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UPFRONT
11 TOWER HEADS TO THE BLOCK: The bidders emerge, none likely to cover retailer's debt.
12 Retail Track
13 Making The Brand
16 Digital Entertainment
17 Global

FEATURES
28 KATRINA: One year later.
30 ATLANTIC REBORN: Craig Kallman and Julie Greenwald return Atlantic Records to chart dominance.
35 FAST FORWARD: MTV, at 25, focuses on the promise of the digital future.

MUSIC
57 ENTOURAGE: Hip-hop protégés learn the perils and pleasures of riding coattails.
58 Now Hear This
60 Global Pulse
62 Rhythm & Blues
63 Higher Ground, Classical Score
65 6 Questions: Trey Anastasio

IN EVERY ISSUE
8 Opinion
69 Over The Counter
70 Charts
89 Marketplace
92 Backbeat
96 Inside Track, Executive Turntable

Conferences
MECCA ROCKS
The Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek and manager Jeff Lamp will hold an exclusive key-note Q&A at Billboard's annual MECCA conference Sept. 11 in Los Angeles to discuss the Doors' digital success.
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R&B ON DEMAND
Billboard and Clear Channel Radio will broadcast the Sept. 8 Billboard R&B/ Hip-Hop Awards. The webcast will be available via Billboard.com and more than 50 Clear Channel station Web sites. billboard.com

EXCLUSIVE Q&A
Top-selling noroena act Los Tigres del Norte will tell all in an exclusive Q&A with Billboard's Leila Cobo at the inaugural Regional Mexican Music Summit, set for Nov. 13-14 in Los Angeles. billboard.com

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Sony-BMG Annulment Good For Business

BY MARTIN MILLS

The European court’s recent judgment in favor of European independent labels’ association Impala that annulled the European Commission’s clearance of the merger between Sony Music and BMG is a watershed moment in many respects. It demonstrates yet again, and on a very different stage, the need for and the value of independent labels acting collectively. This judgment is far from just a technical hitch, not least as demonstrated by EMI and Warner Music’s acknowledgement of its ineptitude over many years.

We live in a very different environment label-wise than was the case 10 or 15 years ago. Then there were not just six majors, but more than that — many small labels existing and successfully in the marketplace with the majors.

Now, following the purchase by the majors of all those companies, there is a chain in terms of size between the smallest major and the largest independents (even though a number of these independents in many territories still compete just as hard and, often, successfully). That has created a very different dynamic in the marketplace and in the way that labels interact with key intermediaries between musicians and fans.

Four big companies can impose their will on retail and media in a way that 15 did not. In battling each other for space and attention — and leveraging their strength — they intentionally or unintentionally reduce opportunities for smaller players. It is to combat this that the smaller players have needed to unite. At the same time, the independents must be able to rely on the regulatory authorities to protect them and the consumer from the dominance of large corporations serving their shareholders.

It was the failure of the European authorities to do this that prompted Impala’s appeal. Now we have the court’s recognition that those authorities did indeed fail to protect us all against that collective dominance.

Let’s be clear that we are not anti-major per se. In many respects we continue to shelter under their umbrellas. They set the terms of the market in which we operate, and they do great work for many of their acts. Some independent labels use majors as trading partners around the world. All the majors have catalogs built on original independent copyrights.

There is a degree of symbiosis between us and them. But just four companies dominate a sector of unfettered worldwide. We wouldn’t put up with just four airlines, four banks, four car manufacturers worldwide, would we? Why would we consider doing this in a market that is not about substitutable products but about artistic goods, which are not interchangeable and whose uniqueness thus confers unique powers on their owners?

Consider a practical example. If HMV wants U2 records, it has to get them from Universal. If MTV wants a U2 video, Universal is the only label that can supply it. Where there’s space for just “x” titles to be racked at the front of the store and just “y” videos on the playlist, that gives Universal a very different advantage with the fans.

Fair enough, you might say, but when you’ve got four or even three big companies using such leverage, especially in a declining market in which it’s increasingly expensive to operate, it’s not hard to see how a great new artist on a small, quality label can quite simply get squeezed out — and that’s perfectly legitimate, not even considering the kind of activities in label relationships with radio that U.S. authorities have focused upon of late.

So it’s pretty clear that a concentrated market carries dangers to musical diversity, to smaller companies and to music fans. That’s why the regulatory authorities must be held to their responsibilities of keeping the market relatively open and the playing field level enough for companies other than the majors to compete and succeed — if they’re good enough and if their music is what fans want to hear and buy.

That’s as it has been for decades, as musical history shows. Independent labels have always innovated and brought most new musical genres to the world — and increasingly so now, since the majors’ economies create a tendency toward homogenization.

And offline is still mainline, still 80% of our business, today’s business. Im- pal’s battle on that front today will be tomorrow’s on a new front, and without those battles being fought, music will be the loser.

Martin Mills is chairman of Beggars Group and Impala.
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Billboard Honors Public Enemy, Dupri
Public Enemy and Jermaine Dupri will be honored at this year’s Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Awards show. Hip-hop innovator Public Enemy will take home the Hip-Hop Honors Public Award, while Dupri will receive the inaugural Apple Computer Lifetime Achievement Award.

Apple Owes $100 Million
Apple Computer will pay Creative Technology $100 million to settle a digital music patent dispute between the two companies. Creative, the company behind the Zen line of digital music devices, filed suit against Apple May 15, claiming patent infringement of technologies it uses in its iPod and iPod Nano players.

The setlement resolves five pending lawsuits between the two companies, including two Apple countersuits.

The Who, Uni Ink Deal
The Who has signed a deal with Universal Republic for the Oct. 31 release of “Endless Wire,” its first album since 1982’s “It’s Hard.” Pete Townshend has a pre-existing relationship with Universal, whose Hip-O imprint is reissuing his entire solo catalog Aug. 29.

Universal also issued the Who’s 2004 retrospective “Then & Now.” The band is gearing up for a fall North American tour that begins Sept. 12 in Philadelphia.

Tower Heads to the Block
The Bidders Emerge, None Likely To Cover Retailer’s Debts
By Oct. 9 Tower Records will have new owners, but vendors may not be so happy about it.

As part of its Aug. 20 Chapter 11 filing, an accelerated bidding process is expected to be approved by the Delaware Chapter 11 judge presiding over the West Sacramento, Calif.-based chain’s reorganization proceeding.

But whatever the auction brings in, it is unlikely to be enough to pay off all secured creditors, let alone unsecured trade creditors.

On Oct. 9, Tower is projected to owe its senior secured banking group led by CIT Group/Business Group $72.3 million. In addition, the subordinated-secured major vendors are owed $74.1 million by Tower Records’ count, or $82 million by the vendors’ calculations.

Tower is unlikely to bring in anywhere near $100 million, said the bank will recoup its full exposure, leaving anyone to guess what it will be left over for the majors. But just as certain, the major vendors have a trump card. If they are unhappy with their recovery, they don’t have to play ball and provide credit to new owners, which would swamp the new venture.

Meanwhile, the independent vendors, collectively owed $15 million, will fight for whatever scraps are left on the table with the other unsecured creditors, including $36 million owed to bond holders who converted to equity from the original prepackaged Chapter 11 in 2004.

The court also approved what is known as cash collateral, meaning the chain can access the cash in its accounts, which should be larger than usual since it missed August payments. Going forward, Tower will buy product cash-in-advance.

Since Tower first filed for Chapter 11 protection in February 2004, it has twice been on the block, but industry participants are betting that a fire sale conducted under Chapter 11 protection will prove third time the charm.

In court, a lawyer for the debtor said that Tower’s investment bank, Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin, is actively talking to six suitors, who are expected to partake in the bidding process. According to court documents, those bidders include HCM Capital Partners, which is believed to have put in the highest bid in 2004; Highland Capital Management; Bayside Capital; Platinum Equity; Radius Equity Partners; and Balmoral Partners.

Also, Tower founder Russ Solomon is trying to put together a group to make a bid. Fred Fox, a former Trans World Entertainment executive, also has financial backing, and sources say he could show up somewhere in the equation. And a suitor with foreign private-equity backers is also said to be studying the situation.

And finally, Trans World, which through the years has bought every other competing music chain in Chapter 11 auctions, will...
Paradigm Buys LBM

Little Big Man is Fourth Acquisition in Two Years

Little Big Man Bookings new has a big brother.

Paradigm, the Hollywood-based film, TV and literary talent agency, has acquired Little Big Man, the Norcross-based booking agency home to Coldplay, Sarah McLachlan, the Fray, Franz Ferdinand, Dido, Snow Patrol, Avril Lavigne and Arctic Monkeys.

Little Big Man, one of the most successful boutique agencies in the touring business, marks Paradigm’s fourth successful acquisition in the last two years, including literary agencies Gene-

sis and Writers & Artists and booking agency Monterey Peninsula Artists (Aerosmith, the Black Crowes, the Black Eyed Peas, Clay Picky Hands Say Yeah, Dave Matthews Band, Wyclef Jean). While Little Big Man founder Marty Diamond does hope for synergies between the Monterey and Little Big Man rosters, “for us it’s more about the synergies that we see in the film and TV and literary and legitimate theater side of things. It’s about new business,” he says. “I want all my clients to put their thinking caps on and say, ‘Wow, our agency now has access to the film and TV world, what else can we provide in terms of content?’”

Paradigm president/CEO Sam Gores says that, though he’s spent his career in the film and TV business, music has always been a passion. “Once we decided to get into the music business, I wasn’t going to be somebody who brought in one or two great artists and let them build from there,” he says.

Gores adds that even though musical artists crossing over into film and TV has always been a “bit of a crapshoot,” the Mon-

terey acquisition has worked well. “We’ve done some really good work with Black Eyed Peas,” he says. “We’ve done some good work with Moz Def. Wyclef Jean is an HBO pilot.”

For his part, Diamond has been one of the concert industry’s true independents. “The reason I made the move is as the mar-

ketplace gets more and more competitive, I need to be able to provide greater services and wider services to my clients,” Diamond says. Both executives seem publicly happy with the new arrangement. “The truth is,” Gores says, “I believe in letting them have their autonomy in the business they specialize in.”

In the story below I analyze how the Aug. 20 Tower Records Chapter 11 filing will play out procedurally, but here I’d like to revisit the reasons why the chain wound back up in Chapter 11 protection for the second time in 30 months. Then I’ll do some crystal-ball-gazing.

The mainstream press is rid-

ing of this disclosure, touting an assertion its almost decade-

old pet theory that Tower owes its problems to the imminent digital induced demise of all brick-and-mortar music stores. (Ya’d, ya’d, ya’d.) The theory overlooks that at least half the industry’s problems are still re-

lated to the competitiveness of the physical music goods world, pricing and problems with the perceived value of the CD and the market-share shift toward big-box merchants.

I reckon big-box execs hate when I point this out, but this much is undeniable: The larger the big-box market share gets, the smaller the U.S. music marketplace becomes. In-

come streams from new digital music products and models may soon offset this, but so far, for the first time in music ind-

ustry history, the growth in sales of a new format—digital—has not resulted in incremental sales growth.

Moving from macro to micro: With hindsight, it’s easy to see that the proclamation (made by distribution executives and en-

dorsed by Retail Track [Billboard, March 27, 2004]) that Tower’s successful completion of its 35-

day prepackaged Chapter 11 re-

organization in February/March 2004 would give the chain a new lease on life was naive.

But how could those execs and I have known that the bondholders would balk at sell-

ing the chain to new owners willing to invest in the future, and then, upon retaining own-

ership, would refuse to make anything other than token capital improvements under their own stewardship?

Tower’s problems now are the same as in 1998, at the time of the $110 million bond offer-

ing that would prove to be the chain’s undoing. Its stores are old and tired, remendously in need of refurbishment, up-

grades and redesign. But in-

stead of addressing that issue, Tower’s management then noted the funds brought in from the bond offering would be used to fuel expansion.

By 2001, Tower was in trou-

ble, beginning a three-year turn around that saw the sale of the chain’s Japanese store and other international stores jet-

soned. Ultimately, the prepack-

aged Chapter 11 filing resulted in bondholders converting their $110 million debt for an 85% stake in the company and $30 million in notes, leaving the Solomon family with little say in company operations.

When Tower was put up for sale after the 1998 Chapter 11, one bidder supposedly offered $170 million ($180 million and was turned down for unknown reasons. More telling was the bid another suitor supposedly made that sources say proposed a Chapter 11, 363-asset sale, the very thing that happened with this filing. If Russ Solomon had filed an outright Chapter 11 in 2004 rather than admiringly pushing for and receiving an unusual prepackaged Chapter 11 solution in which all bondholders retained the right to receive 100 cents on the dollar in prod-

uct payments, bondholders

from >>p1

undoubtedly have a seat at the table. However, this time most of the major vendors see Trans World as a default buyer or a se-

curity net, since it would rather see Tower remain separate as a stand-alone chain, if possible. Also, when Trans World makes an acquisition it tends to liqui-
date a good chunk of stores, re-

sulting in fewer potential sales

for the vendors.

Tower hired Houlihan Lokey in February to shop the chain, and it contacted 167 potential financial and strategic part-

ners, according to court docu-

ments. Of those, 40 executed confidentiality agreements and, ultimately two parties at-

tended management presenta-

tions and submitted bids.

When that round failed to produce a bid large enough to satisfy debtors, Houlihan Lokey embarked on a second round, contact-
ing 34 potential buyers for a 363-asset purchase agreement. May 13 was the deadline and 10-12 bids were due.

Fifteen of those suitors responded and signed confidentiality agreements and ultimately two submitted bids, presumably counted as part of the six bidders men-

tioned in court:

According to Tower’s court documents filed with the court, one bid is actively being negotiated and the sec-

ond arrived just before com-

mencement of the Chapter 11 filing and requires additional due diligence.

In any event, an accelerated bidding process is set to begin with a Sept. 12 deadline for suitors to submit letters of intent to buy the chain.

Additional reporting by Susan Butler.
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VMAs Go Muiltplatform

MTV's Awards Show Will Spread Content Across TV, Internet, Mobile Channels

When MTV broadcasts the Video Music Awards (VMAs) Aug. 31 it will produce not one version of the show, but four.

In addition to the main awards show, which will run on the flagship channel, sister network MTV2 will air a specially tailored offering, featuring its own VJ hosts, dedicated commentary and special award presentation. At the same time, MTV's online portal, Overdrive, will provide a live feed of the scene backstage and follow award winners, presenters and performers during the program. And for those not sitting in front of a computer or TV, MTV will deliver short highlight videos clips from the show throughout the night as they happen to mobile phone users.

"We're trying to create a simultaneous experience," MTV president Christina Norman says. The notion of "screens"—viewing PCs, cell phones and iPods as places for programming in much the same way TV is—has become a key buzz concept in entertainment industry circles as executives grapple with how to keep up with consumers in the era of high-speed Internet connections and mobile entertainment.

MTV is attempting to embrace the idea with its strategy for its biggest night of the year by attempting to be everywhere at once.

Network executives say the big takeaway from last year's VMAs is that the online programming was so popular it should have happened sooner. Last year Overdrive users streamed clips from the show more than 14.7 million times in the month following the broadcast. But online programming wasn't available until after the show ended.

"Users were allowed to watch the show in its entirety, create playlists of their favorite segments and watch post-show coverage. Recognizing that many of its viewers will likely already be online using instant messaging with their friends or using a mobile phone while the show is airing, MTV opted to offer more programming to complement the TV show, which last year attracted 14 million viewers aged 12-34, according to Nielsen Media Research.

The expanded platform also offers a host of additional advertising opportunities for marketers, including CJPenney, Virgin Mobile, Acuvue, Chevrolet, Dodge, Herbal Essences, Pepsi and Taco Bell, all of which are spending a reported $4 million to $7 million for sponsorships.

Dave Sirulnick, executive producer of the 2006 VMAs, says, "It has been conceived as a multiplatform awards show, as opposed to it being a TV show with some ancillary content."

PLATFORM BY:

Overdrive. More than 15 cameras will be set up backstage and MTV VJs will provide commentary on the live action, which will be featured online as the show happens. Sirulnick says MTV got the idea after last year, when it had cameras follow four acts—Kanye West, My Chemical Romance, Ludacris and Kelly Clarkson—throughout the night, from their dressing rooms to the stage. "Aside from the actual performances, it was probably the most accessed VMA material on Overdrive," he says. "It was definitely a factor in us deciding to go to this live, two-stream idea."

Overdrive users also will be able to watch regularly updated highlights of the backstage show, called "VMA Live: Backstage Un-censored," and the awards show itself. Prior to the VMAs Overdrive will present a live simulcast of MTV News' preshow, interviews and music performances, as well as highlights from past VMAs available for on-demand viewing. Sirulnick says MTV will remind TV viewers throughout the night to go to Overdrive by featuring shots from the backstage stream during the main show.

MTV is also looking to encourage user-generated content. Overdrive users will be able to upload pictures and videos of themselves during the show, some of which will be featured on the VMAs broadcast.

MTV Mobile. MTV will regularly send alerts and highlights to mobile phone users as awards are handed out. Clips will be 90 seconds to three minutes in length and feature the winners accepting their awards and other show moments. "We want to get alerts out a few times an hour during the three hours," Sirulnick says. Clips will be available to mobile phone users with wireless broadband services like Verizon's V Cast and Sprint's Power Vision through its MTV Mobile portal.

MTV also will introduce its inaugural ringtone of the year award through an exclusive partnership with Virgin Mobile, which will offer free ringtones from the nominees the week of the VMAs. The artist with the most downloaded ringer will be the winner. In addition, Virgin Mobile users will be able to vote exclusively for the Viewer's Choice award from their phones.

MTV2. As part of a simulcast of the show MTV2 VJs will provide commentary on performances and winners of most interest to the MTV2 audience. And during one commercial break on MTV, MTV2 will feature the presentation of the VM2 award. "We're going to customize the experience for the MTV2 audience and really make it relevant for them," Norman says.

HOME FRONT

BILLBOARD BRINGS MUSIC BIZ ADVERTISERS TOGETHER

The music and advertising worlds will converge Sept. 26 during the Billboard/Adweek Music Up Front at the B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in New York. One of Advertising Week 2007's main events, this exclusive one-day summit will include interactive panel discussions, presentations from top marketing and record label executives who have teamed up on blockbuster campaigns, networking opportunities and executive production opportunities by some of the music industry's hottest rising stars.

Here are some highlights:

Atlantic Records Group, Columbia Records and Aware Records, VirginRecords, Island Def Jam Music Group and Wind-Up Records are confirmed to present.

Mark-Hans Richer, director of marketing for Pontiac, will give a keynote presentation.

A special "View From the Top" will bring together top music, advertising and brand executives to discuss new business models, music consumption and the role of lifestyle products.

Lending their expertise on the topic will be panelists Josh Rabonitz, senior VP/director of music at Grey Worldwide; Larry Mestel, founder of Primary Wave Music and part owner of the Nirvana music catalog; Gayle Trotobrman, director of branded entertainment and experiences for the MSN network of Internet services at Microsoft; Jarrod Moses, CEO of Alliance; and Kathy DeLaet, chief creative officer at Deutsch NY.

In addition, Billboard has once again partnered with Yahoo Music to present an exciting nighttime event, also on Sept. 26 at B.B. King's. Produced by Ed Micon of the Mike Conway Entertainment Group, the show will provide an opportunity for new artists to perform for an audience of advertisers and media agency personnel.

Here is a look at the acts scheduled to perform:

R&B teen newcomer Baylee (pronounced "beige") sings about the challenges young people face when entering adulthood. She was signed to Atlantic Records by Warner Music Group executive VP Joel Haas.

Singer/songwriter/rocker Garland Jeffreys is a New York legend. Best-known for such '70s and '80s hits as "Wild in the Streets" and "R.O.C.K.," Jeffreys has earned a cult following with his autobiographical songs and Latin- and reggae-influenced political statements.

Only 17 years old, singer/songwriter Sonya Kittel has a musical maturity beyond her age. Her debut album "Words Come Back to Me" is part of the Starbucks Here Music program.

TobyMac is a Christian rapper/singer/producer. He rose to fame with his Grammy Award-winning group dc talk. Going solo in 1999, he went on to earn numerous Dove Awards and a Grammy nomination.

Rock/pop outfit Stefy consists of keyboardist Jason
Verizon’s Jet Plan

Campaign For New Phone Features Jet, Chris Brown, Others

"Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is," the lead single from Jet’s sophomore Atlantic album, “Shine On,” is already off to a smashing start at radio. But expect the track to take off in the coming weeks, thanks in part to a savvy ad campaign from Verizon Wireless.

Sure, the campaign spotlights the U.S. debut of the Chocolate by LG mobile phone (part MP3 player, part navigation system), for which Verizon has exclusive U.S. rights. But it also singles out some cool sounds. In addition to the Jet track from “Shine On” (due Oct. 3), the campaign features Lady Sovereign’s “Love Me or Hate Me” (Def Jam), Chris Brown’s “Gimme That” (Jive) and, in a teaser spot, Goldfrapp’s “Strict Machine” (Mute). "We selected music that reflected the different genres that we have available through V Cast Music," Verizon Wireless associate director of product advertising Lynne Geoca says.

Created by McCann Erickson, the campaign broke earlier this month, and will run for the back-to-school and holiday seasons. Because the spots are phone-focused with simple visuals, each piece of music needed to have energy, but the agency was eager to also showcase some brand-new tunes.

"A lot of agencies are loosen[ing] up on voice-overs," says Camille Hackney, Atlantic Records VP of strategic marketing. "More and more, they're letting the music help tell the story."

Unlike most other campaigns infused with music, this one identifies the artists. For instance, midway through Jet’s 30-second spot, the words "new song by jet" appear.

And unlike other brands, Verizon has a history of identifying the music in its campaigns. Shortly after the March debut of the Verizon spot featuring Shakira and Wyclef Jean with their song "Hips Don’t Lie," the track was sitting pretty atop The Billboard Hot 100. Nelly Furtado recently repeated the process with her single "Promiscuous."

As with these two musical partnerships, Verizon retains the exclusive rights to sell the Jet song’s ringtone and the full-length song download for a limited time before they can be sold by any other retailer.

Those keeping score will recall that an iPod spot featuring Jet’s “Are You Gonna Be My Girl” helped launch the Australian band’s career three years ago. Jet’s New York-based manager, Andy Kelly of Win-

REGIONAL MEXICAN SUMMIT TO LAUNCH

An exclusive Q&A with top norteno act Los Tigres del Norte and a marquee opening showcase headlined by Alacranes Musical will be two highlights from Billboard’s upcoming, inaugural Regional Mexican Music Summit.

Taking place Nov. 13-14 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles, the summit will serve as a networking and deal-making platform for the top-selling genre of Latin music.

Already, some of the top regional Mexican acts in the market have signed on for the summit, which officially kicks off with a showcase presented by Promotores Unidos, the association of Mexican music concert promoters. The showcase will feature duranguense group Alacranes Musical, ranchera queen Graciela Beltran, mariachi singer Carla Leon, Arroladores Banda Limon, Grupo Imán and Los Nieves.

The summit’s Nov. 14 panel sessions will include discussions on publishing, immigration, and digital and mobile business.

The summit will also serve as a platform for Urban Box Office to launch new regional Mexican imprint Fronteriza. UBO is the title sponsor of the summit, and Starbucks is the association sponsor.

For more information, visit billboardevents.com.
Music Gets Personal With Gaming
Innovations Work More Songs, More Player Control Into Videogames

In the spring, music executives at the E3 videogame convention predicted music would take on a greater future role as the game market grows more sophisticated. This fall, that prediction seems poised to become reality.

At the pre-holiday game-release schedule swings into high gear, titles expected to hit retail shelves in coming months will feature more songs—and more user control over them—than ever before.

For example, Electronic Arts' "Madden NFL 07" football game this year features an all-time high of 35 songs, up from 21 in recent years. That's just one of the smaller soundtracks. Large, open-game-play videogames like the "Grand Theft Auto" series took the soundtrack concept to new heights with "GTA: San Andreas" featuring a whopping 80 tracks that were later released on an eight-CD boxed set. This fall, two new games matching the "GTA" game-play style will be released with soundtracks that dwarf that title in size and interactivity, heralding what many expect to be a standard feature of tomorrow's games.

