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ASCAP LEADS THE FIGHT FOR ONLINE ROYALTIES

In a historic decision, the US Federal Court has provided ASCAP members, for the first time, a clear framework for the appropriate compensation for the use of copyrighted works online. Combined payments from Yahoo, Time-Warner's AOL, and RealNetworks could reach $100 million.

Rather than settle for a lower amount, ASCAP hung in for the fight, proving its deep commitment to creators' rights and underscoring the value of member-ownership.

This is not the first time that ASCAP has stood up effectively for its members' rights, nor will it be the last. So ask yourself:

WHO DO YOU TRUST WITH YOUR CAREER?

For more information about this historic decision visit www.ascap.com/press/2008/0430_ratecourtdecision.aspx

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WHAT TEENS WANT

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Right On The Money

Court's Compensation Decision Is A Landmark For The Digital Age

BY JOHN LAFRUMENTO

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York recently handed down a landmark decision upholding the rights of music creators in the Digital Age. By setting compensation rates for the public performance of music on three Internet services—AOL RealNetworks and Yahoo—the decision establishes new ground rules for virtually every Internet content aggregator and social networking site, as well as countless online, mobile or other technology-driven services yet to be imagined.

In the broadest sense, the court reaffirmed and applied to the virtual world the numerous 1917 Supreme Court decisions recognizing that music creators deserved copyright protection for the public performance of their works. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes delivered the ruling, which included these memorable words: “If music did not pay, it would be given up...whether it pays or not, the purpose of employing it is profit, and that is enough.”

Again, the court acknowledged the legal right of music creators to fair compensation for the use of their creative works—works that online services have been using for years to subsidize their billion-dollar industries, while paying little or nothing to music creators, like ASCAP’s members. The court adopted a formula that recognizes the value of music to the total revenue of the third Internet businesses, resulting in required payments by AOL RealNetworks and Yahoo to ASCAP that could reach $100 million by 2009, covering periods back to 2002 in some cases.

From the technology community, one often hears the mantra of “Information wants to be free.” What’s ironic is that many in this community make their living from copyright-protected code, patented devices and other fiercely guarded intellectual properties.

The Internet has spawned new—wonderful ways to connect people with music and other forms of content they crave. However, many of these businesses have built much of their success on the foundation of others’ creative works. While they post record-breaking capitalizations, it is critical that these companies compensate those whose creative works attract audiences and ultimately help to make their businesses viable.

In its wise and detailed decision, the court encourages the legal distribution of music and provides a compensation framework for valuing the online use of musical works. Creative people who bring vital art forms to life have a right to earn a living by sharing in the benefits generated by the use of their works. Without this protection, many who dream of devoting their talents and energies to creative pursuits will be economically unable to do so.

John A. LaFrumente is CEO of ASCAP.
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THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC
AND YOUR FRIENDSHIP
WE WILL FOREVER MISS YOU

-Ilene Berns and Family
EYE ON CBS RECORDS

Eighteen Months After Launch, Label Preps Late-Spring Releases

Everything was going well for Larry Jenkins in early 2007. Newly named executive VP/GM of the resurrected CBS Records, the industry veteran had high hopes for such acts as singer-songwriters Sharon Little and Keaton Simons and pop duo Karmina.

Then, last November, the Writers Guild of America went on strike, and the key promotional strategy of CBS Records—seeking synchs in shows on CBS and the CW, as well as marketing boosts from the artists of Viacom-owned properties—went out the window.

"We were still in the infancy of our label," Jenkins says, and as a result, release dates for CBS Records' first round of albums were pushed back from early spring. But with the strike now over, 18-month-old CBS Records is back in gear. Little will release her album, "Perfect Time for a Breakdown," May 27, followed in short succession by Karmina with "Backwards into Beauty" (June 3) and Simons' "Can You Hear Me" (June 10).

"We're off and rolling," Jenkins says, revealing that between February 2007 and April 2008—a time frame that includes the three-month summer hiatus and the three-month writers' strike—CBS Records artists had 65 placements in shows on CBS and the CW. Seven people work in-house at CBS Records. Audrey Fane, formerly of his Distribution, was recently brought on to head up marketing, and a number of duties are outsourced, including retail sales and marketing going to Rocket Science and distribution handled by RED.

But the decision process as to which artists to sign is decided by a family affair. Jenkins works with Amy Oster, VP of music for CBS Entertainment and CBS Paramount Network Television. "She's our chief liaison," Jenkins says. "When we're thinking of signing artists, we run the music by several people—her music supervisors and show producers—and ask, 'Do you think you'd want to use their music?' There are no guarantees, but when we get a thumbs up we go into each signing with a great deal of confidence."

With this kind of vetting, it's inevitable that the label's artists will be listed with the greater Viacom. However, CBS promotion also takes a traditional approach. Little, for instance, is opening for Robert Plant, Alison Krauss and T-Bone Burnett on the Raing Sand North American tour, the dates of which will continue throughout the building and after the release of her album.

"Larry gave them a couple of songs I had written," Jenkins says. "I started crying." Little's "Spaceship" was placed in CBS mystery series 'Numb3rs' on May 2, and her "Follow That Sound" will be heard in "NCIS" on May 20. These types of music placements, and those of other CBS Records artists, are identified during the end credits and give the artist's name, song title and where the song can be purchased. In the placements that occur before an album is released, the ad card tells the viewer to go to the artist's Web site or gives tour dates.

For singer/songwriter Kelly and Kamille Rudisill of Karmina, CBS Records has pushed them to perform for TV numerous times—they appeared on the CBS Christmas special in 2007, alongside Stereolab, Crow, James Blunt and Carole King. "We were in really good company," Kelly Rudisill says with a laugh. "All those household names... and Karmina. It was intimidating."

In addition, on May 31 the duo will take part in music showcase "Second Cup Cafe" on CBS' "Early Show." As for placement, Karmina's "Free" was heard on MTV's "The Hills" at the end of March. Simons' "Unstoppable" has been heard in 'Numb3rs,' and his "Man's Song" will be in the May 20 episode of "NCIS." "I keep them on my TiVo for an unusually long amount of time and show it to people when they come over," Simons says of his placements. "The ad card afterwards is what sets it apart from everybody else—most of the time there's not even credits for music on a show."

Even before their albums debut, it appears as though these placements are having a sales impact. According to Nielsen SoundScan, as of April 13, all three acts are already on track to best their digital single sales for the entire previous year. Other acts signed to CBS include Will Dailey, PJ Osler, Sean Hayes and the Wilbures—and while they don't yet have release dates on their CBS debuts, Jenkins says to expect them to get the same kind of play. "Sean Hayes, for instance, wrote the theme song for CBS show "Rules of Engagement,"" the Wilbures did the theme for the CW's "Life Is Wild," and Osler collaborated with Pakistani musician Salma Ahmed on the intro to the CW's "Aliens in America," a remake of "What's So Funny 'Bout Peace, Love and Understanding?"

And despite the home-field advantage, artists on CBS Records aren't excluded from synchs on other networks. Jenkins adds, nothing that Dailey's "Rise" was placed in ABC's 'El Stone' early in 2008.

In addition, Jenkins wants to bolster ties between his artists and the nonmusicive elements of Viacom, getting more artist placement on the company's information/entertainment screens that are placed on gas station pumps and in doctor's offices. "A lot of companies talk about synergy on paper, but don't practice it," Jenkins says. "We do both."
Royalties, Orphans & Czars

The Industry’s D.C. Work Heats Up

The 110th Congress still has another eight months to go before its session is over. But for music industry efforts to shape—and comply with—federal laws and regulations in Washington, D.C., the next two months will be the busiest time this year. The final phase of the Copyright Royalty Board trial to set publishing royalty rates is now under way. And any bill that can’t make it through Congress by June 30 will likely get shelved.

The rebuttal phase of the CRB trial, which will set statutory mechanical and digital rates for compositions reproduced for CDs, downloads and other products, kicked off May 6. Music publishers and songwriters on one side and record labels and digital music services on the other have been intensely negotiating behind the scenes since the initial trial phase ended in March (Billboard, March 15). If the parties can settle on some mutually acceptable rates, the judges could adopt those rates in their decision. The trial continues through May 21.

On the Hill, only bills for orphan works and intellectual property (IP) protection even have a shot at passing by June, sources in the Senate and in the House say.

The Shawn Bentley Orphans Works Act (S. 2913) and the Orphan Works Act (H. R. 5889), although not identical, would make protected works available for licensing even if the copyright owners cannot be found. The bills protect anyone who uses these so-called orphan works from infringement liability as long as the user conducts a thorough, documented search in good faith for the copyright owner and is unable to locate that owner. If the owner later surfaces, the user must pay reasonable compensation.

The bills focus primarily on photographs and art works. But they may affect music as well. Owners of compositions can typically be found by contacting ASCAP, BMI, SESAC or the Harry Fox Agency. However, owners of sound recordings protected by copyright (i.e., recordings made in 1972 and later) are harder to find—and labels often choose not to use a track, and individual producers or artists often own masters.

The Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act passed May 8 in the House. It strengthens civil and criminal laws to help enforce IP protections and sets up an institutional IP enforcement structure, which endures beyond one administration.

The bill (H. R. 4279), introduced by Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., establishes the position of an IP Enforcement Representative in the White House as an adviser to the president. That representative would set up a joint strategic plan, in cooperation with other agencies, for IP protection. The bill also establishes an IP enforcement division in the Department of Justice.

At press time, there wasn’t a companion bill in the Senate. But sources close to Senate members say that some of them are working on a complementary bill. It is unlikely that this version will establish a White House position.

Currently, there is a Coordinator of International IP Enforcement, so-called copyright czar, in the Department of Commerce who is responsible for coordinating the IP activities of several agencies.

Elevating an IP representative to an executive level in the White House and coordinating the activities across the departments are the hottest issues of debate.

“It makes sense to have a senior, dedicated, long-term IP person in the executive office,” says Chris Israel, who was President Bush’s copyright czar before co-founding PCT Government Relations. “A lot of [current] structures and strategies are not long-term.”

But multiple sources, including two former White House staffers who served the Bush administration, say that a senior person in the White House will not be able to focus on a single issue like IP.

There are too many responsibilities shared among them.

Cuban pianist Chuchito Valdés would very much like for his famed jazz musician father to be allowed to perform again stateside. So would more than 200 musicians, activists and government policymakers—among them Robert Browning of the World Music Institute and Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich.—who gathered last month in Washington, D.C., for a two-day summit on changing U.S. policies on Cuba. The group convened at HR-57, a nonprofit arts organization named for a 1967 House resolution authored by Conyers that designated jazz “a rare and valuable American national treasure” worthy of federal support.

Since 2003, the Bush administration has prevented Cuban musicians from entering the United States through visa denials and has curtailed the ability of American musicians to travel there. Visa restrictions—one of the most notable examples was the denial of a visa for veteran singer Ibrahim Ferrer to attend the Grammy Awards in 2004. It also reversed the Clinton administration’s policy of “people-to-people exchange,” which in the late ‘90s started something of a renaissance for Cuban musicians and their work in the States. Among those who participated in the celebrated cultural-crossover performances was Chuco Valdés, Chuchito’s father. Now, while the younger Valdés, who lives in Mexico, can perform stateside, his father, who lives in Cuba, is forbidden from doing so.

For many Cuban musicians, U.S. exposure is considered vital—and some are willing to take tremendous risks for the chance to succeed. The issue took a tragic turn in April when Cuban reggaeton singer Elvis Manuel died while trying to cross from Cuba to Miami in a small boat.

The current campaign for a change in the Bush administration’s policy was stimulated by an impassioned open letter to American intellectuals and artists last fall from Ballet Nacional de Cuba director Alicia Alonso. “Let us work together so that Cuban artists can take their talent to the United States,” Alonso wrote. Taking that spirit as his call to arms, Louis Head, executive director of U.S. Cuba Cultural Exchange, a national network of artists and presenters, devised an online letter petitioning the Bush administration to reverse its policy.

“The response to that letter was overwhelming,” Head says. “Among the hundreds who signed on were singer Jackson Browne and guitarist Ry Cooder, who collaborated with Cuban musicians on 1997’s ‘Buena Vista Social Club.’”

Head hopes that since Fidel Castro has stepped down and a new U.S. administration will soon take office, the climate may be right for change. “What’s important,” he says, “is that we’ve organized artists presenters, agents, record company executives and educators to let Congress know how we feel.”

“As far as I’m concerned, Cuba is a wellspring of talent and influence,” says Blue Note Records president Bruce Lundvall, who signed Chuchito Valdés to his label through a foreign imprint. “And I’d like that connection back.”
RETRO-FITTING NARM

Dream Of Boosting The CD Falls Silent; Vinyl And Digital Cause Sparks

New formats were supposed to save the CD business. At this last year Warner Music Group (WMG) was rolling out its MVI format. Sony BMG Music Entertainment was talking about different ways to package and configure albums and Buena Vista Music Group was privately reaching its CD+U

While the CD is in the second year of a precipitous decline—sales are down 16.7% so far this year, on top of 2007's 18.8%—retailers, labels and distribution executives alike say that the growth of the niche business of vinyl and digital directives may be a breathing turn of events in the industry. But more may be needed to make up for the plummeting CD market.

This emphasis on vinyl came during the 50th anniversary of NARM's convention—held May 4-7 in San Francisco—and was an abrupt change from last year's sessions when talk of how to reinvent the CD reigned supreme.

"Last year [everyone] was pitching their tethered CD product," Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese said. "This year, there was virtually no talk on that. There is a bigpause.

A head of a major distribution company agreed that most of those efforts appeared to be stalled. "Last year, everyone had their own plan for the physical marketplace, but that didn't work out," said Bob Sisco, digital strategy VP of Universal Music Group Distribution president/CEO Jim Urie said his company has already issued 70 titles on vinyl with plans to put out another 100.

But there appears to be a vinyl manufacturing capacity issue, with a two-month backlog on the manufacture of 180-count vinyl, Sisco said. While he acknowledged that vinyl is a niche business for the chain, it is indeed profitable over despite its high costs. Labels pay anywhere from $4 to $7 to manufacture vinyl and its packaging, in turn they give it a list price of $18.98/21.98 for a single-disc album.

"While vinyl is a small percentage at our chain, its gross profit is only 5% less than the gross profit of our top 30 CDs this year," Sisco said.

And while old-school vinyl was the hot topic at NARM, new-school digital endeavors are still being developed. In fact, the ability to marry physical and digital product through some type of connectivity remains on the minds of the majors even if those topics didn't get as much mileage as they did last year.

During the Digital Music Industry Leaders panel, WMG executive VP of digital strategy and business development Michael Nash said that gift cards have more potential. Last year, 26% of all digital downloads songs were purchased via gift cards. Licensing, BMI Music Marketing senior VP of sales and commercial development Darren Stupak said that the industry should give digital download album-specific cards time to develop.

But while waiting for digital connectivity to finally materialize in a way that works and doesn't confuse consumers, merchants need to find ways to keep CDs from falling so rapidly. Label and distribution executives said that there was almost a universal outcry from retailer to devalue catalog titles to even lower prices, a trend that has already been going on for three years.

And some vendors figure it time to increase defensive measures. For the first time, vendors were discouraging merchants from overbuying new releases, retailers said.

"We would rather have the occasional out-of-stock—which we feel we can replenish quickly—than to get stuck with big returns," one senior distribution executive said.

From left: Sony BMG's THOMAS HESSE, UMG's AMANDA MARKS and WMG's MICHAEL NASH at NARM.

"Last year everyone was pitching their tethered CD product. This year, there was virtually no talk on that."

—MIKE DREESE, NEWBURY COMICS

Managers Jump Into Label Game

Sire Records president Michael Goldstone will leave his post to run an independent label with key artist management company Q Prime. According to Goldstone, the dates for his departure from Sire and the launch of the new label have yet to be determined. Goldstone will be charged with signing artists to the label and to management deals, and will continue to work closely with some Sire Records artists. Q Prime is already home to such top acts as Metallica, Muse, Snow Patrol and Shania Twain.

According to Q Prime co-founder Cliff Burnstein, the new label will be able to offer a unique value proposition to artists—from ALR to financial investment. "Major labels are now in a position where each person on their staffs has twice as much to do to make an artist successful and artists aren't always getting the attention they deserve," he said.

"Since Q Prime is a management company, we are used to and are set up to give artists individual attention. We have the knowledge, experience and staff to steer a career to success. At least, our track record would indicate that. Indie labels have the passion, but maybe not the relationships and the finances that we at Q Prime have to reach big media players both here in the US and abroad."

Other managers who have succeeded at the indie-label game include Jim Guerinot's Time Bomb Recordings and Gregg Langanen's Aware Records.

Goldstone adds, "We have the know-how and the experience to help artists create their own careers. We've got the tool kit."

We have yet to work out distribution, and we are open to exploring options for alliances and partnerships. I'm honestly just thrilled to feel like I don't have to ask for anyone's permission anymore, and that I don't have to limit myself."
Allegro Acquires Wholesaler Softland

Indie Distributor Could Hit $100 Million In Annual Revenue In Wake Of Deal

Thanks to a $25 million cash infusion from private equity firm Canterbury Park Capital, Allegro Media Group has acquired all of the outstanding shares of Softland, a wholesaler that is the exclusive supplier of music and video entertainment software to the U.S. Marine Exchange Service.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed, but the combination of the two is expected to catapult the Portland, Ore.-based Allegro to achieving $100 million in annual revenue on a gross basis.

Even with the equity infusion, the Micale brothers who own and run Allegro will retain a majority interest in the company, according to chairman/CEO Joe Micale, while Canterbury will have a significant minority interest.

What's more, the Canterbury deal makes available a $1.2 million equity line for future acquisitions, in addition to a new $1.5 million revolving loan facility the company has received from U.S. Bank division USB Capital Resources. By Billboard's estimate, Allegro is already the second-largest non-major-owned independent distributor behind Koch Entertainment Distribution. Allegro will generate gross revenue of $55 million this year; Softland, meanwhile, is expected to achieve about $45 million in sales.

"This is the fifth acquisition we have done in the last 10 years," Micale told Billboard at the NARM convention, held May 4-7 in San Francisco. "The Canterbury investment puts us in the position of being a consolidator." Past acquisitions include Newsound Distribution, Rounder Kids and Nail Distribution.

The Micale brothers bought Allegro nearly 20 years ago, when the company specialized in the distribution of classical music. Since then, it has diversified its product offering into all genres of music, including selling the majors as a rack supplier to nontraditional retail stores. In a statement, Allegro president/CEO Ric Micale said the Softland acquisition further diversifies the company's account base as only three of its top 10 customers are NARM members, and traditional core merchandisers account for less than 25% of Allegro's consolidated sales.

While the Softland acquisition is bound to improve sales of Allegro's proprietary entertainment software titles and the indie labels it distributes, it also reinforces Allegro's place in the hybrid wholesaler/rackjobber/indie distributor role occupied by Baker & Taylor, Super D and Alliance Entertainment, all of which have annual revenue of more than $100 million. In addition to diversifying Allegro's account base, the deal will bring the company revenue into equilibrium, with a split down the middle between audio and video product.

Softland founder Larry Goldberg will leave the company, but CEO Pat Nugent will remain in charge of the Maryland-based operation. Joe Micale said there aren't any immediate changes planned for Softland, and he expects to keep its warehouse open to complement Allegro's new 135,000-square-foot facility, which it moved into March 1.

Wholesalers specializing in selling music to the military were among the early adopters of the '90s when the military's own Army Air Forces Exchange Services was a top account, generating sales of about $400 million. But since the war in Iraq began, music and video sales have declined, leaving AAFES and Europe, a privately owned wholesaler that sells to the military, out of the top tier of the account base. (The Allegro-Softland deal required the approval of the Department of Defense.)

There are 247 retail news and analysis, telex billboard.biz/retail.
In the 28 years since a company called Bravado started selling Iron Maiden T-shirts, merchandise has become a revenue stream that labels, not just artists, see as integral to their business. Six years ago, Bravado was purchased by Sanctuary Group, which Universal Music Group (UMG) in turn acquired last summer.

Since then, Bravado's Tom Bennett, the former head of North American operations who has just been named worldwide president of the company, has opened offices around the globe and aggressively signed up new marquee acts—not all of them Universal's. Those acts include Kanye West, Alicia Keys, Daughtry, Gwen Stefani, James Blunt, the Eagles and Pink. Those add to an already formidable roster of clients from before the UMG acquisition, including Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, Kelly Clarkson and Led Zeppelin.

Rather than an upfront fee, the New York-based company takes a percentage of the merchandise it sells through such diverse distribution channels as clothing stores, music retailers, concerts and e-commerce sites for bands. Universal's ownership will put the merch company in business in 46 countries by year's end.

By expanding Bravado, Universal stands to enlarge and get a bigger piece of the merch pie, and in a different manner from the trendy 360 deal. As Universal announced his appointment as worldwide president, Bennett sat down with Billboard to give the goods on merch.

What are your distribution channels, and what is the range of the merch you sell? We're in live event sales, retail distribution, e-commerce, licensing, and we touch a little bit in the mobile commerce world. At live events, we'll sell everything from programs to T-shirts to lithographs to umbrellas to any type of product you would see whenever you go to a concert. At retail, which is our greatest strength—we have a far bigger reach than anybody else—we sell everything that is upper-body apparel to all areas of distribution. We sell T-shirts at Saks Fifth Avenue from an $85 price point to T-shirts at, say, Hot Topic that are more at the $15 price point. So we run the whole gamut on a worldwide basis, from every retailer from H&M to Zara to Virgin to HMV to Urban Outfitters.

What we're doing on the mobile front is concert texting (where users pay to send texts to be displayed on a big screen). We sell an awful lot of wallpaper. And then on the e-commerce side we have maybe as many as 75 Web shops attached to bands' Web sites.

