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TO MAKE ONE LEGENDARY ALBUM

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With G-Unit behind him, a multiplatinum rapper sets out on his own -> P.30

The Love

Courtney's back—and sober -> P.71

Plus

Can radio win back the teens? -> P.9

Latin America's digital future -> P.12
BIG

FOR ITS AGE.

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#360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD HOME FRONT

Conferences

BILLBOARD GOES TO VOODOO Billboard joins this year’s Voodoo Music Experience, a two-day festival known for its diverse blend of artists and genres set for Oct. 28-29 in New Orleans. For more info, go to billboard.com.

RETURN TO TOURING 3 Doors Down members Brad Arnold and Matt Roberts will keynote the “Rebirth of a Region: Concerts Return to the Gulf” Q&A at the Billboard Touring Conference, Nov 8-9 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans.

Blogging
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The Party's Not Over
Tower May Be Gone, But Record Stores Live On

Two reporters phoned me about the liquidation of Tower Records just minutes after a judge in Delaware sealed the chain's fate. It felt like being spoken to sobberly and dispassionately about a long and dear friend's terminal illness, when I really wanted to do at that moment was grieve.

This by no means represents the industry's first significant closure. Musicland, which for decades had been the industry's largest store count, and Camelot Music, the first chain to win NARM's merchandiser of the year award in consecutive years, were among casualties keenly felt. Both were successful companies, smartly and honorably run for most of their histories.

Tower fits that description, but also managed to be a life of the party. Its super-sized stores were fun places to shop and discover music. At the end of the day, the chain's brass and staff played as hard as they worked. Walk into a Tower meeting and one had to be ready to absorb a sarcastic barb or at least a serving of satire.

Never shy to criticize a distributor's new policy, the chain's executives didn't just argue, but offered alternatives. The company offered ideas on everything from packaging to tennis. A lobby from Tower founder Russ Solomon encouraged labels to launch the 5-inch CD single in the late '80s. It was a solid citizen in U.S. trade groups NARM and the Video Software Dealers Assn., and helped stimulate the growth of music retail organization the British Assn. of Record Dealers and international trade group the Global Entertainment Retail Assn.

There has been a temptation to determine whether Tower's downfall can be ascribed to mistakes made by its original management team, or the one mandated in recent years by its bondholders. Such speculation ignores the bright management that guided Camelot, Musicland and other chains that have been erased from the music's board since the 1990s.

Let's remember that Tower won its third consecutive largest retailer of the year award at NARM in August during the very same week that its final chapter of financial distress began to unravel.

Loss-leader pricing from department stores isn't a new problem: We complained about and reacted to it when I worked at Camelot more than 20 years ago. But other wrinkles in the landscape—from CD burners and peer-to-peer to the many new legitimate channels through which consumers find music—make it obvious that music retailing is not a business for the faint of heart.

When the court rendered its decision, I took time from an already busy weekend to visit the Pasadena Tower and the chain's landmark store on Sunset Boulevard. Although discounts were still minimal, both stores were busier than I'd seen in a while.

The marque at the Sunset store cited R.E.M.'s "The End of the World As We Know It!"—and a colleague likened the court's Tower verdict as a new-century meaning for a key phrase from Don McLean's "American Pie": "The day the music died." I understand these sentiments, but before we declare the end of music retailing, let's remember that 88% of the albums purchased so far this year were sold in stores.

When I left Tower's Sunset store, I drove about 3.5 miles east to Amoeba Music. Cars waited outside the garage to grab precious parking spaces, the store teemed with excitement and the line at the cash registers was longer than I'd seen at either Tower store that day.

In the lesie corners where the likes of Amoeba, Newbury Comics, Waterloo Records and others reside, in the wisely run Golinha that is Trans World and in combo stores like Best Buy and Borders, music retail continues to live a vigorous life. Still, I'll hope we first to admit that the world will be less fun and less colorful without Tower's distinctive yellow and red bags. 

FEEDBACK

A WATERSHED EVENT

It was the early 70s. The Sunset Strip was in full swing. And if you lived in Los Angeles and worked in the record business at any point during these last 30 odd years, you know the Tower Sunset experience. It wasn't just a record store, it was the preeminent record store of our time. When Russ Solomon took over the shop in 1970 from eight-track purveyor Earl "Mad Man" Munroe, he created a business that would serve as a beacon of record retailing for the next three decades. Tower ushered in the era of the big spread rock'n'roll superstore, replete with nearly every title known to man. Going to the corner of Sunset at Holloway was virtually a religious obligation for anyone in the business during the last 30 years. This wasn't just another faceless chain outlet; this was the church of record retail—or at least its largest supermarket. A store so unique you never: referred to it as Tower Records, it was always Tower Sunset.

As a young college rep working for A&M Records, I remember when Gil Friesen instituted a program whereby the label's execs had to each spend a week working behind the counter at this store just to see what real consumers actually thought and bought, a different plant than one could glean from merely scanning the weekly charts. Rock, blues, country, classical, soundtracks, imports, spoken word, sound effects records—Tower had it all. Today we talk about the Long Tail. Tower invented it.

When big-name artists made release-day appearances, the first place they considered was the Sunset Boulevard emporium. And why not? It was called "the world's largest record store," open till midnight 365 days a year. But lately, its parking lot has been hardly half full.

Like an aging baseball stadium falling victim to the wrecking ball (or perhaps the demise of the oblivious drum solo), Tower finally became an anachronism. The digital domain grabbed it by the tail and never let go.

Of course, we now have the digital equivalent in cyberspace with places like MySpace, PureVolume, Pitchfork Media, Amazon and more, but it's arguably a different kind of browsing. At Tower, you could not help but run into deep catalog as it was in the bin next to an act's latest release. What will happen to our musical heritage when your product is not on iTunes' front page?

This store's demise will likely be viewed by history as a watershed event. Not just for one store or one chain for that matter, but perhaps as a harbinger for the future of music as a physical package of procrustean length and length. As one music exec recently said, "Can you imagine the message a boarded-up Tower Sunset sends about the business?"

Obviously, the business is at an inflection point as technology and market conditions forego a pull of their own. The future lux new has caught upon with the past. But like Bo Diddley, Dick Clark, Lester Bangs and all the rest, Solomon was a pioneer in rock'n'roll who, for three decades, threw the best party on the Sunset Strip. I'm glad I was there.

Tim Devine is a 30-year music business veteran, most recently as West Coast GM of Columbia Records in Los Angeles.

www.americanradiohistory.com
LATEST FROM Millenium

related payment, which will THE 35% Mart settlement, category that Sept. 30. iPod revenue continue to power the bottom fund revenue grew packaged 60 titles for the "The Millennium Collection" series, using environmentally friendly materials, which will be sold exclusively at Walmart for the next three months. UME will supply the eco-friendly packaging to all retailers beginning in 2007.

> UME GOES GREEN Universal Music Enterprises has re-packaged 60 best-of titles in its "The Millennium Collection" series, using environmentally friendly materials, which will be sold exclusively at Walmart for the next three months. UME will supply the eco-friendly packaging to all retailers beginning in 2007.

> APPLE POSTS STRONG Q4 Strong sales of iPods and Mac computers continue to power the bottom line for Apple. The Cupertino, Calif.-based company said iPod shipments grew 35% to 8.7 million units for its fiscal fourth quarter that ended Sept. 30. iPod revenue for the quarter increased 29% to 1.6 billion. Revenue from related music products and services—a category that includes the iTunes Music Store—rose 71% to $452 million. Apple sold more than 39 million iPods during its fiscal year. Overall net profit for the quarter increased 27% year over year to $546 million, while revenue grew 32% to $4.84 billion.

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TUNED-OUT TEENS

Can Terrestrial Radio Ever Regain A Young Audience?

It's no secret that terrestrial radio and other traditional media are having a hard time attracting teens. Cell phones, iPods, computers, videogames and instant messaging are all grabbing larger chunks of the time when it comes to entertainment options for today's youth. But the problem may be worse than originally thought, at least for radio.

An Edison Media Research study released last month shows sharp declines in time spent listening; radio use and, most importantly, attitudes about radio among the 12-24 age group, the listeners who represent terrestrial radio's future and its greatest challenge. While the news itself isn't surprising, the immense lack of interest in radio by teens is.

Time spent listening, an important benchmark for radio, is down 22% among 12- to 17-year-olds since 1993. Meanwhile, 12-24 listening is falling significantly faster than among those 25-plus, Edison reports. More than 3% of boys 12-17 report no weekly radio listening at all, the study says, and fewer young people expect radio to be an important part of their futures.

The information is not necessarily new, but the extent of the problem just keeps growing.

Edison president Larry Rosin is frustrated by radio's lack of significant movement to address the situation. "We all know that it's a problem, but nothing is ever done about it," he says.

Jacobs Media president Fred Jacobs agrees. "I don't know how much more evidence it's going to take for the people at the top to realize that this isn't about fourth quarter billing. This is a long-term, epidemic-type problem that really boils down to this: Our listening audience is getting older, and younger listeners are clearly falling off in significant numbers."

Radio must embrace younger listeners, Weblogs Inc. CEO Jason Calacanis told his audience at the Jacobs Media Summit in Dallas in late September. "Paradigms don't die, people do. That's what we're seeing—young people who grew up only knowing the Internet. That's the future, and you have to embrace them."

The Edison research doesn't surprise Ennis Communications radio division president Rick Cummings, who has two teenagers. "When we start to build brands that are truly interesting to them and have multiple touch points...they'll consume it all day long."

A few forward-looking radio executives hope that high-definition radio, a relatively new technology that brings better audio quality and more listening options to equipped tuners, will provide the content and shine that differentiates these channels. Those channels are currently commercial-free.

"We've challenged our programmers to use their HD2 channels to reach out to this generation—which has a MySpace, YouTube, on-demand kind of mentality—and build HD2 channels that really will be appealing to them," Cummings says. "That's a great, fertile, untapped testing ground for coming up with things like this. You don't have to bet the $200 million signal on something that's untried."

Meanwhile, with outlets in Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia and northern New Jersey, Greater Media offers some of the most innovative programming currently available in the medium. For example, RIFFZ, the HD sister to Greater Media's active rock WRIF in Detroit, has been on the air since August 2005. The station offers a mix of indie rock, hip-hop and local music. Unlike many HD2 channels, which are glorified jukeboxes, RIFFZ has jocks, a myriad of programs and a presence in the community.

More than one broadcaster draws a comparison between FM of the late '60s and early '70s and HD today. "No one gave a hoot about FM until they started doing 'progressive rock,'" Edison's Rosin says. "Kids said, 'This is cool.' and ran out and got an FM radio."

While there are more chips on the table today because of Wall Street and quarterly expectations, Jacobs says HD2 stations should be treated as "sandelboxes" or places for experimentation. "We're not making money on HD2 anyway, so we might as well try radically different things on these channels."

Cummings has seen "a great shift in thinking" among radio groups during the last year. "We've all said the old model just isn't going to work anymore. We have to be able to deliver great content the way any demographic wants it. The upside to change is enormous. Advertisers now have choices that they didn't have 10 years ago," Cummings says. "The more we spread what we do best to multiple platforms, the more we can participate in all those revenue streams."
Your Other Tube

Could Video-On-Demand Be TV’s Answer To The Web?

Music video’s ongoing transformation from promotional money loser to commercial money maker took another step forward with Google’s recent acquisition of YouTube for $1.6 billion. Ahead of the deal, Universal Music Group (UMG), Sony BMG and Warner Music Group (WMG) had reportedly acquired small minority stakes in the viral video site in exchange for content licenses. But online is not the only opportunity labels have to cash in on people watching music videos on-demand.

Digital cable subscribers are viewing music videos on-demand through their TVs in increasing numbers.

Horsham, Pa.-based cable network Music Choice says its viewers have placed more than 500 million orders for on-demand music videos since November 2004.

The advertising-supported service from Music Choice now claims more than 8 million music video orders a week from an installed base of 14 million homes. (Music Choice’s basic audio-only programming is carried in more than 30 million homes across all major digital cable operators, but its video-on-demand service is thus far only carried by Comcast systemswide and by Cox in 11 markets.)

Most of that VOD consumption is coming from a catalog of more than 7,000 music videos.

But the channel also claims that original programming for VOD like its “Artist of the Month” interview and performance segment featuring such acts as Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé and My Chemical Romance— is generating anywhere from 2 million to 4 million views per month. Those numbers may not seem like much compared with Yahoo or YouTube. Yahoo averages more than 350 million music video streams per month. YouTube delivers more than 21 million VOD streams per day (of which music is a leading segment) and more than 600 million streams per month in the United States, according to research firm comScore Media Metrix.

But growing interest in music VOD content from set-top box users signals new opportunities for TV and online video services as consuming Internet programming through the TV becomes increasingly easy.

“There is a lot of competition out there online but consumers would prefer to watch this stuff on TV,” says Damon Williams, senior VP of programming for Music Choice.

To be sure, Music Choice is not alone in targeting the market. MTV, Fuse, AOL and others also have developed VOD platforms that are carried by select digital cable operators.

However, unlike Music Choice, many of those services were initially conceived as experimental promotional vehicles, not revenue centers. And they are attracting viewers more in the hundreds of thousands than millions.

But as labels have stepped up their efforts for compensation for access to video catalogs, previously promotion-oriented VOD channels have moved to adopt ad-supported models.

Music Choice claims it can charge higher rates for advertising associated with its on-demand content than Internet programmers because it attracts more traditional TV ad-dollars.

But TV-based VOD operators and labels in many cases are still trying to come to a consensus as to whether wholesale rates should be more expensive for TV than for the Web.

“We see more similarities than differences between the two platforms,” says Fred McIntyre, VP for AOL Video.

As a result, virtually every TV-based VOD service has only a partial collection of major label music videos.

Music Choice has formal deals with WMG, EMI and leading indie labels, but not Sony BMG or UMG.

AOL claims deals with Sony BMG and WMG. Licensing of music video content remains a contentious issue across the VOD space, whether it’s for TV or online.

UMG, which recently had YouTube in its crosshairs, filed suit against viral video sites GroupNet and Bolt for enabling the unlicensed distribution of its content.

Meanwhile, press reports have indicated that Viacom, whose MTV unit is facing competitors from all sides, and other broadcasters are still considering suing YouTube for allowing its users to upload unlicensed clips of its programming.

By contrast, WMG inked a deal with Museweb, a service that allows users to mix their own personal pictures and videos into artist videos.

Those aren’t primary concerns for TV-based VOD players—yet. But with convergence between TV and the Web quickly developing, Williams says all players in the space have to be thinking about both platforms as well as mobile.

“The pace at which things are happening in video is incredibly rapid,” it’s game on right now,” McIntyre adds. “Your strategy has to have a concept of how you are going to play in all of these different areas.”

RINTONE RATES SET

Millions In Publishing Revenue At Risk

A Copyright Office decision covering ringtones has stuned much of the music publishing community. Compositions previously recorded and released in the United States must now be made available for ringtones at royalty rates set by the federal government.

Publishers could lose substantial revenue as a result of the Oct. 16 decision. Currently, negotiated market rates to license compositions for ringtones is the greater of 10 cents or 10% of the retail price. With ringtones retailing around $2, publishers receive about 20 cents. But the statutory rate is 91 cents for a compulsory license to reproduce compositions for digital phonorecord deliveries (DPD)—which includes ringtones, the Copyright Office now says.

As long as the ringtone is merely an excerpt of a musical work or of a pre-existing sound recording, then the composition itself is subject to the compulsory license. Register of Copyrights Marybeth Peters wrote in the 35-page decision.

Currently, master ringtones alone sell more than 6.5 million downloads per week on average in the United States, according to Nielsen Mobile. Switching from market rate to statutory rate could represent a drop of more than $700,000 per week in publishing revenue.

“We are disappointed in the decision, which could hurt songwriters significantly and for some time,” said Marybeth Peters at an April hearing.

If the decision is upheld, the Copyright Royalty Board proceedings have begun to review mechanical and DPD rates, but a decision adjusting the rates is unlikely for another year.
George—
Happy 75th and
Congratulations
on 50 years
in music!
Nobody will ever
fill your shoes.
Your friend,

[Signature]
Latin America's Digital Struggle

IFPI Actions Against File Sharers Aim To Pave Way For Legal Download Business

By Leila Cobo

Bogged down by limited broadband penetration, high prices and astronomical piracy rates, the Latin American download business has been struggling to survive from its very infancy.

This week, as a demonstration of faith in the future of the business, the IFPI launched a new wave of actions against file sharers. Target countries include Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. The objective is to pave the way for a legal download business, IFPI Latin America executive director Raúl Vázquez says.

At this time last year, there were only two digital music stores in the entire Latin region, Brazil's iMusica.com.br and Mexico's beon.com. Today, there are nearly a dozen, including four in Argentina, two in Mexico and three in Brazil. Two other stores are slated to open in Argentina before year's end.

But sales of digital tracks are still virtually nil across the region, with educated estimates placing them at most in the low hundreds of thousands per year in each country.

In contrast, illegal downloading is through the roof.

According to IFPI-commissioned studies in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, 1 billion songs were downloaded illegally in Brazil in 2005. In Mexico, the number was 1.6 billion and in Argentina 412 million.

I don't think it will stop right away. But we want to send a clear message that we are going to stop these people," Vázquez says. The IFPI's program targets massive uploaders and includes civil lawsuits against individuals, criminal lawsuits against establishments like cyber cafes, and educational campaigns.

Beyond the fact that people are using to get stuff for free through the Internet, the Latin American download industry suffers from its own issues.

One is security concerns that make it difficult to use credit cards online. As a result, companies are exploring subscription models and prepaid cards that can be purchased at brick-and-mortar stores, with tracks often costing more than $1, too much for the average consumer in the region.

Brazil's iMusica is working on lowering prices, educating the new generation and approaching the 30-plus buyer, who has a credit card. The Web site has also been at the forefront of developing a new business model.

Executive director Felipe Llerena notes that iMusica also acts as a content aggregator for many Internet services and provides the technology platform and content for 25 sites in Brazil.

While iMusica, launched in 2000, was a digital pioneer in the region, until recently there was not enough broadband penetration to justify investment in the business. But in the past year, broadband growth has skyrocketed in Latin America.

In Brazil, for example, there were 1 million broadband households in 2003, according to eMarketer. Today, according to Point Topic data reported by the IFPI, there are 4.7 million broadband households. In Mexico, there are 2.9 million and in Argentina 1.1 million.

And as broadband use expands, so do illegal downloads.

In Mexico, approximately 4.4 million people download songs, according to a national study cited by Fernando Hernández, general director of Amprofon, Mexico's association of record producers.

Sixty percent of the downloaders are middle to upper class, meaning they can afford to buy the tracks. And 60% are 12-26 years old.

"We feel illegal downloading is our youth's favorite sport," Hernández drily says.

Regardless of the issues now facing digital sales in the region, "it is widely seen as an alternative in the not too distant future," says Roberto Piay, executive director of Capif, Argentina's association of record producers. "It would be much worse for us if there were little faith in developing new businesses."

$20 Million Stalemate Ends

Federal Regs Help SoundExchange ID Webcasts

The $20 million stalemate between webcasters and SoundExchange ended this month. The Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) decided how webcasters must report information from their playlists so that performers and labels can be paid their royalties.

Since early 2004, SoundExchange could not distribute royalties received from webcasting services (Billboard, Sept. 30). Although federal regulations require that payments be made and specify the information webcasters must provide to identify the music they play, until now no regulation specified how information must be communicated. Only about a dozen of roughly 500 commercial webcasters have voluntarily provided that information to SoundExchange.

Since 2001, the question became part of a long government rulemaking process. Then Congress shifted authority to make regulations governing this issue from the Librarian of Congress to a newly created CRB.

Last month, Chief Copyright Royalty Judge James Siedge told Billboard that a regulation could not be issued to clear up the matter until the judges had a break from presiding over other pending proceedings—possibly next year. But on Oct. 5, the CRB issued interim regulations to help resolve the problem immediately.

Until final regulations are made, "digital audio services that have been maintaining reports of use since April 1, 2004, will now be able to deliver those and future reports to copyright owners for their use in distributing royalty fees," the CRB said.

The regulations (37 CFR Part 370) require that the reports must be transmitted electronically, not on paper. They specify the types of spreadsheets that must be used and how to name files. The reports must be delivered only by e-mail, CD-ROM, floppy diskette or by file transfer protocol.

"The first distributions will not take place until several months after the receipt of the logs," says Gary Greenstein, general counsel for SoundExchange. "We will have to process all of the information on a service-by-service basis and then aggregate the information to issue checks."

Danny Elfman Sits For One-On-One

In a rare public appearance, composer/rocker Danny Elfman will sit down with Billboard for an intimate one-on-one at the 2006 Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference.


Additionally, Elfman's "Nightmare Before Christmas" theme is being released Oct. 24 by Walt Disney Records in a two-disc special edition that marks the film's 12th anniversary. The set will introduce nine new tracks to the original recording and will include new versions of songs rerecorded by Marilyn Manson, Panic! at the Disco, Fall Out Boy, Fiona Apple and She Wants Revenge.

The fifth annual Film & TV Music Conference is set for Nov. 14-15 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. The event will feature sessions and panels on music for film, TV, Internet, gaming, commercials and other industry-related topics.
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*performers subject to change
Now this is weird. “Weird Al” Yankovic’s new album, “Straight Outta Lynwood,” has scored the enduring song parodist his biggest chart successes in a career that spans nearly three decades. “Lynwood,” Yankovic’s 12th album, debuted this month at No. 10 on The Billboard 200, his first top 10 album ever. Meanwhile, the Chamin, leonary par- ody “White and Nerdy,” reached No. 9 on The Billboard Hot 100 in the Oct. 21 issue, besting his previous high of No. 12 with “Eat It” in 1984. “Literally danced a little jig when I found out,” Yankovic says. “It’s just a number, but I’ve been obsessing over it for a long part of my career. Even with, you know, millions of records sold, I’ve never been in the top 10, and it’s always been a goal of mine.” More distinctions: “Nerdy” made the biggest second-week jump of the year on the Oct. 21 Hot 100, rising 28-9. When that happened, Yankovic became one of few artists to have only one top 40 single in three suc- cessive decades. And there may be more to come: “Canadi- an Idiot,” a parody of Green Day’s “American Idiot,” de- buted at No. 82 on the Hot 100 the same week. So what’s going on here? It could be the widespread ap- peal of screwball comedy or that Yankovic’s legacy and fame have expanded through- out his career (his first single, “My Bologna,” was released in 1979). It could even be providential numerology as- sociated with this being his 27th year of recording (Yankovic has a running joke with the number 27, witness the license plate on the cover of “Lynwood”). For his part, Yankovic tends to credit the Internet. The (“Nerdy”) video has gotten a lot of attention, and the prolif-eration of places like YouTube have been a big help,” he says. Yankovic has also accumulated 155,000 MySpace friends since he joined the site in July—all of which he says he personally added. “I used to be a little pickier. Now I just kind of click as fast as I can.” Viral videos were a big part of the initial promotional campaign, according to Dan Macka, senior director of mar- keting for Zomba Label Group. Before “Nerdy” came “Don’t Download This Song,” an orig-inal track with a Bill Pympton- animated video that was, iron- ically, made available for free on weirdal.com. But once “Nerdy” hit outlets like YouTube, there was no stopping it. “We knew with ‘Nerdy’ that he’d hit on some- thing incredibly relevant to dif- ferent generations,” Macka says. “Kids were discovering him like a new artist.” Plus, with the advent of download services, he says, suddenly Yankovic can be a sin- gles artist again, and indeed, glowing responses from his tar- gets—even though Yankovic had to pull the song he origi- nally slated for the first single, the James Blunt riff “You’re Piti- ful,” after issues arose with At- lantic. (Yankovic released the track for free on his Web site.) Chamin, leonary, whose song “Ridin’” is spoofed as “Nerdy,” even posted Yankovic’s track on his own MySpace site. “It seems like he’s come full circle,” Macka says. “A lot of the artists he’s parodied have come and gone, but Al is kind of a pop culture icon at this point.” Yankovic takes such props in stride. “It’s a little dreamlike,” he says. “I can’t believe I’m get- ting this at this point in my life.” He and his band will spend much of next year on the road, touring Australia in the spring and then heading to North America. He’ll also appear Nov. 2 on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno.”

Making The Brand

MICHAEL PAOLETTA mpaolletta@billboard.com

Sun Rising

Could Asian Dance-Pop Star’s Fashionista Side Lead To U.S. Success?

Asian pop star Sun is no stranger to the U.S. club community. She topped Billboard’s Hot Dance Club Play chart in 2005 with “Without You” and, in the preceding year, with “One With You.” In this issue, Sun’s latest single, “Done,” continues to ascend the Club Play chart, moving from No. 4 to No. 2. These days, Sun is putting the finishing touches on her first English-language album. For this project she has worked with numerous producers and songwriters, including Diane Warren, Denise Rich, Donna Summer and Desmond Child. But the work in progress is now in the hands of Wyclef Jean.

“After he listened to the finished album, he said he could add it,” Sun says. “He could very well remake the entire album. I’m excited and nervous at the same time.” Singapore-based Sun is an established artist in Asia, where she is more commonly known as Sun Ho or He Yao Sun. She is signed to Warner Music in Taiwan and Singapore, Universal Music in Indonesia and Malaysia, 21 East Entertainment in China and Gold Label in Hong Kong. A rep from Universal Music Southeast Asia says that Sun’s sales are in the double-platinum range. Because of her international success—as a singer (four Mandarin-language albums) and fashionista (she owns four Skin clothing boutiques in South-east Asia)—Sun has be- come a popular face in branded entertainment throughout Asia. Her branding partners include True Religion Jeans, Ed Hardy Vintage Tattoo Wear, Bejeweled and 1-Sport Istonic Drink.

Sun has also been tapped by Imagine TV for an upcom- ing multiproject campaign. The 24-hour national TV net- work serves the diverse cul- tures that constitute the Asian-American community. Sun and her management team, which includes Justin Herz of JHM Music in Los Ange- les, are hoping that such brand partners, along with the soon- to-be-completed album, will help her snag a U.S. label deal. Herz believes that Sun’s partners will make it easier to introduce and break her in the United States. He con- firms that he is in discussions with a few U.S. labels. "We’re in a situation differ- ent from other new artists," Herz says. "Sun has the re- sources; she brings a lot to the table. She ties music and fashion together as a revenue and lifestyle marketing platform, which opens up new distribution opportunities. She could very well share profits around these initiatives—as long as everyone participates in what is brought to the table.”

Although Sun has enjoyed success on U.S. dancefloors, she remains primarily un- known outside of clubland. Whether she has the momen- tum needed to cross over to America’s mainstream re- mains to be seen.

“We’re strongly supporting Sun in the U.S.,” says Chris Deleon, West Coast sales rep for Bejeweled. “We will jump on her first English-language album when it comes out.” Deleon says this could en- compass the creation of a pri- vate logo for Sun as well as touring merchandise.

The scenario is similar at Ed Hardy Vintage Tattoo Wear. "When the time is right, we can create a pro- gram to endorse her music,” says Charee Rogers, manager of the international depart- ment at Ed Hardy. “We’re also talking about an exclusive Sun clothing line.”

Sun, by the way, is a spokesperson for Bejeweled and Ed Hardy in Southeast Asia, and carries both brands in her Skin boutiques. In a franchise agreement, she opened the first stand-alone Ed Hardy store in Singapore. Deleon and Rogers credit Sun with tripling their re- spective businesses in the Asian market.