Vivendi Universal Games' "Scarsface: The World Is Yours"—based on the 1983 Brian de Palma film—is taking a particularly strong music focus, featuring more than 120 licensed tracks. Another high-profile game, "Saints Row" from THQ, will launch with 130 songs on its soundtrack.

Going further, both games allow players to interact with the soundtrack and customize it to their whims. Vivendi has added a "Mix Tape" feature that allows users to replace the default soundtrack with a personalized one using whatever combination of tracks they choose from premade mixes. The soundtrack to "Saints Row" will change based on what type of car the player/character drives.

"The game itself is interactive, the story line is interactive, so to the extent that you can make it work, and it doesn't mess up the experience, the music should be interactive as well," Vivendi senior brand manager David Kim says.

Music also has an important role in a game's replay value. At $60 a pop, games today must have some degree of longevity to warrant a purchase by consumers, pricewise with its entertainment dollar. Refreshing the soundtrack with new music is a key part of this goal.

Yet there is a growing concern over the expense.

"A soundtrack these days is expected," THQ VP of licensing Germaine Gioia said during a panel session at the E3 conference. But, "it's all coming out of one pot. At the end of the day, it's still got to be a $60 game."

Game soundtrack songs must be licensed, and the more songs included, the greater the music budget required. Add that to expanding budgets for voice acting, basic development costs and movie and sport licenses, and developers are under incredible cost-savings pressure to keep the sale price below the $60 limit.

As such, the music industry is searching for new ways to populate a soundtrack at a lower cost, while giving gamers more choice at the same time.

Microsoft's new Xbox 360 console offers some relief, providing technology that allows developers to update games after they've been sold. Many already offer new soundtracks that can be bought and downloaded via the Xbox Live Marketplace, then added to the game. Examples include "Dance Dance Revolution," "Lumines Live" and "Ridge Racer.

But while the songs in these soundtrack upgrades still carry licensing fees, the new soundtracks also carry a separate fee that helps offset the cost. It's also a great opportunity for record labels to get greater visibility through videogames without having to slog through the multiyear game-development process.

Moving forward, game publishers may soon let players update certain soundtracks with music from their own collections.

"The capability is definitely there," says Aaron Greenberg, group marketing manager for Xbox Live. "We're just waiting for developers to take it to the next level and integrate it into the game experience."

Doing so will allow gamers to keep soundtracks fresh and won't cost developers a dime in licensing fees. At the same time, it also adds even more user interaction to a format that by its nature stresses interactivity.

"We're very open to consumer involvement and player choice," an EA spokeswoman says.

Finally, game developers hope to offset licensing fees by offering an opportunity to buy music directly from the game. Already PC titles like "Left Behind" contain in-game links that are used to purchase the game and buy the current soundtrack selection via iTunes. The capability is expected soon in console games, too.

Game developers hope that selling music directly through the game will result in some kind of credit against their licensing fees for that song.

"As long as you have parties that are interested in trying new things," Kim says, "new models are going to come up."


digital entertainment

BITS & BRIEFS

GOOGLING MUSIC TASTES

Google Labs has introduced a new beta service that tracks the popularity of music accessed via the company's Google Talk IM service. Users who opt into the service, called Music Trends, give permission for Google to track what they are listening to via various music services. The company then analyzes the aggregated data and publishes an online top 20 rating of what it calls "the world's musical tastes." At press time, the top three acts on the list were Muse, Coldplay and Tom Yorke, respectively. Currently, the only music services compatible with Google Talk are iTunes, Yahoo Music, WMP and Winamp.

MP3 PLAYERS TO MOVE IN Q4

MP3 players were a big hit last holiday season, and according to the Consumer Electronics Assn., they're headed for an even bigger run this year. The organization forecasts 33 million MP3 units will ship by the end of the year, reaching $5 billion in sales, accounting for about 3% of the total $14 billion in consumer electronic sales expected for the year. Riding piggyback is the MP3 player accessory market for such things as headphones, car- and home-integration kits, carrying cases and other similar items. The accessory market is set to grow by 30% this year, according to the CEA.

YAHOO! MUSIC SEP 20 TOP 20 SINGS

1. SHAKIRA
2. CHRISTINA AGUILERA
3. JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE
4. JESSICA SIMPSON
5. CASEY
6. Nelly Furtado
7. PHARRELL
8. REYNDERS
9. THE PUSCIFIL DOLLS
10. PARIS HILTON
11. NELLY FURTADO
12. CHEERISH
13. PANIC AT THE DISCO
14. CHI-CHI
15. CIARA
16. U.S. JOON
17. PINK
18. CHARLIE WALKER
19. SEAN PAUL

THE SISTER QUARTET'S album also takes a bow. hitting No. 4 on The Billboard 200 and the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart.

The big-voiced singer lands her second No. 1 album on The Billboard 200 this week, as "Back to Basics" enters with $46,000.
LONDON—In the wake of the breakthrough success of online communities MySpace and Bebo, a slate of alternative music services have begun to roll out internationally, boosting the next phase in the game—a transactional facility.

Among those artist-centric platforms at the vanguard are Anglo-Australian operation Usync and U.K. offerings Indiestore.com, Bandwagon and Tune-tribe, which cater to unsigned acts and independent labels.

Through Usync, GD Worldwide is attempting a new business model that places artists at the core of what its directors describe as the “alternative independent,” or AI, marketplace.

Usync offers rising artists an integrated marketing and e-commerce toolkit with which to forge an immediate close relationship with their fan bases.

“There’s a big difference between a loose collection of friends and a very tight community of active engaged fans, which the artist wakes up every day and serves,” GD Worldwide founder Dan Simmons says. “This is the next logical stage in the market.” Around 15 artists are understood to be collaborating with the service since it arrived in the Australian market roughly six months ago.

“It’s the new ground floor to have your music available as a digital download,” says Dan Forrestel, guitarist with critically hailed Perth, Australia-based rock act Fourth Floor Collapse, which has teamed with Usync for its artist Web site: “it’s fast, it’s easy and it puts the control in the hands of the music lover.”

Aside from digital downloads, Usync’s technology allows artists to also sell CDs, tickets, photos and memorabilia at a price point of their choosing. The artist-collected 80% of the sum, with Usync the remainder.

Simmons says the company is working with six to 10 “high profile artists” in the United Kingdom, ahead of a planned international rollout in 2007.

“The U.K. is leading the charge on this,” says Ben Drury, managing director of London-based media technology specialist 7 Digital. The company is behind Indiestore, which launched in May. “We’ve always had a strong, vibrant music community with new bands.”

Indiestore enables its artist community to charge users for downloading their tracks. Moreover, its sales data is recognized by charts compiler the Official U.K. Charts Co. British vocalist David McAlmont, who has scored six top 40 hits on the OCC singles chart, is among the 3,000 acts from more than 60 countries to have signed up.

“One of the problems with MySpace is the bands are getting a lot of attention and making friends, but they’re not getting any money out of it,” Drury explains. Sales per active artist store average nearly £13 ($20), “ahead of where we expected it to be.”

Drury says like Usync, artists who sign up keep up to 80% of the money made from sales, depending on the package they choose.

But no one is predicting the international AI community will turn the traditional recording business upside down. “These will be niche markets,” says Gerd Leonhard, consultant and co-author of “The Future of Music.”

“At some point, if you get loads of success doing it yourself, you can get an agent or a label.”

Another potential new player is Univillage, a social networking site launched by Lastminutecom founder Brent Hoberman. As part of its membership drive, the service—which is available only for U.K. students and has inked partnerships with the majors and various indie labels—is offering 50 free downloads.

Of late, MySpace has become bullish on the international market, building localized communities for users in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and Germany. It also released its first non-English-language version with the beta launch of an operation in France. However, there is no word yet on when either MySpace or Bebo plans to add a paid-download function.

As natural a progression as it seems, the enabling of that functionality for the international alternative music community isn’t going to revolutionize the model, Jupiter Research analyst Mark Mulligan says. He cites the examples of pioneering European online music communities Peoplesound.com and Vitaminic, both of which have cooled considerably since arriving on the scene during the dot-com boom.

“There’s still the problem of finding the audience,” he says. “Not many [community members] are in the same place at any one time, which makes it very difficult to make a mass-distribution model. They are becoming another important part of the music marketing mix. But I don’t think it’s there to replace record labels.”
Korn Tour Thrives On New Business Model

After a five-year hiatus, Family Values has been restored in America. Live Nation, Korn and the Firm resurrected the Family Values tour this summer with a 30-city North American trek that is exceeding expectations. Also on the bill were Deftones, Stone Sour, Flyleaf and Dir en Gray on the main stage. Second-stage acts are Deadby, 10 Years, Bury Your Dead, and Bullets and Octane.

Korn created the Family Values brand with Metropolis Entertainment as a winter arena tour in 1998. The tour also helped break Limp Bizkit, which headlined in 1999. The two outings grossed roughly $3 million and $10.6 million, respectively, and drew a combined 552,786, according to Billboard Boxscore.

This year’s tour, launched with a July 29 Nashville sellout, will likely blow away those numbers playing Live Nation amphitheaters, with lawn seats value-priced at $9.99. The first three shows reported to Billboard Boxscore all sold out, grossing more than $870,000.

The tour is a major testing ground for a groundbreaking deal that connects Korn, EMI and Live Nation in a partnership to grow Korn’s career. Live Nation reportedly invested about $3 million in exchange for 6% of Korn’s box office, licensing, publishing, merchandising and CD sales (Billboard, Jan. 21). Earlier, EMI invested $25 million upfront for an estimated 30% stake in Korn’s overall business.

The deal makes partners out of those who historically pursued distinctly separate agendas. The joint venture allows Live Nation to invest in the band’s overall career, tapping into revenue streams beyond the box office that were previously unavailable to promoters. Meanwhile, Korn snags a piece of revenue that has largely been off limits to bands—namely, such ancillaries as concessions at Live Nation-owned venues.

“They’re going to get a nerve” with the ticket price, says Peter Katsis, senior VP of music for the Firm. “A lot of the festivals have gotten real pricey, and kids are broke.”

The $9.99 ticket “doesn’t necessarily make for the type of huge grosses that Korn’s going to get filthy rich on, but what was important was engaging the audience into the festival experience,” he says.

Katsis says all the vested parties—label, promoter, band, management—are holding up their ends of the bargain. “We had to create a model of working together,” he says, adding that EMI is “undoubtedly” helping get radio behind the tour.

Live Nation executive VP of amphitheater programming Jason Garner says that now everyone has a stake in Korn’s success, “there’s not a management agenda versus a label agenda versus a promoter agenda…Everyone’s working together to make sure we maximize the overall pot for Korn.”

In turn, allowing the band to tap into Live Nation’s ancillaries at the venues gives Korn a motivation to pack venues beyond just getting paid based on ticket sales or a guarantee.

The model radically changes the traditional concert deal, with the nightly box-office settlement virtually thrown out the window.

“It’s not like there are no kinks involved,” Katsis says. “We have to keep reminding ourselves of the path…But it has been exciting. You feel like you’re on the forefront of something new.”

Garner says the new business model is exceeding expectations, “simply because you never want to build a financial model based on the best-case scenario.”

Garner and Katsis say they would be interested in trying a similar deal with another act. “We’re helping each other become better promoters, better labels and better managers,” Katsis says. “These are conversations that maybe have been long overdue to create a better understanding of each other’s businesses will probably help us in all our endeavors.”

Seeing Blue

Zuckerman Returns To Co-Produce, Promote Blue Man Group’s U.S. Tour

Irv Zuckerman is back and blue.

Once one of the most high-profile players in the concert business, Zuckerman, along with co-CEO Rodney Eckerman, stepped down from the helm of Clear Channel Entertainment (now Live Nation) in April 2002. Zuckerman came to CCE when his St. Louis promotion firm Contemporary Productions was acquired in the late 1990s concert-promoter consolidation that ultimately led to Live Nation.

Zuckerman has been conspicuously absent from the business for four years, but has now resurfaced with his Pacific Arts Entertainment company in co-producing and promoting Blue Man Group’s upcoming How to Be a Megastar Tour 2.0.

“I was looking for the right opportunity to come along,” Zuckerman says. “I didn’t want to do the traditional ‘tickets on sale Saturday’ routine.”

Zuckerman is partnered in Pacific Arts with Steve Litman, who helms St. Louis-based concert company Steve Litman Presents and exclusively books the Fabulous Fox Theatre in St. Louis. Pacific Arts is partnering Blue on the Blue Man tour with Paul Emery of Emery Entertainment. Also onboard with Emery are VPs Greg Hagglund and Sue Silverstein.

All these players at one time or another worked with Zuckerman at Contemporary. Jen Willink is executive producer of the tour for Blue Man Productions.

“The main thing is the opportunity to put together a small group of professionals who I have history with to create a very targeted company geared towards artists that really want much more depth in a focused relationship,” Zuckerman says. “That’s not to say it can’t happen other ways, but it’s rare when you can get one-on-one with artists, clearly get down to the bare essentials and go from there.”

Zuckerman says his non-competition with CCE/Live Nation is “long over,” but this is his first project since exiting the live-entertainment grant. “I wanted to get back to a small and cohesive group,” he says.

“The extraordinary thing is we put this deal together in one amazing meeting with Blue Man Group.”

The tour begins Sept. 26 in Redding, Pa., with a first leg of 42 cities. A second leg beginning in early 2007 will play 40-50 cities. “There will be a lot of blue paint in America for 2006 and 2007,” Zuckerman says.

The tour will receive exposure from an upcoming PBS special “Inside the Tube,” along with cable network video-on-demand and multiple other platforms.

“The catalyst to this whole relationship is the coordination that comes from working hand-in-hand with an artist directly, where you produce and promote ideas together,” Zuckerman says. “This is a very comprehensive, organized plan. When you see Blue Man, you’ve seen something very unique, and our goal is to take them out there to many, many more people in a broader environment with the concert tour.”

Blue Man Group has opened theatrical residencies in London, Berlin, New York, Las Vegas, Chicago, Boston and Toronto. The tour will primarily play auditoriums and arenas in a wide range of markets.

“We looked at each market very carefully to come up with the right venue where this show could be presented to maximize it,” Zuckerman says.

“And we utilize the existence of the huge capabilities of these auditoriums and arenas with their databases and their recent activities in their marketplaces, along with our national presence in the PBS special and video-on-demand pieces with cable networks.”

Zuckerman says Blue Man Group appeals to a broad demographic. “It combines comedy, music and theater in a large venue that actually connects with the individual much more easily because it’s eye candy,” he says. “They bring together all the elements and attack the senses.”

The industry veteran declined to comment on any future projects for Pacific Arts. “I really want to focus on this relationship with Blue Man Group,” he says. “Anything else is always TBA.”

Asked to comment on the current concert business he once was such a major player in, Zuckerman observes, “Obviously the business is always changing. I think that the major concert companies, Live Nation and AEG, are attacking their strategies very well. I’m interested to see how the artist development and artist relationship pieces turn out.”
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CRACKDOWN IN INDIA

New Decency Efforts Force Music Biz To Live With Censorship

NEW DELHI—The Indian government’s crackdown on raunchy music videos gained pace Aug. 2 when the Indian Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry issued a notification that all music videos will now require a censor certificate from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) before broadcast.

The move was not entirely unexpected as recent years have seen a growing debate over so-called “remix videos”—cover versions of popular Bollywood songs featuring scantily clad girls.

“The industry has no one to blame but itself when it comes to censorship,” says Amar Deb, head of Mumbai-based Channel V India, the music outlet of News Corp.’s STAR India network that held a 34% market share of Indian music channels between August 2005 and July 2006, according to TV ratings system TAM. Channel V and MTV India typically vie for market-leading status in India’s music-TV market.

“We kept telling the industry that they should establish an in-house standards code just like the Indian advertising industry, which follows Advertising Standards Council of India guidelines,” Deb says.

Remix videos drew strong protests from consumer groups, prompting the I&B Ministry to issue a notification last year stating that videos should follow the broadcasting code as detailed in the Cable Networks Act. And in early July, the lack of self-censorship led the I&B Ministry to require that all music channels run an on-screen apology, stating that they had violated broadcasting norms by “airing objectionable videos.”

Vijay Lazarus, president at Mumbai-based trade body Indian Music Industry, says the remix phenomenon was fueled by copyright-law loopholes that make it easy for anybody to create cover versions, even without approval from content copyright holders. The CBFC wants a “minimum 10-year window for a song to have a cover version,” Lazarus says.

But the remix trend is mostly spearheaded by labels outside CBFC’s 130-strong membership. “We should have established an in-house code but . . . we could not control nonmembers,” Lazarus adds.

Though the government had established a broadcasting code in 1994 under the Indian Cable Act, which did mention that only certified videos could air, the law was not strictly followed, says Vinayak Azaad, regional officer at Mumbai-based CBFC. “This notification has now strengthened the procedure which has always been followed by the film industry. Now videos will have certification such as ‘U’ [universal] or ‘A’ [adult] just like films,” he adds. Clips with an “A” certification cannot be aired by any broadcaster.

Paris Hilton is the first high-profile artist to fall foul with India’s new censorship rules. Her video for “Stars Are Blind,” from her debut album “Paris,” received an “A” certificate from the CBFC. According to Narendra Kusnur, manager of international A&R at Mumbai-based EMI Virgin India (which is Warner Bros.’ licensee here), the CBFC said Hilton’s video had “sexual connotations. In fact, we had edited the video and sent a fresh copy, but they weren’t happy with that.”

“Not having a video poses a challenge,” EMI Virgin India marketing manager Kaveri Khullar notes. “but EMI Virgin plans to turn this into an advantage by launching an online viral-marketing campaign. The video will be webcast on a promotional site since there are no defined rules about censoring online content.”

When it comes to censoring video catalog for traditional airing, some broadcasters—such as VH1 viaconv’s all-international playlist music channel—seem to face logistical challenges. “Most of our playlist is based on our catalog of over 6,000 videos which need to be censored,” says Keeran Advan-thaya, VP/GM of VH1 India.

“I don’t know how long it will take for the CBFC to clear all these videos,” Advan-thaya says, “though we are in discussions with them to work out a time frame. But we have already implemented the rule by making sure that labels get new videos certified.”

Meanwhile, the broadcasting industry will soon also have to deal with the I&B Ministry’s in-the-works broadcast bill, which poses the establishment of a regulatory body along the lines of the United States’ FCC. It may take an Indian version of Janet Jack-sen’s famous “wardrobe malfunction” to drive home the point that content regulation is here to stay.

GLOBAL NEWSLINE

BRIT AWARDS TO GO LIVE IN ’07

The 27th BRIT Awards will be aired live next year on Feb. 14, 2007.

ITV, the big U.K. commercial TV network, will broadcast the event to be held at London’s Earls Court.

The BRITs have not been broadcast live since an error-strewn 1989 show, which was co-hosted by model Samantha Fox and Mick Fleetwood.

In addition to the live coverage, ITV1 and ITV2 channels will devote five hours of preview programming in the days leading up to the ceremony.

Trophies in 13 categories will be handed out. However, three standard genre categories—best British rock, urban and pop—will be dropped from the lineup.

The awards are selected by the BRITs Committee, which comprises leading music and media industry execs.

Proceeds from the BRITs will continue to go to the BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology and the Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy. —Juliana Koranteng

TIX VIA VIAGOGO

Viagogo, a new European online ticket-exchange venture designed to bypass scalpers, officially launched Aug. 18 in the United Kingdom.

The brainchild of CEO Eric Baker, co-founder of the U.S.-based StubHub.com ticket-exchange agency, the new Web-based platform allows users to exchange tickets for major events.

Viagogo hopes its service will allow its live-event organizer clients to sidestep illegal ticket sellers seeking to exploit Europe’s estimated £5 billion ($9.5 billion) secondary ticket market.

After the U.K. launch, Viagogo expects to open in Germany later this year before rolling out to other European markets.

—Juliana Koranteng

SOUNDBUZZ ADDS VIDEO IN INDIA

Mumbai-based Soundbuzz India has launched a video download service in India as an extension of its existing audio download service.

Indian videos are priced at 20 rupees (40 cents) per download, while international videos sell for 40 rupees (80 cents).

An established digital content aggregator for Internet and mobile platforms, Soundbuzz has existing Web-based video download services in other territories such as Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

With more than 28 million Internet users, according to the Internet and Mobile Assn. of India, the territory is becoming a key market for Soundbuzz, executives say.

—Nyay Bhushan
SHANGHAI—The sound of more than 100,000 karaoke bars blaring out across China may not always be tuneful, but the establishment of a government-controlled database of approved karaoke recordings should hit the right note with those seeking improvement in the country's copyright protection record. As with many policy ventures on the mainland, however, time will tell if the government is committed to change.

The pilot database project, announced July 18 and to be launched by China's Ministry of Culture in second-tier Chinese cities Wuhan, Zhengzhou and Qingdao, aims to enable karaoke operations to monitor dubbed recordings and ultimately charge for their use. "A database of rights information, we are sure, is the answer," says Taihe Maitian, chairman of the Chinese Audio-Video Collective Management Assn., which is affiliated with the CAVCMCA.

Taihe's plan is for the database to establish a central system that will either allow operators to scan in each song's copyright or provide a link to a database of songs, each of which will carry a track number. "I believe that the role of the database is to catalogue all the copyrighted songs that have rights information associated with them," he says. "Unfortunately, karaoke operators are not yet prepared to pay copyright fees."

"EMI has never received royalties...We welcome any scheme that will correct this."

—SUSANNA NG, EMI

On July 20, China's National Copyright Administration announced its own karaoke copyright fee system. Wang Huapeng, spokesman for the China Audio-Video Collective Management Assn., which is affiliated with the CAVCMCA, announced that the fee will be charged per song. Fees collected by the CAVCMCA will go to music distribution companies, copyright holders and the CAVCMCA.

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GLOBAL BY DIANE COETZER

INTO AFRICA

South African Biz Pushes North To Take On Pirates

JOHANNESBURG—South African companies seek to open new music markets by pushing into the African continent, with piracy-dominated Nigeria the first scheduled stop.

Chief among these is Johncom Africa, which became Warner Music International’s joint-venture partner in the May creation of Warner Music Gallo Africa (WMGA).

Johncom’s projects include the Nu Metro Mediotstores, featuring films, music, books and home entertainment. The first store opened in Lagos in June 2005, with a second added in Abuja and a third planned by the end of the year in Lagos. There is also a Nu Metro Express at an Oando Petrol Station in Lagos, and a rollout of 240 of these mini-stores is planned.

Among Johncom’s other investments are CDT Nigeria, a CD manufacturing plant that opened in Lagos in December 2005. According to Johncom, it operates at 96% capacity with some 98% of the work done for Nigerian customers.

Johncom Africa CEO Brian Pottinger says the biggest challenge has been music distribution. “The pirates produce their albums three days after release, selling at ridiculously low prices. We have to try and compete selling at between 150 and 249 niger [51.21-82] compared to the pirated price of 80 niger [64 cents].”

To take on this market, CDT Nigeria in April released Lucky Dube’s album “Respect” into the informal market (market stalls) using cardboard sleeves. According to Johncom, it sold 50,000 units in the first week with two-tier pricing—one for the informal market and one for retail stores.

Ivor Haarburger, CEO of WMGA, says: “That was feeling the water, and now [that] Johncom has put in place manufacturing and distribution, we are planning on moving more aggressively into the market.”

Pottinger estimates piracy of physical product at around 95% in a country that is the most populous in Africa, with more than 130 million inhabitants.

Keith Lester, Sony BMG Africa CEO and chairman of the Recording Industry of South Africa, says: “The jury is still out on whether the physical market will actually ever be viable. Even if the market for an R. Kelly album is 3 million units, how are you going to sell those numbers before the pirates climb in?”

Meanwhile, Edima Otuokon, a marketing consultant and former DJ on Lagos-based Rhythm FM, says the advent of democracy in 1999 has given the live music scene a boost.

