AMY LEE COMES INTO HER OWN >P.32

PLUS MYSPACE'S MP3 MOVE // LIONEL RICHIE: HELLO FIVE SHOWS THAT DIDN'T SHINE // IS THE IRS AFTER YOU?
Dear Ketel One Drinker
Life is a roller coaster.
Be careful not to spill your drink.
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**INDUSTRY INSIGHT**
Billboard executive editor/associate publisher Tamara Conniff will host Music Day at this year’s L.A. Roadshow, set for Sept. 18-21 in Hollywood. For more info, go to roadshowhollywood.com.

**Mobile**
**MUSIC MOBILITY**
Cingular’s new LG CUS00 cell phone comes complete with Billboard Mobile, providing all things music in the palm of your hand. For more information, go to cingular.com.

**Online**
**CHART ATTACK**
TouchTunes Music and Billboard have announced an exclusive agreement to provide all TouchTunes online jukeboxes with current Billboard charts starting Oct. 1. For more information, visit touchtunes.com.

**Blogging**
**THE JADED INSIDER**
A rocker running for president? A top U.K. act waging on the World Cup? It could only be happening in the wide, wide world of blogging. Warning: This stuff’s habit forming. Check it out at jadedinsider.com.

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SEPTEMBER 16, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 3
LET THERE BE MUSIC.
Over a million songs. 5 bucks a month. THIS IS HUGE.
I spent the first few years after college as a through many years. During this time, I learned several lessons about skiing and teaching that I believe also apply to the fledging mobile music market. It’s not as big a stretch as one might think. Like skiing, music is meant to be fun. But even the skiing activities can be rendered frustrating if the initial run is too complicated.

One of the first things you learn as a ski instructor is the concept of “new technique, old terrain, new technique.” In other words, don’t teach a new skiing technique on an unfamiliar trail. It overwhelms them, and in many cases can be frightening.

Instead, teach students a new technique on a trail they’ve skied many times over. Once they’ve mastered the new technique, introduce a new trail.

The same rule applies to the mobile entertainment industry today. Unfortunately, it’s not being applied. According to a recent Entertainment Media Research poll, only 11% of consumers find the idea of downloading full songs to a mobile device appealing, while 32% find it unappealing. Another 44% say they simply don’t interest it.

This data points to more than just a lack of consumer awareness about mobile downloading. It points to a real lack of interest.

However, the idea of a combination mobile phone/MP3 player is incredibly popular. The same survey states that respondents favor a mobile phone with an incorporated MP3 player over a standalone MP3 player 2 to 1, or 46% to 21%. Among teens, the preference shoots to 52%.

Why the discrepancy? Because consumers like the idea of playing their digital files on a mobile phone, but not the idea of buying their digital files on their phone. Give them some time to get comfortable with the phone as a music player first before asking them to pay twice the online per-track fee to download it as well.

Additionally, the best online services, like Pandora and Rhapsody, allow users to discover the music they like on their own. Mobile, conversely, has become a channel for major labels to market and promote their priorities.

Which brings up the concept of commitment. Wireless operators need to truly commit to serving the needs of their subscribers rather than just the wishes of their industry content partners (read: record labels).

Much has been written about labels’ frustrations at Apple’s refusal to negotiate on price or packaging. And several artists remain (Tunes holdouts because Apple won’t relax its stance on selling downloads.

I give credit to Sprint for adding “recommendations” tab to its music service, which will suggest new music based on users’ purchase history. I only hope it remains a pure recommendation engine un- influenced by outside marketing.

If operators want to get serious about selling more mobile content, they’ll listen to their customers more and to their content partners less.

Apple has proved that a commitment to the user experience pays dividends and, by all accounts, we are expecting to see a combo mobile phone/MP3 (dubbed the "Roofer" - as yet another stand-alone place to buy music) at the end of 2006.

Gal Mitchell (303-544-4468) or Charmaine Chaize (214-528-4125)

Is it time for the mobile music market to give up the "terrain;" can it learn from the mobile video market?}

**FEEDBACK**

**FOR THE RECORD**

*Crostown Songs (Billboard, Aug. 12) did not acquire the Rive Droite Music catalog, it acquired 119 songs from the catalog, which Rive Droite reports includes more than 5,000 titles.*

**Greg Linn (Billboard, Sept. 2) should have been identified as VP of marketing at Columbia Records.**

**APologies ALL AROUND**

In an article in the Aug. 20, 2006, issue of Billboard (‘‘Canada Sees Key Hearings on Online Sales’’), I quoted making certain remarks respecting the trustwor- thiness of record labels with respect to mechanical licensing.

I regret having made those remarks and wish to express my sincere apologies to those who were offended by them.

David A. Basskin
Presidential Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency

**THE WISDOM OF SKIBUMS**

Skiing, like music, is fun. But it’s frustrating if the initial run is too complicated.

tracks rather than requiring the purchase of a full album.

Apple does this because, for better or worse, it has a strong belief in what a good user experience should look and feel like. So far, it has been proved right.

Wireless operators, meanwhile, are content to pout to their subscribers to the highest bidder at the expense of the experience. Select ‘‘Buy Ringtones’’ on your mobile phone, and you are given a list of stores, not ringtones. So now the customer has to figure out which store to use, an added element of frustration. We’re 10 years into the mobile content business and users still can’t customize their screens so see the content that actually interests them.

Don’t get me wrong. I don’t blame labels for wanting to use mobile music services as a way to promote new artists and new releases. There’s a tremendous amount of opportunity there. It’s just that promotion shouldn’t come at the expense of the consumer. Otherwise, all you kill is the goose that lays the golden eggs.

I give credit to Sprint for adding a ‘‘recommendations’’ tab to its music service, which will suggest new music based on users’ purchase history. I only hope it remains a pure recommendation engine un- influenced by outside marketing.

If operators want to get serious about selling more mobile content, they’ll listen to their customers more and to their content partners less.

Apple has proved that a commitment to the user experience pays dividends and, by all accounts, we are expecting to see a combo mobile phone/MP3 (dubbed the "Roofer" - as yet another stand-alone place to buy music) at the end of 2006.
"BLACK LABEL SOCIETY'S NEW ALBUM, SHOT TO HELL, KICKS ASS. RIGHT NOW THERE'S NOT ANOTHER ROCK GUITARIST ALIVE WHO CAN GO TOE-TO-TOE WITH ZAKK WYLDE. HE'S IN A CLASS ALL BY HIMSELF." - OZZY OSBOURNE

Black Label Society

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SHOT TO HELL

FEATURING

"CONCRETE JUNGLE"

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* Shot To Hell Headline Tour This Fall.
* Recently launched at Active Rock and already on 54 major market stations and XM and Sirius.
* "Concrete Jungle" video to premiere on HEADBANGERS BALL on 9/16.
* Zakk Wylde featured on the covers of Metal Edge, Guitar World, Guitar Player and Guitar Edge magazines.
* Upcoming features in Revolver, Decibel and Guitar One magazines.

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY "EUROPEAN INVASION" DVD
IN STORES NOW ON EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT
Some say it's a crackdown and others say it's a benefit. But the bottom line is, if the IRS does not get its cut of foreign artists touring the United States, someone will be liable.

After years of what many say was lax oversight, the IRS has begun to let venues and promoters know that they could be on the hook for 30% of gross revenue from foreign artists in the absence of what is known as the Central Withholding Agreement.

If filed, the CWA withholds 30% of the net, as it takes into account income as well as expenses. If a CWA is not filed, the result is far more ominous. "The IRS can claim 30% of the gross." Filing a CWA, then, seems like a no-brainer. The problem is, many artists and even many agents are unaware of the CWA and leery of anything IRS related.

The CWA program is not new—it's simply being pushed much more aggressively by the IRS in recent months. Also known as Revenue Procedure 89-47, it was first instituted in 1989 for artists and athletes. It relates to IRS code 1441, stipulating all foreigners have to pay 30% withholding on all income earned in the United States.

The CWA lets artists provide information telling the IRS how much they would earn at each venue in the United States, including auxiliary income such as sponsorships and merchandising, plus a projected expense budget for that tour.

"Many of these artists and entertainers that were performing in the United States, although they had large amounts of income, also had very valid business expenses incurred in order to earn that income," explains Cecile Glunt, senior stakeholder liaison for the IRS. "We look at the income and the expenses and then we determine the withholding amount based upon the net income at graduated rates."

The CWA is an agreement between three parties: the entertainer or athlete, the person who is designating himself as the withholding agent and the IRS. The withholding agent is the last American holding the gross from a show—this could be the promoter, the venue, the agent or any other company set up to handle the tours of foreign acts, depending on how the tour's economics are structured.

In the absence of a CWA, if an artist does not pay their taxes, the withholding agent can be held holding the bag. "If there is no withholding and the entertainer or athlete does not pay the tax, the withholding agent is not only subject to the tax, but for the penalties and interest," Glunt says. Even if the athlete or entertainer pays the tax later on, the withholding agent can still be held liable for the penalties and interest.

Glunt's department took over responsibility for the education program surrounding 1441 and the CWA in 2004, and this year began reaching out to the touring industry.

On April 24, the IRS sent out letters to U.S. venues with capacities of 5,000 or more, and on April 20 sent out more than 1,300 letters to promoters and agents explaining 1441 and the CWA. A phone forum for interested parties was held June 7.

"We've had a tremendous influx of inquiries and people who didn't have any awareness as to whether they had a requirement to withhold," Glunt says. "Venues in particular were very much unaware of any requirement that they could be considered a withholding agent."

Some in the business have certainly taken notice. "They're reading advertisements for tours that are coming to America and looking to see how they're structured," says Bill Zysblat, continued on >>p10
Shifting The Balance

UMG’s Acquisition Of BMG Music Publishing Could Change The Biz’s Entire Playing Field

Bertelsmann AG’s announcement that Vivendi’s Universal Music Group was the successful bidder for BMG Music Publishing is triggering a seismic ripple effect in the major publishing and recorded music industries. Not only is more money passing hands for a publisher than ever before, but the deal will test competition laws, affect business decisions and perhaps have an impact on legislation in the industry’s digital and mobile future.

UMG, which owns the world’s largest recorded-music division, agreed to acquire BMG Music Publishing for €1.63 billion ($2.09 billion). If approved by European, U.S. and other competition regulators, BMG will be absorbed into Universal Music Publishing Group, currently headed by David Renzer. Until approval, Bertelsmann claims the two publishers, which both tout themselves as the third-largest publisher, will operate separately as competitors.

Some reports indicate combined publishing assets will make UMPG the largest publisher, surpassing EMI Music Publishing, which most experts agree sits at the top. Yet no one has precise financial information on all five major publishers to definitively determine their value. UMG may overcome any antitrust objections by shaking off certain short-term administration contracts or selling certain assets while holding onto the most lucrative copyrights and co-publishing deals.

While the companies are awaiting regulatory approval, BMG Music Publishing chairman/CEO Nicholas Firth says he will stay onboard during the transition period. “It will be business as usual,” he says. But publishing experts know that, at BMG, that won’t be the case.

NICHOLAS FIRTH, left, will stay onboard as BMG Music Publishing CEO through the transition. If the deal is approved, BMG will be absorbed into Universal Music Publishing Group, headed by DAVID RENZER, right.

Undoubtedly BMG will not be acquiring any more catalogs while UMG awaits regulatory approval. And since songwriters’ managers and lawyers typically point to a particular publishing executive with whom they want to work, it is unlikely many songwriters will sign with BMG when they expect a personnel shift in the next several months.

On Capitol Hill, sources say that the world’s largest label and publisher under one corporate umbrella could soften industry infighting that often holds up technological opportunities. One source draws an analogy to Warner Music Group chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr., credited with instilling a couple of years ago that the WMC recorded-music and publishing divisions begin making fair deals rather than slowing down progress over rights and rate disputes.

The source explains that the UMG’s labels are sometimes viewed as publishers’ mightyest enemy, while its publishing unit is perceived as lacking clout to balance interests.

An agreement that lets foreign acts playing the United States pay 30% of their net, not their gross.

from >>p9

co-founder of RZO, a company formed in large part to oversee the international touring finances for acts like the Rolling Stones, U2, Sting and David Bowie. “These things come and go in waves, where rock’n’roll becomes everyone hates the withholding of the IRS,” she says.

But while the withholding is absolutely crippling,” Obviously, venues and promoters who work with a lot of foreign acts are the ones most affected by the IRS rules. But, as Henry Cárdenas, CEO of concert and event promotion firm CMN, says, “I don’t think any artist who has a 20-date concert tour here will stop coming because he has to pay taxes. I don’t know a single country where you don’t pay taxes.”

In fact, many promoters say, most countries are notoriously strict with taxes, and in places, it is common for tax officials to actually go to shows to collect by Sept. 30, up from 155 all of last year, indicating the need for the program.

“I think it’s a way of abiding by the law and it’s fine with me,” says one promoter who is in the process of explaining the CWA to venues and ask them to withhold. “We’re putting the onus on the promoter, the business manager and everybody down the line,” she says. “It’s been a challenge because everyone hates to pay any kind of revenue service,” Cardenas says. “It’s an educational process.”

And welcome one for Cárdenas, who says the CWA liberates both his company and the artists it works with from IRS headaches at the end of the year.

“The artist sleeps better at night,” Cárdenas says. “And so do I.”

With both divisions of equal stature, the source suggests that the parent corporation could insist that each division work toward a lucrative future for the music industry as a whole and find a middle ground on such disputes. If approved, the acquisition is also expected to affect the National Music Publishers’ Assn. board of directors, the most powerful publishers’ group on Capitol Hill. BMG’s Firth and UMG’s Renzer serve on the 18-person board. Firth’s departure will leave an open seat. With four instead of five major publishers, that seat would go to an independent publisher.

Although every board member has an equal vote and the votes lean toward consensus, the replacement could shift agendas depending on personalities involved.

Meanwhile, several publishing experts are still scratching their heads at the purchase price. They say BMG is simply not worth that much money. But value is in the eye of the beholder.

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UpFront

THE MP3 QUESTION
MySpace Turns Up The Format's Volume, But Are Majors Tuning In?

The MP3 format received a big endorsement from MySpace this month, when the social networking giant announced plans to sell music tracks in the open source standard.

No telling how many of the number of services selling MP3s grows, fresh questions swirl in a long-raging debate over the need for labels to continue to sell tracks encoded with digital rights management (DRM) technology.

MySpace becomes the second major retailer of MP3 music, joining Dimensional Audio's eMusic, the current No. 2 to Apple Computer's iTunes Music Store in terms of market share, according to research firm NPD.

MySpace CEO Chris DeWolfe says the company is bypassing DRM to ensure compatibility with the iPod, which claims roughly 70% of the digital music player market.

We wanted our users to be able to play the music on an iPod and virtually any device," DeWolfe says. "The MP3 format affords that." But backing MP3 comes at a price. No DRM means the majority of major label acts using the site likely will forgo making use of The MySpace commerce library this year. Artists will be able to sell albums and individual tracks directly from their MySpace profile pages.

MySpace hopes that the major labels will use the service to tinker with the MP3 format. "Maybe the major labels will put their foot in the water with some of their emerging artists or even some of their larger labels," DeWolfe adds. "A source at a rival major adds: 'We're just not ready to give up on DRM.'"

Labels already regularly feed MP3s to tastemakers for promotional purposes. But getting them to view unprotected files as a commercial product is proving a tougher task.

Some labels suggest that regardless of the renewed hype around MP3s, the industry is too far down the road on DRM to turn back now.

"We built this for that tier of artist that is underserved and has no distribution, but has a place to connect with their fans," says Rusty Rueff, CEO of Snoop, MySpace's technology partner in the venture.

San Francisco-based Snoop's digital distribution services company from Napster creator Shawn Fanning, is powering the back end of the MySpace service. Bands selling through MySpace must first register their content with Snoop, so the company can fingerprint songs for tracking purposes and block unauthorized content sales.

Even if the major labels don't participate in selling MP3s, DeWolfe acknowledges that the store is likely to spur debate over the need for DRM at all levels of the music business. "To the degree we can shape the attitudes of younger consumers and conditions to pay for their music, we can help move the debate toward MP3," he says.

But DeWolfe says the company isn't necessarily opposed to DRM either. "This is just the first iteration of the service," he cautions. "I don't think you'll ever see a consensus out there where all the major labels will be comfortable with the MP3 format...We will be definitely exploring different DRM solutions with Snoop.

Still, even rival services that already use DRM are holding out hope that they might yet get in on the MP3 business, too.

Yahoo Music—a vocal proponent of selling MP3s—in July teamed with Epic Records to offer personalized versions of Jessica Simpson's Record's "A Public Affair" for $1.99 without any DRM protection. And Yahoo has been surveying its music subscribers on whether they would pay more for tracks without DRM limitations, listing the proposed price as $1.09, up from the standard 99 cents.

Likewise, new ad-supported peer-to-peer services also hope to offer tracks as MP3s, even as they prepare for launch with DRM-protected files.

David Pakman president, CEO of New York-based eMusic, says the issue is not whether DRM is good or bad, but rather interoperability with digital devices, namely the iPod.

"There are only two online stores that can sell to the iPod user, us and Apple, and that contributes to our success," Pakman says.

Additional reporting by Susan Butler and Ed Christman in New York.

![MP3 Format](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**eMusic: Already An MP3 Player**

When MySpace launches its music commerce solution later this year, it won't be the only one selling MP3s. The social networking site will find itself playing catch-up with the current leading retailer of MP3 music from indie artists and labels—eMusic.

A major advantage in Apple's iTunes, eMusic leads with the pack with 13% market share according to NPD; Apple's iTunes claims 60%. But with no major label content, eMusic is chasing a different consumer trend, with a target demographic of 25-54. eMusic executives are betting the youth-centric MySpace will also be after different music fans.

eMusic president/CEO David Pakman isn't expecting any quick shifts in the major labels' MP3 policy. But he says that if experimentation with MP3 sales through MySpace does happen, "there is going to be a lot of pressure from everyone else who wants to do MP3s, us included."

Credit a big part of eMusic's position among the non-Apple digital music retailers to its ability to sidestep the DRM problems that plague other iTunes competitors. The company aggressively markets itself via the iPod accessory market, and eMusic executives say selling in an iPod-compatible format is a key factor in driving consumers to subscribe. The strategy is helping fuel sales and subscriber growth. Privately-held eMusic's annual subscriber base has doubled to 120,000 subscribers by the end of 2005—a 63% increase from when Dimensional Associates bought the company in 2003, according to a confidential report obtained by Billboard.

The document, on investment bank letterhead and dated during the second quarter of 2006, states that eMusic claimed 120,000 subscribers at the end of 2005, an increase of 77% from 2004. The company shifted its existing subscription model in October 2005. Current-year subscriber figures were not included, but eMusic now claims around 200,000 subscribers. The report also says the company posted an annual loss in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of slightly less than $6 million in 2005.

Executives at eMusic declined to comment on company finances, but the loss could be due to reinvestment. The company in recent years has pumped money into everything from marketing to design and editorial content.

Pakman says the new MP3-based models will work more the likely the major labels may be open to working with MP3s over the long term.

"If MySpace is very successful and you add its numbers onto eMusic's numbers and it starts looking really meaningful, does that help them say, ‘Maybe we need to look at this and make a change?’ he asks. "I would hope so."

—Brian Garrity, Susan Butler and Ed Christman
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Aerie Partners With Artists On The Verge

New Music Helps Apparel Chain Connect With Customers

Victoria's Secret has done it. So has Juicy Couture. Now, along comes American Eagle Outfitters with its own line of intimate apparel and dorm wear for the 15- to 25-year-old set, aerie by American Eagle. The "pay-to-play" line takes our girls from dorm room to classroom to coffee shop," AE chief marketing officer Kathy Savitt says.

To help introduce the just-launching aerie line (the first sub-brand from the popular retailer), AE created a new-music program: the aerie Artists Music Series. In-store and online, this initiative spotlights emerging, independent artists, offering aerie customers exclusive content (including special-edition CDs and free music and video downloads).

"This program helps our customers discover new, emerging artists—artists that are reflective of our customers' passions," Savitt says. "Similarly, the series helps the artists discover a new audience."

Say hello to New West Records' Ben Lee and Emd/Astralworks' Sia, the initial artists featured in the aerie program. Two exclusive tracks (and their accompanying videos, paid for by AE)—Lee's "Since I Met You" and Sia's "Pictures"—are available as free downloads at aerie.com. Online content also includes artist interviews and live concert footage.

The artists' music and videos will be heavily featured in the nearly 800 AE stores in North America. Additionally, the stores will sell special-edition CDs from each artist.