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Taylor Swift is Ambitious Nashville Upstart Label's Latest Success Story

In less than a year, Big Machine Records has made the leap from scrappy startup venture to successful record label with a No. 1 Jack Ingram single under its belt and teen newcomer Taylor Swift currently climbing the chart.

The Big Machine roster also includes Danielle Peck, Dusty Drake and former DreamWorks artist Jimmy Wayne, whose new single, “That’s All I’ll Ever Need,” is gaining momentum.

Country label vet Scott Borchetta opened the doors at Big Machine in September 2005 with a high-profile joint launch with Toby Keith’s Show Dog Records. Both are distributed by Universal. Initially structured as sister labels, the companies shared marketing and radio promotion, but as each expanded, they decided to separate (Billboard, March 11).

“The only way we could address our priorities was for us to have our own promotions department,” Borchetta says. “Toby is really a brilliant business guy, and he understands that. We’re great friends, and we’ve got two separate labels, but it was fun to start everything with him.”

Borchetta is proud that exactly eight months and eight days after Big Machine launched, the label was enjoying its first No. 1 with the Ingram hit “Wherever You Are.” “It was a big day,” he says proudly. “It was one of those things where we were literally working seven days a week—and we still pretty much are—but that was a pretty darn cool moment when we rang the bell.”


Andrew Kautz is Big Machine’s GM, Jack Purcell heads the promotion department, and Penny Lazo is head of sales and marketing. Cynthia Grimson handles public relations. Other key staffers include Borchetta’s wife, creative director Sandi Spika Borchetta, and director of national promotion John Zarling.

The label opened its doors Sept. 1, 2005, and by Sept. 26 was going for airplay on Peck’s single “I Don’t.” We didn’t waste any time. We literally started with that song on day one. We went for airplay on the 26th and then we went for airplay on Ingram on the 31st of October. Jack’s first album came out Jan. 9,” Borchetta says, recappping the label’s first efforts.

“I did not want to sit on our butts and wait for six months for the first record to come out,” he says. “I’ve seen so many startups, and after six or eight months, you’re staffed up and you’re just burning away money and literally nobody is working anything. They are just waiting on A&R to get up to speed. I just refused to launch the label like that, because I think it instills a certain amount of laziness upfront, and I wanted everybody here to bring brand-new running shoes ready to run on the first day.”

Borchetta’s criteria for signing an act is simple. “I either fall in love with an artist’s music or I don’t.”

These days Big Machine’s priority is the debut album by 16-year-old Swift, which streets Oct. 24. Swift is climbing the chart with “Tim McGraw,” which is No. 17 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart and has sold nearly 90,000 digital downloads. When he heard her perform, Borchetta says he just had to have her on the label, but admits he knew it wouldn’t be easy because country programmers are hesitant to play teenagers.

“That’s probably one of the things I love about it,” he says. “She’s one of the best songwriters in Nashville period, and we were able to get people to see that and the fact that she plays guitar and the fact that she does sing that good, and she does write that good. She’s witty and charming and all the things that a superstar artist should be.”

Swift grew up near Reading, Pa., but now lives near Nashville. “I’ve been trying to do this since I was 10,” she says. “So many people tell me that radio won’t play me because I’m too young. Because of that, radio is the biggest priority for me and building those relationships.”

Swift chose Big Machine because of the creative freedom Borchetta offered. “I needed a company that would let me be myself and would let me write my own music,” says Swift, who signed a publishing deal with Sony at 14.

“Scott Borchetta has not only encouraged me, but has insisted that I write my own music, and it’s been really really great, and I’m just so glad that I’m here,” she says.

Swift is slated to appear on “Good Morning America” on street date. Her debut has also gained exposure on GAC’s “Short Cuts.”

“I’ve had the good fortune of breaking everybody from Trisha Yearwood all the way up to Sugarland with big steps in between,” Borchetta says. “This feels as big as any of them.”

In general, Borchetta credits the experience and enthusiasm of his team for fueling Big Machine’s success.

“I never told my staff that they were [an] independent,” Borchetta says. “I think that’s part of it, that we didn’t come out saying, ‘We’re a little indie’: that was never our point of view.”

But that was just kind of blind belief that we were going to do this, and the advantage that we had is we’ve done this before. Jack Purcell has done this before. Cynthia Grimson has done this before. So it wasn’t a person coming in from outside of our business just trying to figure the business out.

“We didn’t expect to come out here and be kicked around like some little imprint,” he continues. “We came to play. Failure is really not an option, and I’ve got people around me that really understand the vision.”

Big Machine’s Roster: Talent Runs Deep In Scott Borchetta’s Stable

**DUSTY DRAKE**
Growing up in tiny Monaca, Pa., Drake absorbed a variety of influences from the Grand Ole Opry’s cast to Bob Seger and Van Halen. His first break in Nashville came as a songwriter, scoring cuts by Joe Diffie, Mark Chesnutt, Rick Springfield and others. He landed a record deal with Warner Bros. Nashville, which released his self-titled debut in 2003. He’s currently in the studio working on his Big Machine debut with producer Scott Hendricks.

**JACK INGRAM**
A longtime favorite on the Texas music scene, Ingram attempted to leap from Lone Star success to the national stage with previous Nashville dealings on now-defunct Rising Tide Records and Sony’s Lucky Dog. But he broke through on Big Machine with the 2004 No. 1 “Wherever You Are.” That single and his latest one, “Love You” (No. 15 on Hot Country Songs), are from “Live Wherever You Are,” which has shipped 50,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Ingram would be doing 250 shows a year with or without a record deal, Borchetta says. “You give me a guy with that much charisma and de- sire, and that works 100% of the time.”

**DANIELLE PECK**
A native of Jacksonville, N.C., Peck moved with her family to Coshocton, Ohio, where she began writing songs and performing music at an early age. After relocating to Nashville, the singer/songwriter was signed to DreamWorks by Borchetta. She became a casualty of the DreamWorks/Universal merger, but once Borchetta launched Big Machine, he quickly recruited Peck to the roster. Big Machine is about to release her third single for the label, “Isn’t That Everything.” Her previous singles, “I Don’t” and “Findin’ a Good Man,” peaked at Nos. 28 and 16, respectively. Her self-titled debut disc has scanned 62,200 units.

**JIMMY WAYNE**
Wayne is another artist Borchetta signed to DreamWorks who lost his deal in the DreamWorks/Universal merger and has now landed at Big Machine. A North Carolina native who spent a tumultuous childhood being shuttled around in foster homes, Wayne channeled those experiences into a poignant collection of songs on his DreamWorks debut, earning critical raves and radio support with the hits “Stay Gone,” “I Love You This Much” and “Paper Angels.” His first Big Machine single is “That’s All I’ll Ever Need.” Look for a new album in February 2007.

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The Ramblin' has returned. Bob Seger's early singles "East Side Story," "Persecution Smith," "Sock It to Me Santa," "Vagrant Winter," "Heavy Music," "2+2=7" and the classic of classics "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man" put him in the Garage Rock Hall of Fame long before he got into the other one. Our coolest song in the world this week, "Wreck This Heart," finds Seger back in the garage where God intended.

All right. I'm fantasizing a bit. As it turns out, his new, terrific album "Face the Promise" only visits the garage to remind everybody he can be as cool as you are whenever he feels like it.

Like most of the classic rockers of the '70s and '80s, he fits more comfortably in the country world now than the mainstream rock world. There are a lot of reasons for that, but the main one is that's where the songwriting went. Seger will always be the persistence king, establishing work-ethic standards we've all tried to reach ever since he started in 1966. By 1967, he had a string of local Detroit hits leading up to "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man," which went top 20 on the national charts in 1969. The seven hitless years that followed didn't stop him from playing 200-250 nights a year before finally breaking in '76 with "Night Moves." Touring in those hungry days included regular trips to Florida for one-nighters—driving 24 hours there and 24 back because his band couldn't afford a hotel room. That's called building a base, old-school style.

In other news—life sucks and then you die. But all seriousness aside, Mickey Leigh's book about his brother, "I Slept With Joey Ramone" (co-written by Legs McNeil), had the movie rights snatched up, and the book's not even out yet. I'm smirking "Godfather." See you next week.

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**COOLEST GARAGE SONGS**

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<td>10</td>
<td>Hot Girls in Good Moods</td>
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**COOLEST GARAGE ALBUMS**

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<td>Riot City Blues</td>
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<td>DIAMOND DROPS</td>
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**As Indie As They Wanna Be**

Kemado Switches Distribution With An Eye On Establishing Own Brand

Long denoted as a "fake indie," New York-based Kemado Records' founders are hoping to shed the term with a new distribution deal. Effective immediately, Kemado's releases will be handled by Sony BMG's RED Distribution, and the label hopes to establish its own brand, one that's independent of outside help.

Kemado had most recently been linked with Disney-owned Hollywood Records, which provided marketing, promotion and manufacturing for its releases. The label started in 2002 as a production company and soon landed a distribution deal with Palm Pictures. "It was a weird stigma," Kemado co-founder Tom Clapp says. "We were in the indie world, but people thought we were an imprint. There's been a misconception for a long time. We've been an independent label from the beginning. We just had an unusual start to things."

Kemado is home to psychedelic rock act Dungen and Black Sabbath-inspired band The Sword, among others. The label's two-year deal with Hollywood expired in August, Clapp says, and he was planning to have the label self-sufficient by then. "There's always a problem going through another label," he says. "You're not the top priority and even with the best of relationships, the mandate coming down from the top is not to push Kemado every day." To prepare for the move to RED, Clapp says the label hired its own marketing person as well as a publicist. The label will join RED minus rock act Elephant, which will stay at Hollywood. Clapp says that Elephant is the only Kemado act that was in a joint venture with Hollywood.

Aside from the outside impression that Kemado was a pseudo-indie, little things started to annoy Clapp. He mentions a time when Kemado's name was left off a video credit on MTV or the fact that Kemado releases were not eligible for Billboards Top Independent Albums chart, as Hollywood is distributed by Universal Music Group Distribution.

"The lesson through all of that was that you have to have your own people out in the field doing stuff," he says. "About a year into that deal, we started hiring people and got ourselves ready to make a move."

Kemado's first releases through RED will be rock new-comers Vietman and Danava.

**MORE TO COME:** The parade of new hard rock bands continues, as Epitaph's Escape the Fate arrived earlier this month on Billboard's Top Independent Albums tally.

The album, "Dying Is Your Latest Fashion," sold 4,100 units in its first week in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and has shifted 8,000 to date. Drummer Robert Ortiz says of the first-week tally, "We had the best debut in Epitaph's history for a full-length from a new artist. That's a good start."

Epitaph GM Dave Hansen neither confirms nor denies Ortiz's claim, but notes that the label's crop of rock artists is getting off to faster starts. He says the trend began with From First to Last and Matchbook Romance.

But it's not always rosy from there. Take Matchbook Romance, whose first album, 2003's "Stories & Alibis," spent 28 weeks on The Billboard 200, and has sold 222,000 units. The band's 2006 follow-up, "Voices," fell off after only 11 weeks but has still muscled out 93,000 copies.

"In a lot ways, it's easier to get the ball rolling," Hansen says. "It's easy to get the music heard and get the band onstage in front of an audience. It used to be slower to rise and slower to decline, but there's a lot of bands out there, and it's really competitive."

In Matchbook Romance's case. Hansen notes the band's follow-up likely alienated some fans by branching out of the emo genre. Indeed, "Voices" is a strong album but also an overlooked one, hinting at the difficulty in breaking out beyond the Warped tour and Hot Topic.

"I don't know if that record was for their core fans," Hansen says. "It's then a challenge for us to image that record to potential fans because everyone knows where that hand came from. And they're called Matchbook Romance. I think fans of Muse would want to hear the record, but it's an album of Muse can't put in a CD from a band called Matchbook Romance?"
Brave New World
Stores And Labels Both Need Help To Ensure A Healthy Business Environment

What world do you live in?
I would like to think that I live in a world where what's right matters. But when a federal judge rules to liquidate Tower Records under questionable circumstances, as a means to validate the Chapter 11 bureaucratic process, you've got to wonder what kind of world it is.
You all know the story. It was a situation where either way the creditors get the same payout, but instead of letting Trans World get the stores, the judge ruled to liquidate them and throw 2,700 people out of jobs just to vindicate Chapter 11. An auction that began at $105 million and ended at $134.3 million wasn't good enough.
Even though we all saw it coming, many people in the music industry still regard the liquidation of Tower as a wake-up call. We all know that the digital world is on the come, and yet we were shocked, saddened and angered at Tower's fate.
Of course, the digerati laugh at those of us who see it as a wake-up call, but 10 years ago these same people used to argue until they were blue in the face that digital downloads would surpass physical product sales by 2000. Guess what? They were wrong then, and they are wrong now. But that does not mean they will be wrong forever.
I live in the real world, and when you put digital distribution even in its best light, downloads are only 15% of music sales in the United States, and growth is leveling off.
The labels really need Microsoft, Amazon and Best Buy to each launch successful digital sales initiatives to reignite digital growth, because so far, even with the added bonus of mobile sales, the digital world's rise is not big enough to offset the ground the physical world is losing.
Making matters worse, Tower's liquidation will likely accelerate the decline of the physical goods world far beyond the chain's overall 2.5% market share (4.5% for Indies). Things could get real ugly for the labels over the next three years if the digital world does not fulfill its promise more quickly.
The slide of traditional music retail was ordained as far back as 1985 when the majors decided that the new CD would carry a 35% profit margin, instead of the 42% carried by vinyl and cassette. But it was not until the CD surpassed the cassette in 1992 that everyone understood that the margin issue was the first nail in retailers' coffins.
While discounters are seemingly eternal, never before has there been a margin squeeze that comes when hit by the combined wallapalooza of 5,500 Wal-Mart, Target, Best Buy and Circuit City stores. And when you add in an overwhelming supply of exclusive product, let's just say we're looking at another nail in the coffin.
Along the way, traditional retail chains also found ways to screw up their own futures—look at Tower's bad decision to use bonds to finance a disastrous international expansion and then a prepacked Chapter 11 that only closed four stores. What was it thinking? Then, when the bondholders took control, Tower installed Allan Rodriguez, a nonmerchant who micro-managed the chain into illiquidity, with an even sadder finale scripted by Joseph D'Amico.
In the meantime, the labels were not done hammering nails into retail's coffin. In the early '90s, they began playing games with singles, deleting them in an attempt to force consumers to buy albums. By the end of the decade, the single was history, and its elimination played perfectly to the coming digital world, where tracks may be king, but are still not yet selling well enough to restore the industry's health. Then add in unauthorized peer-to-peer copying and CD burning, and you've got the perfect mess.

Giving the physical goods world a boost doesn't mean that labels don't believe in digital.

If the labels really want to ensure a healthy business environment until the legitimate digital market takes off big-time, they would step up to the plate and prop up the physical goods world, either through pricing or by introducing an enhanced or new physical format. It's something they should have united behind three years ago.
Just because you give the physical goods world a boost does not mean you don't believe in digital. It means you want to live long enough to get to the new world.

Thousands of jobs have been lost because of a long string of short-sighted decisions. How the digerati can go on about that many lost jobs is bewildering, especially since their promised land is taking far longer to reach than they ever predicted.
All things considered, a smoother transition to the new world might have been worked out with a little more forethought, but it's not too late for the industry to stop shooting itself in the foot. —

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A COFFEE SHOP TAKES TO THE ROAD

Online Marketing Spurs Hotel Cafe Tour

Promotion and marketing tools for the second annual Hotel Cafe Tour, which kicked off Oct. 2 with a sold-out show at the House of Blues in Los Angeles, are "online and totally guerrilla," says Josh Neuman, manager of singer/songwriter Cary Brothers, who plays on all the tour dates.

MySpace, a co-sponsor of the 35-city U.S. trek, is playing a crucial role in spreading the word. "If you go to the site's music page," Neuman says, "we have a static banner for the entire duration of the tour. They're helping promote all our artists."

Inspired by the singer/songwriter communal vibe of Holly-wood, Calif.'s 200-capacity Hotel Cafe, a coffee shop-turned-music venue for which the tour is named, this year's jaunt features rotating performances from musicians including Brothers, Rachael Yamagata, Joshua Radin, Matt Costa, Kate Havnevik, the Weepies, Joe Purdy, Tom McRae and Jim Bianco. There have also been surprise visits from Amos Lee and Jason Mraz, who stopped by gigs in Los Angeles and San Diego, respectively.

Twenty-five acts appear on various tour dates, but only six perform each night. A permanent traveling house band backs the musicians as they perform two 15- to 20-minute sets. "We're all in the mix together," says Brothers, who helped organize this year's jaunt. "We just tried to find a good balance to make each night...a strong show."

Marko Shafer, who co-owns and books concerts at the Hotel Cafe, says about 95% of the tour's lineup has played his club. "We wanted to get word out about artists who had supported the room," Shafer says. "We're taking what we do out to the rest of the country."

Agents Jonathan Adelman and Marty Diamond at Little Big Man/Paradigm booked this year's Hotel Cafe Tour, which visits 200- to 1,500-capacity venues and has a ticket

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SESAC Goes South
Performing Rights Group Opens Atlanta Office For R&B, Hip-Hop

SESAC is heading south for that all-important face-to-face time. The performing rights organization is opening an Atlanta office this month to work more closely with the R&B and hip-hop communities.

"Having a presence with a staff that's active and involved really makes a difference in how writers perceive you, respect you and understand you," says Trevor Gale, VP of writer/publisher relations for SESAC. The attraction to the city comes as no real surprise. Atlanta is home to a jewel in SESAC's crown—Grammy Award-winning writer/producer Bryan-Michael Cox, who has been named SESAC songwriter of the year for the last six years consecutively. Atlanta is also the part-time base of Chris Hicks, VP of A&R urban for Cox's publisher, Warner/Chappell Music.

"We have some incredible songwriters who make it their home," Gale says. "It's good to have some SESAC reps come down three to four times a year, but we felt we really needed an everyday presence where writers can come to ask questions and meet other writers through our office."

Other Atlanta-based SESAC writers include Donnie Scantz (who co-wrote Aaliyah's "I Don't Wanna" and Jagged Edge's "Got It"), Balewa Muhammad (co-wrote Christina Aguilera's "Dirty" and Jaheim's "Diamond In Da Ruff"), John Webb Jr. (co-wrote Beyoncé's "Dejà Vu") and Kendrick Dean (co-wrote Chris Brown's "Say Goodbye").

Capp Scates will run the office as associate director of writer/publisher relations. Gale says. Scates joined SESAC earlier this month after working as a manager with writers and producers.

"I want to educate students about the music business."
—CAPP SCATES, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF WRITER/PUBLISHER RELATIONS AT THE ATLANTA SESAC OFFICE

son Wiitter. The Southern California-based publisher is owned by Rory Felton, Chad Pearson and Chris Donohue.

Universal Music Publishing Group signed a co-publishing deal with Timothy "Attitude" Clayton, who co-wrote Nelly Furtado's No. 1 single "Promiscuous." He was also a guest performer on Furtado's "Afraid" and collaborated with Bubba Sparxxx on the "Delivery" album. Attitude is currently working on a group project with Timbaland and Texas rapper 6-2.

Cherry Lane re-upped its worldwide co-publishing deal with Will "Will.I.am" Adams. The multiyear deal extends their agreement for all his compositions, including songs with the Black Eyed Peas and collaborations with Kelis, Fergie, Busta Rhymes, Mary J. Blige and Justin Timberlake.

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There are banners that link back to the Hotel Cafe Tour page on MySpace, he says, adding that organizers have also advertised on Facebook.com. "We're sort of spreading the word that way because it's a total college tour." Other strategies include teaming with Bono's organization RED, which aims to fight AIDS in Africa; working with radio stations; and tying in with the "Last Kiss" soundtrack, which features music from several Hotel Cafe Tour artists. Actor Zach Braff, who stars in the film and is a friend of Brothers and Radin, has also helped promote the jaunt. "He's been talking about our tour on his blog," Neuman says. "There's a link from their site back to ours. It's all very unofficial, but all these things reach critical mass." The seven-week trek wraps up with three consecutive nights, Nov. 16-18 at the Hotel Cafe in Los Angeles. "They'll be ridiculously sold out," Shafer says. "Each night could sell between 1,000 and 2,000 tickets, and we hold 200." After completing dates in the States, the tour heads overseas for a two-week run across the United Kingdom that continues through early December. Confirmed artists for the jaunt include Brothers, Marcella, Bianco, Purdy, Steve Reynolds and "a lot of Hotel Cafe U.K. acts we're talking to right now who might be special guests," Brothers says. Brothers' ultimate goal is to continue the tour every year and to solidify its reputation with fans. "We want to keep building a sense of trust with the audience," he says. "If they hear the Hotel Cafe Tour is rolling through town, it's going to be something good up on the stage."

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3. Chris Anderson, Editor in Chief, Wired

**SPEAKERS PRESENT THIS YEAR:**

David Israeli, President and CEO, NMPA; Larry Kenswil, President, Universal Music Group - eLabs; Robin Kent, CEO, SpiralFrog; Terry Mc Bride, CEO, Nettwerk Music Group, Steve Page, Musician, Desperation Records/Barenaked Ladies, Nigel Morris, President, Isobar Worldwide, Conor Yang, CEO, Rock Mobile Corporation

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**IEG/Billboard Tour Sponsorship**

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<th>Sponsor/Tour</th>
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<tr>
<td>IEG Original Irish Cream</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<td>Diageo North America</td>
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<td>Ace Hotel, Los Angeles, October-December, 25 stops</td>
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<td>Applebee's restaurants, late July - early September, 25 stops</td>
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<td>Chrysler's sponsorship of the band as a platform to tout its new Aspen sport utility vehicle to African-American consumers, the automaker's offering on-site roadside and drive events at seven concert markets. To encourage participation, Chrysler will donate $300 for each tour date to University of Pennsylvania's Abramson Cancer Center.</td>
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Like Father, Like Daughter

Billy Joel's Oldest Finds An Audience On The Road

In what amounts to joining the family business, Alexa Ray Joel is in the midst of a 16-city run in support of her independently recorded and distributed debut EP, "Sketches."

The songwriter/pianist/vocalist’s fall tour includes her first West Coast dates and is set to wrap Nov. 11 at the Sellersville (Pa.) Theatre.

“It’s going great,” Joel says, calling from the tour’s stop in Los Angeles. She says a brief tour of Hard Rock venues last May was good preparation for this run.

“This is definitely more intense,” says Joel, daughter of Piano Man Billy Joel and supermodel Christie Brinkley. “With that [spring] tour we could stay at the hotel for one or two nights, and that’s not the way it is on this tour. This is much busier, with press and signing the night on the bus a lot of the time. It’s crazier and longer.”

Joel admits she’s still coming to terms with life on the road. “Honestly, I kind of have a love/hate relationship with it,” she says. “It’s great to be — it’s very satisfying, but there are still certain things I’m adjusting to, like always being in a different place and living on a crazy schedule.”

Pappalardo, her agent at Artist Group International (which also books her father), has pretty much eased his way into touring, the artist says. “I’m so glad that I did the tour in May, because I couldn’t just go right into this. It would probably be too much. (Pappalardo) is very good at building my experience on the road slowly but surely.”

Joel calls the EP a “review” of a full-length album she hopes to begin recording by the end of the year. “It’s called ‘Sketches’ because it’s like raw sketches, pretty much what we sound like live,” she explains. “About three of the songs, actually, were done in one take.”

Asked about her plans for signing to a label, she says, “I’m actually really excited, because after this tour I have some meetings with a bunch of different labels (including) Warner Bros., Epic, Hollywood, probably Warner. I want to meet with as many people as possible and pick out the right creative people to work with, and I’ll be working on an album later this year or at least starting the creative process for an album as soon as possible.”

Despite her professional musician pedigree, Joel says she’s still going through a considerable learning curve about the business. “It’s hard. I’m just learning about going through the process of hiring different musicians,” she says. “In like a week, we had to pretty much work in a new full band. I’m finding it’s very hard to find guitarists, because my style of music is more bluesy, and some of the songs require a more gentle, kind of jazzy touch.”

Asked if her father has any advice, she says, “He’s very much not like a stage father. He’s not always calling, checking up on me, because he’s been there and he knows what it’s like to be on the road, and he knows when you’re on the road you need space. He’s completely respectful of that.”

That’s not to say Billy Joel doesn’t weigh in with his opinion. “The best advice he gave me was treat your songs as if they were your babies—really protect them,” she says. “Because if you don’t, a lot of other people will want to take control. In that sense, he’s completely my role model because he was always in control of the production, of what happened to his songs and his performances. He really controlled every single facet of his career in terms of his material and his songs.”

To check out samples of Joel’s EP, go to myspace.com/alexarayjoel or her own Web site at alexarayjoel.com.

ALEXA RAY JOEL says her famous dad knows "when you're on the road, you need your space."
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Barbra Streisand, October 4

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GLOBAL Biz Dips in First Half

The digital music business continues to soar, according to new figures published by the IFPI. But the overall picture for recorded music is less cheerful. In the first six months of 2006, global shipments of physical recordings shrank by 10% worldwide for a trade value of $6.4 billion, down 4% from the corresponding period in 2005. On a brighter note, the value of the digital music sector in the first half rose to $9.45 billion, up 10% versus the same period in 2005. Digital sales now account for almost 17% of the total recorded music market worldwide. The IFPI's figures exclude MIDI files, ringtones and non-artist-related content sales. Its data is collated from IFPI members and major record companies and includes an estimate for nonreported sales.

—Lars Brandle

AEG Buys Marshall Arts Stake

Concert giant Anschutz Entertainment Group has acquired a 49% minority stake in Barrie Marshall's heavyweight British concert promotion and talent agency Marshall Arts. Financial details of the deal, unveiled Oct. 17, were not disclosed. Marshall Arts will maintain operational independence in the new joint venture. AEG president/CEO Tim Leiweke, AEG Live president/CEO Randy Phillips and AEG Enterprise managing director Jessica Korovas will join the Marshall Arts board, which will continue to be chaired by Marshall. The two companies have previously worked together on large-scale tours. AEG Live promoted half the dates on Paul McCartney's 2003 and 2005 North American tours, which finished fifth and first, respectively, among all tours in those years, according to Billboard Boxscore. Marshall was McCartney's tour director on both outings.

—Lars Brandle

Constantin List Unveiled

Organizers of the Constantin Prize, France's equivalent of the United Kingdom's Mercury Music Prize, have unveiled the shortlist for its fifth edition. The gala will be held Nov. 15 at Paris Olympia. The 10 nominees are Abd Al Malik's "Gibraltar" (Atmosphériques); Anis' "La Chance" (Virgin/EMI); Ayo's "Joyful" (Polydor/Universal); Clarika's "Joker" (Emma Productions/ULM/Universal); Emily Loizeau's "L'Auteur Du Monde" (Fargo); Grand Corps Malade's "Midi 20" (Anouche Productions/A2/Universal); Jehor's "Jehor" (Superfruit/Recall Group); Katerine's Robots "Après Tout" (Barclay/Universal); Olivia Ruiz's "La Femme Chocolat" (Polydor/Universal); and Phoenix's "It's Never Been Like This" (VIR/EMI). The prize is open to any French-produced album released between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006. Only those artists whose previous albums have not reached gold certification in France are eligible. A jury of music and media professionals whittled down the list to 184 submissions.

—Aymeric Pichelin

CCTV/MTV Awards Handled Out

Taiwanese vocalist Jay Chou was named best Asian artist at the eighth annual CCTV/MTV Music Awards, held Oct. 12 at the Beijing Exhibition Centre Auditorium. Hong Kong musician/composer/producer Chris Babida was recognized with a special contribution award. Best mainland Chinese male artist went to veteran crooner Man Wenyun, while female honors went to Chen Ming. For Hong Kong, the most popular accolades went to Eason Chan and Joey Yung. Best group to went to popular girl duo Twins and best new artist was Justin Lo.