How does Bravado fit into the rest of UMG? Prior to the acquisition, approximately 15% of [Bravado's] business was from Universal Music Group acts, so the growth that was available and should be available with the new marriage with Universal was huge.

What they decided to do as part of the purchase of Sanctuary was to get into [merch] with a real market leader. Bravado has already made the investment into the people and the infrastructure ... and at the end of the day all we're a rights acquisition company. Merchandising contracts are much shorter than recording contracts—you could say an average one is maybe two years. So we're continually having to prove ourselves.

Why would a non-Universal label allow the merch opportunity to slip through its fingers and go to Bravado instead? So many of the acts would be on a different publishing company than the record company they're on anyway, so they're not married to one. It comes down to, fundamentally, doing a really good job. I think it's a given that people want a great job done first for the money.

Part of our strategy and part of the strength of us within Universal is that we've got a really strong hold on music at traditional retail already. We're No. 1 at Hot Topic and Spencer Gifts and HMV and Zavvi in the U.K. We're going to be opening up literally thousands of new accounts around the world in these other 46 countries where we really haven't done business in a meaningful way before.

The CEO of HMV feels that within the next three years quite possibly 25% of their overall business will be music merchandise. So then it becomes more attractive to music retailers, when they see sales of recorded music decline.

For us, with Metallica, we'll very aggressively cross-market the record and the merchandise. With Mika, we'll be doing a lot of stuff with the ads going out for the new records. We'll have a merchandising component within those advertisements. Which nobody else can do.

Would you expect the same to happen with non-Universal artists? We won't be controlling their advertising spend on the music, so it'll happen to the best of our abilities within the world we control. But we've already had big success trying to do a lot of cross-marketing with Led Zeppelin, which we did do with, obviously, a non-Universal label. A lot of the ideas can work regardless of where the act is.

The trick to this is going to be turning non music retailers into music retailers as well. There's a lot of stores that we sell, be it Saks or be it Spencer Gifts—we recently got them to sell for the first time ever recorded music. It's a mall store with approximately 625 stores in America, and another 25 in Canada. I think it's important for the act to have a full offering out there. You'll find most record labels now consider Hot Topic to be a very important music retailer, where maybe they didn't 10 years ago.

This has already happened in the U.K., where we sell T-shirts with downloads, and it's only just started and it's hugely successful.

How does Bravado allow UMG to enjoy the benefits of merch without the potential pitfalls of a 360 deal? It can't just be a land grab where you're paying to get rights. We really explain to an artist and their representatives what we can do for them. Therefore, when they make a decision to be in business with us, it's an informed decision, not just, "Here's some money, we want to grab those rights."

Going back to the different areas of distribution that we're in, if it's purely a live event sale, then I understand somewhat why [merch] is all getting rolled within deals at Live Nation. But we can really impact at retail, e-commerce, licensing, in non-event sales—and most acts don't tour that often. So somebody who tours once every four years, more and more of those people are going to be very interested in companies that can actually help them earn money in the areas they're not touring, which would be common sense for everybody.
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Entertainer Of The Year
BRAD PAISLEY
RASCAL FLATTS

Top Male Vocalist
BRAD PAISLEY

Top Female Vocalist
TAYLOR SWIFT

Top Vocal Group
DIAMOND RIO
EAGLES
RASCAL FLATTS

Top Vocal Duo
BIG & RICH
BROOKS & DUNN
HALFWAY TO HAZARD

Top New Male Vocalist
LUKE BRYAN

Top New Female Vocalist
TAYLOR SWIFT

Top New Duo or Vocal Group
CAROLINA RAIN

Vocal Event of the Year
"Find Out Who Your Friends Are"
TRACY LAWRENCE
"What You Give Away"
VINCE GILL
SHERYL CROW

Album of the Year
5th Gear
BRAD PAISLEY

Taylor Swift
TAYLOR SWIFT

Single Record of the Year
"Lost In This Moment"
BIG & RICH
"Watching Airplanes"
GARY ALLAN

Song of the Year
"Lost In This Moment"
BIG & RICH

Video of the Year
"Don't Blink"
SHAUN SILVA
TACKLEBOX FILMS
"Lost In This Moment"
BIG & RICH
ROBERT DEATON
GEORGE FLANIGEN
MARC OSWALD

"Online"
BRAD PAISLEY
"Stay"
SHAUN SILVA

Special Congratulations to
THE OAK RIDGE BOYS
2008 Pioneer Award Honorees
So little summertime, so many choices. Let Billboard be your guide to cool during the hot months. Albums, tours, festivals and gadgets—read on for the best of the best.

Illustration by Chris Ede
Usher is just getting things warmed up. This month-by-month look at more than 180 albums promises to have a summer tune for everyone. Rock comes in heavy with Shinedown, Disturbed, Slipknot and Motley Crue. Hip-hop sees highly anticipated releases from Three 6 Mafia, Missy Elliott, Lil Wayne and the Game. Let’s not forget R&B favorites Ne-Yo and Ashanti or country mainstays Randy Travis and Montgomery Gentry. Billboard guides you through the albums sure to bring heat to the marketplace.

By Jonathan Cohen

Usher

"Here I Stand" (Jive, May 27)

After telling all on his juicy 2004 disc "Confessions," Usher is all about settling down. Here, the new husband and father embraces his maturation on cuts like the Dre and Vidal-crafted title track—"You ain’t a man until you a man to your woman," he says. "This is the conversation that takes place." Alongside ballads "Moving Mountains" and "Love You Gently," the ultimate love-making record are tracks on the lighter side. The WiLL.i.am crafted "What’s Your Name?" describes "the feeling you get when you run into a woman that makes you speak gibberish," while the Bryan-Michael Cox creation "Before I Met You" revolves around a "modern-day gigolo who decides to change." 

Al Green

"Lay It Down" (Blue Note, May 27)

This friendly collision of new and old sensibilities is as vintage-sounding as anything Al Green released during his Hi Records heyday of the 70s, but also finds him dueting with John Legend ("Stay With Me (By the Sea)"). Corinne Bailey Rae ("Take Your Time") and Anthony Hamilton, with the Dap Kings horns section playing behind them. The Roots' Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson produced in tandem with keyboardist James Poyser. "I’ve never heard anything quite like it, because I’ve never had anybody produce me other than Willie Mitchell," Green says. "And when you give these young kids a shot at it, it’s interesting to see the art they make. It’s beautiful." 

June

David Banner

"The Greatest Story Ever Told" (SRC/Universal, June 3)

"This time I’m not going to put the record out until I get the type of promotion I feel I deserve," David Banner says of "The Greatest Story Ever Told," originally due last fall. "If the mix ain’t right, I’m sending it back a thousand times, even if I have to pay for it." The outspoken rapper is already feeling the love. After a lukewarm response to first single "9mm" (aka "Like Me") last year, "Get Like Me"—which features Chris Brown, Yung Joc and Jim Jones—is scaling the charts. Other guests on the album include Akon, UGK, Lil Wayne, Snoop Dogg, Chamillionaire and Carl Thomas.

Disturbed

"Indestructible" (Warner Bros., June 3)

Proving Disturbed’s brand of nu-metal can still get fans excited after a three-year break between studio albums, "Inside the Fire," the first single from "Indestructible," has already reached No. 3 on Mainstream Rock and No. 10 on Modern Rock. Frontman David Draiman drew on personal travail—including a motorcycle accident, a garage fire that destroyed his truck and motorcyle, and "a number of bad relationships"—to inspire himself, and his bandmates followed suit. Drummer Mikey Wengren "is playing faster and more furiously than ever, with more polysonicism," Draiman says, while guitarist Danny Donegan: "is soloing even more frequently, and the riffs are just brutal and honest and dark."

Fleet Foxes

"Fleet Foxes" (Sub Pop, June 3)

Hipster heaven is abuzz over the self-titled debut from this Seattle quintet, which won over the South by Southwest faithful with its Spring with its Crosby, Stills & Nash-worthy vocal harmonies. The band describes its own sound as "baroque harmonic pop jams." On the heels of April’s "Sun Giant" EP, the full-length renders 22-year-old frontman Robin Pecknold’s songs onto even more widescreen canvases, sympathetically produced by Pacific Northwest vet Phil Ek. Vintage organ and surfy guitar lines dance on the two-songs-in-one "Ragged Wood," while fingerpicked acoustic leads support gorgeous group singing on "Quiet Houses." 

Emmylou Harris

"All I Intended to Be" (Nonesuch, June 15)

For the first time in 25 years, this 12-time Grammy Award winner and Billboard Century Award recipient recorded with producer Brian Ahern, the man who handled her first 11 albums. The new set’s title comes from a line in "Old Five and Dimers Like Me," a duet with John Starling. While Dolly Parton, Vince Gill and Buddy Miller contribute vocals, the set includes songs from Tracy Chapman, Patti Griffin, Merle Haggard and Billy Joe Shaver.

Lil Wayne

"The Carter III" (Cash Money/Universal, June 10)

Plagued with leaks, delays and Lil Wayne’s arrest on drug possession charges, "The Carter III" is now penciled in for June 10. Luckily, the set has already spawned the rapper’s first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 in the form of "Lollipop." Wayne told Billboard in February that Hurricane Chris, Corey Gunz, Tyga, Jibbs, Shanell, Kidd Kidd, Mack Maine and Lil Mama have recorded features for the album, and Kanye West has also joined the roster of contributors. "It’s one of those albums people are really waiting on, so I made it so that whatever is on it will stick with you forever," Wayne says. "I’m taking my time with it. And I’m giving artists I respect and people I want to do songs with—not songs the label fixed—an opportunity to collaborate." 

My Morning Jacket

"Evil Urges" (ATO, June 10)

This Kentucky quintet is already among the most praised live acts in the land, but the music on its fifth studio album should take the band to an entirely new level. After sequestering itself in a Colorado cabin to hone the tracks, My Morning Jacket then decamped to New York last fall to record with co-producer Joe Chiccarelli. Most adventurous than anything that has come before, the songs explore falsetto singing ("Evil Urges"), soft rock ("Thank You Too"), disco beats (first single "Touch Me. I’m Going to Scream Pt. 2") and gritty funk ("Highly Suspicious"), without skimping on the two-guitar jams ("Aluminum Park," "Remnants") and mellow balladry ("Librarian") of past releases. "We’ve never wanted to be one kind of band," frontman Jim James says. "We just enjoy celebrating music—making it loud and making it sad." 

Alanis Morissette

"Flavors of Entanglement" (Warner Bros., June 10)

"The baby is almost out," Alanis Morissette says about her first album of original work in four years, which features production by Pro-Phex’s Guy Sigsworth. "This is a bi-track journey for me—one is the unraveling of my personal life to the point where I hit rock bottom—but then the phoenix rises," she says. "In the other track, I speak about the personal being the political. Rather than talk about war out there, I’d rather talk about war in here, because it’s the only thing I have control over." The ramp-up to the release has a decidedly international flavor: "Underneath" will be preloaded onto Motorola cell phones in Brazil, and Morissette stars in a three-month tour of Europe in June, followed by U.S. dates in the fall.
Marco Antonio Solís

"Una Noche en Madrid" (Fonovisa, June 10)
Marco Antonio Solís has transcended his popularity in his native Mexico to become a mega star in the United States (with four No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart) and virtually all of Latin America. Now, he has his sights set on Spain. "Una Noche en Madrid," a live album recorded during an Oct. 12, 2007, performance in Madrid, will be the first Solís album released in Spain since 2001. The set includes new versions of Solís classics as well as a duet with Spanish singer Pasion Vega on "Como Ti Muera.

Montgomery Gentry

"Back When I Knew It All" (Columbia Nashville, June 10)
Looking to shake things up, Montgomery Gentry, which has scored 12 top 10 singles (including three No. 1) and sold 4.3 million albums after nine years on the country scene, according to Nielsen SoundScan, decided to record its new set in Memphis’ Artistas Studio. The move worked. "The ambience of the studio was really cool," Troy Gentry says of the place where led Zeppelin, Steve Ray Vaughan and B.B. King have recorded. The title track and first single is the duo’s fastest climbing song and is No. 11 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart. The set includes "I Pick My Patties" featuring Toby Keith, with whom the duo will tour this summer.

Busta Rhymes

"Blessed" (Interscope, June 17)
With numerous legal entanglements now behind him, Busta Rhymes says he feels "blessed" to be a free man, hence the title of his eighth studio album. The MC has already released several singles, including "Where’s My Fucking Money," which featured on the "Grand Theft Auto IV" soundtrack, and "We Made It," a collaboration with rock outfit Linkin Park. Other contributors include Cool & Dre, Pharrell Williams and DJ Scratch. In addition, Rhymes released a clip for track "Don’t Touch Me" that recalls his comic videos of the ‘90s.

Wolf Parade

"At Mount Zoomer" (Sub Pop, June 17)
After dabbling in myriad side projects, the members of Wolf Parade finally reconvened last summer to work on the follow-up to 2005’s breakthrough "Apologies to the Queen Mary." "I think it’s more pointed," group member Spencer Krug says. "We wanted to make a record that was done all at once — as much as possible, we did that." The result: nine songs borne out of lengthy improv sessions, yet surprisingly straightforward in sound. "Bang Your Drum" and "Call It A Ritual" pair Krug’s quivering, dissonant voice with low-slung guitar and drum rhythms. It almost sounds like Wolf Parade has nulled a bit until the closing title track, a nine-minute epic that raises its creative bar to new heights.

Mötley Crüe

"Saints of Los Angeles" (Mötley Records, June 24)
"I got to tell you, I’ve been writing songs for a long time, and there’s something magical on this record," Nikki Sixx says of Mötley Crüe’s first album with its original members since 1997’s "Generation Swine." "This is one of those albums that I just feel it in my stomach that something’s happening with the band. There’s a newfound energy in the songs. It’s just a rebirth of that really dirty rock’n’roll side of Mötley Crüe." The title track was first made available through videogame "Rock Band," and is gaining steam at radio. The act leads the bill for its own Crüe Fest this summer, beginning July 1 in West Palm Beach, Fla.

NE-VO

"Year of the Gentleman" (Def Jam, June 24)
Meeting NE-YO’s stated goal to move away from the type of R&B that quickly made him a star, his third album in as many years isNull for the single "Closer." A StarGate-produced club track with pulsing strobe-light synths and a high-energy beat that calls to mind Rihanna’s "Don’t Stop the Music." "So You Can Cry" sposses a mellow, easy-listening vibe, with NE-YO making a priceless reference of "piy party" and "calamari." Collaborators on the set also include members of NE-YO’s Atlanta-based Compound Entertainment crew (The HeavyWeights, Shy Taylor, Chuck Harmony), as well as Christopher "Tricky" Stewart and J.R. Rotem. "My prayer is that my fans know me well enough to know that I’m an artist in the truest form, and I cannot do the same thing over and over again," NE-YO says.

Three 6 Mafia

"Last 2 Walk" (Hypnotize Minds/Columbia, June 24)
If it seems like years have gone by since Three 6 Mafia’s won the best original song Academy Award for "It’s Hard Out Here For a Pimp" in 2005, that’s because, well, years have gone by. "Our lives are like a circus," principal member Juicy J says. "You wouldn’t believe the crap we go through every day." But after numerous delays, the cap-tour’s new album is finally on target for release. Among the guests on "Last 2 Walk" are Akon on "That’s Right," Good Charlotte on "My Own Way," U NK on the single "I’ll Rather" and Juicy J’s brother project Pat on "Telli Loli (Pop That Body).

Weezer

"Weezer" (DGC/Interscope, June 24)
Weezer is literally all over the place on its third self-titled album, with all four members taking a turn behind the mic. The music is just as hard to pin down, from the six-minute "Greatest Man" (which features a sweet piano melody to thick power chords and take crowd noise), "I Heart Songs" (which unironically salutes Nirvana’s "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Teen Spirit"), "Buddy Holly," "Amen," "Ocean Avenue," "Heart Songs" (which unironically salutes Nirvana’s "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Teen Spirit") and "Weezer" (the Wonders’ "Witch It"").

Juno

"The Sound of Madness" (Atlantic, June 24)
Brent Smith wasn’t going to let anyone dictate how to make Xiaomi’s third album—not a sharp sales decline between 2003’s "Leaves a Whisper" and 2005’s "Us and Them," the loss of bandmates Jason Todd and Brad Stewart. "This is a record that needed to be made," Smith says. He and drummer Barry Kerch enlisted Bob Cavolo to produce the set, and with Cavolo’s encouragement Smith wrote nearly 60 songs, off which 15 were recorded. Among them are his first political song — first single "Devout," which is "about George W. Bush and the end of his presidency" — and Smith’s first straight-up love song, "(If You Only Knew." "We wanted it loud and wanted it big and heavy and grandiose," Smith says.
Nas

"N*gger" (Def Jam, July 1)

Following Don Imus' off-color remarks about the Rutgers women's basketball team last year, Nas announced that he would tackle the controversy head-on by titling his ninth album "N*gger." The set was originally slated for late 2007 but never hit shelves, although Nas and wife Keisha kept up the publicity push by heading back-stage at the Grammy Awards to talk about the issue. Now the album is tentatively slated for July 1 and the first single, the Salaam Remi-produced "Be a N*gger Too," hit the Internet April 20.

Los Lonely Boys

"Forgiven" (Epic, July 1)

After making its prior albums with producer John Porter at Willie Nelson's Pedernales studio, this Texas trio is headed to a soundstage in Austin in January and February, with Steve Jordan behind the board. "If I could have a choice, this is the way I'd record the rest of my life, says bassist Joey Garza, who, with brothers Henry (guitar) and Ringo (drums) worked with Jordan to "try and capture the sound of a three-piece band," welcoming just a couple of guests in Dr. John and Del Castillo guitarist Mark Del Castillo. "Forgiven," will be preceded by the single "Staying With Me," the album includes a cover of the Spencer Davis Group's "I'm a Man."
themselves: “Lord, I’m Discouraged” is a bluesy ballad that connotes a more rural image of American life, and “One for the Cutters” should surprise fans. Those adverse to change, however, shouldn’t worry: Lead single “Sequestered in Memphis” is chock-full of Hold Steady hooks.

CSS
“Donkey” (Sub Pop, July 22)
This Brazilian electro/rock outfit scored a left-field hit last year when its song “Music Is My Hot Hot Sex” showed up in an (ad, after parent album “Cansei de Ser Sexy” had already been out for a year. On its sophomore set, the group again trades in sexy dance grooves (the cover of Stevie Ray Vaughan’s “Rooftop All Night”), retro-synth fest (“Left Behind”), chugging indie rock (“Give Up,” “Rat is Dead” [Rage]) and up tempo pop maneuvers (“How I Became Paranoid,” “The Bangles/worth “Move”), all of which should sound great blaring out of hipster speakers this summer.

Common
“Invincible Summer” (Geffen, July TBD)
Chicago rapper Common may be known for his stimulating lyrics, but for “Invincible Summer,” due this summer via Universal, he shamelessly admits that “barbecues and stripper” were some of his main inspirations. “This album isn’t super thought-provoking... it’s just on some fun...” Common says of his eighth album. He teamed with Pharrell and Mr. DJ (OutKast), and concocted a hip-hop/techno/dance sound heavy with kazoos and double-speed drum patterns. Tracks like the Cee-Lo-assisted “Make My Day,” stripper-inspired “Sex Is Sugar” and first single “Universal Mind Control,” which will be serviced to radio in May, are all included. Santogold is set to appear on a track titled “Runaway,” while Jeff B. Star Trak’s Chester French and Musina make guest appearances as well.

Stained
“The Illusion of Progress” (Atlantic, July TBD)
“It’s a departure from the last record,” Stained frontman Aaron Lewis says. The group hasn’t even come up with titles for the songs, according to Lewis, but “there’s a lot more effect—experiential and a lot more textures with vintage instruments and vintage amps.”

The band has been recording at the studio that Lewis keeps in his barn with producer Johnny K. And while Stained previously swore to rock even harder this time out, Lewis says it’s aware of pressure for another ballad-style track along the lines of such hits as “Outside” and “I’m Been Awhile.” “That’s what the record label wants,” he says. “You’re foolish not to be aware of that.”

The Jonas Brothers
TBA (Hollywood, Aug. 12)
On their hotly anticipated new album, expect “the same Jonas Brothers sound, but with just a couple more influences,” says Nick Jonas, who names Elvis Costello, the Animals, the Rascals and the Beatles by way of example. Look for such tracks as “Don’t Take My Heart and Put It on the Shelf,” “ Burning Up” and “A Little Bit Longer,” the last of which Jonas wrote about his struggle with diab... “The lyric content has gotten a little more in-depth as far as who we are as human beings and our personal lives, with our dating and all that—things we’ve gone through in the past,” Jonas says.

T.I.
“Paper Trail” (Grand Hustle/Atlantic, Aug. 12)
The T.I. may very well wind up with another hit album once “Paper Trail” hits the stores. The bad: Afterward, the superstar rapper is headed to jail for a year on felony gun charges. There’s a tinge of gospel on recent leak “No Matter What,” while club track “What’s Up, What’s Happening,” produced by Danja, is likely to be the first single. Also expected are “Bring Me” and “Make My Day” featuring Lil Wayne.

Missy Elliot
“FANOMial” (The Goldmind/Atlantic, Aug. 26)
This feast of Missy Elliott’s trademark beats mixed with tinges of 70s Washington, D.C. go-go funk is led by single “Best,” on which she repeats the last word to every sentence throughout. The set features production by Timbaland, Sedidegaf, Daanjahdez, Timbaland and Point Guard. Highlights include the Jazmin Sulli... “Like When You Play the Music,” drum-heavy “Hip Hop Don’t Lie” and sensual “Milk & Cookies,” on which Elliott lightly harmonized her about her capabilities in the bedroom.