“International acts like Akon, 50 Cent, Joe, Ashanti and Ludacris have all played in Lagos,” Otuokon says. “They know now they will be safe, and they will earn legitimate money.”

But for several current and potential operators in Nigeria, the most compelling way to penetrate the country is digitally.

“In a digital environment you don’t have the threat of export, which means we can price out legitimate goods in a way that really enables us to compete against pirates,” Lester says.

Arthur Goldstuck, head of World Wide Worx, South Africa’s leading independent technology research organization, says Nigeria ranks second in Africa in terms of mobile phone penetration, behind only South Africa, but lags far behind other countries when it comes to Internet access.

“The dramatic increase in mobile phone penetration—around 30 million users—and the widespread availability of GPRS, which allows for a form of Web browsing and e-mail from a phone, is expected to make Nigerian Internet access a mobile-dominated arena.”

Goldstuck says:

MTV Base is also on track to take advantage of the digital environment. MTV Networks Africa GM/VP Alex Okosi says: “Mobile penetration is around threefold that of television. As more and more handsets are video- and music-enabled, it gives us a new avenue to filter through our entertainment content, whether it be music videos or short-form programming.”

But Lester offers words of caution: “Already some content providers operating out of South Africa have announced that they are going to make a fortune out of Nigeria because they don’t have to pay royalties. There is a lot of work to be done, but we are very excited at the possibilities that exist for doing business.”

EMI Adds New Publishing Role

Former Songwriter/Producer/Lawyer Bob Flax To Focus On Global Acquisitions, Strategic Relationships

From cover-band singer to songwriter/producer, lawyer to publishing executive, Bob Flax has worn a variety of hats. In his new position as vice chairman of EMI Music Publishing worldwide, Flax is now taking on the world. He will develop large global acquisitions and new strategic relationships.

Earlier this month, EMI Music Publishing CCOs Marty Bandier and Roger Faxon announced the creation of the new position for Flax, who was previously president of U.S. operations.

“Marty, Roger and I share the same vision to grow EMI Music Publishing in ways that are not the conventional way—to expand into new areas which might be atypical for a music publisher,” Flax says.

While Flax will not reveal specific plans, the types of business relationships are essentially limitless. They may involve licenses or become joint ventures, he says. Internet and wireless opportunities are naturally top of mind.

Flax believes the new position is a perfect fit

EMI Music Publishing’s BOB FLAX: Cover-band singer-cum-global strategist.

Flax played piano and sang in a high school cover band. Later at Syracuse University, he wrote songs but knew no one in the industry.

“I picked up a copy of Billboard, and I looked to see where the publishing companies were,” Flax says. “I literally knocked on doors, and I got a writing gig over at Chappell Music.”

As part of his deal, the publisher flew Flax into New York on weekends to work on his demos. “That’s how I learned to produce,” he says.

He penned five songs that made the Billboard charts in the 1970s: Bullet’s “White Lies, Blue Eyes” and “Willpower Weak, Temptation Strong”; Barbara Mason’s “Bed and Board”; Ian Lloyd & Stories’ “Another Love”;

and, when Howdy Doody and Buffalo Bob were on tour, P-Nut Gallery’s “Do You Know What Time It Is.” Flax also produced or co-produced some of the tracks.

Flax then decided to become a lawyer, joining Allen Grubman in 1981. He moved to EMI as executive VP of the worldwide company in 1992.

“My street education, as it were, between my creative life and being a lawyer really was the foundation for me coming over to EMI,” Flax says.

In the next few months, Flax will follow up on some business discussions that have already started to develop his ideas. His goal is to close the deals soon so his strategies can be implemented.

Flax is also closely following news reports that may spark fresh ideas and to develop new relationships.

“Nothing matter what you do in your career, once you’ve practiced as a lawyer the way you think always stays with you,” Flax says. “That’s indelible in my mind and helps me think through many different types of business opportunities. Not the legal ramifications—we have lawyers who do that—but it helps me be more creative. The parameters of what I want to do are almost automatic in my mind sometimes.”

SIGNINGS: Famous Music sealed an administration deal with Daniel Powter for the United States and Canada . . . Cherry Lane Music Publishing signed a North American administration deal with members of British punk group the Sex Pistols—Steve Jones, Paul Cook and the Sid Vicious Estate.
Ferret’s New Partner

By Selling A Stake To WMG, Indie Label Says It Will Retain More Control Over Acts

New Jersey hard rock label Ferret Records sold a bit of itself to Warner Music Group this month, but the label is promised to another till 2009. Ferret will continue to be distributed by Sony BMG’s RED Distribution for the next three years, despite having sold a stake to WMG’s Independent Label Group.

Ferret Music CEO Carl Severson says the deal was completed with the hopes of ensuring that bands won’t leave Ferret for a competitor or a major. He declines to reveal how big of a stake WMG purchased, defining the deal as a “partnership.” Unlike its Sony BMG/RED relationship, the label’s WMG deal does not feature an upstreaming component. Yet even with Sony, only one Ferret act, A Static Lullaby, was ever called up to the majors. Severson insists that the possibility of having an act upstreamed wasn’t why he made the deal with WMG.

Instead, he wanted Ferret to grow to a point where a band would have little incentive to leave. He notes that he was looking for a partner that would invest in Ferret and provide services “beyond the scope of distribution.”

“We’re not looking to provide a steppingstone to bands to Sony or Warner or another independent label,” Severson says. “We want to provide an environment where we can keep growing the band, no matter what level of success they’ve achieved.”

Over the years RED had invested heavily in Ferret, and Severson says the distributor is responsible for helping the label’s publishing division grow. He hopes to see Ferret’s management arm become larger under WMG, and is looking for new opportunities for the Sounds of the Underground tour, of which the label is a primary owner.

Severson stresses he had no complaints with Sony or RED, and notes that the distributor “has been a better place since Bob Morelli came in.” Ferret, home to In Flames and Everyday I Die, even tried at first to work out a deal with Sony.

A deal with Sony couldn’t “come to fruition,” Severson says, and he declines to go into specifics, instead offering a lighter, more self-effacing response. “This opportunity was presented to Sony as well, and if we were a better label, maybe [Sony] would have been interested,” he says. “We just saw eye to eye with the Warner people.”

MOVING AROUND: Meanwhile, in a relatively quiet move, Sanctuary Records made the in-company switch from Sony BMG to indie-focused RED Distribution. The latter will gradually take over the reins on Sanctuary releases in the United States, including upcoming albums from Tegan & Sara, Iron Maiden and Los Abandoned. The move had an immediate impact on Billboard’s charts, as Drive-Thru’s rock act HelloGood-
Chris Tomlin

The Christian Industry’s Most Successful Artist Talks Songwriting, Recording and God

In a few short years Chris Tomlin has gone from being a popular worship leader in Austin to the Christian music industry’s most successful artist. The singer/songwriter netted five Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards in April including artist of the year, male vocalist and song of the year and worship song of the year for “How Great Is Our God,” from his last album, “Arriving.” That album indeed marked Tomlin’s arrival as a creative force in the Christian community and the catalyst for the rise of modern worship music, the Christian music industry’s dominant trend. “Arriving” has been certified gold by the RIAA and has sold 568,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Produced by Ed Cash (Kathy Mattea, Bebo Norman, Caedmon’s Call), “Arriving” combined guitar-driven melodies with the worshipful lyrics Tomlin became known for at Austin Stone Community Church, a Texas church he co-founded.

Tomlin’s rise to national prominence was fueled by appearances at the Passion conferences, collegiate gatherings targeting Christian youth. He’s signed to Sixsteps records, a label owned by Passion founders Louie and Shelley Giglio, which is marketed and distributed by EMI Christian Music Group.

Tomlin has seven songs in the top 5 of the Christian Copyright Licensing International chart, which tracks songs performed in churches nationwide. Eschewing celebrity and music industry politics, Tomlin has a reputation for staying grounded and focusing on creating music for the church. His new album, “See the Morning,” streets Sept. 26. First single “Made to Worship” is already the most downloaded Christian song on iTunes.

With “Arriving” being such a successful record, were you at all nervous about going in the studio to record the new project? You tend to feel a lot of pressure and it’s new for me having so much success with the last one. [There is] expectation from people for your new record and you tend to put a lot of pressure on yourself, but obviously that stuff went away because I know in my heart that the reason we’ve had so much success is that God has done it. He has just given us so much favor. And if all this success had been man-made, out of our own genius and own ability, then I would feel stressed out again. But I know what God’s love is about, so I just trust him.

I just try to write songs that give people a voice to worship him, and he takes care of the rest. I do want to make a great record and hope it’s something that people really want, really love. Of course I do. Every time I make music, I want people to enjoy it, but as far as the success of it, I think God brings it to us.

It used to be hard to get worship music played on Christian pop radio. With the success of the songs on “Arriving,” you’re credited with opening doors for worship songs on radio. What caused that change?

With our first two records we released songs, and we couldn’t get them played... The response would be the same every time: “We just don’t play worship music on the main format.” Then it just broke loose with “Arriving,” and “Indescribable” was a big part of that... It showed radio that this is what people love and want to hear, not just me, but this kind of music is what people really love. Now it’s all over the radio, all kinds of worship music. It’s exciting and if I had a little part to do with that, I’m thankful.

What do you think it was about “Indescribable” that opened doors? It was a combination of being a great worship song and having a great radio sensibility to it. It’s one of those few songs that has both.

Were you aware of crafting songs that fit that combination when you wrote for “See the Morning”? Sort of. When I’m crafting songs, I’m primarily thinking about how to make this accessible to as many people as you can, and part of that is radio getting your songs out there... Is this a song that people want to sing? Can they get in their cars and instantly feel like something’s starting? Can a music pastor get the CD and say, “Wow, I can lead these songs in my church?” And can radio say, “Wow, this will fit right along on the radio station” That’s hard to do.

I tried to stop thinking about it, but trying to get the music to the masses, that’s always in my heart.

What made you choose “Made to Worship” as the lead single? I just felt from the start that was a great leadoff single... It has that radio sensibility but is a worship song as well. I love singing it, and it’s just a good feeling song.

For mainstream readers, define worship music. Worship is about the heart and it’s about your life, it’s not about any type of song. It’s about giving glory to God. I want to do that through my music. Hopefully, my songs will lead people to do that and give a voice to people. The style of worship songs will change, but the heart of it never will.

Do you see a time when you’ll write an album that’s not worship songs? Not anytime soon. That’s not what I’m good at or where I feel God gifted me.

How long have you been with Sixsteps records?

We started in 2000. This will be my fifth record on my own with Sixsteps, and I’ve been a part of all the Passion records. I think there are eight or nine of those. We’ve done quite a bit in these six years.

‘We get to make records how we want to make them, and we get to say what we want to do. It’s the best of both worlds.’

With Sixsteps in partnership with EMI, do you feel like you get the best of both worlds? I do. Exactly! EMI is the powerhouse distribution. They’ve got so many things in place and are such a strong record company, and then Sixsteps has the creative freedom of an independent label. We get to make records how we want to make them, and we get to say what we want to do. It’s the best of both worlds.

How has the Internet and the tech revolution bolstered your career? What are you doing to reach young consumers? I’m just so bad with that stuff. We try to have a huge Internet presence. I’m so thankful for all the people who go on iTunes because, I don’t know, for some reason between the Passion and myself and David Crowder, it’s been a real strong [market]. We are definitely having a presence there and making sales online. We try to make everything as available in every way we can, in every source.

How do you reconcile life as a Christian music celebrity with being a worship leader? You just do what you can. You just continue to put the focus on God and pray that all the more attention that comes on you, you can reach out there and put it on God.
Primal Scream therapy.

The new Primal Scream album, "Riot City Blues," is finally released stateside, and the band scores a very rare second "coolest song" nod with "Dolls." It may be even better than "Country Girl," but all I know is we're getting a lot of fabulous exactas from the veterans lately: "If It Takes a Life Time" and "Dream the Night Away" from Cheap Trick's "Rockford," "Everyone Knows" and "Turn It Around" from Joan Jett & the Blackhearts "Sinner," and "World Wide Suicide" and "Life Wasted" from Pearl Jam's "Pearl Jam." Some of their best work ever.

If you dug Primal Scream's fourth album "Give Out But Don't Give Up" from 1994, you're going to love this.

In addition to the two already classic tracks "Country Girl" and "Dolls," check out "Nitty Gritty," "99th Floor," "Hell's Comin' Down" and "Suicide Sally and Johnny Guitar." The group's core has been together for a while—Bobby Gillespie on lead vocals, Andrew Innes on guitar-type stuff, Greg "Mani" Mounfield on bass, Robert Young on rhythm, Martin Duffy on keys and Darrin Mooney on drums. If they stick to rock'n'roll, and Gillespie decides not to self-destruct, they could be one of the best and biggest bands in the world. Let's enjoy them while we've got them. See you next week.

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

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**COOLEST GARAGE SONGS**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DOLLS (PRIMAL SCREAM)</td>
<td>Columbia Records UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SAVING GRACE (TOM PETTY)</td>
<td>American Recordings</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>HOT GIRLS IN GOOD MOODS (BUTCH WALKER &amp; THE LET'S GO OUT TONITES)</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>YOUR LOVE, NOW (TH' LOSIN STREAKS)</td>
<td>Secret Disco</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Memphis Industries</td>
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<td>PINKERTON'S ASSORTED COLOURS (THE ANDERSON COUNCIL)</td>
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<td>Big 2 Records</td>
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Music Cares

The Music Business Responded in Grand Fashion When Katrina Hit, But There's Still a Long Way To Go

By Chris M. Walsh

Before Hurricane Katrina hit, Tanio Hingle lived in a house in the Treme section of New Orleans with his wife and three kids, pigging around town with the New Birth Brass Band. The eight-piece played four or five times a week in places like Joe's Cozy Corner, Donna's Bar & Grill, Tipitina's and House of Blues.

Since Katrina, Hingle and his family have been living in an apartment in Houston; he drives back to New Orleans to repair the house when he's not playing shows. "We're still not back to normal. We're trying to get there," he says. "The insurance money wasn't enough to cover house repairs."

Today the band mostly plays shelters, schools and churches—sometimes the airport. Hingle's been able to get one or two gigs a week, which come mostly as referrals from Bethany Bultman, co-founder and executive director of the New Orleans Musicians Clinic. Bultman set up the NOMC Emergency Fund after Katrina last year to raise money. "We're hoping to create opportunities for the musicians to play in shelters and schools," she says. "We want to keep the culture alive."

Support directly to NOMC includes approximately $80,000 from Bruce Springsteen, about $25,000-$30,000 from Bonnie Raitt, plus contributions from Huey Lewis, Pearl Jam and others. "Gig fees" from donors go directly to musicians. One goal: to save the traditional music of New Orleans.

And NOMC's not alone in that mission. On Aug. 29, the one-year anniversary of Katrina, the Tipitina's Foundation will host a ceremony at the legendary Tipitina's Uptown venue to hand over $500,000 in new instruments to 11 New Orleans school music programs. The ceremony will feature performances by Ivan Neville and the Original Uptown Allstars with the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue, the Rebirth Brass Band and other locals.

And help has been coming all along. Days after Katrina caused $8 billion in damages to the Gulf region and devastated an area that today is still trying to re-build, relief started pouring in from all music industry directions. Higher profile efforts included a Sept. 12 Dave Matthews benefit concert at Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Denver; a Sept. 10 special on MTV, VH1 and CMT; and "A Concert for Hurricane Relief," a four-hour-long TV special that aired Sept. 2 on NBC, MSNBC and CNBC, co-headlined by Tim McGraw and also featuring Harry Connick Jr. and Wynton Marsalis.

One of the industry's top donors has been the MusiCares Relief Fund ($3.5 million) set up by the Recording Academy, with representatives in New Orleans ultimately helping an estimated 3,500 people with basic needs such as food, clothing and water.

And within two days of the storm hitting, MoveOn.org set up HurricaneHousing.org. The organization—with help from such acts as Michael Stipe, the Roots, Beastie Boys, Pearl Jam, Moby, Liz Phair, Vanessa Carlton and 311—sent e-mail blasts to millions of people in the region, asking if they could house an evacuee. About 160,000 responded, and MoveOn matched 30,000 within two weeks.

But the task is far from over. "The evacuees still need help, and the rebuilding effort isn't going well," says Laura Dawn, cultural director for MoveOn, which held a concert Aug. 24 in New York featuring the Roots to raise money for the Assn. of Community Organizations for Reform Now, an organization dedicated to helping low and moderate income New Orleans families.

Yet even as help continues to pour in, basic problems still exist. According to Hingle, the biggest issue is still housing. "We're all trying to get our houses back to normal," says Hingle, who received $2,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency after the storm hit; an instrument through MusiCares, and gigs through the NOMC, but he says everyday life still isn't what it once was.

"I'm not sure where all the money raised went," says New Orleans author Tom Piazza, who wrote "Why New Orleans Matters" (Harper Collins). "But to us exiled from N.O., it was very inspiring to watch how the music industry reacted to the needs. It was most amazing."

Neil Porinok, president of the Recording Academy, MusiCares and the Grammy Foundation, asks the industry not to lose focus. "We're not anywhere near to having solved this crisis," he says. "We need to continue the great charity and philanthropy our industry is known for."

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FIRST PERSON

Aaron Neville

Aaron Neville, a member of the New Orleans-bred family the Neville Brothers, lost his house to Katrina, as did several family members. While he'd like to come back, he can't, due to severe asthma. "The toxic stuff in the water has set so long, and with the dust in the air, that would do a job on me," he says. He and his wife, who is fighting cancer, have relocated to Nashville. "New Orleans will never be what it was," Neville says. "But hopefully it can come back. The poor and working people won't ever be able to come back, though. Their houses were under water, and they had no insurance. They were the backbone of New Orleans. It's cool to say, 'Come on back,' but come on back to what? It's been a year and the Ninth Ward and other affected areas still look the same [as right after the hurricane]." —GM
A Retail Resurgence

City Stores Remain Closed, But An Influx Of Relief Funds Appears To Spur Sales Spikes By Ed Christman

It may seem inconceivable, but one year after Katrina decimated the area's retail infrastructure, the greater New Orleans market actually enjoys a whopping 25.8% increase in album sales to 2.4 million units in the first eight-and-a-half months this year. The market area designated by Nielsen SoundScan data includes urban-oriented one-stop, which operates one record store under the name Music Center.

Meanwhile, sales will in the city are down nearly 11% from last year's numbers. This is because several key stores have not reopened, including the Virgin Megastore, the Magic Bus and the city's most well-known urban music store, Odyssey Records, although rumors say Odyssey may open next month.

Most stores still standing say they are doing decent business due to the closures.

"We are hiring in there and doing better than expected, but are not where we were before the hurricane," says Barty Smith, owner of the Louisiana Music Factory near the French Quarter, which reopened two months after the hurricane. "With a lot less competition, we are getting a bigger piece of the pie." Smith also cites local customer support alongside sales to tourists and relief workers as helping business.

A couple of blocks away, Records took nearly three months to reopen, although business hours were restricted until this year's New Orleans Jazz Festival in April.

"Business is not at pre-Katrina levels, but healthy," Tower executive VP Kevin Cassidy says. "Business is better now than earlier in the year."

Eighteen blocks away from the French Quarter, things aren't going so well for Jim Russell's Rare Records, according to his wife, Den se, who runs the store.

"Sales were initially good due to [relief] workers, but since then have really gone down," Denise Russell says. "My old customers say they are not going to get music yet because they are living in small trailers, which they don't want cluttered."

Five miles from the French Quarter, out by Tulane University, the "Music is probably doing better than ever," due to the closure of stores like Virgin Megastore and Peaches, owner Tim Hummel says.

Touring Biz Readies Return

Venues Once Used For Refugees Ready To Rock By Ray Waddell

A year after Katrina, the Gulf region is ready for live music and promoters are figuring out how to pull it off.

"From a facilities standpoint, from a market standpoint, I think we all have to be present in our concentration on the market but also patient in how we pursue it," says Bob Roux, president of the South region for Live Nation, which promotes and books shows for the area. But as optimistic as Roux is, he says that all concerned need to be careful of saturating the market.

"My gut says to waist in with weekend shows to start, allowing the best opportunity for a regional draw in order to potentially capture the largest audience possible," Roux says. "Then as roads and towns begin to give this region the best opportunity to develop, we will need some cooperation on grants and corresponding ticket prices, days of the week [for shows] and traffic management.

"I would like to see the industry band together a bit more," he says, "and give these people some real quality entertainment at fair prices."

That might already be happening. The New Orleans Arena opened in March with a $6,000-ticket Placido Domingo show; months later, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill brought out "the largest crowd ever in the history of the New Orleans Arena, 17,400 people," says Don Fox, president of Beaver Productions, New Orleans' pre-eminent promoter for more than three decades. "Tim and Faith gave all the money to the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast who were affected by Katrina," Fox says, "which was a very, very admirable thing." Sold-out Kenny Chesney and Frankie Beverly & Maze shows followed soon after, and more dates are booked for the fall.

The Louisiana Superdome, in many ways the chaotic focal point of Katrina's wrath, is next. It reopens Sept. 25 with a "Monday Night Football" matchup between the New Orleans Saints and the Atlanta Falcons.

Doug Thornton, regional VP for SMG, the Philadelphia-based venue-management firm that runs the Superdome and the New Orleans Arena, says about 225,000 people are now living in New Orleans, they're working and "the jobs are paying higher wages, 20%-25% higher in a lot of cases."

"There's this image that the entire region is wiped out, but that's not the way it is. It's just a small pocket of the city that's wiped out," says Thornton, the Superdome owner, who famously held down the fort at the Superdome when it was ravaged by Katrina and thousands of people. "The entire region is thriving, and I've been telling promoters and agents that."

Down the road, Lynnd Skynard and 3 Doors Down reopened in the ravaged Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi, Miss., on July 22. The 10,000-seat show sold out in a week, and the event rang up $23 a head in concessions and merch sales, a building record by far. Matthew McDonnell, assistant GM at the coliseum, says that insurance checks and federal grant money have put plenty of jingle in the locals' pockets.

"Grant money from federal government through the state of Mississippi is now being awarded," McDonnell explains, and insurance checks are coming in. "So all this money is starting to accumulate because people have been put on hold trying to rebuild, waiting on [Federal Emergency Management Agency] regulations. They're waiting on contractors and materials. So with all this surplus of money, they've had their hands on before, to go out and spend $200-$300 on a night of entertainment they're still able to fit into their budget."

Back in New Orleans, Fox would like to sell tickets, but he needs all the venues in line and the agents on board. Since Katrina, McGraw and Hill's Soul2Soul II shows have been sold out, but he's promoting with Beaver. "We've got to get bands to come back here," he says. "For a while, we couldn't do anything because the big shows are booked three, four, five, six months out."

Still, he's got Alan Jackson scheduled for the arena in November and is confident the market will return. Fox vowed, "I've been here for 37 years bringing in shows, I am not going to turn my back on New Orleans. This town has been great for me, the music fans have been great, I'm going to stay here and do the best I can to bring it back."
CRAIG KALLMAN AND JULIE GREENWALD RETURN ATLANTIC RECORDS TO CHART DOMINANCE

BY BRIAN GARRITY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEN MISSBRENNER
ATLANTIC
REBORN
JUST WEEKS AGO, industry tastemakers filed into a small New York club, clamoring to catch a glimpse of up-and-coming singer/songwriter Paulo Nutini. As Nutini hid backstage, waiting for the green light to start performing, Warner Music Group (WMG) chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr., sporting jeans and a button-down shirt, took a seat close to the stage. Atlantic Music Group president Julie Greenwald grabbed her partner, Atlantic chairman/CEO Craig Kallman, by the arm. “We have a full house,” she said. “What do you say we introduce Paulo now?” Kallman smiled: “Let’s do it.”