—Lisa Movius

Jazz Club Hosts Own Awards

Celebrated London jazz club Ronnie Scott's will host its own jazz awards ceremony in 2007. The Ronnie Scott's Jazz Awards will laud some of the world's greatest jazz artists, including international talent, and a scholarship will be bestowed to a promising British saxophonist. Votes will be cast by the public, jazz radio listeners and the venue's club members. A date for the gala has yet to be confirmed.

—Lars Brandle

Pay To Play

South African Biz Hopes For Quick Fix From 'Needletime'

Artists and record companies in South Africa are celebrating the emergence of a potential new revenue stream, as collecting societies gear up for the newly established "needletime" scheme, which will introduce royalty payments for the public broadcast of sound recordings for the first time.

Industry bodies, most prominently the Recording Industry of South Africa, have been lobbying government for more than a decade to secure the payments, also known as "pay for play time."

"A lot of our major players actually rely on income from sponsors or corporate gigs. So creating an infrastructure that enables them to make a living without these is very important," says Yiël Kenan, co-manager of Afro-pop group Freshlyground and singer Lunelgo. "In addition, the country has many artists who don't write their own material but who are great entertainers and performers and who have a huge fan base. They deserve to be financially rewarded when their recordings are broadcast."

Major beneficiaries are expected to include girl band NKO (Sony BMG), formed by three finalists from "Idols," the South African equivalent of "American Idol;" and Afrikaans singer Dozi (EMI Music), who has several platinum albums to his name.

Currently, the only performing rights society in the country is the Southern African Music Rights Organization, a CISAC affiliate that administers broadcast and performing rights on behalf of its composers, authors and publishers. Estimates from industry insiders put the current value of SAMRO's income from performing and broadcast rights at around 80 million rand ($10.4 million) a year.

The first move toward legislating sound recording royalty payments was taken in 2000 by the government-appointed Music Industry Task Team, which recommended the step in its final report. In 2001, the Copyright Amendment Bill added a section into the existing Copyright Act that said, "In the absence of an agreement to the contrary, no person may broadcast, cause the transmission of or play a sound recording...without payment of a royalty to the owner of the relevant copyright."

But it wasn't until June 2006 that regulations for the establishment of collecting societies in the music industry were published by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mandisi Mpahlwa. This means that societies representing copyright holders in sound recordings can now be established, although as yet no royalty rate has been set, nor has a date for broadcasters' payments to begin.

Irfaan Gillan, chairman of the newly formed Assn. of Independent Record Companies, which represents the interests of around 50 independent labels, describes needletime as "top of the agenda of AIRCO's broadcasting subcommittee."

"There are more and more viable independents coming into the South Africa music business, most of whom invest substantially in recording South African artists," Gillan says. "The needletime royalty will really enable them to continue to do that. The biggest challenge now is negotiating with our broadcasters."

The initiative is not without its detractors. In a statement, the National Assn. of Broadcasters claims that "needletime was erroneously conceived to be a solution to certain problems affecting the music industry. Its benefits are however limited to payment of a royalty for the broadcast of a sound recording to a performer and the owner of copyright in a sound recording. Due to the structure of the South African recording industry, the primary beneficiaries of needletime might not be South African artists."

A prominent broadcasting source tells Billboard, "The broadcasters have finally accepted that they have lost the needletime battle. Now their aim will be to negotiate as low a rate as possible with the sound recording rights holders—but that is not going to be easy for them to achieve."
**‘SPACE’ INVADERS**

**Japan Gets Set For Social Networking Liftoff**

TOKYO—Social networking Web sites have suddenly become a big talking point in the Japanese music business, but there’s much work to be done if they are to tempt local music fans away from mobile phone-based services.

The Sept. 14 Tokyo Stock Exchange debut by Mixi, Japan’s biggest social networking site, was a runaway success, attracting a plethora of buy orders. By the next day, Mixi’s net market value reached 219.9 billion yen ($1.8 billion) and suddenly “SNS” became a media buzzword.

The number of SNS users in Japan will reach 10.4 million by March 2007, from a March 2006 base of 7.1 million, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. According to research by Access Media International, 25% of Japanese people in their 20s use an SNS, compared to 11% of the population as a whole. Launched in February 2004, Mixi features pages dedicated to artists and specific songs, where users can comment on tracks, find breaking news and link to other fans or communities with an affiliation to the page. Mixi recently introduced a service called Mixi Music, which automatically uploads to the user’s “My Music” page playlists consisting songs they have recently played on their PCs using such software as iTunes and Windows Media Player. Those playlists can then be viewed by other Mixi users. Slightly more than 10% of Mixi’s communities are music-related.

Meanwhile, a source close to MySpace—the world’s biggest SNS—says it will launch a Japanese joint venture with Tokyo-based Internet service provider Softbank “imminently.” Neither MySpace nor SoftBank were available for comment at press time.

“Mixi Music could have a huge impact on the Japanese music scene, as it offers artists and labels a chance to effectively promote their music all across the globe—no SNS in Japan has been capable of this,” says Sho Iwase, director of international relations at Tokyo-based digital distribution company Rightsscale. Most Japanese SNSs are local, Japanese-language sites with no presence outside Japan.

“However, attracting users in Japan may prove difficult, since Japan’s digital music business is dominated by mobile-phone networks,” Iwase adds. Broadband penetration in Japan stands at 41.4%, but labels’ body the Recording Industry Assn. of Japan’s figures for second-quarter digital downloads show mobile downloads account for roughly 90% of digital music sales in Japan, generating 11.29 billion yen ($97 million) in revenue. Steve Myers, president of Tokyo-based software developer Theta Music Technologies, says, “They will have a tough road ahead competing with Mixi, which is already firmly entrenched here and growing very quickly.” Mixi now boasts some 5.7 million members, despite new users requiring an introduction from a friend who already uses the service. A key reason for Mixi’s rapid growth is an interface that allows users to read and post messages via mobile phone and upload photos taken with mobile-phone cameras directly to the site.

Another potential hurdle for music-oriented SNSs in Japan is local labels’ expected reluctance to approve the kind of free MP3 streaming service offered by MySpace. Independent Japanese acts and labels have been quick to see the potential of SNS services to promote their music. One of the best-known is Tokyo-based mf247, operated by indie label 247 Music, where artists like Yuiko Narisaka post their music and users can download tracks free of charge and vote for their favorite songs and artists. Other music-oriented sites include Recomuni, Sony’s Playlog and the Japanese version of British SNS last.fm.

But major labels remain cautious about embracing the service. “SNS is not even on our radar screen [as a promotional tool] yet,” one Japanese major-label source says. “However, if it took off by mobile, then of course it would be. It would be interesting to release Internet-only artists, or debut them on mobile platforms through these services.”

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**GLOBAL**

**By Steve McCLURE**

**‘MySpace will have a tough road ahead competing with Mixi.’**

—STEVE MYERS, PRESIDENT OF THETA MUSIC TECHNOLOGIES

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**Sony, BMG Pursue Merger On Two Fronts**

BRUSSELS—Media giants Sony and Bertelsmann are back in the ring to fight for their music divisions’ right to merge—and this time they aren’t taking any chances.

Not only are they once more seeking antitrust clearance from the European Commission in Brussels, but earlier this month they filed a writ at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg to secure their deal.

The two-pronged strategy is necessary because, despite the European Union’s antitrust authority giving the all-clear for the merger in June 2004, the Court of First Instance—the EU’s second highest court—annulled the EC’s decision in July.

In private, Sony and BMG, which declined comment for this story, remains relaxed about the situation. But in public, Sony leans on government support to block the merger, while BMG’s top executives are clear that the commission has rejected the deal.

Another antitrust hurdle is the European Court of Justice (ECJ) challenge, which could delay the merger for months or even years. The ECJ decision is expected in March at the earliest.

Sony, BMG’s largest shareholder, has been under pressure from its parent company, Japan’s Sony, to reconsider the merger. Sony believes the combined company can be more profitable if it becomes a one-stop shop for the music business, offering everything from recordings and distribution to online music services and mobile video games.

But BMG, which is owned by Bertelsmann, has been pushing for a more-geographic focus, saying that by merging, it would be able to better compete with the likes of Universal Music Group, which is owned by Vivendi, and EMI Music Group, which is owned by Vivendi. BMG also argues that by merging, it would be able to better compete with Sony, which owns the biggest label, Columbia, and the studio music arm, Sony Music Entertainment, which is Sony’s second-largest division.

The ECJ hearing is expected to focus on the issue of whether the merger would result in a significant reduction in competition in the market for the sale of music. The commission has argued that the merger would result in a significant horizontal reduction in competition, as the combined company would control over 25% of the market for the sale of music in Europe.

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As more music becomes available online, fans are demanding better methods of filtering and recommending that music to their individual tastes. Most of today's music recommendation systems are clumsy and often ineffective since their recommendations rely on unsophisticated technology like collaborative filtering or acoustic fingerprinting — both of which lack context, taste and emotion. As such, there is a small but growing movement to add a more human element to the music discovery process. As logical as it may seem to a computer, fans of Pearl Jam may not necessarily like Stone Temple Pilots, as recommended by collaborative filtering technologies. While they may have similar musical attributes, the White Stripes’ "Wild Orchard" has little in common with Ben Folds' "Landed," as recommended by acoustic fingerprinting services. "There's the realization that the other efforts that have been made have failed," says David Hyman, CEO of MOG, a music-oriented social networking site. "With it coming to taste people are cautious of recommendations from a computer. What's the context? Too often it's wrong, and people lose their faith in the ability for a computer-based recommendation to be right." Perhaps the most popular alternative is just to let fans recommend music to each other directly. This is the tack taken by such sites as Last.fm, MOG, Napster and the new breed of authorized peer-to-peer services. The idea is to look into the libraries of others to see what they're listening to. From there, users can sample tracks or take suggestions from others. MOG is an example of the former. The service reads its members' music library and helps those with similar tastes find one another. Once connected, members can sample any song listed in the other's library and dynamically make recommendations. Microsoft's pending Zune strategy is an example of the latter. Users can share a song with several friends, who then sample the track free for a limited time. Wireless operator Helio offers a similar "gifting" system for ringtones and other mobile content, which it says results in one-third of all sales on its network. Other services like Urge, Rhymap and Pandora prefer a more hands-on approach, utilizing professional critics, or "music programmers," to oversee their recommendation engine's navigation process. For instance, Pandora uses music experts to analyze and create profiles of tracks based on dozens of predefined attributes. The recommendation engine then creates playlists based on songs with similar attributes, regardless of genre or style. Rhymap's programmers organize the service's vast library into various music styles, which the recommendation engine then refers to when creating instant playlists. "There's got to be a set of rules and algorithms we use to get some of those recommendations, but it's based on musical connections that actual human beings have made in the first place," Rhymap executive editor Tim Quirk says. These music experts also develop custom playlists around specific genres, styles or artists. For instance, Urge's experts create sampler lists designed to introduce listeners to new genres. "eMusic uses noted music critics to post regular blogs detailing what they're listening to. Even phone manufacturer Nokia is developing a service that will combine the expertise of 40 independent music stores worldwide. Increasingly, these services are also tapping famous artists as sort of über-critics to suggest music based on their preferences. The celebrity playlist has been a standard feature for some time, but some services are expanding that relationship into something deeper. For example, David Bowie has been named the "godfather" of Nokia's service, contributing monthly features and podcasts detailing his music "discoveries." MOG, meanwhile, recruits artists to create profiles and write about their musical whims, as well as let fans explore their digital music library, not just a playlist. Participating acts include Frank Black, the Haid Steady and Gomez's Ian Ball. "Sometimes you want to like something because somebody you admire likes it," MOG's Hyman says. He cites an example where Phish's Trey Anastasio stated his preference for Pavement. As a result, Hyman says Phish fans started buying Pavement albums. "No recommendation system would have ever told a Phish-head to listen to Pavement," he says. "They're all listening to m. The String Cheese Incident." Whether any of these efforts are driving music sales or subscription retention rates remains unanswered. Most are too new to be able to compare sales figures in a meaningful way or haven't been launched yet. Without such data, music services are hard-pressed to justify the investments needed to build even better recommendation systems. For instance, Rhymap's Quirk still rates the overall recommendation process a mere six on a scale of 10. "It's so incredibly expensive and complicated to build such a system — that's the incremental benefit to us and how much is that worth?" he asks. "At this point, I'm skeptical whether it's worth the money we'd have to pour into it."
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SoundExchange is the one and only group authorized by the U.S. Copyright Office to license and collect royalties for noninteractive webcasts and digital (e.g., cable and satellite) broadcasts of recordings.

Even though many other countries recognize the performance right of artists and companies that produce recordings, it was only 11 years ago that the U.S. Congress first created a digital performance right in sound recordings. Before then, there was no right for musicians, singers or record labels to receive a royalty when their recordings were broadcast in the United States.

SoundExchange has had a rough time trying to get this message out to those who are entitled to receive royalties. Even though artists and labels can easily sign up on its Web site to collect royalties, the group has been unable to locate many recipients.

But John Simson, executive director of SoundExchange, still forgives ahead to get artists and copyright holders their fair share.

What is the most common misconception about SoundExchange?
That we collect the same revenue as ASCAP and BMI, but that we just do digital while they do radio, TV and clubs. There are people who don’t understand there is no competition between us. They collect for songwriters and music publishers. We collect for performers and record labels. Given that we didn’t have [performance] rights for [sound recordings] for years, it’s really taken time for it to sink in.

Have you made deals with aggregators—digital distributors—to pay them in addition to paying labels, featured performers and the AFM/AFTRA trust funds for background performers?
They are a work in progress. It’s only for the label share, because the artist share of revenue goes direct to the performer. Basically, the requirement for the aggregators is that they have to advise their label clients that [the labels] have an absolute right to come forward and sign directly with SoundExchange and collect the royalties without any deduction. Or the label can opt in to have the aggregator collect [from SoundExchange] and pay the royalties [to the labels] as part of their overall royalty payments. We approved a prototype letter. [The Independent Online Distribution Alliance], the Orchard and IRIS have all agreed to this methodology, and we’re in varying states with each of them with the notifications and wording in the respective letters. We’re only paying them the label share. A copyright owner is always free to come to SoundExchange and say, “Pay me directly,” and that is what we will do.

How often does SoundExchange audit licensees?
We’ve conducted two audits thus far. We’ve now sent notices to the 10 largest webcast services. These are a different kind of audit than what’s been seen in the music industry before, because it’s just counting the number of things that were distributed or sold. It’s also technologically figuring out through server logs how many streams of a particular song and where those streams ended up.

How often do you anticipate auditing webcasters and digital broadcasters?
That’s an interesting issue for us. You have to balance the cost of these audits versus what they show. We have a couple of proposals that we’ve floated to the users that could, frankly, eliminate the need to audit. We think there are technological solutions, given that this is digital. For example, a box that you could place on a server would monitor all of the activity. Potentially, if it’s reporting to you everything that is going through that server, it would replace the need for an audit. We’re now doing a feasibility study. We hope the users will see this as a great way to save them time and expense as well.

What is the response to your proposals?
I think there’s a little reservation about putting anything inside their servers, but there’s been at least a willingness to have a discussion about it.

What does SoundExchange retain for its services?
We go to our board each year and basically prepare a budget of what it costs to license, collect and distribute [royalties]. Typically the first few years, the board basically knew that the initial costs of getting license rates were expensive—litigating against AOL, Microsoft, the [Digital Media Assn.] companies, broadcasters and Clear Channel to get rates. We amortized those costs over the license period. We essentially took a 20% admin fee to cover all of that and pay back some historic costs from the early days when there was small revenue and fixed costs. We are a fixed-cost business. The more money that goes through our pipes, the lower that admin fee will be.

For example, we’ve seen a very nice increase in satellite radio in the last couple years, and I’m expecting for 2006 an admin fee somewhere between 7%-8%. On webcasting, it’s still close to 20% because we have historic costs that we pay back from that income stream. My expectation is that the blended admin fee for the two would be closer to 11% or 12% this year, and under 10% next year. But there are variables [like litigating over rates] that could affect it.

Is there any difference in your dealings with cable, satellite and Internet companies?
Yes. As a group, the [terrestrial] broadcasters who simulcast still believe they shouldn’t have to pay anything even though their online streams are no different than those of a webcaster or a satellite service. They take the position that given a shorter playlist—although the lack format, which all of a sudden was 400-500 songs, starts to look more like a satellite radio playlist—they’re more promotional.

Music Choice, Muzak and satellite services, for the most part, have been much more open to giving us complete census data of everything they play. Webscatters, to a degree, and certainly the broadcast simulcasters have been much more adamant that we should only get a three-day sample similar to what ASCAP and BMI use. We just think that is completely wrong in the digital world.

We took an ASCAP sample [several years ago], but it over the top of 40 or 50 channels of this programming and came up with what the actual data loss would be—all those [independent labels'] artists and titles were being missed. It was very substantial.

The [performing rights organizations] tested their surveys, and I’m sure they’re very accurate on tightly controlled 29- to 30-song playlists. But I don’t think the PROs are going to be compliant either—saying the survey is good—as we move into much deeper playlists.
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TOP TOUFS
Bon Jovi, Have A Nice Day
Madonna, Confessions
The Rolling Stones, A Bigger Bang

TOP DRAW
Bon Jovi
Madonna
The Rolling Stones

TOP PACKAGE
Kenny Chesney with Dierks Bentley, Sugarland-Carrie Underwood/Jake Owen, Def Leppard/Journey with Steli Vaughan, Rascal Flatts with Gary Allan & Jason Aldean

TOP BOXSCORE
Billy Joel at Madison Square Garden, NYC
Madonna at Wembley Arena, London
Luis Miguel at Auditorio Nacional, Mexico City

TOP CLUB
House Of Blues, Anaheim, Calif.
House Of Blues, Atlantic City
House Of Blues, Chicago

TOP AMPHITHEATER
Nikon at Jones Beach Theatre, Wantagh, N.Y.
PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J.
Tweeter Center at the Waterfront, Camden, N.J.

TOP FESTIVAL
Austin City Limits Music Festival, Austin, Texas
Bonnaroo Music Festival, Manchester, Tenn.
Lollapalooza, Chicago

TOP MANAGER
Angela Becker and Gay Oseary (Madonna)
Front Line Management
Pau> Korzilius of BJM (Bon Jovi)

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By Hillary Crosley
PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN MANNION
**Bullish On Black Wall Street**

**THE GAME DIVERSIFIES ITS BRANDING PORTFOLIO**

The Game's ambitions don't end with his new album. He has established his own record label, the Black Wall Street, and he has negotiated a deal with Sketchers via 310 Motors to release his Hurricane shoe line.

"People love him or hate him," says Marc Laidier, founder of 310 Motors, of signing the MC as his frontman. "People that love him support him and he has a huge following. And now that he's about to come out victorious, he's getting a lot more respect for standing up for what he believed in."

The Hurricane 2 debuts Nov. 21 ("They're selling themselves. I walked into a Foot Locker and the shoe was actually talking to kids," the Game jokes), and one of its six new colors will be released each following month. He is also in talks with Miskenn and Tommy Hilfiger to release his tentatively titled Flyboy jean line, rivaling 7 for All Mankind, and a Black Wall Street urban clothing line for 2007. However, it hasn't been easy.

"Branding opportunities really have been less available," says the Game's manager, Jimmy Rosemond. "It's a difficult standard. 50 [Cents'] continual but that doesn't stop him from getting his branding on. Still, it's not a challenge we're not capable of fighting."

Meanwhile, Hollywood called last year, and the 6-foot-4-inch MC made his big-screen debut earlier this year in "Waist Deep," as a child-stealing crime boss. Now Rosemond says he's negotiating a five-picture deal with producer Joel Silver, at Warner Bros. Studios.

As far as Black Wall Street goes, Rosemond says the label's first release will be the 2007 debut of Phoenix's Juice, to be followed by sets by Atlanta's Black Boy, Brooklyn's Beloved and the Bay Area's Yo Boy and Clyde Carson. Rosemond has yet to hire a distributor, but Interscope and Warner Bros. are in the running. Staying consistent on the mixtape scene, the Game's "You Know What It Is: Vol. 4" with DJ Skee and Nu Jerzy Devil is coming soon as well.

"We're looking for the same opportunities that 50 received," Rosemond says. "Everyone was able to branch off and do their own thing." -HC

**THE GAME has turned almost every impasse into a marketing tool.**

**Hands wrapped in sparring tape.** Compton, Calif., native the Game steps into the boxing ring for his Hurricane 2 shoe campaign shoot. But this battle is twofold. He's also poised to fight for his sophomore album, "The Doctor's Advocate," which streets Nov. 14. Bringing to mind a classic shot of Muhammad Ali before his Rumble in the Jungle bout with George Foreman, the Game seriously seems a few steps away from holtering that he's the greatest.

"You make hit records, and people love you. You don't make hit records, and people hate you," the Game quips. "If I made bricks, I'd give people their money back, but I'm just not good at making bricks. I tried to make 'Hate It or Love It' a brick, and you saw what happened with that." What happened is that it became one of the biggest hits of 2005, checking in at No. 10 on Billboard's year-end Rap Songs chart and No. 24 on the year-end Billboard Hot 100.

Few MCs can survive a character assassination from an entire rap crew, especially if the mob leader is 50 Cent. But the Game, aka Jayceon Taylor, has bloodied his knuckles protecting his brand and his manhood while the G-Unit crew has done quite a bit to destroy his street credibility. From DJ Whoo Kid and 50 Cent depicting him as a thong-clad stripper on their "G-Unit Radio Part 21: Hate It or Love It" mixtape to the Game's own brother denying the rapper's street credibility in the press, he has sustained. And since authenticity is hip-hop's meal ticket, it's been a dangerous game indeed.

Yet the Game's recent switch to Geffen Records from his former Interscope home, brokered between his manager Jimmy Rosemond and Interscope president Jimmy Lovine to release the artist from G-Unit Records, couldn't have come at a better time. With the G-Unit house falling far short of its previous Nielsen SoundScan marks—Mobb Deep's "Blood Money" scanned just 106,000 in its first release week; Lloyd Banks' 143,000-shipment first week for "Rotten Apple" was a 67% drop from his debut "Hunger for More" album's 344,000—it now seems like a smart decision for the Game to separate his identity. But now he must prove that he can write hit songs without the help of 50 and hitmaker Dr. Dre.

"It's up-and-off-shot-up time," Rosemond says. "Game's laughing his heart out right now, because we made a conscious effort to move away from 50 and build his own brand. If you look at Lloyd Banks and Young Buck, they have nothing besides what 50 allows them."

But the Game wasn't always this cocksure.

Signed by Dre in 2002, the rapper has the life story publicists dream about. Born and raised in Dre's hometown of Compton, he left behind college basketball scholarships for gang life with his older brother, a Cedar Block Piru Blood. Then, in a fateful twist, the Game was shot Oct. 1, 2001, during a robbery of his home. He spent his recovery learning to rhyme and studying classic hip-hop albums like Nas' "Illmatic" and Ice Cube's "Death Certificate." Though legend has it that the Game had never rapped before December 2001, Dre found, coached and pushed him to release one of the biggest singles of 2005 in "How We Do," featuring 50 Cent, which peaked at No. 2 on the R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. Then came the infectious "Hate It or Love It," also featuring 50 Cent. It peaked at No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100 and No. 1 on R&B/Hip-Hop Songs.

The Game's constant grimace pushed his debut, "The Documentary," beyond double platinum—it has scanned 2.4 million units to date—and had West Coast hip-hop heads hoping for a revival. But when he refused to join 50 Cent's beefs with artists like Jadakiss and Fat Joe, 50 Cent changed his gold ticket. While R&B/hip-hop/WoPPer New York was interviewing the Game in February 2005, 50 Cent booted him from G-Unit over the air on crosstown rival rhythmic top 40 WQHT (Hot 97), insisting it was he and not the Game who wrote most of "The Documentary."

Later that day, there was a shootout at WQHT between the pair's entourages, and a member of the Game's clan was clipped.

Then in a "Days of Our Lives" turn of events a few weeks later, the Game and 50 Cent held a truce at Harlem's Schomberg Museum in New York, where they shook hands and donated several thousand dollars to the Harlem Boy's Choir. But the following summer at New York's notoriously contentious Hot 97 Summer Jam concert, the Game launched his "G-Unot" campaign, attacking 50 Cent's street credibility as well as the entire G-Unit roster.

"Absolutely, there was trepidation," Rosemond says of the Game's decision to go against his former crew. "Whenever there's a feat that you have to accomplish, it's scary. But he came into this business as a man, and he has remained a man."

Now, a weary Game is tired of the politics.

"It's like beating a dead dog," he says. "50 couldn't dictate what the mighty powerful Dr. Dre is doing. It just happened that Dr. Dre wasn't on the album, but it definitely didn't have anything to do with 50, unless there's something I don't know. If so, I don't want to know, because that's politics, and I just want to make music good enough to be called a classic."

Rosemond did supply early cuts for "The Doctor's Advocate"—he's referenced in the title, after all—but after the album's path changed, they didn't make the final cut. Dre couldn't be reached at press time.

"When you're making a classic album, you want to pick the best tracks," he adds. "We're making a conscious effort to get away from the Interscope and Aftermath brands. Game's been the man in this whole thing. If 50 says he can't write hooks, then he'll do them by himself. He says he can't sell without Dr. Dre's beats, then he won't use them."

In the new album's first single, "It's Okay (One Blood)," which samples reggae artist Junior Reid's "One Blood," the Game spits, "The 'Muth gen' drop him and 50 ain't rocking with him no more, it's 50, I get it poppin' . . . sell another 5 million albums, yes I am."

The 16-track "Doctor's Advocate" is an extremely West Coast-sounding record, with stereotypical California basslines. The lyrics are rife with the intrinsic violent threats hip-hop loves. And with a track listing that includes Left Coasters like "Too Much" featuring Nate Dogg, "Bang" featuring the Dogg Pound, "California Vaction" featuring Snoop and Xzibit, and another joint simply called "Compton," its obvious the Game's returning to his sonic roots.

Still, he allows a few national artists like Floetry's Mesha Ambrusio, Mary J. Blige, Jamie Fox, Nas, Busta Rhymes and Kanye West along for the ride. But the gem lies in the introspective. "Rotten-produced title track featuring Busta Rhymes, where a chocked up Game thanks Dre for his success. He goes on to describe his departure from Aftermath Music, telling Dre that growing up he "had a choice to be like Mike or be like him" and that Dre's like a father to him. But the most poignant line says, "Not saying you had to take my part in the beef, but you told me to say fuck the cops.""

"Dre nor 50 are on the album because people said, "The Documentary's success was heavily Dre- and 50-influenced, making me look like I was just the dumb nigga from the hood who didn't know what he was doing," the Game explains. "There's no turmoil with Dre. He took the training wheels off my bicycle for this record, and I can ride around the corner by myself. There aren't any hard feelings."

Looking again at his Ali-inspired photo shoot, it's not hard to see the Game's similarity to the moody boxer. He has turned almost every impasse into a marketing tool, constantly expanding his brand, and "The Doctor's Advocate" will be his defining moment. For better or for worse.

"No one expected 'One Blood' to end up on MTV's 'TRL' countdown. It's not exactly a 'TRL' song," says Chris Clancy, co-head of marketing at Interscope. "The first track was the alley-opp, and he either slammed it or missed it. And if that song was just OK, it would've hampered everything we're doing. But we hit it out of the park with the first single, and even the haters said, 'I'll give him a little more of a chance.' He's the underdog, and so far he's lining things up perfectly.