Solange Knowles
“Sol-Angel and the Hadley Street Dreams” (Music World Entertainment/Geffen, Aug. 26)
“Her record is totally bananas,” Geffen chairman Ron Fair says of Beyonce’s sister Solange Knowles’ label debut. “It’s not what people would expect from her. The music is more eclectic and international. She’s in her own lane.” The project boasts production from Cee-Lo, Q-Tip, Mark Ronson, Raphael Saadiq and Pharrell Williams, who steered first single “I Decided.” Bilal penned “Cosmic Journey,” while Pooh’s Mara’s Ambitious guests on “Wanna Go Back” and Lil Wayne appears on “Champagnecronichngnightcap.

Fabolous
TBA (Def Jam, August TBD)
Although he isn’t ready to get specific, Queens rapper Fabolous’ as-yet-unitled album will be inspired by a film, much in the way Jay-Z’s “American Gangster” was based on the movie of the same name. “I always wanted to touch this particular movie musically because I felt some of the things in the movie related to me and to lots of other people,” he says. “Plus, I always wanted to use a theme for my album. I want to take scenarios and turn them into records and vice versa.” So far, the set features production from DJ Toomp, Kanye West, Just Blaze, Swizz Beatz and Polow Da Don.

Gym Class Heroes
“Thank You for the Runaway” (CDM/RCA, August TBD)
“Thank You for the Runaway” is the title of a new single from the band’s upcoming album. The song’s first single, “Pumped Up Kicks,” was released in April.

Q-Tip
“The Renaissance” (Universal Motown)
There’s something about Q-Tip and album delays. His 2001 project “Kamal’s Abstract” has never appeared as expected, and “The Renaissance” is now on its third release date in the past 18 months. To freshen up the music, Q-Tip samples a Barack Obama speech on the as-yet-unnamed opening track. “He’s a fresh new voice and an alternative from what we’ve seen in the political scene in some time,” he says. Norah Jones, D’Angelo and Raphael Saadiq make...
guest appearances on the album, which Tip calls "musically in-
trospective. I talk about relationships, love, enchantment, feeling
— the whole gamut." Key tracks: the rock-tinged "Johnny
Dead" and the relationship-driven "Man Woman Boogie."

Ryan Leslie
TBA (Next Selection/Universal)
If Ryan Leslie's recent New York gig—where he brought a jaded
music industry crowd to its feet—is any indication of his star power,
the Harvard graduate is doing pretty well for himself. The producer/
songwriter/solo artist wrote and produced Cassie's 2006 self-titled
debut and is enjoying the success of his single "Diamond Girl,"
which has been remixed by G-Unit and Kanye West. Solely produc-
ing and penning his entire album, Leslie calls the as-yet-un-
titled set a dream come true. "It's almost surreal," he says.
"I've been signed to Universal for five years and now I have a record for myself that's got everyone's attention."

R. Kelly
"12 Play: Fourth Quarter" (Jive)
No matter the turmoil in his personal life (his pro-
tected trial on child pornography charges
was set to begin May 9, after press time), R. Kelly
remains one of the most reliable hit-
makers in pop. "Producers have come and
gone over the last 15 years, but Robert's mu-
sical compass is second to none," I've sen-
sor VP of urban marketing/promotion Larry
Khair says. And barely a year since the re-
lease of last year's "Double Up," he's plot-
ing a summer release for another new
album. Details on the project are slim, but
first single "Hair Brained," an ode to a special
lady, is already climbing Billboard's Hot R&B/
Hip Hop Songs chart.

Big Boi
"Sir Luscious Left Foot . . . Son of Chico Dusty" (Jive)
OutKast's Big Boi plucked the
title of his solo debut from his own alias (Sir Luscious Left Foot)
and his father's first name (Chico Dusty). The MC worked with his
usual Organized Noise produc-
tion crew as well as newcomer
Mr. DJ, who crafted the single
"Royal Flush." The second sin-
gle will be "The World Is Too
Big," featuring Mary J. Blige, and
Big Boi says the album's subject
matter is serious. "It's like a recession special," he says. "I'm talk-
ing about what's going on in the world, with everything from us-
ing gas prices to the election."

G-Unit
"T.O.S. (Terminate on Site)" (Interscope)
50 Cents last year's much-hyped first-week sales battle
with Kanye West, but he's back in the ring with a new G-
Unit album this summer: "Terror Squad." Swizz Beatz, Ron
Brown, Polow Da Don and Enervo have been tapped as
producers, and 50 says "T.O.S." embeds G-Unit's
trademark aggression. However, the album's first sin-
gle, "I Like the Way She Do It," appeals to the ladies.
"Women influence a lot," 50 Cent says. "They run the
centerline. If there's a song that I can't stand but a girl
runs to the dancefloor, I'm right on it."

Beck
TBA (Interscope)
They're both genre-jumpers who've scored left-field
mainstream successes, so a Beck/Danger Mouse pairing
makes more sense than one might think. The duo shared produc-
tion on the follow-up to Beck's 2006 album: "The Information,"
coming up with 10 stripped-down songs with a lean-and-mean run-
ing time of slightly more than 30 minutes. Sources say the album
is likely to just appear without fanfare, similar to the Raconteurs'
recent release. Look for a guest appearance by Cat Power as well.

Scars on Broadway
"Scars on Broadway" (TBA)
Scars on Broadway's debut album won't be the follow-up to System
of a Down's chart-topping 2005 releases "Mezmerize" and "Hypno-
ticide," but the "vibe of my writing is still there," says vocalist/guitarist
Daron Malakian, who wrote 95% of SOAD's material. Joined by Sys-
tem drummer John Dolmayan and a slew of other musicians,
Malakian says the forthcoming Scars on Broadway album is more
rock-driven than metal. "It's more melodic than ever," Dolmayan
says, adding that the band will likely tour toward the end of summer.

The Subways
"All or Nothing" (Infectious/Warner Music)
U.K. garage rock trio the Subways faced some potentially combustible
challenges before hitting Los Angeles last summer to record its soph-
omore album with producer Butch Vig. Earlier in the year, frontman
Billy Lunn had throat nodule surgery, requiring a four month recov-
ery period. "It was one of the scariest things ever," says the 23-year-
old, who also split up with his fiancée, the band's bassist Charlotte
Cooper. "This whole record was a therapy session," Lunn says. "It's
made us more of a unit than we ever were." The new set, due June
30 internationally and later this summer in North America via sire,
is "much, much heavier," Lunn says. "We just can't wait to tour it."

Additional reporting by Michael D. Ayres, Ayala Ben Yahuda, Leila
Cobo, Mariel Conception, Hillary Crosley, Ann Donovan, Gary
Griff, Clover Hope, Gail Mitchell, Mitchell Peters, Deborah Evans
Price and Ken Tucker.
Once upon a time, record companies would cater to kids by releasing plenty of big albums during the summer vacation. But that was back when hits were more plentiful, before labels started hoarding them all for the fourth quarter.

Still, while summer isn’t what it used to be for music retailers, certain characteristics still help distinguish it from a marketing standpoint.

Since the beginning of this decade, “the release schedules for the majors are off during the summer,” leaving room for independents. RED president Bob Morelli says, “Summer is a strong season for touring, so we start tacking into very strong sales. For rock repertoire, the summer is a very significant season.”

Beggars Group head of sales Rusty Clarke says labels at her company also tend to have a packed release schedule during June, July and August, especially if bands are on the road.

Vans Warped, Ozzfest and other packed rock tours are generally scheduled during summer months, as are festivals like Bonnaroo and Lollapalooza, all of which expose up-and-coming rock bands.

Last year, for instance, according to industry observers, Paramore started to break during its appearance on Warped. After debuting the week ending June 17, 2007, with 42,000 scans, then falling into the 13,000-15,000 range for the next two months, sales of Paramore’s “Riot!” reigned in the last weeks of August, eventually climbing to 33,000 copies before dropping back into the teens again. To date, according to Nielsen SoundScan, the album has sold 864,000 units.

And Paramore wasn’t the only Warped tour act to peak last summer—Chiodos, Circa Survive, Tiger Army, Boys Like Girls and others also charted high on the Billboard 200 between June and December.

Merchants agree that rock tours and festivals do indeed drive summer sales for baby bands. “If you have midlevel things that you can work through the summer and you can get bands in front of people in the rock tours,” Newbury Comics buyer Carl Mello says, “you can get some kind of success.” Just not the level of success the industry used to achieve. “The drivers,” Mello adds, “don’t drive records as far as they used to.”

Teenagers recognize that their tendency to hold back big releases until the fourth quarter creates opportunities for smaller bands. “We use the summer to bring attention to all our new freshman- and sophomore-type bands, who tend to release albums during the summer to coincide with the summer festival touring season,” the head of sales at a major label says.

“Certainly, the competition is less at the time, so you can have a pretty sweet debut, even a top 10 record, if it’s the right album,” Clarke says. “We released Thom Yorke’s ‘Eraser’ album in July.” That set scanned more than 90,000 units in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and came in at No. 2 on the Billboard 200.

But despite being a boon to some developing acts, the lack of big records still makes summer a slow season for most merchants.

For some, other seasonal factors cut into performance as well. Newbury Comics, for instance, is not so reliant on big releases, but its stores “tend to be located in college towns,” GM Duncan Brown says. “So typically our sales taper off during the summer because kids go home.”

Not all stores experience summer slowdowns, however. Value Music president Rob Perkins says that since kids in general don’t visit record stores the way they used to, he doesn’t see a pickup in rock sales for developing acts during the season. But since Value Music has a number of stores in resort areas, “those stores are very busy due to tourists and vacationers,” VP of merchandising Brian Poehner says. “In particular, our store on the shore of Alabama is booming in the summer.” With the weak dollar, he expects his resort-area stores to see more international tourists this year; but if people travel less, that might hurt.

Across the board, though, some say that seasonal sales may be beginning to level off. “I used to think summer was dog days and sales would decline,” Clarke says. “But with digital sales, it’s not as bad as it used to be.

On vacation or at home, people still listen to music with their iPod and still have computer access. “I noticed last summer our sales didn’t slump horribly,” Clarke says. “And I am hoping sales will be even better this year as digital increases.”
Its Record Company May Be In Turmoil, But Coldplay Has A Plan—A New Album, A Free Download, Free Shows, An Extensive Tour And A Mission To Connect With Fans

by Paul Sexton
Photograph By Stephan Crasneanscki
The album that will put the new EMI under its greatest global scrutiny to date is also 2008's most eagerly awaited release. That's the official word from Chris Martin's new boss. Coldplay's "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends" will be released June 12 internationally on Parlophone/EMI and on June 17 in North America on Capitol. EMI Group chairman Guy Hands says, "Right across the world, this is the most anticipated album of the year."

As the follow-up to the British melodic rock band's "X&Y" album of summer 2005, which scaled global sales north of 10 million units, according to the label, it's a highly significant release for many reasons. Just as "Viva La Vida" is a bold musical statement by a group that Martin says had grown to feel "a little dirty" by the end of its last campaign, the importance of this album to the new EMI is hard to overstate.

Coldplay's manager, Dave Holmes of 3D Management, who in January expressed his "confusion" over the departure of EMI U.K. chairman/CEO Tony Wadsworth (billboard.biz, Jan. 11), says he has received reassurances from the very top level that the company can do justice to such a major global release, at the exact time its new management restructuring is being implemented.

"There's always a degree of nervousness from me with record labels in general around [my] artists," he says. "Maybe that's a little bit more than normal, but they've reassured me. Guy and I have been talking about this release since he took over the company, and we've made sure that both of us feel confident that the label can handle it amidst all the change."

At retail, Best Buy senior entertainment officer Gary Arnold admits it is "a challenging time at EMI."

"What I do know is that Coldplay has a very capable management team surrounding them, who are guiding the setup and delivery of the new album and tour," he adds. "The management team is working directly with [us] to shape and integrate our efforts and outlets into their distribution and success story. We have every reason to believe the band will continue their string of commercial successes with the new album."

Martin, the band's vocal and visual focus, sits in the band's own studio, the Bakery in northwest London, and offers a typically relaxed and realistic interpretation.

"Being on a major label at the moment is like living in your grandparents' house," he says. "Everyone knows they need to move out, and they will eventually, but we kind of like our grandmother."

"It's obviously an anticipated model, because of the Internet, but we really love the people we work with. If we knew what the solution was to everything, then we'd do it. We have absolute respect for the Radioheads and Raconteurs and people who can do what they like. We're in contract though, so we're just going to make the most of it and enjoy the people we get to work with."

EMI's trans-Atlantic label heads, meanwhile, exude nothing but undiluted enthusiasm for the new Coldplay release and the people who created it.

"Anticipation is incredible on a record from an artist like this," Capitol Records U.S. president Lee Trink says. "To hear what we heard was both exhilarating and a relief. It feels like exactly where the band should be going. It's both unequivocally Coldplay, but stretching themselves out creatively."
“X&Y” has sold 3.2 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, compared with 4.5 million for 2002’s “A Rush of Blood to the Head.” Coldplay’s total studio album career sales in the States are 10.4 million, with 2000 debut “Parachutes” at 2.7 million, according to SoundScan, while all three studio albums have sold more than 2.3 million copies apiece in the United Kingdom, according to the Official U.K. Charts Co.

“They needed to make this record,” London-based Parlophone president of labels Miles Leonard says. “I know that sounds odd coming off the back of an album that sold over 10 million copies, but when I listen to this album I hear a band more confident than ever. It’s got so much more soul, more atmosphere and spirit.”

Leonard says the album could even outperform its predecessor. “Anything’s possible,” he says. “The industry, since the last album, is probably 35% declined in sales, so for any album, however great, that’s going to be tough. But this album has the ability to do that.”

Rush has also released his international belief in EMI’s biggest album of his short tenure.

“While the expectations are high, what Coldplay have done is produce something that goes way beyond any one’s expectations,” he says. “This truly is a monumental album.”

A Rush Of Blood To The Web

In a bold move to reassert its close relationship with its fans, Coldplay made opening single “Violet Hill”—a rocky track, with something of the flavor of 1967-68 era Beatles—available as a free download April 29, shifting more than 2 million units in its week of being available for free, according to EMI. A cover-mounted 7-inch vinyl edition of the single was given away with the May 10 issue of British music weekly NME, which went on sale May 6—the only physical version of the single to be made available, although it also went on sale at digital outlets the same day.

“We don’t get data from the individual retailers who sell it, but we do get it from anyone who goes to coldplay.com, so that really works for us,” Leonard says. “You may look at it in cynical terms and think it’s a great marketing idea to get column inches, but the decision to do the free download and the free shows were a very genuine case of them wanting to put something back.”

“Of course we want to sell a lot of records,” Martin says. “But we want to get right back to the root of everything, by saying, ‘Here you go, have a song, have a concert.’ All that other stuff we have to do because we’re in contract that’s all going to happen, of course, but it’s just starting from that place. It makes us feel good as a group of people.”

“More than ever, you’ve got to give people a reason to be excited about music,” drummer Will Champion adds. “With content being so available, you just want to give people as much as possible.”

Coldplay will also stage free gigs June 16 at London’s Brixton Academy and June 23 at New York’s Madison Square Garden. Another free show in Barcelona is expected to be confirmed soon.

The concerts will be uncompromised, and Martin points candidly to a similar stage of the last album to explain why.

“We felt last year we fucked up so royally in New York when we were setting up X&Y. We did an AOL thing, which was fine to do, but we tried to mix it with a buzz gig and we just came across as a huge and very important corporation.”

“So this time we want to do the ultimate buzz gig and have it not attached to anything or anybody. We’re all very nervous because no one’s done it before and it’s a bit risky. When we first got asked to close [the] Glastonbury [festival] in 2002, it was a similar feeling of something a bit bigger than what we felt we could do. But we really like that challenge.”

Tickets will be offered in a contest via coldplay.com. “It’s very clever. Rather than have the fans e-mail in and get picked off a list, we’re going to make them work a little bit and have some fun with it,” Holmes says, who notes that the band, rather than the label, is paying for the free show.

Hitting The Road

The free shows will be followed by extensive touring throughout 2008 and beyond, with some North American dates going on sale May 17, but the majority going up June 14, the weekend before the album comes out.

“The tour is a major, major part of the setup of the record,” Holmes says. “All of our on-sales are built around the launch of the record—it gives you that extra oomph as you head into the street date.”

It’s a strategy that paid off for the release of “X&Y” in 2005.

“I put the entire tour up on sale in the two weeks heading into the album release and it really played a big part in us hitting that 740,000 copies the first week in the U.S.,” Holmes says. “And I think this time around it will have a similar effect.”

The tour begins June 29 at the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia. It will play arenas only in North America on the first leg, except for a July 27 headlining gig at the Pemberton Festival in Vancouver. Live Nation will promote shows in Europe and North America, with U.K. dates promoted by SJM. Live Nation promoted the bulk of dates on “X&Y” as well, and Holmes says most of the promoters with whom the band has history are Live Nation promoters.

“We have grown up together with Coldplay from the beginning in our clubs and theaters to the global touring relationship we share with them today,” Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino says. “This [upcoming] tour is without a doubt one of the highlights of our year and we’re proud to be working with Dave, Chris, Jonny [Buckland, guitarist], Will and Guy [Berryman, bassist].”

Roughly 30 shows are planned for North America, followed by Europe and the United Kingdom, with Steve Strange; director of X-Ray Touring in London, booking dates. Coldplay will also headline the Summer sonic Festival Aug 9-10 in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan. About 90 dates are expected for this year.

Lighting and set design for the tour are by Paul Nor-mandale and features “lots of projection,” Holmes says. “It will really blow people away.”

Ticket prices are still being determined, but a three-tiered pricing strategy is likely, with prices roughly in the $30-$65 and above. “We’re not going to see us coming out with $125-$150 tickets,” Holmes says.

“They’re so respectful of their fans and the right price point and how you give value per dollar,” says Paradigm president Marty Diamond, who has booked the band since its first U.S. trek.

The tour will feature a limited presale through Best Buy, but Holmes notes that the promotion “has more to do with retail positioning of the record” and is not a tour sponsorship.

More international touring is on tap for next year, with Australia, Asia and Latin America in the early part of the year, then a return to North America and Europe next summer. “Last time we ended up doing 150 shows; we’ll probably end up roughly the same,” Holmes says.

The band will play European stadiums in 2009 and might even play U.S. stadiums next year “if we can do the business,” Holmes says.

On the tour supporting “X&Y” in 2005-06, Coldplay grossed close to $60 million on a conservative ticket price, drawing more than 1 million fans to about 70 shows. Given the target of 150 shows, and the inclusion of stadiums on the route, a gross of $100 million plus is well within reach.

“The reaction to the music has been just incredible, and there are a lot of big opportunities we’re looking at with television and some other things we’re working on that speak to that,” Holmes says.

“This is not the type of record where it’s a big launch followed by a lull,” Trink says. “It’s a big launch followed by a steady flow of activity that ends up being propelled and anchored by the tour.”

Among early TV exposure, he cites Coldplay’s booking June 27 at a “Today” outdoor concert, with “other big ones coming.” At radio, the band is being worked initially to its modern rock and triple A core audience, “followed fairly quickly to hot AC. Then we’ll figure out the best course of action for pop.”

“Violet Hill” immediately connected with radioaudiences, racking up 367 plays across Nielsen BDS-monitored stations in the United States in its first 24 hours, accounting for 3 million audience impressions and ranking as the top song on modern rock for the day. In the United Kingdom and Europe, it scored 300 plays in its first 24 hours, according to Nielsen Music Control, hitting more than 33 million listeners.

In Our Place

The new album, produced by Brian Eno and Markus Dravs, sounds like a band quite certain of its sonic and creative course. It was made during a very deliberate period out of the limelight for the band as a whole, and Martin in particular, ever keen to discourage media attention to his marriage to actress Gwyneth Paltrow.

It’s also a record made at Coldplay’s own address. For this record, the band acquired its own, self-contained studio facility, converting a former bakery in northwest London backstreet.

“We took a long time to recharge,” Martin says. “It’s weird being in Coldplay because we’ve taken on-board a lot of opinion, a lot of different experiences, and we had to hibernate for a while to feel like we had anything worth doing.”

Reminded of his comment, when the band won two BRIT Awards for “X&Y” in February 2006, that it would go off radar for a long while, he smiles and says, “Well, there we are. I laid out a business plan.

“The place we got to two years ago just felt a little dirty,” he says. “We weren’t really speaking to each other.

www.americanradiohistory.com
We all had our corner office in a big tower block, but there was no vibe.

"I just felt, 'We have to get our own place. We have to call Brian Eno, get Phil back'" [Phil Harvey, the band's former manager and creative consultant, described by Martin as "our fifth member that no one ever sees"]; we have to play in a little room, burn all our awards and reviews, not go to swanky dinners, erase all that."

To go back, then, to the beginning, as the 10th anniversary of the band's first gig in January 1998 came around?

"Yeah," Martin replies, "but a beginning where you happen to have the best producers in the world around you. We recorded most of it in January, spent a lot of time writing and going down different paths. Then we suddenly struck on this way of coming in in the morning, sitting in a circle with Brian in the corner and just playing.

"We always have the intention of giving ourselves time to decompess after albums and tours. [But] by the end of a recording session we're anxious to get on with it and tour," Champion says. "Then, by the end of the touring cycle, you're thinking, 'We've written some great songs. Let's get back in the studio.'

"You never really feel like you have time to settle, but we did give ourselves some time this time. We wrote songs off tours. We basically spent eight months in the studio, we approached it as a rehearsal room and a recording facility. We were just here playing through songs all day, every day.

"Eno's role was crucial," Martin says. "Whether or not the songs are good, you can hear that the band is hungry, just in terms of the playing. He'd say, 'You can do anything you like, fellas, but it's got to sound like there's life in it.' So there's probably some magic upsets that we've left off that are very clever but they don't sound like they're alive."

