THE BILLBOARD Q&A

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OPINION

The Challenges—And Opportunities—Of Successful Mobile Content

BY ANDY NULMAN

I have little to complain about. As a mobile media pioneer who sold 85% of his company to a Japanese concern three years ago, the wireless world has been very, very good to me. But like one of those great bands that have a strong regional following yet just can’t crack the big time, it’s frustrating as hell to see the mobile industry—despite its growth and considerable heat—continually punch under its weight and not live up to its full potential. And it’s a drag, because mobile is an industry that’s filled with passionate, intelligent people, many who actually give a damn about its future. And it’s not that we don’t know what sucks about being in mobile... we just don’t bitch about it in public.

Until now. So I can take you behind the curtain and let you in on what we all say in private, this is what’s wrong with the mobile media space, summarized by four Fs:

DISCONNECTED

Indifference: Put simply, the general populace doesn’t give a rat’s ass about mobile content. Yes, people buy it, some steal it, but find me the raving fans, the zealous die-hards who eat, sleep and breathe the stuff like they do videogames, sports teams or music. OK, now find me another one. There are many reasons for this, but primary among them is that most mobile content is “recycled” from elsewhere and not specifically made for the medium on which it is consumed. It’s there because it can be, not necessarily because it needs to be.

Insipidness: Why the indifference? There’s precious little to get excited about, a concern best denied by the tritely blunt words of former Fox exec Lucy Hood at a Billboard conference last year: “How can you all be so worried about advertising when the content isn’t that good yet?” Ouch!

Interface: Computer hardware may be different, but a desktop is a desktop. Yet every phone has its own distinctive face size, look and feel. Oh, what for developers! Add to this that the phone’s 2-inch screen is perhaps the most contested piece of real estate in the world. This makes deck placement paramount and why sales basically depend on where you are, not what you’ve got, even if you have something that’s insipid.

Irresponsibility: Not happy with your carrier deck position? No problem—just go off-deck. Yeah... and face the stigma of direct-to-consumer “Free Ringtone!” scum artists who blazed the trail before you and蛟chored everything in its path, leaving you the task of convincing tentative consumers that you won’t actually rip them off. Again.

DIALED IN

Bummed out? Don’t be. Face it: There wouldn’t be a mobile business if those of us in it didn’t see some light at the end of the tunnel. While the ringbones, wallpaper and retro games that brought us to the dance may not keep us here forever, there are solutions to the industry’s current woes... coincidentally, also all starting with the letter “1”:

Inspiration: Answer: What exactly makes it mobile? The phone isn’t just another screen; it’s a multipurpose interactive tool. One that travels everywhere and unlocks a world of possibilities. The sooner more people realize this about mobile devices, the sooner they’ll be creating better stuff for them. (Hey, iPhone SD—good timing)

Integrity: To capitalize on the inherent two-way nature of the phone and the ease of billing, consumers have to feel safe revealing information like birthdates, passwords and credit card numbers. I’ve heard from smart, rational folks who are still scared to test to a shortcode for fear of incessant SMS spam. People need to be as secure in their palms as they are on their desktops... be they on-deck, off-deck, in store or anywhere not in their home.

Integration: Like the sweet kid in the sandbox, mobile plays well with others. It will work when integrated with other media initiatives and needs their marketing help to grab eyeballs and thumbs. While currently wobbling a bit little, mobile will eventually be as ubiquitous as the Web when it comes to any consumer-reaching product or service. Its future is more as a music play-with than music player, more of a one-to-one relationship-builder than a quick cash grab. Make it a part, not apart.

You guys in the music biz are perhaps best placed to lead this integration. Yeah, you’ve got full-track downloads and ringtone snippets to flag. But more importantly, you’ve got the connection to the hearts and minds of a fervent fan base. An advertising one that talks, listens, buys and is willing to try new things.

As MC Lars sings in “Download This Song”: “Music was a product, now it’s a service.” Thinking like this is good for the strength, and longevity, of both industries...

Andy Nulman is president of Airborne Mobile.

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Artists Aim For Big Business With Own Network Sites

50 Cent has more than 1 million friends on MySpace, but if he ever decides to leave the social network, he'll be leaving behind those friends, too. So like a growing number of artists, he's started his own social networking site, Thisis50, to which fans can create profiles and friend lists just like on MySpace, but where he has direct access to his users and their e-mail addresses.

More and more acts, from Kylie Minogue to Ludacris to the Pussycat Dolls, are launching their own social networks, which are becoming a sort of next-generation version of artist Web sites.

This social networking component gives fans a reason to hang out on a site and continually visit more often than they would a standard Web site. And unlike MySpace or Facebook, artists can sell advertisements on their site and let users buy downloads and merchandise. Plus, they own the content and data on how fans use their site, which they don't get on other social networks.

"The thing that separates Thisis50 from MySpace is we control the e-mail database," says Chris "Broadway" Romero, director for new media at G-Unl Records, which handles Thisis50. "We can e-mail members if we want to. He has 1 million friends on MySpace, but if you close the account you can't take them with you."

Thisis50 isn't meant to be a fan club, but rather a platform for 50 Cent to showcase his music and music he likes, and comment on news and user profile pages. And LinkedIn WeMix.com is more of a hub for aspiring artists to upload their music.

Similarly, artist networks aren't meant to replace MySpace or Facebook, which tend to attract a broader audience and more users.

"Artists think about MySpace and Facebook as funnels for their own social networks," says Gina Bianchini, CEO of Ning, a company that provides social networking tools for: Thisis50, Sara Bareilles and others. "They take and use services where they don't know the users, don't have access and don't have full control. And funnel those fans to something they do control."

The key to getting users coming back to the site is artist involvement, either through blogs or comments on user pages or exclusive footage and other content.

"The biggest thing we push to artists is, 'Embrace the site,'" says Evan Rifkin, CEO of Flux.com, a social networking platform partly owned by MTV.

It's relatively inexpensive to create a social network if artists use one of the growing number of companies that provide the tools and hosting. For instance, Ning charges $34 per month for a site and hosting. And Flux works with artists and labels on a revenue-sharing basis. Artists can set up their main site for free and pay a percentage of revenue from advertisements and sales on additional pages.

Artists also tend to pay for labor to run the sites. But if fans get involved and add things to the site to share with others, it can reduce the need for staff to constantly provide new content, Romero says.

In addition, many artists are simply turning their main Web site into a social network. Suretone Records director of new media Ashley Jex says the label is working with Flux to incorporate social networks into all its artists' sites to cater to the hardcore fans and keep them clicking around.

With Flux, which also has deals with Universal Music Group and Virgin, users create one profile and with one click they can join the network of any artist using it, rather than having to create new profiles for each. IceCube and DJ Pooh added an additional twist earlier this month, launching UVNTV, a broadband TV and social networking site where artists and brands can create their own channel and subscribers can create profiles and chat with each other. Artists get detailed information on their users and can sell advertisements, merchandise, downloads or even subscriptions to their channel. They also own and control the content.

"You know the demographic of anybody watching your content," DJ Pooh says. "You know what they watched and clicked on." The service is in beta and free to artists and is expected to formally launch in January 2009. So far, Snoop Dogg has a channel there, as does Ice Cube and such brands as Rock Star Games and Source.

Even more important: Fans seem to be buying directly from the sites. On Minogue's KylieKonnect, launched last fall through U.K.-based New Visions Mobile, nearly 25% of users have made a ringtone, download or merchandise purchase, company director Julia McNally says.
UPFRONT

BY LARS BRANDEL

BACARDI GETS INTO THE GROOVE

Liquor Brand Signs Groove Armada To 360 Deal

The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival will present a showcase curated by the Ponderosa Stomp Foundation, which is dedicated to revitalizing the careers of veteran musicians of blues, R&B, swamp pop and early rock ‘n’ roll.

They’re exposing heritage musicians in a lot of the areas we represent,” Jazz Fest director Quint Davis says, “so it made sense for us to work with them to bring some of those artists into our fold.

The Ponderosa Stomp Revue will take place April 26 in Jazz Fest’s Blues Tent. Performers include mid-century R&B/blues figures Tammy Lynn, Archie Bell, Roy Head and Dennis Binder backed by Lil’ Buck Sinegal & The Top Cats.

The Ponderosa Stomp, a project of nonprofit educational organization Mix Charities, will present its own annual event April 29-30 at House of Blues in New Orleans. Ronnie Spector, Roky Erickson, Dr. John and Mary Weiss of the Shangri-Las are on the bill for a pair of marathon concerts that will present dozens of influential acts, including “Creole Beethoven” Wardell Quezergue and the final show for R&B trumpet/producer Dave Bartholomew.

Best-known for discovering Fats Domino and producing his early hits, Bartholomew is a key figure in the transition from jump blues and big band swing to R&B and rock ‘n’ roll in the 50s. The Louisiana native headed up Lew Chudd’s Imperial Records beginning in 1949, turning out hits like “Blueberry Hill” and “I’m Walking,” along with Smiley Lewis “I Hear You Knockin’,” Lloyd Price’s “Loudly Miss Clady” and many more.

Growing Roots

Ponderosa Stomp Foundation Pairs With The New Orleans Jazz Fest

TAMMY LYNN and ROY HEAD will bring a little soul to this year’s Ponderosa Stomp.

Now 87, Bartholomew still appears with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, but says he’s ready for the Ponderosa Stomp to be his final show. “I’m getting up in age now,” he says by phone from his Florida home. “And I want to do it 100% while I’m still feeling real good.”

During the day on April 29 and 30, Spector, Lazy Lester, Harold Battiste and other artists will join such historians and scholars as Peter Guralnick and Holly George-Warren for interviews and panel discussions about the early days of rock at the Cabildo Museum.

These Ponderosa Stomp panels will be recorded and added to the permanent oral history archives of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Louisiana Museum.

“In the interest of preserving this legacy, we thought it would be a good idea to get some of these untold stories out,” Ponderosa Stomp founder Dr. Charles Ponder says.
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Orchestral Maneuvers

American Classical Recording Opportunities Expand For The Digital Age

Not long ago, American orchestras considered creating new recordings an almost impossible dream. Among the hurdles: longstanding union regulations that made the process unbearably expensive in the United States, a market flooded with mid-priced catalog reissues and budget recordings that made new full-priced titles less appealing to consumers, changed financial expectations at major labels (demanding that classical recordings earn their keep rather than be prestige money-losing projects) and the sales woes of the broader recording industry.

But crucially, in recent years, American orchestras have figured out how to start recording again—many using a digital-first, intensive DIY-minded set that, while already familiar to indie rock acts, was entirely new terrain to orchestras that in decades past had enjoyed lavish contracts.

One major force that has shifted the current is a set of new agreements between the musicians themselves and the management of many American and Canadian orchestras. In August 2006, more than two dozen orchestras signed a groundbreaking agreement with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), which represents the musicians, that has made recording costs far more tolerable. Some of the signatories—including the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO) and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra (ISO)—have since developed exciting in-house strategies and partnerships (see story, this page).

Under the terms of the agreement announced in 2006, live performances can now be recorded. (Past AFM agreements covered studio sessions and recording, and were structured as deals between the union and traditional record companies; this environment has not changed.)

As a result, there is a new financial model in place for signatories of the 2006 Agreement. Musicians participate in a revenue-sharing plan with reduced upfront payments, while retaining the power to veto recordings on a project-by-project basis. Furthermore, ownership of such recordings is retained by the orchestras themselves, but can be licensed out under short-term contracts to third parties, including traditional record companies. The 2000 agreement also explicitly covers digital sales.

Another agreement between management and the AFM made in 2000 stipulated the creation of "local Internet oversight committees" that include managers and musicians to deal with digital streaming and downloading opportunities. Without these two agreements, SLSO VP/orchestra manager Robert McGrath says, "these new initiatives were not possible or economically viable."

The ISO, however, also included several orchestras that had already hammered out individual agreements between management and musicians—for example, the New York Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, both of which had already teamed with Universal Classics to create a series of highly successful digital-only releases under the new "DG Orders" brand. (DG is the acronym for Deutsche Grammophon, the "Yellow Label" whose catalog, logo and name are legendary among classical aficionados.)

Other signatories—such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, which has partnered with Finnish independent label Ondine, and the Minnesota Orchestra, which has been releasing new recordings with Swedish label BIS—have helped pave the way for a renewed American recording presence overseas.

Seeing such successes has fueled a wave of orchestras into recording again. But management of such ensembles know that recording—whether to create new physical albums or digital releases—can't be undertaken with the expectation that it will turn a profit. In some ways, these American orchestras are long-known sham many top musicians are only beginning to learn: Live performances and touring are the performers' and organizations' bread and butter, while recordings are more promotional items than a source of real revenue. As the SLSO's McGrath says, "We're not really looking at this as a moneymaking proposition. We see it as a targeted PR expense; we're hoping to recoup on that."

ISO assistant director of communications Tim Northcutt agrees. "We really see this as an audience services effort," he says.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra VP of sales and marketing Kevin Ginsburg says, "We have very modest financial goals for our in-house label, CSO Resound, since we launched it last May. We received sponsor money to get the label off the ground, and our goal is that the label will eventually be self-sustaining. We're not there yet, though."

Consumer response has already been gratifying, however, according to CSO VP of orchestra and building operations Vanessa Moss. "Our first digital-only release, a recording of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, made iTunes' classical top 10 for three weeks," she says. It went "head to head with recordings of very popular repertory and with crossover albums."

The SLSO's plan, McGrath says, "is to have new releases available every few months. At least in the beginning, we'll be putting out a lot of contemporary music, because we believe that is where we will have the greatest impact, and where the SLSO already has carved out a niche for itself. One of the next releases will feature Stravinsky's Symphony in C."

The SLSO is making its recordings available online via the Independent Online Distribution Alliance. However, the Nonesuch label, which includes current American composer John Adams on its roster, will release and distribute a physical CD of an Adams program later this year.

Meanwhile, the ISO will make its streams and downloads available via InstantEncore.com, a recently launched digital distribution platform that helps artists and institutions make recorded performances available either for purchase or as freebies. The performers and institutions retain ownership and control of the content.

"We have the option of working with other digital stores in the future," Northcutt says. "but we aren't doing that for now, and only through InstantEncore.com will the recordings be available within 24-48 hours after our concert weekend has ended."

ISO VP/GM Tom Ramsey says that his organization sees its online venture as a way "reinforcing the live concert-going experience" as well as helping to spread buzz about the orchestra, which is already heard in popular radio broadcasts that are syndicated to more than 250 stations in 39 states.

"We're going to alert ticket buyers that they can log on to instantencore.com and listen to the concert they've just attended within a day or two," Ramsey adds. "We don't believe that the streaming and downloading will cannibalize our live ticket sales. Instead, it should enhance and extend our audience's involvement."
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Saguaro Road Rules

New Direct Holdings Imprint Breathes New Life Into Time Life

Direct Holdings, which mainly sells oldies music and video directly to consumers under the Time Life brand, is diversifying into issuing new music albums with the launch of imprint Saguaro Road Records.

In June, Saguaro Road will issue its first two releases, Rebecca Lynn Howard’s “No Rules” and Edwin McCain’s “Nobody’s Fault But Mine,” a homage to the great soul songs of the ’60s.

“The basic idea is to create a label that will issue albums by artists making music uniquely American, whether that be R&B, soul, country or Americana,” Direct Holdings senior VP of retail Mike Jason says.

Howard issued two albums on MCA Nashville earlier this decade, a self-titled album in 2000 that has sold 16,000 units and the 2002 release “Forgive,” which has sold 205,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Since then, as a songwriter, her songs have been recorded by Trisha Yearwood, Reba McEntire, Patty Loveless and John Michael Montgomery. Meanwhile, McCain has sold 2 million units across seven albums since his “Honorable Among Thieves” debut in 1995.

The creation of a label follows in the footsteps of the signing of Joan Osborne last year to Time Life, representing the first time the label issued new music. In May, Osborne issued “Breakfast in Bed,” an album of covers and original songs in a late-’60s/early-’70s soul style, which has scanned 42,000 units.

Time Life has long been one of the main players in the direct TV marketing of music. The company’s approach is unique in that it sells licensed music in a series—sometimes encompassing 10 CDs via commercials and infomercials. It also sells online through a database that contains 16 million names, including transactional, behavioral and demographic information.

It was a decade ago, when the company was still owned by Time Warner, that Time Life began to bring some of its packages to retail. In 2003, Time Life lost $50 million on sales of $550 million at a time when Time Warner was feeling pressure to boost profits. According to press reports, Time Warner unloaded the music operation in a cash-free deal that gave ownership of the Time Life music brand to ZelnickMedia and New York-based investment firm Ripplewood. In exchange, the new owners were to pay a performance-based earn-out and royalties to the media giant. As part of the deal, the company was renamed Direct Holdings, but it secured a 10-year license and a further 10-year option on the Time Life name.

In March 2007, Ripplewood bought out ZelnickMedia’s share of Direct Holdings’ Time Life operation for $56.7 million in cash and stock in a deal that valued the company at $91.8 million, according to documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. On the same day, a Ripplewood-led investment group paid $2.4 billion to acquire the Readers Digest Assn. and merged Direct Holdings into the giant publishing house.

In the year ending June 30, 2007, Direct Holdings had an $8 million operating loss on revenue of $252 million, according to the S-4 filings of the Readers Digest Assn.

Along the way, Direct Holdings formalized its approach to retail by signing a distribution deal with WEA. Overall, Billboard estimates Time Life’s retail sales at about $50 million, or 20% of its total volume.

“The Time Life brand is great—it means instant credibility—but we are not known for doing new music,” Jason says. “We wanted to reinforce our brand at retail in a more aggressive way.”

Consequently, Saguaro Road recordings will use the same traditional marketing methods of breaking new music via radio, publicity and online marketing. Those tasks will be carried out by the existing Direct Holdings staff, which includes Bas Hartong, a 10-plus-year A&R veteran, and VP of new product development Mike Mitchell. The label expects to issue eight to 10 new titles per year. Saguaro Road will get international distribution through Alternative Distribution Alliance Global.

“We are very enthusiastic to launch a new label, even though we know it’s a time when most people are struggling and retail is contracting,” Jason says. But the new label has the backing of Direct Holdings—which is now a profitable company.
Heh hath no fury like Billy Corgan scorned. In an exclusive interview, the Smashing Pumpkins frontman lashed out at Virgin Records in the wake of a lawsuit the band filed against the label for improperly using its likeness in a promotion with Amazon and Pepsi. “I’m sure they indicated to Pepsi that they had a right to do this, full well knowing they do not have the right,” he says of Virgin, which signed the Pumpkins in 1990. (The label does not comment on pending litigation.) Corgan is similarly peeved about the lack of attention to the Pumpkins’ back catalog, but with the band now a free agent following the dissolution of its deal with Warner Bros., he’s excited about the potential for disseminating music in new and creative ways.

1. How did you find out the Pumpkins were being used in this promotion?

Fuckin’, online. You get the, “Hey what’s this?” call from somebody. In our case, it’s not a gray area. We have precedents with Virgin where they have to come to us and ask, “Can we do this?” We have a paper trail. I think they hope people will just take the money and look the other way. At face value, it’s not a huge deal. But in terms of precedent, it is, because there will be much more of this coming.

2. Can you fill in some of the background on how this all went so sour?

We’ve gone to them many times in the last seven years to suggest, “What about this? What about that?” It’s always the same thing. They don’t want to properly maintain the catalog and do what’s necessary with a band of our legacy. At the same time, they then turn around and come to you with the most atinine proposals, which equate to, “Let us make a bunch of money off you, exploiting what we think is important, and squeeze a little bit more blood out of the stone without spending a dollar.” You have this antagonistic, “we don’t think you’re important” relationship. But they turn around and package you in a promotional deal.

3. Where does this leave the Pumpkins in terms of potential archival releases or reissuing the back catalog?

We’ve made offers to buy it. “Look, you have no interest. Let us just buy it.” But they won’t put a number on it. They’ve atrophied the catalog down so low that they probably hope we’ll crawl back and ask for cash.

I went into a Borders the other day in New Zealand (and) there was one record in the store of us. They don’t even ship catalog to where you’re touring. Look, it’s frustrating, all the missed opportunities. That’s a complaint a lot of artists have. To then turn around and be doing shit like this? They can’t have it both ways. They can’t tell you you’re not worth anything and then put you in a bundle.

4. Why are you able to put out any of the unreleased stuff yourself?

We own all the unreleased material. That was part of the renegotiated deal [that both parties agreed to in the late 90s]. For example, we rolled DATs on the entire [“Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness”] sessions. We have 160 hours of the band working on the album. Maybe three hours is relevant and maybe there’s only 10,000 people who want to hear those three hours, but, great! Maybe it’s an indie label or an online thing, but you find the right way to do it. That’s what’s exciting.

5. With the Pumpkins’ Warner Bros. deal up, what’s next?

When you have Irving Azoff riding shotgun, there’s a lot that’s possible. We’re excited. We’re looking at maybe releasing more of a rolling album or an album without walls. We may start to release pieces as we go along, and the album comes out over two to three years. It could provide unique opportunities in the sense of both how you market with different partners, be they online or retail, but also, you can live in the album. You can move in a direction that fans tend to be liking, rather than making it in a bubble.

It kind of seems like now, the album cycle never ends.

Yeah. It’s sort of a weird hybrid of when people used to release singles. The mainstream world has told you, “People only care about singles. Occasionally an album breaks through, but my sense is, people aren’t really listening to the whole record. Most people drag two or three songs into an iPod. You have to accept that. Is it worth trying to sell people things they don’t want and aren’t going to listen to? Maybe you can release singles, but for the fans have a totally different thing going on. You can release work that’s not caught up in those old restrictions of time, space or even format.

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Moving Beyond The One-Hit Wonder

Long-Term Branding Strategies Could Lead To Sustained Success

I just moderated a panel at South by Southwest titled "This Year's Model: Brand Labels." Many of the panelists and audience members felt that branding was just one—at least for now—viable way to get your music out there. Many argued that even if you hit with an ad placement, the Long Tail is nonexistent—and that you're at risk of becoming a one-hit wonder.

I know a classroom of students who would disagree that branding has a finite life span. For the final paper for the “Music in the Media” course I taught last semester at New York University's Steinhardt School of Music Professions, I asked the class of 42 students to provide a credible argument as to what would be viable business models for music five years from now.