Clancy has scheduled a Game MTV's VJ Bill concert, which tapes Nov. 7. Clancy is also scheduling a special video around the album's release for the Will.i.am-produced song "Compton," coordinated by will.i.am himself.

"The video is Will's vision and makes you feel like you're 17 listening to N.W.A.," Clancy says. "It's full of landscape shots and Compton social commentary; it's very raw. It'll be a shot in the arm before the record drops."

As for Jayceon Taylor's ultimate plan for the album, he's thankful for all his obstacles.

"I don't regret the victories, the obstacles or the pain I suffered," the Game says, "just being alone and everybody turning their back on me. Now everybody's back in my face because there's only one entity: that's just making fucking hit records."
Two years ago, when Epic Records signed Denver rock quartet the Fray, the label didn’t just smell a hit in local radio favorite “Over My Head (Cable Car).” It whiffed the fervent fragrance of a career. # A strategy was meticulously devised to break the band—and keep it churning on eight cylinders far beyond that initial single. Instead of flicking “Over My Head” to radio with high hopes that it would catapult up the charts, earn the group TV exposure, sell albums, garner endorsement alliances and spur touring, Epic’s plan followed precisely the opposite tact. # “First, we put them out on the road—touring like madmen—as we created an online grass-roots presence, then we went to college radio with ‘Over My Head,’ mtvU and next to triple-A radio,” says Scott Carter, Epic VP of marketing and product manager for the band. “We released the album in September of 2005, then went to adult radio formats—and then, after 35 weeks, we finally took their single to top 40.” # With a dedicated fan base already stirring across the nation, including an astounding 300,000 “friends” on MySpace, and a burgeoning story to share with PDs, the song was a soft sell. On March 18, it debuted at No. 35 on the Mainstream Top 40 chart; five months later, “Over My Head” peaked at a robust No. 5. # And then the real work began: the holy grail of a successful sophomore single.
CRITICAL MASS

Certainly, the challenge of extending an act beyond its breakthrough hit is marked by formidable roadblocks in an era where gaining critical mass and depending on radio to support artist development are tentative at best. Adding to the challenge is mainstream radio’s heavy R&B bent, meaning that the number of slots for pop- and rock-leaning hits have become precious and few since the start of this decade.

During 2006, the scenario has played out in every possible way: The Fray and Natasha Bedingfield have hit big with debut efforts, and reaped repeated gusto with their follow-up singles at radio. On the other hand, new artists Anna Nalick, Cascada, James Blunt and Daniel Powter conquered The Billboard Hot 100 with a first smash, only to see subsequent releases contend with varying levels of resistance at radio.

There are also those chart-debut stars whose second chapter is just getting under way: KT Tunstall, Grains Barkley, Pan! at the Disco. For these artists, the future looks bright, but nothing can be taken for granted.

In each case, attaining—and maintaining—success requires as much if not more tenacity and creativity on the part of the attached act’s record companies as achieving the initial hit did.

The seeming scapegoat for the challenge of artist development the second time around would be radio programmers, whose allegiance, more so than in the past, lies with individual songs that best fit their stations—not with developing name-brand acts for a given format. But PDs are clear: Don’t blame us.

“We’re overwhelmingly a song-based format, and in a situation where we have a very strong competitor, we can’t afford to make mistakes with records for the sake of artist development,” says Brian Davis, APD/music director at top 40 WKSZ Green Bay- Appleton-Oshkosh, Wis.

Tony Travatto, PD of top 40 KXXM (Mix 96.1) San Antonio, adds, “We’re more likely to give someone a shot if they had a monster first single than if they didn’t, but it all comes down to the quality of the song.”

And Al Levine, APD of top 40 WBLI Long Island, N.Y., says, “A first massive hit by a new artist may not be enough to compel the audience to accept their next release. What are they more familiar with, the artist or the song itself? Understanding this is important.”

Perhaps surprisingly, record company executives acknowledge that their goals and those of radio don’t necessarily parallel. “Yes, it would be great if every radio station gave our artists a shot at taking their careers to the next level, but programmers make decisions based on what keeps their radio stations winning,” says Pete Cosenza, senior VP of adult formats for Columbia Records.

“Radio is part of the puzzle; if you’re depending entirely on radio to break a new artist, you’ve got a good chance of failure,” Carter adds. “At the same time, if you’re looking for multiplatinum status, yes, you still need radio.”

NO GUARANTEES

If every label understood that there is no such thing as a guaranteed follow-up hit from a debut artist, it is boutique Robbins Entertainment, which prima facie signature acts. During the past several years, the company scored at top 40 with hits by DJ Sammy, Lasgo, D.H.T. and, most recently, Cascada, with the top 10 “Everytime We Touch.”

“For us, every time we go out with a record, it’s like starting over, no matter how big,” says Frank Murray, Robbins VP of promotion. “We had a No. 1 record with D.H.T.’s ‘Listen to Your Heart’ at top 40 and came back with the next record and it was like ‘D.H. Who?’ Nothing is easy.”

Cascada’s audience grew organically through MySpace, where the group fostered 300,000 “friends” during the course of several months. The song was already on dance radio and at the clubs before conquering the mainstream. When powerhouse top 40 WHTZ (Z100) New York saw the Cascada track combusting, it added the record. “They were the first major station to play it and it blew up immediately,” Murray says. “Their story was big enough to spread it.”

Ultimately, “Everytime We Touch” became that rare pure dance song to connect with pop radio. It peaked at No. 7 at top 40 and No. 10 on the Hot 100. On iTunes, the track was certified platinum with more than 1 million downloads.

But when it came time for the follow-up, “Miracles,” Robbins knew it had a chore. “Cascada is a real artist with an amazing voice and a personality,” Murray says. The track reached No. 34 on Pop 100 Airplay and sold 175,000 copies, but Murray acknowledges that the sophomore curse is alive and well: “It wasn’t a total failure, but we really thought that we could break the trend of dance acts that don’t have more than one hit.”

Still, Robbins remains undaunted: A third single is planned from Cascada: “We’re totally not done,” Murray says.

PATIENCE PAYS OFF

Anna Nalick’s story confounds any standard agenda in the record business (if such a creature exists). First single “Breathe (2 AM)” was first released to adult top 40 radio in October 2004.

“We got the standard resistance from radio that you get with a new artist,” Cosenza says. “She’s new, I’m not sure I want to take a chance, you’ve got a third of the panel playing it but we need to see more before we give a shit, it’s a ballad . . . But we felt so strongly that the song would cut through.”

It did, but what a lesson in patience. “Breathe” debuted on the Adult Top 40 chart in December 2004, dropped off, reappeared in July 2005 and ultimately peaked at No. 6. It entered the AC chart in March 2005, fell off, relaunched in July and topped out at No. 4.

But top 40 still appears a tough nut to crack—while Columbia remained convinced that the format was within reach. At Nalick warmed up to the likes of Train and Chris Isaak, “We realized we were at the point where we needed film and TV licensing or a big headlining tour,” Cosenza says. And that’s when the magic wand known as “Grey’s Anatomy” waved itself before Nalick’s dogged single.

The show had already adopted the singer/songwriter as a pet favorite, airing a number of her songs within episodes, but when “Breathe” was played as the backdrop to an emotional scene l; at season, “we immediately started getting calls from top 40 and some struggler top 40s, who a limited that it was a smash and they risted it. They wanted the record now—and they added it to their thinking about it. A lot of stations also placed the song into callback and it was coming back top five and top 10, in places where it had never even been played,” Cosenza says.

The track aired at mainstream top 40 in April 2006—but because airplay was so dispersed during the course of nearly two years, it peaked at less than lofty No. 22.

In the meantime, Columbia had already moved on to a second single at adult top 40 with “In the Rough,” which reached a respectable No. 15 at the format.

Then came the supposed payoff: the true follow-up to a cross-format smash. The label chose “Wreck of the Day,” the title track to Nalick’s debut album, which it went so far as to re-record and rearrange, courtesy of Grammy Award-winning producer Steve Lillywhite. The album was also reissued, with new artwork and additional tracks, since Nalick had literally grown up during the course of the journey: She was 17 when the disc was recorded and was now 20.

“Wreck” debuted and ultimately peaked at No. 39 at adult top 40. “It was the same old response,” Cosenza laments. “People thought it was a sleepy song, they just didn’t get it. It’s among the most emotional songs she does in concert—the crowd stands there with their collective jaw on the floor as she’s talking about her life. But it just didn’t connect with radio programmers. We were told it didn’t feel right
for their radio stations."

Columbia stands by its artist. Nallick is currently in the studio working on her second album and Cosenza is convinced that their accomplishments will be further rewarded, particularly since "so many digital platforms, AOL, Music, Yahoo and all the other things that have come to have significant impact on the success of a single or album" did not exist when promotion began for Nallick in 2004. "We absolutely have a solid base to build upon."

THE FORTUNATE FEW

Natasha Bedingfield, meanwhile, is among the fortunate few. Her first hit, "These Words," cemented a steppingstone for an even bigger second single, "Unwritten."

"We were all so massively in love with 'These Words' the first time we heard it at the label and then we met this young, amazing singer from the U.K.—oh, yeah, whose brother is Daniel Bedingfield—and we were committed," says Jacqueline Saturn, senior VP of radio promotion at Epic. "There was so much camaraderie around her."

As such, a radio tour became a natural outreach for Bedingfield, and her innate talent proved a winning ticket for radio. Epic was so confident, in fact, that it took the record straight to top 40 radio. "Radio fell in love with her and when they heard her sing, forget it, they were in," Saturn adds. "It became unstoppable."

"These Words," which topped the U.K. charts in the months preceding Bedingfield's stateside launch, was a solid breakthrough, peaking at No. 9 on the Pop 100 in April 2005 and No. 6 on Hot Digital Songs in August. But, as usual, the accomplishment required a gallon of sweat. "It was a grind like you can't believe, but it really broke her career," says Tommy Nappi, Epic VP of pop promotion. Saturn adds, "A lot of hard work, especially trying to convince rhythmic stations to play a straight pop record—but we got there."

Then came "Unwritten," which indeed served as a Trump card. The song not only reached No. 1 on the Pop 100 and No. 2 on Hot Digital Songs in April 2006, but No. 1 at AC and No. 2 at adult top 40 that same month. It one-upped every accomplishment of its predecessor.

The title's success was entirely radio-driven, without fanfare from licensing or digital alliances. "It took 'Unwritten' for the pieces of the puzzle to come together," Saturn says. "It wasn't until then that she started doing huge television. That song was used in the MTV series 'The Hills' and that was her first."

Bedingfield is now working on her second album, which will see simultaneous worldwide release next year. Saturn is convinced the next round will be less arduous. "She is a believable artist and we have people lined up that want to partner with her. It won't be only about radio the next time out."

SETUP TRACK

KT Tunstall also came to the United States with a European hit already in pocket—but Virgin knew better than to assume the same was a given here. Instead of doing a hard sell on the foot-stomping, folk-rocking first single "Black Horse & the Cherry Tree"—a far cry from the sound of anything else on American radio—the label decided to use the song as a setup for the more mainstream "Suddenly I See."

"We always believed that KT should be more than a singles-driven artist and we wanted to respect that in our approach," says Lee Trink, Virgin Records America executive VP/GM. "We decided to introduce the audience to her with 'Black Horse' and then work to bring it home with the next single."

Of course, the label was in for a pleasant surprise. Virgin first went to triple-A radio with "Black Horse"—as it lined her up with multiple TV licensing opportunities using multiple tracks from album "Eye to the Telescope." During the course of several months, Tunstall was featured in "Grey's Anatomy" (with four different songs) "Men in Trees," "Angela's Eyes," "So You Think You Can Dance," "Six Degrees," promos for "Ugly Betty" and even the U.S. Open. Tunstall was also showcased in the opening credits of the movie "The Devil Wears Prada" and featured as a VH1 "You Oughta Know" breaking artist.

"We made sure there was a consistent barrage on TV to familiarize the music before we went to pop radio," Trink says.

The single hastily scored No. 1 airplay at triple-A radio. By April, it was top 10 at adult top 40—and then Tunstall got a fateful break. "American Idol" contestant Katharine McPhee performed the song twice on the nation's top-rated TV show, exposing millions to "Black Horse." In June, it scored the jackpot: the top 20 on the Hot 100.

She has already triumphed twice more at triple-A with "Suddenly I See" and the current "Other Side of the World," but now the true sophomore test comes, with the release of "Suddenly I See" to top 40. Already, it is perched in the top 20 at adult top 40. "We've got tremendous expectations for the track," Trink says. "This is the more obvious pop song, it's also the one that broke her open wide in the U.K. I feel like we're just getting warmed up."

THE ULTIMATE PAYOFF

In the meantime, Epic's Fray appears to be dodging the sophomore slump. Second single "How to Save a Life" is top five at adult pop, as "Over My Head" remains entrenched in the top 10. It's No. 19 on the Pop 100, top 30 and climbing at modern rock, top 40 on Hot Ringtones; it also topped iTunes singles. MTV and VH1 are also in love. And the platinum full-length "How to Save a Life" is the No. 1 year-to-date digital album.

"When you have a song called 'How to Save a Life'—you just know that's going to work," Saturn says. "We worked in advance to make it among the most licensed songs ever so that we had a lot of good exposure." HBO showcased it for 13 weeks to promote its fall schedule and the increasingly essential "Grey's Anatomy" not only placed the song in its 2006 season opener on Sept. 21, but created a full-length video using character footage, which it showed at the end of the episode. Other alignments "Scrubs," "What About Brian," "NCIS," "One Tree Hill" and "Bones."

"We knew when we had this album for two years in the office that this song was going to be the ultimate payoff," Nappi says. "It takes patience, but it really is all about the songs. And we're just beginning."
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THE LEGENDARY SINGER, AT 75, IS 'KICKIN' OUT THE FOOTLIGHTS . . . AGAIN' ON HIS NEW ALBUM

BY KEN TUCKER
George Jones has been called everything from “the greatest living country singer” to “the Rolls-Royce of country singers.” Jones’ accomplishments—and his difficulties—have filled magazines and books for decades. But the fact remains that at 75 years old, he is what many music stars and wannabes aspire to be: a living legend. And he’s not sitting around on his reputation. On Oct. 24, Bandit Records will release a new album by Jones, “Kickin’ Out the Footlights . . . Again.” Subtitled “Jones Sings Haggard, Haggard Sings Jones,” the album features fellow legend Merle Haggard singing five of Jones’ songs and vice versa. The pair also do four duets. Bandit president Evelyn Shriver says the pairing has “created a little curiosity” among fans because even though Jones has done Haggard songs for years, “they’ve never heard Haggard sing a George song.”

Born Sept. 12, 1931, in Saratoga, Texas, George Glenn Jones had been married twice, served in the Marines and started his music career all by the age of 24. Signed to the Texas-based Starday label, Jones, like other artists during that time, would record the hits of the day, whether they were R&B, country or rock-'n'-roll. Perhaps not surprisingly, Jones’ first records found him emulating idols Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell and Roy Acuff. Eventually he found his own voice and the style that would ultimately be emulated by a legion of artists that he inspired.

Nicknamed the Possum, Jones first hit the Billboard singles chart in 1955 with “Why Baby Why,” a song that peaked at No. 4. Then, in 1956, Billboard named Jones the most promising new country vocalist.

Though not widely thought of as a songwriter, Jones wrote or co-wrote many of his early hits—including “Why Baby Why”—as well as songs for other artists, including “Life to Go,” which was a hit for Stonewall Jackson, and “Seasons of My Heart,” which was a top 10 single for Johnny Cash.

From Starday, Jones moved to Mercury Records, where he experimented with rockabilly under the name Thumper Jones. He had his first No. 1 single on Mercury with “White Lightning” in 1959.

Throughout his career Jones has recorded for United Artists, Musicor, MCA, Asylum and now Bandit. Some of his biggest hits—including “The Grand Tour,” “The Door,” “Golden Ring” (which was a duet with then wife Tammy Wynette) and “He Stopped Loving Her Today”—came during a nearly 20-year run at Epic Records, where he was signed by legendary producer Billy Sherrill.

According to historian Joel Whitburn, Jones has the most Billboard country chart hits of any artist, with 167 through 2005. And he’s second to Eddy Arnold for the most top 10 hits ever.

Interestingly, no one—including Jones—knows for sure how many albums he has recorded, although best guesses put the number at around 200.

Along with all the success came trouble, though. Jones’ legendary drinking, and later drug use, dogged him for most of his career. While admitting that he was “out of his mind” at times, Evelyn Shriver says Jones’ shyness played into the addiction. “All he ever wanted to do was sing. Everything else got thrown at him,” she says. “The fame, the money, the acclaim, all of that was just very difficult for him to deal with, and the only way he knew how to deal with it was to drink or do drugs.”

While there were those who were ready to write Jones off at various points in his career, he just kept going and the hits kept on coming. These days, though, while Jones retains the support of a legion of fans and other artists, he no longer has the support of radio. “It’s a reality of life that radio stations don’t play guys that are in their 60s and 70s, in any format, not just country music,” Shriver says.

In the last five years, Jones has reached the top 25 of Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart only once. “Beer Run,” a duet with Garth Brooks, peaked at No. 24 in October 2001. His last top 20 came nine years ago with “You Don’t Seem to Miss Me,” a duet with Patty Loveless that peaked at No. 14 in 1997. And his last top 10 was in 1990, a duet with Randy Travis on “A Few Ole Country Boys.”

To find his last solo hit you have to go back to 1988’s “I’m a One Woman Man,” which reached No. 5.

Although radio airplay has been waning, Jones still has had a number of influential singles during the last 15 years. Two that stand out are “I Don’t Need Your Rockin’ Chair,” an all-out vocal love fest from such then-relatively new artists as Brooks, Travis Tritt and Alan Jackson, and “Choices.” The latter peaked at only No. 28 on the Hot Country Songs chart but led to a gold record and a Grammy Award for best male country vocal performance.

But even though Jones isn’t a staple on today’s country radio stations or video channels, a generation of artists that he inspired are. Jackson, Kenny Chesney, Rascal Flatts, Dierks Bentley and Brad Paisley all put Jones at the top of their list of musical heroes.

Arguably, he has influenced more of today’s country stars than any other artist. And not only has he influenced them, he has been willing to share his time and hit tales with them. Whether it’s a career in a video, as he did for Jackson’s “Don’t Rock the Ship,” continued on next page.
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KENNY CHESNEY
LIVING THE SONGS
JONES LOOKS BACK ON A LIFE OF TURMOIL AND HEARTFELT SINGING
BY RAY WADDELL

The world's greatest country singer lives about 60 miles south of Nashville in a spacious mansion that's light years away from his hardscrabble beginnings in the rough-hewn region of Southeast Texas once known as the Big Thicket. Free of the demons that plagued him earlier in life, at 75, George Jones is peaceful and content. Still active in the studio and on the road, Jones remains a hardcore country traditionalist and bristles slightly when talk turns to contemporary country. But he has no ax to grind, and talks candidly and easily about his rocky road to becoming a legend.

As I drove up I couldn't help but think this is a long way from the Big Thicket. Well, it's quite a ways, yeah. I was born in Saratoga, Texas, a little town there in the Big Thicket about 60 miles north of Beaumont. Needless to say, we were very, very poor, but we always managed to have enough to keep our bellies full.

When did you first feel like you may have a future as a singer?
I was already up in my 20s before I ever had any idea I could make money at it. I just wanted to sing. I'd be on the bus just singing up a storm—Roy Acuff songs or somebody else. I would play hookey from school just to go do that, ride one bus to the end of the line and get on another one to ride back home. I did it just for the love that I had for it. It was nice to find out later that you could get paid for it. If I hadn't, I probably never could've done anything else. I tried to be a house painter, but I couldn't stand all that paint all over me.

What were your early musical influences?
The only night my mother and daddy would let me get in bed with them continued on >>p44

Glad Music Publishing L.P. and Pappy Daily Music L.P.
FOUNDED IN 1958 BY H.W. "PAPPY" DAILY

Thank you George for 50 outstanding years of classic country music. We are proud to have been a part of your success from the very start with many of your most memorable recordings.

Beggar To A King  Four O Thirty Three  I Really Had A Ball  Last Night  I'll Share My World With You
Just One More  Just Someone I Used To Know  Life To Go  Love Bug  Milwaukee Here I Come
My Favorite Lies  Old, Old House  Please Talk To My Heart  Race Is On  She Thinks I Still Care,
She's Lonesome Again  Sometimes You Just Can't Win  Take Me  Talk To Me Lonesome Heart  Tender Years
Walk Through This World With Me  When The Grass Grows Over Me  Where The Grass Won't Grow
White Lightning  Window Up Above  Your Heart Turned Left  and many others...

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Thanks, George, for allowing us to share in 50 great years of music!

We've enjoyed every minute.
from p.42

was Saturday night, and the only music we ever heard was the Grand Ole Opry. I'd tell my mother, “If I go to sleep, you wake me up when Bill Monroe or Roy Acuff comes on.” That was the biggest thrill of my life in those days, listening to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio.

Did you ever think you might be on there one day?
I never had any idea whatsoever. I loved Roy Acuff with all my heart, and I never dreamed I'd be able to meet him or see him onstage, or especially become good friends with him. For all this to happen, it's hard to explain what a dream this is when you love something so much as I love traditional country music.

Do you remember your first paying gig?
The first time I remember any money at all, maybe $500, was when I hit the charts with “Why Baby Why” in the latter part of ’55. I lived in Beaumont, Texas, at the time, and I had a booking during Mardi Gras in New Orleans. I got me a [speeding] jacket in Bay St. Louis, Miss., for doing about 90, and I didn't have the money to get out of jail, so I had to call home and they had to wire money to get me out. But I still made the gig in time, and I went on and did the show.
And somebody came in my hotel room, I figure it had to be a maid, got in my room while I was asleep and took my watch and rings. So I lost a lot of money, $500 didn't cover it.

You took a brief stab at rock'n'roll under the name Thumper Jones. That didn't take, did it?
Now, it sure didn't. I was desperate. When you're hungry, a poor man with a house full of kids, you're gonna do some things you ordinarily wouldn't do. I said, “Well, hell, I'll try anything once.” I tried “Dadgum It How Come It” and “Rock It,” a bunch of shit. I didn't want my real name on the damn rock’n’roll thing, so I told them to put “Thumper Jones” on it, and if it did something, good, if it didn't, hell, I didn't want to be shamed with it. And I'll never live that down. It was a terrible sound, and now all that comes back to haunt you.
I tried to buy all the masters, but they knew some day they could sell that junk and take advantage of the fans, which they did. Here just a few short years ago somebody bought that stuff and came out with an album, “Thumper Jones,” and it's the worse-sounding crap that could even be put on a record. And a lot of your dear fans will buy those things because your name is on it, and that's a shame.

“Window Up Above” in 1960, which you co-wrote, sort of signifies the beginning of the “George Jones” sound to me. That was one of the first things after “Why Baby Why” that got me any attention at all. When I went to Mercury I got my first halfway decent sound. “Window” and “Color of the Blues” [in 1958] didn't sell that big, but they got me a lot of radio play.
That was the beginning of some good times for you, wasn't it?
The ‘60s and '70s were fantastic. “Window Up Above,” “She Thinks I Still Care” [1962], “Grand Tour” [1974], “Walk Through This World With Me” [1967].

Talk about your relationship with producer Billy Sherrill and why you two had so much success in the studio.
I give the credit mostly to Billy, who at that time had that little bit of something different as a producer that most of the producers in Nashville didn't have. Everybody has their day, producers the same as artists. He just came up with that sound like he got with Tammy Wynette, [sings] “Ba hum ba hum ba hum,” build-ups, and it was a little more updated, I guess. He tried to do that with me, but I finally had a talk with him. I said, “Billy, I'm country, I'm traditional, I know....continued on p.46
Hey, Possum –

Congratulations & Happy Birthday!

We Love You.

Billy, Charlene & Casper

p.s. Just keep listening to Nancy...
On paper, he's 75. On record, he's timeless.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GEORGE, and congratulations on 50 years of real Country.

SONY BMG NASHVILLE

Hill Country "Possum" we've presented symphonies and still do such great albums?

Well, I was young, and my voice hadn't got screwed up yet. [laughs] I would say 90% of the time I would be in pretty damn good shape when I went into the studio. I did have a little sense, not a whole lot. But I would still have to have a little build-up of courage, three or four drinks throughout the session time. I don't know, it seemed to mellow you out and relax you a little more, and you would even feel your songs better. You could do a sad song about Mama, and I could hardly get through some of them, almost get on a crying drunk. [laughs]

Faron Young told me one time, I said, "I'm gonna quit drinking, quit smoking. I'm gonna quit this crappy life." And Parson said, "George, God-dangit, if you ever were to quit drinking and smoking at the same time, why, your damn voice would go into turmoil and ain't no way you'd ever sing again."

But when I had that wreck [a near-fatal accident in 1999] I made my mind up, it put the fear of God in me. No more smoking, no more drinking. I didn't have to have no help. I made my mind up and I quit. I don't crave it. But when I first went back out on the road singing, I could sing high again. I got my huffs back, but my low notes I'm kinda known for hitting,—[sings]—"Hoiter than a two-dollar pistol!"—I couldn't go down there no more. I remembered what Faron said, and I thought, "Damn, he was right."

"He stopped Loving Her Today" from 1980 is a song that will be one of your legacies. Why do you think people latch onto that song the way they have?

I've always thought a song was a hit if it stays up in your mind a lot. I carried that song almost a year, and I bet there wasn't a day I wasn't trying to sing it in my mind like it drove me crazy. But I told Billy Sherrill, "That's too damn morbid, ain't nobody gonna buy that."

He said, "I'll bet you $100." I said, "Shit, I can't lose, I'll take the bet." And when it came out and did what it did I never was so amazed in my life. But then I got to thinking, "Why, hell, it had been on my mind almost a year. And when a song does that to me it's always turned out to be a hit." I said [to myself], "You dumbass, you should of known that."

"The Race Is On" [1964] was pitched to me, and I only heard the first verse, [sings] "I feel tears welling up cold and deep inside like my heart's sprung a big leak," and I said, "I'll take it." Ray Price always said, "Boy, if it makes smoke come out of your ass, you know it's a hit."

continued on >>p48

from >>p44 you're wanting to cross over with me like you have with Tammy, Charlie Rich and those people, but I'm hardcore and I can't help it. That's what I feel, and I can't do a good job for the label, you or anybody else if I don't feel it myself." I had no problem after that, we'd go in and he got me a good sound. I used my fiddle and steel and good country pickers, and I guess I really just latched up a little bit on finding the songs.

What did it take to make it back then?

It takes a lot of luck, and I think your voice has to be a little different than anybody else. Like Tammy Wynette, when she sung you knew it was Tammy Wynette. And they say when they hear me sing they know it's George Jones because I got that little something different in the sound of my voice, I guess. And Ernest Tubb, you definitely know when Ernest Tubb sings, and Hank Williams and Roy Acuff are the same way. But the most luck is songs. If you don't get them and somebody else gets them first, what the hell. Some great singers have come to this town and left empty-handed.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s it was well-chronicled that you had some rough times personally and professionally, but the albums from that period hold up very well. How were you able to have such a crazy personal life and still do such great albums?

Well, I was young, and my voice hadn't got screwed up yet. [laughs] I would say 90% of the time I would be in pretty damn good shape when I went into the studio. I did have a little sense, not a whole lot. But I would still have to have a little build-up of courage, three or four drinks throughout the session time. I don't know, it seemed to mellow you out and relax you a little more, and you would even feel your songs better. You could do a sad song about Mama, and I could hardly get through some of them, almost get on a crying drunk. [laughs]

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continued on >>p48
Happy birthday to The Possum and for 75 years of livin' to tell it all.