Listening to "Viva La Vida," one can picture several songs looming out of the large venues in which the band has made itself comfortable.

The album begins with "Life in Technicolor," which is instrumental apart from a few backing voices, and picks up speed after a contemplative start that Martin says is intended to sound like the band is "coming over the hill."

That eases into "Cemeteries of London," an atmospheric piece that opens on his distinctive vocals. Before the first minute is up, it has grown into the type of large-scale production that characterizes much of the album, highly percussive and with strident guitar. "Lost" also features a heavy, hand-clap-friendly beat and anthemic aura over some church organ detail. "42" is more pensive and initially melancholy, while "Lovers in Japan"/"Rings of Love" is one of three episodic tracks with double titles, the others being "Yes/Chinese Sleep Chant" and the closing "Death and All His Friends/The Escapist."

"The 'other' title track, "Viva La Vida," has incisive strings and an immediate melody. "Strawberry Swing" is a midtempo song with midtempo guitar textures that, as with other moments on the record, are somewhat reminiscent of Eno's work with U2. Overall, the album has a flavor of rich instrumentation and occasional experimentation, but is almost always instantly recognizable as Coldplay."

"They've understood how to translate and elevate records into a live experience," Diamond says. "And it's exciting."

"I have a side of me that always wants to see [our music] sync'd up with the last bit of the Super Bowl," Martin says. "I'm a big fan of the singalong, so the principle is to think, 'I love music, I can chant this at once.' We've definitely put a few choruses in there."

Early enthusiasm for the new album is widespread. MTV senior VP of music and talent Amy Doyle says, "The songs we [first] heard were all contenders for the first single at the time. We totally understood why they were having such a hard time choosing."

Holmes says digital initiatives are a much increased part of the marketing picture compared with the setup for "X&Y."

"When we put the last record out, iTunes were probably the fifth or sixth account," he says. "To come back on this record and have them be the No. 1 account in America, that's probably one of the biggest, most significant differences."

At iTunes, digital album pre-orders began May 6, when "Violet Hill" became available as a download, with consumers able to secure a bonus track to be delivered with it on album release day. The street-date version of the album via iTunes will have a different exclusive bonus track, plus an exclusive music video.

Holmes also cites the growth of YouTube as a new factor. "So that's a part of your marketing plan now, which wouldn't have been three-and-a-half years ago. I was cleaning my desk out recently and found an old MySpace marketing plan when they'd come to us on the last record, [when] they had about 400,000 members. We did a big promotion with them, but it's funny looking back that that was a new platform, and social networking in general wasn't part of your marketing plan. Now it's a major part."

But the Coldplay manager regards the retail arena as "not less vital. It's just as important to me. People still buy CDs, and Coldplay are one of those artists where a lot of the fans want to own the CD, they want the whole package."

Holmes is sanguine about EMI's restructuring, maintaining that neither he nor the band were ever publicly negative about the new regime.

"We were just 'watch and see,'" he says. "Things got a little blown out of proportion in the press. I don't think we ever went on record saying anything to the effect that we wouldn't release it, not that I recall. There was talk about [artists] going on strike, but we should never have been lumped into that."

Martin says of the company's former, publicly quoted incarnation: "We didn't like it when people started linking us with share prices, that felt very weird. But we're still from the school of 'Wouldn't it be great to get a record deal?' It's still every musician's dream."

At Capitol in New York, Trink says such a big release at a delicate time "requires special attention from a dedicated group of people, but there's a flip side to that. It provides a very positive thing to rally around. When people are sometimes so focused on the negative and the changes, it's very difficult for the staff, and I'm sure [it's] concerning for an artist and management."

"But here we have something positive. This is the reason we're in this business. The important part is being laser-focused on making sure that nothing falls through the cracks because people might be distracted."

For all the redundancies across EMI worldwide and those that may follow around the time of the Coldplay release, Parlophone's Leonard says, "All the tools, from the A&R to the video to marketing to radio all stems from here [the EMI Music US and UK], and the team is 90% what it was all the way through their career, so the consistency has been important."

Martin expresses regret that some friends at the label are no longer with the company, but also stoicism: "A lot of our lives have been about people leaving or dying—or so much has changed for everybody so it's sad, but that's life."

Asked about the band's contract and whether it might consider forging a different path when it ends, he jokes, "Well, I think we're in contract until... the end of the space age. On my deathbed, someone will come up and say, 'You still owe me three records.'"

Additional reporting by Lars Brandle in London and Ray Waddell in Nashville.
Yamaha Tenori-On
The unique Tenori-On synthesizer takes a highly visual approach to making music, whether you’re playing professionally or just playing around. The handheld instrument (the name means “sound in the palm of your hand” in Japanese) uses 256 touch-sensitive LED lights to “paint” musical patterns and textures, using built-in sounds plus samples loaded by the user.

Sennheiser wireless earbuds
These high-end earbuds are the first to use a new wireless technology called Kleer that, well, clearly delivers superior audio quality compared with Bluetooth stereo headsets. The MX W1 kit includes a pair of comfortable, lightweight earbuds, a small transmitter that connects to the earphone jack of your favorite music player and a carrying case with its own internal battery, so you can recharge your buds up to three times while on the road.

Sony Rolly
Like a robotic refugee from a strange Japanese disco, the egg-shaped Rolly not only plays MP3 music but “dances” to the tunes by rolling around rhythmically, opening and closing the flaps that cover its stereo speakers and flashing its multicolored lights to the beat. Already a hit in Japan at around $400, the strangely hypnotic Rolly hits U.S. shores soon.

Samsung i8 digital camera
This handsome little digicam leads a double life. When it’s vacation snapshot time, you have a perfectly pocket-size companion that shoots high-resolution 8.2-megapixel pictures, with a 3x zoom lens and a bright 2.7-inch screen to compose your shots. And between photo ops, the camera will keep you amused by playing MP3 files and videoclips, through earbuds or a built-in speaker.

Squeezebox Duet
There are plenty of systems to stream digital music from a computer to the stereo, but the Squeezebox Duet raises the ante by adding a wide range of Internet-based music sources, including the Rhapsody subscription service, Slacker, Pandora, Internet radio and now more than 80 channels of Sirius Satellite Radio. With a beautifully designed handheld remote, featuring a bright, clear, 2.4-inch color display, this system makes whole-home audio easy to set up, a pleasure to use and reasonably affordable.

By Steve Morgenstern

Warm beach days are on the horizon and music in the air—and on the deck, and on the road and even rolling around on the floor, thanks to these 12 must-have new audio products.
LG Vu
One of the coolest handsets, the Vu touch-screen phone is an entertainment powerhouse, with extensive musical talents (it plays MP3s, Napster-to-Go subscription music, AT&T Mobile Music downloads and XM Satellite Radio stations) plus live TV via AT&T’s new Mobile TV system, including full-length shows from CBS, NBC, MTV, Comedy Central, ESPN, Fox and more. $299, wireless.att.com

Outcast
Here’s the perfect solution for outdoor music enjoyment without wiring up the deck or backyard. The rechargeable, weatherproof wireless speaker delivers 360-degree music coverage thanks to four high-frequency drivers plus a powerful 6-inch subwoofer for satisfying bass even outdoors. The base station transmitter, which can sit safe and dry up to 350 feet from the speaker, includes an iPod dock plus an auxiliary input jack to accept other music sources. The base station can also connect directly to a stereo system or powered speakers, so party people can share the same music indoors and out simultaneously. $700, soundcastsystems.com

ITC One
You can replace all that home theater clutter with a single amazing box, if you have the financial fortitude to purchase an ITC One from SE2 Labs. This is the ultimate AV-in-a-box solution, combining audiophile-grade tuners and amplifiers, HD video, Nintendo Wii and/or Xbox 360 game consoles, Blu-ray disc player, iPod dock, Apple TV, even your cable set-top box into a single unit roughly the size of two PCs, with a single power cable, a single remote and a single connection to your big-screen TV. $25,000, se2labs.com

‘Guitar Hero: On Tour’
Everyone’s favorite air-guitar guilty pleasure goes portable in June with this version of “Guitar Hero” for the Nintendo DS. The game comes with a special Guitar Grip peripheral that clips onto the DS to let players show off their fancy fretwork while strumming the virtual strings using a pick on the touch-sensitive DS screen. Songs range from Maroon 5’s “This Love” to Nirvana’s “Breed” and Twisted Sister’s “We’re Not Gonna Take It.” We who are about to rock salute you, Activision! $50, activision.com

Polk iSonic ES2
This premium-quality table radio gives your iPod audio a rich, warm sound and room-filling volume. It also delivers clear AM, FM and HD radio reception, plus a brand-new feature called iTunes Tagging. When you hear a song you like on HD radio (which is transmitted with complete track information), just hit the Tag button. The next time you sync your iPod with your computer, the name of the song appears automatically in iTunes for you to preview and/or purchase. $499, polkaudio.com

JBL On Stage 3
One of the first iPod docks that works seamlessly with the iPhone as well as standard iPods, the On Stage 3 is a compact sound system that runs off batteries or AC power, making it a great solution at home or away. Use it as a computer speaker (via the stereo input jack) and keep your iPod docked and charged, then toss it in your bag for到处-free musical enjoyment in a hotel room or at poolside. $130, jbl.com

Irifer SPiNN
This sleek-looking music and video player is nearly all screen, but even without a barrage of buttons you don’t have to poke at the display with your greasy fingers—the spinning wheel (at top right) lets you zip quickly through even the longest track list. It will be available in 4-, 8- and 16-gigabyte sizes this summer, with pricing to be announced. iriveramerica.com
Phones Feel The Heat

DIGITAL // On Deck Are Efforts To Further Evolve The Struggling Mobile Music Sector BY ANTONY BRUNO

Improving The iPhone

Perhaps no single device has had more impact on mobile music than Apple's iPhone. While only 6.7% of overall mobile customers use their phone to listen to music, rising to 27.9% for smartphone users, a full 74.1% of iPhone owners report using the device as an MP3 player, according to In-Stat.

The majority of this music, however, is transferred from the computer, rather than purchased from the phone and downloaded wirelessly. That may change this summer once Apple unveils what many expect will be a new version of the iconic device, featuring access to high-speed third-generation (3G) wireless networks.

The company has not made an official announcement, but signs point to an early June release. Apple has stopped restocking retailers with the current iPhone version, which analysts say is a sure sign that a new model is imminent. Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference is scheduled for June 9, where CEO Steve Jobs will deliver the keynote.

Existing models connect to an older, slower wireless network, but compensate with access to high-speed Wi-Fi Internet networks. Those using the iPhone to download music from iTunes, for instance, must use this Wi-Fi connection. While certainly faster than cellular networks, Wi-Fi does not offer nearly the coverage.

Whether the 3G iPhone allows users to download music via cellular networks is not as important as the greater number of customers it is expected to attract. Apple has sold more than 5 million iPhones worldwide, but many tech-savvy buyers, particularly in Europe, have been holding out for a 3G version. Upgrading the iPhone to 3G, along with whatever other tricks Jobs has up his sleeve, is considered crucial for Apple to meet its stated goal of selling 10 million iPhones this year.

Smart Phones Get Smarter

Even if Apple manages to reach its goal, the iPhone would still represent only about 1% of all mobile phones available. While it's true that iPhone users listen to music and perhaps even buy more music than do users of other devices, the music industry would like to see this increased music usage be a bit more widespread.

So as significant as the iPhone usage figures are, the greater significance is how they inspire other device manufacturers to aspire to similar levels. The company with the most to lose from the iPhone's momentum is Research In Motion, maker of the popular BlackBerry.

In the United States, RIM leads the smartphone market with a 46% share, but Apple is close behind at 28%, according to research group Canalys. Apple additionally has begun incorporating support for Microsoft-based corporate e-mail applications into the iPhone, which is considered a direct attack on the BlackBerry.

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Brands Cash In On Vacation

//BRANDS//

On The Road, In Games, On MTV, In Stores, Big Names Want To Be Seen BY HANNU HIIGI

EA Goes On Tour

The promotion starts this summer for Electronic Arts' boxing videogame "FaceBreaker," which will hit stores in September. The company has partnered with Suretone Records rock act From First to Last, whose members are not only characters in the game, but also have three songs featured. FFTP, which signed a deal with EA's publishing company last year, will unveil what this summer's Vans Warped tour and has its bus wrapped in a "FaceBreaker" ad. At certain tour stops a fan from the audience will be pulled onstage to play the game with a member of the band. FFTP music will be featured in TV spots for the game. In addition, the rock quartet will do at least two in-store appearances as part of a concert at a big-box retailer that has yet to be determined. That same retailer will then offer a discount off "FaceBreaker" if customers buy the album and vice versa.

"FaceBreaker" is the first of a multi-game agreement to feature the band. Others include the next installment in such well-known franchises as "FIFA," "Madonna," "Need for Speed," and "Burnout.

"First, we look at publishing as though it is our responsibility to create marketing opportunities for the bands we sign. Then, we look to sign unique bands that move the needle," EA worldwide executive of music and marketing Steve Schnur says. "The days of 'let's get it on radio and MTV' are over. CD sales have been terminally marginalized. Within the next five years, the ability of videogames to expose new music of every genre will be beyond anything the industry or the consumer has ever known before."

As a result, representatives from EA and Suretone meet nearly every week to plot marketing strategy. "They're kind of hitched their publishing company to my band and they're using everything they can to leverage this band," Suretone Records founder/CEO Jordan Schnur says.

As part of the deal Suretone will promote EA products on its Web site and "FaceBreaker" merchandise will be sold on the upcoming Vans Warped tour by Suretone Merchandise.

And if things work out, this is only the beginning.

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Artists Set Concert Prices

Acts Selling Tix Through TicketExchange Via TicketMaster

Another summer, another way to get concert tickets.

The latest online resale and price debate prompted a source in the legal community to call me, sharing new information on the subject. Although the practice may not be prevalent, the source said, some of the hottest selling artists who received their allotment of tickets to sell directly to fans have instead "sold" some of them to Ticketmaster to sell to fans through its TicketExchange.

TicketExchange, launched in November 2005, is Ticketmaster's online service that "enables premium and fan-to-fan transactions," the Web site states. At first impression, the artist-Ticketmaster-TicketExchange arrangement may seem like a retailer scheme or some conspiracy between artists and Ticketmaster to make some extra dough from the top drawing concert acts before we all jump to such conclusions, it's important to keep in mind that the term "sale" has a specific legal meaning.

And, as every entrepreneur knows all too well, it's easy to ensnare customers to buy stuff without some sort of statutory power to attract their attention. There are indeed at least two sides to every story.

When Ticketmaster has a deal to provide ticketing for a concert, artists can normally sell up to 8% of the inventory of tickets directly to fans as part of their fan club.

Since Ticketmaster has products and services to promote just like any other corporate sponsor, it's not surprising that Ticketmaster might pay these artists to make some of their choice tickets from that allotment available on a Ticketmaster online service it wants to promote.
the beginning. "We're aiming to create a game around From First to Last by giving a half-dozen songs to EA," Schur says. "It's the sort of project that will give us a revenue stream."

Expect more such deals from EA. "For EA, the From First to Last deal represents the kind of deals it hopes to sign with artists in the future. We see this venture as the beginning of a landmark publishing/branding relationship that will make the industry rethink the possibilities of cross-format marketing," Schur says.

FFTL released its self-titled album May 6. (The band's previous two albums—2006's "Heroine" and 2004's "Deaf Diary, My Teen Age: I Has a Body Count!"—were released on Epitaph and have sold a combined 308,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.)

**Shwayze Drives Onto MTV**

Suretone is on a summertime roll. Label artist Shwayze, who is currently seen in Pontiac ads made by agency Leo Burnett, looks to bring its life to MTV. If it just so happens that he and his partner, Cisco Adler (son of record producer/film director/manager Louis Adler), drive a Pontiac Vibe while on tour, discuss doing business with Pontiac and give away a car at the end of the tour, all on camera, then so much the better. The TV show is set for June and provisionally-titled "Buzzin," which is the name of Shwayze's single from his upcoming self-titled debut album. The single is gaining play on top 40 radio with 491 spins for the week ending May 4, up from 991 the week before. The song is No. 88 on the Pop 100.

**'Mad Men' Play Dress Up**

To promote the release of the soundtrack to the first season of AMC's "Mad Men," EMI label Back Porch is working with Bloomingdale's on a window display that will go up in June 12 of the store's top markets, including New York. The mannequins will wear clothing from Theory while signage will promote the release of the first season on DVD as well as the CD, which was produced by Chop Shop Music Supervision owner Alexandra Parasvas. The soundtrack features period tracks from Vic Damone, Ella Fitzgerald and Rosemary Clooney, original compositions by David Carbonaro, and the instrumental theme by Acelayone and RDJ.

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

"Just as a sponsor may compensate an artist to endorse a product or utilize a service, Ticketmaster has provided limited incentives around product launches that range from marketing support to financial protections for those early adopters," Ticketmaster executive VP David Goldberg says.

TicketExchange is one of these products. Among the online service's offerings are "platinum tickets."

These tickets are, according to the TicketExchange Web site, "were not purchased initially and then posted for resale; they are being sold for the first time on Ticketmaster's TicketExchange platform."

Goldberg adds, "Although TicketExchange, which is largely a fan resale platform, is being used to sell what Ticketmaster terms 'official platinum seats,' this isn't a case of Ticketmaster buying and reselling tickets, but rather using this as a method to help the artists gain 'market price' for the original sale of some of their tickets and letting fans buy specific seat locations."

In other words, the deals seem to not be a case of Ticketmaster buying, for example, 10 tickets at a fixed price and re-selling them at a price above that. They appear to be sponsorships built around a tour.

Based on typical negotiations involving participating artists, the pricing for the tickets is set on TicketExchange after consultations among the artist, the promoter, the venue and Ticketmaster, as well as considering historical data at prices based on seat locations.

Only a handful of acts have landed such sponsorships. Several management and legal sources contacted have never heard of any such arrangement.

Needless to say, it's unlikely that the summer will go by without complaints about concert ticket prices, especially as most music fans find their pockets much lighter this year than last.

**Latin Notas**

Leila Cobó

**Latin America**

**The Summer Preview**

Ah, the sounds of summer. And the sounds of summer songs.

In many parts of the world, the season is associated with lighter, more danceable fare. But nowhere is the concept of the "summer song," or "cancion del verano," taken as seriously as in Spain, where for more than four decades, the country's summer soundtrack has been defined by handfuls of songs that spontaneously rise on the charts.

The summer song is traditionally danceable and catchy, and often gimmicky. These instant hits are played endlessly on the radio, in clubs and on the crowded circuit of shows that takes place in every town in Spain between June and September.

Already considered invaluable as a promotional tool, these summertime hits have gained even more importance with the growing popularity of digital and mobile sales, where consumers are especially hungry for gimmicky tracks. The concept has spread to Argentina and Chile, and nationwide labels are keeping their eyes open for the right song to promote during the summer months.

"We don't record specific songs for the summer," La Galle Records managing director George Zamora says. But, he adds, "some songs fit that format." Zamora has two summer tracks he plans to release as singles this season: DLO2's "Todo Mata" and a debut track by John John, a pop/bachata group out of Los Angeles.

"There's always a song that you hear and say, 'Wow, this would be great for summer,'" Sony BMG Day 1 managing director Ruben Leyva says. He cites Juliesta Venegas' new single, "El Presente," from her new "MTV Unplugged" set, as a strong candidate, particularly because it coincides with the album's June 17 release statewide and in Europe, where she has been promoted before.

Leyva adds, "Would it only work for the summer? Of course not." Leyva, like most label heads in the United States, considers summer songs a gateway to fall success.

In other cases, particularly for Latin-American acts, a summer song opens the doors to Spain. As was the case with Chayanne's "Salome" in 1999 and Carlos Vives' "La Cota Fria" in 1993. Established artists can also score summer hits worldwide, as did Shakira with "Hips Don't Lie" and Juanes with "La Camisa Negra."

Summer songs are key in helping developing acts break, which happened with Cotti's "Nada Fue un Error," which he recorded with Venegas and Paulina Rubio. Crowned a summer song of 2005, it allowed him to make the leap from little-known songwriter to commercially visible artist.

This season, Universal Music Latin America marketing VP José Puig says, the label is planning to work Juanes' new single, "Tres." "Not thinking about it as a 'summer song,' but simply because it coincides with the season," Puig says. "'Tres' is inupempo, as are most summer tunes. We try not to come out with ballads this time of the year," Puig says. "In fact, it's a challenge regionally, because we have to choose an upempo track, but in Argentina and Chile, it's always left out because it's winter."

The Internet is playing an increasing role in breaking the summer song. Two years ago, one of the season's most popular tracks was "Yo Vi'as Jace Un Corra," a humorous song by rock act El Koala that attracted the attention of Universal Music Spain thanks to the millions of hits the video scored on YouTube. (To date, it has close to 10 million hits.) Universal signed El Koala and released an album that sold 50,000 copies, according to the label. But the track sold close to 800,000 digital and mobile downloads.

And this year, Spainiards are already talking about "El Chiki Chiki," recorded by Rodolfo Choikiutri (aka Argentine artist David Fernandez), as the summer song. A novelty, cheeky track that spoofs reggaeton, its multiple videos have millions of hits each on YouTube. The track is also Spain's official entry into the Eurovision Song Contest, a new frontier for the cancion del verano.acciónde-

**For 24/7 Latin news and analysis, see billboard.biz/latin.**
Endless Aussie Summer

//MELBOURNE// Acts Amp Up International Tours

It may be winter back home, but Australian acts are extending their summer by targeting the international festival circuit.

During the summer at least a dozen Australian acts will be part of festivals in the United States and the United Kingdom, including veteran rock group Rose Tattoo at the Netherlands’ Field of Rock and France’s Hellsfest; electronic act Pnau at the United Kingdom’s Glastonbury and Spain’s Sonar; and up-and-coming rock band Airbourne at the United States’ Rockstar Mayhem Festival.