Various theories were put forth with vigor and acumen, some original, some well-documented. The need to focus on subscription services; more emphasis on internet music as a "Grease" and "Saturday Night Fever" effective proliferation of music via TV (as exemplified by "American Idol"); labels disappearing and publishers taking on the recording and production of music; Apple and Microsoft duking it out for total control of all that is musical and digital; and, of course, many talked of brands assuming the role of the label and signing artists.

I say "of course" because it would make sense that any student would want to appeal to the interests of his or her professor's most common profession, something I, with repetition, spew alakmo at conferences, lectures and meetings.

However, several of the young minds seemed to transcend the brown nose. Some expressed fear and loathing of a future where they had to get a job with a brand or a corporation to sustain themselves in music—I can relate—yet others embraced it (I also can relate).

Some students asserted that labels were at one time brands on their own—Stax, Atlantic, early Motown, Sub Pop, Blue Note, Profile, Tommy Boy, Def Jam—where you knew you could rely on getting inspired, atonal, or edgy, or meaningful music and you couldn’t wait for the next record. But alas, these brands lost their identity, lost their resonance with their consumers. These formerly meaningful brands opted for the money, looking for a sound based on demographic metrics rather than creative economics.

But the ideas of those embracing branding's potential in the musical space were, to me, quite worthy of discussion. The students asked interesting follow-up questions: Why not align with a brand that belittles the lifestyle of consumers, instead of an entity that's looking to incite those qualities via its own staff of overly MBAd eggheads?

Why not put your song in a broadcast TV ad that would expose your music to millions of earbuds in a heavy rotation, where no matter if someone steals your music, you will get a sync fee and royalties?

Why not let the brand sponsor your tour and create a symbiosis whereby you sell your music and their business? Imagine if Pepsi signed Madonna Louise Ciccone in the late 1970s as she was paying her dues in the clubs of New York, or if Coke or Guinness met up with four young lads out of Dublin in 1976 who were passionately amassing a following?

Why not sell your music to millions of eyeballs through a chyron on TV, film or a banner ad that prompts consumers to go to a brand's proprietary Web site?

Why not have a patron like Beethoven, Mozart and Bach did, who would be able to supplement your touring income, pay for your technology updates for your studio, your rent, your car, your food—your sustenance?

To this final point, the students countered that people take on jobs that they never thought they'd ever do to sustain themselves. Artists commonly wait tables and caso, act in commercials, do voice-overs, usher at shows, teach, parallel at law firms, enter data at 3 a.m. for investment banks, bartend, dress up as clowns, etc. to get by. Writers have been known to "create" copy for ads, for industrials, for medical brochures, and proofread for magazines or pen prolific press releases. Painters paint murals and house, do graphics for magazines, for Web sites, for book covers and sleeves.

What it all comes down to, they argued, is sustaining yourself through your music—doing something that so many people try but never will be able to do. And maybe, just maybe, that can take you to the next level.

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The Raconteurs' album titled "Sustained Wonder," hit in 1976 when they were pursuing their dues in the clubs of New York, or if Coke or Guinness met up with four young lads out of Dublin in 1976 who were passionately amassing a following?

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File-sharing networks.

So by Friday night, Gnarls Barkley was in many, but not all, stores and on iTunes, and the Raconteurs had more than 400 street-date violation sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan. But most retail was honoring the March 25 street date.

Despite the gyrations caused by moving up street dates a la Gnarls Barkley and even shorter first-time notice to street-date availability a la the Raconteurs, merchants say they like the labels' newfound urgency.

In a statement, the Raconteurs said they made the move because "we wanted to get this record to fans, the press, radio, etc., all at the EXACT SAME TIME so that no one has an upper hand on anyone else regarding it's availability, reception or perception."

The last Raconteurs album scanned 469,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, with 61,000 of it coming in its first week of availability, the week ending May 21, 2006. In its first week of availability, the week ending May 14, 2006, Gnarls Barkley's "St Elsewhere" scanned 36,000 units and went on to shift 1.35 million. This time, without the long setup window, the duo scanned 31,000 units of "The Odd Couple," in the week ending March 23.

Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dressle labels the Raconteurs' decision as "just awesome."

As for Gnarls Barkley, "that's a great move. Four or five years ago, rap/hip-hop totally blew it. Those records would be all over the street in pirated versions, and yet the label was holding up the record, to build demand. Instead, the labels just taught the customer to buy the [counterfeit] album ahead of release for $5."

Sources say Atlantic/WEA shipped about 200,000 units of the Gnarls Barkley album while Warner Bros./WEA shipped about 150,000 of the Raconteurs set.

Some retailers are thrilled with the strategy, which they say prevents iTunes from having a huge advantage on brick-and-mortar stores. It certainly is more fun to put it out as soon as we get it than to have it available at iTunes for three weeks ahead of the rest of retail," Newbury Comics buyer Carl Mello says.

But in the case of Gnarls Barkley, nontraditional retail, nearly all of which was digital, was responsible for 26,000, or 84% of total scans, while the chains scanned 2,600 copies of the album and indie stores sold almost 1,500 units.

Nevertheless, Malik Mike Thorne of Booo Boo Records in San Luis Obispo, Calif., agrees with the rushed released strategies. "In this day of leakage and digital stores releasing albums ahead of physical product, I think a bump up in the release schedule is fine," he says. "Magazines and radio will catch up. In fact, what a nice treat to have a record before customers.

According to Warner Bros. head of sales Dave Stein, the label didn't have much more notice than the accounts. "We got the record [March 11] and started manufacturing," he says of the Raconteurs' disc. Of course, this isn't the first time Warner Bros. had to turn around on a dime and get a record out quickly. The same thing happened when Neil Young showed up at the label with his 2006 "Living With War" album. "From the time we met until the record was in stores took two-and-a-half weeks," Stein recalls.

"You can do these types of things when you have an artist and a chairman not focused on first-week sales but looking at the long term," he adds.

And although this type of rush setup may not be ideal for labels, retailers welcome further experimentation.

"Typically with major-label setup, the single is out a month or more at radio before we get anything to sell," Mello says. "All that time, people are coming in but we can't sell them anything because it's not out yet. Now, with the Raconteurs, they can hear the song on radio, come in and it's right there for purchase. Go figure. What will the labels think of next to sell music?"

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Variable Value

How Amie Street’s Pricing Model Drives Discovery

When the media started buzzing about digital music retailer Amie Street a few weeks ago, it wasn’t because of the site’s unique variable pricing model. It was because Ashley Dupre—the young woman at the center of the scandal that led to Eliot Spitzer’s recent resignation—is also a musician whose songs are posted for sale on the site. A week after the scandal broke, those songs received 450,550 listens. And though Amie Street does not release actual sales figures, that didn’t discourage certain outlets from speculating about how much money Dupre had made.

This dubious honor might be many people’s first exposure to Amie Street, but the site has been building momentum steadily since it launched in July 2006. Amazon stepped in to lead its Series A financing last summer. While the terms of the deal were not disclosed, the venture investor involved in Series A financing will generally purchase 25%-50% ownership stake.

More recently, the retailer added the Beggars Banquet catalog; it was already carrying a number of other labels, including Daytone Records and Nettwerk Music Group. And now, Amie Street is planning deals with a number of other labels and distributors, according to co-founder Josh Boltuch. He adds that the site has nearly 1 million tracks available for download and has sold “millions” of tracks since it went live. But beyond any numbers, the success of the site’s pricing model—where songs start at free and rise as high as $9.89, depending on the number of times they are purchased—has added an important voice and perspective to the ongoing debate of how much a song is worth.

“The value of anything is based upon what people are willing to pay for it,” says Layne Fox, director of sales and marketing at IRIS Distribution, which has had a worldwide distribution deal with Amie Street for the last few months. “Amie Street is driven by pure market forces, and that is really how you determine the value of a track.”

“Amie Street’s model is one potential wave in an ocean of pricing models,” Independent Online Distribution Alliance president Kevin Arnold says. “That said, they have certainly built a lot of momentum, and I think that the social networking component of their site is valuable.”

This networking comes in the forms of recommendations, which earn users credit to purchase more music if the price of the song they recommended increases. Users can also create individual pages, identify themselves as “fans” of an act and add friends.

“When customers who are active on the site and make lots of recommendations are rewarded with download credits and other bonuses. We also allow users to post their own musical content and promote their own bands and tours, which is something most of the other sites don’t,” Boltuch says.

“Our customers are the people who were previously using peer-to-peer networks,” he continues. “When we started, we noticed there was no synergy between people who stole music, who were often huge music fans and really invested in bands, and people who bought music on traditional sites, who were more casual listeners. Our model allows people who were using peer-to-peer networks to act as tastemakers and drive discovery while still not spending huge amounts of money.

The focus on taste-making was what attracted Beggars Group CEO Lesley Bleakley. “It is especially good for our developing artists,” she says, “because people aren’t being asked to take a huge chance financially in order to check them that fans won’t have to make. Big investments mean that some labels will reject the site and claim that it devalues music? eMusic lost a handful of labels last year amid similar complaints, and with some songs going for pennies, one can’t help wonder if Amie Street will face the same criticisms.

“Labels have certainly been surprised to find their releases for sale at such a low price, but no one has asked for their catalog to be taken down,” Fox says. “Overall, the response has been more favorable than I was expecting.”

Amie Street chief content officer Peter Asbill says, “Some of the labels we approach do have sticker shock right off the bat. But that resistance can usually be overcome with education about the way our model works. For most tracks, it generally makes sense for a label to move them at a lower price point.

“The hardest thing for labels to realize,” he adds, “is that tracks stay at static prices because no one is buying them.”

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Create And Innovate

Music, Mobile Sectors Must Continue To Work Together

The music industry is one-for-one when it comes to integrating with mobile devices. Indeed, the music and mobile industries scored a clear home run with ringtones—the perfect, if unexpected, convergence of mobile phones and music content. Since publishers first tried selling the market into oblivion in the late ’90s, ringtones—both polyphonic and those based on master recordings—have grown to more than $3 billion global industry and contributed to as much as half of labels’ digital revenue.

But that run is nearing its end. The market has matured and growth rates are not only flat, but expected to decline in the years to come, as music fans find other methods of personalizing their phones.

Proving far less successful are full-song downloads. The music industry had hoped the interest in mobile ringtones would extend to purchasing the full songs, but the practice has yet to grow past a niche activity.

Mobile operator Sprint hasn’t released download figures since last March, at which point it revealed a download total of 15 million tracks (which included promotional giveaways as well as paid downloads). Verizon Wireless has yet to release any numbers on its music store, and neither have AT&T’s partners eMusic and Napster Mobile.

“Music has been tough for the music industry so far,” independent wireless industry analyst Mark Lowenstein says. “I don’t know that mobile has been the white knight the music industry expected.”

The problem is that most mobile music services—as implemented—did not take advantage of the unique capabilities mobile phones had outside of instant access. The existing models are nothing more than wireless stores.

“There hasn’t been a whole lot of experimentation,” Jupiter Research analyst Michael Gartenberg says. “We’ve only seen a replica of the existing model, which is: Buy the song at 99 cents and try the same thing in the mobile space.”

As the industry gears up for round three, expect the first stage to consist of bundling various types of music content into one mobile download rather than spreading them about into separate sales. This is the best way to spur sales of new formats, like ringback tones. A recent IDC study predicts that there will be 40 million ringback-tone subscribers by 2010—a pretty aggressive estimate, given that they’ve failed to ignite the imagination of U.S. mobile operators the way they did Asian users.

But even more necessary is moving away from mobile as a retail environment and moving toward using music as the centerpiece of a community. Why not allow fans to share music recommendations and gift tracks, and embed sales links into mobile social networks and artist-specific fan clubs so new music can be discovered and purchased as easily from one fan’s mobile profile as they can today from MySpace?

But rather than just pounce on all the negative developments, let’s give credit to the few companies actively making these things happen. On the carrier end, Verizon Wirelessly is easily ahead of its competitors as it relates to mobile music. It was the first operator to bundle ringbacks and ringtones together, the only carrier to link its song ID service directly to its music download service, and does more music advertising than all the other U.S. operators combined.

It’s also developing a potentially groundbreaking service with Rhapsody, the music subscription joint venture between MTV and RealNetworks. Details have been slow to emerge, but RealNetworks CEO Rob Glaser promises to shed at least some more light on the situation at the Mobile Entertainment Live! conference this week in Las Vegas.

Rokus also should go to Nokia, which is leading the way among handset manufacturers offering entertainment services of their own (see story, page 32) rather than relying on operators to do all the work. Its Comes With Music service is a groundbreaking experiment that aims to embed the cost of a year’s music subscription into the price of a mobile phone in order to appease users accustomed to music being free yet still pay rights holders for their content. Universal Music Group was the first to get onboard, and EMI Music Group is expected to be next. They’re hardly alone.

“We fundamentally like the concept of an attachment sale of content at the point of sale for the device,” Warner Music Group executive VP of digital strategy and business development Michael Nash says.

Now, whether the music and mobile sectors tie it to the next level depends on how well they can innovate together.

“We’re going to see more experiments as people try to leverage the unique aspects of mobile to find new business models,” Gartenberg says. “As long as Apple isn’t into subscription services and other innovations, you’re going to see more companies trying to find ways to do this.”

For 24/7 digital news and analysis, see billboard.biz/digital.

The newcomer to this week’s top 10 is Leon Lewis’s “Bleeding Love,” which ranks 10-7. “Love” nearly doubles its output as it shifts 31,000 downloads.

Bits & Briefs

ONLINE, ONSTAGE
Live music and digital distribution are hot concepts in today’s music industry. Newcomer SoundKick hopes to capitalize on both with its live music event recommendation site. The service scans users’ music libraries and then alerts them when any matching artist is scheduled to appear in their town. It also provides concert recommendations based on the tastes of other users with similar libraries and links to 16 different vendors for users to buy tickets. Other features include a line-graph comparison of a band’s relative popularity on MySpace, widgets for users to promote tours on their blog or Web site and a promotion tool for blogs.

THE PLAYER ON DECK
SanDisk’s latest MP3 player, the Sansa Fuze, will find its way to retail shelves in April. The device works with all music subscription services, such as Rhapsody and Napster, and carries a storage capacity between 2 GB and 8 GB. It also features a microSD memory slot that can be used to transfer music, video and photos to the device. FM radio included.

GAME POINTS
While “Guitar Hero” helps gamers hone their strumming chops, this May will see the introduction of the latest “SingStar” installment, coming to PlayStation 3 for the first time. The karaoke game lets players sing along to songs while watching the official video using an included USB microphone. It also will make additional songs available for sale in the SingStar, which is part of the PlayStation Network. In other videogame news, Chuck D has agreed to provide all-in-game commentary for “NBA Ballers: Chosen One.” The game will also feature an all-original hip-hop score created by producer Just Blaze, rather than licensed tracks. The game comes out April 21.

Round Sound

“Small, round and beautiful!” can describe all manner of objects, but in this case the words apply to the Orbi line of handheld speakers from Orb Audio.

A mixture of art and audio, the Orb product features sound components like high-carbon steel satellite speakers and such advanced technology as earth magnets to deliver a rich musical experience—as well as stylish elements like handcrafted metallic finishes and 4-inch glass domes.

What’s more, each set of speakers is modular and upgradable, meaning users can create a custom speaker system containing anywhere from one to four orbs and upgrade at any time.

The sound system is available only from orbaudio.com directly at $239 for a “Quick Pack” of two satellite speakers, or up to $1,000 for five speakers, subwoofer and a stand.

www.americanradiohistory.com
What The F*ck?

The U.S. Supremes Take On Indecency

When news broke that the U.S. Supreme Court will hear an FCC indecency case this fall, I couldn’t help but think of Janet Jackson’s infamous Super Bowl Flash of her bare breast. It’s been 10 years since the high Court has reviewed indecency standards. Could the Supremes be ready to take on such pranks?

But the specific case they’ll review is not about the B-Flash. It’s about the F-word, the B-word, the S-word and others.

In 2006, Fox Television Stations, CBS Broadcasting and ABC petitioned the federal Court of Appeals in New York, challenging the FCC’s notices of liability in connection with four broadcasts: Fox’s Billboard Music Awards in 2002 and 2003, ABC’s “NYPD Blue” and CBS’ “The Early Show.”

“People have been telling me I’m on the way out every year, right? So fuck ‘em,” Cher had said during a Billboard Music Award acceptance speech.

Nicole Richie, who was then co-starring in “The Simple Life,” talked about the show when presenting an award, “Have you ever tried to get cow shit out of a Prada purse? It’s not so fucking simple.”

Characters in various episodes of “NYPD Blue” used words like “bullshit,” “dick” and “dickhead.” And a “Survivor: Vanuatu” contestant during a live interview on “The Early Show” referred to a fellow contestant as a “bullshitter.”

The FCC’s “notice of apparent liability” against Fox didn’t come until a November 2006 order. But between 2002 and 2006, the FCC had made some changes.

In 2003, it was OK at first for U2’s Bono to utter, during his acceptance speech on an NBC live broadcast of the Golden Globes Awards, “This is really, really, fucking brilliant.”

The FCC’s enforcement bureau rejected complaints because of the way the word “fucking” was used, and because the utterance was fleeting and isolated.

Under federal law, whoever utters any “obscene, indecent or profane language” on a broadcast will be fined or imprisoned or both. But in 2001, the FCC clarified indecency standards, ruling that, to be indecent, the agency must find that the material describes or depicts “sexual or excretory organs or activities” and that the broadcast is “patently offensive” as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium.

Whether the material was patently offensive depended on the explicit or graphic nature of the description or depiction; whether the material appeared to “pander,” was used to “initiate” or was presented for its “shock value”; and whether the material dwelled on or repeated at length the descriptions. If the material dwelled on the descriptions, it would be indecent. If it was “fleeting and isolated,” it would not be indecent.

But the decision on the Golden Globes broadcast changed later in 2003 when the full commission got together.

“The F-word is one of the most vulgar, graphic and explicit descriptions of sexual activity in the English language.” the commissioners wrote. Use of the word was patently offensive under any contemporary community standards. Whether use of the word was fleeting and isolated, they ruled, was irrelevant.

The FCC then overruled all prior decisions in which fleeting use of an expulsive was held not indecent. And the commission went further. Using the word wasn’t just indecent, it was profane.

The agency put broadcasters on notice that broadcasting the F-word would subject them to fines. It suggested using delay technology for live broadcasts.

According to the Court of Appeals opinion last summer in the current Fox case, NBC and other networks filed a petition with the FCC to reconsider the Golden Globes order. They challenged the legality of the new policy.

But the petitions “have been pending for more than two years without any action by the FCC,” the court wrote. And the agency moved forward enforcing its new policy.

In the Fox case, the court agreed with the networks that the FCC’s regulation of “fleeting expletives” was a dramatic change in agency policy. “The FCC has made a 180-degree turn regarding its treatment of fleeting expletives without providing a reasoned explanation justifying the about-face,” the court wrote. It must have sufficient reasons to legally support the change.

The FCC argued that to grant an automatic exemption for isolated or fleeting expletives unfairly forces viewers “to take the first blow” before turning off the station.

How the Supreme Court will ultimately rule is anyone’s call. But one thing is highly likely. Chief Justice John Roberts was probably watching that Super Bowl game when Jackson flashed her stash. He was captain of his Indiana high school football team.

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One Less Indie

Live Nation Snaps Up Fantasma Productions

Jon Stoll remained an independent promoter until he died, but the company he founded, Fantasma Productions in West Palm Beach, Fla., is now effectively divided between the two big corporate promoters, AEG Live and Live Nation.

Live Nation has the Fantasma name, signing a binding letter of intent to purchase the majority of the live entertainment assets of the late promoter, who died Jan. 12 at 54 after an extended illness. (Billboard.biz, March 12)

The Live Nation/Fantasma deal includes the 1,500-capacity Mizner Park Amphitheater in Boca Raton, Fla., and the 2,900-capacity Pompano Beach (Fla.) Amphitheater, as well as the Fantasma name, current inventory of shows and two Fantasma-produced music festivals. Lori Stoll, Jon Stoll's widow and a principal in Fantasma, will be employed by Live Nation in a senior position in the company's Florida office and maintain a percentage ownership in the business for several years. She will also maintain ownership of the Fantasma Tours International booking agency.

Meanwhile, AEG Live has brought into the fold some key members of the old Fantasma crew, including 30-year talent buyer/executive VP John Valentino, who was named senior VP of AEG's Florida office (Billboard.biz, March 18).

Based in West Palm Beach, Valentino is joined at AEG Live by former Fantasma co-workers George Perley, director of production/office manager/comptroller Kathy Bohan, and marketing manager Amanda Ances.

Sources indicate that the disposition of Stoll's concert assets was, like so much of the business today, hotly contested between Live Nation and AEG Live. While many people have opinions on how it shook out, one can ultimately only wonder what Jon Stoll himself might think of all this. His 22-year-old son told the Palm Beach Post, "My dad was an independent kind of guy. I think this sale would've been tough on my dad."

As the industry consolidated and all the regional promoters with real estate assets were snapped up, Stoll, like most independents that did not sell, was public about his feelings that consolidation was bad for the touring business.

Still, Stoll was able to survive and thrive under Fantasma by developing his own real estate and craftily choosing his markets and shows. "There are very few of us," Stoll told me in 2001, "and the only ones that will survive are the ones that are super aggressive, super creative and willing to take risks and move into markets we believe are underserved.

It now looks like South Florida concertgoers are going to be superserved.

ON YOUR FEET: Nashville rock band Walk the West will reunite for one show May 9 at Nashville's Exit/In. The band—former schoolmates Paul Kirby, Richard Ice and brothers Will and John Golemon—signed to Capitol in the mid-'90s and toured nationally before focusing on what started out as a side project, the Cactus Brothers. That country-rock-oriented outfit recorded two albums for Liberty, a division of Capitol Nashville, and toured extensively before disbanding in the late '90s.

But Walk the West, one of Nashville's most popular live acts of the era, never got the kind of sendoff its fans were hoping for. According to guitarist Will Golemon, renewed interest in such peer acts as Jason & the Scorchers, Government Cheese, Royal Court of China, the Shakers, Webb Wilder and White Animals prompted the band's principals to pounce on last engagement.

"I made the Walk the West MySpace page about a year ago when I started seeing all the bands we used to play with pop up on there," Golemon says. "I was overwhelmed with the response it got. A lot of people wanted us to play again, so we decided to give them a show for old times' sake. It's for the fans. I hope they have a blast."
LE TECKTONIK, C'EST CHIC!
Furious New Dance Brand Sweeps France

PARIS—Enter any nightclub in Paris right now, and chances are you’ll bump into a group of weird-looking teenagers, seemingly trying to rip their own heads off. If so, don’t worry—you have just entered the world of Tecktonik.