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THE LEGEND IS BACK, & THIS TIME HE BROUGHT FRIENDS.

ARTISTS & SONGS
GEORGE JONES - God's Country
VINCE GILL - She Thinks I Still Care
MARK CHESNUTT - Walk Through This World With Me
TANYA TUCKER - Window Up Above
PAM TILLIS - Take Me
JOE DIFFIE - White Lightning
SAMMY KERSHAW - He Stopped Loving Her Today
GARTH BROOKS & GEORGE JONES - Beer Run
JOE DIFFIE & SHONNA FAEGAN - Golden Rings/We're Gonna Hold On Medley
TRACY LAWRENCE - The One I Loved Back Then (Corvette Song)

Category 5
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George – You are THE best!
Thanks for all the cuts over the years.
Bobby Braddock

A Few Ole Country Boys

The first time I met George Jones, I was taken off guard. What do you say to somebody who you've admired all your life? A few years ago he was doing a show, and I was on his tour to talk to him for a few minutes before he went on stage. After he did his thing up there, he called me up to sing with him. I was so nervous - I wanted to do was stand there and listen to him. Then he turned around, strummed a chord and started singing 'On the Other Hand,' which is one of my songs. That really blew my mind.

— Randy Travis, 1986

"George, I'm still your biggest fan!"
— Randy Travis, 2006

I try to live the story of that song in my mind, my heart and my feelings. That's why they come out like that. I feel the hurt that people have, especially everyday working people. I'll be in the studio and just get so involved in it I almost have a tear come out.

Do you still enjoy going in the studio and laying down tracks?
I still love to do it, but I haven't been satisfied a lot in the past because of the problems I've had with my voice. I have to pick my time to go back in and overdub. It's a little harder for me to do, but I still love going in and recording, and I'm about to get to a point where I'm getting the medications to clear up some of this mess.

How about playing live, do you still love it?
Oh, yeah, I'll always love it. As long as the people still want to come, I'm gonna be there. I don't care if I'm 95. I'm at the point in life where I really could shut it off, but what would I do?

Why in the hell don't George Jones move over and let the new people take over? Well, hell, they can do anything they want to, but I'm not gonna move over, because I love these fans and these fans still think a hell of a lot of me. I'm gonna hit it as long as I'm able.

It's never been the love of the money. I thank God for it because it makes me a living. But I sing because I love it, not because of the dollar signs. A lot of artists come to the big city of Nashville with dollar signs floating around in their heads, they're gonna get a lot of glory and popularity and be somebody and all this crap. Well, if that's what they've got in mind. I'm like Waylon Jennings — you better go back home and get that off, and then come back to Nashville. Because you've got to have a love for it to be successful.

from >>>46 I read a quote one time where Billy Sherrill said something to the effect that on "Bartender's Blues" you were trying too hard to sound like George Jones. Yeah, I got into it too much, I really did. At the time, that's the way I felt it, but I think I really overdone the phrasing. But I cut it again on one of my latest albums, and I don't do quite as many syllables. I got that part from Lefty Frizzell. He always made five syllables out of one damn word.

The nickname "No Show Jones," did you earn it, and how do you feel about that now?
It was talked about so damn much, I think they made a mountain out of an anthill. It's true, I did miss quite a few dates. But they wouldn't have wanted to see or hear me anyhow, the shape I was in.

Now I know it did hurt my fans in a way and I've always been sad about that. It really bothered me for a long time. I could see in my mind a little old lady with her two grandkids walking an old dirt road a mile or two miles just to get to the show to see you, probably saved money for the tickets a couple of months. You realize how sad that is, because I would've given my right arm to get in to see Hank Williams or Roy. A lot of times we forget those things, and you have to be woke up. Even if they got their money back, I hope, they still lost the chance to see somebody they loved to hear sing, and I cheated them out of that.

What do you think when you hear people call you country music's greatest singer?
I don't know why they say that, there's a lot of good singers. I guess I just felt heart songs a little stronger in some type of way than they were used to hearing from other artists. But when I sing a song, whether it's in the studio or onstage,
DEAR GEORGE JONES,

CONGRATULATIONS ON 50 YEARS IN THE BUSINESS.
YOURS IS THE GREATEST VOICE TO EVER SING COUNTRY MUSIC.
THANKS FOR BEING A HERO, INFLUENCE AND FRIEND.

ALL MY LOVE TO YOU AND NANCY,

[Signature]

www.americanradiohistory.com
JONES HAS A RICH HISTORY OF COLLABORATING WITH FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS

BY WADE JESSEN

Coming up with a definitive, inclusive chronology of every recorded vocal due George Jones has ever offered is almost impossible. There are so many that surely something would be left out. And that would be a shame, since the sum of all his songs has so vitally enriched his career and the careers of dozens of others, sometimes with life-altering results.

Beginning more than 50 years ago on numerous radio appearances with husband-and-wife team Eddie & Pearl at KRIC Beaumont, Texas, and stretching to the present day with the release of "Kicking Out the Footlights . . . Again" with longtime friend Merle Haggard, a fairly lengthy list of collaborations has only served to magnify his reputation as "the world's greatest living country singer."

In terms of chart visibility, the list takes flight when "Yearning," a duet with Jeanette Hics, bowed on Billboard's country singles chart in January 1957. That single rose to No. 10. It would be his lone duet on the chart until moving from Starday to Mercury, where "Did I Ever Tell You" was a hit in 1961 with Margie Singleton. He scored one more hit duet with Singleton ("Waltz of the Angels" in 1962) before producer H.W. "Pappy" Daily took Jones to to United Artists. There, a young WSM Grand Ole Opry talent show winner would become the other half of what many consider to be Jones' most artistically gratifying duet work. Enter Melba Montgomery.

Daily instinctively sensed that Jones, who still very much fancied himself a blues-influenced honky-tonker in the vein of his idol Hank Williams, would blend with Montgomery's irresistible mountain lilt with electrifying intensity. It was not the first or the last time Daily would steer Jones in such a fruitful direction.

Much of Daily's duet output with Jones and Montgomery was beautifully produced with emphasis on the staples of mountain instrumentation—banjo, dobro and fiddle most conspicuously. The single for which the two are best-known is the Montgomery-penned tune "We Must Have Been Out of tuned on >>p52"
It's been fifteen years since "Don't Rock the Jukebox" and I still want to hear some Jones.

With love and admiration,

Alan Jackson
from >>p50 Our Minds." Squarely in the honky-tonk weeper vein, that single hit No. 3 in 1963, the first of seven chart pairings that ended with "Party Pickin' " in 1967.

Much more than a passing entry in Jones' collaborative history, the harmony vocals that Johnny Paycheck supplied while a member of the Jones Boys band (1962-66), are the subject of a who-influenced-who debate that remains unsettled to this day.

In the midst of the Montgomery duets, Jones was also paired for a time with pop hearthrob Gene Pitney after Daily made yet another label hop to Mercury. While compelling enough in some instances, the Pitney-Jones pairing is arguably one that leaves most fans scratching their heads.

While Pitney was at the height of his success, Jones was experiencing his second of several zeniths in a career with peaks and valleys as broad and deep as they were numerous. Daily cut 31 tracks with the pair, which populated two albums. On the charts, the most muscular was the juke-joint-friendly "I've Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night," a top 20 contender in 1965.

Also in the relatively obscure pairings category, which includes his first chart duet with Hicks, Brenda Carter joined Jones on the top 20 hit "Milwaukee, Here I Come" in 1968.

Jones' well-documented relationship on stage and off with Tammy Wynette took the couple places neither had dreamed of. The two met in 1968, when Jones was still signed to Musicor. Growing unhappily with Daily and his situation at the label, Jones was eager to duet with Wynette. By the time he negotiated his release and moved to her label, Epic, in 1971, he and Wynette had married.

By the end of his first year at the label, he and Wynette were on the charts with "Take Me," a remake of Jones' 1966 top 10 solo hit. The new version reached No. 9 in early 1972.

What followed could only be described as the most fruitful and talked-about phase in the lives of both stars. While simultaneously having solo hits, the two offered such classic songs as "We're Not the Jet Set," "We're Gonna Hold On," "Near You," "Golden Ring" and "Two Story House."

The ironic and unlucky number of 13 chart duets carried Jones and Wynette through six years of marriage, countless industry awards, one daughter together and eight children between them, a bitter divorce, two reunion albums (1980 and 1995) and, for Jones, an admittedly painful final separation when Wynette died at age 55 in 1998.


Former sideman Paycheck also hooked up with Jones for "Double Trouble," which yielded chart hits with covers of Arthur Alexander's "You Better Move On" (1980) and Chuck Berry's "Maybelline" (1978), among others.

Most of his collaborative work on Epic thereafter came in the form of multi-artist duet projects. Most

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GEORGE JONES' TOP ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Debut Date</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I'm A People</td>
<td>1 (2 weeks)</td>
<td>June 25, 1966</td>
<td>Musicor</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Golden Ring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept. 4, 1976</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Walk Through This World With Me</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>April 8, 1967</td>
<td>Musicor</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Still The Same Ole Me</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dec. 5, 1981</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>We Go Together</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nov. 6, 1971</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Best Of George Jones</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan. 11, 1964</td>
<td>United Artists</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>We're Gonna Hold On (with Tammy Wynette)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan. 12, 1974</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>We Found Heaven Right Here On Earth At &quot;4033&quot;</td>
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<td>Singing What's In Our Heart (with Melba Montgomery)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>The Race Is On</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>May 22, 1965</td>
<td>United Artists</td>
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GEORGE JONES' TOP SINGLES

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<td>She Thinks I Still Care</td>
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<td>Mercury</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>White Lightning</td>
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<td>March 9, 1959</td>
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<td>Near You (with Tammy Wynette)</td>
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<td>Dec. 11, 1976</td>
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<td>He Stopped Loving Her Today</td>
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<td>I Always Get Lucky With You</td>
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<td>May 7, 1983</td>
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<td>The Grand Tour</td>
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<td>Still Do' Time</td>
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<td>Oct. 3, 1981</td>
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<td>Yesterday's Wine</td>
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<td>The Door</td>
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<td>The Window Up Above</td>
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<td>Nov. 7, 1960</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Tennessee Whiskey</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 10, 1983</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>I'm Not Ready Yet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug. 23, 1980</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>A Good Year For Roses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nov. 21, 1970</td>
<td>Musicor</td>
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</table>
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GEORGE.
THANKS FOR SETTING THE BAR SO HIGH THAT NONE OF US COULD EVER POSSIBLY REACH IT!

LOVE,
SWEET PEA

George,
If your career had only lasted six months we’d still be calling you the greatest country singer of all time.
Congratulations on 50 incredible years!

Your friend,
Brad
Johnny Cash was one of the nicest, most beautiful people I've ever known, and one of my very best friends.

—GEORGE JONES

HANK WILLIAMS TO ALAN JACKSON EARN KUDOS FROM THE POSSUM

HANK WILLIAMS:
"Hank Williams is the boss of it all, as far as I'm concerned. Everything that man recorded I memorized. He was out on this earth for one thing, to stir everybody's heart up. In a period of five years he was here, did all that and was gone."

WAYLON JENNINGS:
"Waylon Jennings was another man with a big heart. He and Johnny helped me when I was in my worst shape. They gave me money to pay bills. I didn't ask to borrow it, they knew what I needed. And that's a real friend."

MERLE HAGGARD:
"Merle Haggard is about my favorite singer nowadays. I still love Hank Williams, he's still the boss. I still love the old stuff that Lefty [Frizzell] did, and Roy Acuff. But Haggard, all he has to do is open his mouth and sing. He never did a lot of these fancy syllables and phrasing like I did, but everybody ain't got it like Merle has. It all ties in to one main thing, talent, and he just done it right."

TAMMY WYNETTE:
"Tammy Wynette had a very different voice, like Patsy Cline, way ahead of her time. She was determined. Nobody would give her a shot, she went to every label there was, and Billy Sherrill happened to have some good songs in there waiting for a good voice."

ALAN JACKSON:
"I love him because he started off country and he wasn't like the rest of them, he stayed country. They would either accept him or they wouldn't."

—Ray Waddell

from pp52 Notable among these is "My Very Special Guests" (1979), which featured a patchwork of artists including longtime admirers Nelson, Elvis Costello, Pop and Mavis Staples, Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor. Now considered seminal in Jones' body of work, "Guests" spawned Taylor's breathtaking 4 a.m. harmony on "Bartender's Blues," which hit the top 10 on the singles chart.

Jones also shared studio time—and charted singles—with Ray Charles and Chet Atkins, Brenda Lee, Lacy J. Dalton, Shelby Lynne, Sammy Kershaw, Alan Jackson, Randy Travis, Patty Loveless, Garth Brooks, Shooter Jennings, Chad Brok and Hank Williams Jr.


Supported by an all-star cast (Pam Tillis, Vince Gill and T. Graham Brown), Jones' 1992 single "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair" was a defiant middle finger to a changing radio format where artists of Jones' vintage had become unwelcome amid a sea of new faces.

In 1994, producer Brian Ahern assembled another cast of Jones disciples for "The Bradley Barn Sessions." Showing up were artists ranging from Gill to Mark Knopfler, Keith Richards to Ricky Skaggs, Dolly Parton to Mark Chesnutt.

JONES TO ALAN JACKSON EARN KUDOS FROM THE POSSUM
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Keith Stegall & Alan Kates
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OF CANADA

50 YEARS OF HITS

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2005 Tour Schedule:

NOVEMBER

11. CHILDRESS, Texas Center
12. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum
13. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum
14. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum
15. EL PASO, El Paso County Coliseum
16. EL PASO, El Paso County Coliseum
17. EL PASO, El Paso County Coliseum
18. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum
19. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum
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30. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum
31. SAN ANTONIO, Freeman Coliseum

DECEMBER

1. COLUMBUS, Ohio
2. CINCINNATI, Riverbend Music Center
3. CLEVELAND, Public Auditorium Center
4. MILWAUKEE, BMO Harris Bradley Center
5. MADISON, Alliant Energy Center
6. CHICAGO, Aragon Ballroom
7. CHICAGO, Aragon Ballroom
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29. CHICAGO, Aragon Ballroom
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In the past year, the tremendous growth of digital music in Australia has started to change the look and sound of Australian music. The digital market could provide the local music industry with more opportunities as it prepares to launch more acts onto the global stage throughout 2007. On Oct. 29, the Australian music business prepares to celebrate its top acts at the annual Australian Recording Industry Assn. (ARIA) Awards in Sydney. The year’s top nominees include heavy metal trio Wolfmother, rock band Powderfinger’s singer Bernard Fanning, alternative rock act Eskimo Joe and crossover hip-hop posse Hilltop Hoods—each notching five nominations. But the past year’s real winner is the digital music market.

Half-year figures for 2006 from the ARIA show that digital sales were up nearly 395% when compared with the previous year, to a value of 12.2 million Australian ($9.1 million).

At the same time, online revenue for the Australasian Performing Right Assn. (APRA) for the 2005-06 fiscal year grew 158.3% to $1.2 million Australian ($890,000), surpassing the $1 million Australian mark for the first time.

Income from online sales now accounts for 15%, or $6 million Australian ($4.5 million), of the revenue generated by the Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (AMCOS), which APRA administers.

The APRA and ARIA attribute the digital sales boom to the October 2005 arrival of Apple Computer’s iTunes music store in Australia.

In turn, this shifted the spotlight onto Australian download sites. Digital sales now represent 5.5% of business—up 1.5% from last December.

While we do not see growth on physical sales, growth of over 40% in digital sales is expected,” says Denis Handlin, chairman/CEO of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Australia and New Zealand, and chairman of the ARIA board. “This will be approximately $43 million (Australian) ($32 million) wholesale, which will be between 8% to 10% of total industry sales.”

The digital revolution has already started to change the sound and look of Aussie acts on the horizon.

“The predominance of hip-hop tunes in ringtones and downloads will see a greater focus on that genre,” says George Ash, managing director of Universal Music Australia.

The growth boom of such sites as MySpace allow more rock acts to bypass radio and TV. This allows their sound to be less radio-friendly and more radical, says Ed St. John, president of Warner Music Australia. “At this stage, anything goes, which is exciting.”

The greater role that TV plays these days in unearthing new talent could also see a new breed of “visually interesting acts,” says John O’Donnell, managing director of EMI Music Australia.

Free-to-air TV stations began programming more music after high ratings for such reality TV series as “Australian Idol.” This tapped new consumers.

Concert promoter Michael Chugg of Chugg Entertainment says, “Music seems to be important to people again. We’re finding different demographics going back to concerts again after a 10-year gap.”

This could explain why, in ARIA’s half-year figures, CD sales rose by 17%, equal to 3 million unit sales. (Although revenue was up only 4.65% due to heavy CD price discounting.)

ARIA figures showed that domestic acts represent 31.8% of the Australian album chart, up from 23% last year. This has increased the resolve of labels to break more acts abroad.

But that’s a difficult and expensive mission with a low success rate.

For every Jet and Wolfmother that works, a Delta Goodrem or Missy Higgins is slow to translate their domestic success.

Yet Australian music companies feel upbeat. As they digitalized every aspect of their operations, they

continued on >>
took the opportunity to reshape their operations and try new business models.

Sony BMG set up a TV production division to create shows for its acts. A business enterprises division extended deals with corporations to sponsor videos, album launches and TV tie-ins. The company widened its country music sector and launched the RED label to focus on grass-roots and online marketing channels.

Its biggest local album releases were Pete Murray’s “See the Sun,” Rogue Traders’ “Here Come the Drums” and Human Nature’s “Reach Out: The Motown Record.” Further success has come from Shannon Noll, John Farnham, Something for Kate, TV Rock, Alex Lloyd and Augie March.

Next year: Rogue Traders, Murray and Noll will tour Europe extensively. Goodrem’s third album will see the light of day overseas in the second quarter; and Augie March will play Canada and Germany in March.

Universal Music Australia set up an urban music division. Next year it formally launches Universal Classics with new signings. Fanning’s solo album “Tea & Sympathy” has sold 340,000 units, and he toured behind its overseas release (Lost Highway in the United States, Mercury in Europe).

Wolfmother, through the Modular label, sold half a million units worldwide of its self-titled debut album—more than 200,000 at home.

Other breakouts included classical-crossover singer Mark Scholtez, pop singer Steph McIntosh and alt-rockers the Grates. Most will launch globally in 2007. Ash says, as will Powderfinger, Sarah Blasko, Vanessa Amorossi, Eran James and Grinspoon.

EMI’s major Australian releases are coming in this second half, with Keith Urban, Silverchair, Jet, the Sleepy Jackson, the Vines, Kasey Chambers and Little Bird. These acts are expected to tour abroad through 2007. EMI continued to work on Higgins’ “The Sound of White,” last year’s top seller, bringing its sales tally to 660,000 units. An all-female tribute to Neil and Tim Finn songs, “She Will Have Her Way,” has sold 180,000 units.

Signing such indie labels as Spunk and Below Par increased EMI’s local success rate with breakthrough Kishchay and Something With Numbers. Through 2007, EMI’s priority is to expand the global reach of Urban, and launch new signings Airbourne, the Mercy Arms and Angus & Julia Stone.

Warner Music Australia found that relaunching the Mushroom label as its Aussie imprint (it bought indie Festival Mushroom Records last October and hired its managing director Michael Parisi as its president of A&R) causes its Aussie repertoire share to leap from 12% to 33%.

“Our challenge was to have the largest local music repertoire and we achieved it,” St. John says.

Eskimo Joe’s third album, “Black Fingernails, Red Wine,” was one of the year’s big breakthroughs. It debuted at No. 1, is close to double-platinum and is nominated for nine ARIA Awards. Sibling trio Evermore’s sophomore album, “Dreams,” went gold and peaked at No. 5, with radio response to second single “Light Surrounding You” expected to match the album’s platinum status.

The Veronicas’ debut album, “The Secret Life Of . . .,” peaked at No. 2 and went four-times platinum for sales of 280,000. Through 2007, releases from singer Katie Noonan, hip-hopper Scribe and rock band Thirsty Merc will also be launched internationally.

The independent sector has continued its boom, with retailers estimating it now makes up 25% of the market.

The Aria® of Independent Record Labels hit a record membership of 500 this month. The group’s moves to heighten brand awareness of indie music through its charts and inaugural Independent Music Awards in Sydney in late November is paying off.

“We’ll see more corporate sponsorship in the sector next year,” chief executive Stu Watters says.

The greater global awareness of Aussie indie music—and of Australian consumers’ and media’s willingness to support the unknown and the radical—has filtered through to other sectors.

The concert circuit is a vibrant destination—for up- and-coming acts and larger names such as Michael Franti and the FOO FIGHTERS—who toured a number of times within a year—and for the 15 superstar acts heading to Australia through the summer.

“Australia’s an important part of the global touring circuit,” says Michael Gudinski, managing director of Frontier Touring. “It’s healthy, with a lot of new emerging acts.”

Developing labels, including Sony BMG’s RED and Liberation Music’s Liberator, report strong interest from international indie labels for business.

“Australian consumers have a reputation for different kinds of music, especially new and different things,” Liberator A&R director Nick Dunsea says. Liberator, which launched this year, expects to sign six to 10 licensing deals by the first quarter of 2007.

Publishers continue to nurture new acts, says Ian James, deputy chairman of APRA and managing director of Mushroom Music.


John Anderson, managing director of EMI Music Publishing Australia, agrees that publishers continue to offer a viable alternative for new talent. “There’s a tendency for newcomers of young acts to try for overseas publishing because it’s more money. But that’s a short-term way of looking at things.” He points to how EMI’s major writers—such as Jimmy Barnes, Icehouse and the Divinyls—have remained for 20 years with their publisher despite many label changes. EMI signed 10 new writers in the past year.

The APRA, which represents nearly 44,000 writers in Australia and New Zealand and 437 publishers, declared total revenue of $127.2 million Australian ($94.9 million) in the 2005-06 fiscal year. This was a growth of 2.9% over the previous period.

Results for AMCOS, which represents 577 writers and 282 publishers, rose 8.8% to $41 million Australian ($30.6 million), bringing consolidated APRA/AMCOS revenue to a new high of $168.2 million Australian ($125.4 million).

This was despite a softening in broadcast ad revenue, a second-half decline in value of the New Zealand dollar, a continued decline in cinema box office and some major tour cancellations. APRA chief executive Brett Cottle says.

It was a tough year for retailers, less because of competition from digital sales, but more because heavy CD discounting caused a 7% drop in dollar value, according to the ARIA. Ian Harvey, head the Australian Music Retailers Assn., which represents 740 stores, says: “Nevertheless, great music retailing came to the fore. The smarter indie stores grew by sensing trends and importing their stock.”

**FACT FILE: ARIA AWARDS**

**What:** The annual awards show of the Australian Recording Industry Assn.

**Where:** Sydney

**Broadcast outlets:** Ten Network (free to air), Channel 7 (pay TV)

**When:** Performers include Keith Urban, the Veronicas, Wolfmother, Bernard Fanning, Hilltop Hoods, Human Nature and Eskimo Joe.

**Web:** aria.com.au
Our latest crop.

**Eskimo Joe:**
BLACK FINGERNAILS RED WINE
- 4 weeks at #1 (ARIA Albums Chart)
- 15 weeks in the Top 10
- Double Platinum Album in just 15 weeks
- 9 ARIA Nominations including winners of the Best Producer and Best Engineer Awards

**Evermore:**
REAL LIFE
- Real Life is released through Sire/Warner Bros in 2007
- Co Produced by John Alagia and Jon Hume
- Certified Gold in just 4 weeks
- Includes the number 1 Australian Airplay song 'Running' plus the new single 'Light Surrounding You'
- Dirty South v Evermore's 'It's Too Late' is currently Number 5 on the Billboard Hot Dance Airplay Chart

**Katie Noonan:**
- The Voice of the hit band George
- New solo album 'SKIN' released in early 2007; Written by Katie Noonan, Andrew Klippel, Gary Clarke and Rollo
- Produced by Andrew Klippel and Mixed by Dave Way
- "Katie Noonan is a rare talent with a voice of extraordinary beauty and versatility." The Australian

Mushroom Records is the domestic music imprint of Warner Music Australia/New Zealand. It used to be called Festival Mushroom Records, or FMR, but we bought it from News Ltd last year and gave it a different name. Mushroom is steered by Michael Parisi and features a diverse stable of artists including Kylie Minogue, Scribe, Thirsty Merc, Gabriella Cilmi, Butterfingers, Amiel, The Whitlams, Gyroscope, The Mint Chicks, 67 Special, Gerling, Children Collide, Chloe Lattanzi, Shihad, The Follow. Mushroom is a proud member of the Warner Music label family.

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2007

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HILLTOP HOODS

The Adelaide hip-hop posse Hilltop Hoods avoided the mainstream music industry and set up their own tour circuit. The act’s 2001 release “The Calling” went platinum (210,000 units) after three years. This year’s “The Hard Road” made the group the first local hip-hop act to bow on the ARIA album chart at No. 1. One of the country’s most exciting live acts, Hilltop Hoods are up for five nominations at the ARIA Awards. The band will pursue an international release in 2007.

Record label: Obese Records
Publisher: Self-published
Manager: Pulling Strings

ESKIMO JOE

Eskimo Joe’s 2002 album “A Song Is a City” went double-platinum (140,000 units) thanks to the intense live shows of this Perth guitar trio. But the act’s new disc, “Black Fingernails, Red Wine,” released in June, showed a songwriting prowess that won friends at radio. The album, which debuted at No. 1 on the Australian Recording Industry Assn. (ARIA) chart, has already matched the sales of “City” and garnered nine nominations for the band at this year’s ARIA Awards. The band is eyeing the international market next year and expects to reveal U.S. release plans shortly.

Record company: Mushroom/Warner
Publisher: Mushroom Music
Manager: Catherine Hardy Management

ROGUE TRADERS

A multiplatform promotional plan helped Rogue Traders reach quadruple-platinum (280,000 units) with their album “Here Come the Hunters.” The single “Voodoo Child” set a buzz through clubs, ring tones and downloads before debuting in the top five on the radio charts. The album’s fourth single, “We’re Coming Home,” was tapped for a Masterfoods advertising campaign that brought exposure on TV and in supermarkets. The act has toured the United Kingdom (where “Voodoo Child” went top five this summer as a ringtone and chart hit) and Europe this month.

Record label: Peppermint Blue/Sony BMG
Publisher: BMG/EMI
Manager: Peppermint Blue Management
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**THE GAME**

“STOP SNITCHIN STOP LYIN”

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**MICHAEL GRAY**

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Nick Dunshea: nickd@liberatormusic.com.au • www.liberatormusic.com.au

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  - Red Hot Chili Peppers
  - Platinum 3

- **BLACK FINGERNAILS, RED WINE**
  - Eskimo Joe
  - Platinum

- **TAKING THE LONG WAY**
  - Dixie Chicks
  - Platinum

- **SHE WILL HAVE HER WAY THE SONGS OF TIM & NEIL FINN**
  - Various
  - Platinum 2

- **TIGHTROPE**
  - Stephanie McIntosh
  - Gold

- **SPELLBOUND**
  - Split Enz
  - Platinum

- **ST. ELSEWHERE**
  - Gnarls Barkley
  - Gold

- **BE HERE**
  - Keith Urban
  - Platinum 2

- **SHOW YOUR BONES**
  - Yeah Yeah Yeahs

- **EYES OPEN**
  - Snow Patrol
  - *HP - Highest Position

**SINGLES**

- **I WISH I WAS A PUNK ROCKER (WITH FLOWERS IN MY HAIR)**
  - Sandi Thom
  - Platinum

- **CRAZY**
  - Gnarls Barkley
  - Gold

- **MISTAKE**
  - Stephanie McIntosh
  - Gold

- **BLACK FINGERNAILS, RED WINE**
  - Eskimo Joe
  - Gold

- **NOW I RUN**
  - Shannon Noll

- **DANI CALIFORNIA**
  - Red Hot Chili Peppers
  - Gold

- **NOT READY TO MAKE NICE**
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AIRBOURNE

The hard work is about to start for Airbourne, a young hard rock act whose members were shearing sheep on their farms while listening to classic Oz rock by Rose Tattoo, the Angels and AC/DC.