Dylan Liddy, co-manager of hip-hop act Hilltop Hoods, who play Glastonbury this summer, agrees, saying festivals expose Aussie acts to new audiences, while club shows are usually attended by expats. “No one will take you seriously if you’re just playing to a home audience,” he says.

The Hoods’ latest album, “The Hard Rose” (Obese Records), debuted at No. 1 on the Australian Record Industry Assn. chart, but Liddy says the band is now looking for “industry awareness in the Northern Hemisphere.”

A 2007 slot on the Great Escape won the Hoods their Glastonbury slot, plus representation by U.K. booking agent X-Ray Touring and an invitation to play the Popkomm music conference in Berlin. That in turn led to German and Canadian dates in February/March. Liddy hopes the Glastonbury gig will lead to international record deals and summer 2009 festival slots.

But showing up and playing sometimes isn’t enough to make a mark. Electronic duo the Presets target festival crowds with merchandise giveaways during their sets and by maximizing promotional opportunities with events’ media partners.

“The idea is to permeate the crowd members’ consciousness where they walk off knowing what the Presets are about,” says Steve Pavlovich, Sydney-based managing director of Modular Records and Touring. “The idea is to permeate the crowd members’ consciousness where they walk off knowing what the Presets are about.”

But Brisbane-based Stu McCulloch, co-manager of singer/songwriter Pete Murray, warns that festival appearances must “work in tandem with radio airplay and club appearances” to lead to long-term success.

He has booked May/June club dates for Murray in Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Ireland around festival slots at the Netherlands’ Pink Pop and Germany’s Rock am Ring and Rock im Park festivities.

Murray played his first Pink Pop show in 2006. He was immediately offered a Dutch club tour, following up with two further visits. Because of strong radio support in the territory, Murray’s new album, “Summer at Eureka” (Sony BMG), will be released May 17 in Holland simultaneously with its Australian release. The album doesn’t ship in other European territories until later in summer.

And Northern Hemisphere festival operators welcome the Australian influx, citing strong live reputations for many acts.

“Glastonbury booker Martin Elbourne—who also has the Presets, Midnight Juggernauts and veteran alt-rockers the Hoodoo Gurus on this year’s bill—says he’s keen to encourage Australian acts. “Being on at Glastonbury is certainly a way to get in front of the right people looking for deals,” he says.
OZ FEST Three Aussie Exports To Watch On The Summer Festival Circuit

The Presets
HOMETOWN: Sydney Current release: "Apocalypse"; out May 13 in the United States/Canada through Modular/Universal
BOOKING AGENCY: Windshield Agency
2008 FESTIVAL APPEARANCES: X-Ray Touring, London (UK)/Europe;
Wildish Agency, Chicago (North America);
Modular Agency, Sydney (Australasia, Southeast Asia)
2008 FESTIVAL APPEARANCES:
Glastonbury (United Kingdom, June 27-29),
Wild in the Country (United Kingdom, July 5),
Creamfields (United Kingdom, Aug 23-24),
Get Loaded in the Park (United Kingdom, Aug 24),
Electric Picnic (Ireland, Aug 29-31)
Julian Hamilton and
Kim Moyes met at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, studying
Beethoven by day and hanging out in clubs soaking
in the Prodigy and Chemical Brothers by night.
"We related more
to those bands then to the Australian electronic scene," they say.
Sophomore set "Apocalypse"
debutted at No.1 in March in Australia.

Midnight Juggernauts
HOMETOWN: Melbourne
CURRENT RELEASE: "Dystopia"; out May 27 in the United States
through Astralwerks
BOOKING AGENCY: Select Music, Sydney (Australia);
Vital Talent, New York (United States);
Hansome, London (United Kingdom);
On Air Productions, Paris (Europe)
2008 FESTIVAL APPEARANCES:
Glastonbury, Bestival
Electro-pop act whose debut, "Dystopia," was shortlisted for the 2007
Australian Music Prize. Relocated to France in April for the album's
international release. "It's made people realize
we're more than a dance band," drummer
Daniel Stricker says. As well as the festivals, they have May dates booked in Japan and France.

The Beijing Olympics were supposed to bring a summer-long celebration to China—but live-biz insiders say the mood of protest over Tibet means it's getting harder for international acts to join the party.

"As the Olympics have gotten closer, things have
definitely gotten more difficult," says Jon Campbell, Beijing-based producer of the Time Arts Jazz Series, which recently featured Beijing dates by Canadian duo Brubec Broid and Italian bands ManoMano and Squiemens and Q.
Touring sources say the crackdown is due to Icelandic singer
Björk's pro-Tibetan independence chant during her March 2 concert in Shanghai (billboard.biz, March 4) and heightened sensitivity over such issues in the run-up to the Aug 8-24 Olympics, following global pro-Tibet demonstrations and anti-Western protests.

Vice minister of culture Zhou Heping released a statement following the Björk show referring to it as an "isolated incident," claiming, "I don't think it will affect our invitation of artists from all over the world to come to China and perform, particularly during the Olympic Games." But many in the live biz say the government has tightened controls, particularly on foreign artists.

"I'm surprised it didn't happen earlier," Campbell says. "The regulations aren't ridiculous—but it's ridiculous how intensely they're being enforced, and all of it is sudden.

International acts that have recently had tour plans put back or canceled include Swedish band Mando Diao. Local police refused to provide security at Beijing's Midi Modern Music Festival (May 1-4), forcing postponement of the event. The band then canceled its entire China tour.
"I have had all China projects postponed until after the Olympics," one live-biz source says. "But the unofficial word is that things will be back to normal as soon as the games are over."

Other promoters say they are also holding off plans to bring over international acts until later in the year. It's in stark contrast to the steady flow of artists approved in recent times, with even such "edgy" acts as Nine Inch Nails and Public Enemy appearing live without problems. The crackdown is hurting local promoters, according to Jackie Subek, Los Angeles-based senior partner in CRC Janjan, a U.S. and Chinese music publishing, music recording, cultural development and consulting company.

She cites confirmed reports that promoters must now issue 50% of the total box office as a deposit to the Ministry of Culture in case the performer breaks the law. Other measures reportedly include the signing of disclaimers that the promoter will not be held liable for any offer or advance approval of set lists.

Harry Connick Jr.'s March 9 show in Shanghai was subject to heavy post-Björk government scrutiny, forcing him to play an outdated set list that was reportedly submitted in error.
"Due to circumstances beyond my control, I was not able to give my fans in China the show I intended," Connick said in a statement.

But James Blunt's manager, London-based Todd Interland of Twenty-First Artists, says the singer/songwriter's shows in Beijing (April 18) and Shanghai (Apr 20) both passed without incident.
"As is typical with all Chinese music concerts," Interland says, "there was a strong security presence at both shows. However, he adds, "the enthusiasm showed by the fans at the shows was extremely positive." Blunt would not have a problem playing there again.

And some locals support Beijing's tough stance.
"Any charges against the authorities of being heavy-handed in this are unfounded," one music industry insider says. "China is totally within its realm of powers to minimize risks beforehand instead of acting after anything untoward happens."

And Subek says it's important to take a long-term view. 
"International acts are just beginning to get the opportunity to tour China, and it's imperative the broad picture is really looked at," she says. "China will welcome our music, but it's the approach we take and the respect we give to their culture that will make all the difference."

Additional reporting by Tom Ferguson in London and Steve McClure in Tokyo.
STADIUMS

Kenny Chesney
/// Dates: May-September /// Shows: 35-plus /// Also playing: Arenas, amphitheaters, festivals

Rockin' out to sold-out crowds is nothing new for Kenny Chesney, who will play 14 stadiums this summer on his 2008 Poets & Pirates tour, the most yet for country's top touring artist. "We really only wanted to do a half-dozen or so," says TMG-AEG Live's Louis Messina, who promotes and produces Chesney's tour in North America. "But the phone kept ringing, so we went for it." One of those phone calls came from Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass., where Chesney will perform July 26 as part of the fifth annual New England Country Music Festival. Tickets for the event went on sale Dec. 1 and sold out in less than 15 minutes, according to Gillette Stadium event coordinator Jess Enos, who expects up to 55,000 concertgoers to attend the all-day music event. "From a promoter's perspective, when we're marketing our shows, one thing that is so consistent with (Chesney) is that he has tremendous crossover appeal," Enos says. "He has a hold on that market of women who absolutely adore him and men who want to be his friend." Indeed, Chesney grossed more than $71 million in 2007, most among country acts and fourth among all touring artists, according to Billboard Boxscore. His attendance of 1.4 million marks the fifth consecutive year that Chesney has topped 1 million tickets sold, a first for a country act. Chesney is doing about twice as many stadium concerts this summer as he did last summer. Messina notes. As opposed to doing multiple nights in an arena. Messina says, "a stadium is a one-of-a-kind situation; it's a whole different vibe. The fans seem to enjoy it and Kenny loves it. It's like going to the Super Bowl."

ARENAS

Celine Dion (international)
May-September /// 40

Celine Dion went down in the live entertainment history books with her five-year residency at the 4,100-seat Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The performer grossed a staggering $385 million and drew nearly 3 million people to 717 shows that concluded Dec. 15, 2007. Dion's five years off the touring market have resulted in high demand for tickets to her current Taking Chances world tour, which began Feb. 14 and is in support of her first English-language album in three years. "Ticket sales have been through the roof for Celine," says John Meglen, co-president of Concerts West, a touring arm of AEG Live. As such, multiple dates have been added to various cities, including eight sold-out nights at the Bell Centre in Montreal. "I believe that when an artist sits in a resident show as Celine did ... the pent-up demand just grows and grows," Meglen says. "I hope other artists see this and understand that Vegas can be a place to work and live." The Colosseum stand was a collaboration between Dion and her husband-manager Rene Angélil. Meglen and Caesars. The $95 million facility opened in 2003 with the purpose of housing Dion's show.

LENNY KRAVITZ (Europe) May-Aug / 10+ / Also Playing festivals +
WARREN MINOGUE (Europe) May-Aug / 45-plus +
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND (Europe/North America) May-Aug / 25-plus +
Also Playing arenas
Neil Diamond
July-September // 20 // Also playing: stadiums
Neil Diamond knows how to make a tour announcement. On a Tuesday in early April, he announced he'd be going back on the road via a surprise appearance on the scoreboard at Boston's Fenway Park, where he'll perform Aug. 23. The upcoming North American trek, promoted by AEG Live, "will be returning to a number of venues he has played in the past, along with some new ones," says Diamond's tour producer Jeff Arejay, who works closely with manager Irving Azoff to book dates. Diamond's last tour in 2005 grossed nearly $80 million from 86 shows that drew 1.2 million people, according to Billboard Boxscore.

Kanye West
With the help of some of today's top names in urban music, Kanye West is doing his part to keep hip-hop alive in arenas this summer. The decision to book West into Los Angeles' 20,000-seat Staples Center for June 7 wasn't hard for arena senior VP/CM Lee Zeidman. "We sold out two Nokia Theatre shows [in late April], and based on the tremendous response from that, we added a Staples Center date," Zeidman says. No stranger to healthy box office numbers, West's 2005 tour with Fantasia and Keyshia Cole grossed $8.4 million and drew more than 210,000 people to 46 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore.

Radiohead
(Europe/North America)
British rock outfit Radiohead astonished the music biz last fall after announcing that it would allow fans to name their own price for the digital purchase of its seventh studio album, "In Rainbows." It's still unclear if Radiohead has any tricks up its sleeve for upcoming North American tour dates, but one thing is certain: Fans haven't lost interest in seeing the group perform live. Back-to-back concerts in late August at the

IRON MAIDEN (Europe/North America)
May-Aug / 10 / Also Playing: amphitheaters, stadiums + JAPAN (Europe)
June-July / 20-plus / Also Playing: festivals // ELTON JOHN (Europe/North America)

AMPHITHEATERS

Rock the Bells
A Tribe Called Quest, Nas, Mos Def, De La Soul, Rakim, Redman and Method Man, Raekwon and Ghostface Killah, Immortal Technique, Dead Prez, Murs and Kidz in the Hall, Santogold, Kid Sister, the Cool Kids // July-August // 10
Rock the Bells founder/organizer Chang Weisberg of Guerrilla Union will be the first to admit that multiple performances from the re-formed Rage Against the Machine was the ultimate highlight of last year's traveling hip-hop festival. "With a crowd, their participation with Rock the Bells has magnified the importance and viability of the platform we're creating," Weisberg says. Indeed, Rage—along with the Wu-Tang Clan, Public Enemy and Cypress Hill—helped 2007's Rock the Bells gross $14.5 million and draw more than 203,000 concertgoers to 12 dates, according to Billboard Boxscore. With the absence of a huge box office draw at this year's Rock the Bells, the event has scaled back on dates and venue sizes. But along with some "familiar acts" on the bill, Weisberg freshened the traveling festival with such up-and-comers as Santogold, Kid Sister and the Cool Kids. "I definitely think we're trying to showcase the diversity of hip-hop," he says. With ticket prices ranging between $40 and $75, 2008 marks the first time Rock the Bells will visit Toronto, Vancouver and Philadelphia. In another first, following festival dates in North America, a number of acts on the bill will travel overseas for Rock the Bells concerts in Europe and Japan, beginning Sept. 20 at the O2 Arena in London.

Honda Civic Tour

Panicked at the Disco Tour, Motion City Soundtrack, the Hush Sound, Phantom Planet /// May-June /// 30 "One of our charges is trying to keep the Honda brand youthful and relevant, and [the Honda Civic Tour] becomes a key portion of that," says Tom Peyton, senior manager of advertising at Honda, which is in its eighth year of sponsoring the annual Honda Civic tour. The trek, which is in the second season of running branded festival, launched in 2003, and has featured Blink-182, Incubus, Good Charlotte, Dashboard Confessional, Maroon 5, the Black Eyed Peas and Fall Out Boy, among many others. "We're generally interested in bands that really want to hit it big," Peyton says. Surveys after each tour suggest that the Honda Civic tour increases purchase consideration of a Honda vehicle, according to the trek's executive producer, Marketing Factory CEO Rob Torkin. "It's not about running out and buying a car the day after [the concert]," Torkin says. "But it definitely helps enhance purchase consideration." Nine Honda Civic shows in 2007 tracked by Billboard Boxscore grossed $1.9 million and drew more than 115,000 concertgoers.

Ledisi

May-September /// 20-plus /// Also playing festivals, amphitheaters

Ledisi's summer touring schedule is definitely off to a good start, as the R&B/jazz singer recently performed onstage with Prince at this year's Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival in Indio, Calif. Between a slew of festival appearances, Ledisi will visit a number of clubs and theaters along the way, including Seattle's Jazz Alley and New York's 1st Poisson Rouge. Following the release of 2007's "Lost & Found," Ledisi was nominated in the best new artist category for the 50th annual Grammy Awards. "As we went more of the publicity going to the Grammys, more and more of the doors opened for us," says Rick Farrell, Ledisi's booking agent with International Creative Management.

Crystal Castles

June /// 10 Electronic duo Crystal Castles' upcoming club run "is more of a meet-up tour," says the Windschime Agency's Carter Adams, who had to reschedule spring dates after singer Alice Glass broke a rib during a stage-diving mishap. But the injury turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Between tours, "they managed to get really huge," Adams says. "They're one of our biggest touring bands right now and their guarantees have gone way up." The act will be touring behind its self-titled debut album, which bowed at No. 14 on Billboard's Top Heatseekers chart in April. The Toronto-based glitch rockers will also open for Nine Inch Nails on select summer dates, sources say.

Rockstar Energy Mayhem Festival

Disturbed, Slipknot, DragonForce, Underoath, Machine Head, Mastodon, Walls of Jericho, Five Finger Death Punch, 36 Crazy Fists, Airbourne, Black Tide, Suicide Silence, the Red Chord /// July-August /// 30 It's been a few years since Slipknot has terrorized audiences with its masked-metal fury. But after being "fed up with summer tours and the politics that go into a lot of that stuff," the decision to co-headline this year's inaugural Rockstar Energy Mayhem Festival wasn't difficult, Slipknot vocalist Corey Taylor says. From the same organizers who brought you the Van's Warped Tour and Rockstar Taste of Chaos, Mayhem will likely satisfy this summer's need for a metal-sted fest. "Our goal with the festival was to create a great community around metal and hard music," says John Reese, who is producing Mayhem alongside Warped tour founder Kevin Lyman. Darryl Eaton, agent at Creative Artists Agency, and Live Nation CFO of North American music Jason Garner.

CLUBS & THEATERS

Honda Civic Tour

Black Tide

The Bravery

Phosphorescent & the Destroyers

Buddy Guy

3 Doors Down

Support: Stands/Hand/Tik/Tok /50 /// Also playing arenas, fairs /// 315/3990 DOGG: Support: Fiction Plane /// June-Rug /// 25-plus /// True Colors Tour: Lydia Linsford, The B-Side, Rosie Spector, Andy Bell of Erasure, Turn the Sea. Joan Jett is the Blackhearts. India Sults, Joan Armatrading, Deborah Cox, the Oitts, the Poppin Sisters. Lana Hendrix. Grill in a coma /// May-July /// 25-plus /// Also playing theaters = VANS Warped Tour: Paramore. Gym Class Heroes, Jack's Mannequin, Against Me! Peninsula, Rebel Big Fish, Cobra Starship, Swaying Time // One. Angelos & Miracles, Rockitkid. As I Lay Dying, The All-American Rejects, the Academy Is... others /// June-July /// 4/5/6 Widespread Panic: June-July /// 25-plus /// Also playing theaters, festivals = YES: July-Aug /// 25-plus /// Also playing arenas

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Festival Fatigue?

Midlevel Artists Key To Lineup Diversity

BY PARRY WARDDEL

While there are certainly enough large music festivals to create a circuit of sorts, any perceived similarity between the festival lineups seems to be overstated at this point.

A sampling of 10 major North American rock festivals from a variety of producers actually shows quite a bit of diversity in their bookings.

To gauge the market, Billboard looked at the lineups for Coachella in Indio, Calif.; Bonnaroo in Manchester, Tenn.; Lollapalooza in Chicago; Rothbury in Michigan; Pemberton in British Columbia; the Austin City Limits Music Festival in Texas (ACL); the Mile High Festival in Denver; All Points West in Jersey City, N.J.; Outside Lands in San Francisco; and the Virgin Mobile Festival in Baltimore.

An unofficial survey of these events finds 22 acts playing three of the 10 festivals, 11 acts playing four of them, three acts playing five of them and two acts—ChromEO and Gogol Bordello—playing six of the 10.

The bigger concern is the top of the bill, where exclusivity is hard to find. “Unless you have a ridiculous amount of money, you’re not going to get an exclusive on a large act that has a lot of options,” says Seth Hurwitz, president of I.M.P., which books the Virgin Mobile Festival.

For example, Jack Johnson is playing five of the 10. Radiohead, Tom Petty and My Morning Jacket are performing at three each. “I think at some point we may be cannibalizing ourselves as an industry, that there may be too many festivals with a lot of the same talent at the top,” says Randy Phillips, CEO of AEG Live, which this year launched Rothbury, All Points West and Mile High, and already has Jazzfest and Coachella in its portfolio.

The lesser-known acts that give events an identity and often put a封 over the top for fans, though, are less ubiquitous. “There are so many great bands now in the midlevel. I think we’re all able to get really diverse lineups,” says Charlie Walker, partner in C3 Presents (Lollapalooza, ACL). “I think the perception is that there’s this huge overlap, but I don’t think we’re there yet.”

Gogol Bordello definitely has the phone ringing with calls from festival buyers, which its agent attributes to an electrifying live show. “They are unlike any other band on the bill, and they instantly give a festival a whole new dimension,” says Val Wolfe, Gogol Bordello’s agent at the Agency Group. “The enthusiasm from the fans and the dynamics of the music are perfect for the festival setting.”

Another hot band among these 10 fests is Chromeo. “I think ChromEO is hot with these festival talent buyers because people in their market are ravaging about Chromeo on blogs and reports of the shows are very good,” bund agent Tom Winstead says. “That type of buzz is what a festival wants. They also have not been overplaying any markets, so it’s a fresh booking.”

Gogol Bordello frontman EUGENE HUTZ makes festivals festive.

Pemberton Festival

Coldplay, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Jay-Z, Nine Inch Nails, My Morning Jacket, the Tragically Hip, Interpol, the Flaming Lips, Death Cab for Cutie / July 25-27 / Pemberton, British Columbia

With a number of established music festivals overseas, deciding to launch the Pemberton Festival in British Columbia was a no-brainer for promoter Live Nation. “We’ve got 20 of them in Europe, but we don’t have a multi-day destination festival in North America,” says Scott Burch, Live Nation president of touring and business development at Live Nation Canada. “It was time to bring the product over.” The festival is being produced by Live Nation and Good Boy Productions, a joint venture between Coldplay manager Dave Holmes and Depeche Mode manager Jonathan Kessler.

Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival

Radiohead, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Jack Johnson, Beck, Wilco, Widespread Panic, Primus, Manu Chao, Ben Harper & The Relentless 7 / Aug. 22-24 / Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

San Francisco’s inaugural Outside Lands (produced by Superfly Productions, Another Planet Entertainment and Star Hill Presents, in cooperation with the San Francisco Recreation & Park Department) will be the first music event at Golden Gate Park to run past 6 p.m. “That alone will be special,” Superfly Productions president Jonathan Mayer says. “With five main performance stages, he estimates the fest will draw about 60,000 concertgoers per day. ‘We’re really trying to build an annual tradition in San Francisco,' he says.