Kallman and Greenwald have developed into a formidable team during the course of their two-year working relationship. During that time Atlantic has delivered a diverse mix of hits, including T.J. James Blunt, Gnarls Barkley, Panic! at the Disco, Rob Thomas, Staind and Death Cab for Cutie (both hope Nutini will bring the same success in 2007). In the process, the label has increased its current market share by more than 14% since the beginning of 2004. And year to date, Atlantic ranks as the No. 3 label in the industry with more than 5.9% in market share—trailing only Island Def Jam (IDJ) and sister label Warner Bros. Records.

“The label, which critics worried two years ago cut too deep into its A&R capabilities, is on track to break six new artists this year at least beyond gold certification status, including alternative acts Panic! at the Disco and Gnarls Barkley,” says Greenwald.

The other four artists—Yung Joc, Cassie, Young Dro and Cassie—come from the urban side of the business, the source of some of Kallman and Greenwald’s biggest wins.

“There was a real acknowledgement that we had a lot of roster rebuilding to do,” Kallman says. “We were highly encouraged to go out and aggressively build this roster and purge it and refresh it for the future. It wasn’t about wildly throwing money around. We’ve been fortunate to make some good decisions creatively.”

Atlantic’s turnaround of its previously moribund R&B and hip-hop business is particularly notable. Resuscitating urban music at the label has been a top priority of WMG recorded music boss Lyor Cohen, since his arrival from Universal Music Group’s (UMG) IDJ at the end of 2003.

Now two years into a five-year restructuring and transformation effort, the label is showing signs of delivering on that key mandate.

Riding high on hits from a roster that also includes Sean Paul and Paul Wall, the label’s urban market share is outpacing the old Atlantic and Elektra combined. Its R&B share jumped to 8.37% in 2005 from 7.68% combined two years ago; meanwhile its overall rap share increased to 11% during the same period, up from a pre-merger claimed share of 10%.

“One of our proudest achievements is that we have more market share as a company with half the size, half the roster, half the people and half the release schedule than the combined Atlantic and Elektra when they were in existence a couple of years ago,” Kallman says.

“There is plenty at stake in proving that one company is better than two: The overhaul of Atlantic, both as an urban label as well as a rock and pop label, is the biggest in the record company’s storied six-decade history. It also is the most ambitious piece of the Bronfman-led $2.6 billion buyout of WMG.”

“Restoring health to the combined Atlantic and Elektra was essential,” Cohen says. “Warner Bros. has been doing a fantastic job for years, but it was too much of a burden for them to continue carrying the East Coast organization.”

WMG merged Atlantic and Elektra Records in April 2004 to create a sleeker label that generates about $400 million in annual revenue, according to company sources.

Part of Atlantic’s resurgence: urban artists SEAN PAUL, top, and YUNG JOC.

As part of the merger, the combined operations of the newly christened Atlantic Records were halved from slightly more than 400 staffers to just over 200. The company also trimmed its artist roster by 41% to 90 acts, down from a pre-merger level of 153, Atlantic says.

While analysts fretted over the impact on A&R, Cohen used the integration, along with subsequent smaller restructuring moves, as an opportunity to refashion the new Atlantic in his own image. Cohen brought with him from IDJ his chief lieutenant, Greenwald, as well as IDJ exec Kevin Liles, who came in at the WMG corporate level and also assists Atlantic as part of his duties. About 50% of the staff comes from Atlantic, 35% from Elektra and the remainder are new hires.

Kallman and Greenwald are now a year into their run as a label-topping tandem, following the August 2005 coterie of Jason Flom as co-chairman/CEO of Atlantic Records Group. (Flom’s Lava Records was subsequently folded into Atlantic.)

In leaving Atlantic in the hands of Kallman and Greenwald, Cohen entrusted a complementary pair of executives more in line with him philosophically, especially when it comes to urban music.

Kallman, a veteran Atlantic, A&R specialist who formerly served as co-chairman/COO of the label, made a name for himself working with such acts as Aaliyah, Timbaland, Missy Elliott, Brandy and Junior M.A.F.I.A. Meanwhile, Greenwald, a marketing guru and longtime Cohen ally who joined Atlantic as president in April 2004, built her reputation working with such artists as LL Cool J, Jay-Z, DMX and Ashanti at IDJ.

“Craig has the hard job,” Greenwald says. “He’s A&R. This is an A&R driven company. Craig finds the talent. He’s the mad scientist in the studio with the artists. He works 24/7.”

Greenwald, on the other hand, heads marketing and promotion for the company. With such delineated duties and talents, Kallman and Greenwald say they can work as a team, rather than as competitors.

Kallman says the company is just starting to hit its stride now that it has more than a full year of operation as an integrated unit under its belt.

Since August 2005 the company’s overall R&B share has grown to 11.7% year-to-date from 7.2% the same time a year ago. During the same period Atlantic’s overall rap share has risen to 15.6% from 8.6%.

The company also is benefiting from a string of successful joint-venture and pressing/distribution deals with the likes of Sean “Diddy” Combs’ Bad Boy and T.I.’s Grand Hustle, which has a stable of acts that includes P5C, Young Dro and Rashad.

The company has benefited from upstream deals with Asylum, a WMG incubator label that has fed Atlantic acts from camps like Swishahouse, home to Paul Wall and Mike Jones.

“Partner” is a favored word with Kallman and Greenwald.

“We’re in a building phase,” Greenwald says. “We didn’t have any big boys. We didn’t have any huge quadruple-platinum artists. . . . We needed some new entrepreneurs to help us out like Grand Hustle and Bad Boy.”

Kallman adds that the label has consciously tried to make itself a haven for entrepreneurial label operators by giving them much of the control in the creative process and brand development for their acts.

In a case of fortuitous timing, Warner acquired a 50% stake in Bad Boy in April for an estimated $30 million and assigned Atlantic to handle distribution. A year later, Bad Boy—which many had given up on after a tepid showing at UMG—appeared poised for a comeback with the newly minted Bad Boy Latino (home to Christian Daniels), Bad Boy South (home to Yung Joc, Boye N Da Hood) and a slate of acts that includes emerging pop/R&B star Cassie.

Yung Joc’s debut album, “New Joc City,” bowed at No. 1 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart and has shifted 606,000 copies since its June debut. Cassie’s self-titled set has sold 141,000 units since dropping Aug. 8 via NextSelection/Bad Boy/Atlantic; it entered The Billboard 200 at No. 4. First single “Me & U,” a leading contender for song of the summer, has sold 67,000 copies.

In addition to bringing its own talent infusion, the Bad Boy deal was instrumental for Atlantic because the company opted to create a second 12-person urban-focused promotions staff called “Special Ops” to accommodate the Bad Boy roster as well as artists that Atlantic was upstreaming from Asylum. The Special Ops team works in conjunction with Atlantic’s own 17-person promotions staff.

The fact that much of Atlantic’s urban transfer-

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Two years after the consolidation of Atlantic and Elektra Records, the "new" Atlantic is posting market share that approaches—or in the case of R&B and rap, outpaces—the combined performance of the pre-merger companies. Almost two-thirds of the current roster is new signings; only a quarter of Atlantic’s previous roster (25 acts) and a fifth of Elektra’s roster (10 acts) are still on the label.
mation smacks of the playbook that Cohen, Greenwald and Liles used at IDJ is not lost on the industry. Many use IDJ as shorthand to describe the new Atlantic culture.

Greenwald calls such designations inaccurate. "I’m definitely a student of the lycro Cohen school of thought. But there’s a new spin here," she says.

Unlike at IDJ, central to Atlantic strategy has been to more carefully manage its release schedule, across all genres, focusing on fewer releases and maximizing those efforts. Atlantic has slashed its release schedule by 41% during the last two years and is expected to put out 30 albums by the end of 2006—down from 51 releases in 2004.

"One of the mission statements has been ‘We want to be the company with the highest batting average of releases to successes," Kallman says.

Atlantic is also using a longer lead time to set up its albums—a change of pace for Greenwald. She says she now spends six to nine months planning marketing, strategy, special events and licensing for a new release instead of three. This bigger window allows her to more deliberately set up artists in the market, including digital partnerships for ringtones and other online producers. In connection with its restructuring, Atlantic has added staffers in areas like digital sales, mobile marketing and new-media strategy.

Longer planning is also providing greater opportunities to do more organic builds for albums. Block Entertainment and Bad Boy had Yung Joc on a granular tour of small Southern cities in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee in March to start building a foundation for his latest album.

Similarly, planning on T.I.’s “King,” which has sold 1.4 million units since its release in March, dates back to September 2005 and included eight weeks of touring small clubs around the country and one of the most ambitious digital product rollouts ever, consisting of more than 200 SKUs. According to the plan that execs sketched out almost a year ago, Atlantic is now in the process of dropping the album’s third single.

The breakout success of “King”—one of the top hip-hop releases of the year—marks the culmination of a three-year artist development story for T.I. Kallman signed him in 2003, released “Trap Muzik” (which has scanned 1 million copies), then “Urban Legend” in 2004, which has sold 1.3 million. The T.I. blueprint for success encapsulates much of the Atlantic urban transformation story.

Now comes the hard part: to consistently deliver hot records. "All the directional results are pointing the right way," Cohen says. "But we’re a long way from being the organization that we would like to see.”

The label has big plans for its fourth-quarter releases, which include albums from Lupe Fiasco, Diddy and reggaeton artist Tego Calderon. "Some karma is coming our way now," Kallman says. "Everything we’ve been working so hard on for so long is starting to feel good.”

ROCK STEADY
Marketing Strategies That Transcend Urban Hits

The formula for Atlantic Records’ success works for more than just urban music. The label uses many of the same key strategies—fewer releases, methodical setups and an emphasis on digital offerings, joint ventures, and pressing and distribution deals—to develop hits in rock and pop.

“They’ve become a much more marketing-driven company,” says Michael Lippman, manager for Rob Thomas.

Atlantic’s rock business has been mixed during the last two years, in comparison to the combined numbers of the old Atlantic and Elektra, the new Atlantic's hard-rock and alternative genre share is down noticeably. The company posted a combined hard rock share of 16.9% in 2003 versus 9.5% in 2005. Similarly, an alternative business that totaled slightly more than 10% on a combined basis in 2003 claimed a 6.67% share last year.

But with a roster that includes platinum-selling acts like Thomas, James Blunt, and Panic! At the Disco, Atlantic execs stress that the label's rock and pop business is changing, too. Year-to-date the company claims an alternative market share of 12%, a level that rivals the combined numbers for Atlantic and Elektra from 2000.

AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS:

■ James Blunt’s “Back to Bedlam” is the third-highest-selling artist of 2006 with 2.1 million units sold in the United States. The album has also moved more than 10 million copies worldwide since 2004. Atlantic released it in Blunt’s native United Kingdom a full year before his October 2005 debut stateside. In North America, the company used an Internet campaign that started with months of seeding music and info on tastemaker blogs, bulletin boards and music-community Web sites to build an audience for the album. Blunt also received early championing from digital services including AOL Music, Yahoo, MySpace and iTunes.

■ Rob Thomas’ “... Something to Be” is approaching 3 million in worldwide sales and spent 56 weeks on The Billboard 200. In the United States, the album has sold 1.4 million units.

■ Death Cab for Cutie’s major-label debut, “Plans,” is approaching 700,000 sales in the States. Atlantic also backed the band’s creation of the “Directions” DVD, an anthology of 12 short films inspired by each song, interpreted by 12 different directors.

■ Upstreaming from the incubator system has delivered hits from Gnarls Barkley (Downtown Records) and Panic! at the Disco (Fueled by Ramen/Decadence). Gnarls Barkley’s “Sleepers” has sold 777,000 units on the back of the hit “Crazy.” The song has sold 1 million downloads and recently made history for being on the most airplay charts in a single week, scoring major play on eight radio formats including top 40, triple-A, adult top 40, modern rock, R&B/hip-hop and dance. Panic! at the Disco has sold 11 million units, while the album’s first single, “I Write Sins Not Tragedies,” has sold 791,000 downloads. The band was also nominated for seven MTV Video Music Awards including video of the year.

■ Atlantic’s rock and pop digital album sales are outperforming the industry at slightly more than 5% of total sales. Death Cab for Cutie’s digital sales have been near the 12% mark, Panic! At the Disco is at 11%, James Blunt is at 8% and Rob Thomas is at 7%.

—Brian Garrity
UHHH....WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SEE A 2ND FORM OF I.D.

THERE IS NO WAY BOTH OF YOU COULD BE TURNING 25.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO BOTH OF YOU FROM YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AT MUSICWORLD ENTERTAINMENT.
MTV, AT 25, FOCUSES ON THE PROMISE OF THE DIGITAL FUTURE

ILLUSTRATION BY McFAUL

SEPTMBER 2, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 35
When MTV: Music Television debuted on Aug. 1, 1981, many media experts felt it was doomed from the start. It was an experimental format trying to get established on an experimental platform—cable TV. But the idea of a 24-hour music video channel would never have worked on traditional broadcast TV at the time. Only in the niche environment of cable could such an idea take root. And, boy, did it ever. MTV programming is now found in some 442 million households in 167 territories worldwide, including 88 million households in the United States, according to MTV Networks. One of its most popular programming events, the MTV Video Music Awards, is set for Aug. 31 in New York. On the way to becoming an omnipresent youth brand, MTV exemplified the promise of cable TV. "I want my MTV," became not only a call to action for cable operators, but a cultural catchphrase. Along with HBO and a handful of other early cable visionaries, MTV helped legitimize the then-questionable model of pay TV and proved the axiom that has become the rallying cry for all new delivery platforms since: Content is king.

Today, 25 years after it aired its first music video ("Video Killed the Radio Star" by the Buggles), MTV finds itself in a much different business environment. No longer the upstart challenger to the big media status quo, it is itself a media giant targeted by newer challengers in the digital age. Internet destinations like MySpace, YouTube and even Yahoo are vying for a piece of MTV's once-defining content—music videos—as well as competing to be the next purveyor of cool, youth-driven pop culture upon which MTV built its empire.

For MTV president Christina Norman, who took the helm of the organization in May, the challenge of navigating the behemoth that MTV has become through the rapidly changing market is no easy task.

MTV must make the transition to the Internet and mobile space while competing against content providers built from the ground up for these same platforms.

Like the other mature media giants, MTV's greatest challenge is to determine exactly what it wants to be in this new media era.

"That's true not just for us, but for everyone," Norman says. "All the media companies now are having discussions about things that never would have been fathomed two, three years ago. I think we're finally moving beyond the phase where everyone was afraid to move because they were afraid of making the wrong move, and instead they're just trying things to see what happens."

Just as MTV expanded its programming beyond videos into reality TV, news and other niche markets, it also has been active in establishing a presence on new digital platforms.

MTV.com went live in October 1995, offering the traditional MTV mix of music news, photos and video along with other pop culture information and content.

Then came MTV Overdrive, a broadband Internet video-on-demand service that more closely matches the company's on-air presence with more robust video capabilities. Since it launched in April 2005, Overdrive has become its flagship online destination, with more than 1.5 million video streams per day. According to Norman, the biggest challenge is determining how to organize all this content into an easily searchable site.

With the 2005 Video Music Awards, MTV began experimenting with what Norman calls an "extended viewing experience" that she is now applying to other MTV shows. During the VMAs, Overdrive viewers were able to watch behind-the-scenes footage during commercial breaks and otherwise interact more broadly with the event.

Norman says the trial was a huge success, so much so that MTV is applying the same experience to such shows as "TRL.

For the 2006 VMAs, MTV is holding a contest that will give winners the chance to film their experiences at the awards show, which Overdrive will air as well.

This strategy of using the Internet to give viewers more access to their content extends to MTV's university feed, mtvU, with its Internet counterpart, mtvU Uber. Norman says she may consider airing other MTV niche programming over the Internet well, such as MTV World.

Wireless is a particularly important medium for MTV. When ringtones began their upward arc, MTV got in on the game through a partnership with the teen-focused Virgin Mobile, offering exclusive ringtones unavailable to other carriers. It even commissioned hip-hop producer Timbaland to produce a suite of original ringtones.

The company continues its mobile presence beyond music, striking deals to bring original short-form programming—such as animation and live-action video—to mobile phones.

The mobile strategy has expanded with Flux, a mobile content service that takes different forms in different countries. In the United States, Flux is MTV's direct-to-consumer mobile content storefront, selling ringtones, graphics and so on. In Asia, Flux is a mobile content service that features original animated clips, videos and other services. In Europe, it is a TV channel that contains user-generated videos and messages, much of it captured with multimedia mobile phones.

MTV is exploring digital downloads with the test launch of Urge, a subscription music service that is deeply integrated into the next version of Microsoft's Windows Media Player. Just as the Urge faces dominant competition from iTunes, MTV was initially outflanked in the social networking boom when its parent company Viacom in 2005 lost out on the bidding for MySpace to News Corp. Since the acquisition, MySpace's usage has quadrupled, and only...
SO DON'T STOP GET IT, GET IT UNTIL YOUR CHEDDAR'S HEAVY AND WATCH ME AS I NAVIGATE HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

CONGRATULATIONS ON 25 YEARS!
YOU KEEP GOING AND GOING AND GOING...

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT VIRGIN RECORDS

www.americanradiohistory.com
MTV president CHRISTINA NORMAN is navigating the brand through a rapidly changing marketplace.

Whatever we have to do must add value to the audience.
—CHRISTINA NORMAN

The model, she says, remains largely the same regardless of platform.

"You start with an idea, you develop it, produce it, test it, nurture it, identify who you're making it for, ID the best person to make it and so on," she continues. "We're looking at this for all platforms. Whether it's finding something amazing we want to highlight on Overdrive or some long-form idea that should be on MTV2. We try to bring that same discipline to all our platforms and let the creative expression and freedom run as they should."

With more than five cable TV channels, four Internet destinations, various mobile initiatives, movies and so on, one would think the MTV brand could get diluted—a casualty of the multidimensional world in which we now live. But just as it was in the beginning, when MTV had only one cable channel to call home, content still rules. As long as MTV sticks to its original mission in choosing what content to deliver, Norman says, the brand will only grow.

"Everything at MTV is rooted in the same sensibility—celebrating music, celebrating young people and connecting all those things together," she says. "We're fortunate to have leadership on all those platforms that embrace that mission. It's about surrounding yourself with the right people with the passion for the audience, the platforms and the music. It's such a great time of change in this industry, and to have a front row seat is exciting."

MTV dives into comic waters by airing the wacky British sitcom "The Young Ones," which depicts the lives of four very different college roommates in North London. The program's success presages MTV's support of comedic talents that include Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, Ben Stiller, Jon Stewart and Bill Bellamy. MTV airs 17 hours of the Live Aid concert from Philadelphia and London and becomes the first TV network to run spots promoting safe sex.
Congratulations on refreshing youth for 25 years
B I L L B O A R D  Q & A

MTV’S VAN TOFFLER ON BUILDING THE PERFECT DIGITAL BEAST

FEEDING THE URGE

BY TAMARA CONNIF

In recent years, the music world has transformed itself. MTV, as one of the strongest brands in the space, has actively embraced new outlets for music—from digital platforms to music-driven films. Van Toffler, president of MTV Networks Music, Logo and Films Group, has been at the forefront of these changes. He continues to oversee the strategy and long-term planning for MTV Networks’ Music Group, which includes the MTV, VH1 and CMT music brands; Logo, MTVN’s channel for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender audience; and MTV Films, the feature film division he helped establish in 1995.

Earlier this year, he helped launch Urge, the company’s new digital music service. Toffler has embraced emerging platforms including wireless, broadband, video on demand, digital and high-definition TV. Welcome to the future of MTV.

What was the vision behind Urge?
The notion behind Urge was to create an immersive, editorially and creatively rich experience around music and for music fanatics. We wanted to bring some of the texture of music back, and I think we achieved a lot of that with the beta of Urge, and it’s just going to improve.

What you have [seen in the market to date] are technology companies who have launched digital music services. Typically, when you come to these, you know what you want to buy, you buy it and leave. Our notion is really about buying and listening and sharing and really spending [time] on the site. Then you can pass through the rest of our ecosystems.

It’s really a rich, rewarding experience for fans. We are a few weeks in and it’s broader than any of our particular brands, CMT, VH1 or MTV. It goes from children’s music to classical and jazz, to current pop and hip-hop. It’s really exciting to launch a new brand that just focuses on music.

Where do you see Urge in the next couple of years?
Well, it’s just going to be portable on wireless devices or new portable devices. I think it’s going to drive community and allow sharing. The promise with subscription is that you can get all you want.

What we’ve found is when people look at their iPod they keep changing song after song. It needs to be curated in a clever way, whether it’s by the best bloggers of each genre or your friends. The music fans are rejecting the way music is projected to them. That is the promise of the Internet—you can get what you want how you want.

WHAT IS YOUR MOBILE STRATEGY?
At this point MTV Networks is the largest content provider for mobile devices around the world in terms of media companies. We’ve got deals that go over 60 carriers. We are streaming, from music to original bits, to show clips, to original clips relating to some of the franchises.

I am really anxiously pursuing original series, taking original long form broken up episodically for wireless devices. We see how young people are embracing these technologies in places like Korea where they are watching soap operas on their phones. We know this will happen in the United States, so we are putting a lot of resources into original development for wireless devices.

Given all your TV channels, how do you make decisions about what you are going to repurpose?
I think a lot of those judgments are made by the programmers around what’s popular and where they think they can abstract content that will lend itself to the three-minute bits.

Beyond that, we look at development and original ideas the same way as we do for television. It’s the same development process and pilot process in greenlighting. We restructured our staff to not just be TV development, but to be more of a content development for multiplatforms.

What do you see in the future?
In terms of music, you have to empower the people again. There are all these great new technologies that allow social networking. Whether it is just text or other community connections that allow for customization and personalization catered to your music, video, TV or film taste. I think it will be a much more customized experience.

However, TV is not going away. People like that communal experience of watching something together, particularly live. They also like the notion of I can get what I want, when I want, and how I want it, and it will be simple and fast.

—Editorial assistance by Rachel Survit.

1986
“Dial MTV,” the first viewer request show, debuts. “Downtown” Julie Brown joins the VJ ranks. MTV airs the anti-drug “Just Say No” spots created by the Department of Health and Human Services. By year’s end, the channel initiates its own public service campaign, “Rock Against Drugs,” the first of many efforts to engage viewers with social programming.

1987
A year of firsts: “Week in Rock” chronicles the latest in music, fashion and pop culture, and marks the genesis of MTV News. Colin Quinn hosts pop trivia show “Remote Control.” Adam Sandler makes frequent appearances. MTV Europe becomes the continent’s first 24-hour music video channel. MTV also becomes the first network to broadcast AIDS awareness spots from Musicians for Life.

1988
Former Rolling Stone editor Kurt Loder arrives to anchor MTV News. The channel airs its first spots to encourage voter registration. “MTV Internacional” debuts as a weekly, hourlong Spanish-language version of the network hosted by Daisy Fuentes and Eddie Trucco that airs on the Telemundo network. MTV launches its first global promotion for George Michael’s Faith tour via affiliates in Europe, Japan and Australia. “Yo! MTV Raps” debuts.
Notice how it's never referred to as the PAC-MAN GENERATION, the REAGAN GENERATION or the PERSONAL COMPUTER GENERATION.

Happy Anniversary,

You didn't just inspire a generation. You named it.
MTV'S WORLDWIDE WEB
INTERNATIONAL MARKETS OFFER THEIR OWN DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

By Juliana Koranteng

The world's youth, it seems, no longer just want their MTV. They want to personalize it, participate in it and possess it. MTV Networks International, like its counterpart in the United States, broke out of the TV box to become a provider of multiplatform digital content. And instead of just pushing music programming at its international audience, MTVNI is enticing it to become part of the show via mobile phones, computers and TV sets. "We're seeing an incredible transformation caused by digital," says Bill Roedy, president of MTVNI. "From being a TV-centric company, we're becoming a company that produces great content across all platforms. Our 140 digital media properties offer great creative opportunities for partnerships with artists and music companies." Globally, MTVNI's music-focused channels include MTV, VH1, TMF (the Music Factory) and VIVA. MTVNI brands, including such nonmusic-focused channels as Nickelodeon, Paramount Comedy and the interactive Game One, reach 480 million households in 179 territories in 28 languages, according to the company.