This electro-dance scene was born in 2000 at Paris nightclub Metropolis, and has gradually become an all-encompassing teenage lifestyle, incorporating a highly distinctive dance and dress code (skinny-jeans trousers and tight T-shirts, day-glo colors and punk-inspired spiky haircuts). It’s now ubiquitous in France: on TV, in newspapers and magazines, in discos, even in schools.

EMI France international development director Laurence Muller compares it to hip-hop. “It involves fashion, visuals, music and dance,” he says, “with maybe graphic arts a bit behind.”

And it’s also a brand in the purest sense of the word. “Tecktonik” and “TCK” are official trademarks, owned by Cyril Blanc and Alexandre Barouzdin, the two electro dancers who, eight years ago, launched Tecktonik Killer club nights that mixed various electronic music styles with synthesized, repetitive voices and a high BPM rate.

“At first, we protected the name to prevent other nightclubs advertising Tecktonik nights,” Barouzdin says. “We did not mean to create a brand.”

Now, however, a mind-boggling range of official Tecktonik products are available: from music compilations and a Sony Ericsson mobile handset (due in April) to clothes, jewelry, an energy-drink and even two official hair salons.

Blanc and Barouzdin also initiated the exaggerated arm and head-gesture-filled dance, which spread through battles at Metropolis and then online, when dancers started posting their performances on video-sharing sites including YouTube. Dailymotion and Skyblog.

“Tecktonik videos are among the most-watched on our service,” Dailymotion content director Martin Rogard says. He says traffic first spiked in March 2007 and then exploded with the release of Mondotek’s hit “Alive” (Mercury/Universal) in November. The official posting of the “Alive” video alone has attracted more than 1.9 million views. Around the same time, mainstream pop artists Lorie and Velle incorporated the dance into their videos as Tecktonik hit the mainstream.

Unlike many musical movements. Tecktonik is anti-drugs and -alcohol, with Frédéric Pau, PD of No. 1 France music radio network NRJ, praising it as “a healthy movement, with a good spirit.” NRJ is organizing a Tecktonik tour, expected this summer.

Barouzdin and Blanc, who decline to reveal financial details, have licensed their brand worldwide to EMI Music France for music-related products. TF1 Entreprises—a division of brand French TV channel TF1—acts as Tecktonik’s agent for distributing licenses for other products.

EMI France says its latest genre compilation, “Tecktonik/Vol. 4,” is the most successful yet. The album, featuring such local acts as Hardrox and Dim Chris alongside international DJ/mixers including U.S.-based Robbie Rivera and Italy’s Paolo Boglioni, has shipped more than 230,000 copies since its December release, according to EMI. “Vol. 5” is due April 21 and will include a DVD featuring dance tips.

Meanwhile, TF1 Entreprises deputy director Hubert Taieb says it is working on deals for Tecktonik-branded products including shoes, hair gel, luggage and videogames.

But despite the trademark protection for the Tecktonik name, the popularity of the movement means all the other majors and several indies have already either released electro-dance compilations targeting Tecktonik fans, or are about to.

“We don’t need the word ‘Tecktonik,’” says Philippe Solas, marketing director at Mercury France, which released Mondotek’s “Alive.” “[The style of] dance says enough by itself.”

Barouzdin remains sanguine about the competition.

“Successes such as Mondotek help the movement live,” he says. “The brand Tecktonik is just a quality label.”

He also has plans to help the Tecktonik eagle symbol spread its wings internationally. Tecktonik Killer nights have already taken place in Morocco, Belgium and Switzerland; there are negotiations for events in Hungary, Russia and Japan.

Meanwhile, “Tecktonik/Vol. 4” has been rolling out internationally since Feb. 18, and international artists are showing interest. Moby’s single “Disco Lies” (Mute) was remixed by Tecktonik DJ Dim Chris, while a video shot by Dailymotion shows Janet Jackson discovering the dance.

“We have made her choreography proposals,” says Barouzdin, who also claims interest from Kanye West and Madonna.

Pau has no doubt the movement will eventually catch on globally.

“All it needs,” he says, “is one international artist or DJ to embrace it.”

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TONIK FOR THE TROOPS
Your Guide To Tecktonik’s Main Players

MONDOTEK
Hometown: Essen, Germany
Role: Recording artists/DJs
Current projects: Touring in France and abroad, preparing new single.
Booking agent: Hypetraxx (Dietwil, France) Mondotek is German-born Danny Daagard and Steve Morane, signed to French label Hypetraxx, with Polish record label Flash Music handling international rights. Its single, “Alive,” is licensed to Mercury/Universal in France, which first spotted it in amateur Tecktonik videos online. Mercury made it the first major Tecktonik hit—despite not being able to mention the trademarked name—and says it has shipped 400,000 copies to date.

DIM CHRIS
Hometown: Paris
Role: Recording artists/DJ
Current projects: Preparing upcoming album, DJ’ing in clubs.
Booking agent: DJ Center (Paris)
At 25, Dim Chris has recorded an official Tecktonik single, “Sucker” (EMI), with 71,000 units shipped since its December release. Having already given Moby a Tecktonik makeover, Dim Chris has upcoming remix projects with David Vendetta, Laurent Wolf and Lorie.

EKLIESIAT
Hometown: Paris
Role: Dance team
Current projects: The “Tecktonik/Vol. 4” DVD, due for April release on EMI.
Booking agent: Gravity (Paris)
While there are numerous dance teams associated with the Tecktonik movement, Ekliesiat is the official dance squad. Composed of 15 dancers, male and female, they perform at Tecktonik events throughout France and are in increasing demand abroad.

—AP
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WALKING IN THE SAND

Dubai's Status As Tour Pick Ups Up Steam

LONDON—As a widening stream of top Western artists rolls into Dubai, key players from the live business have dropped anchor in the United Arab Emirates city-state, anticipating its emergence as a major touring stopover.

Dubai's recent Desert Rock Festival drew international talent such as VELVET REVOLVER.

Dubai's status took a significant upswing this summer, with the city hosting its first Desert Rock Festival, which featured international acts from the United States, Europe, and South America. This was followed by the Dubai Desert Rock Festival in November, which saw even more international acts perform. The festival became a highlight of Dubai's cultural calendar, drawing music fans from around the world.

The event was organized by AEG, a leading live entertainment company, which has a significant presence in the Middle East. AEG's involvement has helped to establish the city as a major touring destination, with many of its key players now based in Dubai.

One of the key players is Thomas Ovesen, the CEO of Live Nation Middle East, who has been involved in the region's live music scene for many years. Ovesen says that Dubai is on the cusp of becoming a major tourism destination, with its rich cultural heritage and growing economy.

"Dubai is on the verge of becoming a major tourist destination," Ovesen says. "We've seen a significant increase in interest from tourists and music fans in recent years, and we expect this trend to continue."
Collateral Damage
Troubles Mount For Loan-Strapped Handleman

Three weeks ago I questioned whether the Handleman Co. deserved to be No. 1 on the industry's watch list. While I still see enough positive numbers to allow the Troy, Mich., based rackjobber plenty of wiggle room, there is no doubt the company's problems have mounted, leaving it right behind the 8-ball.

My earlier column was before the company—which supplies music to Wal-Mart and Knart—released its third-quarter financial information March 31. For the nine-month period ended Jan. 31, Handleman lost $31.2 million, or $1.54 per diluted share, on sales of $936.6 million.

Since then, its stock price has dwindled to 24 cents per share as of March 21 (from a 52-week high of $7.76), leaving it with a market capitalization of less than $3 million. To make matters worse, Handleman suffered the humiliation of having its stock delisted from the New York Stock Exchange March 25, because it no longer meets the average $25 million market capitalization requirement to qualify for listing.

But the company's biggest problem is that it is in default of a loan covenant and only has a waiver until May 31 to resolve the situation. If that doesn't happen, lender Silver Point Finance could accelerate payment, if the company cannot raise additional funds, then its ability to continue as a "going concern" would be in doubt. The fact that Handleman had to report this in its third quarter-10-Q has the industry extremely nervous.

Here's how the situation lays out. On Jan. 31, Handleman had drawn down $90 million from its term loan and the collateral formula required the secured assets backing that borrowing to equal $117.9 million. But the collateral on hand actually fell short, as the formula counted only $109.9 million in secured assets.

The problem, according to Handleman CEO Al Koch, is that the Handleman loan agreement is defective in that it doesn't count cash as part of the collateral. On Jan. 31, Handleman's balance sheet showed $32.4 million in cash.

When other wholesalers are contacted, they say a secured loan that doesn't count cash is just plain screwy. Even more unexplainable, Koch adds that even if it had used cash to pay down the loan, it would not have cured the default. That's why Koch is trying to get the loan changed so that cash is counted.

Its loan agreement with Silver Point Finance is divided into three tranches: Term loan A is for $50 million; term loan B is for $40 million, and the revolving credit facility is for $50 million. As of Jan. 31, Handleman had tapped all of term loan A and B, and none of the revolving.

The entire Silver Point loan was due to mature in April 2012, until Handleman tripped up the collateral covenant. While it notified Silver Point two months ahead of time that it would soon have a problem as account receivables (collateral) are paid off and become cash, the bank wanted to see the company's 2009 business plan and working capital requirement before it agrees to extend the loan. Handleman says it should have those projections completed by the end of March.

Meanwhile, the defective loan structure "has caused a great deal of anxiety for us, our customers and suppliers," Koch says. Nevertheless, he adds, "I am highly confident I will be able to achieve an amendment before May 31."

In the meantime, the loan amounts and cash on hand have changed since the Jan. 31 balance sheet. Since then, Handleman has paid down its debt to $72 million, with a $35 million availability. Meanwhile, cash on hand has grown to $55 million. That means the company has plenty of liquidity, at least until May 31.

Also as part of its latest amendment, Handleman has agreed to hire an investment banker to shop Crave, a videogame wholesale operation that accounted for $206 million in sales, or 21.5% of Handleman's total sales, for the first nine months of the company's fiscal year.

Gives its cash situation and the potential for selling a desirable asset like Crave, in a different marketplace—a logical marketplace—vendors would consider Handleman a minor problem. But in a marketplace where "music" is a bad word and "physical music" is a curse word, everyone is paranoid that the banks will act illogically and cause a bankruptcy where one doesn't have to occur. It wouldn't be the first time this has happened.

If worse comes to worst, Koch says, Handleman would work with its accounts to ensure an orderly transition to protect inventory value and to make sure creditors are covered. If a Chapter 11 filing is forced, it looks like Handleman has plenty of assets to assure a large—if not total—recovery by all creditors.

The Jan. 31 spreadsheet shows total liabilities at $275 million, while receivables, inventory and cash add up to about $325 million.

Common sense says the loan situation gets resolved. Then, Koch moves on to his next dilemma: "We need to make an assessment on whether Handleman should acquire something, be acquired or continue to go it alone" to yield the greatest return to investors. —

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**Dark Return**

**Eight Years Later, DLG Returns—with a Twist**

In 1996, Grammy Award-winning producer Sergio George, riding high on the success of Marc Anthony, came up with a novel concept for a pop/urban tropical group: two singers and a rapper, all Dominicans and Puerto Ricans from New York. Their name? DLG, an acronym for Dark Latin Groove.

"I thought there was a void of dark-skinned Latinos doing music," says George, who is a black Hispanic. "So, I made a group with three ugly black dudes," he says with a laugh.

To conceptualize how revolutionary this was, think back to a time when there was a reggaetón, no "urban" stations, no TV/radio and virtually no concept at all of Latin hip-hop or rap.

George took his trio to Sony, which—after George turned down requests to get rid of the rapper—released DLG’s debut album, “Dark Latin Groove.”

The album sold nearly 100,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and two subsequent releases topped the 100,000 mark each (which, considering how much SoundScan undercounts Latin at the time, probably translates to double that).

"A lot of the reason it was successful, aside from the sound, was the look," George says. "People weren’t expecting something to look like that in commercial radio. Three black dudes doing mellow pop/urban music.”

And then, original members James DaBarba, Fragancia and singer Huey Dunbar split up, with Dunbar then pursuing a solo career.

But George retained the rights to the DLG name, waiting for the right time to relaunch his band.

Now, eight years since its last album, DLG will release “Renacer” April 15 on La Calle/Univision Records.

With a twist.

After Dunbar retired from music, George scouted for a singer, preferably female, to avoid comparisons with Dunbar. Last year, via MySpace, he encountered a sultry vocalist called Miss Ya Ya. Now, the makeup of the new DLG resembles that of the soon-to-be-released D.E.Y., whose singer is also female.

Unlike the D.E.Y, however, DLG will not sing in English, even though all its members were born and raised in the United States.

"Because Latin radio won’t play it," George says. "And we’re a Latin label.”

Radio is playing first single "Quiero Decirte Que Te Amo," a cover of a track originally recorded by Laura Pausini. This week it is No. 20 on Billboard’s Tropical Airplay chart.

“It’s definitely a tropical product,” La Calle managing director George Zamora says of the entire album and the song.

However, he says, a more urban mix with reggae elements will be delivered to urban radio this week while a second single, “Toro Maru,” is being worked at a club level.

The strategy is an example of the street marketing and mainstream elements that the DLG campaign incorporates.

As a Univision product, the group will get spots on the Univision network and heavy-duty promotion cross-country, but it is also being worked by street teams in places as disparate as New York and North Carolina, where a large contingent of DLG fans have been awaiting the group’s return.

Zamora, who signed the original DLG when he was head of Sony Discos, now has high hopes for the new version, releasing at a time when tropical music is making a comeback, and when it’s common to have black dudes singing Latin fare.

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**QUESTIONS with Javier Ceriani**

by LEILA COBO

The images plastered on Miami buses show Javier Ceriani—long, blond hair flowing, wearing fur, rhinestone glasses and diamonds. "Glamour, papa, glamour!” screams the quote above his head.

Ceriani is the host of “Zona Cero” (Ground Zero), the popular morning radio show on WCMQ (Clasica 92.3 FM), Miami’s fourth-rated station.

With his flamboyant sense of fashion and outrageously counter-coupled, coupled with keen intelligence and willingness to tackle a broad range of issues, Ceriani has broken the mold of what a Latin radio host should look or sound like.

1. Your show is completely different from other Spanish-language morning radio. Why is it successful?

In the mornings, almost everybody bets on one thing. I want to transcend by improving the world, criticizing and providing the audience a space to vent their opinions. It’s Ground Zero. I have people from many countries, many political beliefs. Every morning we have a debate, and at the end, we laugh together. We don’t screen calls. That excites and amuses me. I never know how people will respond.

2. Who listens to you?

I never think of my target audience. I’ll sometimes play dance music from Ibiza, which I know a little old lady won’t appreciate. But she puts up with it because she likes another portion of the show. It’s a stretch for them. It’s not a comfortable show. It’s like a roller coaster that takes them out of their comfort zone.

3. You’ve spoken about “shock moments.” What are they?

I picture them like giant alarm clocks. They get used to a same position, and I toss these comments out there to shake things up. I change the mood suddenly and drastically. I’ll switch from a funny topic to a serious one. Or I get angry and go to commercials. It’s like an emotional blender.

4. How important is music in your show?

It’s fundamental. I don’t only play songs, but every segment has a musical mood. I have romantic songs, I have panic songs. You can’t separate the conversation from the music. I play all kinds of music—reggaetón, salsa, merengue, classical music—and I try to have a musical guest every morning. I love to bring in new acts. As long as I like the music, as long as it moves me, it can be on the show.

5. Lately you’ve tackled some very serious issues.

I’ve been calling a lot for leadership and change. I give out metaphors—that some people are vultures and others are eagles—looking for a call to altruism, to action. I believe people, and Latinos in particular, listen to radio alone. That radio moment, especially for Latinos, is sacred. That’s why music is so important, especially for immigrants. It’s their inspiration.

6. You have so many people. Who are you, finally?

I’m all of them, and I’m conscious of all my parts. A human being is perverse, sensitive, serious, acerbic, cruel, generous. I think that’s the best thing about me. I explore all the possibilities, even if I don’t like them. And everything that I live, I put out on the air.

Ceriani will speak April 8 at the “Morning Radio in the Post-Impas” panel during the Billboard Latin Music Conference. For news and developments relating to the Billboard Latin Music Awards, see billboardcharts.com.---

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**The Expanding Channel**

**Si TV Finding Growth With Older Demographic**

Latin-focused channel Si TV is setting itself apart in the bilingual entertainment space this spring by unveiling a new look and new online communities.

But the channel also hopes to attract advertisers by aiming for an older audience with more spending power.

The 4-year-old English-language network, which is distributed in about 16.5 million homes via cable and satellite, is seen in top Hispanic markets including Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Houston. The independent channel, whose investors include Time Warner, satellite company EchoStar and various venture capital firms, is expected to more than double its net revenue over last year to more than $30 million this year, according to research firm SNL Kagan.

Si TV CEO Michael Schwimmer wouldn’t confirm those figures, but says they were “not far off” in terms of percentage growth.

Schwimmer says Si TV’s target viewers are in their early 20s, with a less bilingual and less music-heavy focus than other Latin youth channels. “Music is huge in the Latino community,” Schwimmer says, citing such music-focused Si TV programs as “The Drop” and “Flow & Tell.” “But for us to focus only on music would be to ignore where young Latinos spend their time. Comedy is right up there as a top genre that Latinos enjoy. I don’t look at mun2 or MTV Tr3s as competition. We’re targeting adults with higher income levels as well as a very different programing format.”

Key advertisers include Volkswagen, CoverGirl and Payless, which will have their products integrated in competition shows “Jamin’ 2” and “Model Latina” as well as digital promotions.

The channel, whose schedule consists of about 60% original programming, will soon unveil a new-on-air look that says is inspired by Latino “pop art and iconography.”

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

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At first glance, Nokia’s Tero Ojanpera and Dave Stewart may seem like an odd pair. As executive VP of entertainment and communities for Nokia, Ojanpera oversees all of the company’s music, gaming, video and social networking initiatives, including the Nokia Music Store and Comes With Music initiatives.

Meanwhile Stewart is a musician/producer best-known as one-half of the Eurythmics, who most recently co-produced Ringo Starr’s new album, “Liverpool 8.” In February, Stewart was named founding member of Nokia’s new Artist Advisory Council, an initiative created to forge an artist-friendly environment within the giant handset manufacturer.

However, the two have more in common that meets the eye. Stewart has strong ideas on how technology and digital business models should benefit acts and their fans, and, in fact, was the driving force behind the council’s creation. Ojanpera, meanwhile, aims to combine Nokia’s entertainment content services with its social networking capabilities to help fans and artists better-connect and communicate to promote and distribute new content.

For Nokia, the effort is central to its reinvention from a handset vendor with 40% of the global mobile phone market share to a Web services company. For Stewart, the technologies of today and tomorrow represent a new stage of creative and professional development he hopes to share with not only musicians, but also filmmakers and others in the creative community. Together, the two represent a new stage in the convergence between the music and entertainment industries.

Can you give us a better idea what the vision of the Artist Advisory Council is?

Dave Stewart: It’s a vision of the future where people would want to dig deeper in the world of an artist and where artists would be willing to be more experimental because the payment systems would be more transparent and different than they are today. It’s about artists linking together and being collaborative.

Tero Ojanpera: If you think about the artist’s point of view, it’s not about selling one track or selling a ringtone or a wallpaper. It’s about how you create a discovery mechanism that represents the artist in a way that gives justice to their work. It’s not just putting something online in a digital format—the technology will enable us to make a rich world where things come together in a really new fashion.

So how do you plan to achieve this?

Ojanpera: At this point it’s about understanding the artist and understanding the consumer and making that connection. The rest will sort itself out. It may need some facilitation, but we should worry about those two things first. If you can bring value to the consumer and to the creative talent, I’m sure we will do well.

Stewart: Imagine a future where you have a little cloud above your head and in that is everything you think is groovy, and you can carry that along with you and pull it down to either watch or share—and it’s all controlled by this little device in your pocket. The other part of it is that there are artists all over the world who don’t want to share much more than what they can control—there are filmmakers who want to make 10-minute short films. So you can’t put everything into one bag. Whatever you can do is create a facility that can put all that work—whatever it is—into a context and in a way which consumers can access it.

Dave, what is your perspective as an artist on the current digital/mobile business constructs?

Stewart: What I’m talking about is dropping a neutron bomb on the old paradigm of the entertainment industry and the way in which it functions. It’s completely insane. In America, it’s all gotten completely stranglehold by these providers. Nobody ever talked to artists about what they wanted to do. Steve Jobs didn’t talk to me about selling music online—it just went straight to the music labels.

Artists make their work, and people come along and treat it like something you can chop up into bits and sell into other bits. They say ringtones is a $3 billion business; I still haven’t seen one cent on a “Sweet Dreams” download. There’s always been a bit of fogy accounting. There’s ways and means through technology and through common sense to create a way in which the consumer gets a fair deal and the creator gets a fair deal and business is good.

So it sounds like the vision is to try to use mobile phones as a way of distributing content directly to fans without all the other layers. Stewart: I’m not going to try to do that. I am going to do it. It’s also about trying to get artists to understand that, in the new world, it’s not about making an album or a film that has to fit the exact demographic and exact length. It’s going to be a completely different world. I can send you clips of what I’m working on and you can pre-order it. There’s a dialogue going on so you actually know who your fans are and where they are.

So what’s the recruitment process for other artists to join?

Ojanpera: It’s very much a work in progress. I can say that we’re hoping to include all types of creative thinkers, not just musicians. Any body in the creative field is welcome—filmmakers, writers and so on.

Do phone manufacturers have more power in the mobile value chain now that entertainment services have made the phone more of a consumer electronics device and less a mere network access device?

Ojanpera: This is a great opportunity for the whole industry to grow: device manufacturers, carriers and the content companies. The fact that content is coming to mobile will enable us to continue to innovate for the industry. We have the strength to invest in this space, and that’s valuable for the content industry. This is not about who has more power or less power—this is about, Can we attract the consumer to really use these services?

But is there any reason you’re better-positioned to do this as a device manufacturer with 40% worldwide market share than mobile operators are?

Ojanpera: This is not either/or—this is about offering mobile operators specific services, building a joint marketing campaign and really building value. We are used to working with operators in this way.

So on that note, how is the Nokia Music Store doing?