(listed by date): STAGECOACH COUNTY MUSIC FESTIVAL: the Judds, the Eagles, Rascal Flatts, Tim McGraw, Big & Rich (carjammed Tresa Vearwood, Taylor Swift, Gretchen Wilson, Dwight Yoakam, John Fogerty, Shelby Lynne, Glen Campbell / Apr. 25-26 / Empire Polo Field, Indio (adj. to BAMBODIZLE FESTIVAL: Panic at the Disco, Snoop Dogg, Jimmy Eat World, Foos and Lamba. Paramore, Gym Class Heroes, Story of the Year, Alan Ant Farm / May 3-4 / Meadows, Lands Sports Complex, East Rutherford, N.J.) / SUMMER CAMP MUSIC FESTIVAL: Smokey’s McGee, mac, the Flaming Lips, the Roots, ORR, the New Pornographers, Gilla Talk, the Rutts Brothers, Blind Melon, 555, George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic, C. Love & Special Sauce, Tea Leaf Green, Dutch, Hot Buttered Rum / May 23-25 / Three Sisters Park, Chillicothe, MO. / DETROIT ELECTRONIC MUSIC FESTIVAL: Moby, Girl Talk, Carl Craig, the Cool Kids, DJ Benny Benassi, DJ T-3111, Giant Buzz, Buzzco / May 24-26 / Hart Plaza, Detroit / SPOSITIOH MUSIC FES...
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On paper, it's a sellout summer: Tom Petty, Jimmy Buffett, Dave Matthews Band, the Eagles, Neil Diamond, Coldplay, the Police, Bon Jovi, Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, Radiohead, Celine Dion, Rod Stewart, Kenny Chesney, Tim McGraw, Rascal Flatts and Toby Keith are only a few of the acts touring this summer (see list, page 32).

Festival lineups are exploding with big-name talent and showcasing a promising crop of newcomers. Live Nation promoters are touting the best amphitheater summer in years, AEG Live is bullish on its offerings in a wide range of venues, and the live business in Canada and Europe has been solid as a rock for several years.

"Not taking into account what's happening with the economy and the effect it's going to have, it's starting to feel like it should be a good summer," AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips says. "There are a lot of great acts out, and certainly for the festival business there's a ton of great headliners."

So will it all be enough to reverse last year's double-digit decline in dollars and attendance? Many of those who make their living in this business believe it will be, but are predictable in their cautious optimism.

"It looks like it should be a good summer," C3 Presents partner Charlie Walker says. "The amphitheaters look strong, there's some great stuff playing arenas, so generally it looks pretty healthy."

Of course, springtime optimism in many cases turns to autumn teeth-grinding. "We'll see how it shakes out at the end of the year," Walker says. "We all do pretty well at the beginning of the year, but around October it gets harder to sell tickets. So far, so good."

**Shed Survival**

Nothing will tell the tale of summer '08 like the amphitheater season, and Live Nation is high on it. "I believe it's the summer of dreams," says Jason Garner, CEO of North American music for Live Nation, the world's largest promoter. "It's that summer we're all going to look back on and say, 'What a magical amphitheater year 2008 was.' I'm not a cheerleader, but we're pretty darn excited about the year."

The lineup represents an opportunity for the amphitheater as a venue to reclaim favor with the North American concertgoer. With more than 40 sheds in its portfolio, Live Nation owns and/or operates the vast majority of these venues.

Even so, the company says it produces just as many arena shows (1,000) as amphitheater shows, along with about 6,000 shows annually in smaller venues. Still, it's widely considered that much of Live Nation's success in a given year—or lack thereof—hinges on the sheds.

In general, amphitheater concert attendance has

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**Or Tour De Farce? The Coming Months Will Determine The Health Of The Live Market**

By Ray Waddell

Some of the most solid names in the touring business will be out this summer; the industry is hopeful that dollars and attendance will rebound from double-digit decreases in 2007. With some 70% of all touring activity, summer is make-or-break time for the live business, now the primary revenue generator for acts and the music industry alike. And the summer of 2008 will showcase a changing landscape, particularly in North America, where a burgeoning major-festival scene, an amphitheater business seeking revitalization, a vibrant small-venue circuit and a tight economy will all play critical roles. On the positive side, a roster of all-stars and promising rookies will climb on tour buses this summer. But, given the strength of the touring schedule, if a rebound doesn't take place, the implications would not be good.
declined in recent years, posting a year-over-year increase in attendance and gross just once in the past five years — 2006's record-breaking touring year, according to Billboard Boxscore. The decline has been steady; average per-show attendance for amphitheaters was 7,741 in 2007, compared with 9,325 in 1998.

Most amphitheaters have a capacity of 15,000 or more, and when the profitability of shows for Live Nation owes much to per capita spending on ancillary spending, a 2,000-plus reduction in heads is more than meaningful.

With only one-third of their capacity in the more valuable reserved seating category, sheds' gross potential is lower than in arenas, so the promoter must pay a higher guarantee or percentage of ticket sales to entice upper-tier talent to play these venues. Profitability in this razor-thin margin largely depends on traffic.

But right now, optimism reigns supreme in the Live Nation camp, even if its public company status prevents it from predicting a profitable year. The company claims to have streamlined operations at sheds to make them more efficient, and Garner says 2007 was the best year in several for Live Nation amphitheaters.

Even with this list of talent, much depends on the deals Live Nation has struck and the resulting ticket prices. But Garner is more than optimistic. "There are some hallowed names on that list and it's an honor to be hosting them," he says. "When you look at that list, you see some regular touring artists that are out there, and there's also a group of artists who clearly looks like they've come up and said, 'I want to go out and play for my fans,' put a short run together, booked some amphitheaters and festivals, and came out and ended to play.'

Others are less enthusiastic, or perhaps more realistic. "The summer business has pretty much set-tled into a predictable pattern and if that's what your expectations are, you deal with it accordingly," says independent promoter Seth Hurwitz, whose I.M.P. in Washington, D.C., books and operates the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia. Md. "It's not a boom summer, it's not a bust summer, it's just the same old thing. The shows that are supposed to do well do well and the ones that aren't don't."

Previous Live Nation incarnations SFX and Clear Channel Entertainment adopted what critics called a "buy anything that moves" posture in locking up the summer business, cramping amphitheater seasons with 30-plus shows and drawing criticism for saturating the market and putting some acts in venues too big for their drawing power. That strategy has changed.

"Last year we started the process of trying to be more selective, trying to make sure if we were going to reach for a smaller show that wasn't going to sell the majority of the capacity of the amphitheater, we were very careful on the deal-making of those shows," Garner says. "Nothing's changed. We're continuing to be selective, smart and prudent about the way we're programming our amphitheaters."

As a result, shows costs were down by more than 100 for the overall shed business, probably more so for Live Nation sheds, and the industry took notice. "As much as I hate to give them any credit, I think the Live Nation edict of doing less shows has definitely helped us all," Hurwitz says.

The quality of artists touring could reverse that trend slightly in 2008, Garner says. "Whereas last year there was a handful of superstar artists on an amphitheater calendar, this year it's much larger than that," he says. "Show count is a market-by-market thing, but clearly on that core 20 shows per venue, we certainly have a lot more superstars in that 20 than we would have last year."

Merriweather will host a similar number of shows as last year, Hurwitz says. "I never judge it by the number of shows, I judge it by how each show is doing," he says. "I'd rather have 10 shows that sell out than 20 that do half that. The days of getting away with simply booking a bunch of shows are long gone."

| Shedding Numbers Attendance, Gross Trending Down at Amphitheaters |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **YEAR** | **NUMBER OF SHOWS** | **GROSS** | **ATTENDANCE (AVG. PER SHOW)** |
| 2003 | 1,912 | $535,362,446 | 15,514,927 (8,114) |
| 2004 | 1,645 | $493,392,641 | 13,579,726 (8,255) |
| 2005 | 1,693 | $482,870,667 | 13,201,206 (7,797) |
| 2006 | 1,719 | $541,326,022 | 14,199,275 (8,260) |
| 2007 | 1,602 | $475,814,359 | 12,401,741 (7,741) |

**10 Years Ago**

| **YEAR** | **NUMBER OF SHOWS** | **GROSS** | **ATTENDANCE (AVG. PER SHOW)** |
| 1998 | 1,287 | $322,205,669 | 12,001,496 (9,325) |

SOURCE: Billboard Boxscore
Are Fests The New Sheds?
What will really change the summer landscape in 2008 is the explosion of new festivals, a trend that began earlier in the millennium with the huge success of the Coachella (Indio, Calif.) and Bonnaroo (Manchester, Tenn.) events and resulted in the announcement of more than a dozen major lineups since.

The trend is providing a wealth of options for artists, particularly on the developmental side of the business. But major headliners are also taking advantage of the opportunity (see story, page 35).

"The festival circuit is the new amphitheater circuit," Hurwitz says. "The big acts have somewhere to play besides amphitheaters that is not as challenging as a stadium."

Garners does not see a festival circuit replacing a shed circuit. "What we're seeing is artists picking and choosing great plays," he says. "What artists are doing is looking at the entire U.S., saying, 'I'll play two or three festivals, 15-18 amphitheaters and have a nice little tour.'"

"Bands can go out and pick their spots," says C3 Presents' Walker, whose company produces Lollapalooza in Chicago and the Austin City Limits Music Festival in Austin. "If an act is strong in some markets, they can go headline shows. If there is a weaker area of the country where maybe they're not as strong, they can pick up a festival and maybe grow some new fans."

Phillips says that theory is fine if it works out graphically. "That's easier said than done, because you're making the assumption in the weaker markets that there's actually a festival to replace the headlining date," he says. AEG Live, Live Nation's closest rival, is producing 2008 concerts and tours by Neil Diamond, Celine Dion, Bon Jovi, Kenny Chesney, the Eagles and others. The subsidiary of sports and entertainment firm Anschutz Entertainment Group subscribes primarily to an indoor venue model, except for its role in such festivals as the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Coachella. This year the company launched three new major festivals in Rothbury (Michigan), Mile High (Denver) and All Points West (Jersey City, N.J.). For its part, Live Nation launched only one, Pemberton in Western Canada.

"One of the reasons why Live Nation has been late to the party in the North American festival business is because their promoters who oversee the amphitheaters have been reluctant to use up as many headlining acts as it takes to put a festival together," Phillips says. "So in that regard, [the growth of the festival business] has been an issue."

Whether a festival play hurts a stand-alone performance in a market depends on who you're asking. "In some markets an artist will view it as an 'either/or' scenario, but the good news is we own over 40 amphitheaters," Garners says. "It's about the right play for the market at the right time. There's enough business to go around for everybody, and this summer is proving there is the right mix of festivals and amphitheaters. And in a market where neither exists, the artist can play an arena, and at the end of the day you end up with the right tour for the artist."

While all types of venues compete for headliners, when it comes to acts and consumers, choice is good. "If you're a broad-based music fan, clearly the festival offers you a better value if you want to go knock down 30 bands in a weekend or however many you can squeeze in and watch," Walker says. "That's definitely the best way to go as far as the economics work."

Europe
Festivals have long been the driving force of the summer live business in Europe, where no structured amphitheater network exists. During summer in Europe, the festival is king.

Herman Schueremans, president of Live Nation's Belgium operation and overseer of Euro fests, says festivals do well because they satisfy a variety of needs, including value to consumer and big audiences for artists. He says the four-day Rock Werchter festival July 3-6 in Werchter, Belgium, is headed to yet another sellout with Chemical Brothers, Lenny Kravitz, B.B.M., Mika, Jay-Z, Ben Harper, Kings of Leon, Gaarld Barkley, the Roncounts, Beck, Grandier and others.

Often for major headlining acts that play arenas or amphitheaters in the States—the Police, Bon Jovi and Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band amongst them this year—stadiums are sellouts in Europe. Such is the case in Scandinavia, which is primed for a "fashionable summer," according to Thomas Johansson, Stockholm-based chairman of international music for Live Nation.

Iron Maiden stadium dates will move 230,000 tickets, according to Johansson, and Springsteen sold out 260,000 tickets to six stadium shows in an hour. Metallica sold out at 22,000 tickets in Bergen, Norway. "That's a record for that city," Johansson says. "Bergen is 1,100 years old, so that's a good record."

The region is also enjoying big sales with Celine Dion, Foo Fighters, Rod Stewart, Jay-Z, John Fogerty, Mark Knopfler, Bob Dylan and the Eagles.

As the weakened American dollar had an impact on the European live business, Schueremans replies, "Yes, all Americans want to tour Europe too soon and too often." The Belgium-based promoter says he's seeing the "first signs of an overheated market."

"We keep telling managers and agents that ticket prices can't keep growing," Schueremans says. "We should freeze them now in order to keep our market healthy."

Smaller Venues
Among the major promoters, smaller venues have experienced a similar, if quieter, boom as festivals. AEG Live has focused on more intimate venues like its Nokia rooms in New York and Los Angeles, and Live Nation has kept on expanding its Fillmore and House of Blues brands.

"That continues to be a growing segment for both us and the industry," Garners says. "People get exposed to more and more music in these venues. There are more and more bands that can sell out that 1,000- to 2,000-capacity space, and we're certainly dedicated to it."

Hurwitz, who owns the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C., says, "The club business is still good, but it's not packed to the brim like it once was. Shows that used to sell out are now doing 900 out of 1,200, which is nothing to complain about. But it's not going berserk like it was there for a while. I wouldn't call it suffering, but the public certainly picks and chooses a little more."

For the industry at large, the wild card remains the economy. "I read the paper, I understand the economy's not in the best shape," C3's Walker says. "I just drove by a gas station and saw that price, but it hasn't translated into a lack of attendance for us yet."

So, while there are a wealth of blockbuster acts on the road, blockbuster ticket prices may be hard to swallow in an iffy economy. And if the touring industry suffers another decline in attendance and dollars, artists and the business will have to move to maximize the concert stage's status as music's golden goose.
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WITH A SMASH GLOBAL TOUR AND A NEW HITS COMPILATION, THE VETERAN METAL ACT ROCKS A NEW GENERATION OF FANS.
It all began, like many of the key moments in the Iron Maiden story, in the pub. The principle of inspiration via lubrication is terribly British—and terribly Maiden. The enduring story of a true rock family begins in east London as long ago as Christmas 1975, when bassist Steve "Harry" Harris assembled the band’s fledgling lineup. Even its very first gig, a few months later, took place in a spit-and-sawdust "local," the Cart & Horses in Stratford, in the East End. Seventy million albums later, Iron Maiden can still claim to be the people’s band. Or it would if it had any inclination to play famous, which it certainly doesn’t. Just watch the act after a typical night on the road, such as the current, record-smashing Somewhere Back in Time world tour, playing to tens of thousands of people per night.

"We always stay in hotels in the center of town," says Rod Smallwood, director of Phantom Music, the management company that represents the band. "We don’t carry personal security, and after a show, the band will just walk to the nearest Irish pub. It’ll be full of fans, and it’ll be great. There’s no, ‘How dare you come over here and talk to us? We’re the band.’"

When Iron Maiden launched the Somewhere Back in Time trek Feb. 1 in Mumbai, India, the set list and stage show would have struck a chord in the memory of longtime fans. Both echoed a legendary four-night stand by the band in 1984 in Long Beach, Calif., that was captured on the album "Live After Death," released the following year.

This year, the band released an expanded DVD of those shows, also titled "Live After Death," which has hit No. 1 on video charts worldwide, according to the band’s management.

On May 12, via EMI worldwide (and one day later via New Door UMe in North America), Iron Maiden will introduce new fans to its greatest hits from the ‘80s with the compilation "Somewhere Back in Time."

And on May 21, Maiden will open a North American summer tour at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in San Antonio.

When tickets for the 2008 tour went on sale, it soon became obvious that Maiden was heading for a new personal best. The 42,000-capacity Palmeiras Stadium in São Paulo, Brazil, sold out in a week; its first visit to Colombia produced the fastest first-day sales of any music event in the country’s history, according to Phantom Music. 125,000 tickets for shows on the upcoming Scandinavian leg disappeared in two hours; and so it goes.

What’s more, Maiden has adopted an old adage. In its case, the band that flies together stays together. For 23 shows in 45 days in 10 countries, the first leg of Somewhere Back in Time had the act creating its own friendly skies across the Southern Hemisphere.

Ed Force One, the customized Iron Maiden plane named for Eddie, the band’s beloved “mascot,” carries the band, the 30 man crew, 12 tons of equipment and the entire stage set. Among the pilots is the man who fronts that very stage: Aviator Airline Captain and Iron Maiden lead vocalist Bruce Dickinson. Not a bad “day job” for something that started out with "a trial lesson for 35 bucks" on holiday in Florida.

"We did 170,000 tickets in a week and flew over 4,000 miles," Smallwood recalls of one phase of the tour. "What a week. If that isn’t fun, you’re not alive."

In every corner of the Iron Maiden camp, you find people who’ve been part of its family for 25 years and more, many who’ve been with the band since it started its lifelong association with EMI Records in 1979.
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of sanctuary. "I exiled with the band, and that's what I want to do anyway," Smallwood says. "For me it's all about Maiden, so I'm on the road thinking about what Eddie does next. Same as the '80s."

Amid various early personnel changes, original vocalist Paul Di'anno fronted the band's first two EMI albums. A self-titled 1980 debut hit the U.K. top five, and 1981's "Killers" reached No. 12, as Maiden charted a number of top 40 singles with little mainstream support.

Dickinson's arrival as Di'anno's replacement coincided with the group's ascension to Britain's rock elite. After "Run to the Hills" became its first domestic top 10 single early in 1982, "The Number of the Beast" debuted atop the album chart. Maiden celebrated with the Beast on the Road tour, spending six months on the U.S. leg alone. Eddie, by now, was in audacious form. He appeared onstage, 12 feet tall, brandishing a model of the bitten-off head of renowned bat-thrower Ozzy Osbourne.

Every Maiden studio album since has gone at least top 10 in the United Kingdom, with "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" (1988) and "Fear of the Dark" (1992) going all the way to No. 1. In the United States, "Beast" was the first of five consecutive platinum-certified albums in the '80s.

At retail and in ticket sales, the band's U.S. track record had much in common with that at home: maximum achievement from minimum exposure, certainly as far as mainstream radio and TV acceptance was concerned.

"We never had radio," Smallwood says. "A lot of people listen to radio in the car, and if you put Maiden on you're going to hit something."

Dickinson adds, "Maiden's stuff was like being in a boxing match, so that's why it was always difficult at U.S. radio. But of course kids loved it, so they adopted the band in significant numbers."

Nevertheless, there were radio supporters. Tommy Nasti, former publisher of radio tipsheet the Album Network and now a music, media and marketing consultant, recalls, "Having been an on-air personality and music director in upstate New York in 1980, I was fortunate to have played many of their songs and promoted their shows, and I saw their power firsthand."

"Rod Smallwood was such a driving force behind their success, with the passion he put into every aspect of the band and what it stood for," he adds.

Capitol Records A&R executive Bruce Ravid's first experience of Maiden was at a Hamburg gig, prior to the U.S. release of "Killers." "They ended a great show, and I remember getting into their van for the return to the hotel," he says. "The guys were reading books and listening to Frank Zappa. They were in their early 20s and were always the perfectionists who were passionate about heavy metal, but also very well-rounded as people."

Walter Lee, head of sales at Capitol during that period, recalls that Smallwood "very kindly explained everything to all of us. Unfortunately, not being accustomed to his accent, we didn't understand a word he said."

Maiden's first album of the Nielsen SoundScan era, 1992's "Fear of the Dark," is substantially its biggest in America, with sales of 438,000. It's followed by 367,000 for "Brave New World" (2000).

The 2000s have seen Maiden playing to its strengths, empowered by maturity. "The longevity of the band now is based on knowing what we have to do, but also we've grown up and go on to discuss the band's longevity and success. The text continues on page 52.
DAINTY CONSOLIDATED ENTERTAINMENT congratulates IRON MAIDEN

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SOMEBECHERE BACK IN TIME WORLD TOUR 08
AUSTRALIA - FEBRUARY 2008
from p50

with each other," Dickinson says. "It's a family in the true sense of the word."

EMI Records U.K. head of press William Luffsenses greater latter-day media acknowledgement of the band's worth. "There's been an interesting shift in attitudes over the past five years in the U.K.," he says. "Obviously, mainstream radio and TV are still reluctant to give them daytime exposure but their profile and stature has steadily grown. The derisive attitude of old seems to have been replaced by a real appreciation of Iron Maiden's significance."

Elsewhere, heavyweight news media from CNN and Fox News to Channel Nine (Australia) and Globo (Brazil) have provided mainstream coverage of the blockbuster 2008 tour and the band's headline-grabbing arrivals in its own plane.

"A lot of it is the consistency of the band over the whole 30 years, so you've almost got a snowball effect," says Taylor, who says he has a schedule of Maiden releases stretching to 2012. "It's about as busy as you could possibly get," he says with a smile.

A new studio album will come in 2010, says Dickinson, who is hardly taking it easy before the second leg of the tour puts him back onstage and on the flight deck.

Following the release of compilation "Somewhere Back in Time," Dickinson on May 17 will fly Ed Force One, containing the band and VIPs, into the Cannes Film Festival for a screening of the supernatural thriller "Chemical Wedding," to be released theatrically in early summer in the United Kingdom. Co-written by Dickinson, it stars Simon Callow as Professor Haddo, a reincarnated Aleister Crowley.

The ethos of Iron Maiden has not changed in more than 30 years. "We've always believed the whole idea of touring is to give fans good value for their money," Taylor says. "So yes, I'm sure we could double our ticket prices, but the name of the game hasn't been making money. It's been building up fans and giving them what they want."

Onstage: Davey, Adrian, Nicko, Bruce, Steve and Janick
Backstage: Rod, Dave, Andy and Val ... oh and EDDIE!

For ten amazing years - It's been an honour and a privilege to have been associated with you. Here's to many more!