Last year the quality of the band’s demos saw it signed as an unknown directly to Capitol in America for a five-album deal. The band’s debut album, recorded in Los Angeles, is set for a March 2007 release Down Under. The band follows its idols’ route in creating an audience: the members will hit the road in their homeland for most of Australia’s summer. In March, they’ll showcase in New York and Los Angeles and at the South by Southwest conference in Austin.

Record label: EMI (Australia), Capitol (world)

Publisher: Mushroom Music (Australia only)

Management: Step2Artist Management

EVERMORE

Evermore’s members are three siblings who grew up in a New Zealand farmhouse without a radio. They’ve gone on to sell 120,000 units in Australia and New Zealand of their debut album "Dreams" thanks to constant touring. A follow-up album, "Real Life," peaked at No. 5 on the ARIA chart and has gone gold. With the group gaining airplay in the United States, with attention from dance and modern rock formats, a U.S. tour is expected. An EP will test the U.K. market in early 2007.

Record label: Sire/Warner Bros.

Publisher: Rough Cut Music

Management: Rebekah Campbell Artist Management

DALLAS CRANE

Slow and steady, and put the roadwork in. That has been the approach of blues-rock band Dallas Crane. With its fourth album, "Factory Girl," released domestically last month to strong reviews and airplay from influential radio outlet Triple J, the band has its sights set on the international market. A compilation of early and new tracks, "Dirty Hearts," was released this month in the United Kingdom, and the band tours there in November. More roadwork follows in Europe and the United States when "Factory Girl" is released in mid-2007 in those territories.

Record label: Albert Productions

Publisher: J Albert & Son

Manager: Majorbox Music

LIOR

Israeli-born Lior’s fiery live performances saw his 2005 debut album "Autumn Flow" go gold (35,000 units) without major airplay in Australia. He’s still focusing on live shows, finishing off dates in the United States and the United Kingdom this month to follow the album’s U.K. release on Sept. 25. His songs are diaries of his coming of age, and his music owes as much to Led Zeppelin and Jeff Buckley as to Middle Eastern motifs. He released the live album "Doorways of My Mind" locally this year.

Record label: Senso Unico (Australia), Red Ink (United Kingdom)

Publisher: Mushroom Music

Manager: Nick Boshier Management

THE DRONES

The Drones’ dark, swampy melodies and lyrics about breakdowns and meltdowns created a buzz around Australia, the United States and Europe. But the Drones made their mark in March when their album "Wait Long by the River and the Bodies of Your Enemies Will Float By" won the inaugural $25,000 Australian Music Prize. Their new CD, "Gala Mill," was released in Europe and the United States.

Record label: ATP Recordings/Shock

Publisher: Mushroom Music

Manager: Self-managed
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Apple Turned The Tide For Oz's Download Market

BY CHRISTIE ELIEZER

It is still early days for the Australian digital sector. "Our broadband and [third-generation] phones penetration is low, and iTunes is relatively new to the market," Warner Music Australia president Ed St. John says. "Digital is only 5% of business here."

Australian-based download sites had struggled for eight years to reach a market. They had a minimal volume of tracks on offer, and paltry marketing budgets.

It took Apple Computer, which launched its iTunes Music Store last October in Australia, to turn the tide. Apple has not divulged iTunes' Australian sales figures. Sources estimate it makes up 60%-70% of the 200,000 tracks currently being downloaded each week in the market.

iTunes had an immediate impact. Half-year figures for 2006 from the Australian Recording Industry Assn. show that digital sales were up nearly 395%, compared with the previous year, to a value of $12.2 million Australian ($9.1 million).

"We expect double-digit growth to continue for another five years, at least," predicts Dominic Carosa, chief executive of Destra, which was a pioneer of Australian digital distribution.

In its report "Australian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2006," released Aug. 2, accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers predicted the legitimate download market will triple in revenue to $253 million Australian ($189 million) to represent 22% of the total market by 2010. Ringtone revenue will grow from $78 million Australian ($58.5 million) to $209 million Australian ($156.7 million).

One factor spurting this growth is an acceleration in broadband use. More than half of the 6 million active Internet subscribers in Australia use it already, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. New business models, including subscription and advertising-funded free offers, will arrive by mid-2007 to further attract consumers, sources say.

International brands increasingly see Australia as a viable digital market. MySpace, with an estimated 1 million Australian users, launched a local operation in August. Last month, Australia became the first market outside the United States where YouTube appointed a sales agency to buy ads for the video-sharing site.

According to Nielsen/Net Ratings, YouTube drew 1.27 million Aussie users during July. It is anticipated that four more global brands will set up digital download sites within the next 12 months.

"All this adds to our visibility," Carosa says. Destra launched the first local download site, mp3.com.au, in 1999. Destra has widened its multimedia interests with six divisions, with revenue of $32.9 million Australian ($24.7 million) and estimates of $50 million Australian ($37.5 million) for the 2006-07 year.

In the past 12 months, Destra has spent $30 million Australian ($22.5 million) in acquiring content companies, to redigitize their music and movies and to sell online via mobile phones and pay-TV partners.

Paul Buchanan, Sydney-based GM of digital licensor Soundbuzz Australia, anticipates greater juice from mobile phone content.

"We predict that while online sales grow 20% in the next year, music sales through wireless will grow by 40%-50%," he says.

The outlook for mobile phone music is certainly healthy. There are 19 million mobile phones in Australia. The mobile content industry is forecast to grow at an average rate of 46% per year until 2009 when it will transverse $1.23 billion Australian ($922 million), research firm Frost & Sullivan says.

A survey by the Australian Mobile Phone Lifestyle Index, released in May, found that the appetite for mobile phone content is rising, with 66% of respondents buying some form of content in the past 12 months, compared with 50% from the period before.

Kevin Burmeister, managing director of Altinet, believes next year will see an influx of investors and advertisers into Australia's digital music sphere. Burmeister believes Australia can be a source of new technology. One of these is the Global File Registry, a content-filer that provides users with the choice of a legitimate music or movie site when they enter an illegal one. Altinet launched the registry in August. "We have a lot of opportunities to make Australia a cutting-edge territory."

APRA, a non-profit service organisation, established in 1926, administering the rights of the world's songwriters, composers and publishers in Australia and New Zealand. APRA represents over 44,000 Australasian members and over 2 million writers and publishers throughout the world under reciprocal, bilateral contracts with similar overseas service organisations. APRA administers the Performing Rights in music: that is, the right of performance in public and communication to the public. Since 1997, APRA has also managed the Reproduction Rights licensing business of AMCOS including record manufacturing, broadcast mechanicals and production music.
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Lived Through This
The Queen Of Rock Wants Her Throne Back

Courtney Love rocks back and forth, lights a cigarette and sings—words coming to her as she finds the melody. Linda Perry says, “Yeah, yeah. I like that.” The band finds the beat, and the song that materializes is one of the last to be recorded for Love's new album.

They've been in Perry's recording studio in Burbank, Calif., for months, doing 50 takes of some songs. For Perry, who wants to capture Love at her rawest, this is a labor of love. One of the most sought after songwriter/producers in the business, Perry has worked with such superstars as Pink and Christina Aguilera. But here, she's not getting paid.

“Courtney is the queen of rock ’n’ roll to me,” says Perry, who's put Love on her Custard imprint (also the home of James Blunt). “Damn it all to hell. She is the last one.”

If Perry has her way, the embattled Love will regain her throne. Love says she's more than ready.

Love has been sober for more than a year. After a string of drug and assault charges, she says it was jail or rehab. “I was backed up against a wall,” she says. “I had fuckin’ nothing.” For a short time, she even lost custody of Frances Bean, her daughter with late husband Kurt Cobain. She was also broke.

Perry and Love first worked together on Love's last album, “America's Sweetheart” (2004), a project Love admits was doomed for two reasons: She was high as a kite, and the label didn't understand the album. Perry finally walked out on Love at that time. “I said, ‘When you want to make music, give me a call,’” Perry says.

Love called her for rehab. Perry brought her a guitar. “My hand-eye coordination was so bad, I didn't even know chords anymore,” Love says. “It was like my fingers were frozen. And I wasn't allowed to make noise [in rehab]. So I'd sit there and try to quietly write and struggle. I never thought it would work again. No one is ever going to talk to me. I'm never going to get a record deal. I'm never going to get on stage again. So, I just kept writing. This is a very personal album.”

Love wound up playing guitar on every song, even though she claims Perry is a better guitarist.

Perry says, “I told her, ‘If you want to work with me, you're going to have to write. I can't write for you. You're going to have to sit down and write music again, Courtney, because I think you got a little lazy.’”

Love's career peaks and valleys are legendary—from platinum-selling artist and a fated actress in such films as “The People Vs. Larry Flint” and “Man on the Moon,” to suffering addict, from having money to burn to not having a penny. But slowly, she's building her team, her self-esteem and her bank account.

To clear up her finances, in April Love sold 50% of Cobain’s Nirvana publishing catalog to Primary Wave Music Publishing for a reported $50 million. The unusual deal gave her the cash flow she needs, allows her to maintain control over creative decisions and puts the catalog in the hands of someone she trusts, Primary Wave partner and CEO Larry Mestel, who she had previously worked with at Virgin Records.

Love also has a new attorney, John Branca, a well-respected industry veteran whose client list has included Korn, the Beach Boys, Michael Jackson and Aerosmith. Additionally, manager Peter Asher, most recently president of Sanctuary Artist Management, has started his own company and is devoting plenty of time to Love. Asher says he expects the album to be released in 2007.

Love and her team have yet to officially shop the record for a label deal, though a few executives have expressed interest. The album features a sequel to Perry's Christina Aguilera hit “Beautiful” titled “Letter to God.” Perry wrote the song at the same time as “Beautiful.” Love and Perry “courtified” the song, recasting it in minor chords and adding what Perry calls “Courtney swagger.” Billy Corgan also lent his hand to a few tracks.

“I think we made a beautiful, vibey, magical record,” Perry says. “Courtney Love’s name should be right next to Bob Dylan when they say best lyricist of all time.”

Love says that now that she's clean, she's looking at movie scripts and would consider doing a play in London. She also has a hardcover book of her diaries and letters coming out next month.

“It's an insight into how I think. Not sure that's a good thing or not. But it's me.”

Back in Love's Hollywood home, Frances Bean sits in the dining room. She's working with a math tutor preparing for an exam. Love walks in and gives her a kiss on the forehead.

Does Love have regrets? “I always thought I'd be that girl that lives with no regrets,” she confesses. “I've written so many amends letters. I can't even count them. It's still not enough. Drugs make you an asshole.”
Latin Notes

LEILA COBO  Icobo@billboard.com

Radio And The Street

Latin Rap Conference Attendees Clash On Issues Of Language, Content

Conventional wisdom often got thrown by the wayside at the fourth annual Latin Rap Conference, which featured performances by the likes of Zion, Rigo Luna, Toby Love and Tres Coronas. At the sessions held Oct. 12 at nightclub LG in New York, issues that might have seemed no-brainers encountered skepticism from panelists and audience members. And although many of the opinions expressed by many fledgling artists could be attributed to lack of experience or knowledge, it was still clear that the law of the land for urban Latin music is always shifting, and often not in line with what labels practice in other forms of Latin music.

At the radio discussion, for example, panelists ended up advocating a most extraordinary thing: Don’t turn to radio to sell your records. Instead build street cred, and radio will eventually catch up. “In hip-hop, you need a certain level of credibility to sell records,” said Ebro Darden, APO/MD at R&B/hip-hop WQHT (Hot 97) New York. “Sometimes you have to say ‘if you’re going to promote city-to-city to radio and go promote city—to city and radio will come.”

Others stressed that radio is not going to promote artists—they have to promote themselves. Granted, this is all easier said than done. Promoting yourself is costly, time-consuming and just plain hard. A helping hand from radio is vital. But in hip-hop, and even reggaeton in particular, it does seem that if there isn’t any buzz on the street, the record doesn’t sell as well, no matter how much it gets played.

Which brings us full circle. If radio promoters and programmers are so keen on credibility, why do they mostly play what labels promote and virtually ignore the sounds of the street? (Until, that is, those sounds get picked up by labels.)

Later in the day, at the media panel (which I moderated), panelists and attendees clashed on the issue of language and content. Being “Latin,” panelists said, did not depend on language; that is, Spanish was not necessary to reach a younger, assimilated audience. In addition, this audience also wanted mainstream English content reflected in the programming.

But Greg Benning of the Connection magazine disputed this notion. Latin media should advocate Latin content, he said, and promote Latin artists, not mainstream artists who have plenty of other avenues of exposure.

This, of course, is a perpetual discussion. But surprisingly, the young-skewing audience, many of whom were artists, sided with Benning and his “Latin content” premise. Why, many argued, should their space be taken up by artists like Jay-Z?

The answer lies in ratings, which in turn drive advertising. Panelists said. Much of this media did not exist five years ago, and if it did, its ratings were minimal. If mainstream content helps them gain traction and ratings, it only benefits the cause in the long run. There was also an unspoken concern over lack of quality material, specifically music videos.

I heartily applaud any media outlet that seeks to reach a Latin audience and promote Latin music any way it can. But do you really need mainstream ads to drive your viewership? In Latin America, where there aren’t any viewing options, it is understandable that windows like MTV Latin America represent global youth culture. Here in the States, I simply don’t see it. If I want my mainstream fix, I go to MTV. If I want my Latin fix, I go to a Latin channel—and don’t expect to see Jay-Z on it.

Maybe these are growing pains. Or maybe we underestimate our audience and the quality of our expanding Latin content.

Global Pulse

EDITED BY TOM FERGUSON  tferguson@eu.billboard.com

Dublin’s Second-Biggest Band Checks In Near The Top

Zucchero Enters Italian Chart At No. 1; Tim Finn Doesn’t Dream It’s Over

For Dublin’s The Frames, being No. 2 is no bad thing. Widely recognized as the Irish city’s second-biggest band behind U2, the Frames shot into the national albums chart at No. 2 with their new “The Cost” (Platæau Records) after its Sept. 22 release.

Their sixth studio album was recorded in the south of France at Black Box Studios and produced by Stephen Fitzmaurice and former Frames guitarist David Odlum. Toby Darling Publishing represents the band’s songs.


“America is our biggest territory outside of Ireland,” Frames manager Claire Leadbetter says. “We also sell well in the Czech Republic, where [frontman] Glen Hansard has spent a lot of time. Our best overseas markets gigs-wise and sales-wise also include the Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, the U.K. and Austria.”

To accompany the album release, the Collins Press is to issue a new publication, “Behind the Glass.” The book contains a series of black-and-white photos of the band taken by Chicago-based photographer Zoran Orlic.

Nick Kelly

ZUCCHERO ‘FLIES’: The new album from veteran Italian soul/bluesman Zucchero, “Fly” (Polydor/Universal), did just that: flew straight at No. 1. Following its Pan-European Sept. 22 release, “Fly” also had strong chart performances in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France, as well as a No. 1 in Switzerland. A launch is planned for the Latin American market in the first quarter of 2007.

“Italians tend to consider Zucchero an ‘international’ artist, but we feel that this album will do even better at home than its two predecessors,” Universal Music Italy domestic division director Marco Zischka says.

In Italy, Zucchero’s 2001 album “Shake” and 2004’s “Zu & Co” shifted 600,000 and 400,000 units, respectively, Zischka says. The album should get another push with the Oct. 20 domestic release of a second single, the ballad “Occhi.” The artist is due to start touring in March 2007.

Zucchero is managed by London-based Stewart Young and booked by Friends & Partners in Milan. He is published by Universal Music Publishing Italy and his own Zucchero & Foranciuci Music.

—Mark Worden

FINN’S BUSY: Despite making music for about 40 years, New Zealand Tim Finn is far from ready for retirement. During the past two years he has written, recorded and toured on an album, “Everyone Is Here,” with brother Neil (former frontman of Crowded House); reformed his original band Split Enz for a brief tour of Australia; and still found time to write and record the new solo set “Imaginary Kingdom.”

The 54-year-old’s energy levels are astonishing, says Clayton Doughty, international marketing manager at EMI Music Australia, who has lined up a punishing schedule of promotional work to support “Kingdom.” The label issued the album Oct. 7 in New Zealand and Oct. 14 in Australia. The United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands follow Oct. 23.

Finn will visit all countries to support the release. “It will be a mix of on-ground promotion and album launch with a mix of fans and media/retail present,” says Doughty, who says touring plans are being finalized for late 2006/early 2007.

Finn is published via Mushroom Music Publishing for Australia/New Zealand and Coburn Music/Ten Ten Music Group for the rest of the world.

—Steve Adams
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Happily Ever ‘Idol’
Hicks, Serletic Racing To Meet Deadline For Arista Debut

Taylor Hicks is more than ready for his major label close-up. In fact, the winner of the fifth season of “American Idol” has been preparing himself for just such a moment. On this early-October day, Hicks is ensconced in a Los Angeles recording studio with producer Matt Serletic. It is the pair’s second recording session together. Hicks and Serletic have a major mission ahead—to create and complete an album in time for a Dec. 5 release. The as-yet-untitled disc, at this point without a confirmed lead single, is surely a priority for the powers that be at Arista. However, the label declined to comment on specifics of the marketing and promotional campaign for it.

Hicks isn’t exactly staring from scratch; he already has a No. 1 Billboard Hot 100 hit to his credit with the double-A-sided single “Do I Make You Proud?/’Takin’ It to the Streets.” But having held off recording until the completion of an extensive run with the American Idols Live! Tour 2006, Hicks knows time is now of the essence.

“I want this to be a stocking stuffer, which is why we’re putting in 13-hour days,” he says. Serletic admits the work schedule is intense, but he adds that the project is moving quickly forward.

He credits this to Hicks’ natural talent, as well as that of the crack musicians onboard, which include drummer Curt Bisquera, bassist Lee Sklar and guitarist James Harrah. With Serletic overseeing the project, Hicks acknowledges that he is learning to let go. Of course, this in itself is a learning process for Hicks, who released two independent albums (1997’s “In Your Time” and 2005’s “Under the Radar”) prior to his “American Idol” engagement.

“Matt has stepped in so I can stop worrying about every little detail, which is very helpful,” Hicks says. “Fortunately, we are on the same page creatively and musically.”

According to Hicks—who can currently be seen and heard in Ford’s “Drive on Us” ad campaign—the album’s sound will be his take on modern soul music. “I wanted brass with ass, and that’s what will be on the album,” he says. Although Ray Charles is the base root of Hicks’ influences, artists like Al Stewart, Steve Winwood, Eddie Hinton, Gerry Rafferty, Sam Cooke and Marvin Gaye have also played roles in the 10-year-old’s life. Hicks says one song on the album—which will focus on original material penned by himself and others—will be a cover of an obscure Charles song, recorded in Charles’ studio. “It’s my way of saying ‘thanks’,” he says.

Serletic calls Hicks a connection to past masters. “I don’t hear him phoning [the vocals] in. Take after take, he’s bringing it,” he says.

A major challenge for Hicks is trying to make a good record within months of winning the “American Idol” title. “I’m not trying to capture a moment, but I am using time to my fullest advantage,” he says. “Dealing with fame in such a short period of time is a challenge. It’s amazing the amount of exposure ‘American Idol’ can give an artist—especially for someone like me who’s been working in bars and clubs for 10 years.”

While Hicks is glad to be out of the “Idol” spotlight, he fully recognizes its power as a launching pad for an entertainer today. In fact, he is aware he would likely not be in the situation he’s currently in without the help of the hit TV show. One of the goals now, says Hicks’ manager John Leslay of the Firm, is to have his client come out of his “American Idol” shell to become “Taylor Hicks the performer.” “He was a singing contest. In the process, he almost turned into a puppet, which is the antithesis to his past 10 years,” Leslay says. “He is psyched to get this opportunity, but he’s not starting from ground zero. He’s the ann-Idol in many ways.” Leslay says he keeps reminding Hicks that he’s now on the road he’s always wanted to be on and that there is no need to rush. “He has time to make left and right turns, and to speed up and slow down,” he says.

Leshay points to Kelly Clarkson as a perfect example. “It took time for her to come into her own,” he says. “She knew she wanted to rock, but she also knew she couldn’t make that record first . . . With Taylor, we get him off the ‘American Idol’ platform and onto his own platform.”

Hicks, meanwhile, is keeping his eyes squarely on the target. “I’m just glad to now be moving forward with another phase of my career.”

The Best Of The Rest
What’s New With Notable ‘Idol’ Contestants

Taylor Hicks is not the only “American Idol” graduate keeping busy these days. Consider these other show contestants:

KIMBERLEY LOCKE
Locke’s sophomore album, “Based on a True Story,” is scheduled to arrive in March via Curb. It will be preceded in January by the single “Change.” In late summer, the label released the track “Superwoman” to adult R&B radio. It tanked. In the coming weeks, Curb will service radio with Locke’s holiday single “Single Bells.” If it repeats the success of her 2005 holiday jam, “Up on the Housetop,” it will soon be sitting pretty atop Billboard’s Adult Contemporary chart. Until then, Locke, a former Lane Bryant spokeswoman, can be seen on “MTV’s Little Talent Show,” where she is a judge.

RUBEN STUDDARD

FANTASIA
The singer’s as-yet-untitled second album for J Records is scheduled to arrive Dec. 5. Although the label is tight-lipped on details, the album will reportedly feature contributions from Outkast’s Big Boi, Gnarls Barkley’s Cee-Lo Green, songwriter Diane Warren and producer Swizz Beatz. Earlier this year, Fantasia played herself in Lifetime Network’s original movie, “The Fantasia Barrino Story: Life is Not a Fairy Tale.”

KELLY CLARKSON
Clarkson is in the studio working on her third album for RCA, expected sometime next year. And following in the footsteps of SO Cent, Clarkson is featured in a new campaign for Glaceau vitaminwater, which invited the singer to cocreate a limited-edition label for its focus flavor. The partnership includes Clarkson-fueled ads.

KATHARINE MCPHEE
Season five runner-up McPhee scored earlier this year with the double-A-sided single, “Over the Rainbow”/”My Destiny,” which debuted at No. 2 on the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart. Now, McPhee—a spokeswoman for beauty care company Sexy Hair—is gearing up for the Nov. 28 release of her still-untitled debut album on 19 Recordings/RCA. Surrounding the album’s street date, McPhee will perform on numerous TV shows, including “Live With Regis and Kelly.”

MARCO VAZQUEZ
Vazquez is known to many as the contestant who voluntarily withdrew from last year’s competition when he reached the top 12. Arista issued his self-titled debut Sept. 26. It bowed at No. 80 on the Billboard 200, although lead single “Gallery” is top 15 at mainstream top 40 radio. Prior to the album’s release, Vazquez headlined Teen People’s back-to-school Rock ’n Shop Mall Tour.

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Underwood is causing a commotion with her new single, the potent “Before He Cheats” and its feisty video. The track is the latest single culled from the artist’s 2005 Arista Nashville debut, the triple-platinum, charttopping “Some Hearts.” Underwood, who hails from Checotah, Okla., can also be seen in the Oklahoma Library Ass’n’s “Read YAY!” literacy campaign.

BO BICE
RCA artist Bice remains on the road in support of his 2005 album, “The Real Thing,” which debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard 200. While fans await a follow-up album (next year, perhaps), they can hear Bice in current ad campaigns for the Monopoly Here and Now board game. For this multimedia campaign, Bice sings a rocking cover of the Chambers Brothers’ 1968 hit “Time Has Come Today.” Like it? It’s available at iTunes.

CLAY AIKEN
Aiken is promoting his just-released RCA album, “A Thousand Different Ways,” through the end of the year, with numerous TV appearances slated. First single “Without You” was just sent to AC radio. He commences a holiday tour Dec. 1, followed by the A Thousand Different Ways trek next year. Earlier this month the album debuted at No. 2 on The Billboard 200.

KELLIE PICKLER
Season five finalist Pickler is signed to Nashville-based BNA Records, which issues her debut album, “Small Town Girl,” Oct. 31. The set finds the singer working with producer Blake Chancey. Pickler co-penned lead single “Red High Heels,” which is No. 38 on the Hot Country Songs chart.

CHRIS DAUGHTRY
Daughtery, who finished in fourth place during season five, will see his debut album arrive Nov. 21 via 19 Recordings/RCA. Producer Howard Benson (All-American Rejects, My Chemical Romance) is helming the set, which will feature songs penned by Daughtery as well as co-writes with Brad Arnold (3 Doors Down), Carl Bell (Fuel) and others. In June, Daughtery’s cover of Bon Jovi’s “Wanted Dead or Alive” entered The Billboard Hot 100 at No. 43.

—MP
since her first U.S. hit in 1971, Olivia Newton-John has maintained standing as a beloved artist across a demographic swath that is practically unparalleled. A staple at country, pop, AC and dance, she has logged more than 40 songs on The Billboard Hot 100. Her new “Grace & Gratitude”—Newton-John’s 30th album—available exclusively at Walgreens, is her way of trying to return the favor.

“Grace & Gratitude” is beautiful, serene, accepting. Please explain the concept, why the time was right and what you hope listeners will gain from it.

I really made this for myself as a journey of healing and, if I feel that in doing so maybe I can help other people who have gone through something difficult as well. I had a difficult year, so [producers/songwriter] Amy Sky and I got together and both had ideas . . . In five days we wrote seven songs. If you asked me where they came from, we can’t even imagine how we did it, but it just flowed through us.

And the title?
The title came from the idea that no matter what you’ve gone through, if you have gratitude for something, it creates a feeling of well-being. It always makes you feel good to thank whatever it is that you want to thank: the universe, the planet, the god you believe in.

The disc is an exclusive with Walgreens, where you also have a new line of women’s wellness products. How did the alliance come about?

I met with Walgreens, because they were interested in my Olivia Breast Health Kit and Olivia Breast Health Dietary Supplement, and I had the idea that we should put them together with the CD—that music is part of the healing and the wellness. I went to the Walgreens offices at 9 in the morning with my computer, under fluorescent lights and sang with a track to the head of the company . . . He got together the head of the music department and the women’s health department and said, “I don’t know how you’re going to make this happen, but do.”

The breast health exam kit is designed to help women find lumps more easily. It’s like a magnifying glass for your fingers, so if you have any changes whatsoever it will show the lump much more easily. We’re giving 10% of the profits to the Y-Me Breast Cancer Organization and the City of Hope, which is another reason Walgreens is partnering with me, because they’re also giving money.

So you’ve been entertaining for more than 35 years. What keeps it rewarding, and what do you most enjoy now?

I love the writing and the creative part of the process. It’s such a rush when you’re writing a song, and I get to use my brain. I also really enjoy the recording process. And now I like the touring. I’ve learned to let go of a lot of the fear . . . A few times I’ve thought of retiring and I think, “OK, what would I do that I like better?” I couldn’t think of anything. What an amazing position to be in.