"We're launching a plethora of services that are designed to take advantage of new media," MTVNI senior VP of digital media Gideon Bierer says. "It's not just about pushing media, it's also about giving the audience the tools to create their own content in a social environment.

"We have a unique and valuable organization set up, and we're innovating on top of that," he says. "And most of the innovation coming from outside the U.S. is significantly from mobile and broadband PCs."

MTVNI content is available via 63 mobile carriers worldwide. About 20 million subscribers of Europe's high-speed, third-generation mobile phone services can access MTVNI video content, the company states.

Among the group's 96 Web sites, 48 are devoted to the MTV and VH1 music brands, while 17 are targeted for broadband and interactive distribution of original TV programming through the Internet.

In Japan, MTVNI launched Flux in June 2005 as a local subscription-based mobile phone and Web networking service. Flux was among the first MTVNI ventures that did not originate as a TV brand.

Flux invited mobile and Web users to access music and videoclip content and recommend preferences to their digital friends. Flux's dedicated Japanese content includes original produced short music videos for Utada, one of the country's most popular artists.

"In the multimedia world, the user doesn't care whether it is a big or a small screen; it's all just about their moods and their devices," says Tony Ellison, Viacom International Japan senior VP of digital media and Flux GM. "Users can select entertainment in a way they never could before. In Japan, it's about user empowerment."

MTVNI experiments with new ideas in one market and uses the results to determine where it will expand those ventures. Flux (rebranded as MTV Flux) was subsequently launched in Italy and came to the United Kingdom Aug. 1, the 25th anniversary of MTV's debut in the United States.

U.K. subscribers can access MTV Flux via the Web, mobile phones and TV using a digital persona created from a host of onscreen icons or avatars. That persona can create his or her own profile, make friends, write blogs and influence the music video playlists. The MTV Flux character can also select parts of games, animation and music videos to produce its own Flux content.

"Most of the labels are excited about this development, because they see it as another way to promote artists and increase sales," says Angel Gambino, VP of commercial strategy and digital media at MTV Networks U.K. "We're having many discussions with big artists about creating unique content for MTV Flux."

Gambino also sees MTV Flux as a future gateway to other MTV music services, including the TV channels and the music subscription service Urge, which MTV has developed in partnership with Microsoft as a competitor to iTunes.

Another MTVNI brand, TMF, which continued on >>p44

WHO'S WHO
Paul A. DeBenedittis
Executive VP, multiplatform programming, content strategy and scheduling
Links the linear MTV brands to MTV.com. Overdrive, MTV's digital channels and other platforms. Also responsible for strategic scheduling across platforms.

Tony Disanto
Executive VP, series development and animation, MTV head of programming, MTV2
Leads the series development and animation group, creating, developing and producing long-form live action and animated series for MTV and MTV2.

John Shea
Executive VP, Integrated marketing and brand partnerships, MTV Networks Music and Logo Group
Oversees all marketing partnerships and advertiser-driven content tied to programming events and specials of the MTVN Music and Logo Group.

David Gale
Executive VP, MTV Films; executive VP of new media and specialty film content, MTV Networks
Develops, acquires and produces long-form narrative content and branded films for all platforms including online, wireless, theatrical, DVD and video on demand.

1989
Madonna's "Like a Prayer" video premieres on the channel. "MTV Rockumentary" debuts. The Ace Award-winning series from MTV News profiles R.E.M., Aerosmith, Michael Jackson, Madonna, the B-52's, Bruce Springsteen and others. MTV wins its first Peabody Award for "Decade," a documentary that links music to issues of the '80s. "House of Style" debuts with hosts including Cindy Crawford.

1990

1991
Animation shows debut with "Liquid Television," presaging "Beavis and Butt-Head" (1993), "Daria" (1997) and "Celebrity Deathmatch" (1998). Nirvana's video for "Smells Like Teen Spirit" premieres. The channel also premieres call-in show "Rock Line on MTV," while "MTV Unplugged" presents its first acoustic rap show with LL Cool J, MC Lyte, De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest. MTV Europe airs a feed to Russia, making it the first non-Soviet channel to be broadcast 24 hours a day in that country. MTV launches a global on-air AIDS awareness campaign with "Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself."
Congratulations, MTV, for 25 years of taking the world to new places.
started as a Dutch music TV channel, has since developed multiplatform content for the Dutch, Belgian and U.K. markets. TMF viewers use cell phones to send multimedia messages, photos and videos for their favorite videos.

Also in Europe, the pioneering MTV Live service transmits live concerts via the Web, currently in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy and Sweden.

As in the States, MTV Overdrive, another Web-distributed TV service, offers music videos in Germany, Italy and France. In Asia, South Korea is among the most advanced digital markets, with 80% of the population using high-quality broadband services.

Korea’s multiplatform MTV Boombbox presents user-generated content, video channels and on-demand videos that can be downloaded to mobile phones or digital music players. Additionally, it is a music store with 500,000 tracks from major labels and local independents.

Boombbox, launched in July, has already recorded 1.4 million registered users, with the number of paying subscribers growing daily, according to MTVN.

“In Korea, the seamless integration between mobile and online is a daily reality,” MTV Networks Asia Pacific VP/GM Laurent Verrier says. “Mobile-payments systems are very well-developed. And piracy is at an acceptable level.”

By contrast, digital penetration is relatively low in Latin America, notes Luis Goicouria, VP of digital media at MTV Networks Latin America. Of the region’s 560 million citizens, only about 60 million are online and some 200 million have mostly basic second-generation mobile phones, he says.

However, he argues, that means service providers can go straight to investing in the most advanced infrastructures. This underpins the recent launch of La Zona, a virtual community Web site dedicated to unsigned artists and fans, and the only Spanish-language service of its kind.

“We wanted to build a community of underserved musicians because there was something that existed that was dedicated to Latin American acts,” Goicouria adds. “We felt that was something for us to go after.”

Bands from Argentina to Venezuela upload their recordings to the site AdiosGarage.com. From there, MTVN selects five finalists and invites La Zona users to pick the winner. The prize is the chance to perform at the MTV Alerta Live event. One winner, a Colombian punk band called Al D-Tal, plans to release a 12-track album in December.

International digital initiatives include MTV Flux UK (top), mobile animated music videos seeking Japan’s Utada (above) and MTV Boombbox for broadband users in Korea (below).

Goicouria says the quality of the recordings by several of the 20,000-plus bands registered on La Zona is high enough for a potential MTV-branded CD compilation by year’s end. His team hopes to encourage major Latin-American artists to consider AdiosGarage victors as openings acts on international tours.

Looking forward, MTVN! might be going full circle to its TV-programming roots but with mobile technology. Like MTV in the United States, the international company sees mobile TV broadcasting on cell phone devices as a potential way to get its music TV channels onto cable and satellite TV homes.

MTVN! already operates 20 mobile TV broadcast channels in 19 markets, six of which have MTV music channels. A few more are launching in the Asia-Pacific region by the end of the year.

MTVN! is even going directly to cell phone subscribers by launching its own wireless carriers. In Belgium and Germany, MTVN! is a mobile virtual network operator respectively called TFM and VIVA, taking their brand names from the local music video channels.

“We’ve evolved organically over the past 25 years,” Bierer says. “The brand’s guardians in each country have taken its history and made that relevant locally. But in many markets, our business has been limited to cable and satellite homes. Now, we’re finding new ways into more homes.”

“MTV Unplugged” airs with Eric Clapton and the subsequent CD wins the album of the year Grammy Award and earns platinum certification for sales of 10 million units. Reality show “The Real World” marks its first season. The MTV Movie Awards debut. MTV becomes a political player as it launches the “Choose or Lose” campaign, encouraging viewers to get politically involved during the presidential campaign year. Candidate Bill Clinton speaks with viewers during a town hall session. Kurt Loder interviews candidate Ross Perot, and MTV News host Tabitha Soren interviews President George H.W. Bush. Soren, who later wins a Peabody Award for her coverage of the election, engages in a testy discussion with Bush on a whistle-stop train tour throughout Wisconsin.

1993

President Bill Clinton shows up at the “MTV Rock’n’Roll Inaugural Ball.” MTV begins a yearlong campaign against intolerance titled “Free Your Mind,” prompted in part by the Los Angeles race riots. The campaign debuts with “Straight From the Hood,” a 30-minute show that delves into the riots in South Central. L.A. MTV Latin America starts a 24-hour Spanish-language network, with three regional feeds. Debuts: “Beavis and Butt-Head,” “MTV Beach House,” “The Jon Stewart Show.”

1994

The third season of “The Real World” features an openly gay cast member, Pedro Zamora, publicly coping with HIV. Soon after the season ends, Zamora succumbs to the disease. Fans turn to MTV as they mourn the death of Kurt Cobain. Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley lock lips at the MTV Music Video Awards. Led Zeppelin’s Jimmy Page and Robert Plant reunite for “Unledded,” while “The Eagles: Hell Freezes Over” reunites band members Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Don Felder, Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit. Tom Jones hosts the inaugural MTV European Music Awards live from the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

continued on >>p48
MTV’S ‘JUICE’

SHAPING LIFESTYLES AND ATTITUDES AROUND THE WORLD

By Michael Paolletta

On a recent sweltering summer day on the 70th-floor outdoor observation deck at New York’s Rockefeller Center, MTV staged a press conference to announce nominees and performers for the 2006 MTV Video Music Awards. The show takes place Aug. 31 at nearby Radio City Music Hall.

MTV president Christina Norman hosted the press event, but all the starry-eyed attendees had their sights set squarely on the guest artists: Beyoncé, T.I. and Justin Timberlake. Looking over his shoulder at Norman, Timberlake smirked and said, “MTV was born in 1981.” The same year Timberlake was born. “Coincidence?” he asked with a chuckle. “I think not.” Timberlake was having fun, playing in the brand that is MTV. Beyoncé and T.I. were also having a good time. And for good reason: Each artist has personally experienced the power that MTV wields.

In its 25 years, MTV has become a pervasive cultural influence around the world. Its reach extends way beyond music to the worlds of fashion, sports, politics and sexuality.

This is not lost on Timberlake, who could have easily declined the invitation to partake in the press conference. Instead, there he was with the others, sweating profusely in the name of MTV.

“MTV is A-list,” says Reverend Run, whose MTV show “Run’s House” was recently greenlit for a third season. “If they call Madonna, she’s there. If they call the president [of the United States], he’s there. MTV has juice—still.”

By keeping an open mind and its ear to the ground, MTV deftly taps into pop culture. For actor-turned-singer Nick Cannon, MTV is synonymous with the word “cool.”

“MTV is the voice of today’s youth,” says Cannon, whose MTV show “Wild ‘N Out” commenced its second season Aug. 10. “The network keeps coming up with new ideas and new ways to deliver content. They do their research and then run with it.”

Fashion designers do their research, too. John Varvatos says that his recently launched Converse collections were “influenced by music and whole aspects of MTV and pop culture. It offers stimuli and energizes me for my collections.”

MTV has become the moniker of a generation (or two). In 2006, there are many lifestyle brands for today’s generation to choose from. But in 1981, there was no MySpace or YouTube, and clothing company Billabong was in its infancy. MTV is the first lifestyle brand that people latched onto as such, says Phil Quartararo, executive VP, EMI Music North America.

“In our industry, people are not brand loyal,” Quartararo says. “No one ever bought a song because it was on Capitol Records or because it was published by BMG [Music Publishing]. People buy songs because of emotion and passion. MTV is one of a few music brands that has been able to break through and become an identifiable brand in music.”

Madonna concurs, but digs a little deeper. MTV “opened a window for all of us to see as well as hear and learn about the music and culture of a new generation—and has continued to do so for 25 years,” she says. “Their voice speaks volumes to millions. I’d like to think we had a big influence on each other while we were both growing up. MTV’s imprint, influence and impact in music, politics, fashion and lifestyle are immeasurable.”

In January 1993, President Bill Clinton was quoted as saying, “MTV had a lot to do with the Clinton-Gore victory.”

Since going on the air Aug. 1, 1981, MTV has educated and empowered young people with programming that has addressed some of the most pressing issues facing its audience.

In 1985, according to MTV, it was the first TV network to broadcast public service announcements to encourage safe sex to help combat the spread of AIDS.

Its long involvement in AIDS awareness has included airing AIDS spots from Musicians for Life (1987); the “Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself” campaign (1991); a collaboration with the Kaiser Family Foundation to air PSAs on sexually transmitted diseases, testing and protection (1997); and the global “Staying Alive” campaign supported by MTV’s parent corporation, Viacom (1998). In 2001, MTV Networks International, working with Levi’s Jeans and YouthAids, presented two Stayin Alive concerts in Cape Town, South Africa, and Seattle.

Similarly, MTV has created programming to battle intolerance, such as “Free Your Mind,” a yearlong initiative prompted by the Los Angeles race riots of 1993. "Enough Is Enough" (1994) featured panel discussions on the consequences of violence.

The campaign “Fight for Your Rights: Take a Stand Against Violence” (1998) won the channel an Emmy Award. A follow-up drive in 2001 included the premiere of “Anatomy of a Hate Crime,” a documentary on the murder of college student Matthew Shepard. The campaign’s launch weekend included 17 hours during which MTV preempted programming to scroll the names of hate crime victims on the screen. MTV News subsequently created content focusing on gay marriage and other topics concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans.

On the political front, “Choose or Lose” (1992) included a town hall discussion with presidential candidate Bill Clinton.

MTV News correspondent Tahlia Soren that year interviewed President George W. Bush. “Choose or Lose” was revived in 1996 with the Choose or Lose Bus and in 2002 with the Choose or Lose Street Team. With its “20 Million Loud” campaign in 2004, MTV sought to register 20 million new voters for that year’s presidential campaign.

In May 2005, think MTV and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation partnered to form think. Education. This ongoing campaign, which crosses all MTV platforms, informs young people of the need to graduate high school prepared for work, college and citizenship.

Throughout, MTV helps engage and educate people, says Ian Row, VP of strategic partnerships and public affairs. “We let them know that they’re not alone.”

Says actor David Arquette: “MTV understands the younger generation. The youth of America is an audience that keeps changing, and MTV changes right along with it.”

Songwriter Diane Warren believes that it precisely why the MTV brand has resonated for decades. “They keep it fresh and new,” she says. “It’s an iconic brand now.”

Twenty-five years ago, Academy Award-winning film composer Hans Zimmer was a member of new wave group the Buggles, which gave the world the prescient song “Video Killed the Radio Star.” Its video was the first one MTV played.

“I’m an anarchist at heart,” says Zimmer, who licenses MTV to a Jackson Pollock painting. “You can find beauty in this one little corner or that one over there. It’s all very random.”

Zimmer calls MTV “a cultural phenomenon,” a brand that “prepared us for the Internet. MTV radicalized how we could present ourselves.”

Who's Who

NUSRAT DURRANI
Senior VP/GM, MTV World

Responsible for the overall management, strategy and operations of MTV across 180 countries, which includes MTV Asia, MTV China and MTV Asia and its associated digital properties.

SEAN MORAN
Senior VP, ad sales

Oversees advertising sales for all MTV brands across a wide variety of platforms, including MTV, MTV2, mtvU, mtvU.com and MTV Digital.

AMY DOYLE
Senior VP, music and talent

MTV, mtvU and mtvU.com. Leads MTV’s music platform strategy as well as record label and artist relationships.

MICHAEL GRECO
Senior VP, research and planning

Oversee all digital and television research across all MTV platforms.

‘MTV’s impact in music, politics, fashion and lifestyle are immeasurable.’

—Madonna

Stars including, from left, T.I., Beyoncé and Justin Timberlake join MTV president Christina Norman to promote the 2006 MTV Video Music Awards.
One giant step for music video, one humongous leap for pop culture.

Congratulations to MTV for boldly going where no network has gone before.
We look forward to the next frontier.
MTV TELEVISION CHANNELS
MTV operates and programs 51 MTV branded channels worldwide, reaching more than 480 million households in 179 territories/countries, and communicating in 28 different languages. There are also 44 MTV branded online properties worldwide. The following MTV channels are seen in the United States.

MTV
Launched: August 1981
Audience: 88 million U.S. households
The original MTV channel continues to offer music videos, live programming and original series. Its focus embraces rock, pop, dance, hip-hop, fashion, sports, lifestyles and ethnic politics. It is the home of MTV’s best-known programs including the MTV Video Music Awards, the MTV Movie Awards, “TRL” and “The Real World.” Current programs include “Laguna Beach,” “The Hills,” “The Real World: Key West” and “Fresh Meat.”

MTV2
Launched: August 1996
Audience: 60 million households
As MTV’s primary channel developed more original non-music programming, MTV2 has remained focused on music videos and long-form music programming. It has originated such shows as “Wonder Showzen,” “Wildboyz” and “The Andy Milianakis Show.” Current shows include “All That Rocks,” “The Final Fu” and “Where My Dogs At.”

MTV HITS, MTV JAMS
Launched: 1999 (Hits), 2000 (Jams)
Audience: 20 million households (Hits), 14 million households (Jams)
MTV Hits is MTV’s only hits-driven digital music video channel. It airs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, showcasing rock, pop, dance and hip-hop. MTV Jams also is available 24/7 via digital cable and features non-stop videos of R&B, hip-hop and soul artists.

MTVU
Launched: January 2004
Audience: More than 7 million students at more than 750 colleges nationwide
MTVU programming includes exclusive music videos; short-form series featuring popular artists and newsmakers “teaching” class; and student-produced content, as well as news and social awareness activities. The programming is available only through college networks, and is aired in university-owned dorms and common areas.

MTV PUERTO RICO
Launched: August 2004
Audience: 1.1 million households
MTV Puerto Rico, a joint venture with the Puerto Rican broadcaster LIN Television, is broadcast from studios on the island and features Spanish-language rock and pop and local music, along with countdown shows and “MTV Puerto Rico Unplugged.”

MTV TR3S
Launched: Set for fourth-quarter 2006
Audience: Pending
MTV Tr3s will repackage MTV Español and target young Latinos with a fusion of American and Latin music and cultures, showcasing pop, urban and rock music. Tr3s will be delivered via broadcast, cable and satellite.

WHO’S WHO
CAROL ENGT
Senior VP, programming and series development, MTV2
Directs MTV2 programming and series development.
KEVIN MACKALL
Senior VP, on-air promotions
Oversees all on-air promotion for MTV and MTV2.
LISA PRESTON
Senior VP, marketing and advertising
Oversees off-channel campaigns for MTV and develops creative strategy for MTV2 marketing and on-air promotion, including identifying new platforms and target audiences, establishing promotional and agency partnerships and exploring new channel formats and presentations of content.
ROD AISSA
Senior VP of talent and series development
Responsible for relationships with celebrity and music artists for talent-driven programming for MTV and MTV Films and overseeing casting for MTV, MTV2, MTV Tr3s and MTVU.

MTV moves its studio to Times Square and launches “MTV Live,” the daily predecessor to “Total Request Live” (aka “TRL”). Animated sitcom “Daria” debuts as does “Headbanger’s Ball.” Internationally, MTV expands with local programming into the United Kingdom and Ireland, Nordic territories, Italy, Germany and Australia. “Live From the 10 Spot” premieres with the Rolling Stones. Puff Daddy and Sting pay tribute to the Notorious B.I.G., singing “I’ll Be Missing You” on the Video Music Awards.
Happy 25th Birthday MTV

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2006 VMA NOMINEES:
AFI - THE ALL AMERICAN REJECTS - ANGELS & AIRWAVES - ASHLEE SIMPSON
BECK - THE BLACK EYED PEAS - BUSTA RHymes - COMMON - DADDY YANKEE
50 CENT - MARY J BLIGE - NELLY FURTADO - THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS - 12
DIGITAL AND MOBILE PLATFORMS

MTV.COM
Launched: October 1995
MTV.com is the official online destination for MTV. It has a music database featuring artist bios, news, music, Internet radio, photos and more; reports from MTV News covering all things relevant to the MTV audience; and in-depth details on all of MTV's programming, ranging from the Video Music Awards to “Pimp My Ride.” Also included are dedicated links to movies, fashion, gaming, shopping, community features and MTV wireless. In April 2005, MTV added Overdrive as the featured streaming video component of MTV.com.

MTV OVERDRIVE
Launched: April 2005
MTV Overdrive is MTV's broadband network, launched as a adjunct to the MTV.com parent site. Overdrive features streaming video, both on-demand and scheduled, of music videos as well as artist interviews, live music performances, original and newly created short-form programming, MTV News updates, specials produced exclusively for Overdrive, a variety of companion programming to MTV and MTV2's on-air shows such as the Video Music Awards, as well as movie trailers and clips and gaming programs.


Future plans for the site include live programming of simultaneously aired MTV shows such as “TRL,” user-generated content, short-form original programming and full-length shows.

MTVU UBÉR
Launched: October 2005
UBéR is mtvU's broadband channel, streaming 24/7 online for college students off campus. Additional exclusive programming includes “UBéR House Band” featuring exclusive performance footage, video premieres and interviews; “mtvU Exclusive Live Leak,” a look at performances of new material from emerging artists heating up the college music scene; and “Fresh Produce,” which profiles handpicked batches of student-produced programming uploaded to mtvU.com from campuses across the country.

Additionally, mtvU and Cisco Systems have teamed to award 10 college students grants totaling $250,000 to develop broadband programming via its Digital Incubator Program. Winning projects appear on mtvU.Uber.

MTV WIRELESS
Launched: July 2002
The Virgin Mobile USA/MTV Networks partnership, announced in July 2002, concurrent with the launch of Virgin Mobile USA, was MTV’s first mobile-related content deal. The company then launched video programming services with Verizon Wireless in February 2005 with the launch of the VCast mobile video service, and since it has provided additional video programming to Sprint TV, Cingular Video, Amp’d Mobile and the recently launched Hello.

MTV MOBILE ON MTV.COM
Launched: May 2006
The site features ringtones, graphics, games, alerts and video from various celebrities and MTV shows. Internationally, MTV Networks provides original made-for-mobile series, music videos, user-generated content and never-before-seen outtakes from the company's most popular on-air programming. MTV has direct mobile distribution deals with more than 60 carriers around the world, including 21 mobile video channels launched in 13 countries.

MTV MADE HEAR
Launched: February 2005
MTV's original ringtone initiative kicked off with a ringtone "album" created by hip-hop producer Timbaland. Additional short-form programming includes the made-for-mobile "Head and Body," "Sway's Hip-Hop Owner's Manual" and "MTV News Mobile."

FLUX
Launched: June 2005 (Japan)
Flux is MTV's international brand serving different purposes in each market, including Flux Japan, a subscription-based mobile video service, and MTV Flux U.K., a social networking site featuring user-generated content.

URGE
Launched: May 2006 (beta); live launch set for later this year
Urge is the digital music service of MTV Networks, featuring original and exclusive music programming, editorial and music discovery features. The service leverages the music history of MTV, VH1 and CMT. Subscription and la carte options are available.

1998
Anti-violence campaign “Fight for Your Rights: Take a Stand Against Violence” wins an Emmy Award. MTV Europe, with UNAIDS and the World Bank, produces “Staying Alive,” a half-hour documentary hosted by George Michael focusing on the experiences of six young people from six different countries, all affected by HIV and AIDS. “TRL” mania rules. The show hosted by Carson Daly, mixes a live audience with viewer-on-the-street interviews and Web comments. "TRL" fans of the Backstreet Boys overrun Times Square outside the MTV studios during an appearance by the teen-pop superstars.

1999

2000
Britney Spears is a teen queen no longer after a saucy performance of “Oops . . . I Did It Again” on the Video Music Awards. “Jackass” debuts, a weekly comedy show devoted to ridiculous pranks and outrageous stunts performed by stars Johnny Knoxville and Bam Margera. An instant hit, it spins off two more series, “Wildboyz” and “Viva La Bam.” MTV expands in France, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain.
You'll never look at the face of **music** the same way again

PHOTO TAKEN AT MTV 10TH ANNIVERSARY

happy anniversary

from your friends at **hollywood records**

www.americanradiohistory.com
When the annual MTV Video Music Awards touch down Aug. 31 in New York, older viewers who recall the channel’s first awards show in 1984 may not know what hit them. Indeed, this is not your mama’s MTV—or your older sister’s, for that matter. The 2006 edition of the VMAs will be a multiscreen experience carried on all MTV platforms, encompassing TV, wireless, video on demand (VOD) and broadband. In this way, and for the first time in their history, the VMAs will give music fans uncensored access to onstage and backstage activities.