Tina Wells, CEO of New York-based youth-gear marketing agency Buzz Marketing Group, is intrigued by what AE is doing with its aerie line. "They're using music as a conduit between their customers and the new loungewear line," she says. "By using cool sounds from emerging artists, the aerie and AE brands speak volumes—and stay in the spotlight."

Lee views this partnership as a great opportunity. When AE executives first approached him, he recalls them saying, "We want to help you and align yourself with you. You represent what our brand is about. I liked their honesty and where they were coming from."

Lee also liked the potential to reach an additional, new audience. "The icing on the cake, for him, was the exclusive content. "It's one more creative way to share my music."

On Sept. 6, Lee was scheduled to perform at the AE Union Square store in New York. Sia is scheduled to make a similar appearance at an AE store later this year.

Steve Rosenblatt, head of marketing at New West, says there will be much activity on the Internet connecting the dots between Lee and his music and what he's doing on the branding side. "It's exciting for us," he notes. "With all the back-to-school activity in the malls and online, a new audience will learn about Ben."

With Lee, though, the label has scored a double whammy. In addition to his music being heard in a new Dell TV spot, the 15-30 and 60-second ads feature the sounds of "Catch My Disease,"

the lead single from Lee's nearly 2-year-old disc, "Awake Is the New Sleep."

Since the Dell campaign launched Aug. 1, New West has watched digital sales of "Catch My Disease" rise sharply. For the week ending Aug. 27, the track amassed digital sales approaching 1,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan. For the week ending Aug. 27, the track sold 3,000 downloads.

In total, the track has sold 62,000 downloads, while "Awake Is the New Sleep" has sold 55,000 units, making it Lee's biggest-selling album.

"Thanks to the ad, the song exploded online," Rosenblatt says. "Now, with both campaigns happening at the same time, we have lots to leverage."

So it's not surprising to learn that New West is reenvisioning "Catch My Disease" to radio. 

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- DVD of the Year
- Television Technology of the Year
- Best Interactive Television Programming
- Most Innovative Use of Technology for Advertising
- Best Video On-demand Service

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- Best Use of Technology by an Artist
- Best Radio Service
- Best Downloadable or Subscription Music Service
- Best Digital Music Community
- Music DVD of the Year

**GAMES**
- Game Innovation of the Year
- Console Game of the Year
- Mobile Phone Game of the Year
- Casual Game of the Year
- Multiplayer Game of the Year
- Advergame of the Year
- Best Use of Sound in a Game

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**On The Road**

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Halloween Festival In Las Vegas Touts Killers, Widespread Panic, Petty And Others

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**IEG/BILLBOARD TOUR SPONSORSHIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPONSOR/TOUR</th>
<th>ESTIMATED FEE</th>
<th>LEVERAGE</th>
<th>DEALMAKERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nintendo/América</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td>Nintendo is using the fourth iteration of its proprietary music tour to once again play up the interaction between gamers and music and demonstrate new video systems including the Nintendo DS Lite and upcoming Wii console. The company is promoting the tour through a dedicated Web site and a running promotion with iHeartRadio, the tour's exclusive retail partner. IEG Concepts executes.</td>
<td>Rich Levy, senior VP of custom sponsorship and events, IEG; Ben Berman, senior VP of marketing, Nintendo of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RadioShack</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>Consumer electronics retailer aligned with the Rolling Stones to repackage its brand and gain a marketing platform to drive store traffic and lift sales. RadioShack will activate the tour throughout the fourth quarter with ticket promotions,以及其他 activation elements inclusive of music downloads, a cross-promotion with Sirius Satellite Radio and employee sales incentives programs. It will also broadcast footage of one of the band's concerts in Japan through in-store LCD TVs.</td>
<td>Jon Coleman, president, Entertainment Marketing Communications International; Michael Cohl; Ronn Hannon, VP of marketing, RadioShack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki</td>
<td>$750,000</td>
<td>American division of Suzuki Motor signed its first-ever music sponsorship to help its automotive division tap into the broad reach of the company's more recognized music acts, as well as promote the Suzuki model line during the long-range tour of its new SX4 crossover vehicle. The company will activate with an online sweepstake offering the chance to win either an SX4 or one of two Suzuki motorcycle models. Additionally, Suzuki plans to leverage the partnership to drive dealer traffic by bringing the band out for appearances at auto and motorcycle dealerships, and will display vehicles at each concert stop. Kallas will be included in all four marketing materials and promotional ads.</td>
<td>Kattie Armbrust, commercial account manager, Williams &amp; Partners; Shane Hood, partners, Platform Artist Management; Gene Bremers, VP of marketing for Suzuki automotive operations, American Suzuki Motor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of nighttime concerts, will present a variety of acts Oct. 27-31 at marquee venues throughout the city. Onboard are Phil Lesh & Trey Anastasio; Dave Matthews & Tim Reynolds; the String Cheese Incident; Anastasio with Robert Randolph & the Family Band; Medeski, Martin & Wood with Maceo Parker; and STS9. In addition to their performances at Sam Boyd Stadium, Panic, Marley and Williams will headline these nighttime events. The venues used for Vegoose at Night, which require a separate ticket, are the Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel, the Orleans Arena, the MGM Grand Garden Arena and House of Blues.

The event’s central complex at Sam Boyd Stadium—which includes the 30-acre Star Nursery Field with its mountainous backdrop—provides a festival setting that could hardly be compared to the rural Tennessee campout of Bonnaroo. But like Bonnaroo, Vegoose offers a combination of artiness and whimsy that takes the event to another level. Building on the debut event’s extracurricular activities, like the Impersonators Cafe, the Wedding Chapel and the Great Evil Pumpkin, producers have a few more tricks up their sleeves this year, Capps says. “As with Bonnaroo, we’ve always got these special, some of them non-musical, side amusement areas that feature different things,” he says. “We’re really excited about some of the new visual elements and special attractions we’ll have. Vegoose was such an exciting event last year, we can’t wait to get this one up and running.”

Capps says a few more announcements will be coming in terms of the night show lineup, and several other acts are being added to the main bill. “All of the information isn’t quite out there yet, but it’s going to be a great event,” he says. “There’s nothing quite like the combination of Las Vegas, Halloween and this music festival. It’s going to be fun.”

When On The Road spoke with Capps he had just returned from vacation in Iceland. “Iceland was amazing,” he says. “It was really nice to be off the grid for a little more than a week. Everybody’s trying to recharge their batteries because there’s a lot to do here in the next few weeks.”

THE KILLERS return home to Las Vegas for the Vegoose festival Halloween weekend.
1. Tim McGraw & Faith Hill - $2,837,014
2. Celine Dion - $2,552,336
3. CeeLo Green - $2,488,845
4. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM - $2,459,277
5. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM - $2,039,161
6. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DELIRIUM - $1,718,288
7. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM - $1,619,793
8. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM - $1,307,952
9. MARIKH CAREY, SEAN PAUL - $1,300,140
10. TOOL, IIS - $1,275,618

**TOUR:**

**ARTIST(S)**

1. Tim McGraw & Faith Hill
2. Celine Dion
3. CeeLo Green
4. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM
5. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM
6. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM
7. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM
8. MARIKH CAREY, SEAN PAUL
9. TOOL, IIS

**VENUE:**

1. Mandalay Bay Events Center, Las Vegas, Sept. 14
2. Celine Dion at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Aug. 23-27
4. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM - NIT House, Hershey, Pa., Aug. 25-27 includes matinee
5. Madison Square Garden, New York, Aug. 25
6. Toyota Center, Houston, TX, Aug. 26-27
7. CIRCUE DU SOLEIL'S DÉLIRIUM - New York, Pa., Aug. 26-27 includes matinee
8. Madison Square Garden, New York, Aug. 25
9. The Gorge, George, WA, Aug. 18

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The SpiralFrog Deals Could Wind Up Costing Merchants Big-Time—Even Ones That Are Now Thriving

When SpiralFrog announced it had struck a licensing deal with Universal Music Group, insiders at the major were surprised that the mainstream media played up the story in a big way.

While executives at the new initiative and UMG may refer to SpiralFrog as an ad-supported or no-cost digital music service that will compete to transform labels for music from revenue derived from selling advertising, the message that came through loud and clear in the mainstream media is that consumers will be able to get music for FREE, and legally too. That indeed is big news.

It remains to be seen if SpiralFrog will work, and what impact a successful launch will have on the other various traditional, digital and envisioned future revenue streams of record labels, but music merchants who sell music for a living wonder if SpiralFrog has already opened up a Pandora’s box.

Traditional merchants already know how hard it is to compete against the online stores’ $9.99 digital album, the $5.99 per CD price offered by the YourMusic.com record club and the loss-leader tactics employed by big boxes. But Retail Track wonders how much those big-box and nontraditional merchandisers will like competing against FREE.

A traditional music merchandiser is too busy worrying about the implications for his own business to consider the impact that FREE will have on other merchants. He writes Retail Track that “with our industry in a distressed condition and spiraling downward,” merchants who’ve invested a considerable amount of funds and carry deeper catalog or specialize in certain genres are the ones showing success nowadays.

But he asks, “With UMG’s new business venture offering their entire catalog available for free, do you think it will help the catalog and/or genre-based merchants?”

While that merchant didn’t answer his own question, the implication is clear: FREE will undermine the business models that make customers pay for music.

For his part, Universal Music Group Distribution president Jim Urie gave a statement on the SpiralFrog deal. “We are being compensated for these downloads and in all cases we expect to be compensated for downloads of our content.”

But that statement doesn’t address retail worries. On the other hand, the SpiralFrog deal suggests UMG is worried about monetizing the potential revenue it is losing to unautho-

rized file-sharing, but less concerned that FREE will further truncate the revenue that the labels get from traditional sellers of CDs.

Besides, retailers should be ready for the ad-supported digital model because the majors have been talking about that possibility for almost five years now, label executives say.

Moreover, they say retailers’ worries are misplaced because it’s unclear if the service will be successful or if it will open the door for other major labels. At press time, EMI Music Publishing signed on to make its catalog available to SpiralFrog. But in a FREE environment, do you really need all the major to launch and keep the consumer coming back for more? I think not.

Still, the success or failure of SpiralFrog may hinge on how willing consumers are to deal with the inconvenience of viewing 90 seconds of commercials to get a download.

“I question whether the advertising will be effective with multitask computers,” Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese says. That means if the advertisers don’t feel they are getting their money’s worth, they will stop supporting SpiralFrog.

Dreese says an even bigger question needs to be answered, in order for ad-supported models like SpiralFrog to be considered a success. “Is the artist well-served by vehicles like SpiralFrog?” he asks.

In other words, the revenue streams and profitability from ad-supported business models will have to be compared with the profitability of other models. And if found lacking they’ll lose the industry’s licensing of music.

But don’t forget that the SpiralFrog announced today can look very different tomorrow. For example, SpiralFrog can always convert its model to a hybrid service by monetizing advanced features. For example, the model currently planned only allows users to download tracks to a computer, then transfer them only once to a Windows Media-compatible portable device.

However, SpiralFrog, with the labels’ blessing, can always offer the capability of burning CDs and charging for it. Or it might consider converting to a subscription-based service one day offering advanced pay services beyond the free download.

But ultimately, whether or not consumers embrace the planned offering or whatever it becomes, SpiralFrog still leaves the FREE word closely associated with music. Even if it fails, consumers will remember when they got music for FREE, further undermining the perceived value of paid models.
And The Legacy Continues....

September 9, 1941 - December 10, 1967

The family and friends of Otis Redding thank Billboard Magazine for the inception of The Otis Redding Legacy Award and we congratulate Jermaine Dupri, the award’s first recipient, whose determination, outstanding talent and musical contributions exemplify those of Otis Redding.
Disconnected
Portable Content Strategies To Find A Significant Audience

Despite all the dramatic advancements that the mobile entertainment industry has made, there is still one important ingredient it has not obtained: customers. There has been a flurry of content-related dealmaking and partnership activity in the last year between those who create content and those who distribute it. Granted, this was a necessary step in the development of the mobile entertainment industry, but the focus now is moving to selling this newly acquired content properly.

“The content is there, and there’s plenty to choose from,” says Richard Silber, an industry consultant who formerly led Accenture’s mobile media division. “It’s just not intuitive to discover or actually purchase [the content]. It’s about making the discovery easier and making the transaction seamless.”

Mobile tracking firm M:Metrics has determined from data collected from three-month periods ending this July that ringtones—by far the most popular form of mobile content—are bought by only about 10% of the total user base. In addition, 2% have bought games, 3.5% subscribed to a ringtone service or downloaded a wallpaper image, 1.5% watched paid video and 0.2% downloaded a full song. Overall, about 28 million, or 15%, of the 190 million U.S. wireless subscribers, have downloaded some type of multimedia content.

By any definition, that is a niche market. Granted, it is still early in the evolution of the industry. M:Metrics is quick to point out that these figures triple when narrowed to consumers with more advanced phones and networks better optimized for multimedia content.

But hand in hand with technological evolution is a growing perception that the industry must develop a better way of selling all this product.

“People are throwing a lot of things at the wall to see what will stick as opposed to taking a step back and asking themselves what’s the best way to consume content from an end-user perspective,” says DP Venkatesh, CEO of mPortal, a mobile services application provider. “There seems to be an over-emphasis on making more content available rather than relevant content.”

The biggest concern is that each type of mobile service—ringtones, games, video—is sold separately. Consumers who buy a ringtone of a given artist, for example, may have no idea that the same artist may have a mobile game for sale or that the artist’s music video is available for download. Record labels, for instance, are keen to offer what EMI senior VP of digital and mobile strategy Tom Ryan calls “mobile albums,” a variety of artist-related applications combined into a single package.

“Fans want to buy content based on the artist, not based on a specific product.”

—Tom Ryan, EMI

News Corp’s Fox Mobile launched a direct-to-consumer play called Mobi Zoo this spring. It’s a place where fans of “Family Guy,” for example, can purchase voice tones, wall papers and other content based on the popular adult animated show.

“This is expected to dominate the discussion at CTIA—The Wireless Association’s Wireless I.T. & Entertainment conference, set for Sept. 12-14 in Los Angeles. Billboard is hosting mobile entertainment event MECCA Sept. 11, in association with CTIA.

Bottom line: Mobile is the key to unlocking the potential of the wireless market for those who can adapt to the pace of change and move like theying.

—Antony Bruno

AOL Music

Top Songs

1. Paris Hilton 1,691,228
2. Cassie 1,577,067
3. Dainty Kane 1,476,197
4. JoJo 1,408,423
5. Jessica Simpson 1,183,202
6. Justin Timberlake 1,139,192
7. Fergie 1,111,465
8. Ciara 845,867
9. Lil Jon 830,600
10. Cherish 777,394

Top Videos

1. Ciara 1,175,715
2. Rihanna 1,078,018
3. John Mark 767,184
4. Nelly Furtado 677,864
5. The Pussycats 479,725
6. Justin Timberlake 390,495
7. Fergie 337,842
8. The Fray 305,932
9. Christina Aguilera 301,582
10. Cassie 300,993

M:Metrics estimates that there are 5,000 ringtones available per artist.![Image 0x0 to 787x971]
For the past six years, the most influential decision-makers in the music industry have gathered at Digital Media Wire's annual Digital Music Forum in New York to network, do deals and share ideas about the future of the music business. Participants have described the event as a "melting pot of the best of the best in digital music" where ideas are shared and opinions don't go unchallenged. It is with this illustrious background that we are pleased to announce the launch of Digital Music Forum West at the Bel Age Hotel in West Hollywood, October 4-5, 2006.

### KEYNOTES

- **Mic Harcourt**
  Music Director & Host of Morning Becomes Eclectic
  KCRW

- **Thomas Hesse**
  President
  Global Digital Business
  Sony BMG Music Entertainment

- **Jim Griffin**
  Managing Director
  OneHouse LLC
  Co-Founder, Pho Group

- **John T. Frankenheimer**
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  Digital Media Wire

- **Ted Cohen**
  Managing Partner
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### Day 1

- **Panel 1:** The State of the Digital Union
- **Panel 2:** The Social Networking Phenomenon & Music
- **Panel 3:** (Track 1) The Future of Radio
  (Track 2) Open Mic with Digital Music Industry Leaders
- **Panel 4:** (Track 1) Advertising, Promotions & Digital Music
  (Track 2) PassAlong Networks Demo Presentation & Roundtable
- **Panel 5:** (Track 1) Broadband Video & Music
  (Track 2) The Evolution of Peer-to-Peer & Music

### Day 2

- **Panel 1:** The Future of Mobile Music
- **Panel 2:** Digital Media & the Live Music Experience

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Urban Renaissance

Warner/Chappell Beefs Up In Hip-Hop And R&B

Just two years ago, Warner/Chappell Music was practically out of the new urban music market. An ownership change and layoffs at one of the world’s largest publishers left a skeleton staff with little direction or dead-making money. Which makes its recent success all the sweeter: A couple of weeks ago, BMI named Warner/Chappell—for the first time—urban music publisher of the year at its sixth annual Urban Music Awards.

“When I arrived, we had very few resources in the urban division,” says Warner/Chappell president/CEO Richard Blackstone, who came onboard last year. “Consequently there was less focus than I would like to see.”

Blackstone formed a bond with Chris Hicks, an Atlanta-based entrepreneur who was already working for the publisher as VP of A&R, urban.

“We needed a moment to create a rhythm of working together,” Blackstone says. “I realized we came from similar backgrounds. Very quickly we got a shorthand going, built up and developed a trust with one another. It allowed us to move really quickly into a ‘go mode.’

That mode resulted in an especially strong string of hits for Warner/Chappell urban music writers. Among the chart-toppers were Mariah Carey’s “Don’t Forget About Us,” co-written and co-produced by Bryan-Michael Cox; Nelly Furtado’s “Promiscuous” featuring Timbaland, co-written and co-produced by Tim “Timbaland” Mosley and Floyd Nathaniel “Danjahandsz” Hills; and some songs from marquee songwriter writers signed in the past couple of years: T.I.’s “What You Know” and “Why You Wanna,” co-written by Clifford “T.I.” Harris; and Yung Joc’s “It’s Goin’ Down,” co-written by Jasiel “Yung Joc” Prather.

The Warner/Chappell strategy is pretty simple: create a good atmosphere to develop talent, pitch great songs, build on strong relationships and be aggressive.

“We’re a big company, but we have a very small company mentality,” Hicks says. “We’re easily accessible, and we listen to everything. Everything doesn’t always fit with what we’re trying to do, but our door is always open.”

Hicks says his focus is on dedicated songwriters. “As much as I believe in getting behind talented people, I really like to get into writers who have their feet firmly on the ground and they steadfastly want to do this more than anything else on the planet.”

Today, the Warner/Chappell roster of writers reads like a who’s who of rap and hip-hop, including Dr. Dre, Timbaland, Cox, T.I., Lil Wayne, Yung Joc and Young Dro.

“We’re establishing a boutique publishing culture, which means hands-on service,” Blackstone says. “For developing artists, producers and writers, we’re going to track their career. We’ll sit down and have a discussion on where we think it should be. It means involving that person going through exercises, putting them together with people who they may not think is a perfect match, trying to find out where they can grow, what their direction should be and what are their strengths and weaknesses—working to their strengths, developing their weaknesses and supporting their weaknesses.”

This seems to attract young writer/producer teams. Eric Hudson recently signed with the publisher. He co-produced and co-wrote Omarion’s “Entourage” and is now writing and producing with Mary J. Blige and Mario.

“It feels like a family,” Hudson says as the reason he chose Warner/Chappell. “Everyone I work with makes me feel like a little brother.”

Blackstone plans to continue this boutique approach to developing urban music talent.

“Not only does everyone make more money and become a success, it actually feels better,” Blackstone says. “It feels like you’re really winning, and everyone is winning together. When magic happens, that’s what keeps me going.”

When it comes to publishing, a song is a song whether it’s rock, pop or urban, right? Not necessarily. Publishers who have been able to tap into the chart-topping market of urban music—hip hop, rap and R&B—didn’t do so just by offering songwriters a standard publishing advance on royalties or working the songs like a rock or pop catalog. Urban music publishing has its own set of rules, from calculating the investment risk to attracting writer/producers who are also savvy business entrepreneurs.

Rules Of The Game

The Ins And Outs Of Urban Publishing

When urban deals, you have more of a shot at winning,” says Platt, executive VP of urban music. “In other genres, it’s either hit big or lose big. With urban deals, some you win big, some you make out OK, but if you’re signing the right things, it’s rare you ever really lose.”