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IRON MAIDEN
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Paul Bruce Dickinson made his live debut with Iron Maiden at the end of 1981, some two years after the band started its enduring relationship with EMI Records. He had viewed the group's early emergence from a ringside seat as lead singer with Samson, another of the bands in what the rock press dubbed "the new wave of British heavy metal." Since then, he has been not only Iron Maiden's definitive lead singer, but an author, sportsman, a solo artist for five years in the 1990s, a radio DJ and a pilot. In the middle of the most successful global tour of the band's career, he sat down with Billboard to discuss his, and Maiden's, life and times.
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from >>p54 When you joined Maiden, how aware had you been of the band?
We effectively grew up together, musically, because I was in Samson, and all the bands were aware of everybody else, we all gigged together. It’s fair to say Maiden had this momentum about them. It was like standing in front of a truck. They had that energy before they got the deal [with EMI].

But that took quite a while to build, didn’t it?
It did, but a lot of that was Steve [Harris, bassist and founding member] trying to get the personnel right, trying to get the commitment from people. Once the deal was signed, the press leapt all over it. “Running Free” came out, and it cunningly snuck in under the radar of all the punk stuff. They must have had to restrain Steve, because he absolutely hated punk. The first album ["Iron Maiden," 1980] went to No. 4, which was an astonishing feat for a band like that.

I was in Samson; we were supposed to be going on tour supporting Maiden. I got the date list and there were 50 or 60 shows, right the way through Europe. I thought, “This is unbelievable.” We were still scrambling around trying to find gigs in Newbridge Memorial Hall in Gwent [Wales]. That fell through, we never did it, which in retrospect was probably a good thing.
Maiden came back, having made quite a serious dent in the U.S. market, which they never expected.

Then, before your arrival, the band did “Killers” in 1981. I liked that more than the first album. It got sniffily received [in the United Kingdom], because it wasn’t very punk. They wanted [producer] Martin Birch for the first album and didn’t think they could get him. The irony was, Martin had noticed the band and was like, “I’d love to work with them.” Anyway, it did happen on the second album, and by then Adrian [Smith, guitarist] had joined and was writing, so really the sound of the band just matured massively.

That was the album that really started to break them in America, and actually had a radio hit, “Wrathchild.”

What were the circumstances of you replacing Paul Di’anno as lead singer?
Things with Paul hadn’t been going terribly well, and they’d made the decision to get rid of him. So they came and took a peek at me. Clive [Bur, Maiden’s then-drummer] had been in Samson for three years, and “Killers” was being made at Zomba Studios [in northwest London], which back then was Morgan Studios.
We were in Morgan, and Maiden were in the studio opposite. So we used to go to the pub and have a few beers and chat. I went over and listened to the Maiden record and Clive would come over and listen to ours.

Had you looked across at the band and thought, “I could do that”?
Oh, I did that the first time I saw Maiden play, in Camden [north London] at the Music Machine. It was like a four-act bill, we were supposed to be headlining and Maiden were third on the bill. They turned up and it was clearly their audience. Everybody left as soon as they’d finished.
I stood at the back watching and thought, “Christ, this is a great band. Imagine what I could do if I was singing with that band.”

Were you cocky in those days?
Absolutely. I had an unfeasible amount of balls. Rod Smallwood offered me the chance of an audition, he didn’t offer me the job. This was at Reading Festival.

continued on >>p58

Pino Saglioccco would like to congratulate IRON MAIDEN for an astonishing career!

As well as Rod Smallwood, John Jackson and the whole team.

I would like to thank you on behalf of all the Spanish fans for all these great years.
Looking forward to continue working with you for many more years to come.

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I said, “Well, alright. First of all, if I do the audition, I'm going to get the job, so you need to figure out whether or not you want me onboard, because I don’t want to be unless I can be a pain in the ass and have some opinions.

“I'm not going to be like the old guy. I'm going to have disagreements with Steve, because I've got some ideas about how I want to change things around. So if you don't want that, you'd better tell me now.”

They asked me to learn three songs and I basically learned the lot, both albums.

So we turned up to the rehearsal room and let rip. Steve picked up the phone and said, "Could we get him into a studio today?"

They were still doing gigs with Paul. The atmosphere was a bit down. When they came back from Sweden, we popped in the studio, recorded three songs and that was it. That was “job done.” We all went out and got very drunk that night.

‘My aim as a frontman is to shrink the venue, turn that football stadium into the world’s smallest club.’

—BRUCE DICKINSON

It seems as though Maiden developed a common cause because the band members were, and still are, outsiders.

We are still outsiders. We always will be, because that’s our essential nature. I can’t imagine what it would be like to go to vacuous showbiz parties. It’d be a nightmare. It’s just not what we’re about. The show’s the thing. Everything you need to know about Iron Maiden is onstage.

So when you joined, you hit the ground running.

There was no transition. It was zero to 100 miles an hour in one stride. That rush continued for five years, solid. continued on >>p60

Already big in the United Kingdom, IRON MAIDEN'S first headline performance at New York's Madison Square Garden in 1983 helped solidify the members' stature as stars in the States.
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IRON MAIDEN  KILLERS  THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST  PIECE OF MIND
POWERSLAVE  SOMEBWHERE IN TIME  SEVENTH SON OF A SEVENTH SON
It was No. 1 album ("The Number of the Beast," 1982) tour, biggest thing on the planet. I'd never done a gig outside the U.K. until I joined Maiden. Unless Inverness (Scotland) counts. I'd probably only done 20 or 30 gigs in my life.

How did you develop your personal stagecraft?

It's one thing to project a confident air to the back of a club. It's another to do the same thing in a theater, then an arena, and it's quite another thing to do it in a festival. Before the days of camera and side screens, you were just a little speck. It was a rapid learning curve.

My aim as a frontman is always to try and shrink the venue, if you can, to turn that football stadium into the world's smallest club. At least you have to try. The essence of the Maiden experience is that we want to include everybody in it.

When "The Number of the Beast" hit No. 1 on the U.K. charts in April 1982, it knocked Barbra Streisand's "Love Songs" off the top. It was almost anti-establishment.

Yes, we had a bit of a history of that. With "Bring Your Daughter . . . to the Slaughter" (in January 1991) we did a service to the nation by knocking Sir Cliff (Richard) off the Christmas No. 1. I'm still waiting for my [royal] honor as a C.B.E. for that.

That leads into a question about the way you've always been viewed by the U.K. music mainstream.

The funny thing is, we were on Saturday morning telly. At the time, everything was so overwhelming. Some of it was, "Let's do this and see what happens."

But you were, and still are, regulars in the singles chart.

Oh, yeah, and if you listen to some of the singles we had out, some of them were pretty bloody good, quite catchy, like "Can I Play With Madness." People listen to the catalog and go, "Oh, it's Maiden, not a lot of melody." It's like, "just a minute!" All of our songs are stuffed full of tunes.

You personally have always taken on challenges, whether it's fencing, broadcasting, being an author or being a pilot.

That's because I just have this insatiable curiosity about the nature of things, and I think the best way to find out about something is to try and do it. 

---

"RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER"
(from "Powerslave," 1984)

"Because I can remember all the words and have a cup of tea in the middle. Steve [Harris] wrote the song and when he came up with it, I thought, 'This is fantastic,' because it tied together so much stuff that I was interested in. When it turned out to be 13 minutes with a whole dreamy chunk in the middle . . . I was amazed at how he'd précis'd the [Samuel Taylor Coleridge] poem. It's the closest thing you're going to get to an Iron Maiden symphony movement."

"MOONCHILD"
("Seventh Son of a Seventh Son," 1988)

"Because it's years since we played it and I'd forgotten how good it was. It started out as part of what was going to be a story album. 'Moonchild' comes around to the film we're just doing, 'Chemical Wedding,' because one of [Aleister] Crowley's novels was called 'Moonchild,' about a reincarnated soul invested in a body created by ritual."

"RUN TO THE HILLS"
("The Number of the Beast," 1982)

"The song that kicked off my career with the band. It was the more metal follow-up to 'Run to the Hills' and it was the source of all the controversy that people like to pump up about devil worship, all the usual nonsense."

"PASCHENDALE"

"No flippancy on this one. A very poignant metal epic about a tragic and hugely wasteful military catastrophe. Sound familiar? It was Adrian [Smith's] song, and when we did it live we really tried to make it theatrical, with barbed wire and gunfire."

—Paul Sexton
IRON MAIDEN

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THEY JUST CONTINUE TO MULTIPLY!
Here is a chronological tally of the albums that Iron Maiden has released in the United States during the past three decades.

**“KILLERS”**
- Release date: June 2, 1981
- Label: Harvest

**“FEAR OF THE DARK”**
- Release date: May 26, 1992
- Label: Epic

**“MAIDEN JAPAN”**
- Release date: Oct. 27, 1981
- Label: Harvest

**“A REAL LIVE ONE”**
- Release date: April 6, 1993
- Label: Capitol

**“THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST”**
- Release date: April 6, 1982
- Label: Harvest

**“A REAL DEAD ONE”**
- Release date: Nov. 16, 1993
- Label: Capitol

**“PIECE OF MIND”**
- Release date: June 7, 1983
- Label: Capitol

**“THE X FACTOR”**
- Release date: Oct. 24, 1995
- Label: CMC International

**“POWERSLAVE”**
- Release date: Sept. 25, 1984
- Label: Capitol

**“VIRTUAL XI”**
- Release date: April 7, 1998
- Label: CMC International

**“LIVE AFTER DEATH”**
- Release date: Nov. 12, 1985
- Label: Capitol

**“BRAVE NEW WORLD”**
- Release date: June 13, 2000
- Label: Portrait/Columbia

**“SOMEBODY IN TIME”**
- Release date: Oct. 7, 1986
- Label: Capitol

**“ROCK IN RIO”**
- Release date: April 9, 2002
- Label: Portrait/Columbia

**“SEVENTH SON OF A SEVENTH SON”**
- Release date: April 26, 1988
- Label: Capitol

**“DANCE OF DEATH”**
- Release date: Sept. 23, 2003
- Label: Columbia

**“A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH”**
- Release date: Sept. 19, 2006
- Label: Sanctuary

**“SOMEBODY BACK IN TIME”**
- Release date: May 13, 2008
- Label: New Door UMe
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Iron Maiden's upcoming release, "Somewhere Back in Time," represents more than a retrospective of the band during the '80s. The album—featuring 15 tracks from 1980 to 1989—is being presented to potential new fans as a high-quality WMA download at ironmaiden.com. Listeners can play the compilation for free three times before it times out, and then purchase a digital rights management-free version if they desire. "Somewhere Back in Time" is at the forefront of Iron Maiden's plan to enhance its digital presence. The album, which takes its name from the band's current global tour, will be released May 12 internationally by EMI Records and the following day in North America through New Door UMe.

continued on >>p68
CONGRATULATIONS
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Up the irons

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"The digital era has been an additional promotional tool for Maiden," co-manager Andy Taylor says. "It was hard for people to find out about them if either you didn’t have a friend that listened to them or you didn’t happen to come across them and go to a gig. The digital era has allowed a lot of people more access to their music."

Co-manager Rod Smallwood says that the idea of releasing "Somewhere" digitally "came from Val Janes, who I stole from EMI; she was head of international marketing. Our fans like to have [product] in their hands, but with the [U.K.] singles charts being more and more dominated by downloads, we were left for dead. "Val’s always working out ways for us to do things more effectively in the marketplace, and this came up in discussions with EMI. There’s nothing new [on the album], it’s for an introduction, for the general browser that’s heard the name, to buy something simple that covers a period and hopefully will get drawn into it and buy the catalog."

Sarah Philp, who runs the Iron Maiden Web site, says it receives 9 million page impressions per month and 1.5 million visitors. "That traffic is more akin to what we’d get the month of [a studio] album release," she says. "It’s certainly a new high for when the band are on the road."

Taylor says the online merchandise shop does brisk business. "We do a reasonable number of realtime and wallpaper, but they’re still quite small markets," he adds. "We noticed that Iron Maiden fans at their shows are predominantly in their 20s and 30s," Universal Music Enterprises VP of sales Steve Wengert says. "The [best-of] promotion is the first of its kind, to encourage new fans who use digital as their primary source for music to preview and purchase. "To maintain long careers, bands have to continue to garner new fans. Iron Maiden continually look forward to embracing new technologies, without compromising their commitment to giving their longtime fans quality product."

—Paul Sexton

‘The best-of promotion is to encourage new fans who use digital as their primary source to preview and purchase.’

—STEVE WENGERT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC ENTERPRISES
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SOMEBWHERE BACK IN TIME

IRON MAIDEN

WORLD TOUR 08

BEAT THE STREET

BAND & CREW BUSSING
Iron Maiden has had many memorable nights on the world stage, but one of its landmark occasions has a new lease of life, almost 25 years later. In 1984, during the early years of the band's global expansion, Maiden played a four-night stand at the 13,200-capacity Long Beach Arena in California.

The following year, those shows were condensed and commemorated on the album "Live After Death," which hit No. 2 in the United Kingdom and was a platinum-selling top 20 record in America.

Now, that occasion is celebrated again in the form of a double-disc DVD, also titled "Live After Death." The set contains the 90-minute Long Beach performance and part two of the "History of Iron Maiden," the continuation of a 2004 documentary, plus rare and archival material. This includes the band's Rock in Rio appearance in 1985, the "Behind the Iron Curtain" and "'Ello Texas" features and a selection of promo videos, artwork galleries, a tour program and other period collectibles.

"It's a very specific era, and there's a charm to that DVD," lead singer Bruce Dickinson says. "And not just the fact that we look so fucking young."

Released by EMI worldwide, except in North America where it goes via Columbia Music Video/Sony BMG Video, the package has been another continent-straddling triumph. It entered the United Kingdom's Music DVD chart, compiled by the Official U.K. Charts Co., at No. 1 in February, and has been "No. 1 everywhere," Maiden manager Rod Smallwood says. U.S. sales are 35,000.
‘There’s charm to that DVD, and not just the fact that we look so fucking young.’
—BRUCE DICKINSON

The package continues the story begun on 2004’s “The Early Days” DVD. Smallwood says that while Iron Maiden is always looking ahead, this retrospective is crucial, professional and personal reasons.

“The whole ‘History’ DVD thing is, in a way, as much for the band as the fans, [so that] we’ve got a record of our career, with all the videos and pictures. It’s for your kids. We’re very conscious of heritage.”
—Paul Sexton

The second part of the band history in the package continues the story begun on 2004’s “The Early Days” DVD. Smallwood says that while Iron Maiden is always looking ahead, this retrospective is crucial, professional and personal reasons.

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—Paul Sexton
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Our Thanks and Respect to Iron Maiden: Steve Harris, Bruce Dickinson, Dave Murray, Adrian Smith, Jannick Gers, Nicko McBrain and to the Maiden team and tour staff Rod Smallwood, John Jackson @ K2 Agency, Chris Dalston & Rick Roskin @ CAA, Ian Day, Dick Bell, Jason Danter and The Killer Crew.
SIMON SAYS
FORMER MAIDEN PUBLISHER RALPH SIMON RECALLS EARLY DAYS

Even for Iron Maiden, it all starts with a song. And Ralph Simon, now chairman emeritus/founder of the Mobile Entertainment Forum (Americas), was the band's early publisher at Zomba Music. He remembers that the media-dubbed "new wave of British heavy metal" was undoubtedly triggered by the emergence of Iron Maiden. Simon says, "In 1979, when I first met Steve Harris and Dave Murray, the two members that have played on every Maiden album, Steve's clear musical and narrative vision for the band and their fans was perfectly complemented by Rod Smallwood's wise managerial guidance and his ability to see Maiden becoming a worldwide, rather than simply a U.K., phenomenon." I saw how Steve and Dave shaped the textural sound of the band together with producer Martin Birch, and Maiden's trajectory was accelerated with the addition of Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith. It was inevitable that they would emerge as one of the most invigorating forces in heavy metal." – Paul Sexton

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John, Rod,
merci de la part de tous vos fans français.
IRON MAIDEN

Congratulations on your success, you deserve it!

Martin Birch

Some 30 years into a career that’s still gaining momentum, it seems Iron Maiden didn’t need a hit single after all. And now the band is putting up its best box-office numbers ever, totally independent of—if not indifferent to—what’s happening in the mainstream music marketplace.

Iron Maiden is that rare band that broke in the 1980s and is selling out arenas and stadiums worldwide today. The band opens its North American summer tour May 21 at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in San Antonio. Nine days earlier, on May 12, Maiden plans a global release for “Somewhere Back in Time,” a compilation of its hits from the ‘80s. The album arrives in U.S. stores May 13.

“The ‘80s were huge, but it was a completely different scale to what is happening now, which is remarkable,” Maiden manager Rod Smallwood says. “No one’s ever broke a band in America like we did with Maiden in the ‘80s, without any help from radio at all, without anything from anybody at all, just literally from marketing, touring and fan support. And we’re doing it again.”

What began with eye-catching imagery and key supporting slots has become what is now one of the most successful and consistent box-office bands touring today.

And Iron Maiden is, above all, a touring band. “They’re essentially a live band,” says Smallwood, Maiden’s manager since 1979. “It’s all about live. That’s the focus, always has been.”

In retrospect, a touring-based strategy worked out well for Iron Maiden, given the concert stage has pretty much been its primary means of exposure.

“It’s the way we reach fans, the way we get known, really, in terms of almost complete lack of radio worldwide, a complete lack of video-type TV worldwide,” Smallwood says. “We rely on word-of-mouth and live concerts, and word-of-mouth is generated by live concerts, so without concerts we wouldn’t even be here.”

Iron Maiden is booked in North America by Rick Roskin at Creative Artists Agency and internationally by John Jackson at the K2 Agency in London.

“Iron Maiden continues to thrive because they stay true to their artistry, creative vision, fans and music,” Roskin says. “It has never been about trends or the status quo. Iron Maiden represents integrity and freedom.”

Promoter John Scher, co-CEO of Metropolitan Talent, has been presenting Iron Maiden since it first hit North American shores. “Our experience with Iron Maiden has always been good, and lately, bigger than it has ever been,” Scher says.

Asked why he thinks Maiden is bigger than ever, Scher responds, “They’re the only authentic thing out there in their genre of music. They’re the godfathers. They’re the real thing.”

Iron Maiden first toured America in early 1981 in support of Judas Priest. Its first U.S. performance was at the Aladdin in Las Vegas.

“The band was from the East End of London and had traveled very rarely when I met them first. They’d never been out of England,” Smallwood recalls. “So to do the first show in America in Las Vegas was a lot of fun.”

Smallwood remembers Maiden rangel up a merch per cap of about $3.50 per head that night in Vegas, “which in those days was fan-
tastic for a support act,” he says. “It showed me immediately that there was something going on here at the roots level.”

With its iconic Eddie mascot, galloping bass and mondo riffs, Iron Maiden was a powerful metal brand from the beginning. “But we never really considered it a brand in those days,” Smallwood says. “Across the album artwork, across the T-shirts, everything, it was all very important to the band that the fans got the very best, idea-wise, song-wise and quality-wise. That’s what we were about.”

Maiden was signed to Capitol at the time and Smallwood says the label’s Los Angeles staff provided some good marketing juice in putting across the band’s striking visuals. “We spent a lot of time on the artwork and a lot of people discovered the band by seeing that artwork in the window displays at record shops,” he says. “In those days the [customer service rep] guys were really important to us. We got the displays in the shops and that’s how we got noticed. It was a very ‘street’ thing.”

Even as the albums started to sell, if modestly, “we never got airplay. It took a lot of hard work to get anywhere,” Smallwood says. By the second album, “Killers” in 1981, Maiden was making about $3,000-$4,000 per night as a support act in America.

By the time “Piece of Mind” was released two years later, Maiden took the headlining plunge in the States, based on “gut feel,” according to Smallwood. “We decided to just go straight for the arenas and headline, which, really, without airplay, with only 40,000 albums sold on the previous record, was a pretty bold decision,” Smallwood says. “Innocence can be a wonderful thing. If I knew then what I know now, I never would’ve taken the chance.”

Of course, by the time Maiden began topping bills in America, it had long been a headliner in Japan, Australia and across Europe and Canada. “We were support in America and headliners everywhere else on the planet,” Smallwood says.

The band is still a massive draw internationally, routinely selling out stadiums around the world while averaging 10,000-15,000 per show in the United States. The first leg of the band’s 2008 Somewhere Back in

continued on »p78

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Time world tour put it in front of some 400,000 fans in 10 countries. Regardless of the language in the market it’s playing, the fans know the lyrics and sing along.

“Even when we played in India and South America, Eastern Europe, places where people don’t speak a lot of English, the fans still know the words and they’re belting them out at the shows,” Smallwood says. “It’s quite remarkable, really.”

The Iron Maiden fan base is a community, Smallwood says, and a noisy one.

“This probably applies to a lot of bands but it really does apply hugely to Maiden: What’s thrown at them from the audience they amplify and throw it straight back,” he says. “The better the audience, the better the show.”

International markets tend to skew a little younger than in the United States and England, Smallwood says, and the younger crowds are more fervent “because, let’s face it: You get in your mid-30s, you’re not going to go fucking nuts, are you?” Smallwood asks rhetorically. “You don’t appreciate it any less, but you react a lot less, so your noise is going to be less, so the vibe’s going to be less and the show’s not going to be quite as good as when everyone’s going fucking ape shit.”

Along with its durability, the Iron Maiden camp has proved loyal.

“They don’t play industry games, proved by the fact that they’re still playing for me,” Scher says. “They’ve had the same manager for their entire career. They’re loyal to their fans, loyal to their manager and, from my perspective, loyal to the promoter.”

Veteran Scandinavian promoter Thomas Johansson, now chairman of international music for Live Nation, has promoted every Iron Maiden show in Scandinavia, including seven stadium sellouts on the upcoming European leg.