Ojanpera: We’re not sharing any specific data. But the service is live in the U.K. and Germany, and we are launching additional countries in Europe and Asia. So one could describe a store rollout phase for the next month or two and getting the catalog in place. The feedback from the U.K. store is good; people are using it and seeing that there’s an easy way to get music on your device, both sideloading and (over the air). We’re currently seeing about 75% sideloading and 25% OTA. We think once the Comes With Music service is in place later this year, it will make the purchase decision easier, and we believe that and will really scale the music market up.

They say ringtones is a $3 billion business; I still haven’t seen one cent on a ‘Sweet Dreams’ download. —Dave Stewart
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  - Yankee Group

- Peter Lurie
  - General Counsel & Founder
  - Virgin Mobile USA

- Oliver Maio
  - GM, Mobile
  - Vivendi Universal Games

- Aaron Grosky
  - President
  - Control Room

- Lucy Hood
  - Formerly President
  - Fox Mobile Entertainment

- Paul Palmer
  - CEO
  - Vivendi Universal

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  - Vivendi Universal Games

- Tero Ojanpera
  - EVP, Entertainment & Communities
  - Nokia

- Luci Hood
  - Formerly President
  - Fox Mobile Entertainment

- Paul Palmieri
  - CEO
  - MillennialMedia

- Larry Shapiro
  - Executive VP Business Development & Operations
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GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Mariah Carey’s Single-Packed New Disc Could Put Her In Elite Company

BY ANN DONAHUE

Albert Einstein created E=MC2 as the formula to express his law of conservation of energy. Mariah Carey, needless to say, has a different interpretation.

On a recent Monday morning, she flew the red-eye from New York to Los Angeles, stopped by Ryan Seacrest’s morning radio show to chat, recorded a background vocal track for the song “I Stay in Love” for her upcoming album, then went through hair and makeup and recorded a video for Wal-Mart’s “Soundcheck” series, which will be used as bonus footage online and played in stores.

By the time all of this was done, it was just past noon. Her afternoon consisted of another radio interview on rhythmic KPWR (Power 106) Los Angeles, and then a return to the studio at night to work on mastering the album.

For Carey, “E=MC2”—due April 15 via Island Def Jam—is the representation of her formula for success, and it’s one that requires an extreme expenditure of energy.

“It becomes nothing other than living for the marketing of the record,” Carey’s manager Benny Medina says.

After the comeback success of 2005’s “The Emancipation of Mimi,” 38-year-old Carey is in overdrive to make “E=MC2” another hit. A multitude of promotional plans—from mobile initiatives (see story, page 30) to copious TV appearances—are designed to appeal to fans of the classic balladeer Carey and her current hip-hop incarnation.

Sitting in a mixing room at Henson Recording Studios in Hollywood, Carey does seem a touch weary. But this is Mariah Carey, so you’re immediately distracted by the blingy-to-the-max gold, platinum and diamond bracelets that extend almost to the elbows on each of her arms. Armed with a small Evian atomizer and soothing throat spray, Carey’s a bit hoarse. But her excitement about the new album still bubbles through.

“There is some heavy stuff on some of the songs,” she says. “I was trying to be as honest as I could—it’s almost like it wasn’t a choice for me. And then there are the songs that are still honest, but they’re fun.”

One of these is the first single, “Touch My Body,” which has made its way up to No. 15 on the Billboard Hot 100—and that’s without any digital sales of the song, which didn’t start until March 25. On the Hot 100 Airplay chart, it resides at No. 4 for the week that ended March 25. It’s a sexy love song, made immeasurably appealing by a video featuring Carey as the bombshell fantasy of a geeky IT guy.

“Mariah loves to collaborate with writers and producers, and we had success with Tricky [Stewart] and The Dream,” Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio “L.A.” Reid says. “She went into the studio with them, we closed the door, and when we opened it up they had several ideas, one of which became ‘Touch My Body.’”

While “Mimi” sold 5.8 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, making it the top-selling album of 2005, and spawned the Hot 100 No. 1s “We Belong Together” and “Don’t Forget About Us,” Reid denies that this success puts added pressure on “E=MC2.”

“We can’t compete with the work we’ve already done,” he says. “That represented that time period, and this represents this time period. We can’t make records for how things were yesterday.”

To its credit, like “Mimi,” the new album is much more than a catchy leadoff single. The 14 tracks range from lung-busting ballads like “Bye Bye” and “I Wish You Well” to club-thumpers like “Migrate” and “Side Effects.”

If “E=MC2” scores big, Carey could find herself in elite chart company. She’s currently tied at No. 2 with Elvis Presley for the most Hot 100 No. 1s, with 17. The Beatles hold the crown with 20.

“I think it would be phenomenal,” Reid says of the prospect of Carey besting the Beatles’ record. “But the real goal is to create music the whole world can sing. And if we break records and set some milestones while doing that, that would be beautiful.”

On “E=MC2,” Carey teams again with “We Belong Together” and “Don’t Forget About Us” producer Jermaine Dupri on the
reggae-tinged "Cruise Control," which features Damian Marley; the ballad "Love Story," and back-to-back love-gone-wrong odes "Last Kiss" and "Thanx 4 Nothin."

"What I usually do is go to Atlanta to work with Jermaine, we write the songs, then I take it and leave and do my vocals," Carey says. "Then we work on the mix together afterwards—that's how I work with everybody."

Carey started recording the album last summer in several houses she rented in Florida, as well as her favorite vacation spot in Capri. "There's something kind of important to me about going there when I'm working on an album," she says. "There's something about the Mediterranean that's amazing for my voice."

And Carey again called on her friends for an assist in front of the mic on "E-MC2," with Young Jeezy taking a turn on "Side Effects" and the omnipresent T-Pain featured on "Migrate." (He also backed Carey during her recent performance on "Saturday Night Live," when she debuted the song.)

Two versions of the "E-MC2" CD will be sold, a basic with a listed price point of $13.98 and a deluxe edition with a fold-out poster and an iPod skin overlay for $21.95.

"There's all this research that shows people want more," Island president Steve Bartels says. "They're looking for more value and more things that come with it. With big artists, we know there is going to be initial demand for the music, but we want to provide consumers a choice."

For Carey, those consumers are across the map, she is the rare artist whose appeal spans the younger MTV crowd and the older VH1 demographic alike. "The beautiful thing about Mariah is her fan base," Island Def Jam senior VP of marketing Caron Veazey says. "She has fans from 12 to 70 years old. Some artists, as they grow, they don't garner new fans. She does."

For "E-MC2," Carey's strategy is to lure new fans with several big-ticket promotional appearances. She will be heavily involved with Fox's "American Idol" this year, appearing on the show's charity effort, "Idol Gives Back," and acting as a mentor/guest judge the week "E-MC2" comes out. "She loves working with developing artists, and she has such a body of work to pull from," Veazey says. "It was a perfect fit."

In addition, she recently filmed behind-the-scenes footage for MTV's "T2/2," which will play during the release week for "E-MC2" as promotional spots on the channel—totaling 11 hours of exposure—as well as archived online and for wireless devices. Carey also performed at the premiere party for MTV's docu-soap "The Hills" at the end of March, with footage streamed the day after the event on mtv.com.

On April 16, BET will air an exclusive Carey performance, taped in early March, that showcases "E-MC2." In addition, Carey will make the traditional circuit of "The Oprah Winfrey Show," as well as morning and late-night talk shows in the weeks surrounding street date, according to label executives.

Internationally, Carey will visit Japan, Europe and the United Kingdom for promotional stops; in January, Reid held a listening party in London for press and label execs where tracks including "Migrate," "I'm That Chick," "Bye Bye" "O.C.C." and "Touch My Body" were played.

"They went nuts," Bartels recalls. "All our international divisions have now submitted these incredible plans—they want Mariah in their country. Some artists are great in certain territories—but she transcends the globe."

But despite all the work of the Carey brain trust to make the album a hit with the public, the most important aspect of "E-MC2" for the singer was that each song conveyed something private.

"I do feel like it's my responsibility," Carey says. "I was given a gift. I know that music comes from God. It got me through things before I was known to the world, before I was on the Billboard charts. Music healed me. Music helped me. It was important for me to express where I was coming from."

---

**SWEET 17**

With 17 songs that have topped the Billboard Hot 100, Mariah Carey is tied with Elvis Presley in second place as the artist with the greatest number of No. 1s. On top of the heap are the Beatles, with 20 chart-toppers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Peak Date</th>
<th>Weeks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Vision of Love</td>
<td>6/4/90</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love Takes Time</td>
<td>6/16/90</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
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<td>Someday</td>
<td>7/14/90</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
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<td>I Don't Wanna Cry</td>
<td>7/28/90</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>8/18/90</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>I'll Be There</td>
<td>8/25/90</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dreamlove</td>
<td>9/1/90</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
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<td>Hero</td>
<td>9/23/90</td>
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<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>9/30/90</td>
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<td>My All</td>
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<td>Heartbreaker</td>
<td>10/9/90</td>
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<td>Thank God I Found You</td>
<td>11/27/90</td>
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<td>We Belong Together</td>
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She May Be Ready For A Nap After Nonstop Promo, But Mariah Carey Is Poised To Soar All Over Again

BY ANN DONAHUE
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIO SORRENTI

With the success of "The Emancipation of Mimi" and this new album, it seems that you've found a comfortable home at Island Def Jam. I love the fact that Antonio "L.A." Reid and I have the relationship that we do. He was talking to me today, and he was like, "Yeah, I'm a frustrated producer! I want to be a producer!" I'm like, "I think you're not a frustrated producer—I think you're quite the accomplished producer, but you happen to be excellent at doing lots of things." It's just such a plus for me to be able to work with somebody who understands music, who can sing something to me and I can sing it back to him. We can go back and forth with concepts rather than just a corporate person who doesn't relate to me on the same wavelength, like an artist.

"E=MC2" crosses a lot of genres. There are a few ballads, but there's definitely some hip-hop and even some gospel-tinged songs and a bit of a reggae beat. I'm really a festive person, and that's what came across with the "Mimi" album. I hate it when people are like [uses a dramatic voice] "She's taking a new direction with hip-hop." I'm like, "Will you please freakin' research?" I've been doing this for a long time—working with Dave Hall on "Dreamlover," using the "Ain't No Half-Steppin'" loop.

I think that it was Q-Tip—he said this to me in '97—that I was really the catalyst for so many of these artists who are now trying to infuse songs with hip-hop. It was just digging in the crates with Dave Hall and coming up with, "Hey, let's use this loop!" And from then on, I did it anytime I could. The next was "Fantasy," which was a groundbreaking moment for me, the ability to be able to work with Puffy.

Right now everything is kind of merged together because pop is such a nebulous format, in my opinion. You'll hear a hip-hop record next to a rock-sounding pop beat, or a country song. Aretha Franklin can still have a hit—look at "A Rose Is Still a Rose"—it's just her talent is shining through. She can work with anybody at any time in her life. Same thing with Patti LaBelle and Luther Vandross: God rest his soul, before he passed away. The true talent will always come through.

And after the success of "We Belong Together," "Don't Forget About Us"—co-produced by Bryan-Michael Cox—and "Shake It Off" on "Mimi," you've teamed up with Jermaine Dupri again for several songs on "E=MC2." JD is the best; I love him, I really do. We have such similar influences. It's fun because a lot of our favorite records from growing up are really the same. Back in the day we did the [R&B] remix of "Always Be My Baby." The original version was a hard track, if you listen to the bass—but it was very
Go along with the many songs that I really want to sing live, that I really enjoy. Fun songs, like "I'm That Chick" or "O.O.C." and then the ballads, of course. I really want to do "I Wish You Well" and "I Stay in Love" and "Bye Bye."

And now that you're in promotional mode, does it ever get daunting?

I'm totally ready for a nap. I'd love a nap... It's a little tiring to have this kind of schedule. As long as I'm straight up in promo mode, it's cool, but I'm still doing little things on the road—we're mastering... But I'm collaborative about it. I like to hear what other people have to say. I wouldn't feel like an artist if I didn't. I wouldn't feel like I was truly the architect of the record. And why do it, then...
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Can Phones Do For Music What Carriers Haven’t?  

BY ANTONY BRUNO

Oct. 31, 2005, marked the dawn of a new era for the music industry. That was the date wireless operator Sprint launched its mobile music service—the first U.S. operator to let customers buy and download full songs over the air from their mobile phones. That and the similar services that followed from Verizon, AT&T and Alltel were supposed to revitalize the digital music market, unleash a wave of new digital customers downloading the latest music on a whim from wherever they were, and in the process mount a real alternative to the growing threat of Apple’s near-monopoly on the market. They didn’t. The carrier-led mobile music market has to date failed to significantly move the needle in terms of new customers or new revenue. As such, the music industry is looking past wire- less operators to mobile phone manufacturers for the innovation, user experience and mass market needed to revitalize a market that, frankly, still shows some great potential.

The mobile industry is poised to experience a dramatic change during the next three years, opening up the traditional “walled-garden” carrier-driven content distribution model to a system more resembling today’s Internet—that’s no coincidence, as software platform providers like Google, Apple and Microsoft are driving much of this change by unleashing open technologies that can be used across a variety of networks and handsets. All of this gives handset manufacturers an opportunity to contribute to—and profit from—content distribution.

One of the most important developments over the last six months or so has been the emergence of handset manufacturers as real players in the global digital music space,” says Michael Nash, executive VP of digital strategy and business development for Warner Music Group (WMG). “There are hundreds of millions of music-enabled phones out there, but most consumers are not using them for music...most are not purchasing content. That’s because the content acquisition experience—the buy button, if you will—has not been well-implemented in the existing mobile music value chain that the carriers have driven.”

For instance, in a recent Jupiter Research/Ipsos Insight survey asking respondents to list the top three functions they would use most on a mobile device, listening to music ranked second only to making voice calls, at 30%. However, a separate Jupiter report finds that only 5% of mobile users have ever sideloaded music to their phones, and only 2% have downloaded music over the air.

“That gap between the capability of the device and the use of the device for music is the biggest negative story in the mobile music space,” Nash says. “That’s a gap that the handset manufacturers are in a great position to solve.”

IT’S THE INTERFACE, STUPID!

It all comes down to the user experience. Yes, mobile services, like all digital services, are challenged to compete against Apple’s market share. But the industry has done itself no favors with the uninspiring services released so far.

“There’s absolutely strong interest in the notion of the phone being a media- and entertainment-centric device,” Jupiter analyst Michael Gartenberg says. “It’s just that a lot of the efforts to date have not been very good from the hardware side, software side, services side and pricing/business model side.”

Part of the challenge has been implementing a carrier- designed music service across many different devices. The service ultimately looks and feels different on each phone, in some cases better than others.

Those phone manufacturers developing their own music service, however, can design them specifically for either one phone or an entire line of devices, thus creating a more integrated service that—in theory, anyway—will be easier to use. And the easier it is to use, the more likely that it will be.

Case in point is the iPhone. On the surface, it offers few features that other devices don’t already have. But because those features are easier to use and better integrated, iPhone owners consume mobile entertainment content at a much greater level than owners of other phones.

According to data from M:Metrics, only 6.7% of mobile users have listened to music on their phone in some fashion, and only 27.9% of smartphone owners have done the same, compared with 74% of iPhone users.

“The game is now centered around providing a better user experience,” mobile industry analyst Mark Lowenstein says. “If you consider the iPhone a catalyst, but it’s certainly not nirvana. There’s lots of opportunity for more, and better...Expect some game-changing relationships and thinking over the next couple of years.”

A NEW DAY

Much of this new thinking is coming from Nokia. The company has spent hundreds of millions acquiring companies to help transform it from a simple hardware provider to a content and services company.

One of these acquisitions was digital music service Loud-eye, which now provides the back end of Nokia’s new Ovi mobile music store that the company is rolling out across Europe. It also serves as the facilitation engine behind the groundbreaking Come With Music initiative—a sort of mobile music subscription service that bundles the cost of a user’s worth of unlimited song downloads into the phone’s price—that Nokia is expected to be first to market with in April.

“Nokia clearly sees that there are elements of the device business that are heading in the direction of the PC business,” Lowenstein says. “The same way the operators don’t want to be just pipes, Nokia doesn’t want to be regulated to being just a hardware provider. Nokia sees its competitive landscape as Apple, Google and Microsoft as much as it does Samsung, LG and Motorola.”

Others are creating new approaches as well. Sony Ericsson has its PlayNow service, originally launched to sell ringtones but being upgraded to sell full songs via Walkman-branded phones. Motorola swung and missed with its iRadio mobile streaming music offer, but bought the Singapore-based Soundbuzz mobile download service to extend its MotoMusic initiative in Asia. Samsung partnered with MusicNet last year to launch a dual subscription/download service in Europe, which has yet to go to market. And LG most recently added Omnifone’s MusicStation Max subscription service as a subsidized, unlimited music option for select phones.

INNOVATE OR DIE

As such, device manufacturers like Nokia and others are spending millions to innovate around not just technology, but business models, and doing so at a rate that far surpasses the mobile entertainment budgets of individual carriers. Where a mobile operator may have all of five people dedicated to mobile music initiatives—at best—handset manufacturers have whole divisions.

Neither the manufacturers nor the operators will disclose their level of spending, but a quick glance at their earnings speak volumes as to who has the deeper pockets. Nokia’s fourth-quarter net revenue was $24.4 billion at AT&T Mobility’s $11.4 billion.

“They can afford to invest in good technology solutions in a way that’s very different from the kinds of investments that the carrier can make,” WMG’s Nash says. “Even the largest carrier in the world is operating at a much smaller scale than a handset manufacturer.”

Whereas mobile operators spend most of their money on network improvements, leaving very little to build and mar-
arket entertainment services, handset manufacturers—particularly Nokia—are betting big on entertainment. This is a flight to the death for market share and prominence in the mobile value chain—the very future of their business—with entertainment content being the key battleground.

"This is not cheap, rolling out these new services and building the new offerings," says Tero Ojanpera, who leads Nokia's entertainment and communities division (see Q&A, page 23). "There is a risk involved in some of this will fly and some will not. Our 40% market share allows us to invest in a big way in the innovation that is required for these new services...The industry needs new innovation. The content industry, whether it's music or otherwise, is trying to figure out how to expend their market. The same applies to the mobile industry. By going aggressively and investing in these services we can help to grow the pie rather than sharing something that already exists."

SCALING THE WALLED GARDEN

But perhaps what attracts the content industry to device manufacturers most is their ability to deliver customers in scale.

"Addressing the mobile opportunity at the carrier level is kind of a ground war," Nash says, "country by country and carrier distribution footprint by carrier distribution footprint."

For instance, just in the United States alone, labels had to strike separate deals with AT&T, Sprint and Verizon for their download services. Then, those operators had to ensure their music service worked across a wide range of devices.

"The global music opportunity with the handset vendor as the focus is more of an air war," Nash continues. "You're talking about companies that have huge global distribution footprints...that are putting hundreds of millions of devices into the marketplace and combined nearly a billion new devices in the hands of consumers over the next year or so. That's a pretty amazing opportunity if properly harnessed."

There you're talking about working with three, four, five companies.

Nokia's Comes With Music phones, when launched, will be available via a variety of carriers in a number of countries—mostly in Europe at first. To achieve that same service coverage, working with the operators would have required dozens of separate licensing agreements.

Of course, to realize that scale, the individual operators must agree to play ball, and the heavy lifting is left to Nokia and the other device manufacturers to get buy-in from them all—negotiating airspace clearance if you will, to continue the analogy. This is no small task, given that carriers have long seen the mobile content market as their own to mine.

As such, it's no accident these handset-driven services are rolling out first in Europe and Asia—U.S. operators are very resistant to having their initiatives co-opted, AT&T being the exception.

Yet even the most stubborn walled-garden operator to date—Verizon Wireless—has introduced a plan to let other services and devices operate on its network. The successful entertainment services will be those that best blend the innovation and support of both.

"At the end of the day, it's got to be some kind of combination," Gartenberg says. "You can't have a good phone without the wireless service, and you can't have a wireless service without the devices. The best relationships are those that have something in it for everyone. But the whole experience really leverage something important. What we call a phone isn't a phone anymore...it's a pocket computer. That can be leveraged in unique ways that haven't been done yet."

Want to buy a CD from your favorite band? Just pick any record store you like that has it in stock and walk out with it.

Want to buy it online? Take your pick of digital download services, either a la carte or subscription.

Want to get it via your mobile phone? Well, then you're stuck.

U.S. mobile customers today have only one option if they want to buy full-track downloads from their phone—whatever service their mobile operator offers. (If they even do.)

That's soon going to change.

Hand in hand with the growing importance of the mobile phone in today's content relationships (see story, page 32) is a desire to give music fans more choice in where they acquire that content. That means allowing parties other than the wireless operator to market and sell content outside the carrier walled garden.

The trend will be among the topics examined at Mobile Entertainment Live! March 31 in Las Vegas, an event presented by Billboard and sister companies Nielsen Mobile and the Hollywood Reporter. The event coincides with CTIA Wireless taking place April 1-3 in Las Vegas.

Content and services sold through the wireless operator's built-in menu screen is known as "on-deck" or "on-portal" sales. Getting content on the carrier "deck" involves striking agreements with the wireless operator, which are not easy to come by; the ability to integrate with the operator's technology, which can be complicated; and the willingness to surrender a significant slice of each transaction.

A New World Of Sources For Mobile Content

BY ANTONY BRUNO

Selling content and services directly to mobile customers outside of the carrier system is called "off-deck" or "off-portal" sales. In Europe, such sales are commonplace, but until recently haven't been a niche phenomenon in the United States. No longer. According to data from Informa Telecoms & Media, off-deck content revenue will not only catch up to, but slightly outpace on-deck revenue this year in North America.

In 2005, off-deck revenue in North America constituted $381 million vs. $1.1 billion via the carrier deck. In 2007, that gap narrowed to $1.5 billion off-deck to $2 billion on-deck.

This year, the figures are expected to be almost even: $2.4 billion off-deck to $2.8 billion on-deck. Off-deck revenue is expected to continue outpacing on-deck through 2010, totaling almost $5 billion-$2.1 billion on-deck.

The bulk of off-deck content sold so far is ringtones, offered by such companies as Thumbplay, Dada, Playphone, Buongiorno, Jamster/Jamba and Funmobility. And while the worldwide ringtone market is largely flat, off-deck sales are booming.