Everyone has a favorite Elton John or Beach Boys song—and a favorite Olivia song. What is yours?

Oh, there are many that bring back a memory or a feeling. I never tire of performing “I Honestly Love You,” because every night I find something new in that song; it’s such an amazing lyric and melody.

John Farrar wrote so many great songs that are all spiritual and haunting in their own way. His melodies are beautiful, and they go to unexpected places and they’re so timeless. There are some more obscure songs of his like “Suspending in Time” and “Falling” that are incredible. And “Suddenly.” He was very deep. Mr. Farrar. Stevie Kipner also wrote me great songs.

Looking over all of it, do you have a prized memory that stands above all others?

There are so many, of course. Singing with Cliff Richard on television in the early days, the Sydney Olympics where I sang with John Farnham. But overall, “Grease” was the most fun in every area: It was a blast to make, the music is great, and people still seem to love those songs. The whole “Grease” experience was magical. That was a gift.
Yin And Yang
Howard Stern Helps Trent Tomlinson's Spiritual Struggle Sell

The number of country artists who have appeared on Howard Stern’s radio show is small. Willie Nelson has, and so have the Dixie Chicks, and then there was, uh, no, I guess that’s about it. Add rising country star Trent Tomlinson to that short but impressive list.

A native of Kennett, Mo.—also the hometown of Sheryl Crow—Tomlinson scored with his first single, “Drunker Than Me,” a barefaced-funny ode to a woman who drank more than he did on a date.

While the song peaked at No. 19 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart, it received enough airplay to be heard by Andrea Owenby, a former stripper who holds the dubious distinction of being known as “Miss Howard Stern.” Stern and his crew became aware of Tomlinson’s single when Owenby sang it at a karaoke contest.

When Tomlinson heard about Owenby’s performance, he offered to travel to New York to sing a duet with her on Stern’s show.

The Sirius Satellite Radio appearance was a success. Tomlinson says Stern was “a class act. We really hit it off, he says. “It was like we were peas in a pod.”

Following the July appearance, sales of his Lyric Street debut, “Country Is My Rock,” shot up more than 50%. Coupled with the airplay of his current single “One Wing in the Fire” which he wrote about his father—sales have remained steady ever since. The single is No. 26 on the Hot Country Songs chart.

Tomlinson’s father, Don, is a former college basketball star who was drafted by the NBA’s Cleveland Cavaliers before knee surgery knocked him out. He was also a basketball coach and biology teacher at Kennett High School. His problems with alcohol inspired “One Wing in the Fire.”

“He was a good guy,” Tomlinson says of his father, who is still living. “In the eyes of our town he was a great guy. But none of those people knew what kind of guy he was when he’d had alcohol and came home.”

Although the younger Tomlinson resented his father’s behavior at the time, he later forgave him. “Once I got thinking about heaven and hell, I realized what would heaven be without being able to see my dad there? So I wrote this song pleading to God for my dad to go to heaven.”

When Tomlinson played the song at Nashville’s famed Bluebird Cafe one night, his father was in the audience. “He gave me a one-man standing ovation,” Tomlinson says. “It was awesome.”

The song became a bridge between the two men. “We have a better relationship now than we’ve ever had,” Tomlinson says. And while he initially worried about airing his family’s dirty laundry by recording the song, he decided, “It’s my life.”

In fact, Tomlinson says that it wasn’t until he started writing about his own life experiences that his songs began to connect with people.

“How can you expect someone to believe and buy what you’re doing unless you believe it yourself?” he asks. “There’s a lot of things I don’t know about, but what do I know about is my life.”

WGQ Cookeville, Tenn., PD/manager Gator Harrison hears real life in Tomlinson’s album. “There’s a spiritual struggle—a good vs. evil heart in his music,” he says. “We can all identify with trying to live right, while sometimes falling left.”

The yin and the yang of “Drunker Than Me” (“I can’t be with a woman, baby, who gets drunker than me”) and “One Wing in the Fire” (“He’s an angel with no halo and one wing in the fire”) typifies Tomlinson’s album, which alternates between rousing rockers and thoughtful ballads. He wrote or co-wrote all 11 songs on the record.

Meanwhile, Tomlinson is the best-selling solo country artist debut this year to date, according to Nielsen SoundScan, with 87,000 sold. In addition, he recently scored a major cut with “Why Can’t I Leave Her Alone,” a song he co-wrote intending to record himself. He was beated to the punch by George Strait.

Soul Survivor
Monica Transcends Tragedy With Chart-Topping New Album

When you’re already considered an R&B veteran at only 26, how do you maintain your competitive edge among the newcomers now ruling the roost? If you’re Monica, you just keep pushing.

“I take the same approach in music as I do in life,” says the Atlanta native, who endured a rough period during the year 2000, when her cousin, grandmother and then-boyfriend all died within a few months of each other.

“So many things have happened to me, but I’ve stayed true to who I am in a very fickle business,” she adds. “I’m also not afraid to try different things. That’s what keeps me going.”

And that resulted in Monica claiming her first No. 1 debut on Billboard’s Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart on Oct. 21 with “The Makings of Me” (J Records), her fourth album, landed at No. 8 that week on The Billboard 200, selling 93,000 copies.

Powering the album’s No. 1 R&B ascent: “Everytime Tha Beat Drop,” the beat-heavy, top 20 Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs collaboration with ATL brethren Dem Franchise Boyz and producer Jermaine Dupri.

In addition to Monica’s fun side, “The Makings of Me” is inspired by various real-life situations the singer and new mom (to son Rodney) has encountered in the time since 2003’s “After the Storm” (which debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 with 186,000 copies sold). A cheating boyfriend (the Underdogs-produced “Sideline Ho”) and Monica’s recovery following the suicide of her boyfriend (the Dupri-produced “Get Away”) are among the experiences she explores.

Her keep-the-music-honest approach has been instrumental in crafting a career that dates back to 1995. Discovered at 13 by producer Dallas Austin at a local talent show, Monica (last name Arnold) scored back-to-back No. 1 R&B singles just two years later: “Don’t Take It Personal (Just One of Dem Days)” followed by “Before You Walk Out Of My Life.” Both songs appeared on her debut album, “Miss Thang,” which peaked at No. 36 on The Billboard 200.

That was followed by “The Boy Is Mine,” which yielded the R&B/pop hits “Angel of Mine,” “The First Night” and the Grammy Award-winning title track duet with Brandy. Additional credits include “For You I Will” from the “Space Jam” movie soundtrack.

“A Dozen Roses,” a love song produced by Missy Elliott, is being ramped up as the second single from “The Makings of Me.” During a recent promotional tour to Los Angeles, where she appeared on various TV programs including “The Ellen DeGeneres Show,” Monica also filmed the “Roses” video with director Chris Robinson.

As for competing against such newcomers as Clara, Monica isn’t worried.

“Clara having a great record won’t get in the way of ‘A Dozen Roses’,” she says. “There’s room for all of us. We all do better when we motivate each other.”

A prime example, she notes, was when she and Brandy recorded “The Boy Is Mine.”

“She and I had never won a Grammy until we came together,” Monica says. “So that right there validates my point.”

So do she and Brandy plan to record together again?

“I love Brandy to death,” Monica says. “We’ve reconnected and gotten together with the kids. But we wouldn’t do another record. That’s been done.”
Pint-Sized Rhymes
U.K. Rapper Lady Sovereign Making A Splash Across The Atlantic

Lady Sovereign feels like an idiot.
It’s August 2005 and the U.K. hip-hop sensation (born Louise Harman) is standing in the New York office of Def Jam Records president Sean “Jay-Z” Carter. Jay-Z wants to sign her to the label. But first he needs her to give an impromptu performance for the other executives in the room. In Sov’s words, “He says, ‘Can you spit me some lyrics a cappella?’ ”

The request is causing her all sorts of anxiety.
For starters, she’s facing a tough crowd. Jay-Z would be an intimidating enough audience by himself, but he’s just one of many music industry heavyweights in attendance. Island Def Jam Music Group chairman/CEO Antonio “L.A.” Reid and Usher, one of Reid’s most successful artists from his days at BMG, are there, too.

Then there’s the matter of Sov’s outfit. Hailing from London’s Chalkhill Estates housing development, she’s wearing a cartoonishly oversized shirt and her hair is pulled into a side ponytail—a look that most American audiences haven’t seen since the days of Sporty Spice from the Spice Girls. It’s her trademark garb, but she’s suddenly feeling self-conscious about her fashion in front of a group of men known almost as well for their style as for their musical talents.

And to top things off, she doesn’t want to perform a cappella. She wants a beat to freestyle over.

Jay-Z gamely offers her a Kanye West beat. There’s just one problem: She doesn’t like it. They finally settle on a Ludacris beat.

The performance is so good that within a hour of leaving the meeting, Def Jam executives are on the phone offering her a contract. But looking back on that day now more than a year later, the 20-year-old Sov winces at the thought of how out of place she felt. “I didn’t know what was going on. I felt like a clown for hire,” she says.

But being a fish-out-of-water is something she’s getting used to. To be sure, there’s no one else quite like her on the Def Jam roster—British, female and not particularly focused on American hip-hop.

Her U.S. fan base is rooted in the Internet-savy indie rock community (she claims more than 56,000-plus friends and 1.6 million music listeners through MySpace). During the last year, she’s performed in front of festival crowds at Lollapalooza, Coachella and Bumbershoot, and graced the covers of tastemaker magazines like The Fader, Urb and ID.

And Sov is just as apt to listen to grime, jungle, drum’n’bass or punk, as she is Dirty South hip-hop. “I was more into hip-hop years ago,” she admits. “I’m not saying I’m not into it now. But I don’t listen to it as much as I used to.”

No matter. Def Jam executives think they have a pop star on their hands with the pint-sized artist Jay-Z refers to as “Mighty Mouse.”

Her full-length debut, “Public Warning,” drops Oct. 31, and she’s already showing signs of broad appeal. Verizon Wireless recently featured her and the lead single from the album, “Love Me or Hate Me,” in a TV campaign promoting its new Chocolate music phone. The wacky video, in which the rapper annyoys everyone in her neighborhood simply by being herself, is No. 1 on MTV’s “TRL,” and top 40 radio is starting to embrace the track.

Her debut EP, “Vertically Challenged,” has scanned more than 20,000 units since its release via Chicago indie Chocolate Industries in November 2005. Adam Lowenberg, senior VP of marketing for Def Jam, says the next step is crossing her over to a bigger pop audience. To be sure, there have been plenty of heavily hyped U.K. rap acts in recent years that haven’t connected with U.S. audiences en masse—the Streets, Dizzee Rascal, M.I.A. and Ms. Dynamite among them.

Def Jam is attempting to get over that hurdle with Sov by going after a female demographic.

“Everything that we are doing from a marketing level is really targeted toward young females,” Lowenberg says. To that end, Def Jam is running promotions through women’s catalog clothier Alloy, AOL’s Instant Messenger and social networking site Facebook. The label is also running mall-based street marketing campaigns—filling shopping centers with hoards of reps dressed in Adidas track suits and Lady Sovereign masks.
Death Or ‘Glory’
Say Anything And Its Enigmatic Singer Convert The Kids

It is a dreary October night in New York, with wind gusting and rain pouring. But that hasn't stopped hundreds of teenagers from forming a line a city block long outside Irving Plaza an hour before doors open. The subject of their affections? Up-and-coming rock act Say Anything, led by enigmatic 22-year-old Max Bemis.

Bemis' struggle with bipolar disorder nearly derailed Say Anything's début. "I'm a Real Boy," from finding a mainstream audience. The set, nominally a concept album based around a self-involved rock singer, was released in August 2004 and sold 21,000 copies on the indie Doghouse label, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Majors began predictably sniffling around.

"Max and I were always very open with each other about where we wanted things to go for the next step," Doghouse president Dirk Hemsath says. "If he would have said, 'I want to stay on Doghouse,' I would have been fine with that. But he said he wanted to try and take it to the next level.

The label opted to license the album to J Records, this time with a seven-song bonus disc, for a planned October 2005 reissue. But Bemis required hospitalization to deal with his health, forcing the J version to be pushed back until late February while the band's rabid fan base grinded its collective teeth. To the relief of all parties, the frontman has returned just as Say Anything is enjoying its first MTV airplay and its maiden entry on Billboard's Modern Rock chart.

At the Irving Plaza show, the kick-off date of a North American tour, the audience frequently drowned Bemis out, bellowing back his lyrics (simple line: "I called her on the phone and she touched herself") with true fervor and moshing to the faster songs. On several occasions, his six-piece band left him alone on stage with an acoustic guitar, conjuring an intimacy in the vein of Dashboard Confessional, with which Say Anything toured this summer.

"For the first time on that tour, they had to try to win over people there to see a singer/songwriter show," says RCA Music Group VP of A&R/marketing Matt Shay, who oversees the band for J. "They did win over a lot of new fans. It was also important to show the diversity of where Max can go in his career. His songs take a million different directions. That is why some people compare him to Beck—he is a mad scientist."

The J version of... I'm a Real Boy has shifted 71,000 copies so far, spurred by the single "Alive With the Glory of Love," which reaches a new peak of No. 30 in its ninth week on Modern Rock. The band has also just scored placement in MTV's coveted "Discover and Download" initiative.

"We got immediate reactions as soon as we started playing it," says Nikki Alexander, MD of WEQX Albany, N.Y. "It had top five phones for at least two weeks. We're still playing it, and it's still getting a lot of phones and requests."

Say Anything will play headlining dates through late November, followed by some support slots with My Chemical Romance and radio station-sponsored shows. Bemis admits that because the album is now nearly two years old, he's compiled a host of material for Say Anything's next project, which he will begin recording in the spring. But for now, he's happy to balance promoting... I'm a Real Boy along with his desire to press forward.

"I'm pulling it off, because the things that are happening are so amazing, so it's not like we're pushing and pushing for something that's not really happening," he says. "At the same time, I'm trying to write new material, we keep getting handed these amazing opportunities. It's really positive thing all around. It's hard to believe."
JOHN LEGEND
Once Again
Producers: various
G.O.O.D. Music/ Columbia/Sony Urban
Release Date: Oct. 24
John Legend cranks the classic dial way up on sophomore effort "Once Again," a timeless, feel-good album that could easily slide into your papa’s Sam Cooke and Percy Sledge collections, yet still sounds contemporary. This time around, the singer blends sandy vocals with dreamy background “oohs” and blissful keys, trumpets and flutes that enhance the old-school feel. On the Will.i.am-produced lead single, "Save Room," he aches for tender moments with a partner, while "Stereo" takes a witty jab at gold-digging groupies and the endlessly catchy "P.D.A. (Just Don't Call It A Comeback)" salutes public affection. ""Care)" salutes the endlessly
dreamy background and rock, the package takes even a consummate conceived production, both sweet and slickly, yields a perfect balance of classic and contemporary. Owen's two original tracks stand solid and deliver a veritable forest of premonitions. "(Rock of Ages)" in "The Sweet By and By," "Amazing Grace)."

POPE
ROBBIE WILLIAMS
Rudebox
Producers: various
EMI
Release Date: Oct. 23
(United Kingdom)
Robbie Williams—a No. 1 artist everywhere except the United States—usually delivers exactly what his fans (and record company) expect, but on his seventh solo album he was supposed to abandon his pop heartland in favor of edgy electronics. A barrage of hip producers (Mark Ronson, William Orbit) and collaborators (Lily Allen, Pet Shop Boys) solely wheeled out. But fan-boy covers of the Human League (“Louise”) and Level 42's “Loose Talk” plus Williams’ inherent cheesiness, mean this is a long way off from his equation with the Establishment. Consequently, things hover uneasily somewhere between wholesale rip-off and more super-prettiness project Embarrassment is just avoided, but excess sales to cool regardless.—MS

COUNTRY
ALABAMA
Songs of Inspiration
Producer: Randy Owen
RC
Release Date: Oct. 24
Probably the only question surrounding Alabama's first album in more than five years is how many multiples of platinum it will move. Randy Owen and the band's trademark vocal sound is still as bright as ever, and a consummate conceived production, both sweet and slickly, yields a perfect balance of classic and contemporary. Owen's two original tracks stand solid and deliver a veritable forest of premonitions. "(Rock of Ages)" in "The Sweet By and By," "Amazing Grace)."

ROCK
JEREMY ENIGK
Undiscovered
Producers: Scott Storch, CeeLo Green
SoBe Entertainment
Release Date: Oct. 24
The reign of the teenage pop princess—grinding, posing and speaking—her way onto the charts—has stretched an unimaginable eight years, if you start counting at "...Baby One More Time." But Brooke Hogan's debut confirms that producers are
definitely out of ideas. Scott Storch dresses up her chatty, ultra-light alto with the crunch beats and ethnic flourishes that made his Beyoncé track work. But because Hogan has nothing of her own to add, what results is midlevel mimicry. "Next Time" sounds just like "Naughty Girl," "Space." is Ciara's "1, 2 Step," "My Number is" part Of Dirty Bastard, part Shakira's "Hips Don't Lie." Other tracks have hints of Davinci Kane and Hilary Duff. Nelly Furtado and Avril Lavigne, JoJo and Selena. You spend so much time ID'ing the references that you forget to listen to what you're listening to.—KM

BADLY DRAWN BOY
Born in the U.K.
Producer: Nick Franglen
Alfaworks
Release Date: Oct. 17
On the melodramatic, mildly hippy-dippy intro to “Born in the U.K.,” Badly Drawn Boy flashes the two emotional and musical personalities we’ll encounter throughout the album—on the one hand, hype preacher who doesn’t know who he is and is sort of lost, but can still see light and hope. The other is a little more overtly isolated and offbeat in the world. That high-energy walk between the two is what ‘Born in the U.K.” does and how Hogan should call the shots on the core of "Born in the U.K.,” which seems to only delve into the artist’s actual vocation as a rapper. “They’re a little more out of place, albeit great and nicely nostalgic, track. The earlier third of the album almost thrillingly recalls David Bowie, Peter Murphy and even rock operas. But afterward, "Born” loses its focus amid unabashed nods to Brit Bards and songs that are just not done yet, despite smart tempo changes and pretty melodies.—WO

PAUL STANLEY
Live To Win
Producer: Paul Stanley
New Door/Universal
Release Date: Oct. 24
It took 25 years, but the now-unknown kiss frontman hands over a second solo set packed with awesomely anachronistic arena rock anthems. It’s refreshing to hear him sneer “see you” with “deja vu” on the tear-stained “Wake A Screaming,” which sounds like a stereofied mix of Kelly Clarkson and Alice Cooper circa 1989. His vocal abilities are undiminished, but hyperconstructed power ballads like “Everytime I See You Around” and “Second To None” feel a little too generic. The presence of co-writers Desmond Child and Andreas Carriss is felt in

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every soaring, over-produced hook. Still, kudos to Stanley for channeling his nostalgia into 10 fun and fist-pumping tracks instead of launching a reality show to produce them. —SP

SHAREEFA
Point of No Return
Producers: various
Disturbing Tha Peace/
Def Jam
Release Date: Oct. 24
Shareefa wears her heart on more than just her sleeve this intimate mixtape. Like so many of the troubled vocalists got mixed up with the wrong crowds, eventually landing in prison. But luckily, she turns those unfortunate events into candidly gripping tales about treacherous men ("U Tool Me") and active females ("Phony") while exposing her own vulnerabilities ("Butterfly"). Those raw, emotional touches cut deep. She lifts this off-piste lamenting songs like "No One Saved" and "How Good Love Feels," where her squeaky voice crackles more for good storytelling. Elsewhere, she takes charge on foot-stomping lead single "Need a Boss," featuring Disturbing Tha Peace honcho Ludacris, and "Cry No More," both produced by Rodney Jerkins. With this mix of hard and soft joints, the singer offers an openness that should lure fans.

ELECTRONIC
SQUAREPUSHER
Hello Everything
Producer: Tom Jenkinson
Warp
Release Date: Oct. 17
A model of consistency amid electronics' undulating waves, Squarepusher's Tom Jenkinson is back with his eighth album in a decade that has seen him become one of Warp's flagship artists. Although there's nothing quite as beautiful as "Ambient 9: Polar" from 2004's "Ultrasound" or as subversely catchy as "My Red Hot Car" from 2001's "Go Plastic," the new set goes just far enough beyond the call of duty to warrant repeat listens. "Hello Menon" and "Welcome to Europe" are the kind of melodious, Kraftwerk-on-speed cuts that Squarepusher fans love, while the more introspective "Theme From Sprite" and "Bubble Life" effortlessly incorporate real instrumentation into Jenkinson's good old circle 2 wave sounds like a Tortoise throwaway, and 11-minute noise collage " Orient Orange" isn't very pleasant, but the intense, hyper-speed workout "The Modern Bass" and vindictive Jenkinson's unique flavor of techno still has bite. —JC

TARTIT
Abacabok
Producers: Vincent Kenis, Michel Winter
Crammed Discs
Release Date: Oct. 24
Two of the leading lights on the vinous Moroccan scene, Ulay and Komasheku, play a show that is a showcase for the fertile interactions of old world with new. This album not only has a great sense of timing but is also very well played. —CH

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS:
Sparta, These ( holland)
Various Artists, A Chorus Line: The New Cast Recording
(12424 Broadway, Hollywood, CA)
Flavor Flav, Flavor Flav ( DC Strait)
CD REVIEW
KELLIE PICKLER
Red High Heels
(3:35)
Producer: Blake Chancey
Writer: Pickler, C. Lindsey, A. Mayo, K. Rochelle
Publisher: various
"American Idol" alum Pickler makes a run at the country format with this lively little uptempo number. She penned the tune with hit writers Chris Tompkins, Aimee Mayo and Karyn Rochelle. The result is a catchy anthem about a woman not just surviving, but thriving as she leaves her ex in the dust and steps out in her red high heels. Pickler has an engaging voice and loads of personality, and both shine on this single. But as good as it is, one can’t help but feel Pickler has even better songs up her sleeve. She has an abundance of spark and charisma, and with the right career choices, she very well could follow in her heroines’ footsteps. Look out, Dolly Parton. —DEP

OASIS
Acquiesce (4:04)
Producers: Owen Morris, Noel Gallagher
Writer: N. Gallagher
Publisher: ATV Music
Publishing U.K.
In advance of forthcoming double best-of set "Stop the Clocks," this bad boys of British rock Oasis release fan favorite "Acquiesce." Arguably its greatest tune to date, originally from 1995’s UK single "Some Might Say," the anthemic track is quite simply one of the most popular songs of all time. It has a timeless quality that makes it a perfect candidate for radio airplay. "Acquiesce" is a perfect example of why Oasis is one of the greatest bands to grace the airwaves. The song’s catchy melody and memorable guitar hooks are sure to bring Oasis’ music to the forefront once again. —CLT

CHRISTIAN
NATALIE GRANT
Awaken (3:49)
Producers: Bernie Herms, Rob Graves
Writer: N. Grant, R. Graves, J. McArthur, J. Williams
Publisher: various
"Awaken" is another in a string of hits for Natalie Grant. This time around, she takes a more personal approach to her music, crafting a song that speaks directly to the listener. The result is a powerful track that is sure to resonate with audiences around the world. "Awaken" is a testament to Grant’s talent as a songwriter and performer, and a reminder of why she is one of the most respected musicians in the industry. —CLT
Digital Sales Dip; Stewart Earns Year's 32nd No. 1

There tends to be a moment in many a Looney Tunes cartoon when a poor sap like Wile E. Coyote runs past the edge of a cliff, leading to a startled moment when he hangs in the air before taking that inevitable fall. This week's digital tracks volume may not be such an "uh oh" moment, but at least merits a "Huh?"

According to Nielsen SoundScan, track downloads amount to 9.6 million for the frame that ended Oct. 15. It's only the fourth tracing week this year in which such sales fell below 10 million. It's also the lowest tally since the week ending May 14, when 9.5 million marked this year's lowest tide for digital track sales.

Digital album volume for the tracking period that informs this issue's chart isn't as gloomy compared with 2006's overall landscape, but that detail doesn't exactly thrill either.

Album downloads come in at 621,000, better than what was tracked in the first eight months of the year but the lowest take that configuration has seen since the week ending Sept. 10, when 601,000 downloads were tracked.

A week later, digital album volume rose to 887,000. Until this issue's Market Watch, no subsequent week fell lower than 683,000 album downloads.

Can these comparatively low digital figures merely reflect the yield of the Oct. 10 album slate?

Rod Stewart's latest bows at No. 1 with 184,000. That's not an insignificant total, but it is smaller than any of last week's top three albums. And, it's the lowest sum for a No. 1 album since the multi-act "Now 22" ruled for a second week with 127,000 sold in the Aug. 19 issue.

The top three new entries on this issue's Billboard 200 self a combined 491,000, compared with the 594,000 that Ennecensence, the Killers and George Strait moved last week when they bowed on the chart's top three rungs.

Those three acts had more meaning on Hot Digital Songs, too, placing a combined five tracks on last issue's 75-place chart. The artists who own this week's top three album debuts—Stewart, Lloyd Banks and Jimmy Buffet—are absent from the Digital Songs list.

Hinder's "Lips of an Angel" leads the chart with 75,000 units, the lowest total that a No. 1 Hot Digital Songs title has seen since the week ending Jan. 15, when Bonerace's "Check On It" with Slim Thug reigned with 61,000.

There were only three weeks in 2005 when the No. 1 on Digital Songs exceeded Hinder's current total, but in this year's cycle, 75,000 is a modest yield. None of this means to suggest that the sky is falling. I'm confident this year's holiday season will deliver another big iPod Christmas, bringing with it the same sort of heavy elevation in weekly volume for digital tracks and digital albums that we saw after the Christmas frames of 2004 and 2005.

But digital distribution sure would seem like a mightier savior if its numbers weren't looking this soft during a time of year when so many high-profile artists are coming to market.

YOU CAN LOOK IT UP: When Rod Stewart's "Stardust ... The Great American Songbook Vol. 111" bowed two years ago, it was his first No. 1 album since 1978. Now he's almost making that seem like old hat, as "Still the Same ... Great Rock Classics of Our Time" repeats the feat.

The second, third and fourth volumes of Stewart's "Songbook" cycle each had larger opening weeks than "Same."

As hinted last week, Stewart's bow makes 2006 the year with the most No. 1 albums in Billboard history. We've now had 32 chart-toppers, exceeding the prior record of 31 that was set in 2003.

Diddy should take that mark up one higher next issue. Chart watchers make his "Press Play" the odds-on favorite to lead next week's page, in the range of 150,000-180,000.

Last week, the occasion of the 700th No. 1 in the 50-year history of the album chart led us to detail several noteworthy Billboard 200 milestones. If you want to learn more about the chart's first half-century, check out Joel Whitburn's "The Billboard Albums," the 15th edition of the Whitburn series previously titled "Billboard's Top Pop Albums." Along with the vast array of chart and album nuggets included in past editions, the new tome adds such details as Grammy Award achievements.