This is because urban music is so collaborative. With multiple writers, producers, artists and featured guest artists, there are many more opportunities for an urban songwriter—who is often also a producer, artist or both—to have hits in songs on several albums the same year.

And publishers are stepping up to take on a stronger role in this collaborative process.

“Up until recently, an urban publisher’s role was more about putting people who were already established in the urban market together,” says Kenny Meiselas, a partner with Grumman, Indursky & Shire in New York. “It was more about chasing the hot producer instead of developing a new, unknown songwriter. Now more publishers are signing unknown songwriter/producers.”

In the early days of hip-hop, the urban music publisher was greatly underutilized, says Meiselas, who represents Sean “Puffy” Combs, Mary J. Blige, Mario and others. Publishers essentially sat in the back seat while producers drove the music, he says. “Today, even the great, well-known producers like the Pharrells or the Kanye Wests really need a publisher to help them on songs.”

When calculating which songwriter/producers may be the best investment, urban music publishers don’t have to rely only on their ears and gut feeling. They have plenty of indicators to figure out how well a new songwriter/producer or artist may do, says Chris Hicks, VP of urban A&R for Warner/Chappell Music.

Hicks points to companies like Sho’Nuff Records, Grand Hustle and Block Entertainment in Atlanta that consistently get their records a head start, giving labels and publishers an indication of how well the songwriter/producer will do. Much more than radio stations broadcasting other types of music, urban stations often play mix tapes and other recordings by local producers and artists.

“As an effective music publisher, you kind of watch and track those movements to find out how much fire is really under those records based on radio play, media and so on,” Hicks says. “What makes it tougher on [rock music publishers] is that they don’t have the urban independent picture, i.e., radio and statistics, to back up their signings. So a lot of what they’re doing is really based on sheer gut feeling.”

All of this information is used to make the right deal—but not only by publishers. Songwriters, producers and artists are typically well-informed about the value and profitability.

“The interesting thing about the urban world is that it’s very much about business,” says David Mamel, president of Zomba Music Publishing. “Everybody understands their business, their numbers, their bank account situation. That is not necessarily true in other genres.”

Yet even when publishers are ready to spend money to sign urban writers, breaking into the market is not easy to do.

First, a publisher has to work with credible artists, writers and producers to attract top urban music creators, says Danny Strick, Sony/ATV Music Publishing U.S. president. Next, the publisher has to establish a track record.

“The urban community is really word-of-mouth,” Strick says. “As soon as you’re hot, everybody knows it. When a company is doing well—is active on the charts—people notice that.”

Then the publisher has to find a way into the creative team that emanates around a production company and artists associated with the company, like 50 Cent and the G Unit camp.

Publishers who successfully work with anyone associated with a camp have a good chance of working with others on that team. And just looking at the top of the charts in any given week will show just how well that teamwork pays off.
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MADRID—Four years on, Rock En N is back in the U.S. Organizers of the annual multi-country series of Spanish-language rock events last held a show in the United States in October 2002, but declined to include U.S. dates between 2003 and 2005. Blamed were a dearth of local sponsorship and a lack of interest in rock en Español.

Now the October opening of new Miami venue the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts (initially named the Miami Performing Arts Center) has led to a low-key revival of the U.S. leg of Rock En N’s tour of the Americas. “It was the perfect opportunity to return to the U.S.,” Rock En N coordinator Xavier Novaes says. “This will be our first ever concert in Miami.”

If the Oct. 28 show proves successful, Novaes adds: “[t]e could facilitate our presence each year in the States. Let’s hope the impact reaches far—to New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and so on.”

Novaes is event organizer at Fundación Autor, the nonprofit promotional arm of Spanish authors’ and publishers’ society SGAE. Fundación Autor launched Rock En N in 2000 to promote Spanish-language rock music through U.S. and Latin American concerts. SGAE says it funds Rock En N through Fundación Autor as an educational exercise rather than a financial one, although shows also rely on local sponsorship from individual territories. The MPAC Foundation, for example, is funding acts’ hotel and local transport costs plus fees for the Miami concerts. Fundación Autor pays for flights and visas.

“We are delighted at the MPAC collaboration,” Novaes adds, “and hope it will lead to a definitive return of Rock En N to the States.”

Rock En N generally visits six or seven countries, with Fundación Autor inviting Spanish and Latin American artists to play different dates and local acts added to perform in their own home territories. In 2002, Rock En N shows took place in Anaheim, Calif., and Los Angeles (Billboard, Oct. 12, 2002) but the following year, no U.S. shows were scheduled. Novaes complained then that domestic media was “turning a deaf ear to rock en Español.” (Billboard, Nov. 15, 2003.)

The Fundación Autor executive says he saw an opportunity to try again when he learned the Carnival Center’s inauguration would coincide with this year’s tour and swiftly contacted venue operator the Miami Performing Arts Center Foundation.

The Miami tour opener at the center’s 2,500-capacity theatre features Grammy Award-winning Colombian duo Aterciopelados (National Records), Barcelona-based multi-ethnic group Macaco (EMI) and Miami-based Spanish-born soft-rock artist Javier Garcia (Surco) — “a fair representation of what is understood in Miami as rock en Español,” Novaes says.

The tour ends Nov. 11 in Buenos Aires after passing through Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay. Artists are still being selected for the Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina dates.

Novaes acknowledges the Miami concert could be a challenge, noting that rock en Español is more associated with such music centers as Los Angeles or New York whereas Miami is more familiar with pop/genre genres.

In Miami, Latin rock continues to be a small movement, says Hinsul Lazo of H&L Distributors. Sales of the genre have grown for Lazo, who has a distribute a brick-and-mortar store—Museo del Disco—in the city. But Lazo attributes those sales to new immigrants who yearn for the sounds of their native countries, as opposed to a home-grown movement.

“Nationally, there are pockets of sales for Latin rock,” Lazo says. “New Jersey, New York, Los Angeles. But we’re not talking even close to mainstream [Latin]. Again, it all goes back to radio,” he says, noting that there are no full-time Latin rock stations in the United States.

Fernando Gonzalez, curator of jazz programming at the Carnival Center, says that “precisely one of the reasons Rock En N has not been in Miami is that there has not been a place [to play]. For rock here, the options often have been either the (20,000-capacity American Airlines Arena) or a small theater or club.”

Madrid-based EMI Spain president Manolo Diaz admits Madrid itself “is not a good market for Latin rock.” Diaz returned to Spain two years ago after 16 years as a record label executive in Miami, including two years chairing the Latin Recording Academy. Despite his comments, he calls Rock En N’s U.S. return “excellent news.”

Macaco’s latest album, “Ingravitto,” was released in March in Spain, where Diaz says it has sold 22,000 units and rolled out in several continental European markets in July. If the response to Rock En N is favorable, he says, “we could even consider a U.S. release for ‘Ingravitto.’”

The trade value of the Australian recorded-music market rose to $224 million Australian ($170.2 million) in the six months through June 2006, up 5.8% compared with the corresponding period in 2005.

According to the Australian Recording Industry Ass., digital sales leapt 394.9% to 9.4 million tracks, with a trade value of $12.2 million Australian ($9.2 million), up 30.6%. That performance is widely attributed to the launch of Apple Computer’s iTunes Music Store in Australia last October.

CD album shipments rose 17.0% during the first half to 20.4 million units, although retail price pressure meant value rose only 4.7% to $185.4 million Australian ($140.9 million). In a statement, ARIA said it remained optimistic “that a strong release schedule for the remainder of 2006 will ensure that this year continues to be positive for the industry.”

The U.K. government’s Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has referred the planned acquisition of a majority stake in U.K. venue operator Academy Music Holdings to antitrust body the Competition Commission (CC).

Hamsard, an investment vehicle jointly controlled by Live Nation (Music) U.K. and Gaiety Investments, the Irish music promotion company, announced in August that it intended to buy a 51% stake in Academy Music, jointly held by U.K. investment fund companies RDF Partners and F&C Private Equity Trust (Billboard, Aug. 12).

In a statement, OFT CEO John Fingleton said the body had considered the effect such a purchase would have on competition among indoor live music venues in London.

“Non-competitor third-party concerns about this merger were coherent and consistent,” Singleton said, “and supported the OFT’s analysis.”

The CC has a 24-week period in which it must undertake its investigation and report its findings.

The new service, powered by French digital service provider Mobilivitaj, allows customers to buy ringtones from EMI’s catalog for €3 ($3.03) each. The service will additionally provide customers with mini-biographies, tour dates, album covers and “anything that can add value to the customer experience.” EMI France deputy director/VP of strategy and development Morvan Boury says. Video content should be available shortly, but full-track downloads are not planned in the short term. Boury says EMI Mobile will push current hit repertoire and new acts.

The deal extends an agreement between the two firms, dating from 2000, that covered just Norway and Sweden. The 10 territories covered by the new deal include the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

Musicbrigade opened for business in 1999 as a video-only streaming service. The company now boasts a catalog of more than 13,000 videos licensed for streaming or download. The company last month clinched a Pan-European content deal with EMI Music.

The facility included two retail units and a basement unit equipped with 142 data burners. Local authorities estimate that the operation could generate more than $4.3 million Canadian ($3.8 million) in annual retail sales.

“This is the largest lab we have ever seen in Canada,” Toronto-based CMPDA investigator Jim Sweeney says.

RADIO NEWSER
Make the Right Connections at this year's Mobile Entertainment, Content, Commerce and Applications Conference!

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS (subject to change)
Greg Ballard, CEO, Glu Mobile
Ted Cohen, Partner, TAG Strategic
Kristen Lindsey Cook, Dir of Multi Platform, Fuse
Stephen Davis, President, Intomedia
Rajesh Khara, Director of Mobile Solutions, RealNetworks
Jeremy Laws, SVP, Universal Pictures Mobile Division
Steve Lenner, CEO, Wind-up Entertainment
Anil Malhotra, Chief Alliance Officer, Banga
Brian Palmieri, Senior VP, New Media at CTIA Wireless Association
Lindsey Ballard, VP, Mobile Solutions, RealNetworks
Ray Cohen, Partner, Rapp Collins
Najarian, Senior VP, and Maria Makris, Director of I.T., The Doors
Steve Palmieri, EVP, Beijing Wireless
John Naganian, Senior VP, New Media at CTIA Entertainment Television
Jason Maltz, VP, Mobile Marketing, MTV

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES
Ray Manzarek, The Doors
Paul Reddick, HP Business Development & Product Innovation, AOL Mobile
Mike Wehres, Chief Technical Evangelist, AOL Mobile

SPECIAL LIVE PERFORMANCE BY Interscope Recording Artist ELAN

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**FESTS OF HONOR**

Glastonbury Takes A Holiday, But U.K. Outdoor Summer Concert Biz Stays Strong

LONDON—As festivalgoers scrape the mud from their boots at the end of another typically damp British summer, promoters of the big events are celebrating a banner year in the absence of the Glastonbury Festival.

But even with Glastonbury’s vacation, many new events found business challenging, raising fears they may not survive next summer, when the juggernaut of U.K. outdoor music events is set to return, bigger than ever.

“In terms of income for festivals, it must have been the highest ever, even without Glastonbury,” says Martin Elbourne, music director of the legendary festival, which raked in more than £15 million ($28 million) from ticket sales alone in 2005.

His sentiments are echoed by Live Nation U.K. managing director Stuart Galbraith, who boasts, “The festivals scene is very, very healthy, without a shadow of a doubt.”

But traffic to the numerous upstart and “boutique” events wasn’t as hasty, promoters confirm. “It was a tough year actually. It certainly wasn’t a slam-dunk,” says Melvin Benn, managing director of London-based Mean Fiddler Music Group, which also handles operational management for Glastonbury. “A number of festivals got off the blocks this year thinking it would be very easy with Glastonbury not there. That didn’t prove to be the case.”

MFMG this year launched its new boutique Latitude festival in July. Although he admits losing money on the 15,000-capacity multifaceted festival, Benn says Latitude will return.

Glastonbury skipped this year to allow the site—Michael Eavis’ farm in Somerset, southwest England—time to regenerate. But its absence did not seem to translate to an extra 120,000-plus people searching for alternative entertainment—one casualty was the Lost Weekend festival in Devon. a spin-off from Glastonbury’s Lost Vagueness field that was canceled after poor ticket sales. “Most of the new festivals suffered,” Elbourne says, “so clearly there was some market saturation.”

At least 45 outdoor festivals rolled out in the United Kingdom and Ireland in 2006, in a season that now stretches from mid-May to mid-September. Festival promoters, however, were typically guarded on their grosses, with just two Irish events—Dublin’s Download Festival ($4,725,059) and Kilkenny Source Festival ($1,613,043)—reporting to Billboard Boxscore so far.

The king-hitters again proved to be the well-established events such as V, the Carling Weekend Reading and Leeds festivals, Isle of Wight and T in the Park, which all sold out their respective capacities in record time. Reading alone generated £8.1 million ($15.4 million) in ticket revenue within one hour of going on sale.

“It’s now a rite of passage for a young person to go to a festival in the summer,” says John Giddings, managing director of Solo, the London-based promoters of the Isle of Wight festival. “It’s a better way of hanging out with your mates and having a good time than going on holiday.”

Demand for tickets to the biggest brands is now so high some organizations have already released tickets for their 2007 edition, months before a single band is announced. Metal event Download, V and Reading and Leeds are among those to have issued thousands of presale tickets. Giddings is blunt on the phenomenon: “They’re doing that to get the money in the bank and earn interest. It’s called greed.” Festival organizers who are preselling tickets for 2007 events say it ensures core fans do not miss out. Generally, the rise of small regional festivals—such as Beautiful Days (Devon), Wickerman (Dundrennan) and Bestival (Isle of Wight)—is a positive trend, promoters say. But those promoters hungry for a piece of the festivals’ pie are warned to come to market with a watertight concept. And be prepared to do battle with the heavyweights.

“If you are not part of the MCD/Live Nation monopoly, then it is very difficult to get a decent lineup, and [the artist] fees are still stupid,” Elbourne says. Dennis Desmond’s Irish promoter MCD is behind the country’s O2 and HiFi festivals, among others. MCD and Live Nation co-own the Hamasrd investment vehicle, which in turn owns MFMG.

Glastonbury, for its part, is poised to return in 2007 revitalized. Organizers are exploring an expansion of next year’s festival to a 175,000 capacity, subject to license approval. Eavis says Australian pop singer Kylie Minogue will be one of the headliners for the June 22-24 event.

Promoters both competing against and working closely with the festival are optimistic the “Glastonbury effect” won’t be a negative one. “It doesn’t make a blind bit of difference. Glastonbury will sell out in a heartbeat. It’s a different experience and it won’t affect [Isle of Wight],” Giddings says.

“I’m still very positive about the business in 2007,” Benn says. “Glastonbury doesn’t impact on Reading and Leeds and the V. It certainly impacts on other shows, but there’s such a buzz about Glastonbury, it could be argued that when Glastonbury is on, more people are interested in festivals generally.”

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**U.K. Summer Wrap-Up**

**Five Festivals, Five Fine Paydays**

**T IN THE PARK**

**VENUE** Balado, near Kinross, Scotland

**DATE** July 8-9

**TICKET PRICE** weekend £97.50 ($185); weekend with camping £115 ($218); £56.50 ($107) per day

**ATTENDANCE** 75,000 each day (weekend/day split not disclosed)

**THE CARLING WEEKEND READING AND LEEDS FESTIVALS**

**VENUE** Richfield Avenue, Reading; Bramham Park, Leeds

**DATE** Aug. 25-27

**TICKET PRICE** weekend £135 ($256); £60 ($113) per day

**ATTENDANCE** Reading: 105,000 (60,000 weekend, 15,000 per day); Leeds: 100,000 (62,500 weekend, 12,500 per day)

**TICKETS AVAILABLE** Sold out

**PROMOTERS** London-based Mean Fiddler Music Group

**MEDIA PARTNERS** BBC TV, BBC Radio 1, NME

**HEADLINERS** Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Who

**SPONSORS** Tennent’s Lager, Bacardi, Virgin Mobile, iTunes, Duracell, Red Bull, Nintendo, Superdrug, Volvic, Scottish Water, Kodak, EA Games

**NOKIA ISLE O F WIGHT FESTIVAL**

**VENUE** Seaclose Park, Newport, Isle of Wight

**DATE** June 9-11

**TICKET PRICE** Adults: weekend £85 ($165), weekend with camping £105 ($200); Children (under 12): weekend £42.50 ($80), weekend with camping £52.50 ($100)

**ATTENDANCE** 50,000

**TICKETS AVAILABLE** Sold out

**PROMOTERS** London-based Solo

**MEDIA PARTNERS** Virgin Radio, Channel 4 TV

**HEADLINERS** The Prodigy, Foo Fighters, Coldplay

**SPONSORS** Nokia, Bacardi, Strongbow

**V FESTIVAL**

**VENUE** Hylands Park, Chelmsford; Weston Park, Staffordshire

**DATE** Aug. 19-20

**TICKET PRICE** weekend £110 ($190); weekend with camping £120 ($220); £58.50 ($111) per day

**ATTENDANCE** Chelmsford: 70,000 each day (32,000 camping); Staffordshire: 85,000 each day (68,000 camping)

**TICKETS AVAILABLE** Sold out

**PROMOTERS** London-based Metropolis Music and J&M

**CONCERTS**

**MEDIA PARTNERS** Channel 4/E4 TV, NME, Virgin Radio

**HEADLINERS** Radiohead, Morrissey

**SPONSORS** Chelmsford: Virgin Mobile, Carling, Bacardi, Strongbow, Duracell, Lynx, Intel/Haspter, JJB/Puma, Nintendo, Red Bull; Staffordshire: Virgin Mobile, Carling, Bacardi, Strongbow, Duracell, Lynx, Intel/Haspter, JJB/Puma, Nintendo, Red Bull, EA Games, Kodak, Superdrug

**O2 WIRELESS FESTIVAL**

**VENUE** Hyde Park, London; Harewood House, Leeds

**DATE** June 21-25

**TICKET PRICE** £37.50 ($71) per day

**ATTENDANCE** London: 110,000 (over five days); Leeds: 38,000 (over two days)

**TICKETS AVAILABLE** Not disclosed

**PROMOTERS** London-based Live Nation (Musik UK)

**MEDIA PARTNERS** London: Channel 4 TV, XFM, Metro newspaper, MySpace; Leeds: Radio Aire, Galaxy FM, Metro newspaper

**HEADLINERS** London: The Strokes, David Gray, Massive Attack, James Blunt, Depeche Mode; Leeds: Massive Attack, the Who, the Flaming Lips

**SPONSORS** London: O2, Motorola, Red Bull, Fender, Transport for London, HMV, Brothers Cider; Leeds: O2, HMV
IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT 
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE 

In re: ) 
THREE A'S HOLDINGS, L.L.C., ) Chapter 11 
a Delaware limited liability company, et al., 
) Case No. 06-10886 (BLS) 
Debtors. 
) (Jointly Administered) 

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION AND SALE HEARING 

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, on August 20, 2006, Three A's Holdings, L.L.C., a Delaware limited liability company, and its direct and indirect affiliates, Jeremy's Holdings, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, Tower Direct LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, 33rd Street Records, Incorporated, a Delaware corporation, Pipernick Corp., a Delaware corporation, M T S, Incorporated, a California corporation, Columbus & Bay, Inc., a California corporation and R.T. Records, Incorporated, a California corporation, each as a debtor and debtor-in-possession (collectively, the "Debtors" or "Tower Records"), filed a Motion for an Order (a) Approving the Bidding Procedures, (b) Approving the Form and Manner of Notice of the Auction and Sale, and (c) Approving the Sale of the Debtors' Assets (the "Sale Motion"). The Debtors seek, among other things, to sell all or substantially all of the Debtors' Assets (the "Assets") to the successful bidder(s) at an auction (the "Successful Bidder"), free and clear of all liens, claims, encumbrances and other interests pursuant to section 363 of the Bankruptcy Code. 

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that, on September 6, 2006, the Bankruptcy Court entered an order (the "Sale Motion") approving the bidding procedures (the "Bidding Procedures"), which set the key dates and times related to the sale of the Assets under the APA. All interested bidders should carefully read the Bidding Procedures. To the extent that there are any inconsistencies between the Bidding Procedures and the summary description of its terms and conditions contained in this Notice, the terms of the Bidding Procedures shall control. 