Driving this growth is a tighter integration between off-deck sales providers and such online discovery platforms as search engines and social media sites. Thumbplay, one of the biggest off-deck content providers in the world, in the last six months has embedded its service into AOL and social music application iLike, among others.

In that time, CEO Ole Traasdal says traffic to Thumbplay's Web site has increased from virtually nothing to 15 million-20 million page views per month.

What's even more interesting is the kind of sales that result. On the carrier deck, the top 20 ringtones represent around 90% of the revenue made from the category. Traasdal says Thumbplay's top 20 best-selling ringtones only make up 17% of its revenue. The other 83% comes from Long Tail catalog and niche-audience titles.

Traasdal says he expects to see the same breakthrough once Thumbplay extends into full-song downloads, which he calls "a very natural extension."

To get an idea of what off-deck full-song sales might look like, take a look overseas. Jamba, the European name of News Corp.'s Jamster division, has been selling full-song downloads since September 2006 with all the majors on board and just recently added digital rights management-free content from EMI.

The company sells the music three ways: via an SMS short code, a WAP page or dual-delivery from an Internet-connected PC. According to Jamba senior VP of products Jens Begemann, the bulk of the transactions take place from the PC, not the mobile phone. The company also offers an all-you-can-eat subscription package for $20 per month.

"There are significant differences in consumer behavior between ordering ringtones and ordering songs," he says.

Ringtones purchases are impulse-driven, chart-driven, but are not necessarily representative of the music buyers love, he says, whereas full-track sales are more deliberate. Additionally, full-track customers tend to buy more than one song at a time and browse longer for songs than for ringtones—from around two minutes on average for a ringtone to 10 minutes for a full track.
But before off-deck, full-track downloads can be anointed as the saving grace for sluggish mobile music sales, a few barriers must first be addressed.

Perhaps most important is bandwidth cost. While off-deck sales generally include a deal with wireless operators to charge the content to the customer’s mobile phone bill, the fee charged for the content itself isn’t necessarily the final tab.

That’s because the carrier separately charges for the airtime costs of transferring the file from the off-deck provider to the phone. On-deck sales don’t carry such fees because the operator combines all the costs in the price it sets.

“It’s not important whether they’re downloading a ringtone or a full track,” Begemann says. “Those charged by the megabyte or kilobyte are often reluctant to download a full song, and sometimes even a ringtone.”

But easier solution is for operators to offer all-you-can-eat data plans the way they are starting to with their voice minutes. Neither Begemann or Thumbplay’s Traadahl expect full-track off-deck sales to go live in the United States until more operators offer such a plan.

First out of the gate is Sprint Nextel, which at the end of February unveiled a pricing plan that offers unlimited voice, text, data and music usage for $100 per month. All other major operators offer some flavor of unlimited pricing for certain services, but none go as far as Sprint on the data-usage end.

But even so, the $100-per-month plan limits its reach. Sprint won’t divulge how many subscribers pay more than $100 each month for their basic plan, but competitor Verizon says only 0.5% of its base pays those kinds of fees.

Digital rights management is another issue. These off-deck providers envision a service where they sell music online, via the phone or from the cable set-top box, with the resulting files interchangeable between them all, as well as with a portable device and TV stereo. Saddling the files with DRM makes that a difficult proposition.

Finally, there is the stigma that some off-deck services are thinly veiled scams. A number of European and U. S. off-deck providers have been accused of fraudulently advertising free ringtones and other content, only to lock unsuspecting customers into monthly subscriptions of between $10 and $50, with no easy way to opt out.

The Florida attorney general’s office recently fined AT&T Mobility $2.5 million for billing and taking a cut of such services. AT&T has also agreed to refund between $10 million and $40 million to customers caught in the scam, and will spend $500,000 on a customer education campaign designed to warn users of such deceptive advertising in the future.

Florida’s attorney general office is also suing the U. S. branch of Italian mobile content provider Buongiorno for allegedly operating such a practice and says that, going forward, it will go after additional wireless operators aiding these scams.

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SHIFTING SOURCES OF CONTENT

Off-deck revenue catches up to revenue from wireless operator services

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DEALING IN VEGAS!

Now entering its third year, Billboard’s Mobile Entertainment Live! has grown not only in size, but in scope and diversity—qualities that will be on display at the coming event taking place March 31 in Las Vegas.

Mobile Entertainment Live! has always been about partnerships, taking its cue from Billboard’s collaboration with CTIA that gave rise to the conference in the first place. This year, in addition to partnering with CTIA to host the show the day before its CTIA Wireless 2008 event, Billboard is welcoming sister companies the Hollywood Reporter and Nielsen Mobile to the party.

THR brings its expertise in the film and TV industries, with deputy editor Andy Wallenstein on hand to conduct the mobile entertainment discussion related to those fields. He will first sit down for a one-on-one interview with NBC Universal chief digital officer George Kliavkoff during a keynote appearance, then moderate the “Video Content SuperSession” later in the day.

Nielsen Mobile meanwhile is hosting a main-stage plenary discussion on mobile advertising, titled “Mobile Advertising and Content Adoption—Who’s Dropping the Ball?” With interest in mobile advertising at an all-time high, Nielsen Mobile VP of mobile media/advertising product leader Jeff Hermann will moderate a discussion on the disconnect between mobile advertising’s promise and its reality, featuring custom data from the Nielsen Co.

Other keynote speakers include RealNetworks founder/chairman/CEO Rob Glaser and Nokia executive VP of entertainment and communities Tero Ojjanpera, both to be interviewed by Billboard executive director of content and programming for digital/mobile Antony Bruno, who is also executive producer of Mobile Entertainment Live! Ojjanpera will focus on how the mobile phone is emerging as a strong player in the mobile entertainment value chain and why Nokia is entering the Web services business, while Glaser will provide the perspective of a service and technology provider of mobile entertainment solutions for multiple platforms.

Billboard group editorial director Tamara Conniff will interview the final keynote speaker, Mathew Knowles, manager and father of superstar Beyoncé and the architect of such mobile entertainment deals as Beyoncé’s B’Phone with Samsung and various Destiny’s Child mobile games.

Plenary sessions include a “State of the Industry Debate” pitting content providers against wireless operators and a sure-to-be-controversial session outlining “What Sucks, and How Do We Fix It?”

The remainder of the day will feature three “Content SuperSessions” focused respectively on music, games and video, and three “InFocus” sessions featuring one-on-one conversations or presentations. One, on the mobile prospects for social networking, features imeem; another, on the state of venture capital investing in digital and mobile content plays, features North Bridge Capital; and the third, on the technology needed to deliver content across multiple platforms, will be covered by Level 3.

—Antony Bruno


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Moby Plays On

New Label Heralds New Approaches For Dance Vet

Ask Moby that requisite career-artist question—the one about regrets—and he won't give you the requisite answer. He does, he says, have a few.

"There are things that I've done that I think I've done badly," he says. "Some of the songs I've made. I'm really disappointed in how I mixed them. And some decisions I've made were more fueled by desperation than anything; some of the more gratuitous licensing things. But at the same time, I don't let myself regret things to the point that I'm paralyzed. You make mistakes and you learn from them."

It makes sense for Moby to be the one to introduce the era of licensing repentance. Nearly 10 years ago, he was the poster boy for the industry's newest revenue stream. In addition to selling 2.7 million copies of his 1999 album "Play" (V2), according to Nielsen SoundScan, all 18 tracks landed in movies, TV shows and advertising spots for everything from American Express to Bailey's Irish Cream. The album's drowsy electronic blues was omnipresent to the point that the former rave DJ became known more for his deal-making than his music.

The follow-up, "18," continued in a similar vein, musically and otherwise, and 2005's "Hotell" was so guitar-driven that Moby seemed like a different animal altogether.

But new album "Last Night," out April 1, is neither too safe nor off-brand. His first effort for new label Mute is a shock of electronic energy, a combination of the pre-"Play" Moby's warehouse party bears and the polish of a multiplatinum artist. He's not trying to sell you a Toyota—he's trying to make you dance.

"We deal with a perception issue with Moby. He's very aware of it," says Bruce Kirkland, president of Tsunami Entertainment, a marketing consultancy brought in by Mute. "He gets slagged off for [the licensing], but there's no one I know who better understands the marriage between music and visuals. He can be hard on himself, but at the time it was the logical thing to do."

To get over the perceived hurdle of corporate cahoots, Kirkland seeded "Last Night" at the grass-roots level. "From day one we've been all over social networks, getting the message out there in a positive way," he says. "He had a good long lead time and he's been very active: a track on 'The Bourne Identity' soundtrack, his Degenerates DJ parties, a good presence at South by Southwest and Sundance, an accumulation of so much activity that people are feeling good about Moby right now."

They'll feel even better when they hear the music. Meant to condense an entire night out in New York—and the whole arc of New York dance music, starting with disco and including hip-hop—"Last Night" bops and grooves without apologies, heralding today's dance-rock indie kids on the same dancefloor as their finicky "we lived through it" elders.

"We're eight years on from 'Play,' and if you take the 18-25 audience that was its predominant buyer, they're 26-33 in 2008," Kirkland says. "That's a marketing generation. Disney would put it in mothballs and pull it out again. Then there's the new audience. The record is as relevant as any being made for a college audience now. We've got a very fertile playing field here."

"My big inspiration was going out and hearing DJs in their 20s playing records I grew up with," Moby says. "There are two ongoing trends in dance: being avant-garde and cutting edge and being gently nostalgic and fun. I wanted to worry less about the first. Indeed, the album is so accessible and warmly familiar, it lends itself to simultaneous, multipronged radio outreach. "There's a diversity in terms of tracks that enables us to take them to different audiences," Kirkland says. "Underground hip-hop groove "Alice" is a focus track and will go to alternative and crossovers. The very "Play"-like "Live for Tomorrow" goes to triple A. ('We know Moby lives in the triple A world,' Kirkland says.) House throwback "Disco Lies" is the first single in Europe and will also be serviced to Billboard's Hot Club Play chart DJ panel. "The club audience is still a very big, important sector," Kirkland says. Should the demand arise, Moby says he'll tour not with a "conventional live show," but a "DJ set with some live elements. I get really excited by other people's records."

He has also started a Web site, mobygratis.com, where noncommercial or nonprofit filmmakers can download his music for free use in their projects.
**MUSIC**

**HIP-HOP** BY JEFF VRABEL

**Dino-mite!**

**Babies Get A Taste Of Hip-Hop On New Album**

Chali 2na spent his formative years with Jurasic S, so it's logical that on his latest project, he just went ahead and played a dinosaur.

2na stars as MC T-Rex in "Baby Loves Hip-Hop Presents: The Dino-5," the latest installment in the acclaimed "Baby Loves Music" series created by Ropeadope Records founder Andy Blackman Hurwitz. The series bowed in 2006 with "Baby Loves Jazz," a lively and award-winning set that featured Sharon Jones and John Medeski; these days the "Baby Loves Disco" movement — DJ-led kid-friendly parties that take place at clubs across America in the afternoons — have taken place in nearly 30 cities. Hurwitz says the hip-hop installment, due April 1, was simply a logical extension.

"I don't want to make any bold statements, like, "Oh, my kids only listen to Miles and Coltrane,"" says Hurwitz, "but my kids love the Wiggles, but they also do like Miles and A Tribe Called Quest. With this series, we looked at the musical landscape and saw there was definitely something to be desired. more opportunities for projects for both kids and parents."

After the success of "Baby Loves Jazz," Hurwitz came up with the idea about a dinosaur crew and after a quick few calls, the Dino-5 was born. In addition to 2na, the lineup includes DipJhay Planets' Ladybug Mecca (Tracy Triceratops), Brooklyn MC Wordsworth (Billy Brontosaurus) and the Roots' Scratch (TED Pterodactyl); spoken-word story interludes are read by poet Ursula Rucker. And the musical mastermind (and DJ Stegosaurus) is Prince Paul, who Hurwitz contacted after his kids developed a serious affinity for De La Soul's "3 Feet High and Rising."

"I have a 5-year-old daughter, and a lot of the kids' stuff that's hip-hop-related makes me kind of cringe," Paul says about his involvement. "So I had to see if I could bridge the gap and find a way to make it cool without having the cringe effect. I'm not going to name names, but I said, 'Look at all the other hip-hop-related kids' stuff. Listen to those things. We're not doing that,' he says with a laugh.

"Dino-5" is heavy on melody and simple, head-involving beats and includes tracks about counting ("What About Ten?"); playground shenanigans ("Sometimes I Like to Scream") and the dangers of judging by appearance (2na's "I May Be Big and Scary But I'm Really Pretty Nice").

"This has been just one of those fun things that's happened," Hurwitz says. "It was a side project that's moved more to the center. There wasn't really a grand vision behind it, I didn't sit with a Powerpoint presentation or anything. It's this very organic thing, and the best things usually happen that way.

Upcoming releases include "Baby Loves Salsa!"); "Baby Loves Reggae," featuring Stephen Marley, and a "Baby Loves Disco" album produced by King Britt.

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**R&B** BY HILLARY CROSLEY

**TIME TO SHINE**

**Producer Leslie Is Breaking Through In Front Of The Mic**

While Ryan Leslie's name might not be familiar to the average listener, the music industry is well-acquainted with the 29-year-old producer.

Now Leslie the artist is rising up Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart with the single "Diamond Girl," from his as-yet-untilted debut album, due June 10 via Universal.

To build recognition for himself, Leslie created a strong online presence through two personal YouTube channels, which feature clips of him making beats in the studio.

"Ryan created the webisodes in advance for the promotional team to use with radio. They really showed his personality and how involved he is in the overall music process," Universal senior VP of promotion Gary Maretta says. "By the time we impacted the single, about half the programmers in the country felt they knew him personally."

"Diamond Girl," a pop tinged track featuring an electronic piano crescendo, is No. 35 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs this week. The song's ascension during the last 12 weeks has also been bolstered by unofficial remixes from 50 Cent and Kanye West.

More webisodes are on the way and will premiere on ryanleslie.com and Universal's YouTube channel each week, according to Universal director of digital marketing and strategy Xavier Jernigan. The "Diamond Girl" series debuts during release week and depicts Leslie as a secret agent searching for a diamond that he must exchange for his kidnapped girlfriend. The webisode will also feature the "Diamond Girl" video, directed by Chris Robinson.

On the mobile side, Universal plans to utilize its partnership

**POP** BY FRED BRONSON

**Sounds And Vision**

**American Songwriter Pens Czech Eurovision Entry**

Gordon Pogoda is about to become an American in Belgrade. The Canoga Park, Calif.-based songwriter has co-written the Czech Republic entry for the 2008 Eurovision Song Contest. "Have Some Fun," by Tereza Kendrova. That makes Pogoda one of the few Americans to ever compete in the annual telecast, which has been running for 53 years.

Working through his publisher in Belgium, Lawrence van den Eede at EMI, Pogoda noticed that Icelandic girl group Nylon was looking for material. At the same time, he was in discussions with producer Stano Simon, who splits his time between Belgium and the Czech Republic, about co-writing songs. They teamed up to write "Have Some Fun" and submitted it to Nylon, but nothing happened. "So Stano submitted it to Universal in the Czech Republic and they had an artist, Tereza Kendrova, who was part of a duo," Pogoda says. "She was doing a solo album and I ended up with four cuts on the album.

Kendrova recorded Pogoda's "Tell It To The Rain" and was con-
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YOUR GUIDE TO UNSIGNED BANDS. COMPILED BY KATIE HASTY

>> JOE PURDY
Contact: Brian Klein, manager, radioneck@mac.com
Shortly after Joe Purdy signed a publishing deal with Warner/Chappell in 2004, he got a phone call from TV producer Brian Burk. "He said, 'I'm working on this new TV show called 'Lost,' and it airs in a week. I need you to write me a song about being stuck on an island,'" Purdy recalls. The singer/songwriter plucked from his archives a frankly cheerful-sounding suicide ballad called "Wash Away" and the track was played over speakerphone to the show's producers. "They said, 'Great, can you make it 40 seconds longer?' I played it live right there and tacked on a bridge," Purdy says of the tune, which aired during the show's first season.

TV, in a way, is what keeps the 27-year-old Arkansas native on the road. He's scored six placements on "Grey's Anatomy" with such songs as "I Love the Rain the Most" and "San Jose." "Can't Get It Right Today" can be heard in a new commercial for Kia cars and "Rainy Day Lament" was placed on "House." "I take all the money from that and then just blow it all going on tour," Purdy says.

Writing "mostly sad bastard" music, Purdy has sold more than 200,000 digital song downloads in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. He's also released nine full-length albums, produced in an imagined race against the clock. "I always had it in my mind that I was going to die at the age of 27," he says with a laugh. "So I wanted to get a lot done."

After moving to Los Angeles, Purdy started "working four jobs and hitting open mics." He resisted signing to any labels after lunch courtships would turn into reps "speewing bullshit." He found the right deal only when a rep from Warner/Chappell sat him down after a showcase at South by Southwest. "I needed something that let me put out as many records as I want, that got me enough money for a studio and some boys to make a band and go on tour."

However, Purdy adds, "I lose the bank whenever I play live. It'd be great to have a label that helps me out in that respect, but then I have to listen to them talk all day long." —Katie Hasty

>> DON TETTO
Contact: Fabio Acosta, akosta@mac.com
Think of the term "Columbian music" and what comes to mind might be a traditional cumbia or vallenato, or perhaps pop superstars Shakira and Juanes. But Bogotá-based indie rock band Don Tetto isn't content to play festivals and clubs in its home city; its influences are international, as are its aspirations.

The quartet, which released its debut album "Lo Que No Sabías" on Columbian label Cabeza de Raton last year, is part of the "happy punk" movement sweeping parts of Latin America. Singer/guitarist Diego Pulecio cites Blink-182 and Metallica as primary influences. The group's melodic punk has found a radio audience via Bogotá rock station Radioactiva, which started playing Don Tetto's songs and book the band at events after the group won the station's battle of the bands in 2003. A slew of club gigs and festivals, including Colombia's massive Rock al Parque, followed.

Don Tetto has some heavy hitters backing it up, including former EMI Televisa marketing and promotions VP Pietro Carlos and touring veteran Jorge Naranjo. As the group's management discusses label deals for worldwide distribution, "Lo Que No Sabías" got a March 25 U.S. digital release from 786 Music. Don Tetto has enjoyed spins from Latin radio stations in Chicago and Texas and is booked for radio concerts in those places; additionally, the act is slated to perform at the BMI Latin Alternative Music Conference this July in New York. U.S. promotion extends to bilingual video channels and an artist-of-the-month pick on Spanish-language portal terra.com.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

>> TEN MINUTE TURNS
Contact: Adam Lekach, manager, adamlekach@hotmail.com, 713-906-4400
Visual and audio art go hand in hand with Brooklyn's Ten Minute Turns. Songwriting principals Alan Foreman and Roger Mason met while at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), where "there were no other musicians," according to Mason. They made music together at house parties and eventually made their way to New York. Foreman started work at cartoon company Animation Collective, while Mason became roommates with multi-instrumentalist Jacques Novak, who later became his girlfriend and joined the band. ("Though, we can't remember in what order that all happened," she says with a laugh."

Mason's boss at Animation Collective caught on to the group's buoyant music—which blends Foreman and Mason's dueling lead vocals, guitars and quirky noise samples—and matched them with a new project, the kung fu nickelodeon cartoon "Three Delivery." Ten Minute Turns is now charged to compose the show's score and write the theme song. The show has been picked up for syndication in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Canada and beyond.

In another visual endeavor, the band (which also includes drummer Jason Schultheis and guitarist Peter Forucci) can be seen in naked-seeming suits in the dazzling music video for its song "Long Night Drone." Directed by RISD cohort Neil Forman, the video was recently accepted into the Los Angeles and New York International Independent Film & Video festivals.

—KH
Kick Out The Jams
The Kooks Jump-Start New EMI Regime

When English pop-rock act the Kooks released their debut album early in 2006, they were just another aspiring quartet with a couple of top 40 singles to their name. Two million worldwide album sales later, according to EMI, the stakes are rather higher for the follow-up.

The BRIT School graduates, based in Brighton on England’s South Coast, succeeded beyond their most optimistic expectations with “Inside In/Inside Out,” a multiplatinum U.K. success fueled by hit singles including “You Don’t Love Me,” “Naive” and “She Moves in Her Own Way.”

Now the Kooks’ sophomore set, “Konk,” out internationally April 14 on Virgin and a day later in North America on Astralwerks, is an early test for the new EMI regime.

“It’s going to be fine, as long as they keep putting out great records,” lead vocalist/rhythm guitarist Luke Pritchard says. “I do think the streamlining is a good idea. Some of our great friends work at the label and for them it’s really shit, and the way they’ve gone about it is pretty harsh, but the whole idea of it is right. Now, hopefully, it should revert back to being more about the music, signing less acts and working hard.”

Virgin U.K. marketing manager Kelly Bush says recent personnel departures at EMI have not affected the label. “For me, day to day, nothing’s changed, and the vibe at Virgin’s really good because everyone’s so busy,” she says.

Bush says the Kooks campaign will reflect EMI CEO Guy Hands’ declared enthusiasm for the digital space. “A lot of the early success was through building a fan base and speaking to them every week on e-mail,” she says, adding, “Obviously, the new structure will focus a lot more on that, because that’s the way forward.”

The new album, also available in a two-disc edition with eight live or acoustic versions, will benefit from increased online advertising and e-mail promotion, such as a live version of the single at U.K. weekly NME’s new online store.

Astralwerks GM Glenn Mendlinger says, “One of the main themes in the new structure will be global reporting functions. This will allow us to work more collaboratively across all of EMI worldwide and use best practices from territory to territory.”

Nielsen SoundScan reports U.S. sales of 104,000 for “Inside In/Inside Out,” but Mendlinger says the album also generated nearly 300,000 individual track downloads.

“We’re going to greatly benefit from having a simultaneous worldwide release on this record,” he says, which offers us much more access to the band, more U.S. touring and the advantages of simultaneous digital marketing that impacts globally.”

The new album is titled after the studio owned by the Knick Ray Davies where, like the debut, most of it was recorded with producer Tony Hoffer.

Worldwide first single “Always Where I Need to Be” is airing on BBC Radio 1 and 2 and Virgin Radio. It was serviced to U.S. radio March 3. Mendlinger, speaking of “Kooks mania” at alternative radio, points to early adds at KITS (Live 105) San Francisco, KNDD Seattle and others.