---

**Market Watch**

**Weekly Unit Sales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBUMS</th>
<th>SINGLES</th>
<th>DIGITAL TRACKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-05</td>
<td>10,096,000</td>
<td>48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-06</td>
<td>10,455,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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**Weekly Album Sales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>35 million units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,096,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10,455,000</td>
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**Year-To-Date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERALL UNIT SALES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>436,066,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413,666,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>437,424,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413,666,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427,324,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403,205,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>686,049,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>585,920,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DIGITAL TRACKS SALES**

| 05 | 257.2 million |
| 06 | 437.8 million |

**SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
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<th>2006</th>
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<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>421,860,000</td>
<td>388,037,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>11,339,000</td>
<td>23,978,000</td>
<td>111.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
<td>2,934,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>882,000</td>
<td>716,000</td>
<td>-8.8%</td>
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hot 100 Airplay</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SEXYBACK</td>
<td>GALEN FAYE</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL (TOTAL 44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MY LOVE</td>
<td>HEART</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SAY GOODBYE</td>
<td>SIA</td>
<td>REPRISE (TOTAL 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PULLIN' ME BACK</td>
<td>NOAH GORDON</td>
<td>ULTIMATE (TOTAL 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FAR AWAY</td>
<td>NICK DIGGINS</td>
<td>IMPERIAL (TOTAL 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>GET UP</td>
<td>JAMIE RUSSELL</td>
<td>SPOTLIGHT (TOTAL 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>YOUNG HEARTS</td>
<td>GET UP YOUNG HEARTS</td>
<td>SPOTLIGHT (TOTAL 19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>COLUMBIA (TOTAL 18)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>BARRY MANILOW</td>
<td>COLUMBIA (TOTAL 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BARRY MANILOW</td>
<td>COLUMBIA (TOTAL 16)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hot Digital Songs</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DON'T BUILD ME UP</td>
<td>AC/DC</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>YOU DON'T KNOW ME</td>
<td>BLACK SABBATH</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IRON MAN</td>
<td>IRON MAN</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CHILDREN OF THE DISASTER</td>
<td>IRON MAN</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HEAVEN AND HELL</td>
<td>IRON MAN</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 33)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Adult Top 40</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MY LOVE</td>
<td>HEART</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SAY GOODBYE</td>
<td>SIA</td>
<td>REPRISE (TOTAL 38)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>YOUNG HEARTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>TIDAL</td>
<td>COLUMBIA (TOTAL 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BARRY MANILOW</td>
<td>COLUMBIA (TOTAL 17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BARRY MANILOW</td>
<td>COLUMBIA (TOTAL 16)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LET IT BE</td>
<td>THE BEATLES</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>WHY I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU</td>
<td>LIONEL RICHIE</td>
<td>MOTOWN (TOTAL 42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>HONKY TONK WOMAN</td>
<td>THE BEATLES</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY</td>
<td>QUEEN</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH</td>
<td>ROBERT PLANT &amp; THE LCD SOUND SYSTEM</td>
<td>CAPITOL (TOTAL 33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for week of OCTOBER 28, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 85

www.americanradiohistory.com
# POP 100

## Chart Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>SKYFORD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>LIPS OF AN ANGEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>TOO LITTLE TOO LATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>FAR AWAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>HOW TO SAVE A LIFE</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SMACK THAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>MONEY MAKER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>CHASING CARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>JUIN THOMAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>LONDON BRIDGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE SOBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>MANEATER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td>SHOW STOPPER</td>
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<tr>
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<td>WHITE &amp; NERDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>CHAIN HANG LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td>I WRITE SINS NOT TRAGEDIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td>GIVE IT AWAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td>UNFAITHFUL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td>TELL ME BABY</td>
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<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td>MY LITTLE GIRL</td>
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<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td>YOUNG HEEDS TB (CABLE CAR)</td>
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<td>HURT</td>
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<td>WHERE YOU GO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td>SITTING ON THE WORLD TO CHANGE</td>
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<td><strong>35</strong></td>
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<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td>THAT GIRL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td>STAND I'M NOT JEREMY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td>BEFORE HE CHEATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td>ABOUT US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td>COME BACK TO ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td>AMI RUSSELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td>雞 CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td>WHEN YOU HEART HEARTBUSTING</td>
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## Pop 100 Airplay Chart

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<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td>chicken noodle soup</td>
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<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td>WHEN YOU HEART HEARTBUSTING</td>
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## Hot Singles Sales Chart

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<td>CALL ON ME</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>COMING LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>COMING LOW</td>
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**TOP LATIN ALBUMS**

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### LATIN AIRPLAY

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<td>Tu Recuerdo</td>
<td>Menudo</td>
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#### REGIONAL MEXICAN

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### TECHNICAL DETAILS

- The data for October 28, 2006 is provided for chart reprints. For complete chart data, visit www.billboard.com.
**HITS OF THE WORLD**

**JAPAN**

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| Denmark | Albums   | Hits of the OCT 26 7 i42       | ORPH 

This is a partial list of hits from various countries around the world as of October 26, 2006. For complete chart data, visit www.billboard.com. Chart data was provided by Nielsen SoundScan (international) and Nielsen SoundScan International (U.S.).
### PRICING CONFIGURATION

**NEAT SELLER**

SoundScan from distributor.com.

**RADIO AIRPLAY CHARTS**

Compiled from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of cross-radios audience impressions, computed by cross-referencing exact times of airplay with Arbitron listener data. The exceptions are the Rhythmic Top 40, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are ranked by total detections.

**SINGLES SALES CHARTS**

The top selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail stores. Data are provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales, data is compiled from a national subset of core R&B/hip-hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

**DANCE CLUB PLAY**

Complied from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

**AWARD CERTIFICATIONS**

- Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold) or $5 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinum) or $10 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA platinum certification for sales of 100,000 units for shortform or longform videos. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units for shortform or longform videos.

**MUSIC VIDEO SALES CHARTS**

RIAA certification for net shipment of 25,000 units for video singles. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units for video singles. RIAA platinum certification for sales of 100,000 units for video singles. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 1 million units for video singles.

**TOP CAST ALBUMS**

Catalog Albums are 2-year-old titles that have fallen below No. 100 on The Billboard 200 or 10 issues of older albums. Weekly column reflects physical singles consumed on The Billboard 200 and Top Pop/County Albums. TOP INTERNET reflects physical albums consumed on the Internet. Albums based on data collected by Nielsen SoundScan. Catalog titles are included. Charts based on sales collected by Nielsen SoundScan. Catalog titles are included. All rights reserved.

**TOP DIGITAL**

Information compiled by Nielsen SoundScan. For complete chart data, please visit www.americanradiohistory.com.
### Chart Codes:
- CS (Hot Country Songs)
- H100 (Hot 100 Songs)
- LT (Hot Latin Songs)
- POP (Pop 100 Song and RBH (Hot R&B/Hi-Hop Songs)

#### Title (Publisher - Licensing Org) Sheet Music Date, Chart, Position

**A**  The Diary of Jane (Elvis Presley Music, ASCAP/Trinity Music, BMI)  013
**B**  Do the Right Thing (Trent Reznor, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**C**  All I Need (Bob Dylan, ASCAP/Midland Music)  017
**D**  Case Closed (The Rolling Stones, ASCAP/Universal)  01
**E**  Enough (Justin Timberlake, ASCAP/Sony/ATV)  01
**F**  Fire Down Below (Bon Jovi, ASCAP/Atlantic)  014
**G**  gallery (Chris Martin, ASCAP/A&M)  01
**H**  Hands Up (The Black Eyed Peas, ASCAP/Atlantic)  014
**I**  Hello (Alicia Keys, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**J**  In the Name of Love (U2, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**K**  Keep Yourself (Johnny Cash, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**L**  Last Man Standing (Bruce Springsteen, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**M**  Make It Rain (The Game, ASCAP/LJL)  01
**N**  Nothing Left to Lose (Green Day, ASCAP/RCA)  01
**O**  Oh Boy (Soul Asylum, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**P**  Own Life (Daughtry, ASCAP/Polygram)  01
**Q**  Pure (Hoodie Allen, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**R**  Rock of Ages (Mötley Crüe, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
**S**  Set You Free (Benjamin Biolay, ASCAP/Universal)  01
**T**  Take Me As I Am (Boyce Avenue, ASCAP/Universal)  01

#### Additional Entries
- **A**  About the Rain (Garth Brook, ASCAP)  013
- **B**  Avalanche (Lil Wayne, ASCAP/Atlantic)  01
- **C**  Be Here (George Strait, ASCAP)  01
- **D**  Case of You (Joni Mitchell, ASCAP)  01
- **E**  Confirmation (Jill Scott, ASCAP)  01
- **F**  For What It's Worth (The Doors, ASCAP)  01
- **G**  Good Day Sunshine (The Beatles, ASCAP)  01
- **H**  Hands of Stone (Tom Petty, ASCAP)  01
- **I**  Here Without You (Depeche Mode, ASCAP)  01
- **J**  Huge (Kid Rock, ASCAP)  01
- **K**  I Love the Way You Love Me (Evanescence, ASCAP)  01
- **L**  I'm Not the Only One (Sam Smith, ASCAP)  01
- **M**  Into You (Ariana Grande, ASCAP)  01
- **N**  Just a Friend (LL Cool J, ASCAP)  01
- **O**  Let Me Take You Home (Shania Twain, ASCAP)  01
- **P**  Love the Way You Lie (Eminem, ASCAP)  01
- **Q**  Make You Feel My Love (Adele, ASCAP)  01
- **R**  Move (Kanye West, ASCAP)  01
- **S**  Never Gonna Give You Up (Rick Astley, ASCAP)  01
- **T**  One More Time (Daft Punk, ASCAP)  01
- **U**  Open Your Eyes (Elton John, ASCAP)  01
- **V**  Part of Me (Lady Gaga, ASCAP)  01
- **W**  This Love (Adam Levine, ASCAP)  01
- **X**  Like a Rolling Stone (Bob Dylan, ASCAP)  01
- **Y**  You Can't Hurry Love (The Beach Boys, ASCAP)  01
- **Z**  Another Brick in the Wall (Pink Floyd, ASCAP)  01
HELP WANTED

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF SALES

VICTORY RECORDS

THE #1 INDEPENDENT RECORD LABEL is looking to fill its NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF SALES position. This person would interface with our US (RED) and Canadian (Universal) distributors and retail. Five years of experience in similar position along with great relationships in the retail community is required. Position is in downtown Chicago.

Resume with references and cover letter to:
email: jobs@victoryrecords.com
fax: 312.873.3889

www.victoryrecords.com

HELP WANTED

PUBLICIST

VICTORY RECORDS

VICTORY RECORDS is looking for a savvy and creative individual to join its U.S. publicity department. This person would be responsible for using their existing and developing media relationships to expose our artists and other related projects. Excellent writing, organizational, marketing, creative and social skills required. Candidate should have a love for promotion, travel, willing to work long hours and hungry for searching out media opportunities in print, on the Internet and on Television. For consideration please fax cover letter, resume and references. At least three years previous publicity experience required. 

Resume with references and cover letter to:
email: jobs@victoryrecords.com
fax: 312.873.3889

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF ASSETS OF THE SONGWRITER COLLECTIVE, LLC

Notice is hereby given that Fortress Credit Opportunities I LP, a Delaware limited partnership, as a lender and as agent on behalf of the lenders (the "Agent") under that certain Loan Agreement, dated as of March 1, 2004, as amended (the "Loan Agreement"), the Songwriter Collective, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, as borrower (the "Debtor"), the Agent and the lenders, having postponed the public sales scheduled for November 4, 2005, December 14, 2005, January 31, 2006, March 14, 2006, April 25, 2006, June 6, 2006, July 18, 2006, August 29, 2006 and October 17, 2006, intends to sell at public sale in accordance with the provisions of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, certain personal assets of the Debtor, generally described as all of the Debtor's right, title and interest of every kind and nature in and to all accounts, chattel paper, deposit accounts, documents, electronic chattel paper, equipment, general intangibles, goods, instruments, inventory, investment property, payment intangibles and software belonging to the Debtor, in each case whether tangible or intangible, wherever located or situated, including all rights to a portfolio of musical compositions, including, in some instances, copyrights of the musical compositions, the right to and interest in any and all revenues and licenses derived from such musical compositions, and all claims and causes of action related to the musical compositions accruing at any time and all other rights of the Debtor of any nature whatsoever in the musical compositions (the "Collateral"). A more detailed description of the Collateral will be provided to you upon execution of a confidentiality agreement.

The public sale will take place at the office of Sidley Austin LLP at 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019, on Wednesday, November 29, 2006 at 11:00 a.m., New York time. The Agent reserves the right to cancel the sale, without notice, in its entirety, or to adjourn the sale to a future date. The Agent may further adjourn the sale herein described to another date from time to time, before, during or after commencement of bidding, without written notice, by announcement at the time and place appointed for such auction, or any adjournment thereof, and, without further notice, such auction may be made at the time and place to which the auction may have been so adjourned.

Interested persons should take notice that the Collateral will be sold on the following terms and conditions:

1. All bids must be given orally at the public sale.
2. The Agent reserves the right to bid for and purchase the Collateral and to credit the purchase price against the expenses of sale and principal, interest and any and all other amounts due and payable to the Agent pursuant to the terms of any and all indebtedness secured by the security interest in the Collateral.
3. The Collateral has sole discretion to determine which offer is the highest or best offer, and to reject any offer which it deems to be insufficient.
4. Concurrently with the acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to execute and deliver to the Agent the Asset Purchase Agreement, a copy of which may be obtained by contacting one of the person's identified in the final paragraph of this notice, containing terms of sale and conditions precedent to the Agent's obligation to sell, in each case, in addition to those set forth herein, including, without limitation, the requirement that the sale of the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement be consummated no earlier than 30 days following execution thereof.
5. Upon acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to deposit (the "Deposit") with the Agent earnest money in an amount equal to ten percent of the purchase price. Such Deposit shall only be refunded to such prospective purchaser as, and to the extent, provided in the Asset Purchase Agreement. In all other cases, the Agent shall have the right to retain such Deposit. If such sale of the Collateral is consummated with such prospective purchaser, the full amount of such Deposit shall be applied to the purchase price. If such sale is not consummated, the Agent shall have the right, but shall have no obligation, to resell the Collateral for sale, without further notice. The prospective purchaser shall not be entitled to any interest on the Deposit held by the Agent, whether or not the Deposit is required to be refunded to such prospective purchaser by the Agent pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement.
6. No bids may be withdrawn once made, but no sale is final until accepted by the Agent.
7. Only cash or cashier’s check or other immediately available funds will be accepted for the Deposit or for payment of the purchase price. The bid of any prospective purchaser who fails to tender proper payment may be rejected and the Agent may, subject to the other terms hereof, (i) accept any alternative bid made at the sale, in which case the Agent shall have no obligation to reexamine the sale, accept additional bids, or notify any other bidders of the acceptance of the deposit, or (ii) refuse to consider the Collateral for sale without further notice, in each case, at the Agent’s option. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the Agent shall not be obligated to make any sale of the Collateral pursuant to this notice.
8. In the event the Agent is unable to consummate any sale and deliver the Collateral to a purchaser, then the sole liability of the Agent to such purchasers shall be to refund the purchase price, if any, previously paid to the Agent.
9. The Collateral will only be sold in its entirety unless the Agent announces otherwise at the outset of the public sale.
10. Subject to satisfaction of all of the conditions precedent to the Agent’s obligation to sell the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement and the terms and conditions hereof, consummation of the sale of the Collateral will be made immediately upon receipt by the Agent of the purchase price and shall be evidenced by delivery of the Collateral to the purchaser thereof, but WITHOUT DELIVERY OF A BILL OF SALE, WITHOUT GUARANTEE OF SIGNATURES, WITHOUT PAYMENT OF ANY TRANSFER OR OTHER TAX, AND WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY BY THE AGENT, AND SUBJECT TO ALL DEFENSES.
11. The above terms and conditions of sale may be subject to additional or amended terms and conditions to be announced at the time of sale.
12. If any dispute arises between two or more bidders, the Agent may decide the same or put the Collateral up for sale again and resell to the purchaser submitting the best bid, as determined by the Agent. In all cases, the Agent’s decision shall be final.
13. All bidders and other persons attending this auction agree that they have full knowledge of the terms set forth above and contained in the Asset Purchase Agreement and agree to be bound by the terms hereof and thereof.
14. The Debtor shall have the right to redeem the Collateral in accordance with, and to the extent provided in, any and all applicable law.

Persons desiring further information as to the public sale of the Collateral, and the terms and conditions relating thereto, and/or desiring to obtain copies of the confidentiality agreement or the Asset Purchase Agreement, may contact either Martin Jackson (212/839-6726) of Sidley Austin LLP, 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019 or Colleen McDonald (415/772-1207) of Sidley Austin LLP, 555 California Street, San Francisco, California 94104, counsel for the Agent.

October 21, 2006

Freddy Fender, 69

Freddy Fender, 69, died of lung cancer Oct. 14 at his home in Corpus Christi, Texas. The Tex-Mex pioneer, who rose from humble south Texas origins to roll on Billboard’s country charts in the mid-’70s, had constantly crossed musical boundaries in a career that spanned five decades.

“Freddy Fender was an innovator, a creator and an individual that was reflective of the community’s diverse musical tastes,” says Dr. Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., a history professor at the University of Houston. “He took various forms of popular music found in Texas over time—rock’n’roll, Tejano, country and R&B—and blended them into a distinctive sound that reflected the working class and mestizo heritage of Tejanos.”

The three-time Grammy Award winner, born Baldomero Huerta on June 4, 1937, in San Benito, Texas, became the first and one of the few successful Mexican-American crossover artists in 1975 when he scored a No. 1 hit on Billboard’s Top Country Singles chart with “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights.”

For Casey Monahan, director of Austin’s Texas Music Office, Fender was a “uniquely Texas hero for his soaring voice, the enormous obstacles he overcame and the triumphs he achieved.”

Accordionist Floco Jimenez recalls spending a day in May 2005 with Fender recording the “Dos Amigos” CD at Michael Morales’ northside studio.

“It was fun because we were free to do whatever, and we just let the tape roll nonstop,” Jimenez says. Jimenez, who performed with Doug Sahm, Augie Meyers and Fender as the Texas Tornados, adds, “The whole world who saw Freddy perform knows that we have lost a big star.”

Fender started his career recording in the ’50s as the “Bebop Kid,” singing Elvis Presley and Gene Vincent covers in Spanish. He hit his peak in the mid-’70s when he released the landmark album “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights.” In March 1975, “Before the Teardrop Falls,” with both English and Spanish lyrics, hit No.1 on The Billboard Hot 100 and Top Country Singles.

During the ‘80s, Fender lost momentum. But in 1989, he entered a new phase when he joined the Texas Tornados, playing the spicy stew of Tex-Mex, country and blues that impeccably reflected his musical roots. With the Tornados’ self-titled debut, he won his first Grammy in 1990 for best Mexican-American performance.

Fender, survived by wife Evangelina “Vangie” and several children, was buried Oct. 18 in his hometown of San Benito.

The Fender family has requested that in lieu of flowers donations or memorials be made to the Freddy Fender Scholarship Fund in care of CapitalOne Bank, 198 South Sam Houston, San Benito, Texas 78586.

—Ramiro Barr

Singer/songwriter Yusuf Islam, right, retained his songwriter of the year title at the Oct. 11 ASCAP Awards in London, having also scooped up the honor at last year's event. The artist, formerly known as Cat Stevens, is seen here with ASCAP CEO John A. LoFrumento, left, and PRS chairman Ellis Rich. (PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALASTAIR FYFE)

Billboard senior correspondent Chuck Taylor recently visited Whoopi Goldberg at Clear Channel's New York radio studios for a sit-down to discuss her new morning show "Wake Up With Whoopi." So far, the four-hour weekday radio show is heard in 12 markets around the country.

Comedian Jim Gaffigan has become a top touring draw thanks to appearances on "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" and his CD/DVD "Beyond the Pyle." After two sold-out shows Oct. 14 at New York's Town Hall, Gaffigan, second from left, visited with Billboard's Chris Walsh, left, Jonathan Cohen and Cohen's wife, Kelly Baez.

Bertelsmann Music Group U.S. president/CEO Charles Goldstuck was honored Oct. 5 at the City of Hope Spirit of Life Gala at the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles. The star-studded event was highlighted by performances from Maroon 5, Sarah McLachlan, Velvet Revolver, Taylor Hicks and a stunning finale duet from Chris Daughtry, recording artist Hicks and Reprise recording artist Josh Groban. From left are RCA recording artist Chris Daughtry, Arista recording artist Hicks and Reprise recording artist Groban. (PHOTO: COURTESY OF JEFFREY MAYER)

Styx and the Contemporary Youth Orchestra of Cleveland, Nov. 14. Signing the deal at Atlanta's Chastain Park Amphitheatre were, from left, Styx's Tommy Shaw and James "JY" Young, standing, and Styx's Lawrence Gowan, manager Charlie Bruno and Styx's Lawrence Gowan. (PHOTO: COURTESY OF JASON POVLSS)

Eagle Vision will release "One with Everything," a live DVD featuring Styx and the Contemporary Youth Orchestra of Cleveland, Nov. 14. Signing the deal at Atlanta's Chastain Park Amphitheatre were, from left, Styx's Tommy Shaw and James "JY" Young, standing, and Styx's Lawrence Gowan. (PHOTO: COURTESY OF JASON POVLSS)

ABOVE: From left are Core Club CEO Jennie Saunders with Elizabeth & the Catapult's Matt Wigton, Elizabeth's Zimba, Dan Molad and Pete Lalish. BELOW: The band members perform for the Core Club's industry crowd.
EIGHT DAYS A WEEK

Justin Timberlake will play the new 23,000-seat O2 Arena in London eight times during its two-week grand opening period next summer. Scheduled to open in late June or early July, the O2 is being built and operated by Anschutz Entertainment Group, and the Timberlake tour is being promoted worldwide by AEG Live. It kicks off Jan. 8 in San Diego with Pink on tap as the opening act. All shows will be staged in the round.

HIP-HOP AND HOOPS

Track hears that “NBA 07” (for PlayStation 2 and PlayStation Portable) will be accompanied by a brand-new in-game soundtrack. Comprising exclusive and licensed hip-hop titles, the soundtrack will feature songs from Rakim, B.G. featuring Mannie Fresh, Del the Funky Homosapien, Big Rich, KRS-One, Pep Love featuring Jenci Fujica, King, Rhymefest, Souls of Mischief, Traxamillion featuring Tuff Talk, and Mistah F.A.B. and Twisted Black.

AL KNOWS BEST

“ Weird Al” Yankovic. Leading parodist, master polka-smith and quality father, he has a 3-year-old daughter, one who’s pretty hip to what Dad does for a living even when it comes to his songs about pummelling the snot out of small mammals.

“I was reluctant to play the video for ‘Weaseel Stomping Day’ for her,” Yankovic tells Track, referring to the comically horrific Robot Chicken-animated claymation clip that appears on his “Straight Outta Lyndon.”

“But she totally got the irony of it. I told her, ‘Now, Nina, you really wouldn’t stomp on a weasel,’ and she was like [adopts voice of an eye-rolling 3-year-old], ‘I know that, Daddy.’ Which is good. I try to be a good role model.”

THIS AND THAT

Track has learned that Interscope urban promotion executive Kevin Black is segueing to Warner Bros. Records. Details about the title and scope of his new position could not be confirmed at press time. Meanwhile, look for cell phone giant Verizon Wireless to soon start offering ringtones and ringback tones on a bundled basis. Pricing for the combo package hasn’t been disclosed, but it is expected to carry a price tag below what Verizon charges for the products separately. Ringback tones cost $1.99 each, along with a 99-cent monthly subscription fee. Ringtones cost $2.49 each.

YOU LIKE US!

We at Inside Track aren’t here to bash other publications, but we’ll surely let the Racoonites do it for us. Group member Jack White went off on a tangent recently when we asked him why the Racoonites won’t play any new material during their ongoing tour. It’s a double-edged sword, White says. If they do, bootleg recordings will inevitably wind up online and will then be “reviewed” by such Web sites as pitchforkmedia.com.

“We don’t want to release those children because we’re too protective,” White says. “I’m not saying that people aren’t going to record us. I’m just saying that we know the electronic medium exist. So we’re not going to play any new songs. There’s our way of dealing with it. You get what happened to the Arctic Monkeys. They released their demos and then they recorded the [album]. And everyone said, ‘I like the demos better.’ No one buys the record because they have the demo. At least [Billboard has] some class to what we’re going to do.” He adds: “But Pitchfork recently reviewed the idea that the Racoonites are covering a song called ‘Bang Bang.’ They’re not reviewing a record or a version from a show that they saw. They’re reviewing the idea that we’re doing it.”

THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR FUND-RAISING

More than a thousand Manhattan fashionistas from all walks (that’s a pun you’ll get 12 words from now) gathered Oct. 18 at the ever-posh Waldorf-Astoria for the 13th annual “Shoes on Sale” gala, presented by the Fashion Footwear Assn. of New York and GVC. Benefiting the top six leading breast cancer research centers and hospitals in the United States, the event raised $3 million, an all-time high, topping its all-time haul to more than $25 million.

Universal Motown artist—and newly signed Ford model—Myla, strutting her stuff in Christian Louboutins, performed three songs during the awards ceremony and dinner, including hot new party rump “Ayo” from her upcoming album “Liberation.” Carmen Electra hosted (in Jimmy Choo), while other famous faces included Kenneth Cole, Bebe Neuwirth and Fran Drescher.

BACK IN BLACK

After all these years, Frank Black continues to release new music at a dizzying pace. The man has already brought forth two albums (one of which was a double-disc) in the two years since the Pixies reunited, and he’s been at it again while on tour in North America. Black and his band have been booking studio time after shows in various cities; two songs were recently put to tape at SugarHill Studios in Houston. The results will see the light of day on Black’s next album, for which a release date has yet to be announced.

EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

RECORD COMPANIES: Savoy Label Group promotes Joshua Sherman to VP of A&R/marketing and Sheila Volpe to VP of marketing. They were senior directors.

Island Def Jam Music Group promotes Gabrielle Peluso to VP of video promotions. She was VP.

Warrior Records in Los Angeles promotes Jimmy Hodges to senior VP. He was VP.

PUBLISHING: ASCAP in New York promotes Matthew DeFilippis to VP of new media and technology. He was assistant VP.

DISTRIBUTION: The Orchard in New York appoints Jordy Trachtenberg to VP of music licensing and A&R and Dan Pifer to VP of sales operations. Trachtenberg was senior director of content acquisition, and Pifer was VP of product management for tools and infrastructure at eMusic.

TOURING: Global Spectrum, operator of Philadelphia’s Wachovia Center and Wachovia Spectrum, names Tim Murphy VP/GM of the two facilities. He will continue to be a regional VP.

StubbHub names Chuck La Valle director of music business development. He was an agent at William Morris Agency.

Knitting Factory Entertainment in New York names Jeff Fryer label relations and content development manager. He was a coordinator at EMI Music Publishing.

Concert Productions International in Toronto promotes Mark Norman to president of global touring. He was executive VP of new media and special projects.

MEDIA: MTV networks names Sean Moran executive VP of MTV’s 360 brand sales. He was senior VP of national advertising sales at VH1.

FOR THE RECORD: Arturo Gil’s former employer was incorrectly identified as Universal Music Group. He previously worked for Univision Music Group.

Send submissions to exec@billboard.com.

GOOD WORKS

HELPING HAND

The lineup is set for the third annual 3 Doors Down & Friends benefit, to be held Dec. 2 at the Mobile (Ala.) Convention Center. Staind, Hinder and Michael Tolcher will support 3 Doors Down on the bill. Proceeds from the concert, sponsored by AIGAmerican General Life & Accident, will benefit Hurricane Katrina victims along the Gulf Coast.

MUSIC FOR THE TROOPS

Sean P. formerly known as Sean Paul of the YoungBloodz, will head to the Middle East to perform for Navy troops stationed in Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain. “As frightening as it sounds to go over there, the least I can do is spend some of my time and say thanks by performing with them,” he says.

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EDITED BY MITCHELL PETERS

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Vice President & Associate Director, HP Labs
Hewlett-Packard Co.

Vince Broady
Head of Entertainment Games & Yahoo!

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