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that, pursuant to the terms of the Bidding Procedures and Bidding Procedures Order, an auction (the "Auction") to sell the Assets will be conducted on October 5, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. (ET) (the "Auction Date") at the offices of Richards, Layton & Finger, P.A., One Rodney Square, 920 North King Street, Wilmington, Delaware, 19801 or at any such other place, date and time as may be designated in writing by the Debtors. Parties may submit bids no later than September 12, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. (ET) in order to qualify as Lead Bidder (as defined in the Bidding Procedures). Except as otherwise provided in the Bidding Procedures, only parties and their advisors that have submitted a Qualifying Bid (as defined in the Bidding Procedures) by no later than September 26, 2006 at Noon (ET), will be permitted to participate in the Auction. 

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that hearings will be held before the Honorable Brendan L. Shannon, United States Bankruptcy Judge, in the United States Bankruptcy Court, District of Delaware (i) to approve proposed Bid Protections (the "Bid Protections Hearing") on September 15, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. (ET) and (ii) to approve the sale of the Assets to the Successful Bidder (the "Sale Hearing"), on October 6, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. (ET), or at such time thereafter as counsel may be heard or at such other time as the Bankruptcy Court may determine. The Bid Protections Hearing and the Sale Hearing may be adjourned from time to time without further notice to creditors or parties in interest other than by announcement of the adjournment in open court on the date scheduled for the Sale Hearing. Objections to the Bid Protections must be filed and served so that they are received by the Debtors no later than 4:00 p.m. (ET) on September 11, 2006 (except that objections solely as to the amount of the Bid Protections must be filed and served so as to be received by the Debtors no later than Noon (ET) on September 14, 2006). Objections to the Sale Motion must be filed and served so that they are received by the Debtors no later than 4:00 p.m. (ET) on September 29, 2006. 

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that this Notice of the Auction and Sale Hearing is subject to the full terms and conditions of the Sale Motion, Bidding Procedures Order and Bidding Procedures, which shall control in the event of any conflict, and the Debtors encourage parties in interest to review such documents in their entirety. A copy of the Sale Motion, Bidding Procedures Order and/or Bidding Procedures may be obtained by written request made to proposed special counsel to the Debtors, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, 2029 Century Park East, Suite 2400, Los Angeles, California 90067, Attention: Patrick J. Ivie, Esq., Telephone: (310) 229-1000, Facsimile: (310) 229-1001. 

Dated: September 6, 2006 

/s/ Brendan L. Shannon 
United States Bankruptcy Judge 

1 The Debtors are the following entities: Three A's Holdings, L.L.C., Jeremy's Holdings, LLC, Tower Direct LLC, 33rd Street Records, Incorporated, Pipernick Corp., M T S, Incorporated, Columbus & Bay, Inc. and R.T. Records, Incorporated.
Crack That Web
Babygrande Impresario Launches Urban Streaming Space

A s indie labels create their own online communities, Babygrande Records founder Chuck Wilson is thinking a little bigger. His Web site hiphop.crack.com is slated to launch Oct. 1 as a sort of MySpace/YouTube/download store directed solely at the urban audience.

With new online communal sites arriving on a seemingly weekly basis, this bit of news may not illicit that much excitement at first. Yet Wilson, whose Babygrande has released albums from rappers Jean Grae, Immortal Technique and the Jedi Mind Tricks, is promising to launch with previously unreleased songs or remixes from Ludacris, Ghostface, Rick Ross, T.I., Purple City and Foxy Brown, among many others. If the content is there, the only question is whether users will follow.

The indie hip-hop impresario, who also wrote the script to 2004 film “Soul Plane,” says songs will only be streamable at first. But he is open to partnering with someone to sell downloads for third-party labels. To help get the word out, a promotional partner in Wilson’s site is the Web community of Hip-Hop Info (http://hh411.com), which attracts nearly 400,000 unique visitors per month to its message boards.

“If I feel like I’m at a place in my career where the sky is the limit,” Wilson says, “I can make a call to anyone of camp, and in most cases to the artists directly, and tell them what this site is about. For the exposure that we offer, I’m expecting content from every artist in the urban hip-hop world.”

Wilson tapped Frog on Top Studios to develop the site. A key component of Hip-Hop Crack is its MySpace-inspired Crackspace, where users can upload their own songs and videos and sell them. Wilson formed Triumph Media Holdings to launch the site, and has partnered with Municane, which will handle Hip-Hop Crack’s backend transactions.

Unsigned artists can sell music, ringtones and wallpaper via the site, with Municane taking a 20% cut of each transaction (the rest goes to the artist). Users can dictate what format songs will be in, as well as whether they will be encoded with digital rights management. For now, Wilson won’t take a percentage of the sales, but that may change down the road.

“We launch, we won’t dip into that,” Wilson says. “If this becomes something incredible and is the place to be, we may look into it. But for now, we’re passing on a relationship between Municane and the end user. It’s up to us to make the community strong appealing.”

Other aspects of the site include news and gossip sections and a budding mix-tape database. Hip-Hop Crack won’t stream mix tapes, but will point users to sites that do.

To help sustain the site, Wilson says he has enlisted TAG Strategic, the company started by former EMI Music Group senior VP of digital development and distribution Ted Cohen, to consult after launch.

Aside from simply attracting users, Wilson knows a hurdle will be persuading other labels that this is not a vehicle for the Koch-distributed Babygrande. He promises his label will not be heavily promoted on the site’s home page, especially in the early going.

“I’m going to stay away from Babygrande content as long as I can,” he says. “This is a place for anyone who loves the culture. We still have to sell records, but we have to be very much in touch with the places where kids experience music and really set the table for when the majority of sales are online. That’s really what this is about.”

Meet the new scam . . .
On Aug. 30, it was announced that Universal Music Group had closed a deal with New York-based Web site SpiralFrog to make their entire library of songs available for free downloading as long as consumers watch ads while they do it. I hope this is a joke, but the pathetic penny-pinching insanity rampant throughout our culture at this point makes anything seem possible. If nobody’s seriously suggested this idea yet, somebody probably will eventually, so let’s look at it.

The article doesn’t explain, but the model for paying the artists must resemble how performance royalties works with ASCAP and BMI. A percentage paid from a pool of loot.

The ad agency pays the record company, let’s say $10 million, and if there are 10 million downloads, each is worth a dollar, right? If Froggy takes 30% that would leave 70 cents, about the same as iTunes (not great, but that percentage will change soon). So is it a crapshoot?

If there are 5 million downloads, you score $2 a song? And if there are 20 million downloads, they are worth 50 cents? And what about the writers who are being screwed by downloading as it is? You think advertisers are going to give someone $10 million hoping consumers will watch their ads on the honor system?

“Now promise you won’t leave the room or close your eyes, kids, while you are downloading!”

No, luckily this idea is so stupid it will be born dead. But that won’t stop record companies from desperately seeking new ways to stop the bleeding. They’ll do everything except face the fact that their records REALLY SUCK.

Call me old school if you want to but I believe quality is something people are happy to pay for. They just can’t find any.

COOLEST GARAGE SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>SONG</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TEDDYBEARS</td>
<td>PUNKROCKER</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>RADIO BIRDMAN</td>
<td>ZENO BEACH</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>PRIMAL SCREAM</td>
<td>DOLLS</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>TOM PETTY</td>
<td>SAVING GRACE</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>BUTCH WALKER &amp; THE LET'S GO OUT TONITES</td>
<td>HOT GIRLS IN GOOD MOODS</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>TH' LOSIN STREAKS</td>
<td>YOUR LOVE, NOW</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>THE PIPETTES</td>
<td>PULL SHAPES</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>THE ANDERSON COUNCIL</td>
<td>PINKERTON'S ASSORTED COLOURS</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>NEW YORK DOLLS</td>
<td>DANCE LIKE A MONKEY</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>CHEAP TRICK</td>
<td>IF IT TAKES A LIFE TIME</td>
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COOLEST GARAGE ALBUMS

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<th>#</th>
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<td>TOM PETTY</td>
<td>HIGHWAY COMPANION</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>RIOT CITY BLUES</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NEW YORK DOLLS</td>
<td>ONE DAY IT WILL PLEASE US TO REMEMBER EVEN THIS</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>THE RACONTEURS</td>
<td>BROKEN BOY SOLDIERS</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>DIRTY PRETTY THINGS</td>
<td>WATERLOO TO ANYWHERE</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>CHEAP TRICK</td>
<td>ROCKFORD</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>JOAN JETT &amp; THE BLACKHEARTS</td>
<td>SINNER</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>BUTCH WALKER &amp; THE LET'S GO OUT TONITES</td>
<td>THE RISE AND FALL OF BUTCH WALKER &amp; THE LET'S GO OUT TONITES</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>TH' LOSIN STREAKS</td>
<td>SOUNDS OF VIOLENCE</td>
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<td>RADIO BIRDMAN</td>
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ull-song downloading to mobile phones in the United States is fast approaching its one-year anniversary. Sprint pioneered the first over-the-air service in tandem with Groove Mobile 11 months ago. In its most recent publicly disclosed numbers, Sprint had sold more than 5 million tracks to an installed user base of more than 1 million customers. Now the company has introduced six new phone models capable of downloading music since the first quarter, is looking to stretch deeper into everything, from song sales and bundled product offers to music video and streaming radio.

In a move that signals increased experimentation with discounts, the Sprint Music Store recently launched a limited-time “buy two songs, get a third song for free” offer that runs through Nov. 15. Sprint has also launched a music recommendation feature that suggests songs to music store users based on previous purchases. A radio feature, offered in conjunction with mSpot, now includes more than 50 channels of streaming music video and news and talk for $5.95 a month.

Overseeing all of these initiatives is Paul Reddick, Sprint VP of business development and product innovation. Reddick is no stranger to growing wireless businesses. Prior to joining Sprint, Reddick was with the Dallas and Oslo offices of McKinsey & Co., where he led strategy development for clients in multiple industries in the United States and Europe.

Just ahead of his opening keynote presentation at Billboard’s MECCA conference on Sept. 11, Billboard caught up with Reddick to discuss the company’s evolving music strategy, the growth of mobile entertainment to date and the remaining challenges that must be faced in order for the industry to expand even further.

How is the music store progressing? Very well, both in terms of adoption by people who buy a Power Vision plan that are registering and downloading music, and the number of songs they are downloading. The rate of adoption is limited a bit by the number of handsets that are out there capable of downloading music. That is a key thing for us—to get those into people’s hands. There are fewer music-capable phones out there than there are iPods and MP3 players running around. As the market continues to proliferate with music-capable phones, we are very comfortable with how that will expand.

What was the thinking on the “buy two songs, get one free” initiative you launched with the music store? That was to get beyond the novelty of buying just one or two songs. It also allows us to test the market on price elasticity.

What’s your take on bundling offers versus a la carte offers? We’re in a new pioneering era of how to bundle music, as well as entertainment in general. The level of bundling has been limited in the past by physical distribution. As things go digital, there’s no reason why you couldn’t come up with a lot more creative bundles. There’s no reason why there can’t be bundles of five songs rather than the 13 tracks you get on a CD. There’s no reason that, with rights holder approval, it can’t be mixed across some other themes. And there’s no reason it has to stay within just the music genre. It could be a pack of music and art and potentially games, or entry into a fan club that could be bundled together into a package the customer purchases.

Why haven’t we seen more bundling efforts in the United States? What have been some of the factors limiting experimentation with such initiatives? There are a few limiting factors. First, the billing systems. The carrier is the primary billing interface. The ability to specify several items at one time, provide it to the customer, and have it all come out on one bill sounds pretty simple to the casual observer. But it is actually very complex. It’s something that most delivery systems have struggled with. Everybody gets that, and everybody is working on it. It’s just a matter of timing. Over the next 18 months you’ll see the carrier billing system limitation drop considerably. There is also the issue of how comfortable rights holders—artists, management, labels—are having their waters bundled in ways they didn’t conceive of when they created the music or entertainment piece. Another limitation is the ability of the market to absorb new product messages. There is a certain simplicity around a digital track or $1.99 video from Apple. But when you offer more choices to customers you can introduce more complexity, too.

What can the industry do to drive more consumption of ringtones and mobile downloads? This market really needs some off-the-phone and off-carrier marketing to really stimulate and tell people what you can do. The fact that you can download music products to your phone is not a ubiquitous message when people talk about music.

One of the things that would help stimulate the market more would be for the labels and other people with an interest in growing the market to spend more marketing dollars. It is one of their faster-growing areas, even if it is not their largest distribution channel.

How is the wireless industry’s relationship with the music business evolving? Labels respect what is the same versus what is different in distributing music over mobile. Clearly ringtones are different than regular downloads. And we think over-the-air downloads are different than PC downloads. They understand and seem to respect that, unlike other broadband services where the network costs are seemingly zero, there are network costs associated with what we’re doing.

How important are windows to maximize the success of sales? They sell better. But we also promote windowed ringtones. So you have to account for a couple things: Is it the scarcity or is it because we are featuring the ringtone?

Does that mean that windowing doesn’t drive sales in and of itself? Carriers have limited ability to feature every release, so if you hold everything back and make it only available through the carrier and the carrier is not featuring it, that could be problematic for a label. On the other hand, you could see an evolution where there is formal windowing. If that becomes standard practice then people will say, “This is OK, this is where I go to get it.” That could go to some of the pricing differences between mobile and PC. It is possible that you could say that the window is one of the advantages of getting music on mobile. You are in a select group able to get a download a week or two before your friends can get it.

“There’s no reason why there can’t be bundles of five songs rather than the 13 tracks you get on a CD.”
Amy Lee is sitting cross-legged in a lounge chair on the roof of New York's Dream Hotel. She's decked out in worn jeans and a Joan Jett T-shirt, and her pale-blue eyes are translucent—a sharp contrast to her long dark hair.

In the past three years, her band Evanescence has skyrocketed to fame thanks to its 2003 Wind-up debut, "Fallen," which won two Grammy Awards and has sold 6.5 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. But as quickly as the band hit the big time, the threads that held its members together began to fray. Co-founder Ben Moody abruptly left mid-tour in 2003; his replacement, former Cold guitarist Terry Balsamo, suffered a stroke last year; and bassist Will Boyd, whom Lee has known since middle school, opted out of the group in July.

Adding to the drama, Lee split from her boyfriend, Seether frontman Shawn Morgan, and changed managers. But the artist says the trials have made her stronger and more independent. "It took me a while to figure out who I was," she says. "I'm the youngest person in the band. I'm the leader of the band. I'm a chick. I learned how to say no and draw boundaries."

Indeed, Evanescence's new album "The Open Door," due Oct. 3, is an ode to a stronger Lee. As Wind-up founder/CEO Alan Meltzer notes, "She is the female voice of her generation. She's come into her own as a writer and a singer. She made this record with no label involvement. It was all her."
“Fallen” was a multiplatinum smash. Were you under pressure to produce a follow-up that could stand up to it? I think people sometimes lose the love of what they do and just try to put out another record. That’s a crime. If you don’t feel it, wait until you’re hungry for it. What’s the point of making a huge piece of music if it’s not for the love of the art.

It took longer than I thought. But, I am a perfectionist. We took all the time we needed and wrote and wrote and wrote. If it wasn’t good, I threw it away. I wanted every piece of it to be as good as it possibly could be. We accomplished what I wanted, which was to do something that I was more proud of than what I’d done before. I constantly have to top myself, it’s just how I am.

Is “The Open Door” thematically different from “Fallen”? What music is for me and what Evanescence has been is me purging all of the negative and hard, difficult experiences that I’ve had in life. Naturally that’s still coming out. I’m still going through the trials. I feel like this album comes from a place that is not so hopeless. The first album, I was talking about the hard stuff, but I was also wallowing in it. I wasn’t strong enough to take a stand and say no in a lot of situations.

I listen back to “Fallen” now and definitely hear all the vulnerability and the fear and all the childish things in me that are just human. But I’ve grown so much now. The lyrics on the new album are looking for the answers, looking for the solutions, looking for happiness. It’s not, “I’m miserable, end of song.” It’s more, “I’m miserable, and what do I have to do to work this out and get out of this bad situation.”

Have you matured? Yes, I’ve learned how to say no. This is a bad situation. See the signs and say, “I’m out of here.” Especially in relationships. You have to be willing to jump off the cliff and know that when you get to the bottom that it’s going to be way better, and know it could also be crash and burn. Those are the times in my life that I’ve really broken through and had great joy, because I took those chances. At least when you’re at the bottom and all alone again and starting over, it’s a clean slate.

What is it like having such a different configuration of the band? The biggest difference is Ben [Moody]. We formed the band together. We were the main writers. Without him, it wasn’t like I was thinking, “Oh, my God, what am I going to do?!” It really had gotten to the point where it was so horrible and dramatic, it was a relief and I knew the band could continue. When it came to writing, I had so much by then to write about, it was spilling out of me. I didn’t know how to stop writing.

I have so much more freedom to do everything myself this time. For a lot of reasons, I wanted to prove that not only could I do it myself, but I could make a better album than before. I’ve never really tried to sit, say OK and just start writing and go for it and not have anyone to answer to, at all. I’m the boss. Here we go! If it sucks, I figure it out.

Terry Balsamo replaced Moody and has become your songwriting partner. How do you guys write together? It’s a completely different writing process (than with Moody). He’s completely laid-back. There’s no pressure of wanting to rule the world. It’s just about writing great music.

Terry and I will just sit in a room and jam. As simple as that is, it’s completely different for me. I was so insecure at the time, though I didn’t realize it then. I thought I was strong. It’s so hard to let yourself be vulnerable. In front of a huge audience, it’s not so bad, because it’s just a sea of people. But in front of two people you know, it’s impossible. It was a first for me to just make music as we go.

Why are there so few female rockers today? In the music industry today, there are a lot of holes. There are things I miss, like great female rockers like Joan Jett. She totally inspired me and inspired guys and everybody everywhere. Where did they go? It seems like if there were any women in music, it was either R&B or easy listening. No one was rocking. No one had the real power, not the sex appeal, the real power of rock ‘n’ roll. We need chicks in rock.

“Fallen” was first released in the Christian market. Do you consider Evanescence a Christian band? Can we please skip the Christian thing? I’m so over it. It’s the lamest thing, I fought that from the beginning. I never wanted to be associated with it. It was a Ben thing. It’s over. It’s a new day.

You are prepping for a major tour. What are your expectations? We just started rehearsals. I was really stressed. It’s been two years since I’ve been onstage.

More than that, Terry had a stroke. It’s been about nine months and he’s doing great. We had our first day of practice and he’s playing guitar on every song. That is such a big step. There was so much pressure, but I didn’t want to hire another guitar player. We wrote this record together. I knew he was going to get better. I knew he’d make it just in time. The doctor couldn’t believe he was still alive.

Our band has been through so much together by now, we couldn’t be more tight onstage. We love each other.

You were still in your teens when “Fallen” broke. You seemed overwhelmed by the fame and glitz. Are you more comfortable in your skin now? I don’t feel that nervous about it anymore. In the beginning, I was so wide-eyed. It’s fun now. I used to think I didn’t belong, like everyone thinks I’m a dork, everybody hates me.

When we won those Grammys, I remember standing there after winning best new artist, and people were clapping, but they weren’t sure why, they didn’t know who we were. I remember trying to get out my thank-yous to this sea of faces who were thinking, “Who are you, and why should I care?!” I don’t feel like that anymore. Especially after writing this album, I feel like I am an artist, and I respect myself a lot more.

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TOURING SMART

A couple of years have passed since Evanescence toured the globe in support of its multiplatinum 2003 debut, “Fallen,” and the band is eagerly awaiting round two.

“They’re very excited to get the [new] music out there and have a chance to play it,” says manager Andy Lurie of I/O Management.

The rockers haven’t long to wait; another worldwide trek is in the works. This time around Evanescence will take a slightly different, more relaxed approach to global domination.

“They intend to tour smart this time,” Lurie says, “I think they suffered from a little burnout last time because they didn’t build in any reasonable breaks. They pretty much toured nonstop for over 18 months.”

Seventy concerts reported to Billboard Boxscore between Feb. 25, 2003, and Aug. 14, 2004, show that Evanescence pulled in $8.6 million. Twenty-three of those gigs were sellouts.

Two days after “The Open Door” hits stores Oct. 3 via Wind-up Records, Evanescence will embark on the first leg of its jaunt, playing 17 dates in 1,200- to 3,300-capacity venues across the United States and Canada. Tickets range from $25 to $35, and New York-based band Revelation Theory supports on all dates. The idea was to start off light and give Evanescence “core crowd” a chance to see the band up close and personal. “This is sort of their way of thanking fans for sticking with us for a six-year run,” Lurie says.

Creative Artists Agency’s Jenna Adler, who represents the band in North America, says New York’s Hammerstein Ballroom and Los Angeles’ Wilkerson LG sold out immediately following the Aug. 19 general on-sale. “It definitely created the buzz we wanted,” Adler says, “They had such a huge first record that people were wondering if, on the second record, they could continue this growth pattern. It’s quite obvious they have.”