“The band has already done a performance on ‘Late Night With Conan O’Brien,’ ” Mendlinger says, and “we’re targeting more TV for their spring tour,” booked by Steve Ferguson at Paradigm. U.K. commitments include a 10-date tour in April and an appearance at second headliners at the June 15 Isle of Wight Festival.

The new album shows the Kooks’ sound maturing, but still features the band’s trademark immediacy.

“Our music has layers,” Pritchard says. “We’re not trying to do indie-schmindie or heavy rock. We love pop music.”

GLOBALPULSE

>>> BUSY LIZZIE
Copenhagen-based music/media company ArtPeople is aiming to launch its star artist, electro-pop vocalist Lizzie, overseas.

According to Nielsen Music Control, Lizzie’s Danish chart-topping single “Ramm I Natten” has sold more than 42,000 downloads since its November 2007 release, making it the biggest-selling download in Denmark since it began logging digital sales two years ago. The single has topped the IFPI Denmark/Nielsen Music Control chart for three months.

Lizzie’s debut album of the same name was released domestically in February, peaking at No. 5, with shipments to date of 15,000 units, according to ArtPeople.

Company CEO Jan Degner says he is in talks with various labels for releases in the Nordic countries, and is having English-language lyrics for the title track written for potential international releases.

Founded five years ago by former Sony Denmark managing director Degner, ArtPeople is a music/video label and a concert booking/management operation.

Degner says the international marketing of Lizzie—booked, published and managed by ArtPeople—will be the next phase in the company’s expansion strategy. “The 360-degree model is the only way,” Degner says. “Nowadays coffee shops are record companies, and I wouldn’t be surprised if telephone companies were next. How we’re doing it is the only route forward for a music company.”

—Charles Ferro

>>> BATT MAN
British industry veteran Mike Batt wears many hats—songwriter, label founder and deputy chairman of trade body the BPI. But the man who discovered singer/songwriter Katie Melua—and co-wrote, produced and managed her to multimillion-selling success with his Dramatico company—is focusing again on the role of artist in his own right.

Released March 24 in the United Kingdom on Dramatico (distributed by Pinnacle), “A Songwriter’s Tale” features new recordings of many of Batt’s best-known songs. They include “Bright Eyes,” a British No. 1 in 1979 for Art Garfunkel; “The Closest Thing to Crazy,” co-written with (and a hit for) Melua; and “A Writer’s Tale,” “Please Don’t Fall in Love” and “I Feel Like Buddy Holly,” which clicked for David Essex, Cliff Richard and Alvin Stardust, respectively.

The album was released in late January in Germany, distributed through Rough Trade. Batt, published by Dramatico and Sony/ATV, has also acquired his back catalog from Epic/Sony BMG, and will release it worldwide between now and May as six double-CD sets on Dramatico. Batt initially came to the fore as creator of top-selling spinoff records by 70s children’s BBC TV characters the Wombles. Subsequently, he says, “my albums were very successful in Europe, but they weren’t really taken seriously in the U.K.”

—Paul Sexton

>>> SIGNING OFF
UB40 vocalist/guitarist Ali Campbell exited the highly successful reggae act after 28 years in January, blaming “miscommunication” with those handling the band’s business affairs.

But the artist is moving swiftly to keep his own lines of communication with fans open via his first live shows as a solo artist. On a 12-date U.K. tour that kicks off June 3, booked by AAA Entertainment, Campbell will perform songs from his October 2007 album “Running Free” (Crumbs/Absolute/Universal) and 1995 debut “Big Love” (Virgin), plus favorite reggae numbers. Dates across Europe, Japan and South Africa are planned.

The U.K. tour is preceded April 3 by a show at London’s Royal Albert Hall featuring several guests from “Running Free,” including Smokey Robinson, Katie Melua and Sly & Robbie. “I tried to do something different and fresh with ‘Running Free,’ ” Campbell says. But, he adds, “a lot of people say it sounds like UB40.” The album has been certified gold (100,000 shipped) in the United Kingdom.

Recording of a third solo outing, tentatively titled “Flying High,” will begin at “the end of the year,” says Campbell’s manager Kim Revie of London-based RHM. “Running Free” has rolled out in most Continental European markets through Edel; Revie says a North American deal is being finalized.

—Kiwaku

www.americanradiohistory.com
George Strait is one of music's most consistent hitmakers for a reason—he knows a hit song when he hears one and he only sings it if it fits him. "Troubadour" is check-full of classic Strait. "I Saw God Today" is a perfect example of a track that speaks to the country core, while "Don't Let Her Slip Away" is a song about the singer reconciling his age with how old he feels. When You're in Love cleverly equates romance with a vacation destination. "(There's So Much to See and Do when you're in love)", and "River of Love" will have women swooning at King George's invitation to a "stream of kissin' about 10 miles long." "House of Cash," with Patty Loveless, is a powerful tribute to the loss of the Cash family home to fire a year ago. —KT

JO SH G RACI N
We Won't Be Crazy
Producers: Marty Williams, Brett James
Lyr ic: Street
Release Date: April 1
Before Carrie Underwood and other "American Idol" alumni came to Nashville, season-two finalist Josh Gracin helped prove reality show stars could find a home in country music. But after scoring three top five singles, including 2005 No. 1 "Nottin' to Lose," Gracin struggled to reconnect at radio, and his second album has been long in coming. Now on the strength of a coming-of-age title cut, fans will be happy to know this solid follow-up is at hand. "Favorite State of Mind" stands out for its sheer energy, while "Livin' It Up," which includes the much-used line "I can sleep when I'm dead," has a raw feel. And the simply written "Unbelievable (Ann Marie)," which Gracin penned for his wife, might be this decade's "Amazed." —KT

DANCE
MOBY
Last Night
Producer: Moby
Mute
Release Date: April 1
Madonna, Seal, Big Pop stars who started as dance artists have circled back to the floor on their latest albums. But "Last Night," Moby's homage to reconstruction of New York dance music during the course of his 42-year lifetime, is the only one that causes the desired effect: making you feel about the artist the way you did when you first heard him. The guy who sold millions of records by stitching gospel samples into lush sonic patches is still here—just listen to "Live Tomorrow." But so is the one who created 90s rave anthem "Go"—the frantic piano riff and snare rolls of "Stars" give him away. Then there's the best '80s-style radio-friendly house track since the 90s ("Disco Lies").

LATIN
AKWID
La Novela
Producer: Francisco Gómez, Adolfo Valenzuela, Omar Valenzuela
Universal
Release Date: March 11
This sibling duo of brothers Sergio and Francisco Gómez broke ground nearly a decade ago by blending traditional banda beats with rap and hip-hop. Here, the brothers expand their sound by incorporating a broad variety of regional Mexican rhythms—from norteno to cumbias adorned with rapping accou- plings—as the basis for tales of growing up poor in the hood. This mix of grittiness and sophistication strikes just the right note, achieving cohesiveness despite a changing cast of guest acts that includes Fidel Rueda, Voces del Rancho, Los Tecates de Tijuana and Jenni Rivera (on a clever English-language track). With its perpetual change of pace in music and lyrics, "La Novela" is riveting, and it works as a vehicle for singles and as a stand-alone piece of music. Equally important, it's an example of on-target evolution within a niche genre. —LC

THE ROLLING STONES
Shine a Light
Producers: The Glimmer Twins
Release Date: April 1
With a Modest Mouse covers collection out of his system, Mark Kozelek is back to sketching his signature tales of love poisoned by expectation on his second album as Sun Kil Moon. Easily divided between the distorted guitar epics of the last to Bad House Painters albums ("The Light") and spartan voice-and-acoustic confessions ("Lucky Man"), "April" is the aural equivalent of that heartbreak that never heals. "Moorstown" and "Blue Orchids" set the bar high, with Kozelek's fixation on little details ("Her walls are Mediterranean blue/Her bathroom smells like spiced nuts") setting crystalline scenes. Kozelek never sugarcoats; the sting is almost tangible when he chronicles a failed romance on "Tonight in Bilbao," and the loss of a loved one is literally as haunting as a ghost on "Unit Hallway," the first of two ace pairings with Will Oldham. Throughout, Kozelek connects memory to emotions with masterful strokes. —JC

SONG TRACK
THE BLACK KEYS
Attack & Release
Producers: Danger Mouse
Nonesuch
Release Date: April 1
Throughout the course of four proper albums, the Black Keys hewed to a nononsense formula: guitar, drums, vocals, period. It was so satisfyingly simple and raw it's likely the duo could have successfully deployed it again. But, to paraphrase the old saying, you can't know what you've been missing until you've had it, and on "Attack & Release," we have it. Danger Mouse, the first producer to work with the Keys, takes on role akin to gardener. He nurtures the duo's innate musicality, allowing its elemental blues-rock to bloom into something far grander. Clever but tasteful arrangements and an impeccable shine make songs like "Same Old Thing" seem anything but the heavy, dirge-like "Lies" and the playful, faux-spooky "Psychotic Girl," which melds whimsical keyboard with earthy banjo and slide guitar, are but two of many highlights. —SV

THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

COUNTRY
GEORGE STRAIT
Troubadour
Producers: Tony Brown, George Strait
MCA Nashville
Release Date: April 1
George Strait is one of music's most consistent hitmakers for a reason—he knows a hit song when he hears one and he only sings it if it fits him. "Troubadour" is check-full of classic Strait. "I Saw God Today" is a perfect example of a track that speaks to the country core, while "Don't Let Her Slip Away" is a song about the singer reconciling his age with how old he feels. When You're in Love cleverly equates romance with a vacation destination. "(There's So Much to See and Do when you're in love)", and "River of Love" will have women swooning at King George's invitation to a "stream of kissin' about 10 miles long." "House of Cash," with Patty Loveless, is a powerful tribute to the loss of the Cash family home to fire a year ago. —KT

ALBUMS

R.E.M.
Accelerate
Producers: Jacknife Lee, R.E.M.
Wannab
Release Date: April 1
R.E.M.'s first album in four years shoehorns 11 tracks of jagged guitars, quick and dirty drums, and Michael Stipe's gruff keen into 34 minutes, rocking with a blacker, blunter edge than "Document," "Green" or "Monster." Armed with deadpan "wows" and "I-ten moves" homely from 1986's "Wake-Up Bomb," Stipe limns politics, the media and the velocity of modern life with gimlet eyes, from the strutting "don't turn your talking points on me" of "Living Well's the Best Revenge" to the candid "uncertainty is suffocating" of the title track. A '70s junkie's gut dominates "Peter Buck's cool riff for first single "Supernatural Superserious" strikes like a cartoon mallet. "Accelerate" may not stun on impact like some R.E.M. records, but it's still habit-forming. —XL

FERRAS
Aliens & Rainbows
Producers: the Matrix, Gary Clark Capital
Release Date: April 1
This Los Angeles-based singer got a boost last month when "America Idol" used his single "Hollywood's Not America" and "What's the Point of Me" as backing songs for contestants departing the show. Judging by the sound of his first full-length, though, it seems likely that Ferras (who was born in small-town Illinois before being whisked away to Jor- dan by his recently divorced dad) thinks America is Hollywood. "Aliens & Rainbows" is an action-packed collection of high-gloss piano-pop production numbers in which the scenery counts for just as much as the senti- ment. Like Mika (a fellow Westerner with Middle East- ern roots), Ferras is rarely satisfied with just one mood or mode; the dozen tracks here juxtapose loud grunge guitars and sleek synth-rock beats, while his lyrics swirl drama-kaos melodically with the "End of the Land." "Song of Home" is resigned, reflect- ive and spiritually attuned, but not always keenly focused. —WR

BABY BEATS
DAY 26
Day26
Producers: various
Bad Boy
Release Date: March 25
Several members from Day26 clashed while on MTV's "Making the Band," the reality show that brought them together. But on its debut, the Sean "Diddy" Combs-chosen quintet comes together harmoniously to de- liver hits for the masses. The "Midnight"- driven set positively sugges- tive of former Bad Boy group 112. There's little doubt what's on its mind on tracks like "I'm the Reason," the piano-laden "In My Bad" and "Cold Star" (I just want to be a part of your show," they sing). Luckily, a more nuanced take on phys- icality can be found on the Bryan-Michael Cox-produced "Are We in This Together," which questions a lover's loy- alties over a pulsating beat, and on the regretful "Since You've Been Gone," about missing a past flame. —MC

THE BLACK KEYS
Attack & Release
Producers: Danger Mouse
Nonesuch
Release Date: April 1
With a Modest Mouse covers covers collection out of his system, Mark Kozelek is back to sketching his signature tales of love poisoned by expectation on his second album as Sun Kil Moon. Easily divided between the distorted guitar epics of the last to Bad House Painters albums ("The Light") and spartan voice-and-acoustic confessions ("Lucky Man"), "April" is the aural equivalent of that heartbreak that never heals. "Moorstown" and "Blue Orchids" set the bar high, with Kozelek's fixation on little details ("Her walls are Mediterranean blue/Her bathroom smells like spiced nuts") setting crystalline scenes. Kozelek never sugarcoats; the sting is almost tangible when he chronicles a failed romance on "Tonight in Bilbao," and the loss of a loved one is literally as haunting as a ghost on "Unit Hallway," the first of two ace pairings with Will Oldham. Throughout, Kozelek connects memory to emotions with masterful strokes. —JC

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SINGLES

POP

LIL MAMA FEATURING CHRIS BROWN & T-PAIN

**Get Loose** (3:32)

Producer: T-Pain

T: Nirkland, T-Pain, C. Brown

Publishers: various

"Her "Lip Gloss" isn't the only thing poppin' this spring. Lil Mama follows that top 10 debut from last summer with a caffeinated shot of fun in "Shawty Get Loose." With chart monsters like "Chris Brown and T-Pain. One of the most buzzed-about artists from 2007 and hip-hop's most consistent rising MC - at only 18 - Lil Mama, who writes her own rhymes, accompanies this one with a future-tastic video reminiscent of Michael and Janet Jackson's 1995 "Scream." poignantly dedicated to Lil Mama's, who recently passed. This Mama would certainly make her proud. More flavors are coming April 29 when "VOP (Voice of the Young People)" drops on your block. —HM

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

LOS CAMPESINOS!

**Hold On Now**, Youngster

Producer: David Newfield

Art & Crafts

Release Date: April 1

"Lyrical references to flies, Spider-Man, LiveJournal and "The Breakfast Club" can only mean one thing - another young, hip band that's a byproduct of the quote-unquote MySpace Generation. Enter Welsh septet Los Campesinos!, a group that might keep tabs on an ex and her new K Records, T-shirt-wearing boyfriend via Facebook photos, but what? They don't care, and neither should we. Because it's precisely that wry self-awareness that gives the group's full-length debut such a kick. Not to mention the music here is catchy as hell. Like a Red Bull-fueled Belle and Sebastian, a less self-deprecating Arctic Monkeys or an easier-to-swallow Architecture in Helsinki. Los Campesinos delivers palpable twee, a sugar rush just sweet enough to prevent you from crashing down. Check-out flickenspiel, keyboards, hand claps and boy-girl harmonies, "Youngster" is playful and fun. —JM

COUNTRY

GARTH BROOKS

**Midnight Sun** (3:44)

Producer: Allen Reynolds

Writers: J.L. Nielsen, R. Brown, G. Brooks

Publishers: Sony/Pearl Records

"Garth Brooks' latest release from "The Ultimate Hits" is a slice of honky-tonk heaven. The song opens slow and stately, describing a tired cowboy whose "tail is dragging" it then rips into a spirited chorus, signaling that the party has begun as the cowboy hits his favorite water hole and kicks up his heels with Brooks narrating "Find a looker, have her hold my keys/ And tell her later we'll be needing these/ Grab a cold one, turn it upside down/ To that honky tonkin' beat". —JM

JESSE McCARTNEY

**Leavin'** (3:36)

Producer: Christopher "Tricky" Stewart, Tesu "The-Dream" Nash

Writers: C. Cole, C. Stewar, T. Nash

Publishers: various

Hollywood

"Good thing Tricky and The-Dream make house calls. Popster Jesse McCartney was looking like a one-hit wonder with 2004 top 15 "Beautiful Soul." But thanks to the writing/production duo that rained -uh, rein -in Grammy Award-lauded "Umbrella" for Rihanna and penned hits for Mary J. Blige and Mariah Carey, the (almost) 21-year-old shed boyhood ways. "Leavin'" is a funk-like confection that, on the surface, is hookier via its smooth-guy-inspired instrumentation and McCartney's "Uhh-oh-oh-oh" chant than anything he readily contributes - that is, until you catch the steamy make-out video (banned by the Disney Channel). Then it all comes together: du jour pop-R&B production with a visual that will prompt young ladies to pin McCartney beside Jonas Brothert on bedroom walls. Top 40 has bitten the bait, with "Leavin'" **fully** ignited. From his upcoming third- and aptly titled- "Departure," due May 20. —CT

ROCK

P.O.D.

**Addicted** (3:32)

Producers: Jay Baumgardner, P.O.D.

Writer: P.O.D.

Publishers: Ripple Off/Mark Cunei Freemac ASCAP/INQ/Columbia

P.O.D. celebrates the reunion of its original lineup with "When Angels & Serpents Dance" (April 8), but the party has already fallen flat. The record is midtempo and experimental (no crime there), yet "Addicted" was probably chosen to reassure that the band is still playing socially conscious rock which would be fine if "Addicted" wasn't as harmless as aspirin. Down-tuned guitars make the track sludgy, as vocalist Sonny Sandoval misfires with an off-kilter rap that leaves him sounding winds. He claims to feel "electrified, I'm so high" on a track that can knock you out like Valium, however, P.O.D. seems to be em-bracing this "addiction." We're holding out for the disc's "End of the World." —CT

I N I E

**If This Room Could Move** (3:36)

Producer: Chad Kroeger

Writer: N. Stace

Publisher: Uhitakami, BHI

Ten Star

If I N I E catapulted out of native South Carolina when Cameron Crowe invited the quartet to appear on the motion pic soundtrack to his "Elizabethtown," at year-end 2007, it grazed the adult top 40 pop top 25 with "Seven Days of Loneliness," the debut from upcoming CD "Heavy Weights the King." but that pep pill was a mere taste of the group's prowess. Sunny follow-up "If This Room Could Move" is garnering hype because Chad Kroeger produced -all well and good but bragging rights are earned on its own merits: an ambrosial vocal from Carmen Keigans, a divine start-and-stop tempo, and instrumental elements that blend '60s jangle-rock with Britpop. On record, the band sounds like a blissful union of Jewel and Sixpence None the Richer — if more Avril Lavigne live. With two exquisite singles in a row, I N I E is counting down to name-brand status. Utterly superlative. —CT

TRIPLE A

NEWTON FAULKNER

**Dream Catch Me** (3:57)

Producer: Mike Spencer

Writers: C. Hunt, N. Faulkner, G. Mills

Publishers: various

Columbia

A gifted guitarist with a powerful post-grunge croon, 23-year-old U.K. import Newton Faulkner had a huge hit at home with this acoustic-based soft rock, them, which combines pure pop melody with an organic homemade feel. The soul-searching signature track from debut "Hand Built by Rob" develops a breezy hook to effortlessly infectious, it's destined to soar beyond triple A radio, where it's building right now. More Eddie Vedder than Jack Johnson, Faulkner's voice is full of yearning, suggesting someone who has never seen a beautiful tropical beach, but keeps dreaming about it every night. —SP

EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS) AND CHUCK TAYLOR (SINGLES)


PICK X: A new release predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format.

CRITICS' CHOICE: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album promo copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventeenth Floor, New York, N.Y. 10036) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

INTERSCOPE

Release Date: April 1

MOVING from stadiums to ballrooms, the Rolling Stones performed two sold-out shows at New York's Beacon Theater in October 2006, filmed by Martin Scorsese for this documentary, which opens April 4. The accompanying live album features the pure magic of a high-energy rock show performed in a small venue, offering a mix of crowd-pleasers ("Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Brown Sugar") and setlist oddities like "Some Girls" or the feverish, rarely played "She Was Hot," which sizzles with mean guitar licks. Mick Jagger and the boys throw a curveball and bring out Christina Aguilera, who rocks her vocal acrobatics on "Live With Me," and Jack White of the White Stripes guests on "Loving Cup," one of the best moments. Much more dazzling than the guest list: more than 40 years into their career, the Stones sound raw and dangerously alive. —SP

VARIABLE ARTISTS

In the Name of Love:

Africa Celebrates U2

Producers: Shwan Amos, Paul Heck

Shout Factory

Release Date: April 1

Some of Africa's most celebrated musicians take on the music of U2. It would have been very difficult to screw up this idea and, indeed, it's apparent from the opening track — Benin native Angélique Kidjo's high-powered cover of "Mysterious Ways" — that this album is a rare beauty. Every act lays down its own vibe, Vieux Farka Toure works a wicked, distinctly Malian groove on "Bullet the Blue Sky" while singing in three languages. South Africa's Soweto Gospel Choir delivers a thunderous cover of "Pride (In the Name of Love)," and fellow South African Vusi Mahlaule handles "Sometimes You Can't Get It on Your Own" with a depth of emotion that typifies his own tremendous body of work. —PPV

www.americanradiohistory.com
A LOT TO ‘LOVE’

U.K. Superstar Leona Lewis Tops The Hot 100

Leona Lewis has definitely got the “X Factor.” The U.K.-born singer, who was discovered on the British talent show of that name in 2006 and went on to break numerous chart records in her homeland the following year (Billboard, Dec. 1, 2007), is well on her way to proving her music has lost nothing in translation on U.S. shores.

“Bleeding Love,” the first single from Lewis’ album “Spirit” (due April 6 on Syco/Jive), vaults to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 this week, making her only the third U.K. solo female to have a No. 1 hit with her first single. The song’s 8-1 jump comes amid an 82% spike in digital sales following her March 17 performance on “The Oprah Winfrey Show.”

“Bleeding Love” also climbs 2-1 on Hot Digital Songs and breaks the top 20 on Radio & Records’ CHR/Top 40 chart, going 22-14 with an increase of 794,000—its second-largest gain this week.

RCA Music Group executive VP/GM Tom Corson says Lewis’ performance on “Oprah” was “a magical moment. What you saw of her on the couch—that’s the real her. She’s good-hearted, humble and hardworking, all of which comes across onscreen.”

Indeed, making use of the medium that helped Lewis win over the hearts of Brits lies at the center of her U.S. marketing campaign. “You’ll be seeing a lot of her on TV,” Corson says.