Dave Sirulnick, executive VP of MTV multiplex production, news and music, and executive producer of the VMAs, is particularly excited about this year’s awards show. “With our broadband channel, Overdrive, we’ll be able to bring the viewer even closer to the action,” he says. “A live parallel experience, produced on the back of a TV show, will be created.”

According to Sirulnick, Overdrive will feature all the behind-the-scenes action. So, while the VMAs are airing live on MTV, Overdrive will air “VMA Live: Backstage Uncensored.”

Sirulnick says a sizable portion of the MTV audience keeps its computers on while watching TV. “So, while a band is performing onstage, viewers might see interviews happening in hallways backstage. Or viewers might find themselves in a production truck. It’s the stuff you normally wouldn’t see unless you were working on the show.”

Such a 360-degree approach to the VMAs is new for MTV. But such multiplex programming is not new to MTV overall. During the past 12 months—among MTV, MTV.com, Overdrive, MTV2 and mtvU—the brand has focused on spreading its content across numerous platforms, from the VMAs to reality TV shows like “The Real World.”

Confused? Don’t be. MTV no longer creates content solely for its mothership, the TV channel. When it greenlights shows like “The Hills” and “Laguna Beach,” MTV execs are contemplating ways to repurpose the content on every MTV-branded platform. Throughout, the content must remain engaging and entertaining.

As for those who can’t seem to find the “M” in “MTV,” it’s safe to say that these individuals are not tuning in to the proper platform. Witness recently continued on >pS4

**WHO’S WHO**

**JOSE TILLAN**
Senior VP, music programming and talent strategy, MTV Tr3s and MTV Networks Latin America
Leads MTV Tr3s and MTV Networks Latin America to its creative vision and its global brand image by attracting and retaining talented artists and top executive talent.

**TIM ROSTA**
Senior VP, integrated marketing
Supports and promotes MTV’s creative vision and global brand image by creating marketing and integration opportunities for advertising partners.

**MATT BOSTWICK**
Senior VP, franchise development
Leads efforts to develop next-generation media models for MTVN Music Franchises.

**JOANNA BOMBERG**
VP, music and talent, MTV
Oversees all music and artist bookings across multiple MTV Networks as well as MTV Overdrive and various online platforms.

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2001

Anti-violence campaign “Fight for Your Rights: Take a Stand Against Discrimination” debuts. It includes the film “Anatomy of a Hate Crime,” exploring the 1996 murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard. For 17 hours, MTV pre-empts programming to scroll a list of hate-crime victims. MTV Networks International, in conjunction with Levi’s Jeans and YouthAIDS, launches two Staying Alive concerts focused on HIV/AIDS awareness in Cape Town, South Africa, and Seattle. Performers include Alicia Keys, Missy Elliot and Dave Matthews.

2002

“The Osbournes” debuts and becomes a successful reality series, chronicling the daily life of metal legend Ozzy Osbourne; his wife, Sharon; and two of their children, Kelly and Jack. The show wins a prime-time Emmy Award. MTV Films’ “Jackass: The Movie” grosses in excess of $60 million worldwide. MTV2 launches the $2 Bill concert series with the Strokes. Awards shows debut in Singapore, Romania and Japan. The MTV Video Music Awards Latin America debut in Miami. MTV Live, designed for broadband viewing, debuts in Sweden.

2003

At the Video Music Awards in New York, Madonna sings and smooches with Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, making global headlines. MTV Films’ “Tupac Resurrection” depicts the life and times of the late, legendary rapper told through his own words. The film is nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary, feature. “Newlyweds,” with lovebirds Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, debuts. MTV2 launches “Subterranean” to showcase alternative rock and “Sucker Free Sunday” for hip-hop.
VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR

25 YEARS
AND WE STILL WANT OUR MTV

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ISLAND Def Jam Recordings MUSIC GROUP
launched, exclusive music initiatives spotlighting Christina Aguilera, Paris Hilton, Justin Timberlake and Beyoncé.

A video debut on “TRL” paves the way to additional content (interviews, acoustic performances, archival material) at mtv.com and Overdrive and via VOD and mobile phones.

“Every platform matters to our audience,” MTV/MTV2 senior VP of music and talent Amy Doyle says. “More platforms equal music that is everywhere.” With the additional platforms, “we’re able to extend and enhance music-driven content.”

In addition to exclusive live footage, music videos, music-based reality shows and artist interviews, MTV spotlights music in other ways: theme songs to shows, music messaging during programming and in interstitials.

Bite-sized doses of music are poised to drive viewers to mtv.com where more extensive information about the artists and their music is available.

In their trial-and-error efforts, Doyle and her colleagues have discovered what content works best, and where. Short-form content (90 seconds or less) and hip-hop videos work best for mobile applications, while short-form comedy works well on VOD. Archival and historical material, meanwhile, works better at mtv.com and Overdrive. “People like to dig deeper online,” Doyle says.

But make no mistake: MTV, the TV channel, is what drives viewers and content to the other platforms. “We view the role of the channel differently today,” MTV Networks Music Group president of entertainment Brian Graden says. “Yes, it is entertainment, but it is also a 24/7 way to promote to the other platforms.”

MTV2 GM David Cohn concurs, adding, “The TV channel is the entryway to other platforms. It’s very liberating to go beyond one-hour shows.”

Of course, liberation often presents its own set of challenges. For MTV, this means staying in touch with and locating its viewers “off-channel,” says Tina Exharos, executive VP of marketing and multiplatform creative at MTV, MTV2 and mtvU.

In other words, where does MTV reach potential viewers as well as ardent fans when they’re not tuned in? Enter YouTube.com and other youth-oriented Web sites that MTV needs to contend with: “Ubiquity is what our audience expects,” Exharos says. “Shutting down content on other sites is a slippery slope.”

MTV looks to YouTube to gauge audience interest in bands, artists, music and pop culture. For instance, MTV execs can see which seeded content is being embraced and which is not. Lively activity surrounding a certain band on YouTube could point to an act that MTV needs to further highlight.

MTV execs are confident that such seeding of content doesn’t cannibalize its own brand. In fact, Cohn says, it gets people talking—“buzz is so much of what we do”—and coming back to MTV.

Because today’s society is so well-connected, with access to vast amounts of information, MTV was forced to adapt or die. Which explains why the brand places so much emphasis on the creation of new long- and short-form content.

Ironically, with the birth of broadband and wireless platforms, the content that MTV embraced 25 years ago—short-form—is back in vogue. Exharos says such material is “incredibly valuable again.”

For those who may have forgotten, “Beavis and Butt-Head” began as short-form content that MTV repurposed into 30-minute blocks. Now, though, “the three-minute clip has surged again,” adds Exharos, who credits the uptake to mobile, digital and broadband applications, which put “the user in control.”

Whether they realize it or not, users of mtvU, which broadcasts to 750 colleges nationwide, and its broadband extension (mtvU Über), are closely observed for possible upstreaming opportunities.

Stephen Friedman, GM for mtvU, calls it a crystal ball for acts and songs about to break. In the past couple of years, mtvU has championed such acts as the Killers, Fall Out Boy and Matisyahu. These days, it’s repeating the process with Gym Class Heroes, who have the record for the largest video premiere on mtvU based on streams, according to Friedman.

For the MTV family, mtvU is viewed as a feeder system for other MTV channels. That said, keep your eye on the rise of Gym Class Heroes.

MTV News

MTV News, the around the clock online news service of the MTV Networks, provides a complete daily news and entertainment overview, featuring the latest news and entertainment videos from MTV Networks.

MTV News’ newsroom produces content that is distributed to all MTV Networks channels and online and mobile platforms.

MTV News

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Hip-Hop Protégés Learn The Perils And Pleasure Of Riding Coattails

Crowded into a tight Times Square studio on a spring New York night, T.I. takes the mic and introduces the album by his friend and first Grand Hustle artist Young Dro to a roomful of music critics. Songs carrying the same kind of side-eye hooks that made T.I. platinum spilling from the speakers while Young Dro, dressed in a brightly colored Ralph Lauren V-neck sweater and collared button-up, dances among numerous white T-shirt-clad buddies. Though the music is good, whether Young Dro can stand apart from T.I.’s coattails is still up in the air.

Most rappers have an entourage benefiting from their star power. And often, to their fans’ dismay, the star introduces mediocre music because of it. Sometimes, as with Young Buck from 50 Cent’s G-Unit, the offshoot MCs actually have crafty lyrics and a charismatic personality. But even then, it’s not always easy to market posse members outside a star’s shadow.

Selling any new artist can be a puzzle and adding a multi-platinum distraction to the mix doesn’t always help. Connection with an established artist can get a new artist’s shoe through the door but can also make establishing an individual identity complicated. Too often the star MC’s familiarity can block the spotlight. To combat such upstaging, Grand Hustle Entertainment CEO Jason Geter took a radical step by kicking his other acts off T.I.’s tour bus. Months later, Young Dro’s “Shoulder Lean” sits at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

“If T.I.’s in Chicago [with you], no one’s going to care about you,” Geter says. “But you might be able to go to a smaller mar

ket like Chattanooga, Tenn., by yourself, do some shows and get your shine on.

“We started working the record the first of this year,” Geter continues. “We did it throughout the Southeast region, and now it’s the No. 1 record. But artists have to keep the same mental- ity that we had in the beginning before the private planes took us here and there. You have to drive all around the South to do shows, you’ve got to get back to the basics. Dro worked his record until he’s able to do his own shows now.”

Chaka Obafemi, co-CEO of Ludacris’ Disturbing Tha Peace label, says, “You’ll be hard-pressed to find a new artist to match the sales of the superstar. That only happened to us once with Chingy, but really the talent has to be able to stand on its own because their sales are also based on their own brand.” Disturbing Tha Peace now has four artists, but none has reached Ludacris’ consistent platinum sales marks.

Letting the established star guest on an unfamiliar artist’s debut song can automatically smooth the transition into the spotlight, as with T.I. singing the hook on Young Dro’s “Shoulder Lean.” But on subsequent singles, such cameos might be counterproductive.

Lloyd Banks’ original solo single “My House” for his forthcoming fall album, “Rotten Apple,” was recently replaced with the catcher “Hands Up” featuring 50 Cent, even though Banks had already made a name for himself as a platinum MC with his 2004 debut “Hunger for More.”

“Having 50 on my first single [from every album] is not a necessity for me,” insists Banks, whose “Hands Up” sits at No. 46 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart after four weeks. “I’ve been recording music with 50 since I was 15, and if you work with someone that long, you get the same head for music.”

It pays to remember that being a protégé isn’t always a bad thing. Hip-hop’s biggest contemporary stars were ushered in by established artists of their day. Dr. Dre, who has essentially become hip-hop’s star scout, launched Snoop Dogg’s career on 1992’s “Deep Cover” soundtrack and Eminem’s on 1999’s “The Slim Shady LP.” In turn, Eminem introduced 50 Cent through 2003’s “Get Rich Or Die Tryin’.” And while Eminem’s offshoot project, D12, doesn’t get as much respect, it has reached platinum status with both of its albums, “Devil’s Night” and “D12 World.”

“I don’t think poor sales are based on anything but the market and how much people believe in the artist,” Obafemi says. “Over 800,000 people have a St. Lunatics album, but they know it’s not a Nelly album. Eminem does 10 million, and D12 only does 2 million, [but] 2 million’s still good.”

At the end of the chart week, regardless of who an artist associates with, Nielsen SoundScan numbers are what matter.

“Once an artist goes platinum or almost double-platinum like Banks,” a G-Unit source says, “you have to respect them on their own.”

September 2, 2006
BECK GOES BLANK
Beck's new album, "The Information," will feature blank packaging and one of four sets of sticker sheets designed by artists from the United States and Europe, allowing fans to customize the cover however they wish. The album is due Oct. 3 via Interscope and will include a DVD for each of its 15 songs. The clip for "Cell Phone's Dead" will be directed by French filmmaker Michel Gondry.
—Jonathan Cohen

DARK DAYS
Key members of two superstar U.K. acts, the Darkness frontman Justin Hawkins and Keane vocalist Tom Chaplin, have entered rehab for unspecified drug and alcohol addictions. While confirming the news, the Darkness also refuted rumors it has been dropped by Atlantic and vowed to issue a new album in 2007. Chaplin's condition forced Keane to postpone a North American tour, due to begin Sept. 7 in Chicago.
—Jonathan Cohen

COLD WAR KIDS
Alcohol is destroying a family in one song, and a narrator is trapped in a hospital bed in another. With only two EPs to its name, Southern California foursome Cold War Kids unveils a kind of urban storytelling in its songs that borders on voyeurism. It's as if the band's sparse guitars and trash-can rhythms are creeping through the alleys of every city side street, providing a soundtrack for a thought-to-be-private conversation.
"Things could be much worse," Nathan Willett sings with a hungover drawl in "We Used to Vacation." "We still got our health, my paycheck in the mail."
Cold War Kids released a pair of six-song EPs in March. About half of those songs are available for listening on the act's Web site (coldwarkids.com) and MySpace page. Manager Brett Williams says the two EPs have sold a total of about 3,000 copies, although neither is listed in the Nielsen SoundScan database. Much of those sales have come from the band's tour. Williams notes.
At Sea Level Records in Los Angeles, owner Todd Clifford says the band dropped off only a handful of copies of each EP, but he's eager to get them back in stock. "We had the EPs for about five minutes, and I haven't been able to get them in again," he says. "We may not have sold that many, but I know we can."
Together for about a year-and-a-half, Cold War Kids performed in August at Lollapalooza in Chicago and earlier toured with Tapes 'N Tapes for two months. Drummer Matt Averio was forced to quit his classes at community college, and Willett and guitarist Johnnie Russell have put substitute teaching on hold. The band is rounded out by bassist Matt Maust, who doubles as the act's graphic designer.
More than one label has come knocking, Williams says, and Averio notes that the band is finally nearing a decision on its future plans. A deal, Williams adds, could be finalized in the next two or three months.
"We've been taking it real slow," Averio says. "We're trying to search out as many options as we're able to, whether that be a label or straight distribution. We're getting pretty close to knowing exactly what we want."
The band has a string of West Coast dates planned through September with Dr. Dog, and then will begin work on its first full-length.
Contact: Brett Williams, brett@coldwarkids.com
—Todd Martens

KAVA KAVA
Despite a hard rock appearance, Kava Kava creates party-worthy music by combining rock, funk, dance and soul. After forming around the turn of the millennium, the U.K. foursome began by piecing together space rock and disco. A full-length, "Mau," was ultimately released on bandleader Pat Fulgoni's own label, Chocolate Fireguard. The label has released four artists and a handful of compilations. "It's all very time-consuming, and I'll know it's gone too far when I start answering the phone onstage," Fulgoni says. The label work has yet to worn him down, and the group has maintained a heavy touring schedule in Europe, including such U.K. music festivals as Glastonbury in 2003. While the act is looking for licensing and distribution opportunities in the United States, Kava Kava has already been heard on Showtime series "Weeds" and has been spun by Nic Harcourt on noncommercial KCRW Los Angeles.
Contact: Pat Fulgoni, chocolatefireguard.artistes@virgin.net
—Katie Hasty

HOW I BECAME THE BOMB
In slightly less than a year, the new wave-inspired pop of How I Became the Bomb has become one of the most talked-about musical happenings in Nashville. The act's debut EP was released in May, and has since held a steady spot as one of the top 25 sellers at indie retailer Grimey's. The store reports that it has sold 73 copies of the band's "Let's Go!" The colorful quintet, which draws inspiration from ELO and ABBA, features a lead singer in Jon Burr who expresses an affinity for videogame and pro wrestling themes from Japan.
"We make pop music, so we want to get it out to the population," Burr says. "We'd like to make a career out of this." How I Became the Bomb recently finished a tour of the southeastern United States, and is in the studio prepping a full-length.
Contact: Jon Burr, howibecamethebomb@ymail.com
—Courtney Lear
Dylan’s ‘Modern Times’ Means Tickets Via iTunes
Ticketmaster And Apple Offer Fans Who Pre-Order The Album Access To Exclusive Presale

The Bob Dylan camp knows the times are a-changin’, and the convergence of digital downloads and ticket presales are a part of it.

Ticketmaster and Apple’s iTunes Music Store have joined forces to give fans another reason to pre-order Dylan’s new album through the retailer: a chance to score tickets to his fall North American tour before anyone else.

Customers who pre-order “Modern Times” through iTunes are e-mailed a code for a Ticketmaster presale scheduled for Aug. 30—the day after the album’s release via Columbia Records. The exclusive presale gives participants a jump on the Sept. 9 general public onsale for the as-yet-unannounced fall trek.

“This particular program allows us to marry two parts of the business that have in many ways functioned as separate and distinct things: the recording side and the live side,” Ticketmaster president/COO Sean Moriarty says. “It creates excitement about the record and tour simultaneously.”

Participants are allowed to purchase up to four presale tickets for select U.S. and Canadian cities through Sept. 2. The iTunes version of “Modern Times” will feature five bonus Dylan videos.

The concept isn’t new for Ticketmaster; previously, the approach has worked well for the latest full-lengths from Depeche Mode (“Playing the Angel”) and Red Hot Chili Peppers (“Stadium Arcadium”), Moriarty says.

“This is something that can provide value for any artist,” he explains, “but you’ve got to have the timing of the tour and album release congruent in order for it to work.”

“Given the success of these programs over time, people will start to put it into their planning sessions [and] timing the release of the album with the tour on-sales,” Greg Linn, VP of marketing at Capitol, says “Modern Times” shot to No. 1 on iTunes’ top downloaded albums immediately following the Aug. 8 pre-orders launch.

But Linn doesn’t think this type of cross-promotion can work for just anyone. “It has to be the right artist at the right time,” he says, adding that the concept took a lot of planning.

“You’re dealing with management, a tour promoter, a booking agent and everybody on the label and tech side,” he explains. “A lot of things have to work out exactly in order for it to be there.”

Moriarty says Ticketmaster will get involved with more programs like this in the future, but didn’t name any specific acts.

Meanwhile, Dylan began his third annual summer tour of U.S. minor league baseball stadiums Aug. 12 in Comstock Park, Mich. As of press time, Dylan had dates on the books through early September.

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Music

MORRISON GIVES THE U.K. ‘SOMETHING’
Singer Tops Chart, Creates Buzz With Album ‘Undiscovered’

Gravel-voiced U.K. vocalist James Morrison is “Undiscovered” no longer after the Polydor-signed singer’s debut album of that name topped the Official U.K. Charts Co.’s weekly listing Aug. 12.

It’s success came in the wake of soulful ballad “You Give Me Something,” which peaked at No. 5 on the OCC singles chart July 29. “When we heard ‘You Give Me Something,’ we immediately felt [Morrison was] a truly global act that ticked every box,” says Hassan Choudury, Universal Music U.K. VP of international marketing. After Universal’s international affiliates echoed that response, a series of showcases were booked at London’s intimate Eve Club in April and May.

“Attendance was unprecedented,” Choudury says. “Our Japanese managing director flew in to see a show there on the Wednesday night and home again on Thursday morning.”

Sony ATV-published Morrison played a sold-out seven-date club tour in July and August, booked by London-based Helter Skelter. The singer has showcased in other European markets, and Choudury says continental radio reaction to “You Give Me Something” has been positive, especially in Germany and Denmark.

Universal issues “Undiscovered” in most continental European markets Sept. 1; release dates are TBD for France, Spain and the United States.

— Paul Sexton

LONEY SWEDES: Swedish multi-instrumentalist/songwriter Emil Svanängen might need a bigger Stockholm apartment if he is to accommodate the nine members of his band Loney, Dear.

Graduating from the flourishing Swedish DIY scene, where home recordings regularly garner play on daytime radio and national TV, the act has sold nearly 5,000 independently released albums and EPs, manager Per Wikström says. British independent Something in Construction has picked up “Sologane,” the act’s first official album release, for an Oct. 9 launch. American indie Sub Pop is set to handle the album in the United States, Australia and New Zealand next February.

U.S. concert dates booked by the Windish Agency and U.K. performances are likely to support the releases. “The music is so beautiful and earnest,” says Tony Kiewel, head of A&R at Sub Pop. “There won’t be a shortage of people who are drawn to it as we were upon hearing it for the first time.”

Svanängen’s catalog is published by copyright control.

— Steve Adams

‘FADE’ IN: Dublin singer/songwriter David Kitt has returned with “Not Fade Away,” his first set since 2003’s “Square 1.” Recorded in the Woodstock, N.Y., studio of the Band’s Levon Helm, the new recording alternates between electro beats, pastoral acoustic folk and ballsy garage rock. It features guest appearances by British folk combo the Magic Numbers on upcoming single “Up to You,” with Tore Johansson (Cardigans, Franz Ferdinand) at the mixing desk.


“David has a very strong relationship with [Rough Trade founder] Geoff Travis,” says Dave O’Grady, Kitt’s manager. “Geoff has pulled him through some difficult musical and personal times.”


— Nick Kelly
Latin Notas

LEILA COBO | lcobo@billboard.com

Martin Unplugs
Singer Debuts New Tracks During His First ‘MTV Unplugged’

Ricky Martin is known for his romantic ballads and up-tempo, tropical dance fare. He navigated slow ballads but truly stood out on the more intimate, acoustic fare, and, inevitably, with the up-tempo stuff he does so well, despite the living room-esque setting. Even “Maria,” which brought the crowd to its feet, relied not on electronics, but on great horn and percussion sections, as well as a flamenco guitarist and an accordionist imported from Colombia.

The show will also air on MTV Puerto Rico and will be made available to more than 100 MTV channels worldwide. Sources say MTN execs were hinting at a showing on mainstream U.S. MTV channels. Following the taping, an excited Martin also announced he would go on tour in February, beginning in Puerto Rico. Since this was news to his surprised agent, we’ll keep you posted.

Martin’s “Unplugged” was produced by Jose Tillan, senior VP of music and artist relations for MTV Latin America and MTV Tris.

The taping came 10 months after the release of Martin’s “Life,” a highly produced album in stark contrast to the pared-down “Unplugged.” “Life” has sold 266,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. But this is a singer who can do more than shake his bon-bon.

The “Unplugged” album is slated for release in November on Sony BMG, coinciding with the Latin Recording Academy honoring Martin as person of the year.

And, in what rounds up an excellent Pan-American strategy, Martin’s “MTV Unplugged” will be the first to premiere not only on MTV Latin America, but also on the newly minted MTV Tris, MTV’s U.S. Latin channel, effectively covering north and south.

Reggaeton superstar, Tego Calderon, returns to the limelight with his debut effort for Atlantic Records. The Puerto Rican native collaborates with Don Omar, Buju Banton, Volto, to name a few, in this new twenty song collection.

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Sunshine Rises Again

R&B Singer Anderson Returns With New Album

Sunshine Anderson isn’t leaving anything to chance this time around. The talented R&B singer is already stumpling for her new album, “Sunshine at Midnight,” even though it’s not due until January via her own label, Shining Star Incorporated, and Mathew Knowles’ Music World Entertainment (billboard.com, July 27). “No strategy and no setup leads to chaos,” the singer says.

It’s a lesson she learned firsthand after the release of her 2001 Soulife/Atlantic debut “Your Woman” and top five Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs single “Heard It All Before.” Despite scoring a hit single and a gold album, she ended up bankrupt and moved back home to Charlotte, N.C., where she covered the windows with black sheets to shut out the world.

“It was all over in a matter of months,” Anderson recalls while in Los Angeles to film the video for the new album’s first single, “Something I Wanna Give You.”

“No one was really prepared for the way the single took off,” she remembers about the success of “Heard It All Before.” “I was being pulled one way and another.”