Along with the upcoming trek linked to the release of “The Open Door,” Adler says she strategically coordinated with Wind-up to give the album’s first single, “Call Me When You’re Sober,” radio play to build interest in ticket sales.

“What you see happening more and more is labels and agencies collaborating more in terms of setting up an artist and making sure all the t’s are crossed and the i’s are dotted,” she says.

After the North American run ends Oct. 29, Evanescence will head to Europe to play 2,000- to 4,000-capacity venues. From there the band will return state side for radio concerts (including top 40 radio station WHTZ [Z100] New York’s annual Jingle Ball) and TV appearances. Then it’s off to Japan, Australia and New Zealand to ring in the new year, according to Lurie, who says dates are still tentative. Geoff Meall of the Agency Group books the band worldwide (except South America) out of TAG’s London office.

Once spring rolls around, Evanescence plans to revisit North America to play 5,000- to 7,000-seat buildings. The intent is to hit some grant shows, says Adler, who explains that it’s better to take gradual steps before jumping to amphitheaters and arenas. “We don’t want to go zero to 60 in a second,” she explains. “I think it pays to take the appropriate steps at the appropriate time, and leave people wanting more every time.” Ticket prices will most likely stay in the range of $25-$35, she adds.

Another key place of interest is South America. Lurie notes that Evanescence has a strong following in the region, and didn’t have a chance to tour there the last time around. The band is also scheduled for a two-song appearance at the MTV Video Music Awards Latin America, which takes place Oct. 19 in Mexico City.

—Mitchell Peters

AMY LEE OF EVANESCENCE performs “My Immortal” at the 2004 Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas.
For years, the mantra of the live music business has been, "There are no bad shows, only bad deals."

While business is up and there have been some major—and well-chronicled—successes so far in 2006, the touring highway is littered with a few stiffs as autumn arrives.

Promoters, agents, managers and venues are, for obvious reasons, reluctant to talk about shows that don't do well. The artist psyche is best handled with care, and human nature dictates that accepting blame is difficult. Besides, today's box-office dud may be tomorrow's advance sellout, and no one wants to jeopardize future business.

Few tours are a failure across the board. If ticket sales indicate a tour will be a total dog, in most cases it will be reconfigured, postponed or even cancelled before it ever gets out of the gate (Lollapalooza 2004 is the poster child for the last scenario). Many dates on a less-successful tour will at least break even. It could be that only a handful of dates, or just one, do not work out financially.

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There are many reasons why a show can do poorly. Perhaps radio did not get onboard; there was another, bigger event in the market at the same time; weather killed the walk-up; or too many same-genre shows hit the area in a narrow time frame. Promoters have to cast a wide net when casing potential pitfalls today.

Sometimes a show only looks on the surface like a failure. In many cases, promoters invest in an act, venue or market and look at low attendance as the ane to be in business with the artist for the long term. In other cases, attendance looks low but the gross puts the date over the top.

Bottom line, no judgment on any of these tours or acts should be passed based on the information presented here. These are stand-alone examples intended to provide information and insight.

Sometimes great talent, creative promotion, a fair ticket price, a beautiful venue and a Saturday night aren’t enough. To paraphrase Yogi Berra, “If people don’t come to the concert, you can’t stop them.”

**SOUNDS OF THE UNDERGROUND**

Merriweather Post Pavilion, Columbia, Md.
July 17

| ATTENDANCE: | 1,875 |
| CAPACITY: | 10,000 |
| PERCENTAGE OF CAPACITY: | 18.7% |
| GROSS: | $55,312 |
| TICKET PRICE: | $29.50 |
| PROMOTER: | I.M.P. |

The Sounds of the Underground tour, now in its second year, is a Warped-styled hard-rock package that this year featured As I Lay Dying, In Flames, Trivium, Cannibal Corpse and others. Conceived by Tim Borror at the Agency Group, the tour is produced with House of Blues. Ferret Records label executive/artistic manager Paul Conroy, Ferret owner Carl Seversen and artist manager Larry Mazer.

Promoter Seth Hurwitz of I.M.P. says that without the success of niche tours as Ozzfest and Warped, SOTU would have meager expectations. “If you look at the hill, there are no big bands on there, so you’re basically selling the concept, and people don’t pay to see concepts,” Hurwitz says. Warped producer Kevin Lyman has made it look easy, but he’s worked years and years on it, done a great job, been true to his integrity and vision, and it takes a long time.”

Hurwitz adds that he does not think Borror and his partners expected instant success with SOTU. “I think what he’s trying to do is begin that long process himself,” he says. So why did Hurwitz buy the show?

“I like Tim, I like his energy, and I thought it was worth giving him a shot to get this thing started,” he says. “It might have done a little better, but all along Tim had sold this as, ‘Maybe we can build this into something.’ He certainly wasn’t asking a lot of money for it.”

Hurwitz says the show wasn’t really a big loser for I.M.P. “It wasn’t a lot [of money] to begin with and Tim even worked with us after that without much prodding, because he has a vision for this thing,” he says. “A lot of these bands could sell out the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C., but he certainly didn’t have one really big act to play off of.”

Hurwitz says he wouldn’t call the show disappointing “because I don’t think anyone expected much more than it did. I would say, actually, getting 2,000 people to go see a bunch of bands that a lot of kids had never even heard of isn’t too bad.”

And would Hurwitz book SOTU again? “It depends on how Tim behaves in the coming year,” he says.
Our show was on a weekend, right in front of the long Fourth of July weekend when people all throughout Alabama take the opportunity to go on vacation.

-GRETTCHEN WILSON

THE BLACK CROWES, ROBERT RANDOLPH, DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre
Pelham, Ala.

June 28

ATTENDANCE: 3,074
CAPACITY: 10,479
PERCENTAGE OF CAPACITY: 29.3%
GROSS: $107,590
TICKET PRICE: $35
Promoter: Live Nation

On the surface, a Southern-fried hill like the Black Crowes, Robert Randolph and Drive-By Truckers in the Birmingham, Ala., market looks like a no-brainer. But the disappointing numbers for the show are a perfect illustration of why the touring business is so tough.

Live Nation/South Region president Bob Roux says he "made a mistake and did not follow my gut or the research the way I should have" when he booked the show. "Our show was on a weekday, right in front of the long Fourth of July weekend, and people all throughout Alabama take the opportunity to go on vacation all along the Gulf Coast for an extended break," Roux says.

In addition, the show was the Crowes' third in Birmingham in slightly more than a year. "They played City Stages in June of 2005, then came back for a fantastic show at the Alabama Theater in the early fall," Roux says.

He is quick to add that "even on the third time through a pretty small market in one year, the Black Crowes still did business well above the theater level on that [Pelham] play, and that is a true testament to the band's live show and their relationship with their core fans. I felt bad about the results, and I won't make the same mistake again."


grechen wilson

GRETCHEN WILSON

Merriweather Post Pavilion, Columbia, Md.

June 18

ATTENDANCE: 2,218
CAPACITY: 10,000
PERCENTAGE OF CAPACITY: 22.2%
GROSS: $96,480
TICKET PRICE: $45, $30
Promoter: I.M.P.

After breaking big with "Redneck Woman" in 2004, Gretchen Wilson opened for Kenny Chesney and then toured with fellow Muzik Mafia members Big & Rich the following year. She stepped out as a headliner in 2006, selling well in mid-capacity venues.

But larger venues have been a tougher nut to crack, as evidenced by the Merriweather show, the failure of which Hurwitz blames on himself.

"This was a case of me just not taking people's advice and believing in her as an act because I felt she was a very strong personality. I thought it would simply be a country show that people would want to go to," Hurwitz says. "I believed in her, no one else did, everyone warned me and didn't listen. So I got whacked."

Hurwitz says even though local country radio got behind the show, "clearly [Wilson] is not ready to headline venues of this size. I don't really know why. She seems to be a pretty popular figure all around to me."

And with tickets at $45-$30, it wasn't high prices that kept attendance down. "I don't believe it ever was a ticket [price] issue," Hurwitz says. "I still believe she's a headliner and perhaps just a bit ahead of the curve."

COUNTING CROWS/
GOO GOO DOLLS

Cricket Pavilion, Phoenix

July 1

ATTENDANCE: 7,279
CAPACITY: 20,001
PERCENTAGE OF CAPACITY: 36.4%
GROSS: $238,952
TICKET PRICE: $67.50, $59.50
Promoter: Live Nation

With the highest attendance of any of the shows examined here, the Counting Crows/Goo Goo Dolls tour was relatively strong for much of the summer. The Phoenix date happened to hit at a bad time, according to the promoter.

Radio was onboard with a ticket promotion and the tour was strong, so why didn't it draw 10,000 plus people? "I'll tell you why," says Danny Zelisko, president of Live Nation/Arizona. "It was Fourth of July weekend."

Historically, people leave Phoenix on that weekend. Zelisko says, "Let's say people will pay $140 for a good pair of tickets," he points out. "If you've got that kind of dough, chances are you're going to spend some money and go somewhere cooler," he says, referring to the temperature.

So, 7,000 plus paid is "not bad," Zelisko says, adding that if he had the chance, he'd buy this package again. "I would love to have that show in the spring before school lets out," he says. "In April or May I think I would've had over 10,000 people."

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mobile: entertainment

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Digital entertainment in all its forms continues to command the attention of the entertainment and technology industries. It represents the future of both businesses, and it's one that has yet to fully take shape.

The companies profiled in this Power Players report have a front-row seat to this history in the making. They are the pioneers that are building this digital future, on their own or in partnership with others.

Billboard's editors compiled this top 20 list based on the successes—and in some cases, failures—of key companies in the last year. Contributing to the selection, ranking and profiles are digital/mobile contributor Antony Bruno and business correspondent Brian Garrity in the United States, contributing writer Juliana Koranteng in London and Asia bureau chief Steve McClure in Tokyo.

These selections represent the broadest cross-section of the converging industry, including record labels, wireless operators, computer companies, phone manufacturers and digital retailers of all stripes.

Everybody involved in digital entertainment can boast of a vision. This list is based on action and the ability to make a vision a reality in the marketplace today.

—Antony Bruno
Apple Computer
Cupertino, Calif.
Steve Jobs, chairman/CEO
apple.com

Just when it seemed like Apple Computer’s vise grip on power in digital entertainment couldn’t get any tighter, it did. During the last 12 months the company successfully staved down music industry executives in a debate over variable pricing and trumped the Beatles in a copyright clash over the Apple brand. It also transformed the market for flash-based digital music players with the Nano, and kicked open the door for music video sales and TV show downloads with its video iPod. Reports are swirling that a widescreen video iPod and movie downloads could be on the way in the next year.

Still to be seen is if and when Apple makes a move to meet competition from the wireless industry head-on. “We don’t think that the phones that are available today make the best music players; we think the iPod is,” Apple CFO Peter Oppenheimer said in July. “But over time that is likely to change, and we’re not sitting around doing nothing.”

But challenges are mounting. The debate over interoperability is intensifying, and archrival Microsoft has plans to launch its own competing device/service combo for the first time with its Zune brand. Regardless, Apple is the undisputed winner of Round One. Let’s see how it fares in Round Two.

Universal Music Group
New York
Doug Morris, chairman/CEO
umusic.com

Industry kingpin Universal Music Group is not afraid to throw its weight around in the digital music arena, either in the United States or abroad via Universal Music Group International.

The company, the U.S. leader in digital market share, is investing in mobile-phone plays like Amp’d and in its own Mov U service; distributing its own music video channel, IMF, via new telco TV services from the likes of Verizon; and making waves by opting to delay digital distribution of some hit radio singles until the albums that generate them reach stores.

UMG became the first major to have a No. 1 album on The Billboard 200 with more than one-quarter of its sales coming from digital retailers. Jack Johnson’s “Sing-A-Longs and Lullabies for the Film ‘Curious George’” (Brushfire) in February. The company wants to expand its digital sales to keep pace with the shift away from CD sales. “The object of replacing the falling physical formats with the growing digital ones is very achievable in the near future,” says Larry Kenswil, president of UMG eLabs.

Microsoft
Redmond, Wash.
Bill Gates, chairman
microsoft.com

Microsoft has accomplished what until previously has been almost unimaginable. It has supplanted Apple Computer in the hype as for a pending digital music device Microsoft dropped a bombshell with the introduction of its Zune strategy, which is not only a Wi-Fi enabled MP3 player, but a service that will allow users to share and recommend music across a range of devices, including the Xbox 360 and Windows-powered mobile phones.

With an expected advertising budget to match its Xbox 360 launch, a successful effort would achieve something the music industry has long desired: competition in digital retail. “When they focus on execution and delivering a particular set of value to the consumer, they bring a lot to the marketplace,” says George White. Warner Music Group senior VP of strategy and product development.

Microsoft continues to support the PlaysForSure ecosystem of devices and services competing with Apple, and the Xbox Live gamer community is becoming a vehicle for promoting new music, videos and movies.

Yahoo Music
Sunnyvale, Calif.
David Goldberg, VP/GM of music yahoomusic.com

Although Yahoo still won’t discuss its Yahoo Music Unlimited subscriber numbers, the general consensus is that the service is lagging behind its competitors. But you can’t measure Yahoo’s impact on the digital music landscape in subscriber numbers alone.

When Yahoo first launched its beta mobile subscription service for $5 per month, it sparked a price war that many believe kept Microsoft out of the subscription game altogether. When it became the first digital retailer to offer an à la carte download from a major label sans digital rights management (Jessica Simpson’s “A Public Affair”), speculation followed that it would soon begin offering additional unprotected tracks. With 350 million streams per month, its video service has effectively supplanted MTV as the place to catch new music videos, and its new fan-remix series helps extend the freshness date even further.

Yahoo Music chief David Goldberg continues to rally for DRM-free music, and industry sources are whispering about a pending mobile play on the distant horizon. Clearly, Yahoo will continue making its presence in the marketplace known.

MySpace
Santa Monica, Calif.
Chris DeWolfe, CEO
myspace.com

When News Corp bought social networking powerhouse MySpace last year, many were afraid the irreverent hodgepodge of user-generated content would go corporate under the rule of Rupert Murdoch. But the service has quadrupled in membership since the purchase, and with 1 billion page views per day, it is the top-visited Internet destination in the world after Yahoo.

Musicians of all stripes maintain MySpace pages, and new technology promises to let them sell their music directly to fans via the service as well. Its record-label venture has gotten off to a rocky start, although it has proved quite adept at promoting local live concerts at the drop of a hat.

The service has even created its own economy, with start-ups emerging with services that let artists sell full songs and ringtones directly from their MySpace profiles. The Web site is quite simply a marketing gold mine. It gives users complete control to do what they want, when they want, and in doing so has illustrated how the Internet of tomorrow belongs not to big media, but the individual.

Warner Music Group
New York
Edgar Bronfman Jr., chairman/CEO
wmg.com

Label executives stress the need for thinking big when it comes to driving growth. Warner Music Group chairman Edgar Bronfman Jr. underscored the point at a Goldman Sachs investor conference in October 2005. “Twenty years ago we gave our music videos to MTV, and MTV has since created an outstanding business,” the WMG chief noted. “Even more recently we have been selling our songs to iPods, but we don’t have a share of iPods’ revenue. We have to keep thinking how we are going to monetize for our shareholders the value we are creating for so many other streams.”

Bronfman and company are betting on digital, and have transformed its structure. Included: a joint venture with Korea’s SK Telecom; an e-label; Cordless, from former Elektra CEO [ncl Holzman; partnerships with indie record stores to launch digital sales and “mobile music bundles” of audio, video, graphics and text in a single, downloadable file. Still on the way: a plan to sell albums on DVDs instead of CDs.
Your phone can do much more than make phone calls. Accessing and buying content like ringtones, music and video has, until now, been an experience that only the most enthusiastic gadget fan would consider. The barriers to consumption and revenue have been high. That is about to change.

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KDDI
Tokyo
Tadashi Onodera, chairman/president
kddi.com

KDDI is Japan’s second largest mobile operator, but the Tokyo-based company is the country’s clear front-runner when it comes to delivering music and music-related content via mobile phones. Since November 2004 KDDI has sold more than 50 million full-length songs through the Chaku-uta Full service, and in May it launched the Lismo Music Store, which allows users to download Chaku-uta Full content via personal computers.

“Much of KDDI’s success in mobile music is due to the fact that they have moved so quickly and aggressively to bring new music services to market,” says Steve Myers, president of Tokyo-based software developer Theta Music Technologies. “They’ve enjoyed first-mover advantage with chaku-uta [master tones], full-song mobile downloads and an integrated PC-based service... they were first to offer flat-rate plans for data. Without the flat-rate data plans, full-song downloads would be far less popular than they are today.” Myers also says KDDI has “the fastest third-generation network speeds in Japan, [and] the widest range of music services.”

Sony BMG Music Entertainment
New York
Rolf Schmidt-Holtz, CEO
sonybmg.com

Sony BMG has spent much of the last year dogged by controversy. Its use of flawed copy-protection technologies on CDs caused a PR backlash that continues to resonate. It has pushed Apple Computer to embrace variable pricing sooner rather than later. And members of the Allman Brothers Band and Cheap Trick have alleged in a class-action lawsuit that the label group underpaid artists for digital music transactions.

But in the process Sony BMG has been at the fore of the conversation on some of the industry’s toughest and most debated-worthy topics. During the past 12 months Sony BMG also launched Italy’s first digital label and embraced the use of Web 2.0 technologies like RSS feeds and viral video for promoting its artists. Next up for the major: driving increased revenue diversification from new products and items previously used only for promotion.

T-Mobile International
Bonn, Germany
René Obermann, chairman
t-mobile.net

While its parent company battles for market share in the United States, T-Mobile International is a rising star. The international carrier unveiled an 18-month exclusive Pan-European partnership with British artist Robbie Williams and his management company IF Music in July 2005. No carrier has ever before committed to one artist on this scale.

T-Mobile is head sponsor of shows in key markets during Williams’ current European tour, which sold a record 1.6 million tickets in one day, and is now in the 2007 edition of Guinness World Records for most concert tickets sold in a single day.

The partnership led to exclusive content for T-Mobile subscribers, including a mobile TV channel dedicated to the tour; a Europe-wide TV ad campaign; and support for Sony Ericsson’s special-edition Williams handset. By the end of 2005, some 250,000 of his tracks were downloaded via T-Mobile in five countries.

“The deal has put Robbie Williams at the leading edge of the digital revolution to get music to the fans faster and more easily than ever before.” IF Music partner Tim Clark says.

EMI Music
London
Alain Levy, chairman/CEO
emigroup.com

EMI Music is on track to fulfill its plan declared goal to produce 25% of its revenue from digital sources by 2010. Its recent initiatives have ranged from major trials to full commercial ventures encompassing full-track downloads, master ringtones, Bluetooth marketing and other third-generation mobile entertainment.

EMI made its recordings available to GSNAB, a Pan-European peer-to-peer downloadable music service, and to Qtrax, the world’s first ad-supported P2P music service.

Additional initiatives include Placebo’s collaboration with French wireless carrier SFR in March and Robbie Williams’ Europe-wide exclusive 18-month partnership with T-Mobile. In June, it linked with PayPal, eBay’s international secure online payment system, to encourage fans to buy music safely via mobile phones. And it helped to make international repertoire available in Turkey’s digital market for the first time in June via a deal with local mobile operator Turkcell.

“We’re not simply digitizing an old business model,” EMI vice chairman David Munnis says. “We are embracing and creating new business models.”
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MTV finally stepped up to the digital-music plate with Urge and did so with conviction. In a first, it partnered with Microsoft to integrate Urge into the new Windows Media Player 11. The result is a strong partnership between software and service, with tracks stored on a PC blending seamlessly with streamed subscription tracks stored online.

More broadly, MTV is on a digital mission to expand its brand and content to multiple platforms online, mobile and beyond. MTV.com, Overdrive, VSpot, mtv Über and Made Hear are just a few of the company’s digital initiatives gaining traction.

According to MTV president Christina Norman, the company is thinking not only about extending archived content to new platforms, but also creating original programming for each new digital outlet as well.

“There’s always going to be lessons and successes,” she says. “Just like TV, there’s shows that work and shows that the audience completely rejects.”

You Tube
San Mateo, Calif.
Chad Hurley, founder/CEO
youtube.com

The rise of user-generated content sites, led by YouTube, has sparked a revolution in the sharing of music videos across the Web. The problem is that much of the distribution taking place, outside a select number of promotional deals, is happening without the approval of record companies.