RCA Music Group senior VP of marketing/artist development Scott Sevour adds, “It’s so important that while radio is happening and while her story is getting out through blogs and the press, she’s doing these TV performances, because we don’t have the luxury of a 24-month buildup here.

“In Britain, people saw her on ‘X Factor’ and then followed her as she worked on her album,” he continues. “But she’s a new artist to America, and so we’re trying to establish that emotional connection. And TV lets her show off that voice.”

The singer performed March 24 on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno” and him “Good Morning America” April 4. During release week, she’ll appear on several programs, including “Live With Regis and Kelly” and “The Ellen DeGeneres Show.”

Lewis says she’s thrilled to be introducing herself to American audiences. “A lot of [“Spirit”] was recorded here—the majority of it, actually,” she says. “So it’s amazing that I get the chance to now share it here.”

She adds, “I’m not taking anything for granted. This opportunity is extraordinary and I know a lot of people would love to have the chance I’ve got. I’m working the hardest I can and just want to keep going.”

Corson isn’t taking anything for granted, either. “She’s obviously a massive success story in the U.K.—but the task of converting that success is a difficult one. What works internationally doesn’t always connect to U.S. audiences.”

To that end, what Corson calls “a U.S.-friendly video” for “Bleeding Love” was placed in rotation here, and the U.S. edition of “Spirit” contains two new songs alongside several new mixes.

“It’s been a great team effort between Syco and I to position her in this market, and it really started with the A&R process and the crafting of a record that’s perfect for the U.S.,” Corson says.

“We believe we’ll get four or five singles deep on this album. Hopefully, this is the dawn of a new career.”

SHE’S ‘BOSS’: KRISTINE W ENJOYS DIY DANCE HIT

She might be an eternally coifed, former Vegas showgirl, but dance artist Kristine W knows when it’s time to get scrappy. From conception to recording to remixing to release, her new single “The Boss,” which shot up the Hot Club Play chart to No. 1 last week, was a completely homemade project.

“I ran it by a couple of labels and they didn’t understand what I was trying to do,” she says from her Las Vegas home. “So I said, ‘Well then, this is coming out on Fly Again Music.’” Named after her 2003 song of the same name—released on old label Tommy Boy—the imprint didn’t even exist yet. But the very week of the single’s release, it had a hit on its hands.

“It went a lot faster than I had time to even set it up. I didn’t know it would rocket up the charts like it did,” Kristine W says. “We didn’t even have time to get it on lots and iTunes.” She worked with promoters Bobby Shaw (nightclub DJs) and Cary Vance of Promo Only (dance radio) to get the word out.

The artist—a fixture on the dance scene since her 1996 hit-packed, Rollo-produced debut album, “Land of the Living”—is a rare blend of a showy singer with astounding vocal firepower and a confessional songwriter’s ethic. She’s currently working on two double-CD projects: a straight-up dance album—“The Power of Music,” with producers like Grammy Award winner Hex Hector and Quentin Harris—and “Straight Up With a Twist,” a reimagining of her biggest dance hits in a bossa nova style. Each will have a companion mixed CD. She’s not ruling out working with an established label for either, but Fly Again will do just fine if the chemistry isn’t right.

“You have to get smart really fast in the business, because things are changing so quickly,” she says. “If you don’t figure out how to survive it all, you’ll be at the back of the line.”

—Kerri Mason
ST. PATRICK’S DAY KICKS

The Dropkick Murphys have been the beneficiary of big sales boosts in recent years thanks to their inclusion in the film “The Departed” and a gig singing the national anthem at Boston’s Fenway Park during the baseball playoffs.

But the days surrounding St. Patrick’s Day reinstate the Boston-based band’s retail bread and butter, and 2008 was no different. The group’s 12 releases were up 75% in the week leading up to St. Patrick’s Day versus the week prior, with more than 15,000 unit sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Its most recent album, “The Meaning of Tinkers,” was the biggest beneficiary, moving from a 3,000 sales the week ending March 9 to more than 7,000 the week ending March 16. Appropriately, 2003’s “Live on St. Patrick’s Day” more than doubled as well.

What’s more, the growth was essentially sustained during the tracking week after St. Patrick’s Day this year, with total sales for the 12 releases at only a couple hundred less than the prior frame.

By comparison, the Dropkick Murphys’ catalog had a 44.6% St. Patrick’s Day gain in 2006, and a 48.3% boost in 2007.

During the St. Patrick’s weekend, the band played a club show in Dorchester, Mass., on Friday night and then an arena gig in Lowell, Mass., the next evening. And in celebration of the holiday, three Dropkick Murphys songs were given away for free to “Guitar Hero III” users.

Research by Keith Caulfield.

GREEN GAINS

A look at the percentage sales gain for the Dropkick Murphys’ releases in the week leading up to St. Patrick’s Day.

44.6%

48.3%

75%

ON TRACK

Warfield ‘Embraces’ R&B Success

Six years ago, after realizing singing was her calling, Liz Warfield took a track-and-field scholarship at Portland (Ore.) State University—and started doing research in karaoke bars.

“I would listen to singers around town and study them,” says Warfield, now 22. “And I knew I wanted to sing, but I didn’t have the guts to do it. I was too shy.”

Her studies have paid off. The second single from her 2006 debut album, the Dave Whipple-produced “I Decided,” recently entered Billboard’s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart at No. 71.

In September 2006, Warfield released her album “Embrace Me,” which “talks from a woman’s perspective and expresses what I was going through in my life,” she says. Producers include Darren Bowls, while jazz/R&B drummer Bernard “Pretty” Purdie is featured on the track “ABC’s.” The first single from the set, the Sade-inspired “Groove DJ,” did well in the underground market last year.

Born in Peoria, Ill., Warfield grew up in the Pentecostal church and played the violin.

“When I moved to Portland, I realized I had a voice inside of me that needed to come out already,” she says.

After performing many open mic nights and eventually getting past her stage fright, Warfield started her own band called Money and Loving. Two years later, it landed a gig opening for famed R&B group Pokey’s. “It was a crazy experience and moment in my life,” she says. “There were merely five people in the room when we took the stage, but there was just so much joy in that.”

Warfield caught the attention of Maryyn Mills, CEO of independent label B&M, who signed her to a solo deal a few months later.

Now, Warfield is prepping to release her third track off “Embrace Me.” “I’m ready to get with radio stations to really push my album and for people to hear what the Northwest has got going on musically,” she says. —Mariel Conception

WARFIELD

PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF

Capitol Nashville artist Emily West is a woman with a plan. Visit her MySpace page and look under “news and tour dates” and you’ll see one entry repeated down the length of the page: “October 8, 2009 7:00 p.m. The Grammys Los Angeles, California. “You need goals in life,” the 26-year-old Waterloo, Iowa, native says.

It’s not surprising that West knew she wanted to be a country star at a very young age. In her early teens, she began visiting Nashville on a regular basis hoping to get her shot. In March 2000, after graduating early from high school, she moved to Music City. A month later she was signed to Warner/Chappell as a songwriter. “I basically took one day at a time and pretended I knew about how the music business worked and developed myself as an artist and wrote songs,” she says.

West was signed by Capitol Nashville in 2004, but success didn’t come overnight for the young woman who counts Patsy Cline, Bettye Midler and Vince Gill among her influences. “I feel like the record has real stuff on it that couldn’t have been made in the matter of a year,” she says. “You learn a lot from perseverance.”

West wrote or co-wrote seven songs on her as-yet-untitled debut, tentatively scheduled for fall release. First single “Rocks in Your Shoes,” which James 50-44 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs after four weeks on the chart, is an up-tempo “put on your big girl panties and deal with it” song. It was inspired by her great, great grandfather John Baptist Bevard, a religious man who would literally put rocks in his shoes and plow the fields as penance for a night of drinking. “I thought that was sad, but I thought it really was a good song title,” she says with a laugh.

Country: WDTW-FM Detroit PD John Trapano says that while he had already heard West’s music and liked it, he was further impressed when she came to visit the station. “She had it, whatever ‘it’ is,” he says. “She had buckets of it.” Stage presence, vocal range and ability, a personality that was honest and genuine.”

—Ken Tucker
MILEY TIMES TWO

» Miley Cyrus becomes the first female artist in 11 years (up to child) to concurrently top 10 albums on the Billboard 200. LeAnn Rimes was the last solo lady to do so on the March 23, 1997, chart with "Unchained Melody/The Early Years" and "Blue."

THE LONG RUN

» Santana's "Smooth" featuring Rob Thomas hung in the top 10 for 50 weeks through April 2000.

BIRTHDAY GAL

» National Public Radio's coverage of Marian McPartland's 90th birthday festivities give the pianist her best sales week since Nielsen SoundScan launched in 1991, as "Twilight World" (Half Note) tops jazz albums with nearly 1,000 copies.

CHART BEAT

» For the first time in almost 27 years and only the third time in the rock era, a British solo female artist tops the Billboard Hot 100 with her first chart entry. Leona Lewis boldly moves in with "Bleeding Love." Who are the only other (U.K.) solo female artists to reach No. 1 with their debut singles? And which two Hot 100 artists are enjoying their first No. 1, as well? Find out in Chart Beat online.

Market Watch

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

Weekly Unit Sales

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Digital album sales are also counted with pgun sales.

Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)

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<td>Dec</td>
<td>20.40</td>
<td>25.94</td>
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Year-To-Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>20.40</td>
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DIGITAL TRACKS SALES

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CDs</td>
<td>96,979</td>
<td>81,969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>10,660</td>
<td>14,472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type

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<td>Indies</td>
<td>109,820</td>
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<td>Non-traditional</td>
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<td>Mass Merchant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chain</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

Over the Counter

GEOFF MAYFIELD gmayfield@billboard.com

Danity Kane Goes Two For Two; MTV Still Buzzes

In yet another year when album sales suffer a tough climate, the tracking week that coincides with the arrival of spring stirs wisps of fresh air. We're talking about little victories, mind you, but small wins are better than an extended losing streak.

Danity Kane Goes Two For Two; MTV Still Buzzes

With Rick Ross accomplishing that same feat last week when he bowed at No. 1, we're in a rare patch that finds true two frames in a row.

Kane's first-day numbers at key SoundScan accounts of $2,000,000, and the $1,500,000 sold through March 20 at the same panel of retailers, suggested that the act's new "Welcome to the Dollhouse" might open near $300,000 copies, but it appears the album cooled off over the weekend. Still, the start of 2,400,000 copies does beat the first week by its 2006 freshman album by about 1%. Remember, it prefaced this math by proclaiming a "small win."

Last issue, rapper Ross saw "Trilla" open at $198,000, 5.9% larger than the start for his first Def Jam album in 2006, "Port of Miami."

The improvement in first-week stats by these two acts stands in contrast to the first three artists who bowed at No. 1 in 2008, as Jack Johnson, Janet Jackson and Alan Jackson each rang the bell with smaller stats than they saw on earlier albums.

The other waft of positive news in Easter week's album numbers comes with a bunny-sized footnote, but Market Watch, below, notes volume stood above that of the same 2007 week, for the first time this year.

Before you set off a bottle rocket to celebrate, remember that since Easter hops around from year to year, this comparison pits a gift shopping week against a nonholiday week from last year's calendar. Then again, the same was true last year, when Easter arrived April 10. Yet even in that week, album sales were down 5% from the nonholiday frame of 2006, so this still counts for something.

How do the sales reflected this issue stand up against those of last year's actual Easter frame? You might not want to go there. The 2007 week that ended April 10 hauled 10.6 million, providing a gap of more than 18% over this year's basket.

Perhaps it's better to concentrate on those little victories, right?

STILL MTV TO ME: If you were 15 years old when MTV first signed on, you're over 40 now. So, spare me the sob story about how MTV doesn't play as many clips as it did in the early days. Does anything on TV resemble what you saw in 1981? When Billboard paid a recent housecall to a sharp management company, a couple of executives who I respect asked me if MTV still makes a difference in music sales. I'm guessing the folks at Atlantic, Danity Kane's distributing label, just might answer with an emphatic "yes."

The label thinks the latest "Making the Band" assembly, Day 26, will replace Danity atop next issue's Billboard 200, estimating an opening week in the vicinity of 200,000-210,000 copies. An earlier vintage from that show, Bad Boy's Da Band, also started at 200,000 plus when "Too Hot for TV" bopped No. 2 in 2003.

Consider, too, the hating average of MTV's multiplatform 52/52 campaign, which has propelled visibility for as diverse a legion of acts as Paramore, Rodrigo y Gabriela and last issue's beneficiary, OneRepublic, which jumped 45-20 on a 52 spike then and post another 15% gain this week. Add it all up and it becomes fairly obvious that while MTV and some of its sister channels are less clip-driven, it still has the power to move the needle.

Meanwhile, Flo Rida becomes the latest illustration of how one must look beyond album sales alone to measure certain artists' popularity. Focus on the 86,000 copies that his "Mail on Sunday" moves on No. 4 on the Billboard 200 and you might forget that between ring-related options and digital downloads, the rapper's "Low" has sold 4.9 million units. I'd settle for a piece of that action.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welcome To The Dollhouse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NOW 27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Trilla</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mail On Sunday</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sleep Through the Static</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Searching For The Best Of Both Worlds Concert</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Good Time</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>So Dumb</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Odd Couple</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Coco</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Radio Disney Jams 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Self-Made</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Still Feels Good</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Back To Black</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Daught</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dreaming Out Loud</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Jordan Sparks</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Lowest Of The Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Hannah Montana</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Hannah Montana</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Growin' Pain</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>August Rush</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Across The Universe: Deluxe Edition</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Minutes To Midnight</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Just Like You</td>
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<td>29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Once</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Enchanted</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Vampire Weekend</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Silverback Gorilla</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>The Outkast</td>
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<td>The Ultimate Hits</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Detours</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>High School Musical 2</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>The Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Step Up II: The Streets</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Rawnd</td>
<td>41</td>
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</tbody>
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**Parleys:**
- The album, "Our Love," hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart, including "Last Kiss" in Paris, France.
- "Last Kiss" reached No. 1 on the chart, becoming the first single from the album to do so.

**Listers:**
- The album, "Our Love," hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart, including "Last Kiss" in Paris, France.
- "Last Kiss" reached No. 1 on the chart, becoming the first single from the album to do so.

**Dates:**
- The album, "Our Love," hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart, including "Last Kiss" in Paris, France.
- "Last Kiss" reached No. 1 on the chart, becoming the first single from the album to do so.

**Wide:**
- The album, "Our Love," hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart, including "Last Kiss" in Paris, France.
- "Last Kiss" reached No. 1 on the chart, becoming the first single from the album to do so.
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WITH YOU</td>
<td>VAMPS (Columbia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LOVE IN THIS CLUB</td>
<td>Diddy ft. Chrisette/Bad Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>R. City ft. Big Boi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LOVE SONG</td>
<td>Connecting to You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SEXY CAN I</td>
<td>JAZZ FEAT. MIKE WILLIAMS ft. BEYONCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NO ONE</td>
<td>R. City ft. Big Boi</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>ALL YOUR LIFE</td>
<td>Pendant</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/New Edition</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>BITCH I'M IN HEAVEN</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>STOP AND STARE</td>
<td>D. Frank ft. Aaliyah</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>ALL AMERICAN GIRL</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood ft. Bad Boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>BEAT IT II</td>
<td>Michael Jackson ft. Jermaine Dupri</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>TALK TO ME</td>
<td>J.טו (Universal)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>CRANK THAT (SOULJA BOY)</td>
<td>Crank That ft. Lil Wayne</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>D. Frank ft. Aaliyah</td>
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<td>Michael Jackson ft. Jermaine Dupri</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Crank That ft. Lil Wayne</td>
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<td>Carrie Underwood ft. Bad Boy</td>
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### ADULT TOP 40

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<td>The Commodores (AMERICA)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>SORRY</td>
<td>R. City ft. Big Boi</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FEELING LIKE TIGHT</td>
<td>T.I. ft. Usher (Bad Boy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>TOUCH THE NIGHT</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>WHAT NO ONE</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HOW MUCH I MISS YOU</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>WHEN YOU LOOK IN THE EYES</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SORRY</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ROLL</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SHADOW OF THE DAY</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SWEETEST GIRL (DOLLAR BILL)</td>
<td>S. Brown ft. Jodeci</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>THE BOSS</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>SWEETEST GIRL (DOLLAR BILL)</td>
<td>S. Brown ft. Jodeci</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>THE BOSS</td>
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### MODERN ROCK

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ROCKSTAR</td>
<td>Queen Latifah (Le Boulevard/Def Jam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PARIS IS BURNING</td>
<td>The Toy dolls ft. Bruce Springsteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>WHAT A GIRL WANTS</td>
<td>The Toy dolls ft. Bruce Springsteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IN YOUR EYES</td>
<td>The Toy dolls ft. Bruce Springsteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SHE CAN'T STOP WHAT SHE STARTED</td>
<td>The Toy dolls ft. Bruce Springsteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HOW MUTOURS THE MOST CNOUD</td>
<td>The Toy dolls ft. Bruce Springsteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PIECE OF THE PICTURE</td>
<td>The Toy dolls ft. Bruce Springsteen</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>FEELING LIKE TIGHT</td>
<td>T.I. ft. Usher (Bad Boy)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>TOUCH THE NIGHT</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>WHAT NO ONE</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<td>HOW MUCH I MISS YOU</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>WHEN YOU LOOK IN THE EYES</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>SWEETEST GIRL (DOLLAR BILL)</td>
<td>S. Brown ft. Jodeci</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>THE BOSS</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>S. Brown ft. Jodeci</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>THE BOSS</td>
<td>R. City ft. Usher/Maine</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>SWEETEST GIRL (DOLLAR BILL)</td>
<td>S. Brown ft. Jodeci</td>
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For complete chart data, visit [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz)
**TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS**

<table>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Week #</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>DANDY KANE</td>
<td>Welcome To The Dollhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>RICK ROSS</td>
<td>Trilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>FLO RIDA</td>
<td>Mad On Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>SNOOP DOGG</td>
<td>Ego Trippin’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Now 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>ROCKO</td>
<td>Self-Made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>JANET</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>SHADY LOU</td>
<td>Silverback Gorilla</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>ALICIA KEYS</td>
<td>As I Am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>MARY J. BLIGE</td>
<td>Growing Pains</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>KEYSHIA COLE</td>
<td>Just Like You</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>FAT JOE</td>
<td>The Elephant In The Room</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td>ERYKAH BADU</td>
<td>New Amerykah: Part One (4th World War)</td>
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<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>WEBBIE</td>
<td>Savage Life 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>JAHKIM</td>
<td>The Makings Of A Man</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td>THE-DREAM</td>
<td>Love/Hate</td>
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**GREATEST HITS**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>TAMEEM DEVAUGHN</td>
<td>Love Behind The Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>CHRIS BROWN</td>
<td>Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>Back To Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>J. HOLIDAY</td>
<td>Back Of My Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>JILL SCOTT</td>
<td>The Real Thing: Words And Sounds Vol. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>RHIANNA</td>
<td>Good Girl Gone Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>SOUNDBOARD</td>
<td>Step Up 2: The Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>JOHN LEGEND</td>
<td>Live From Philadelphia</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>SOULJA BOY TELL EM</td>
<td>soulibyechannel.com</td>
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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>JIM JONES</td>
<td>HARLEM’s American Gangster</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>CHRISTIE MICHELE</td>
<td>I Am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>KIRK FRANKLIN</td>
<td>The Fight Of My Life</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td>LEDISI</td>
<td>Lost &amp; Found</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>PLIES</td>
<td>The Real Testament</td>
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<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>TREYSONGZ</td>
<td>Trey Day</td>
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<td>KANYE WEST</td>
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<td>5’Stunna</td>
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<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>New Era Vol. 3</td>
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<td>MICHAEL MCDONALD</td>
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<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td>SCARFACE</td>
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<td>SEAN KINGSTON</td>
<td>Made On A Night Out (77-2264/Lullaby)</td>
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<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>GUCCI MANE</td>
<td>Back To The Trap House</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td>ANGIE STONE</td>
<td>The Art Of Love &amp; War</td>
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<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td>TIMBALAND</td>
<td>Timbaland Presents Snatch Skill</td>
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<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td>BONE THREES</td>
<td>Still Crisp On An Up Come</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td>CHRISSY DENNIS</td>
<td>In And Out Of Love</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td>JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE</td>
<td>FutureSex/LoveSounds</td>
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<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td>DRAMA</td>
<td>Gangsta Grillz: The Album</td>
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<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td>BOII•H•MEN</td>
<td>MotorT: A Journey Through Hitville USA</td>
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<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td>GARNLS BARKEY</td>
<td>The Odd Couple</td>
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<td>Attitude Adjuster</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td>BOW WOW &amp; OMARION</td>
<td>Face Off</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td>NE-YO</td>
<td>Because Of You</td>
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**TOP BLUES ALBUMS**

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN</td>
<td>The Real Deal: Greatest Hits Vol. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>JEFF HEALEY</td>
<td>Mess Of Blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN &amp; FRIENDS</td>
<td>Solos, Sessions &amp; Encores</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS</td>
<td>Bernard &amp; Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>B-Lcrets DOORMAN</td>
<td>Roll Away</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>JOE BONAMASSA</td>
<td>Get On Board</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>BIRDMAN</td>
<td>Blood Brothers</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>JAMES BROWN</td>
<td>Ain’t A Ruckus</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>JIMMY DUCK LAKE</td>
<td>Command Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>KENNY WEAVER</td>
<td>10 Days Out: Blues From The Backroads</td>
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<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>FRANK TAVELA</td>
<td>Black Snake Moon</td>
</tr>
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<td>JOHN HOFFMAN</td>
<td>Live Bootleg Series Vol. 2</td>
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<td>OTIS TAYLOR</td>
<td>Recapturing The Band</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>ANA POPOVIC</td>
<td>Still Making History</td>
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**FLO, ROCKO IN DANNITY’S SHADOW**

While Dannya Kane crowns Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums and the Billboard 200 (see Over The Counter, page 45), rapper Flo Rida and Rocko start in the top 10 on the R&B list.

Flo Rida may have the best-selling digital track of all time, but he can’t make the same magic happen on the Billboard 200, as his debut album, “Mail On Sunday,” bows at No. 4 with $6.000. It lands at No. 3 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. The rapper’s “Low” has sold 3.3 million downloads since its release in November. The tune was also the most-heard on U.S. radio for four consecutive weeks from January into mid-February. Writer Rocko also debuts, landing at No. 6 on R&B/Hip-Hop Albums and No. 21 on the Billboard 200.