Fellow artist Macy Gray was helping manage Anderson at the time. However, Gray was also busy with her own career. So that left a green Anderson and a then-boyfriend trying to figure out the lay of the land.

Their industry ignorance led to Anderson being tagged as difficult and nasty. But she says, “No one really told me what was expected. No one told me, for instance, that going on the road also meant getting up to visit radio stations at 7 a.m. after performing the night before. Once I knew the drill, I picked up the pace, but it was very overwhelming.”

After adjourning to Charlotte, she woke up one day and decided to move to Atlanta. It was from there that record industry veteran Jheri Busby mentored her return, guiding her in establishing the Shining Star label and spearheading her deal withKnowles.

Signed directly to Atlantic after Soulife, Anderson began recording songs for an album that was never released. Several of those songs, including some done with former Soulife CEO and producer Mike City, appear on “Sunshine at Midnight.” Other collaborators include Dr. Dre, Raphael Saadiq and Warryn Campbell.

With plans to release a second single in November before the album bows, an enthusiastic Anderson says she now has the strategy and setup she was missing before. “I’m not bitter or mad,” she says. “I just want to move forward. I want longevity this time.”


Howard Hewett is returning to his R&B/pop roots. The inspirational artist and former Shalamar member is recording an as-yet-untitled debut album on Groove Records, a division of multimedia entertainment company the Machine Productions. It’s been 12 years since his last R&B/pop project, 1994’s “It’s Time.” Earth, Wind & Fire member Ralph Johnson is director of business development for the Machine Productions.
Selah Reinvents Success

When it comes to resiliency, Curb Records trio Selah has proved its mettle over the past couple of years. Founding members Todd Smith and Allan Hall have survived the exit of two female vocalists, persevered and crafted one of this year’s acclaimed albums, “Bless the Broken Road—The Duets Album.”

The CD features Smith and Hall along with new member Amy Perry and a cast of duet partners, including Cynthia Clawson, Jason and Adam Crabb, Plumb, Nichole Nordeman, BarlowGirl, Kim Hill, Nicole C. Mullen and former Selah member Melodie Crittenden.

Smith and Hall launched the trio nearly a decade ago with Smith’s sister, Nicol Smith Sponberg, and they quickly became one of the most successful groups in the Christian format. In late 2004, Smith Sponberg opted to leave the group to begin a music ministry with her husband. Remaining members Hall and Smith enlisted longtime friend Crittenden to join the group.

After about six months, Crittenden realized the group’s busy tour schedule was going to clash with her desire to start a family, and she decided to leave. She remains good friends with Smith and Hall, the album’s title track, “Bless the Broken Road,” features Crittenden. (A former country solo artist, Crittenden had previously recorded the tune long before it became an award-winning Rascal Flatts hit.)

After Crittenden’s exit, Hall and Smith began auditioning new female vocalists. They hired Perry, a California native who had moved to Nashville to pursue a career in Christian music. “She could sing great as a soloist. She could blend great. She could harmonize great,” Smith says. “She was just a great learner and you could just tell by her spirit and attitude that she’d be great to have in the group.”

Perry quickly settled into life with Selah. “The second show was three hours from my home,” she recalls. “So the whole family came and I think that was the first time I was nervous. My family was sitting out there with all these huge expectations and I was nervous, but after the first song, it was just comfortable.”

The duets album is a collection that finds Selah joining forces with an eclectic group of duet partners. “We really focused on artists that have moved us personally and that we really love,” Hall says. “Like Kim Hill, we’ve toured with her and Jill Phillips also on there. I think Jill is one of the most under-rated artists around today. She is magnificent. Cynthia Clawson has been so important in my life. To do ‘Softly and Tenderly’ with her was so great. And of course, Jason Crabb, we’ve just admired enormously.”

Crabb duets with Smith on “Ain’t No Grave” with brother Adam wailing on harmonica. Covering a song so closely associated with Russ Taff could be daunting, but these guys pull it off, and it’s the highlight of the album. “We started getting in there and feeding off each other and it was a blast,” Smith says of the recording session. “They are awesome.”

Joy to the World: Disney World, that is. It’s time once again for Night of Joy, Disney’s annual Christian music festival. This year the event will be held Sept. 8-9 in Orlando, Fla., at the Magic Kingdom. The lineup for the 24th annual Night of Joy includes MercyMe, Casting Crowns, Kirk Franklin, tobyMac, BarlowGirl, Rebecca St. James, Todd Agnew, Smokie Norful, Building 429, Matthew West, Hawk Nelson, the Afters and a winner from the 32nd annual GMA Music in the Rockies. More than 900,000 have attended previous Night of Joy events during the last couple of decades. The event received the Gospel Music Assn.’s Lifetime Achievement Award in April during Gospel Music Week.

Partings: P.O.D. has left the Atlantic Records roster... The Crabb Family is calling it quits. The successful Southern gospel act plans to perform farewell concerts through next July, then will pursue separate interests.

Classical Singers Celebrate Mozart Milestone

Releases Marking The Composer’s 250th Anniversary Continue To Arrive

The march of albums marking Mozart’s 250th anniversary continues unabated into the fall. Among them are a phalanx of vocal releases ranging from recitals to operas, and the singers run the gamut from operatic superstars to early-music authorities.

Among the first up is “The Mozart Album” (Deutsche Grammophon, Aug. 8). Culling the DG roster for singers like soprano Anna Netrebko, bass-baritones Thomas Quasthoff and Bryn Terfel and bass Rene Pape, this compilation of favorite arias and duets—whose release was timed to coincide with the Mozart anniversary year—combines otherwise unavailable new Netrebko recordings with tracks from other releases. Despite a grim cover that looks as if it was hastily designed, the recordings themselves sparkle.

Later in the season, DG continues the Mozart deluge with two recital albums by solo artists, both with a street date of Oct. 10: Terfel’s “Tutto Mozart!” and mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kozena’s new disc of Mozart arias.

Two new recordings of Mozart operas also arrive in stores. On the first, conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt and the Concentus Musicus Wien introduce a new performing version of the unfinished opera “ Zaide,” with soprano Diana Damrau, tenors Michael Schade and Rudolf Schächting, baritone Florian Boesch and bass Anton Schäringer. To make up for the dialogue missing from the original manuscript, Austrian actor/director Tobias Moretti narrates texts of his own creation (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Aug. 8).

On Aug. 22, Harmonia Mundi released the latest entry in conductor Rene Jacobs’ hugely acclaimed series of Mozart opera recordings. This time, it’s the composer’s last opera, “La Clemenza Di Tito,” sung compellingly by a cast that includes tenor Mark Padmore, soprano Alexandra Pendatchanska and mezzo Bernarda Fink.

A New Era? Although it does not remove all of the hurdles for all of the American ensembles that have long been distanced from the recording industry, a deal announced earlier this month between 48 American and Canadian symphonies and the American Federation of Musicians, which represents the players, is certainly a start. The contract’s revenue-sharing model offers the musicians the opportunity to record live concerts on a project-by-project basis; the orchestras themselves will retain ownership, but can license out to labels or distributors on a short-term basis.

In the end, the orchestras involved in the agreement—which range from heavy hitters like the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra to small regional groups—will have more flexibility to create deals that make sense for their particular needs and missions.

For some ensembles, that may mean thrashing out new relationships with one of the majors, as in the case of the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, signatories that had already worked out their own deals with Universal Classics to create digital-only releases for the “DG Concerts” series. Other orchestras may seek to work with smaller independents or to produce recordings in-house and find distribution either through traditional outlets or digital stores.

Whatever the results, we hope the deal itself will encourage musicians, performing arts institutions and labels alike to free themselves from outmoded paradigms and ways of thinking that have limited the reach of so many of America’s classical musicians for so long.
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Former Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio signed a high-profile deal with Columbia in August 2005, the first fruit of which was the Brendan O’Brien-produced solo album “Shine,” which has sold just 62,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Exactly a year later, Anastasio has already moved on and will launch his own RED-distributed Rubber Jungle imprint with new album “Bar 17” due Oct. 3.

The artist actually began working on “Bar 17” before “Shine,” but put the project on hold after producer Bryce Goggin left due to family commitments. In finished form, the set features appearances from Phish’s Mike Gordon and Jon Fishman, the Benevento/Russo Duo, John Medeski and percussionist Cyro Baptista, plus a collaboration with Anastasio’s 10-year-old daughter, Eliza.

What went wrong with your Columbia deal?
Well, everyone on the team that I was working with, for the most part, was fired, like Will Bowbin and Donnie (Jessner). I was thrilled to be on Columbia when I was there. I got a chance to work with Brendan O’Brien, which I loved doing, and I really enjoyed making “Shine.” But I’m really excited about starting my own label. A lot of hands are telling me this is what they’re going to do. It just starts to become the obvious choice.

It doesn’t seem like you need a major label from a promotional standpoint.
No, I don’t think so at all. I have a good distribution company, a great team and good management. I don’t really know what Columbia was doing for me. The whole thing with the CD copy protection—that was just a disaster. For the right now, this is kind of a lifelong dream to have my own label. There’s a possibility I could sign people, which is pretty cool.

How did you come to work in the studio and then go on tour with the Benevento/Russo Duo?
Mike [Gordon] told me how much fun he had playing with these guys, and I met them in Brooklyn. They were only going to do two songs, but Mike came in with them and we just hit it off instantly. I think we did four songs in one or two nights, and we instantly started talking about doing some shows, which were a great time. I enjoyed them tremendously. They’re great, high-energy, smart, interesting people. I hope we get to play together again.

It must be nice to have all these different collaborators under the umbrella of one album.
Yeah. It feels a lot more like the record I was expecting I would make, which is combining all these people into one big ocean of sound.

What can you say about “Goodbye Head,” on which you collaborated with your daughter?
She’s 10. I was writing that song while she was skateboarding around in the living room, and she threw in some lines that turned out to be the best of the song: “Don’t you know the stars in the sky might not even still be there?” I just love those, because I was writing a song about thinking too much. I was rushing home to talk to you because I had to take the kids to the Limited for school clothes. I can certainly tell you that I can sing every word to “High School Musical,” that’s for sure [laughs].

Stewart Copeland said he’s hoping Oysterhead [which also features Les Claypool] will play more shows or make another album this year. Any chance of that happening?
After October, I don’t know what’s going to happen, but I had such a good time playing with Oysterhead this summer [at Bonnaroo]. I thought it sounded a lot better the second time around. I missed those guys. They’re so funny. We keep joking about doing another album because we already have a title: “02—You Gotta Have It” [laughs].
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BOB DYLAN
Modern Times
Producer: Bob Dylan
(a.k.a. Jack Frost)
Columbia
Release Date: Aug. 29
You may have seen the recent photos of Bob Dylan looking uncannily like Charlie Chaplin, and his 44th album shares a title with Chaplin's 1936 largely silent classic about automation, big business and the overarching intrusion of the state into private lives. Sort of like today Dylan sings like he has been traveling by boxcar since 1936; such tunes as “Spirit on the Water” and “Beyond the Horizon” have a sweet, old-time Depression-era feel. But images within the same song leap across decades: “The Levee’s Gonna Break” could be about New Orleans 2005 or the great flood of 1937. This enchanting album runs with homespun reflections on philosophy, religion and the never-ending quest for true love. They are summed up by this couplet from hard blues shuffler “Thunder on the Mountain” “I’m wondering where in the world Alice Keys could be/I been looking for her even clear through Tennessee.”—WR

THE ROOTS
Game Theory
Producers: various
Def Jam
Release Date: Aug. 29
In a hip-hop world propelled by drum machines and other computerized instruments, there’s still plenty of room for the real thing—as well as for lyrics that say something beyond the usual bling and ass-shaking fare. The Roots have never compromised on that belief, and “heart creative fervor still fuels the group’s work. Its Def Jam debut tackles such topics as media distrust (“False Meda”) and social ills (“Take It There”). It’s a youthful yet always had a distinctive sound, anchored by lead singer Fher Olvera, rich guitars and an infusion of rock/tropical/Reggae beats amid highly melodic songs. “Amar Es Combatir,” Maná’s first studio album in four years, doesn’t deviate from this formula, and that’s the good and the bad of it. Lasbos Company is a reliable midtempo ballad that collects several prior Maná hits. It is an undeniable hit, well-crafted and beautifully executed. That is true for most of this album, which boasts far better songs than 2002’s “(The Love of Amor)” and is also an aier, more inspired collection. Some new territory is covered on the catchy “Tochicabon,” a rock cha-cha, while a collaboration with bachata star Juan Luis Guerra on “Bendala Tu Luz” is organic both in the blend of genres and vocals.—LC

PARIS HILTON
Paris
Producer: various
Warner Bros.
Release Date: Aug. 22
Does it matter that she’s the ex-girlfriend of a great singer? Not really. On her debut album, she alternately coos, giggles, whispers and talks-sings her way through R&B dance/pop songs. Wisely, the gaggle of producers and writers enlisted for the project don’t require Hilton to do more than she’s capable of, thus making “Paris” an enjoyable pop romp. While she dabbles in hip-hop on a few tracks, including “Fighting Over Me” (where she takes a back seat to Fat Joe and Akon), she shines when she embraces her inner dancefloor diva. Standout cuts include the Groovey “I Want You,” the 80s throwback rocker “Screamed” and the galloping disco of “Not Leaving Without You.” Nasayers be damned—Hilton releasing an album does not signal the end of days. “Paris” won’t change the world, but it’s good fun.—KC

RAY LAHONTANE
Till the Sun Turns Black
Producer: Ethan Johns
RCA
Release Date: Aug. 29
With only one album behind him, LaMontagne opts to flesh out his naked tales of woe and heartache on “Till the Sun Turns Black.” Still fraught with troubles from 2004’s “Trouble,” he employs strings, organs and stellar percussion to help carry his load. Songs like “Empty,” “Can I Stay” and the title track still contain the tenderness of the debut, but “Three More Days” and “You Can Bring Me Flowers” are sunnier and more soul-inspired. LaMontagne also bares his guitar chops on the instrumental “Truly, Madly, Deeply,” while “Gone Away From Me” and “Barfly” are refreshingly simple. For fans of the previous effort, “Till the Sun” may be satisfying, if not a little disappointing, but it is a promising move in a varied direction for a new songwriter with an old heart.—KH

CASSIE
Long Way To Go (2:39)
Producer: Ryan Leslie
Writers: R. Leslie, C. Ventura
Publishers: various
Next Selection/Bad Boy/Atlantic
R&B freshman Cassie follows her pandemic club groove debut “Me & U” with the cutesy midtempo “Long Way To Go.” a nonwaver’s effort with a juvenile lyric that warns prospective pursuers to work it with the right attitude. Perhaps in an attempt to tap into current pop trends, she mimics the playful rhythmic style of Gwen Stefani’s “Hollaback Girl” and Yelly Furtado’s “Promiscuous,” both of which topped The Billboard Hot 100. But while the latter artists found ways to flow with the beat, Cassie’s faint vocals seem to clash with her song’s dizzying synth. Nonetheless, this cut’s hummable by spindly drums and simple hook should give it enough edge for sizable pop and urban airplay.—CH

ELTON JOHN
The Bridge (3:38)
Producer: Elton John, Matt Still
Writers: B. Taupin, E. John
Publisher: not listed
Rocky Marciano
Breathtakingly simple and heartfelt, “The Bridge” is Elton John’s most affecting single in years. The first release from upcoming “The Captain and the Kid” (a concept album that bookends 1975’s “Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy”) is just John and piano with a touch of haunting vocal echo and a well-chosen background layer. The lyric addresses human crossroads where tough choices are made: “Every one of us has to face the day/Do you cross the bridge or do you fade away? We can’t certainly never lose relevancy with adults, but there is a sense of renewal and purpose here that is striking. One is drawn to bring tears to sentimental eyes. So many years, so many songs, and this beloved artist still makes it matter. Splendid.—CT

RAYMOND LAVERN
Dejpeg
Producer: Jonathan Huddleston
Warner Bros.
Release Date: Aug. 29
“Dejpeg” is the latest release from the Baltimore native who returns with some more electronic tracks and a moreadrastic &$$k $tyle. The track itself is a catchy and upbeat dance-pop tune that features a catchy hook and catchy beats. The overall sound is a blend of electronic and pop elements. The track has a strong beat and a catchy melody that is easy to follow along with. The vocals are clear and the production is of high quality. Overall, “Dejpeg” is a well-produced track that is sure to please fans of electronic music and pop. —RB

THE MANY
Happy Anarchist
Producer: Adam Was
Def Jam
Release Date: Aug. 29
“The Many” is a new project that brings together a diverse range of artists from different genres. The album features a mix of electronic, pop, rap, and rock tracks. The album opens with “Happy Anarchist,” a track that features a danceable beat and catchy vocals. The lyrics are thought-provoking and deal with themes of rebellion and resistance. The album is a celebration of diversity and collaboration, and it is sure to be a hit with fans of alternative music. —RB

Old Crow Medicine Show
Big Iron World
Producer: David Rawlings
Nettwerk
Release Date: Aug. 29
Embraced by improv rock and old-time music fans alike, Old Crow Medicine Show is building a devoted following by playing great songs really well. Producer Rawlings conjures an effortless bounce and backbeat, his bandmates playing deep, enduring cuts like the bluesy “Down Home Girl” and the spooky “Bobcat Tracks.” One wonders where they stop digging up...
from >>p67

traditional gems like the hangdog “Cocaine Habit,” “Let Me Alone” and Woody Guthrie’s “Union Maid.” Elsewhere, originals like the clever “My Good Gal,” “James River Blues” and the catchy, southern rock “New Virginia Creeper” would fit right in on Springsteen’s “Seeger Sessions” album. They’ve all got brains and heart to spare on “I Hear Them All” and the haunting “Don’t Ride That Horse.” They may be a niche band, but the niche is getting much wider and deeper here.—RW

ELECTRONIC

BT
This Binary Universe
Producer: BT
Binary Acoustics
Release Date: Aug. 29

“This Binary Universe” depicts the sights and sounds of a wondrous, ambient cosmos. The chill-out sector might assume that it’s simply BT’s soundsound music, but BT has greater consciousness in mind with titles like “All That Makes Us Human Continues.” Celestial songs flow together and drift by leisurely, sometimes almost inaudibly. Occasionally disturbing the vast atmosphere are mechanical churnings and cinematic orchestration (“The Anthyphthera Mechanism”). The DVD portion complements the music with diverse footage; “Dynamic Symmetry,” for instance, is a blue-black nighttime seascape inhabited by animated, robotic creatures. The video for “Good Morning Kaa” explains why the record glistens with nursery chimes. Here BT writes a touching love letter to his wee daughter with stylishly edited home movies and a crashing, climactic score. We dare you not to cry.—CLT

JAZZ

BILL FRISELL, RON CARTER, PAUL MOTIAN
Bill Frisell, Ron Carter, Paul Motian
Producer: Lee Townsend
Release Date: Aug. 29

Guitarist Bill Frisell is a master of reflective, quiet but subtlyquick lines that flow from the lyrical to the angular. He can also sing arrows into the mix, but here in the company of two of jazz’s greatest rhythm players, Frisell steers away from sudden bursts and settles into the fluidity of clitch-free improvisation. What’s remarkable is how unchallenged the leader and trio play. Ron Carter steers with his unpredictable bass runs, countermelodies and motifs as Paul Motian flicks the cymbals in dance-like support while Frisell muses soundscapes deep in the background, standbys like Hank Williams’ “I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry” and “You Are My Sunshine” (ironically sketched in a melancholic mood). It’s significant that the trio deftly covers two Monk tunes (“Rooze Four,” “Misterioso”) given that Frisell is the Thelonious of jazz guitar.—DO

KENNY GARRETT
Beyond the Wall
Producer: Steven Epstein, Kenny Garrett
Release Date: Aug. 29

A alto sax man Garrett drew album inspiration in large part from a 2005 trip to China. Realization (Marching Towards the Light), for instance, is undeniably inspired by Tibetan monks chant Garrett sampled, adding a deep resonance to the instrumental arrangement, which itself is actually rather minimalist. On “Tsunami Song,” the presence of the Chinese ehr, played by Guowei Wang, as well as cellos, violin, gives the piece a strongly melodic, wistful air that’s quite unique anything else on the record. Most of the tracks, however, do not evolve Asian influences that would be fittingly enjoyed by most listeners. Such tunes as “Beyond the Wall” and “Calling” are notable mainly because they’re supremely well-played and swing most excellently.—PPV

POP

SCISSOR SISTERS I Don’t Feel Like Dancin’ (4:08)
Producer: Scissor Sisters
Writers: S. Hoffman, J. Sellards, E. John
Publishers: various

With happy-go-lucky piano tinklings, courtesy of Elton John, that recall John’s Connection’s “More. More. More.” The 4 Seasons’ “December 1963 (Oh, What a Night),” “Don’t Feel Like Dancin’” is wittily retro. But like the Killers and other acts that mine sounds and rhythms that came before them, Scissor Sisters keep their feet in the real time of 2006. The lead single from the band’s sophomore album, “Ta-Dah” (due Sept. 26, “Dancin’” is decidedly pop. Perhaps, this could pose a problem at top 40 radio. Realization (Marching Towards the Light), for instance, is undeniably inspired by Tibetan monks chant Garrett sampled, adding a deep resonance to the instrumental arrangement, which itself is actually rather minimalist. On “Tsunami Song,” the presence of the Chinese ehr, played by Guowei Wang, as well as cellos, violin, gives the piece a strongly melodic, wistful air that’s quite unique anything else on the record. Most of the tracks, however, do not evolve Asian influences that would be fittingly enjoyed by most listeners. Such tunes as “Beyond the Wall” and “Calling” are notable mainly because they’re supremely well-played and swing most excellently.—PPV

INDIA.ARIE
Heart of the Matter (4:02)
Writers: India.Arie, Frank “Blame” Macek

India.Arie’s最新 album, “Heart of the Matter”—from third album “Testimony: Life & Relationship”—is all about taking the high road. Her remake of Don Henley’s 1991 top 25 hit intricately explores the benefits of forgiveness while embracing the uncertainty that accompanies it and the serenity that results. Arie perfectly conveys that complexity with her sturdy vocals, alongside transcendent cello plucks and piano taps. (“The trust and self-assurance that lead to happiness are the very things we kill I guess,” she vents.) Radio may not lap up this peaceful jewel, but one senses Arie couldn’t care less.—CH

DEEP SIDE
Let’s Make Love (3:18)
Producer: Stargate Writers: M. Ensrksen, E. Hermansen, T. Jackson, R. Kelly
Publishers: various

New Jive male quartet Deep Side (which released an indie CD in 2002) may be reminiscent of the days when boy bands ruled the charts with potent vocal meshing, but these Floridians are no kids. Witness panting first single “Let’s Make Love,” which offers to “release your tension” “til the sweat starts pouring,” along with a bevy of other suggestive commentary. Posturing aside, the guys prove themselves worthy chart contenders with a damn catchy major-label debut. Lyrical, the sexually charged track oozes with convincing swagger, making for an (at least) hot enough ride. Rude Boi, Penny, Slick 9 and Mike Ezay have the vocal-ease to back their promise. Ingeniously crafted and addictive the first time through, “Love” is one rousing romp. Labiater R. Kelly contributes, but such props are hardly required to sell.—CT

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY
Concrete Jungle (3:24)
Producers: Zakky Wylde, Michael Beinhorn
Writer: Z. Wylde
Publishers: Bellbottoms & Beer

“Single “Concrete Jungle” pre-empts Black Label Society’s new record “Shot to Hell,” arriving Sept. 12 on Roadrunner. Bandleader Zakky Wylde conjures images of a smoke-filled concert stage as he revs the track with a squalling diesel white and murky undertones. He steps out of the smog with the typically gritty BLS sound of metal-based guitar, a lyric about fighting for survival in a psycho-filled world and his trademark gravelly voice, which gets another raspy layer by a vocoder. Unlike the band’s other songs, this track is extremely tight and to the point, giving it the feel of a demo. Even Wylde’s guitar solo is abbreviated—he quickly scratches it off instead of letting the notes sprawl. You’ll hear “Concrete Jungle” blasting from cars on route to a Saturday-night beer jag (along with a brawl or three).—CLT

AKIL DASAN
The Jawn (2:33)
Producer: Akil Dasan
Writer: A. Dasan Baker
Publishers: Akil Dasan, SESAC

The Timeless Talent Group Hip-hopper Akil Dasan doesn’t need an outrageous grill to show his musical worth. When he unleashes one of his tongue-twisting raps, you hear the gold in his mouth. And forget about rudimentary, overproduced loops and samples. The Philadelphia native eschews them for lounge-smooth soul that’s rife with funky beats and—praise God—melody. “The Jawn explores Dasan’s light-footed quick raps (their speed and precision put him in league for a throwdown with Eminem) and his quest for positivity. He disavows the rapper stereotype that spews “repellent, negative messages” and Theories, “instead of staying ‘home raisin’ the youth/We raisin’ the roof.” The timing is right for Dasan to crash hip-hop’s over-hyped party. But can his fresh approach slip past the cogniscenti’s velvet rope?—CLT
It’s the same old song: Flashy news in the top 10 of The Billboard 200 while album sales continue to sag, a pattern that even a career-best seller by Christina Aguilera cannot beat.