The site, which now claims more than 13 million monthly visitors and 100 million streams daily after launching in February 2005, has caught the attention of the entertainment industry. Labels want to stop the sharing of their popular videos on the rapidly expanding site to protect growing revenue from ad-supported on-demand video-streaming and video-download sales.

But there are signs YouTube wants to play ball. It inked a pact with NBC in June to preview its fall TV season, and reportedly is in talks with labels and other entertainment companies about licensing content as well. “Bringing more entertainment and exclusive content to YouTube helps further our goal of providing the best video entertainment experience on the Internet,” CEO Chad Hurley says.

Sprint
Kansas City, Kan.
Gary Forsee, president/CEO
sprint.com

Sprint ushered in the full-song mobile download era last October and has since surpassed 5 million music downloads on its Sprint Music Service. But at a whopping $2.50 a track, one wonders how many more the company could sell.

Yet Sprint’s music initiative spans for greater than a la carte downloads. It includes streaming music from Sprint’s Satellite Radio and Rhapsody, a Sprint Music Series with exclusive access to Interscope artists, and video ringtones. The company has even made noises about bringing a mobile subscription music service to market soon.

But one of the company’s biggest initiatives is almost basic: expanding the appeal of ringtones beyond the traditional base of hip-hop and urban genres. In particular, the company is putting quite a bit of weight behind country music as the next mobile hit.

“They’ve pushed the envelope in the past, and they continue to do so,” says Adam Sexton, VP of marketing and product management for Groove Mobile, which powers the Sprint Music Store.

Napster
Los Angeles
Chris Gorog, founder/CEO
napster.com

Opinions of its business model may vary, but give Napster credit for its persistence. Earlier this year Napster appeared to be in serious trouble. Its stock price plummeted to a 52-week low, it had just laid off about 10% of its work force and — despite a 100% subscriber growth rate over the prior year — was showing no signs of gaining ground.

It responded by relaunching Napster.com as a free, ad-supported service, allowing visitors to stream any song up to five times each. While the site saw a 50% increase in page views, subscriptions fell 7% in the most recent quarter and rumors of a potential sale persist. But Napster keeps trucking along, this time launching a branded mobile-music service with Sprint, a regional wireless carrier in the Southeast.

Sirius Satellite Radio
New York
Mel Karmazin, president/CEO
sirius.com

Fueled by Howard Stern’s arrival in January, Sirius has been hard closing the gap on market leader XM.

The Mel Karmazin-helmed Sirius claimed 4.7 million subscribers at the end of its second quarter in June — up 158% from a year earlier when it had 1.4 million subscribers. Narrowing XM’s lead to just more than 1 million subscribers. Meanwhile the company, which anticipates more than 6 million subscribers by year’s end, looks to double the number of subscribers it generates through deals with auto manufacturers.

The company still finds itself facing tough negotiations in the months ahead with the record labels over licensing rights for music and portable devices that can record satellite programming. But Karmazin is focused on growth, noting in August that Stern is “mobilized for an aggressive campaign in the fourth quarter to bring on some of the fans that he didn’t get.” From traditional radio last year.

Nokia
Espoo, Finland
Olli-Pekka Kallasvuo, chairman
nokia.com

Nokia is driven to become a major digital-music player. The world’s biggest mobile phone maker proved that aquisitions such as the audacious bid to acquire Loudeye, the digital-music service supplier. Loudeye operates 60 branded digital-music services and stores across Europe, Africa and Asia-Pacific. With shareholder and regulatory approval to buy Loudeye, Nokia will be transformed into a leading global digital-entertainment provider.

It is our fundamental intention to offer consumers a comprehensive music experience,” explains Jonas Hetse, VP of Nokia’s Series Players. “We’re seeing more and more convergence between music, downloadable videos and mobile TV.”

This will be achieved by integrating Loudeye’s resources with the music-enabled phones, led by the groundbreaking N91, part of Nokia’s Nseries multimedia PC handsets launched in 2005.

The N91, which stores 3,000 songs and plays for 12.5 hours, is hailed as a close contender for Apple Computer’s iPod crown. Nokia expects to ship 80 million music handsets in 2006, up from last year’s 46 million. “We see it as a serious challenge for stand-alone music players,” Geusz adds.

Dimensional Associates
New York
Danny Stein, CEO
dimensional.com, theorchard.com

Holding tightly to the concept of the Long Tail is Dimensional Associates, which has built its business entirely on the strength of and demand for indie music online and via mobile phones.

The private equity arm of JDS Capital Management owns eMusic and the Orchard. eMusic touts itself as the second most popular music service online after iTunes. With an average of 5 million monthly downloads, eMusic sets itself apart not only by focusing on an indie-only catalog, but also because none of the tracks in its 1 million-strong library is protected by any digital rights management technologies.

Meanwhile, the Orchard aggregates the digital rights of a catalog that this year reached 1 million. From total unknowns to the early work of now famous acts to international selections spanning the globe, the Orchard licenses niche music to online retailers, full-song mobile-download services and ringtones.

“We try to connect music that you couldn’t find at the big box or traditional retailers with consumers that are looking desperately for it,” says Danny Stein, CEO of Dimensional Associates and president of JDS Capital Management.
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- Paul Anthony, CEO, Rumblefish
- John Babbit, Talent Manager & Marketing Consultant, Tsunami Entertainment
- Brandon Bakshi, Director of Writer/Publisher Relations for Europe, BMI
- Chuck Barrett, Executive Producer, Promo Only
- Maurice Bernstein, CEO/president, Giant Step
- SuzAnn Brautner, General Manager, 3 Artist Management
- Richard Bridge, A&R Manager, Petrol Records
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The singer who toured the world without leaving her basement is finally crossing the Atlantic.

An Internet-made sensation in the United Kingdom, Sandi Thom scored a five-album deal with RCA/Sony BMG and topped the charts after streaming a series of live concerts from her London flat. Now, three months after the involvement of PR firm Quine Great, a Cambridge, U.K.-based company specializing in “fan base building” and “Internet strategy,” which started working with Thom in June 2005, and counts Mariah Carey and Stevie Wonder among its clients.

Amid these accusations, “Punk Rocker” shot to No. 1 on the U.K. singles chart, having debuted two weeks before at No. 15 on download sales alone. When Viking Legacy first released the single in October 2005, it topped out at No. 33. This week it is No. 31 on the singles chart.

Meanwhile, “Smile... It Confuses People,” went straight to No. 1 in its first week and is now No. 24 after 13 weeks on the chart.

Columbia executives did not respond to multiple requests for comment, but Thom stands her ground as she gears up for her North American album release. The media hype it, because it’s a brilliant story. I think it would be unnatural for them not to find something wrong with it, once a new artist is having success,” she says. “I have nothing to hide. I was signed to an indie label and had a publishing deal when I started doing the webcasts. Anybody who says my webcasts could click on my bio, which was right next to the video. It was all there, right in front of you.”

Debates aside, “Punk Rocker” does not sound like your everyday radio hit. Relying on sparse percussion and Thom’s crystal-clear voice, the cappella tune insistently looks back at, ironically, the pre-Internet days. In it, Thom, who has been likened to KT Tunstall and Janis Joplin, laments that the ’70s were over before she was born.

“We heard the single once and thought instantly this was a song we would get reaction on,” says Dave Benson, PD of tastemaking triple-A station KFOG San Francisco, which started playing the song in June. “At that point, nobody [here] knew the webcast story, so we were all going on the music and the quality of the song.

“I think it’s irrelevant whether or not Sandi had a little more structure in her business life than throwing up a webcam and going for broke,” Benson adds. “She’s a very talented artist who’s found a way to reach people and do that thing we all hope for artists and ourselves, which is to be heard and get a chance to be creative.”

These days, Thom is no longer webcasting to the world; she’s touring the country with a three-piece band. She just played 10 shows in the United States, including New York, Nashville and Chicago. “It was great to finally play here in America,” she enthuses. “It’s amazing to have people come to you after the show and say, ‘Hey, I saw you on the Internet. I was there.’

Thom will be back in the States this month to promote her album, and more live shows are planned for November. “I’m really excited to come back to do more gigs,” she says. “This is just the beginning.”
Go West, Young Men
Panamanian Reggaetón Duo Takes A Circuitoous Route To Success

The sudden emergence of Mach & Daddy on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart may look like an overnight success story. But as Gloria Estefan once told me, "If this is an overnight success, it's been a very long night."

While Latin Notas recently reported the immediate factors behind the success of Mach & Daddy (Billboard, Aug. 26), it failed to mention the lengthy groundwork that was laid for nearly a year, since the album's release in November 2005: a rare example of a major label willing to bide its time with a new act, instead of simply relying on a quick radio hit.

Back then, Universal Music Latino president John Echevarría and senior marketing/A&R VP Walter Kolm told me about a Panamanian duo that was climbing the charts in Latin America thanks to the catchy ditty "La Botella." The pair was part of the roster of Panama Music, which is licensed worldwide by Universal.

Conventional wisdom indicated "La Botella" could also do well in the United States, a mirror market for what happens in much of Latin America.

But, Kolm says, U.S. Latin radio initially flat-out rejected the sound. "It didn't fit any of their formats," he says. "It didn't sound like Puerto Rican reggae-ton. It sounded like soca [a Caribbean dance rhythm]. I have to say, the initial radio reaction was nil."

So, instead of insisting on radio, Kolm turned to club promotion via record pools. "La Botella" was sent to DJs nationwide, and with March, it started to climb club charts. Surprisingly, the first reaction was seen in Texas, which indicated to Kolm that that market was more open to other kinds of reggaetón than the East Coast. At that point, with a story to tell, Kolm returned to radio, but instead of going to East Coast stations, he went to the Los Angeles-based Superestrella network, which plays a mix of Latin top 40. The result was unusual: a tropical group initially penetrating radio via the West Coast. Once Superestrella picked up "La Botella," other stations followed, ensuing in the chart entry and East Coast promotion this column noted last month.

Now, Mach & Daddy's album "Desde Abojo" is No. 27 on the Top Latin Albums chart, and has just been certified Latín gold by the RIAA for shipments exceeding 100,000 copies.

Next for the duo is a second single, "Las Soteras," which, like its predecessor, was initially worked to cable video channels and clubs before being taken to radio this week.

Going to record pools, Kolm explains, has become his MO for acts, particularly new ones, that initially do not get radio play.

Paulina Rubio is often called "the Golden Girl." While her nickname is ostensibly attributed to her blonde mane and tanned good looks, it also applies to her string of top-selling albums and her overall celebrity-aden persona. In the Latin music world, there are few, if any, female stars quite as glam as Rubio, with her visible careers in TV and music, and her artistic pedigree. (Her mother is Mexican film star Susana Dosamantes.)

But unlike celebrities who sing, Rubio is a singer who happens to be a celebrity, and her taste for picking repertoire runs toward well-crafted songs that veer from traditional to adventurous and span multiple genres, from pop to dance-tinged vallenato. Rubio's Sept. 22 release, "Ananda," is no exception. With tracks by such respected authors and good friends as Coti, Juanes, Ceilo Piña and Julietta Venegas; producers like Cachorro López, Toy Hernández and Tricky; and a radio, but instead of playing her album at her Miami Beach waterfront home.

You look very relaxed considering you have an album soon to be released. What's up?

I come from an excellent year where I've become human again. I spent five years nonstop putting out albums, touring, and I think it's good to be unafraid to stop, see what's going on, and breathe and vindicate yourself as a sister, a daughter and as a woman.

You don't need to be on all the time. That's such a lie. People who like to be on, maybe it's because they just hit the big one. Do you need to always be first?

Nah. It's like those girls that have to go to every party and every award show.

You're a pop artist, but there's quite a bit of rock—and everything else, for that matter—on this album. Why?

I have my rock side. I'm a Gemini, and I'm very loyal with my moments. I can rock ranchera or ballads or rock. I have a wild side, and guitars bring it out. The good thing about this album is that it doesn't fall under a single genre. Pop gives me the liberty of playing with different rhythms.

You include some skips and ambience in between some of the songs. What is that?

It projects who you are and prepares you for the next track. I feel the next song has cricketes and air, we'll, there's cricketes and air. You'll hear a motorcycle, a mother's message in the answering machine on Sunday morning. I'd fight. Everyday moments. Things you may want to share with someone that aren't very important, but I include them just the same.

There is no song titled "Ananda." Why the album title?

It's the name of this house, and it means "happiness" in Sanskrit. Ananda was a disciple of Buddha. His most charming, freest, craziest, most different disciple. But he was the one Buddha loved best because he was real. I decided on that title because what I wanted to exude was happiness, peace and inspiration.

Who is this album for?

For everybody who still has a child inside. People who haven't killed their inner child. I know Paulina the woman, the friend and the artist, and the artist is a girl who loves to dress up, go down, go up, fly. I don't take myself too seriously, and that allows me to fly and have no prejudices. It's an album forgraduations, weddings, discos, for the boyfriend, the cousin, grandma, kids, you name it. My public in general. Small, medium, large. Mexicans, Colombians, Spaniards. Everyone.

You are extremely fashionable. Every time I see you, I think you should be the face of a great designer. Well, I would love that. I'm not doing it right now, but I am producing my yoga video.
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**Mark Shultz Gets Personal**

**Singer/Songwriter Taps Experience And Speaks To Parents**

Sometimes it feels like an artist has been moving his whole life toward one album, a watershed collection of songs that perfectly marries personal conviction to commercial accessibility. Mark Shultz’s new Word Records release, “Broken & Beautiful,” is such a project. Due Sept. 26, the disc finds the recentlywed singer/songwriter exploring a wealth of topics, including relationships, parenthood, adoption and God’s grace.

One of the Christian community’s most compelling songwriters, Shultz has experienced crossover success, gaining airplay on mainstream AC radio with the poignant hit “He’s My Son,” which voice a parent’s worst nightmare—a child with cancer. “Letters From War” was used by the U.S. Army for its “Be Safe—Make It Home” campaign. His last project, “Live... A Night of Stories and Songs,” won the 2006 Gospel Music Association’s Dove Award for the New Artist of the Year.

**MUSICAL NOTES:**

Joe Adams, Ray Charles’ longtime manager and business partner, is steering. Replacing him at the helm of Ray Charles Enterprises is Valerie Ervin.

One of the last projects Adams is producing is the Oct. 3 release “Ray Sings, Basie Swings.” The album was inspired by the discovery of never-released concert tapes of Charles recorded in the mid-’70s by producer Norman Granz in Europe. A la Natalie Cole’s “Unforgettable” duet with Nat, Charles’ vocals are paired with new recordings by the current Count Basie Orchestra. Concord Records and Starbucks Hear Music, which co-released Charles’ Grammy Award-winning “Genius Loves Company,” are reteaming for this effort.

Several weeks later (Oct. 24), Concord, in tandem with Monster Cable Products’ new Monster Music division, will release the first collaboration between Al Jarreau and George Benson, “Givin’ It Up.” Guests include singers Paul McCartney, Jill Scott and Patti Austin and musicians Patrice Rushen, Rex Rideout, Marcus Miller and Herbie Hancock.

“Of the lines from the sermon, ‘Faith isn’t taught, it’s caught by your kids,’” Shultz recalls. “They are listening a lot more when you’re actually living it.”

Shaun Shankel and Mark Bright produced “Broken & Beautiful.” This is kind of a dream album for me to be able to work with Mark Bright and Shaun as well, two great producers,” Shultz says.

Shultz met Bright through BMI Nashville’s Jody Williams. Bright, well-known for his work with country acts Sara Evans and Rascal Flatts, jumped at the chance to work with Shultz. He credits Bright with using a different microphone that made him much more comfortable in the studio. “In the past I’ve had to sing the vocals over so many times that emotionally I would be at my peak for the first few times,” Schultz says.

“Then my wife would say, ‘Gosh, the way you phrase things is great, but I don’t hear your heart as much.’ Working with Mark, he matched the right microphone to my voice and I just felt so comfortable.”

Shultz admits he’s more comfortable as a songwriter than a vocalist. “The idea for me is to write a new song,” Schultz says. “Grabbing people in my church when they are walking by, saying, ‘Hey, I want to play this new song. That’s the biggest thrill for me—the whole world, because you get to express something and somebody gets to enjoy the moment with you. That’s it for me.”

**IN BRIEF:**

Austin’s Bridge has signed with Daywind Records. The trio comprises Jason Baird, Mike Kofahl and former Crab Family pianist Justin Rivers. Daywind has also signed Karen Peck & New River. Look for both acts to release projects next spring.

Legendary country group Alabama has recorded its first gospel album, “Alabama—Songs of Inspiration,” featuring such classic hymns as “How Great Thou Art,” “The Old Rugged Cross” and “Amazing Grace,” and two new songs. The album will street Oct. 24 and will be simultaneously released by RCA Records to general-market retail and via Provident Music Group to Christian retail.

Blackberry Records, owned and operated by the famed Williams Brothers, is launching a new series of budget-line CDs. The first two in the Blackberry Collection—the Williams Brothers’ “Cover Me” and the Canton Spirituals’ “Wonderful Change”—will hit stores Oct. 1 with a $9.98 price tag.
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Return To Commodore Lane

Young Producers Welcome Lionel Richie Back To The R&B Chart

“Where is it you haven’t been in a long time?” Lionel Richie says Island Def Jam chairman Antonio “L.A.” Reid asked him, going into Richie’s new album. “I just said to L.A., ‘Put me with the best of the best.’”

And that’s where Richie is now, where he hasn’t been in 10 years: getting reacquainted with the Hot R&B/Hit-Pop Songs chart, where he now has the No. 23 single, “I Call It Love.” Also claiming No. 1 on the Adult R&B chart and climbing The Billboard Hot 100 at No. 70, the track is the lead single from Richie’s third Island Records album, “Coming Home” (Sept. 12).

As a member of ‘70s soul group the Commodores, Richie was no stranger to the R&B charts. That relationship dates back to 1974 when the Tuskegee, Ala., act finked its way to its first top 10 hit (“Machine Gun”), followed by six No. 1s, including “Slippery When Wet,” “Easy” and “Stilts.”

Breaking away as a solo artist in 1982, Richie garnered more R&B No. 1s—and even more mainstream acclaim—with “All Night Long.” “Hello,” “Say You, Say Me” and other chart-topping hits.

His heralded style-changing skill with pop and country, though, sometimes sparked accusations of him forsaking his R&B roots. Of late, despite his stellar career, the Grammy Award and Academy Award-winning Richie was becoming best-known as Nicole’s dad. The last time he put a song on the R&B/hip-hop chart was in 1996 with “Ordinary Girl,” which peaked at a paltry No. 76. And aside from a 2003million-selling compilation (“The Definitive Collection”), his first two Island albums, 2001’s “Renaissance” and 2004’s “Just for You,” have sold less than 500,000 copies combined, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Enter Reid, fresh from Mariah Carey’s multiplatinum return. Now it was Richie’s turn to come home.

“The whole concept was about surprise,” Richie says. “Shock value has always been a wonderful thing in my career because of songs like country-flavored ‘Sail On’ and pop ballad ‘Three Times a Lady.’

Accompanying Richie “right down Commodore Lane,” as he describes it, were Jermaine Dupri, Sean Garrett, Dallas Austin, Raphael Saadiq and Richie musical director Chuckii Booker, among others. Whereas some might write this off as another old-school artist simply leaning on more contemporary, hit-making shoulders, Richie dismisses that notion.

“I’m a writer first,” he says. “And to get the real me on record, I wrote with them. They brought me things we experimented with, and my job was to sneak it back to me, to build the bridge between the generations without sounding too ridiculous. Working on this album reminded me of working with the Commodores. We bounced off one another creatively: They brought the R&B thing; I had the pop and country flavor.”

The only song Richie didn’t write or co-write was “I Call It Love.” It was penned and produced by Taj and Stargate, whose credits include Ne-Yo and Rihanna. “That was the first song L.A. sent me,” Richie says of the single. “These guys nailed Lionel Richie—and that’s what keeps the integrity. People are hearing Lionel Richie from back in the day.”

And they are responding big-time. The song is No. 1 on early supporter: adult R&B/WDZZ Flint, Mich. “Lionel got smart,” PD Trey Michaels says. “Listeners appreciate that he’s going back to his [R&B] roots. He got together with some of the hottest young producers, and that helped redefine him.”

That redefinition isn’t just bringing back his “Brick House” fans, contains R&B/hip-hop W2HT Montgomery, Ala., PD Daryl Elliott. “This is an absolute new generation,” he says. “The 18- and 19-year-olds who aren’t familiar with his early work with the Commodores are being reintroduced, and they are excited.”