—Keith Caulfield
### R&B/HIP-HOP Airplay

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<thead>
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<td>Ke$ha</td>
<td>RCA Contemporary</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Like You'll Never See Me Again</td>
<td>Keri K</td>
<td>Jive/RCA Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>ASHANTI</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Just Fine</td>
<td>R.Kelly</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>WOMAN</td>
<td>A$AP Ferg</td>
<td>Epic/Def Jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Ariana Grande</td>
<td>Epic/Def Jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Suga Suga Suga</td>
<td>Shaggy</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Touch My Body</td>
<td>Nicki Minaj</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Baby Baby Baby</td>
<td>Jason Derulo</td>
<td>ANTI/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Just Me</td>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>One For All Time</td>
<td>Bow Wow</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Never Land</td>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>Epic/Def Jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>The-Dream</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Luv</td>
<td>Bow Wow</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Almost</td>
<td>Bow Wow</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Baby Boy Baby Girl</td>
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<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
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### Rap Songs

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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Flo Rida</td>
<td>RBL/Polygram Int'l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>De Know</td>
<td>Slim</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I Won't Tell</td>
<td>BT</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Superstar</td>
<td>The Dream</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Boss</td>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Umma Do Me</td>
<td>Plies</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Flashlight</td>
<td>Mya</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elevator</td>
<td>Flo-Rida</td>
<td>RBL/Polygram Int'l</td>
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<td>The Anthem</td>
<td>Timbaland</td>
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<td>Lollipopp</td>
<td>Lolate</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Shay's Get Loose</td>
<td>Z-RO</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Good Life</td>
<td>Kanye West</td>
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<td>Hustler</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Boss</td>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Road</td>
<td>Ludacris</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Because of Love</td>
<td>Jason Derulo</td>
<td>ANTI/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kiss Me</td>
<td>Jason Derulo</td>
<td>ANTI/Atlantic</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Missy Elliott Feat. Kanye West</td>
<td>Missy Elliott</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>One Time</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Drop A Bomb</td>
<td>Plies</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Fly</td>
<td>Chamillionaire</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>For The First Time</td>
<td>Chad Hugo</td>
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<tr>
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### Rhythmic Airplay

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<td>Love In This Club</td>
<td>Flo Rida feat. T-Pain &amp; Gaels</td>
<td>RBL/Polygram Int'l</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sexy Can I</td>
<td>Jason Derulo</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>I Won't Tell</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Superstar</td>
<td>The Dream</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Lloyd</td>
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<td>Umma Do Me</td>
<td>Plies</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Flashlight</td>
<td>Mya</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
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<td>Elevator</td>
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<td>Kiss Me</td>
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<td>Missy Elliott Feat. Kanye West</td>
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<td>One Time</td>
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### Adult R&B

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<td>Just Fine</td>
<td>R.Kelly</td>
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<td>Suga Suga Suga</td>
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<td>Warner Bros.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Baby Boy Baby Girl</td>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>Def Jam/ATLANTIC</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Chart Data

- **Chart Data** includes weekly charts for R&B/HIP-HOP, RAP, and Rhythmic music genres.
- **Hot R&B/HIP-HOP Airplay** features the top 25 songs based on radio airplay.
- **Rap Songs** lists the top 25 independent songs.
- **Rhythmic Airplay** showcases the 25 most-played songs.
- **Adult R&B** chart highlights the top 25 songs in the adult contemporary genre.

Visit [www.billboard.com](http://www.billboard.com) for complete chart data.
## HOT COUNTRY SONGS

<table>
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<td>Alan Jackson</td>
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<tr>
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**HIT PREDICTOR**

See chart legend for rules and explanations. Yellow indicates recently tired title, Green indicates new Release.

**COUNTRY**

- **ARTIST**
  - ALAN JACKSON: Small Town Southern Man (85.1)
  - TRACY ADKINS: You're Gonna Miss This (90.8)
  - CARRIE UNDERWOOD: I Saw God Today (88.3)
  - GEORGE STRAIT: I Saw God Today (73.5)
  - JAMES OUTFIT: Just Got Started Livin' (76.1)
  - JASON ALDEAN: Love Me Like You Mean It (90.8)
  - TAYLOR SWIFT: Picture to Burn (85.1)
  - PHIL VASSAR: Love Me Like You Mean It (75.9)

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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

**STRAT'S SONG RACES WITH 'GOD'S SPEED'**

Country's all-time No. 1 king clocks his fastest top five tempo in almost a decade as George Strait's I Saw God Today rises 7-4 in its seventh chart week. That's his quickest climb since I Just Want to Dance With You needed seven weeks to crack the top five in the May 30, 1998, issue.

In the 18-year Nielsen BDS era, Strait has made better time on four occasions. His quickest sprint to that part of the chart happened in the Dec. 1, 1990, issue, when "I've Come to Expect It from You" did so in five weeks. Meanwhile, Taylor Swift is the third solo female this decade to place four songs from a debut album in the top 10. As "Picture to Burn" spikes 11-8, (Carrie Underwood did so in 2007, following Gretchen Wilson's feat in 2005.) Also new to the top 10 is Phil Vassar's "Love Is a Beautiful Thing," his eighth top 10 and first since "Last Day of My Life" rose to No. 2 in June 2006. — Wade Jessen
### HOT LATIN SONGS

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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Los cuates de san luis</td>
<td>Gente de Zona/Latina America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Convierto a mis amantes</td>
<td>Gente de Zona/Latina America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>La arrolladora banda el limón</td>
<td>Gente de Zona/Latina America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Los rayos de sol</td>
<td>Gente de Zona/Latina America</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>El encuentro</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Enero</td>
<td>Gente de Zona/Latina America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paseo por suelo de los amantes</td>
<td>Gente de Zona/Latina America</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Buenas noches</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>El paso del tren</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Karaoke en la sierra</td>
<td>Arrolladora Banda el Limón/Latina America</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Los horroscopos de Durango</td>
<td>Arrolladora Banda el Limón/Latina America</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Los cuates de san luis</td>
<td>Arrolladora Banda el Limón/Latina America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Enero</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Paseo por suelo de los amantes</td>
<td>Arrolladora Banda el Limón/Latina America</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data for week of APRIL 5, 2008 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 57
### Hits of the World Billboard 2008

**Japan Albums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>NEW</th>
<th>DAVID GILMOUR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>KEN HIRAI</td>
<td>SONG COLLECTOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>HIKAU UTADA</td>
<td>SCOPY</td>
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**United Kingdom Albums**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>MICHAEL JACKSON</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
<td>SINGING IN THE RAIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3</td>
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<td>MAXELL</td>
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**Germany Albums**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
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<td>BACK TO BLACK</td>
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**Euro Digital Songs**

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<th>MARCH 28, 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
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<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
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</table>

**France Albums**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
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<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
<td>SINGING IN THE RAIN</td>
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**Australia Albums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
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**Canada Albums**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
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<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
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**Italy Digital Songs**

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<td>#2</td>
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**Spain Singles**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
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<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
<td>SINGING IN THE RAIN</td>
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**The Netherlands Albums**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>#2</td>
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**Denmark Albums**

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
<td>SINGING IN THE RAIN</td>
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**Greece Albums**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
<td>SINGING IN THE RAIN</td>
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**Austria Singles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>MARCH 28, 2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>MICHAEL JACKSON</td>
<td>SINGING IN THE RAIN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### Top Christian Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Distribution Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk Franklin</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smokie Norful</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew West</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abel &amp; Directions</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Jobe</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shari Curtis Henley</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CeCe Winans</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>WEA NEW BEGINNINGS</td>
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</table>

### Top Gospel Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Distribution Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. J. Hairston &amp; Youthful Praise</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Hammond</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Curtis Chapman</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk Franklin</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
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### Billboard Radio Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Distribution Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marvin Sapp</td>
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<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Hammond</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk Franklin</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew West</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abel &amp; Directions</td>
<td>INTEGRITY</td>
<td>EMI CMG DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Data for week of April 5, 2008. For chart reprints call 646-654-4633. Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### ALBUM CHARTS
Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for the 50 top albums is garnered from a national subset of core stores that specialize in those genres.

#### WHERE-LOCATED
Where included, this award indicates the title ranked on the chart's primary coast.

#### REMOVED
Indicates album entered top 100 of The Billboard 200 and has been removed from Hot Albums chart.

#### PRICING/CONFIGURATION/AVAILABILITY
CD/DVD's others are suggested at equivalent prices, which are projected from wholesale prices. ©/©/© price indicates album only available on DualDisc. CD/DVD's only available. © DualDisc available. **©/©/©/©/©/©/©/©** availability. Pricing and vinyl LP availability are not included on all charts. **©/©/©**. After catalog number indicators title is exclusive to a particular format.

### RADIO/PLAY AIRPLAY SINGLES CHARTS
Consulted from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charted are tracks by number of downloads and/or sales with a co-interviewing index of airplay with Arbitron-RadioInfo data. The exception are the rhythmic Airplay, Adult Top-40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are scored by total detections. 

### REGULAR CHARTS
Songs are removed from The Billboard Hot 100 and rest 100 Airplay charts immediately if they have been on The Billboard Hot 100 for more than 27 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/hip hop Songs and Hot Rap/hip hop Airplay chart or if they have been on the Hot R&B/hip hop Songs or more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed from the Pop 100 and Pop 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Pop 100 for more than 27 weeks and rank below No. 50. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50 or 60. Songs are removed if there are no detections for a period of six weeks and rank below No. 10. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed if there are no detections for a period of six weeks and rank below No. 10. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed if there are no detections for a period of six weeks and rank below No. 10. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed if there are no detections for a period of six weeks and rank below No. 10. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed if there are no detections for a period of six weeks and rank below No. 10. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50.

### SINGLE CHARTS
The top selling singles compiled from a national sample of record store, mass merchant, and Internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/hip hop Airplay Singles, sales data is compiled from a national subset panel of core R&B/hip hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

### AWARDS/RECOGNITION
- **DVD CHARTS**
  - **CD single available**
  - **Digital Download available**
  - **DVD single available**
  - **Vinyl single available**
  - **High-End single available**
  - **Configurations are not included on all singles charts.

### INTRODUCTORY
- **Indicates title entered Hot 100 status in that particular format based on research data provided to Billboard. Songs are tested online by Promusica using multiple leaks and a nationwide sample of carefully profiled music consumers. Songs are rated on a 5–5 scale; their results are based on weighted qualities. Songs with a score of 65 or more (and 10 more as the case may be) are pegged to have Hit Potential although that benchmark number can fluctuate per format based on the strength of available titles. For a complete and updated list of current songs, with Hit Potential, commentary, polls, and more, please visit www.billboard.com/biz.

### DANCE CLUB PLAY
Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs. Titles with the greatest club play may appear each week.

### ALBUM CHARTS
- **Recorded Industry Assoc. Of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinum)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 2 million units (2x Platinum)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 5 million units (5x Platinum)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million units (Diamond)**

### SINGLES CHARTS
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 50,000 paid downloads (Silver)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 100,000 units (Gold)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 250,000 units (Platinum)**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 500,000 units (5x Platinum)**

### VIDEO MUSIC SALES CHARTS
- **RIAA gold certifications for net shipment of 25,000 units for video singles.**
- **RIAA gold certifications for net shipment of 50,000 units for video albums.**
- **RIAA platinum certification for net shipment of 100,000 units for video singles.**

### DVD SALES/VIDEO SALES/RENTALS
- **RIAA gold certifications for net shipment of 200,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price.**
- **RIAA platinum certifications for net shipment of 400,000 units or $3 million in sales at suggested retail price.**

###調集結果
- **Top Independent Albums**
- **Top Digital Albums**

---

**TOP INDEPENDENT ALBUMS**

| Position | Artist | Title | Label/Imprint | Format | Week Date | Sales
|----------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-----------|------|
| 1        | Sheek Louch | Longtime Friend | Interscope | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 119,000
| 2        | Jack Johnson | Sleep Through The Static | Capitol | Digital | 2008.03.22 | 52,000
| 3        | Jason Uraz | We Sing (EP) | Hollywood Records | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 51,000
| 4        | Sara Bareilles | Little Voice | 143/11 | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 39,000
| 5        | Grouplove | Are You Still Down | Atlantic | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 35,000

**TOP DIGITAL ALBUMS**

| Position | Artist | Title | Label/Imprint | Format | Week Date | Sales
|----------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-----------|------|
| 1        | Snowpatrol | Welcome To The Nightshore | Atlantic | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 68,000
| 2        | Jack Johnson | Sleep Through The Static | Capitol | Digital | 2008.03.22 | 67,000
| 3        | Jason Uraz | We Sing (EP) | Hollywood Records | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 66,000
| 4        | Sara Bareilles | Little Voice | 143/11 | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 65,000
| 5        | Grouplove | Are You Still Down | Atlantic | Digital | 2008.04.05 | 64,000

---

**AMED Sue Tone**
### Top Heatseekers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Week Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE KILLS</td>
<td>Midnight Boom</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HIGH KINGS</td>
<td>The High Kings</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAGONFORCE</td>
<td>Inhuman Rampage</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONDOR LERCH</td>
<td>Dancing In The Dark</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAVING ABEL</td>
<td>Saving Abel</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SUTTER TWINS</td>
<td>The Sutter Twins</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE BE REYV</td>
<td>De Be Reyv</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIRBOURNE</td>
<td>Airbourne</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICK PUPPIES</td>
<td>Sick Puppies</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCUS MILLER</td>
<td>Marcus Miller</td>
<td>35</td>
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### Tastemakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RICK Ross</td>
<td>Tunde</td>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANDY KANE</td>
<td>I Feel The Earth Move</td>
<td>East North Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHE &amp; HIM</td>
<td>Twist &amp; Shout</td>
<td>West North Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAMPIRE WEEKEND</td>
<td>Parsley, Sage, Rosemary &amp; Thyme</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLO RIDA</td>
<td>E.T.</td>
<td>South Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BLACK CROWES</td>
<td>By The Night</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE KILLS</td>
<td>Retox</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVOTCHKA</td>
<td>A Kiss Of Fragile Beauty</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOGGING MOLLY</td>
<td>Spanish Hand Grenade</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERYKAH BADU</td>
<td>Flying</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBERT PLANT</td>
<td>Alison Krauss</td>
<td>South Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Breaking & Entering

Toronto boy-girl duo Crystal Castles, named after a Sh- Ra playset, prove they’ve got the power as their self-titled debut album enters Top Heatseekers at No. 14. Find out what these playful beat-mashing eight-track tapes will be up to next at billboard.com.

Go to billboard.com/breaking to discover developing artists making their inaugural chart run each week.

### Progress Report

**Ludo, “You’re AWFUL, I LOVE You”**

The band notches its first radio hit as “Love Me Dead” bows at No. 40 on Modern Rock. Its album thus earns its first sales gain, up 15%, since charting on Top Heatseekers (No. 39). Though it falls shy of bulleting in this competitive Easter week.

### Regional Heatseekers

- Mountain: Midnight Boom, The Kills
- Texas: PlayRadioPlay!
- South Central: Inhuman Rampage, Dragonforce
- Northeast: The High Kings
- Midwest: The High Kings
- South Central: Texxas, PlayRadioPlay!

### South Atlantic

1. Teddy Brant: Fashionable
2. The High Kings: The High Kings
3. Dragonforce: Dragonforce
4. PlayRadioPlay!: Texas
5. The Kills: The Kills
6. Tiff Merritt: Another Country
7. Angel & Khriz: Showtime
8. Bury Your Dead: PlayRadioPlay!
9. The Matches: Bury Your Dead
10. MGMT: Character Descriminator

### West North Central

- Dragonforce: Whuther Rampage
- MGMT: Character Descriminator
- Five Finger Death Punch: The Way Of The Fist
- Bury Your Dead: PlayRadioPlay!
- The High Kings: The High Kings
- Ludo: You’re Awful, I Love You
- Devotchka: A Kiss Of Fragile Beauty
- Bon Iver: For Emma, Forever Ago
Major independent record company is seeking a V.P. of Marketing.

Candidate will oversee all aspects of product management for a select roster of artists and will interact with sales and distribution, art directors, photographers, web designers, publicists, and all other personnel involved in the preparation and release of physical and digital music projects.

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RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Music Group international promotes Jens Kessler to VP of IT, supply chain and sourcing in Berlin. He was VP of IT at Universal Music Germany.

Albert Music in Australia names Damian Rinaldi head of legal and business affairs. He was VP of legal and business affairs at Sony BMG Music Entertainment in London.

PUBLISHING: EMI Music Publishing U.K. promotes Felix Howard to VP of A&R. He was A&R manager.

TOURING: Fan club management and marketing service UltraStar Entertainment, a division of Live Nation Artists, appoints Michael Sloane senior client manager for the company's Nashville office. He was a client manager at Nashville-based Web entertainment marketing company echomusic.

Paradigm names Lori Sale head of artist marketing, a new division within the agency that will seek out marketing and 360-degree deals for its clients. She was an agent at International Creative Management.

Facility management/consulting services firm VenuWorks names Terry W. Dederich assistant executive director of Cedar Rapids, Iowa's U.S. Cellular Center, Paramount Theatre and the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena. He was president of consulting and management services company Super T Events.

World-renowned concert pianist Kathryn Stott has been appointed artistic director of the Manchester Chamber Concerts Society. Recently joining the staff of the Royal Academy of Music in London, she is also a visiting professor at Chethams School of Music in Manchester.

RETAIL: HMV U.K. and Ireland appoints Damian Evans rock/pop buyer for the retailer's product department team. He was manager of HMV's Heathrow Terminal 2 store.

LEGAL: Attorney Lisa Weiss joins Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal as a partner in the firm’s corporate practice group. She was most recently with Morrison & Foerster.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS

TAPES 'N TAPES 'WALK IT OFF' FOR BREAST CANCER

Leading up the April 8 release of its sophomore album, “Walk It Off,” Tapes ‘N Tapes will ask fans to help raise awareness and funds for breast cancer by participating in the nationwide Making Strides Against Breast Cancer or Avon Walk for Breast Cancer events. Fans of the Minneapolis-based indie rock act can register for either walk under “Team Tapes ‘N Tapes.” Following each event, fans will be asked to report how much money they raised, and a winner in each city will receive a signed copy of “Walk It Off.”

GENTRY TEAMS WITH PATIENT ADVOCATE FOUNDATION

Montgomery Gentry’s Troy Gentry will be featured in a series of national radio and TV public service announcements to promote the Patient Advocate Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides case management services and health-care information to those in need. Gentry’s announcements, which launched in March, will describe the service that the PAF provides to insured and uninsured patients who need assistance in securing access to medical care.

INSIDE TRACK

DEAD AGAIN

A Barack Obama presidential campaign may give Grateful Dead fans reason to rejoice this year. The Dead’s surviving members got together in February to perform at a Deadheads for Obama rally in San Francisco. “It was our first straight-up political event ever,” says guitarist Bob Weir, who’s now on the road with his band Ratdog. “We had fun.” And the group, which is largely dormant these days, may want to have a little more fun in the near future. “I would be surprised if we don’t get around to playing again at some point,” he says. “But, really, my hot hand right now is Ratdog, and I think that goes for Phil [Lesh] with his group, and Mickey [Hart] has his project and Billy [Kreutzmann] is sort of happily retired over in Hawaii. But we’ll get together again. I’m sure of that.”

Weir says the Dead men like Obama “for different reasons.” Mostly, he says, “I think it may be the last chance in our lifetimes to get money out of politics, to show special interests the door. It’s also a chance to get younger people involved in politics for the first time in many years; once they’re involved, I think they’ll stay and that’s important, because it’s their future being decided now.”

SECOND ANNUAL TASTE OF HOPE

Members of the music and entertainment industry hosted the latest discoveries in cancer research March 19 with a tasting of vintage wines, dinner and the all-sculptural view from New York’s Tribeca Rooftop at the second annual Taste of Hope dinner and wine auction. The evening raised $185,000 for City of Hope’s cancer research and treatment programs. Photos courtesy of Steve Plageman Imaging

Billboard Latin managing director Renee Smith made a special presentation to Warner Latin VP of marketing Gabriella Martinez of a Billboard "Stars" plaque, honoring Warner artist Miguel Bosé on his 50th anniversary in the business. From left are Martinez, Smith and Billboard Latin America sales manager Maria Oliva.


Evergreen Copyrights and ASCAP Nashville executives commemorate the signing of EverGreen's new deal to acquire the Steve Diamond catalog. Diamond was presented with a plaque to celebrate the 1 million-unit sales mark of Miley Cyrus' "Hannah Montana" soundtrack (Disney), which featured his song "I Learn From You." With Diamond, seated, from left, are EverGreen Copyrights co-CEO Richard Perma, ASCAP senior VP Connie Bruday, Diamond's wife, Teri, EverGreen Copyrights VP of A&R Chip Hardy, and ASCAP president John Barker.

Billboard presented a plaque to Hopeless/ Sub City Records founder/president Lewis Posen in recognition of the label's efforts in raising more than $1 million for charity. From left are Hopeless/ Sub City Records sales and artist development coordinator Edwin Figueroa, operations coordinator Erin Choi, director of operations Brian Belknap, Posen, director of marketing Ian Harrison, operations coordinator Valerie Carrillo, director of sales and artist development Eric Table, GM Alan G. Persson and marketing coordinator Melissa Becerra.

2008 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees Kenneth Gamble, left, and Leon Huff, right, sing with Elvis Costello at a recent event at the Four Seasons in New York that celebrated Gamble & Huff's legacy. The event was sponsored by Sony/Warner/Chappell and Philadelphia International Records.

Billboard Presents

Staffers were treated to the sounds of two up-and-coming singer/songwriters—American-born Josh Kelley, above, and Ireland's Paddy Casey—on their recent visits to Billboard's New York headquarters. Exclusive video from the sessions can be found under "Billboard Presents" on billboard.com/video.

Rock 'N' Soul

Memphis' own Justin Timberlake recently made two separate donations of $300,000 each to the Memphis Rock 'N' Soul Museum and the Memphis Music Foundation. Timberlake, in Memphis to film the independent movie "The Open Road," presented a big check March 20 to museum executive director John Doyle and museum board chairman Joel Holton, and foundation president Dean Dwyer. From left are Dwyer, Memphis Development Foundation board member Deanie Parker, Timberlake's co-executive manager Paul Harless, Timberlake, Timberlake's co-executive manager Lynn Harless and Memphis Development Foundation board chairman Phil Trenary. (Photo courtesy of Greg Campbell/WireImage.com)
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