Fact is, with her new Nielsen SoundScan mark and six new titles entering the chart’s first eight spots, the top 10 looks pretty healthy.

Aguilera’s “Back to Basics” racks up 342,000 sales in its opening frame, lifting her prior best-starter by 5.6%, set when last album “Stripped” bowed at No. 2 with 330,000 copies in 2002. Followed immediately by new sets from R&B voices Lyfe Jennings (136,000), country sirens Trace Adkins (115,000), new R&B ensemble Cherish (91,000) and the soundtrack to “The Cheetah Girls 2” (87,000), this marks only the third time in the 50-year history of Billboard’s album chart that five new entries occupy the first five slots.

Commerce from these five and the return of rapper Obie Trice (No. 8, 74,000) help deliver more volume in the top 10 than the chart saw in the same week last year, up by 6%. However, none of that prevents an overall decline, with total albums missing the comparable 2005 frame by 6.7%. That deficit includes a 4.1% slip by catalog albums.

nulling these numbers helps explain the odd juncture that finds the August Tower Records chain filing for bankruptcy just two weeks after winning its third straight merchandiser of the year award at the recent NARM convention.

And, while intense price competition from mass merchants and electronics chains has helped complicate life for Tower and other traditional music stores, it doesn’t even look like the lawbreakers are having fun.

Year-to-date, mass merchants’ album sales stand at 133.5 million units, down about 3% from the same point last year. A story about Tower’s situation that runs in a newscast on NBC’s Los Angeles affiliate KNBC puts the odds all music merchants face into perspective. In it, a girl in her early teens, starring near the chair’s landmark Sunset Boulevard store, said, “A lot of the CDs that come out now, I only like five songs. I don’t want to waste $12 or $13 for like five songs, so sometimes I’ll go online to get the specific songs that I like.”

On one hand, she was generous. All too often, research—and the anecdotal recollections of actual consumers—suggests the rank-and-file citizen often thinks that too many albums have only one or two good songs. But when she suggests that $13 is too much for a set that includes five songs she enjoys, I wonder how much that young consumer paid for a ticket the last time she went to a movie theater.

THRICE, TWICE, TRICE: While there have been only three occasions in Billboard 200 history that all five top titles belonged to new titles, two of them occurred this year. The more recent fiver came in the May 13 issue, when Godsmack’s “1.V.” led the page, followed at Nos. 2, 3 by Taking Back Sunday, Bruce Springsteen, Avant and Rihanna. The top 10 included another: Goo Goo Dolls, at No. 9.

Obie Trice might say it’s “deja vu all over again,” as his first album was included in the straight the first time five new albums led the list. That issue, in fact, went one letter, as the Oct. 11, 2003, Billboard saw chart debuts on each of the top six rungs.

OutKast, which might lead next week’s chart, was that week’s champ. Its “Speakerboxx/The Love Below” was followed at Nos. 2, 6 by new sets from Dave Matthews, Limp Bizkit, Kelly, Trice and Nickelback. A seventh bow, by Murphy Lee, also stood on the top 10 (No. 8).

SNAPSHOT: Say Anything re-enters at No. 36 on Top Heatseekers with a 52% increase and its best sales week since March. That month was also the last time “.. Is a Real Boy” appeared on the chart.

Target Stores added the album. Consequently, mass merchants, which only accounted for 2% of last week’s sales, now 58% of the album’s action this week. The band’s single “Alive With Love/Glorious” debuts on Modern Rock at No. 38. Boston and Providence, R.I., are two markets where airplay is driving sales. The group also got a glowing mention in an Entertainment Weekly review of a Dashboard Confessional concert.

For weekly ending Aug. 20, 2006, figures are rounded. Sales from both surveys are compiled from Nielsen SoundScan. MarketWatch data was not available at press time. Year-to-Date chart issued weekly by Billboard, a division of Nielsen Business Media. Visit Billboard at www.billboard.com.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christina Aguilera</td>
<td>Back To Basics</td>
<td>Jive Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<td>Jive Records</td>
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<td>Toby Keith</td>
<td>The Phoenix</td>
<td>Mercury Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<td>Trace Adkins</td>
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<td>Warner Bros. Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<td>Cherish</td>
<td>The Creature Girls</td>
<td>Round Hill Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY</td>
<td>Roadrunner Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>15.98</td>
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<td>All The Right Reasons</td>
<td>BMG Records</td>
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<td>Phobia</td>
<td>Atlantic Records</td>
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<td>Kidz Bop 10</td>
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<td>In My Mind</td>
<td>Def Jam Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The High School Musical</td>
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<td>Polydor Records</td>
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<td>EMI Records</td>
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<td>Assisted Rhymes</td>
<td>BMG Records</td>
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</table>

**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
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<td>Eclipse</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
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<td>We're All About The Music</td>
<td>RCA Records</td>
<td>15.98</td>
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<td>The Royal Affair</td>
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<td>BMG Records</td>
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<td>The River</td>
<td>BMG Records</td>
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<td>BMG Records</td>
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
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## TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
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<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>CHRISTINA AGUILERA</td>
<td><em>Back To Basics</em></td>
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<td><em>Second Round's On Me</em></td>
<td>TP Records (12.08)</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td>LLOYD</td>
<td><em>Le'Roy</em></td>
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<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td>STREET THANGS</td>
<td><em>Step Up</em></td>
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<td><em>New York Bitch</em></td>
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<td><strong>8.</strong></td>
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<td><em>Ghetto Story</em></td>
<td>Tha Carter (11.98)</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong></td>
<td>INDIA ARIE</td>
<td><em>Testimony: Vol. 1, Life &amp; Relationship</em></td>
<td>Geffen (13.98)</td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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<td><em>In My Mind</em></td>
<td>Shatter Records (12.98)</td>
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<td>DONELL JONES</td>
<td><em>A Girl Like Me</em></td>
<td>Def Jam Recordings (15.98)</td>
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<td><strong>12.</strong></td>
<td>THE ISLEY BROTHERS</td>
<td><em>Baby Makin' Music</em></td>
<td>The Isley Bros. (11.98)</td>
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<td>KEYSIA COLE</td>
<td><em>The Way It Is</em></td>
<td>J Records (12.98)</td>
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<td><strong>14.</strong></td>
<td>SEAN PAUL</td>
<td><em>Tha Trinity</em></td>
<td>J Records (15.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15.</strong></td>
<td>AVANT</td>
<td><em>Director</em></td>
<td>Universal MOTOWN (13.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16.</strong></td>
<td>SHAWINNA</td>
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<td>Def Jam Recordings (12.98)</td>
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<td>HEATHER HEADLEY</td>
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<td><strong>18.</strong></td>
<td>CHANCELLOR &amp; JULLIAN</td>
<td><em>The Carter II</em></td>
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<td>MARY MARY</td>
<td><em>Play It Right</em></td>
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<td>BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY</td>
<td><em>Greatest Hits</em></td>
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<td>B.G.</td>
<td><em>Hoodie</em></td>
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<td><strong>22.</strong></td>
<td>KIRK FRANKLIN</td>
<td><em>Hosanna</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>23.</strong></td>
<td>FIELD MOB</td>
<td><em>No Trees</em></td>
<td>Star 80 (12.98)</td>
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<td><strong>24.</strong></td>
<td>KID N PIMP</td>
<td><em>Ride Or Die</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>25.</strong></td>
<td>TRAE</td>
<td><em>Restless</em></td>
<td>UNI Silver (12.98)</td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>26.</strong></td>
<td>MIKE WATTS</td>
<td><em>Pandoras Box</em></td>
<td>J Records (12.98)</td>
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## TOP REGGAE ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>RELEASE DATE</th>
<th>WEEKS ON CHART</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>DAMIAN JR. Gong MARLEY</td>
<td><em>Welcome To Jamrock</em></td>
<td>Universal Motown (11.98)</td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong></td>
<td>MATSYAMU</td>
<td><em>Live At Stubbs</em></td>
<td>VP Records (11.98)</td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td>BOB MARLEY</td>
<td><em>Gold Medley: Best Of Duncie</em></td>
<td>VP Records (11.98)</td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td>THE AGGROLITES</td>
<td><em>Together As One</em></td>
<td>VP Records (11.98)</td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**JENNINGS’ ‘PHOENIX’ SOARS**

Perhaps Lyfe Jennings predicted the future when he titled his latest project _"The Phoenix"_ as his sophomore set flies to the summit of Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums.

The Billboard 200 also welcomes the album’s 136,000 first-week sales at No. 2, a far cry from the No. 193 start that _"La’se 268-192"_ made when it debuted on that chart in October 2004, a full month after it hit stores.

Undoubtedly, "Phoenix" is fit by lead single "S.E.X.," which shines at No. 10 with more than 31 million in audience on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs. "Must Be Nice," from his first album, peaked at No. 5, reaching the chart eight months behind the album’s street date. The "Phoenix" went for less than $10 at Target, Best Buy and Circuit City.

—Raphaël George
From: Andre Harrell
To: The Music Industry
Subject: Did You Know?

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Andre Harrell
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Mile
(T.G000AIAN,T.LJAMES)
KNABE,A
KNABE,
MCA NASHVILLE
LOFTON CREEK
Ann Womack
Gary Allan
Pat
Wreckers
Curves
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F
FINDIN'
Kenney,J. RICH(
SARA EVANS
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1990,
(October 2005)
Another Brooks song came close in the Nielsen BDS monitored-era, when "The Thunder Rolls" started at No. 19 in May 1991. The two Brooks tracks and Urban's new song are the only titles to debut in Hot Country Songs' top 20 since Billboard adopted Nielsen BDS data in the Jan. 20, 1990, issue. Urban's chart history boasts 12 top 10 songs, including seven that have spent time at the top of the page.
— Mike Jansen

URBAN'S 'LIFETIME' SETS ALL-TIME RECORD
Opening with Hot Shot debut at No. 17 on 15 million audience impressions from 125 monitored stations, Keke Urban's "Once in a Lifetime" shatters the all-time record for high debuts on Hot Country Songs.

The lead single from Urban's as-yet-untilled Nov. 7 album "Ride" "cappeles a pair of No. 18 starts by Eddie "Habb's 'It's Every Which Way but Loose" (December 1978), a theme from a Clint Eastwood movie and Garth Brooks' recent comeback single "God's Country Cowboy"

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HOT LATIN SONGS:

1. **LABIOS COMPARIDOS**
   - Artist: Marc Anthony
   - Wikipedia: [Marc Anthony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Anthony)

2. **DON'T LIE**
   - Artist: Shania Twain
   - Wikipedia: [Shania Twain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shania_Twain)

3. **CALLE**
   - Artist: Tito El Bambino
   - Wikipedia: [Tito El Bambino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tito_El_Bambino)

4. **TODO AMOR**
   - Artist: Toby Love
   - Wikipedia: [Toby Love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toby_Love)

5. **NO, NO, NO**
   - Artist: Thalia
   - Wikipedia: [Thalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thalia)

6. **ALIADO DEL TIEMPO**
   - Artist: Mariana Barra
   - Wikipedia: [Mariana Barra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariana_Barra)

7. **DUELO**
   - Artist: Marc Anthony
   - Wikipedia: [Marc Anthony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Anthony)

8. **SHAKIRA**
   - Artist: Shakira
   - Wikipedia: [Shakira](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakira)

9. **LOS CAMINANTES**
   - Artist: Tito Puente Jr.

10. **FLORENCIA**
    - Artist: Gloria Estefan

11. **FLOW NATURAL**
    - Artist: Tito El Bambino
    - Wikipedia: [Tito El Bambino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tito_El_Bambino)

12. **QUE PRECIO TIENE EL CIELO**
    - Artist: Marc Anthony
    - Wikipedia: [Marc Anthony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Anthony)

13. **QUIERO ASI**
    - Artist: Daddy Yankee
    - Wikipedia: [Daddy Yankee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daddy_Yankee)

14. **UESTO CON EL Y PUNTO EN EL**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel

15. **QUIEN SE QUITARÁ EL DIAMANTE**
    - Artist: Tito Puente Jr.

16. **YOU GONNA GIVE IT TO ME**
    - Artist: Sean Paul
    - Wikipedia: [Sean Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean_Paul)

Rauco's first top 10 debut on the chart this week, at No. 35-32 on Latin Pop Airplay.

Duo Score's first No. 1 on Regional Mexican Airplay. Previous best was at No. 2 on that list.

Pepe Aguilar, No. 30 on the chart, entered the Top Latin Albums at No. 18 and Hot Essays at No. 23.

---

HOT LATIN ALBUMS:

1. **King Of Kings**
   - Artist: Marc Anthony
   - Wikipedia: [Marc Anthony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Anthony)

2. **Relaciones Conyugales**
   - Artist: Relaciones Conyugales
   - Wikipedia: [Relaciones Conyugales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relaciones_Conyugales)

3. **Mas Alla Del Sol**
   - Artist: Amor Eterno Los Mosqueteros

4. **La Trayectoria**
   - Artist: Gloria Trevi

5. **Limon Y Sal**
   - Artist: Julieta Venegas

6. **Las Mas Caracoles**
   - Artist: Los Cadetes De Linares
   - Wikipedia: [Los Cadetes De Linares](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Cadetes_De_Linar%C3%A9s)

7. **Para Trí, Nuestra Historia**
   - Artist: Don Omar
   - Wikipedia: [Don Omar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Omar)

8. **Nosotros Aman...**
   - Artist: Ana Gabriel

9. **Mas Alas de Corazon**
   - Artist: Los Angeles De Charlie
   - Wikipedia: [Los Angeles De Charlie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angelas_De_Charlie)

10. **Siempre Corriendo**
    - Artist: RBD
    - Wikipedia: [RBD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RBD)

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Data for week of September 2, 2006.
### Japan Singles

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### Mexico Singles

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### SINGLES & TRACKS

**SONG INDEX**

**Chart Codes:** CS (Hot Country Songs), H100 (Hot 100 Songs), LT (Hot Latin Songs), POP (Pop 100 Songs)

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CRUSH HERE TONIGHT</strong></td>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BAD DAY</strong></td>
<td>Kellie Pickler</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 2</td>
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<td><strong>HANGING ON</strong></td>
<td>Tim McGraw</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BE IN LOVE</strong></td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MISS YOU</strong></td>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SAY GOODBYE</strong></td>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 6</td>
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<td><strong>SOMETIMES</strong></td>
<td>Jason Aldean</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IF I WERE YOU</strong></td>
<td>Gary Allan</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WE'LL BE LOVERS</strong></td>
<td>Martina McBride</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>CS, 9</td>
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*Data for week of SEPTEMBER 2, 2006*
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Nestled in the green belt at the end of Sycamore Meadows is this majestic Malibu country sanctuary. Enjoy sweeping ocean views and magnificent hillside scenery from this private 2.4 acre compound. Approx. 5,000 sq. ft., 4 bed, 4.5 baths, plus a media room, recording studio and several isolation booths for recording.

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Trivia...
What Do
Joe Jackson (Jackson 5), Andre Crouch, Wayne Warner, Doug "Cosmo" Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revisited), Larry Hoppen (Orleans), Phil Greene (Eng. New Kids), Holly Stell (duet w/ Andrea Bocelli), J-Henry, Sharif, Shaunya Hartley (Stylist for Usher), Raistalla (Madonna's, Dancer), Jonzun Crew, & Don Smith (Eng. Stones, Petty)

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If you will be in the Atlanta Georgia area September 6-8 and would like to volunteer for the Billboard R&B Hip Hop Conference & Awards, please contact:

Courtney Marks cmarks@billboard.com 646.651.4652 For more information visit: www.billboardevents.com

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T.J. MARTELL FOUNDATION LIFETIME ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

BELOW: Music industry legend Clarence Avant, et al., in attendance at the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., for a breakfast celebrating Avant's recognition by the T.J. Martell Foundation with its Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award. The honor will be presented to Avant Oct. 10 at the foundation's 31st annual awards gala in New York. For ticket information, visit tjmartellfoundation.org. Photo Courtesy of the Academy of Country Music Photo: Annamarie Santo

ABOVE: Celebrating Avant's award recognition at the Peninsula Hotel are, from left, Avant; his daughter, Nicole; wife Jacqueline; Quincy Jones; and Avant’s son, Alex. Photo: Annamarie Santo
CHEF’S CHALLENGE

In the fall of 2004, in-demand producer Dan "the Automator" Nakamura excitedly told Billboard.com about his solo debut, "Omakase," which was to feature everyone from Butta Rhymes and Damon Albarn to Mos Def and Beck. But two years have passed, and Nakamura now tells Track the album is no closer to release. What happened?

It seems "Omakase" wound up as a casualty of MCA’s 2003 merger with Geffen, which cost a number of artists their record deals and ultimately led the Roots to bolt for Def Jam.

"It ended up being this two-year stalemate," Nakamura says. "I delivered the record, but nothing happened, and I couldn’t get it off the label. Before you know it, years have passed by, and the lawyers are getting involved." Nakamura is now free of Geffen, "but the record is old to me, so I have to re-vamp it." He’s also unsure where to take the project. "There’s been a couple offers, and they’re good, but I’m a little afraid of it. When I do other records independently, the financial end is much better. On the other hand, you can’t get a really big record off independently."

For the time being, Nakamura is staying busy crafting the soundtrack for upcoming videogame "NBA 2K7," which is due next month and features Ghostface Killah, Mos Def, Slim Thug, E-40, Fabolous, Rhymefest and Lupe Fiasco, among others.

CRAZY FILA FASHIONS

Track hears that Gnars Barkley bandmates Cee-Lo and Danger Mouse have asked the design team at Fila to create something special for them to wear to the Grammy Awards. This would make perfect sense, especially since the duo was dressed in Fila tennis gear during its Aug. 5 Lollapalooza performance at Chicago’s Grant Park.

OOH LA LA

Hennessy’s music experience, Hennessy Artistry, touches down Oct. 17 in New York. Dubbed "the global art of mixing," the invite-only even brings together Kanye West, the Strokes, Goldfrapp and DJ Carl Cox.

‘HOPE & FEAR’ IN AMERICA

An expert blend of storytelling and music has always been a hallmark of NPR program ‘This American Life.’ Well, this sensibility is on full display on the two-disc set ‘This American Life: Stories of Hope & Fear,’ due Nov. 7 via Shout Factory. The 11 complete tales, including David Sedaris’ "So a Chipmunk and a Squirrel Walk Into a Bar" and John Hodgeman’s "Slingshot," are set to music from the likes of Sonic Youth’s Thurston Moore, Wu-Tang Clan mastermind the RZA, Tortoise (as remixed by Tom Ze), Carly Simon, Calexico and Merceheera. "This American Life" host in Glass penned the liner notes, while artist Divya Srinivasan, who designed the cover for Sufjan Stevens’ "Illinois," created the artwork.

In related news, ‘This American Life’ will premiere a new weekly show on Showtime in January.

THE POLITICS OF DANCING

International DJ/producer Paul van Dyk recently treated fans to two outdoor concerts (Aug. 18-19) at New York’s Central Park SummerStage. While van Dyk’s loyal legion of fans from around the world flocked in for these shows, Track heard that some of them couldn’t justify the airplane ticket or simply couldn’t get in (the second show sold out after word spread of van Dyk’s killer set the previous night). So, for those who didn’t make it as well as for those who did, but can’t seem to remember every ecstatic detail—Sirius Satellite Radio comes to the rescue.

On Aug. 31, Sirius’ trance and progressive house channel, Area 33 (channel 3), will broadcast van Dyk’s Central Park gig as part of a special 10-hour programming block. This precedes van Dyk’s very own Sirius show, "Paul van Dyk’s Vonic Sessions," which premieres Aug. 31.

A GATHERING IN SIN CITY

Heading to Las Vegas Labor Day Weekend? If so, stop by the Palms Casino & Resort for the Global Gathering music fest. Presented by Bacardi and Live3Net, the three-day event features Papa Roach, Tommy Lee, Tiesto and others. The artists will perform solo sets as well as “jam” with the others in creative bursts of spontaneity. That is, if all goes as planned. Fingers crossed that it does, as Track lives to see Lee and Tiesto making music (together).

POST-HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

Have you heard about “Johnny Postal,” the feature film with rockers Deborah Harry and David Johansen and dance/electronic DJ/producer Roger Sanchez? Well, Track now hears that Dave Mason has been added to this colorful cast of characters. In addition to appearing in the dark romantic comedy, Harry, Johansen, Sanchez and Mason are scheduled to contribute new music to the accompanying soundtrack. Track also hears that “Johnny” director Frank M. Calo is in the process of bringing additional club DJ/producers into the film. Names being bandied about include (avne Bellini, DJ Irene and George Acosta. How cool is that! (Hello, Rachael Ray!)

MUSIC FROM THE HEART

Miami Performing Arts Center gone! In its place is the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, which is preparing for its four-day grand opening celebration (Oct. 5-8). Music veteran and South Miami resident Emilio Estefan Jr. is producing the opening night celebration, dubbed the Concert for Miami, Gloria Estefan (surprise, surprise) is confirmed to lead a colorful lineup that includes Bernadette Peters, Jose Carreras, Andy Garcia and Quincy Jones.

EXECUTIVE TURNABLE

RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Motown Records in New York promotes Sherronda Sweet to senior director of media relations. She was director, Universal Motown Records also taps Kimberly Harris as director of publicity. She was manager of media relations at Atlantic Records.

Cooking Vinyl USA in New York appoints Sue Drew to A&R consultant. She was a consultant to Capitol Records and Def Jam Records.

Deutsche Grammophon in Hamburg promotes Michael Lang to president. He was GM.

DISTRIBUTION: Universal Music Group Distribution in Universal Music City, Calif., names Alan Yoss executive VP of sales and marketing. He was executive VP/GM of WEA.

TOURING: Monterey International in Carmel, Calif., names Brian Swanson as agent. He was an agent at Monterey Peninsula Artists/Paradigm.

DIGITAL: RealNetworks in New York names Gabriel Levy GM of label relations. He was head of music at RealNetworks’ European subscription-based venture, RealMusic.

RELATED FIELDS: The Recording Academy promotes David Konjioyan to VP of creative services. He was senior director.

Send submissions to exec@billboard.com.

RAISE FUNDS, MEMORIAL TO FOLLOW

Lynrd Skynyrd and Big & Rich have teamed with two country radio stations in Atlanta, WKFX and WYAY, for an Oct. 7 benefit concert at the HiFi Buys Amphitheatre in Atlanta. All profits from the show will go to the building fund for the 173rd Airborne Brigade National Memorial in Fort Benning, Ga. Also confirmed to perform are the Lost Trailers, Cowboy Troy and John Anderson.

TWO ARTISTS AID ALL THESE PEOPLE

Harry Connick Jr. is raising money via sales of his new single “All These People” for the New Orleans Habitat Musician’s Village. A duet with gospel singer Kim Burrell, the song will be available Aug. 29 at the iTunes Music Store. “All These People” is the lead single from Connick’s new Columbia album, “Oh My Nola,” due this fall.
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