Part of that younger appeal can no doubt be traced back to daughter Nicole of “The Simple Life” fame, who appears with her dad in the “I Call It Love” video. To further build awareness for the record, Richie embarked on an intense cross-country promo tour to every major metro market. Complementing that push were small intimate performances staged for key tastemakers in those various markets.

His 16-city Coming Home tour kicks off Oct. 27 in Detroit and wraps up Nov. 25 in Oakland Calif. He is also slated to perform with Lyfe Jennings on the new AOL entry, “The Bridge.” Sept. 13. An offshoot of AOL’s popular “Sessions.” “The Bridge” pairs legendary artists with rising talents.

“Lionel is still viewed as a contemporary artist whom consumers and fans still want to hear original material from,” Island Records president/Island Def Jam Music Group COO Steve Batts says. “The music on this album stands strong to the buzz.”

A singer/songwriter of Richie’s stature could afford to just sit back and enjoy life. But Richie proclaims he’s still having the same fun he did back with the Commodores.

“Our acting crazy together brought out ‘Slippery When Wet’ and ‘Brick House.’ Why get serious 30 years later? You have to keep a light heart in this business. This album is a 200-year-old man having the greatest time of his life.”

Additional reporting by David Greensward in Los Angeles.

HOME FRONT

BORN TO REGGAE: ELAN’S LAID-BACK RIDDIMS PREPARE TO BREAK THROUGH

“Most of the audience thought I was lip-syncing when I first starting playing with the Wailers,” Elan Atlas says. “I remember people saying, ‘He’s white. He can’t sound like Bob Marley.’”

Atlas, who was born in Los Angeles to an Israeli/Moroccan father and Jewish Native American mother, smiles and shrugs his shoulders. “This is just what I sound like. Reggae is just in me. I never took voice lessons.”

Only a few minutes ago he was very stressed. Stuck in traffic, he was running late to meet No Doubt’s Tony Kanal to talk business and music. He rushed into Magnolia, a hip restaurant on Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street in Hollywood, and gasps, “I’m never late. I swear. I’m not some kind of rock-star type.”

Kanal laughs and pats him on the back. “No worries. Eat something.”

Kanal and Atlas first met at a Wailers show in 1998. The two hit it off and became friends. When Atlas was ready to go solo, Kanal signed him to his imprint Kingsbury Studio via No Doubt’s label Interscope.


“It’s what we listened to as kids,” Kanal says of the genre. “It’s what inspired us.”

Kanal’s support is helping break Atlas in the market, manager Al Hassas says. “Urban radio is focused on rap and R&B,” Hassas says. “But Elan’s album has a lot of those elements in it. It’s soulful and driven by beats. We just need to get the program directors to take a listen.”

But Hassas is not waiting for radio. Instead, they are partnering with brands that vibrate on Atlas’ laid-back California style. He’s inked a deal with OP sportswear to be its new spokesmodel, and California-based gourmet chain the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf are promoting him in stores.

Atlas will perform during the Billboard mobile entertainment conference MECCA’s after-party bash, sponsored by AOL Mobile, Sept. 11 in Los Angeles. For more information on MECCA, go to billboardevents.com.
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Three Movements
Carnegie, Lincoln And BAM Unite To Celebrate Steve Reich's 70th

With composer Steve Reich's 70th birthday on Oct. 1, New York is feting a native son in a big way. To mark the occasion, three of the city's hottest venues—Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM)—are collaborating on programming. Notably, this is the first time these presenters are teaming up, which is a real testament to Reich's enduring prominence and legacy.

This celebration is a feast in three movements; during the monthlong celebration, each organization will focus on a different aspect of Reich's work. BAM gets things moving in early October with programming that focuses on the choreography that has been inspired by Reich's music. Beginning on the composer’s birthday, the Brooklynites will present the U.S. premiere of a new work by groundbreaking British choreographer Akram Khan set to a new Reich score titled "Variations for Vibes, Pianos and Strings," played live by the London Sinfonietta and led by the stratospherically rising young conductor Alan Pierson.

Midmonth, Carnegie Hall will host a six-day young artists workshop led by Reich, followed by concerts featuring such longtime Reich partners as Pat Metheny and the Kronos Quartet. Carnegie's series culminates Oct. 22 with the U.S. premiere of Reich's "Daniel Variations," which pays tribute to slain Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. (This work, which interweaves Pearl's own words with texts from the Bible's Book of Daniel, is actually the first in a series of new pieces commissioned anonymously to honor Pearl's memory, in a project developed by the organization Met the Composer.) To wrap up the Reich festivities in late October and early November, Lincoln Center will offer programming that emphasizes Reich's vocal and theatrical works, including the Oct. 28 New York premiere of "You Are (Variations)" with the Los Angeles Master Chorale led by Grant Gershon.

Although fine recordings of Reich’s music exist on a wide array of labels, including ECM, Naïve and Cantaloupe, his name has been nearly synonymous with Nonesuch for more than 20 years. To honor this longtime relationship (one nearly unheard-of in these days of short-lived contracts between labels and classical artists, new-ermind composers), Nonesuch is releasing a five-CD Reich boxed set titled “Phases: A Nonesuch Retrospective,” due in stores Sept. 26.

"Phases" contains some of Reich’s most iconic works in signature performances, though most selections are repeated from the twice-as-big Reich edition Nonesuch released a decade ago, a 10-CD set called "Works: 1965-1995." Even so, it’s impossible to overstate the importance of such material as 1976’s "Music for 18 Musicians" and 1971’s "Drumming," both performed by Reich and his own ensemble, or the Kronos Quartet’s recording of 1988’s "Different Trains."

Nonesuch is not the only label commemorating Reich’s big year. Fresh on the heels of the widely acclaimed, digital-only "DG Concert" release this spring of Reich’s "Tehillim," "Three Movements" and the "Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards" with conductor Stefan Asbury, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and vocal group Synergy, Deutsche Grammophon’s sister label, Philips, has resumed its own recording of the "Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards" (paired with John Adams’ "Shaker Loops"), with the San Francisco Symphony and conductor Edo de Waart.

Texas Lightning Strikes All Year Long
Countrified Band's Covers Take Germany By Storm; A Soft Boy Rocks Hard; Cassius Back And Fighting

Hamburg quintet Texas Lightning has just celebrated a solid year on Germany’s Media Control album chart with “Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch” (X-Cell/Sony BMG).

Its success has been fueled by the single “No No Never,” which was Germany’s entry for this year’s Eurovision Song Contest in May, Athens. Despite finishing 15th in Greece, it proved hugely popular with German broadcasters and hit the No. 1 slot there May 9. Sony BMG says it has shipped 300,000-plus copies in Germany.

The single was penned by the band’s Australian vocalist Jane Comerford (published by Gluck Publishing/Edition Texas Lightning). However, “Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch” predomi-
nantly features countrified versions of pop and rock anthems, including AC/DC’s “Highway to Hell,” Lou Reed’s “Walk on the Wild Side” and ABBA’s “Dancing Queen.”

Berlin-based record producer George Gluck signed Texas Lightning to his own X-Cell label in 2005 and released “Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch” Aug. 22 that year. It entered the Media Control Chart Sept. 5, 2005, eventually peaking at No. 3 in June 2006. Gluck says European shipments have passed the 200,000 mark, and the album is gold (100,000 units) in Germany. Further international releases are under discussion, he adds.

“You can’t help but like them,” says Cologne, Germany-based Frank Adler, regional buyer for music chain WOM. “It’s completely different from rock and pop—sophisticated but light-hearted music.”

New Comerford song “I Promise” is due as a single Sept. 29 in Germany. The band is touring Germany this month, booked by A.S.S. Concerts & Promotion in Hamburg, with further dates planned for France, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

—Wolfgang Spahr
REVIEW

Spotlights

ALBUMS

Justin Timberlake
FutureSex/LoveSounds
Producers: Various
Jive
Release Date: Sep. 12
On “FutureSex/LoveSounds.” Just n
Timberlake claims to be bringing “sexy”
back to pop music, and indeed he is. You
can almost feel beads of sweat rolling
cit the title track and “SexyBack” featuring
Timbaland, which is No. 1 on The Billboard
Hot 100 for a second week. But Timberlake
at the production helm and guest
appearances by J.T. and Three 6 Mafia,
Timberlake is seriously courting hip-hop
fans. But he has not lost sight of his pop
audience. The playful “Darn Girl” features
Will.i.am and sultry “(Another Song)” All
Over Again” are reminiscent of Prince’s
signature style. Although the mix of service
beats, pounding basslines and palatable
vocals is occasionally marred by mund-an
R&B tracks like “Until The End of Time,”
there are far more pop than even slow
jams. The sound may be a bit different, but
the music’s sex appeal remains a force to be reckoned with—KK

The Black Keys
Magic Potion
Producers: The Black Keys
Nonesuch
Release Date: Sept. 12
On Nonesuch debut, guitar/drums
duo the Black Keys creates the garage-blues
that has defined it for more
straightforward classic rock sound. Dan
Auerbach’s precision-crafted riffs are as
menacing as ever, but his once-primal
howl has been softened with reverb, and
many of the songs take a less direct route
for the soul, making the album’s best
numbers its least obvious. “You’re the
One” is a tender ballad featuring Beatles-
ques double-tracked vocals and gentle
chord progressions, while the use of
delayed guitar on “The Flame” makes each
stirring down-stroke resolved like
shattering glass. Of course, some of the
tunes just plain rock, like “Rayon,
hormonal “Your Touch” and the dynamic
“Elevator.” It may take a while to sink in,
but “Magic Potion” exudes its charm with
every listen.—SV

John Mayer
Continuum
Producer: John Mayer
Columbia
Release Date: Sept. 12
John Mayer’s new album makes good on
the promise of worrying less about “Wonderland” and
more about his blues. Even more
detractors admit are pretty solid. But the
Jeffry-and-Hyde-like co-existence of his
blues and pop influences is tough to pull
off. Though Mayer uses “Waiting on the
World to Change” and “Stop This Train” to
tame (rather passively) the state of the
union, his persona remains that of the
broken-down guy standing in the
doorway. With a bouquet of wilted roses
in the rain. To his credit, his work with the
John Mayer Trio has staked out ground
well-removed from the Dave Matthews
brand of blues, but it’s still hard to tell if he’s a bluesman in a soft-
rockier’s body or vice versa.
and “Continuum” is the sound of him trying
to figure it out too.—JW

Bob Dylan
Somewhere Baby
(3:07)
Producer: Jack Frost
Writer: B. Dylan
Publisher: Not Listed
Colombia
Later, the once-so-
reclusive Bob Dylan has been revealing
more of himself—he’s even hosting a
weekly radio show—but his music
remains as enigmatic and proclamatic
as ever. With “Modern Times,” he
 submits a new album that sounds just like one of
those scratched pre-rock records he is
now spinning on-air. An old-timey electric blues shuffle in the
vein of Slim Harpo, “Someday Baby” isn’t breaking
any ground, but that’s exactly the
point. “I’m so hard-pressed, my mind tied
up in knots/just keep recycling the same old
tales,” he riffs, holding onto the
blues like an old preacher to his most
sacred text. Dylan in 2006 offers a
refuge from, not homage to, our
hopelessly modern world.—SP

Lindsey Haun
Broken (3:53)
Producers: Randy Scaggs, Toby Keith
Writers: Angelo, A. Lauer, H. Lindsey
Publisher: Not Listed
Snow Dog Nashville
Artist/actress Lindsey Haun is the brim of
showcasing her breakthrough
performance in the upcoming Paramount
Classics/CMT Films movie “Broken Bridges” (starring Toby Keith)—obviously
directed toward a country audience—but the
teen’s performance of single “Broken” breaks free
of all boundaries. Not only is this
talent ballad among the best debuts of the year,
but hers is a voice that could command any
genre. It takes a half-listen to fall in love with
her inherent passion and pure, raw talent —
and ever so rarely—we hear little to no
vocal processing. Every element, from
sweeping production to undeniable melody to a lyric of
newfound strength, make this among the
great songs of 2006. If this movie takes off,
this song is the stuff of Oscar noms.—CT

Singles

Bob Seger
Face the Promise
Producer: Bob Seger
Capitol
Release Date: Sept. 12
Last recorded mostly in
Nashville with
wallowing drones and lively
if gratuitous soul singer
back-up, Seger’s first
studio set in 11 years
contains his hardest rock
since the ’70s. But it often
feels sluggish despite
intense guitar
work, but may
also lacks
the
rock
variety
with
real ease.
Rock radio may not care
anymore, but maybe
country radio should.—CE

Black Label Society
Shot to Hell
Producers: Zakk Wylde, Michael Beinhorn
Roadrunner
Release Date: Sept. 12
While his Black
Label Society brethren
are still serving their
domino brand of brew-tail; gritty
bar rock that squawks like a
Harley on an open highway.
Cuts like “Faith Is Blind”
and “Concrete Jungle”
are to the point. Wylde
must have known
the flavor was getting
a little weak, because he
chases the dirty sad with
shots of maudlin spirits.
His softer, melodic side steers
five tracks that are led by
keyboards or piano instead
of guitar to mention
their titles, but
the
Zeppelin-ish “Lead Me to
Your Door,” “Sick of It All”
and “Nothing’s the Same”
raise the question of what
in addition to the loss
of good friend “Dimebag”
Darrell (Aabbott) has turned
Wylde so introspective
these days. Nevertheless,
these tunes are a nice
diversion from the usual
hard-charging fare.—CLT

Sandi Thom
Smile...It Confuses
People
Producers: Jake Field, Duncan Thompson
Capitol
Release Date: Sept. 12
This Scottish singer-
songwriter won instant U.K.
fame by hosting a series of home concerts
that drew a stadium-sized audience. Ironically,
his debut album unfurls in the
predigital warmth of
vintage folk and soul.
Signature track “I Wish I
Was a Punk Rocker (With
Flowers in My Hair)” is a
foot-stomping update of
Janis Joplin’s “Mercedes
Benz” and City and original,
but not enough to carry an
entire album. While ballads
like the soul-tinged “Lonely
People” or the acoustic
“Sunset Borderline”
conjure sweet echoes of
Carole King and Stevie
Wonder, retro-styled folk-
rockers like When
Horsepower Meant What It
Said” feel like KT Tunstall-
like. Thom is blessed with
a beautiful soul voice.
but one is left wishing she
would break out of her
sunny adult-pop once in a while to reveal more
personality.—SP

Kasey Chambers
Carnival
Producer: Nash Chambers
Warner Bros.
Release Date: Sept. 12
Motherhood, marriage
and maturity have not
robbed Chambers of her
beautiuflilear voices,
but they have contributed to
more
release of
Carnival
and a trip outside her melodic
comfort zone. Her fourth
album makes the
vulnerability of 1999’s
“The Carn

Singles

Governor
Son of Pain
Producers: Various
Grand Hustle/Atlantic
Release Date: Sept. 12
Following in the
contemporary footsteps of
scruffy soul singers like
Anthony Hamilton and
newbie Governor’s “Son of Pain”
proves solid soul’s still
around. Gruffly singing
staccato over almost every track and
ending verses on
high notes, it’s
ironically
charming as he
riddles the beat. Tracks like
“Blood Sweat and Tears”
have him wailing about
continual on >p56

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from >>>55 “ghetto rain” and pain, while the rest hinges upon various “meeting a girl” scenarios. On “Make Love to You,” Guv picks up a cute waitress and convinces her he’s the one by stretching his voice beautifully over the saxophone-laden chorus. Taking a very stab at the style, Donnie Hathaway’s classic “I Love You More Than You’ll Ever Know” as “Never Wanna Leave.” Thankfully Governor doesn’t override his offset runs, delivering his distinct voice with clarity and precision.—HC

JAZZ

PAT METHENY & BRAD MEHLDAUL
Metheny Mehluda
Producer: Pat Metheny
Release Date: Sept. 12
What happens when two jazz titans from different generations collaborate for the first time? In this case, over the course of guitarist Pat Metheny and pianist Brad Mehldau’s eight duets (plus two tracks with drummer Jeff Ballard and bassist Larry Grenadier), each player retains his distinct artistic voice while responding familial warmth to the other’s point of view. On tracks like “Unrequited” and “Metheny’s ‘Bachelors III,'” the guitarist retains his trademark airy sweeps of melody and harmony, while Mehldau’s elegant and dense constructions remain intact. A surprisingly organic dialogue that’s musically and intellectually dynamic.—AT

FOLK

ANKYONOUS 4
Gloryland
Producer: Robina G. Young
Harmonia Mundi
Release Date: Sept. 12
Ankynos 4’s road has been long and winding, but never boring. Recording everything from 12th-century liturgical music to spirituals, its music-making continually enters. And this, the vocal quartet’s second journey into the heart of American music featuring a plethora of folk songs, spirituals, gospel tunes and religious ballads, is no exception. Framed by genteel accompaniment provided by violinist/ mandolin player Darol Anger and guitarist/ mandolinist Mike Marshall, the quartet sings with its trademark crystalline and open sound, but idiomatically endows phrases with supple bends and slides. From the haunting shape-note song “I’m On My Journey Home” to the lilting drawl of “Mempick” and the ebullient gospel of “Just Overer in the Gloryland,” this is a truly sublime album, guaranteed to appeal to saints and sinners alike.—FT

VITAL REVIEWS

R.E.M.
And I Feel Fine . . . The Best of the I.R.S. Years 1982-1987
Producer: Kevin Flaherty
I.R.S./Capitol
Release Date: Sept. 12
No self-respecting R.E.M. fan needs disc one of this collection, which rounds up “the best” of the band’s first five years. The real treats are on the second disc, which boasts such long-bootlegged but never officially released gems as the oblanguishing “Theme From The Big Bang” and the original “Bad Day,” first demoted in 1986 but revived for an inferior rererelease on a 2003 best-of. A mollases-paced “Gardening at Night” offers a fascinating glimpse into the creative process, while a live-in-studio “Just a Touch” and three ripping 1983 concert cuts bristle with the electricity often absent in the band’s latter-day work. Also new to market, the DVD “When The Light Is Mine,” with 18 more live cuts and collector-geek period footage. “I Feel Fine” reveals how one little college band from Georgia grew into the chart-toppers who arrived on Warner Bros.’ doorstep in 1987.—JC

GIRLS

ROB MADONNA Jump (3:32)
Producers: Madonna, Stuart Price
Writers: Madonna, J. Henry, S. Price
Publishers: various
 Warner Bros.

Fourth time’s a charm, right? As her new concert tour winds down, Madonna has released “Jump,” the fourth single off “Confessions on a Dance Floor.” Maybe its radio fortunes will be better than her last single “Get Together.” But we’re being realistic here: if programmers turned up their collective noses at the super-catchy “Sorry,” then there’s no impetus suddenly come to the table for “Jump?” That song, the poem is a pulsating pop tune that has its positive, universal message about believing in yourself, in the new age, in life. Dance clubs will obviously jump all over the single, while adult top 40 radio seems like the natural starting place for the tune to get its footing.—KC

COUNTRY

BRAD PAISLEY She’s Everything (3:47)
Producer: Frank Rogers
Writers: M. Nance, B. Paisley
Publishers: various
 Arista Nashville

Brad Paisley’s “Time Well Wasted,” which picked up album of the year honors at the Academy of Country Music Awards last spring, is one of the best country sets in years. Though much of his career has been built on such feel-good hits like “I’m a Gomer & like “Alcohol” and “Celebrity,” this fourth single demonstrates how compelling Paisley can be on a beautiful ballad. Penned by the artist and Will Nance, the song has great take lyrics, like “She’s the one I wish I could be/And the stealer of the covers/She’s a picture in my wallet of my unborn child’s mother.” (One can’t help but picture Paisley’s wife, actress Kimberly Williams Paisley.) It’s a stunner with a well-crafted lyric, effectively showing his softer side. It looks sure to be another chart-topper. Meanwhile, the label could go another four singles deep and not lose any momentum on this album.—DEP

DANCE

SUN Gone (3:14)
Producer: Jason Nevin
Writers: M. Grant, A. Wilson
Publishers: Gary & Joe (BMI)
Remixers: Ralph Rosario, Moto Blanco, Tony Moran, Steve Mac.

SUN Gone, which has scored a couple of No. 1 club smashes on the Billboard club charts, continues her bid to shine upon the U.S. market with super-fresh dancefloor popover “Gone,” another instantly gratifying melodic jewel. The song is given numerous treatments via A-list remixers Ralph Rosario, Moto Blanco, Tony Moran and Steve Mac, though Jason Nevin’s track really gets it right on his radio edit, effectively churning the beats while letting Sun’s innate charisma hold court front and center. Bonus ballad mix from John Poppo proves to potential detractors that Sun is the real deal as a vocalist, with the remixes simply revolving around another luminescence. Breaking Asian artists is notoriously tough in the States, but Sun is a world-class artist who’s already comfortably Americanized and working overtime to convince mixing masters that she has got the goods. “Gone” hardly. Sounds like Sun is here to stay.—CT

DATA & CREDITS

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PICK *: A new release predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format.
CRITICAL CHOICE: An A+ release regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.
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Dylan Stands Tall; Simpson Fades Despite Fanfare

Did a Bob Dylan album ever reach No. 1 before this issue? Yes, but it occurred to me that some of Bob Dylan's readers had not yet been born when the singer/songwriter's "Desire" ruled the Billboard 200 for five weeks in 1976.

For that matter, had any of the performers who share this week's top five with Dylan taken their first breaths.

Just a few weeks after the late Johnny Cash notched his first No. 1 album at the big chart in 36 years, it doesn't seem so odd to see Dylan on his 39th season of his top slot. While Cash's "American V: A Hundred Highways" rang the bell with less than 90,000 copies during a soft holiday week in a slow summer, Dylan reaches the summit with a number that would look respectable in any climate.

With visibility aided by his featured role in a TV commercial for Apple's iTunes, "Modern Times" sells 192,000 in its opening frame. That shatters Dylan's previous best Nielsen SoundScan week, and it's a sum large enough to lead the page in all but 15 of this year's 35 sales weeks.

His prior SoundScan high's been 134,000 copies, when eventual Grammy Award winner "Love and Theft" bowed at No. 5 in 2001.

Seeing the influential Dylan replace MTV-favored Dancy Kane at No. 1 reminds me of a health insurance company's radio spot in which Allison Janney speaks of choosing between broccoli "on this side" and saturated fat on the other. While the history of popular music will forever be dotted with momentary successes for prefab acts like Dancy Kane, Paris Hilton and Ashley Parker Angel, Dylan's big week proves there will always be an appetite for music of a substance.

PUBLIC OFFERING: The Beatles sang that "Money can't buy me love," and Jessica Simpson's career proves that a whole lot of media attention won't guarantee chart success.

Her fifth album, "A Public AFFAIR," enters Billboard 200 at No. 5 with 104,000 sold in its first week. It was bad enough that sister Ashlee, a less talented singer whose career started later, had two No. 1 albums while Jessica has yet to score her first, but who would have guessed that ex-husband Nick Lachey would mount a much larger splash.

His divorce-inspired collection "What's Left of Me?" invaded the chart 17 weeks ago at No. 2 with a start of 172,000, but that has the surface form of the post-98 Degrees career—and a bigger week than the older Simpson has managed with any of her albums.

There was a moment not so long ago when Lachey looked like they might be pop culture's next Sonny & Cher, translating top 40 success into TV stardom. Their MTV show "Newlyweds" put them in the spotlight. Whether her confusion over Chicken of the Sea or buffalo wings on that reality series rose from genuine naiveté or dumb-like-a-box cunning, the result made Simpson a modern-day Gracie Allen who could laugh all the way to the bank. The pair landed a prime-time variety special on ABC that sounded like a series pilot.

Her third album, "In This Skin," started at No. 10 on 64,000 in 2003. After "Newlyweds" became a hit, Columbia launched a special edition that led to her biggest week ever, 160,000 units, as "Skin" soared 16-2.

Yet, despite commercial endorsements, a budding movie career, nonstop ink about her personal life on grocery-counter magazine covers, a release-week visit to "Today" and a clever campaign that offered consumers 500 different personalized download versions of the title track to "A Public Affair," this album's opening sun falls shy of the 120,000-unit splash that placed second album "Inseparable" at No. 6 in 2001.

AWARDED: It does not offer wall-to-wall videos like it did when it launched 25 years ago, but MTV still moves the music market.

Last week, the channel owned the top slot on The Billboard 200, courtesy of "Making the Band" creation Dancy Kane. This week, Aug. 11 Video Music Awards accounts for No. 1 on Top Heatseekers and several spikes on the big chart.

Most conspicuous is OK Go, winning The Billboard 200's Facecetter as sales almost double (190-118). Its "Oh No" reaches Heatseekers' top shelf full year after bowing at No. 1, the longest gap between No. 1 stops by any album in that chart's history.

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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- **CHRISS BROWN**: Chris Brown (13.98)
## Pop 100 Airplay

### Title
1. **Black Eyed Peas** - "The Chorus Tree (Interlude)"
2. **DANIEL POWTER** - "BAD THINGS"
3. **DEJA PARIS HILTON** - "DEJA"
4. **JOSH TURNER** - "PUT YOUR CARTEL (THE HONESTLY)"
5. **ANNA NALICK** - "UNFAITHFUL"
6. **THE QUEEN & I** - "DON'T READY TO SING SINS NOT TRAGEDIES"
7. **CHERISH SHO'NUFF** - "WHAT HURTS THE MOST"
8. **DANI CALIFORNIA** - "SO WHAT"
9. **Fear Factory** - "ME & U (WARNER BROS.)"
10. **EVELYN" - "I CAN'T HAVE YOU ANYMORE"

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## Hot Singles Sales

### Title
1. **Black Eyed Peas** - "I FEAT. CLARA" - "REWRITE SINS NOT TRAGEDIES"
2. **DANIEL POWTER (WARNER BROS.)** - "BAD THINGS"
3. **DEJA PARIS HILTON (WARNER BROS.)** - "DEJA"
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5. **ANNA NALICK** - "UNFAITHFUL"
6. **THE QUEEN & I** - "DON'T READY TO SING SINS NOT TRAGEDIES"
7. **CHERISH SHO'NUFF** - "WHAT HURTS THE MOST"
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### TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

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### REGGAE ALBUMS

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### BETWEEN THE BULLETS

Riding High on the success of his smash "Shoal" single, Young Dro checks in at No.1 for Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with his major-label debut, "Best Thang Smokin'".

He leads a busy top 10, where Method Man (No.4), the Roots (No.5), and Too Short (No.7) round out the big debut. Each of those acts reaches the top 15 of The Billboard 200.

--- Keith Caulfield
### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

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### COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE

**Visit www.BillboardRadioMonitor.com to sign up to register for your free Country Radio Blast.**

**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

This band shouldn't be confused with the other Kansas-based Heartland that charted three country singles in 1989-1990.

In other top 10 action, Keith Urban's "Once In A Lifetime" takes the chart's fastest gain (up 3.5 million impressions) and leaps 16-10 in its third chart week. Top 10 ink hasn't happened this fast since Gretchen Wilson's "All Jacked Up" rose 15-10 during its third chart week in the Aug 27, 2005, issue. — Wade Jansen
### Top Latin Songs

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<td><strong>Pam Pam</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hips Don't Lie</strong></td>
<td>Shakira Featuring Wyclef Jean</td>
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<td><strong>Aladio Del Tiempo</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tengo un Amor</strong></td>
<td>Toby Love Featuring Raikal &amp; Ken-Y</td>
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<td><strong>De Rodillas Te Pido</strong></td>
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<td><strong>No, No, No</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Que Preciso Tiene El Cielo</strong></td>
<td>Marc Anthony</td>
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### Top Latin Albums

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ALBUM CHARTS

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

- Albums with the greatest sales gain this week.
- Albums with the greatest sales loss this week.
- Albums where included, this award indicates the title with the chart's largest unit increase.

Suggested platinum or tapes. Certification for albums is based on Nielsen SoundScan data provided by Promosquad. Songs are tested online by listeners of selected radio stations and are ranked by Nielsen SoundScan, compiled by a cross-referencing exact times of airing with actual listener data. The exceptions are the Rhythm Top 40, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are ranked by total sales.

- Songs showing an increase in audience (or detections) over the previous week, regardless of chart movement.

RECURRENT RULES

Songs are removed from the Hot 100 and hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Pop 100 and Pop 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Pop 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 15 in detections or audience. Titles are removed from Hot Adult Contemporary if they do not obtain enough audience points to be bullet. Songs are removed from the Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Adult R&B, and Hot Dance Airplay charts if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 18. Titles are removed from Rock and R&B LPs if they have been on the chart for more than 15 weeks and rank below 10.

SINGLES SALES CHARTS

The top-selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail stores, mass merchandisers, internet sales reports compiled, and collected by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/hip-hop Singles Sales, sales data is compiled from a national subset of core R&B/hip-hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

Singles with the greatest sales gains.

CONFIGURATIONS

- CD single available
- Digital Download available
- DVD single available
- Vinyl Maxi-Single available
- Vinyl Maxi-Single available, CDs not included on all singles charts.

MTPREDICTOR

Indicates title earned MTPredictor status in that particular format based on research data provided by Promosquad. Titles are ranked online by Promosquad using multiple factors and a nationwide sample of cardiographically profiled music consumers. Songs are voted on a 1-to-5 scale; final results are based on weighted averages. Songs with a score of 4.5 or more (75 or more for country) are ranked on the MTPredictor chart and are followed by Nielsen SoundScan sales data. Title rankings are based on airplay, detections, audience, and updated sales data. Sales are included in MTPredictor's Airplay and detections from Nielsen SoundScan.

DANCE CLUB PLAY

Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs. Titles with the greatest club play increase over the previous week.

AWARD CERT LEVELS

- Recording Industry Aot: Of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold). RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinum). RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million units (Diamond). Diamond Award numerator symbol indicates album’s multi-platinum level. For boxed sets and double albums with a running time of 110 minutes or more, the RIAA multiplies shipments by the number of discs and/or boxes. Certification for net shipments of 10 million units (Diamond). Certification of 200,000 units (Platinum). Certification of 400,000 units (Multi-Platinum).

SINGLES CHARTS

- RIAA certification for 500,000 paid downloads (Gold). RIAA certification for 1 million paid downloads (Platinum). NCH symbol indicates song’s multi-platinum level. RIAA certification for net shipment of 500,000 singles (Gold).

MUSIC VIDEO SALES CHARTS

- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 25,000 units for video singles.
- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 25,000 units for shortform or longform videos.
- RIAA platinum certification for net shipment of 50,000 units for video singles.
- RIAA platinum certification for sales of 50,000 units for shortform or longform videos.

DVD SALES/WSS SALES/VIDEO RENTALS

- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units or $1 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 100,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price.
- RIAA gold certification for minimum sales of 250,000 units or dollar volume of $18 million at retail to theatrically released programs, or at least 50,000 units and $2 million in suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.
- RIAA platinum certification for minimum sales of 250,000 units or dollar volume of $18 million at retail to theatrically released programs, or at least 50,000 units and $2 million in suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.

TOP DIGITAL

- Artist name and distribution label.
- Digital Download available
- Maximum price.
- Title.
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Sonoma County, California

With spectacular views in every direction, you will feel like you are on top of the world!

One-of-a-kind wine country property featuring 332 acres (5 parcels) with over 9700 sq ft of living space, beautiful solar heated pool, and 8 horse barn with many trails.

4000 +/- square foot grand room could become recording/art studio. Gourmet kitchen is perfect for entertaining. Unlimited potential, including vineyards. Gated entry and views of Alexander Valley, Lake Sonoma, St. Helena, & the Graysers. Truly a rare opportunity.

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A 5 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath, 4-story wooden home, with finely finished rooms. There's an Art Studio/Home Office, Master Bedroom/Library with View, & Theater/Woodworking Shop/ProjecManager not available at this time). Master Suite with walk-thru closet in full bath, washer & dryer, full walk-in, and an in-law Apartment with separate entrance, a closet and a walk-in closet.

A 3-year Dining Room, a basketball court with 1/4 court, a Gym area. AND A SWIMMING POOL! THE LIST GOES ON...

The high ceiling living room, a large office area, an open roofed and a day seating area. Onward to the large entertainment room with a 2-story, access to the roof - ceiling height, then into the open "mini" kitchen with 2 pantries, a dishwasher, room for refrigerator and freezer, great views, and a wood stove that heats for a cozy feel. The high ceiling living room (with exposed wood and beams), has large windows that give you a view of the peace and tranquility that transforms your amazing new home.

The landscaped-accessible bedrooms and full bath on the main floor, has a large walk-in shower, a tub with jacuzzi/whirlpool, a toilet with lid, and grab bars already in place. The barn sets up on a hill, on 3/4 of an acre, at the end of the road, with Room for a Recording & Performance Studio.

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St. Augustine, FL 32085 - view
http://bighouse@balderdanevermont.com
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Entire house is wired for sound.

$5,000,000.
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Matt Rapf - 310 774 5153
www.MattRapf.com
Pritchett-Rapf & Associates

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A nearby "comp" just sold (Aug '06) for $2,300,000

$1,600,000 HURRY!

Carol Bird
310-317-9346

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P.O. Box A Frankfort, K.J. 40601-0020
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fax: 312.873.3889
www.victoryrecords.com

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Music Show with Buddy Max - every Saturday at 2 pm, Cowboy Junction Opry, Hwy. 44, Jet, OK, Levanto, Fl. 94401.

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BILLBOARD UNDERGROUND:

Fall Out Boy was presented gold records for its 2003 Furious Records album “Take This to Your Grave” Aug. 20 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York. From left are the band’s Joe Trohman, Andrew Hurley, Pete Wentz and Patrick Stump. [Photo: courtesy of Donna A. Umeda/RONNIE WRIGHT PHOTO.]

On Aug. 29, Virgin Records presented gold record plaques to the members of 30 Seconds to Mars, the band’s single “The Kill” was the No. 1 hit on the Modern Rock airplay chart, and the award was presented at the band’s Sept. 5 MTV Video Music Awards. From left are Virgin Records senior VP of sales Danielle Pistone, senior manager Vanessa Leto, senior director of promotion mentalist; senior VP Jeff Kogod; Virgin Records chairman/CEO Jason Flom; singer Jared Leto; and Virgin Records’ Carl Brickstad. [Photo: courtesy of Donna A. Umeda/RONNIE WRIGHT PHOTO.]

Alan Jackson’s 15th anniversary celebration of his family’s first album, “Precious Memories,” at a gathering earlier this week at Sony BMG’s Nashville office. From left are star producer Keith Stegall, Sony BMG chairman Joe Galante, Jackson’s daughter Ali, wife Denise, mother Ruth, and Sony BMG executive VP Butch Waugh. [Photo: courtesy of Donna A. Umeda/RONNIE WRIGHT PHOTO.]

Clothing designer and Complex founder Marc Ecko, left, and multi-platinum artist Nas attended Complex’s 2006 Best of Music Bash. The celebration was held Aug. 30 in New York in conjunction with the MTV Video Music Awards. [Photo: courtesy of Donna A. Umeda/RONNIE WRIGHT PHOTO.]

GRAMMYS ON THE HILL: Producers of the Music 101 quarterly and held Sept. 6 in Washington, D.C., Grammys on the Hill connect top recording artists and songwriters with members of Congress in the nation’s capital. [Photos: courtesy of www.billboard.com]


RIGHT: Portnow, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ron Clarkson.
ELTON'S INTIMATE EVENING

Elton John offered up the world premiere of material from his new album, "The Captain and the Kid," Sept. 6 at New York's intimate Rose Hall, with proceeds from the $1,000 tickets to benefit the Elton John AIDS Foundation. John and his crack band played the new set in sequence, and the artist took time to explain each of its 10 songs. Thematically, the album picks up where 1977's "Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy" left off, chronicling the ups-and-downs of Elton and his longtime songwriting partner, Bernie Taupin.

The opener, "Postcards From Richard Nixon," describes the pair's first trip to Los Angeles, while "Wouldn't You Have Any Other Way (NYC)" is "a love song to the city of New York," according to John. He added that "Blues Never Fade Away" is "probably one of the best vocals I've ever done on an album." A particular highlight was the single "The Bridge," which is steadily climbing the Hot Adult Contemporary Song chart.

The rest of the set went heavy on Elton classics like "Bennie and the Jets. "Phila Free," "Rocket Man," "Tiny Dancer," "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting" and "The Bitch Is Back," which finally got the suit-and-tie-clad audience up on its feet. For the encore, John dished a planned "Your Song,"/"Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me" two-fer in favor of a solo piano rendition of the ballad "Mona Lisa and Mad Hatters." While wolfing down sushi and kicking back Patron tequila, Track spotted Brooks & Dunn's Ronnie Dunn, Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath and George Harrison's son Dhani at the after-party.

JEAN GENIE

Just as the Black Eyed Peas' Fergie launches her solo career with the hit single "London Bridge" and album "The Duchess," the artist is about to unveil a line of jeans she tells Track is inspired by "my crazy life," "it's called Blendshe featuring Fergie, and it's mostly based in Copenhagen," she says. "There's (the word) "L.A." on some of the pockets and "Mi Vida Loca" on some of the shirts. I wanted the buttons to look like albums. I'm starting small because I can't handle doing a whole line right now." Fergie is the latest hip-hop artist to make a foray into jeans, following Nelly's debut Bottom's Bobbi Valentine's Bobby V. Jeans and Lil Wayne's V. Jeans.

ENCORE

Cheryl Lynn's 1978 crossover hit "Got To Be Real" still gets plenty of play—it currently provides the musical backdrop to a Clarol hair color commercial. Now Track hear that the elusive singer will make a rare statewide appearance Nov. 16 when she performs with friends (rumored to be David Foster, David Patich, Ray Parker Jr. and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis) at the Black AIDS Institute's annual Heroes in the Struggle event at the Directors Guild of America in Los Angeles. Trivia buffs will recall that Lynn was an early TV talent-show winner when she appeared on "The Gong Show."

SLIM & HIS BLUE BOYZ

According to Track correspondents who were backstage at the recent MTV Video Music Awards, Houston rapper Slim Thug is working on the follow-up to his Geffen debut, "Already Platinum." He's also collaborating with his rap group, Boyz N Blue, on an independent album, "Served and Collect," that will arrive via his Boss Hogg Outlawz label.

FACE DANCES

The Faces haven't played together in more than 30 years, but vocalist Rod Stewart says he would not rule out re-forming the still-influential group for a special occasion. "It'd be great to put the band together for charity or, on a one-off event," he tells Track, adding that the group's surviving members—guitarist Ronnie Wood, keyboardist Ian McLagan and drummer Kenney Jones—are open to the idea, too. "Ronnie is always up for it. So's Ken and Kenney. We'd just need to find ourselves a bass player," he said, referring to Ronnie Lane, who died in 1997 due to complications from multiple sclerosis. For now, Stewart is focused on his next album. "Still the Same ... Great Rock Classics of Our Time," due Oct. 12 via [ ]

KNOLES SISTERS ON THE MOVE

Beyoncé is shifting her music publishing from ASCAP to BMI, where she will work with executive VP/head of urban music Big Jon Platt. Knowles' manager/father Mathew broke the news during the "I'm With The Brand" panel at Billboard's R&B/Hip-Hop Conference & Awards in Atlanta. Beyoncé is credited as a co-writer on a number of her hits, including her latest smash, "Déjà Vu."

Matthew Knowles also said his younger daughter, Solange, will be the face of Beyoncé's new junior clothing line, Dreeon, which will launch in October. He noted that Beyoncé, often decked out in a $500 pair of jeans, is no longer the right spokesperson for a clothing line aimed at younger ladies.

GOOD WORKS

MARLEY TRIBUTES DOUBLE AS AFRICAN FUND-RAISERS

The 2007 Africa Unite festivals will take place in three South African cities next February and include three benefit concerts celebrating the life and work of Bob Marley, spearheaded by his widow, Rita. They include a star-studded Feb. 7 show in Durban and additional events in Johannesburg (Feb. 17) and Cape Town (Feb. 24). Proceeds will benefit a variety of initiatives aimed at encouraging peace, education and empowerment for youth in Africa.

In addition, Africa Unite has teamed with the Emerging Leadersh- hip Programme, which groom's young leaders to help foster global peace, and the Shanduka Foundation's Adopt-a-School Programme, which aims to improve the quality of education in the region.

JOHNSON TREE GIVES BACK

Organizers will donate 100% of the proceeds from California's Joshua Tree Music Festival to local organizations af-fected by severe fires that ravaged the area in July. The event will be held Oct. 21-22 at the Joshua Tree Lake Campground and feature performances by Dave Alvin & the gravy, John, Railroad Earth, the Ditty Bops, Tim Easton and Anne McCue, among others.

BROWN ON THE TOWN

Chris Brown will headline a Dec. 3 concert in Las Vegas as part of the annual Gift of Hope charity fund-raising weekend in Las Vegas, benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The event also boasts celebrity golf and poker tournaments, a soccer clinic and a performance by actor Dennis Quaid's band the Sharks. For more information, contact the South- ern Nevada chapter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society at 702-436-4220.
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