“Ever since Iron Maiden first set foot on Scandinavian soil I’ve had the privilege, pleasure and honor to work with them,” Johansson says.

Nous Productions’ Salomon Herzot, who promotes the group’s French shows, says, “Every show they do is amazing, [to] fans will come back forever.”

Thomas Andrea Pieroni at Live in Italy adds, “They were the first metal band I saw in 1980, when I was a young boy, and I’m proud to be their Italian promoter.”

Smallwood admits he thinks loyalty is a quality to admire. “But really at the end of the day we believe in teamwork,” he continues.

“We do like to keep the same people. Some of our crew have been with us since 1979.”

Promoters and others in the band deals with “have got to be good, they’ve got to do their job, they’ve got to be straight with us,” Smallwood says. “We believe people should all make money, but not too much. The band provides a service and the promoter should always come out with a fair amount. And if someone screws up, then we change.”

Virtually everyone associated with the Iron Maiden touring machine says the band is bigger than ever as a concert draw around the world. “This tour has taken the band to a totally different level everywhere in the world,” Johansson says. “This summer, in Sweden alone we sold 85,000 tickets in less than an hour for stadium shows in Gothenburg and Stockholm. They’re the first band ever to sell out stadiums in both cities.”

Smallwood concurs that Maiden is doing “huge” business on this tour.
When IRON MAIDEN says world tour, it means world. As many as 30,000 delirious fans, according to press estimates, welcome the band in a 2007 concert in Bangalore, India.

"This is without any support, this is because the kids want it," Smallwood says. "It's not bullshit, it's not about radio, it's not cool, it's not fashionable, it's not in People magazine. It's about the fans, and that you can't stop. It's real, and a lot of things out there aren't real."

Asked if he ever thought Maiden could last this long and be this strong, Smallwood replies, "It never really occurred to us. We'd always come up with a two- or three-year plan and that's as far as we looked. And that's what we're doing now. We're looking at the next two or three years."

In regard to its future as a touring act, Maiden controls its own destiny. "The only thing that limits us now is ourselves, not the market," Smallwood says. "I think people will be going to see Maiden as long as Maiden are able to play, and I think Maiden will play as long as they're able."

Smallwood says the Iron Maiden trajectory of the past five years perhaps indicates a gap in the marketplace. "It may mean that there's something missing out there," he says. "Maybe with the younger bands there's too much packaging, too much obsession with style and profile and coolness, and not enough brute force and ignorance and, 'Let's just go and play hard.' It's more fun that way."

Finally, as the band continues to thrive, long-time fans can rejoice. "I think a lot of people who have been Maiden fans, even closet Maiden fans, are really proud and saying, 'This is right, this is what it should be,'" Smallwood says. "It's like the black sheep have done good. These fuckers won't stop. They're still doing it, and more and more and more people are flocking to the flag of Eddie."

MAY 17, 2008 | www.billboard.biz | 79
They dared to go where no one would try, They chose to fly where eagles dare.

Thanks for giving so much to so many for so long. We're proud to rock with you!

Congratulations to a truly great band. We are proud to be working with you.

Anderson & Pennington
An Astraerus Boeing 757 dubbed Ed Force One carried IRON MAIDEN on the first leg of its 2008 tour. Lead singer BRUCE DICKINSON (inset), a veteran trained flyer, was the co-pilot.

The key was using local production, which was satisfactory overall, if better in some places than others. "We got the power for the sound after doors opened in one place," Bell says. "It was a gamble opening the doors before electricity, but it all came off because it's a good team of people, a very good road crew."

Among the key members of the Maiden team is tour manager Ian Day, assistant tour manager Steve Gadd, production manager Jason Danter, production assistant Katharina Gauss, front of house soundman Doug Hall, lighting director Rob Coleman, stage manager Bill Conne and video director Dave Patterson.

The guitar techs are Sean Brady, Colin Price, Michael Kenney, Justin Garrick and Charlie Charlesworth. The set carpenters are Paul Stratford, Ashly Groom and Phil Stewart. Natasha Dempsey is in wardrobe. Jeff Weir oversees security. Petri Lokrantz is the band's tour masseur, and Squid Walsh is the sound tech.

Many on the crew are longtime veterans of the Iron Maiden road team. "Hall" and Mike Kenney have been with them since the late 70s," says Bell, who joined the Maiden team in 1981.

Set design and production, undertaken since 1984 by Alan Chestnut at Hangman, has grown even more sophisticated. "Eddie gives me adrenaline overload every time I have to devise a new stage incarnation," he says. "Without him life would be so mundane."

Bell adds: "I think this crew go that extra little bit to give the fans a very professional show. It doesn't matter if the band is playing for 10 people, 10,000, 100,000 or half a million—they will put on the same show." —Ray Waddell

John Jackson, managing director of the K2 Agency in London, has booked Iron Maiden's European shows for nearly 30 years. He was such an early believer that the band had not even yet signed with EMI when he got involved. "I first saw the band in 1979," he recalls, "and thought they were the best heavy metal band I'd ever seen. The following morning, I found out that Rod [Smallwood] was managing them and before I got the chance to call him, he called me asking me whether I would be interested in representing them. I bit his hand off."

Jackson first booked Maiden on the tour in early 1980 to support the "Metal for Muthas" compilation album, and then secured all the guest slots on Judas Priest's headlining tour that spring. That included a show at London's celebrated (and now-defunct) Rainbow, where within weeks the band was back for its own headline date. After a guest slot on a European tour by Kiss, Maiden left its supporting days behind forever.

"Nearly 30 years on, they're bigger than ever," says Jackson, citing new box office records on the first leg of this year's Someplace Back in Time tour in India, Oceania, Mexico and Latin America.

"In Mexico City, the demand to see them was so great that having sold out the biggest arena in minutes, I switched the show to the biggest stadium available, over 100,000 capacity, Fero Sol, which sold out straight away. That had never happened in Mexico."

During the upcoming European leg of the tour, Jackson says that stadium shows throughout the Nordic region will see the band play to audiences of close to 250,000. "In Sweden, they're bigger than ABBA," he says with a laugh.

Sifting the memories of his countless tours with the band, Jackson picks out the 1988 headlining show at Donington's Monsters of Rock Festival, which drew 107,000 people. "That was over 40,000 more than the previous record at the event. To this day, it's the biggest one-day audience for a heavy metal show."

But a recent memory now rivals that one. "I still get shivers remembering their stadium show earlier this year in Sao Paulo [Brazil]," Jackson says. "Ten minutes before showroom, the heavens opened and instead of watching from the desks, I watched high up from one of the grandstands and could see close to 50,000 drenched, adoring Iron Maiden devotees having the time of their life singing along to every song, every word. It was truly amazing, a real heart stopper."

—Paul Sexton

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When Iron Maiden played Australia on its 2008 Somewhere Back in Time world tour for a half-dozen shows between Feb. 4 and Feb. 10, it marked the band's first shows Down Under in 15 years. Promoter Paul Dainty, chairman of Melbourne-based Dainty Consolidated Entertainment, saw no risk in presenting the band after such a lengthy absence.

"We are talking about a band that is a legend and which is renowned for amazing live shows," he says. Maiden toured Australia in 1982 with "The Number of the Beast" at No. 1 on the Australian Recording Industry Assn. chart, in 1985 with the "PowerSlave" tour and in 1992 with "Fear of the Dark."

In June 2007, Australian metal sites were buzzing about how Maiden vocalist Bruce Dickinson let it slip on his weekly BBC 6 "Friday Rock Show" that Australia was "likely" on the next tour itinerary. An online petition lobbied for the band to make it definite. "We marketed extensively through traditional media, through [free] street press and online, as well as to metal media, metal radio shows and fan metal sites," Dainty says.

Australia was the first country on the band's global itinerary to put tickets on sale, on Sept 27. Sydney's 13,250-capacity Acer Arena sold out in 25 minutes, Melbourne's 16,000-capacity Rod Laver Arena within 15 minutes. Second shows were immediately added.

"Sales were phenomenal. Over 40,000 tix went in the first hour," Dainty says. Seventy thousand tickets were sold in total, with the 13,500-capacity Brisbane Entertainment Centre and the similar-capacity Perth Burswood Dome selling out.

The arrival of Ed Force One, the band's customized 757 jet, received coverage from prime-time TV and newspapers.

"It had been a very long time since we had a band in Australia flying around in a commercial plane of that size, and with their singer as one of the captains," Dainty says. "It was pretty extraordinary to see the 757 land and take off with the 60 people in their entourage and all their gear."

"It was one of our best merch nights per head we've ever had," Acer Arena business development manager Don Elford says. He adds, "The audience was extremely well-behaved. The fans were here to see the band, and they got what they came for. It was an awesome show."

Brisbane Entertainment Centre GM Trish McNamara says, "We saw a lot of dads arriving with their sons. The audience came from all walks of life—and they virtually bought every piece of merchandising. Iron Maiden were a longtime wait—they came, they conquered, and they moved on!"
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Keeping It ‘Trill’

Bun B Releases Sophomore Set In Tribute To Pimp C

Five months after the death of his partner Pimp C, Bun B will release his sophomore solo album, “Trill,” May 20.

The drum-heavy, mid-tempo laden rap set is diverse, including songs like the Jodeci-sampled “You’re Everything”—a track about Bun B’s love for his hometown of Houston—the Fiasco-assisted “Swang On Em,” with marching band drums and horns, and the reflective “If It Was Up To Me,” in which Bun B raps about poverty, politics and spirituality over reggae riddims. The album’s first single, “That’s Gangsta,” has sold 38,000 downloads in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

But the most conspicuous track on the album may be the one dedicated to Pimp C, “Angel in the Sky,” featuring Razah and containing elements of Stevie Wonder’s “Ribbon in the Sky.” “I miss my brother every day, but I know he’s watching from up above,” Bun B rhapsodies over piano chords.

“Trill” comes on the heels of Bun B’s rejuvenated success with UGK, his act with Pimp C. After a five year absence, UGK returned to the Billboard 200 with “Underground Kings,” the group’s seventh album, debuted at No. 1 the week of Aug. 15, 2007. The Rap-a-Lot/Asylum set not only scored the hip-hop act its first chart-topper, moving 168,000 copies in the United States, it also marked its best sales week. The set has sold 429,000 to date.

In addition, “Underground Kings” spawned the popular single “U B Players Anthem” featuring OutKast, which reached No. 12 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and No. 10 on Hot Rap Tracks.

But four months later, in December 2007, the victories were abruptly sidetracked when Pimp C was found dead in his room at Los Angeles’ Mondrian Hotel two years after completing an eight-year prison term on assault charges that initially derailed the act. After responding to a 911 call, police found the 33-year-old rapper, whose real name was Chad Butler, dead in his bed. The Los Angeles County Coroner determined an accidental overdose of cough syrup and a pre-existing sleep apnea condition caused his death.

Fortunately, Bun B didn’t let the untimely loss daunt him. On the contrary, he says he’s even more confident about the depth of his latest album than his previous—2005’s “Trill,” which has sold 567,000 copies.

Among the new set’s long list of collaborators are Lil Wayne, Rick Ross, Lupe Fiasco, Sean Kingston, Young Buck, Chamillionaire, Juvenile, Webbie, David Banner, 8Ball & MJG and, of course, Pimp C. In addition, producers Clinton Sparks, JR Rotem, Jazze Pha, Scott Storch and the BlackOut Movement lend their efforts.

Bun B says he has “great stuff to choose from. The Scott Storch track is probably one of the biggest records I’ve done in my life,” he says about “I Love That.” “It has the potential to go further than any other song I’ve done before. It was originally made for Rakim, and it’s just an incredible record. Plus, everything Storch touches goes big.”

As far as the marketing plan to push the album, Bun B has partnered with Microsoft’s Zune on a series of promotional events and programs taking place throughout the U.S., including appearances at several Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Bun B also is part of Zune Social, an online music community where he blogs about his experiences on the road.

A strong viral campaign will be implemented as well, with audio/video placements on music sites, music blogs, Bun B’s MySpace page, Yahoo Music and AOL.

And Bun B’s name is already out there in association with work on other projects—he’s recently collaborated with the likes of Kidz in the Hall, Glasses Malone, Killa Mike, Kardinal Offishal and Dizzie Rascal on their respective albums.

“There’s always purpose and meaning behind the music,” Bun B says. “Pimp C’s passing reinforced that message. You don’t need to take yourself too seriously, but you have to take what you do seriously.”
atlantic crossing

british urban singer estelle scores on both sides of the pond

estelle's sophomore album "shines"strepted april 29 in the states. it bows at no. 38 on the billboard 200 with 15,000 copies, according to nielsen soundscan. in the united kingdom, it entered the occ album charts at no. 6 on april 12 and has been bpi-certified as silver (60,000 shipped). produced by will.i.am, mark ronson and yecla jean, "shine" also features guest vocalists john legend and cree lo. legend signed estelle to his atlantic imprint home-school records after being introduced to her by west. the deal resulted from estelle's 2007 decision to turn her focus to the states. "i just did what i thought was necessary," estellean says. "i moved to new york last may." estelle's americian producers, estelle says, did not dictate her musical direction. "they just said, 'carry on doing what you're doing,'" atlantic records u.k. president max loussada admits there was "an ambivalence and apathy to estelle" in britain following her 2004 debut, "the 18th day" (v2), which stalled at no. 35 on the occ chart. but that changed, he says, once she released "an incredible record" with "american boy." "part of her success is about the journey the public have seen her go through," lousasa adds. "for an urban-skewed (u.k.) female artist to be signed out of america is very unusual." however, the london-born artist de- nies any resentment toward the british music industry. "it wasn't like. 'they let me down, so i went to america,'" she says. "i still feel like a british artist—but i'm now a worldwide artist." in the united kingdom, "american boy" has enjoyed cross-format airplay from top 40 bbc radio 1, ac bbc radio 2 and urban digital station bbc 1xtra. the single's u.k. digital sales now stand at 188,000, according to nielsen soundscan. the video is an ingenious tvt, and the song is picking up spins on urban, rhythmic and top 40 radio. "the fact that it's already a hit and estab- lished somewhere else has been able to help us knock all these stations down," atlantic records president julie green- wald says. the campaign has also included tv appearances on "late show with david letterman," "the ellen degeneres show" and "jimmy kimmel live." greenwald says estelle has been "working her butt off" since last september, playing headline dates and support on legend's shows plus regularly visit- ing radio stations. "there are so many american artists validating her on the album," she says. "[and] when people see her live, they're saying she's the real deal." despite the album's combination of rap, soul, reggae and pop, estelle is being marketed as a top 40 artist. "i would com- pare her to any wineloshe and corinne bailey rae," greenwald says. estelle will play u.k. shows in june around the release of upcoming single "no substitute love," followed by european dates and a trip to japan.

LONDON—A song called "american boy" helped u.k. urban vocalist estelle successfully reinvent herself as a chart-topping artist at home. now she's hop- ing some high-profile americans will assist the launch of her stateside career. estelle spent the weeks (march 29-april 26) in new york filming the official video (occ) singles listing, selling more than 260,000 copies of her single "american boy" (atlantic), featuring kanye west. the track has already hit billboard's hot r/b hip-hop songs and hot r/b hip-hop airplay charts and sits at no. 71 on the billboard hot 100, no. 58 on hot digital songs and no. 57 on the pop 100 this week.

estelle: the voice that's on fire in new york. her upcoming album "shines" is out this month, and estelle is already making waves in the city's independent music scene. her unique style, combining elements of soul, hip-hop and r&b, has earned her a dedicated following among fans who appreciate her raw and honest approach to music. she's worked closely with producers will i am, mark ronson and yecla jean to create a sound that's both fresh and timeless. estelle's success in the uk has paved the way for her to take on the us market, and with the release of "shines," she hopes to make a lasting impression on american listeners.

estelle: the american dream come true. estelle's journey to music stardom began in new york city, where she grew up in a neighborhood filled with artists and performers. she started singing in church choir and quickly fell in love with the power of music to connect people. after moving to london, she began to perform at local clubs and venues, building a loyal following with her unique blend of soul, hip-hop and r&b.

estelle: she's a force to be reckoned with. estelle's music speaks to the human experience, addressing themes of love, loss, and self-discovery. her powerful vocals and honest lyrics have resonated with audiences around the world, earning her critical acclaim and chart success. with "shines," estelle continues to push boundaries and challenge expectations, delivering a album that's as thought-provoking as it is catchy. her success in the uk has opened doors for her in the us, and with "shines," she's poised to make her mark on the american music scene.

fame game

will scarlett johnsson's a-list status affect her wait's tribute?

scarlett johnson describes the recording of her tom wait's covers album, anywhere i lay my head as "an intimate experience—almost private, in a way." of course, when you're an actress, like scarlett johansson, marketing and scheduling can be a challenge. but johansson was able to take the time to record this album with passion and dedication. the album includes covers of wait's songs like "living with you" and "i'm looking at you," which are full of emotion and meaning.

as scarlett johansson says, "i've been doing a lot of music recently, but it's been a great opportunity to explore and express myself through music. it's been a really rewarding experience for me." while she's known for her acting, johansson is also a talented musician. this album is a testament to her versatility and love for music. it's sure to be a hit with fans of wait and johansson alike.

acting up

sure, the monkees' "actress-turned-singer" and "celebrity-turned-singer" are frequently met with a snicker—but, as it turns out, notoriety does lead to album sales at the start of a singing career.

zoe deschanel (as she & him, with m. ward) "volume one" (2008) 41,000

paris hilton "paris" (2006) 194,000

lindsay lohan "spook" (2004) 7,000

"a little more personal (raw)" (2005) 3,100,000

jennifer lopez "on the 6" (1999) 2,800

"j lo" (2001) 3,600

"i to tha l-o! the remixes" (2002) 1,500

"this is me...then" (2002) 2,600

"rebith" (2003) 731,000

"como ama una mujer" (2007) 201,000

"brave" (2007) 156,000

ashlee simpson "autobiography" (2004) 2.9 million

"i am me" (2005) 944,000

"bittersweet world" (2004) 48,000

reporting by martel conceptions, susan viskoskowitz and ray waddell.

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**THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS**

**ALBUMS**

**ROCK**

**10 YEARS**

_Division_

*Producer: Rick Parasher*_

*Universal Republic*_

_Release Date: May 13*

10 Years named its sophomore effort “Di-

vision” because of the internal strife it endured while try-

ing to piece it together, but it’s so cohesive, you wouldn’t
guess the band members were ever out of sync with each other. First single “Beau-
tiful” gave 10 Years a good head start at radio, yet the

somber track doesn’t indicate how stimulating the rest of the material is on “Division.” It

steps off with catchy, flail-

ing rocker “Actions and Mo-
tives” and follows up with similar gratifying tracks like “Eleven”

and “Death Cab for Cutie.”

_Release Date: May 13*

**DOLLS**

*No, Virginia...*_

*Producer: Sean Slade*_

*Roadrunner Records*_

_Release Date: May 20*

Doll’s vocalist Amanda Palmer is a show-

topper. She can be as a calm-
ing as a member of a church choir or as towering as a

Broadway lead, and the chaotic, piano-driven cabaret

of the Dresden Dolls often re-

quires her to capture both extremes in a single verse.

She’ll have a starring role later this year when she

releases her first solo effort, but in the meantime, the Dresden Dolls’

“No, Virginia...” serves as a placeholder, a collection of odds and ends to tide fans over.

Some cuts, like the cover of “Pretty in Pink,” or the ten-

sionless march of “Mouse and the Model,” didn’t need to be

resurrected. But others, like the singalong rolling notes of

“Sorry Bunch” or “Night Re-

connaissance,” a multipart romp about middle-class va-

grants, can stand with the

Dolls’ A-sides.—TM

**DEATH CAB FOR

CUTIE**

*High Stairs*

*Producers: Chris Walla*_

*Atlantic*_

_Release Date: May 13*

Death Cab for Cutie, that poster boy for sensi-

tive indie pop, prove it has some balls behind all that

pretty, “OC”-approved music with “High Stairs.” The fol-

low-up to 2003’s “Plans,” the group’s second Atlantic out-

ing, is a welcome growth mu-

sically and thematically. The

songs here hit with a full-on assault of crunching guitar

riffs, distorted, cracked vocals

and walls of disorienting feed-

back, while lyrically, frontman

Ben Gibbard visits the moodier and darker corners of his

mind. A lumbering bass

lingers behind a stalker on the

loose on the eight-minute

“I Will Possess Your Heart,” the
guitars driving “Cath...” vehen-

ture close to alt-country terri-

or, and “Pity and Fear” grooves with a jungle-like beat.

Fundamentally, it’s the

Death Cab you know and

love, just a little rougher around the edges.—JM

**BLOWING TREES**

*Blowing Trees*_

*Glassnote Records*_

_Release Date: March 18*

Drawing from influences as diverse as Pink Floyd, the

Flaming Lips and Radiohead, San Antonio-bred Blowing

Trees demonstrated at this year’s South by Southwest that

they know how to have a good time. Known for a fever-

ish following and energetic live shows, they re-

gewangled producer Dave Castell—

who forged hits for Blue October and Deep Blue Something—

for their debut self-titled set.

What emerges is a hook-

laden 12-track journey that

swirles between psychedelic and anemic, lyrically taking

on the state of the world today. Lead singer Chris

Martinson’s technical and dynamic abilities; the

vocals, and ends serving

up to 2005’s “Girls, Girls, Girls”

as catchy, melodically infectious.

*Producer: Mark Hammond, Rob

Hawkins*_

*Word Entertainment*_

_Release Date: April 29*

This 10-man French crew has a
tremendously entertaining album in hand with “Dances

of Resistance.” The disc opens with the title track, a

whirlwind of high-energy ska, then doubles the dosage

with the frantic “No Competition,” rolls through a circus-

like interlude appropriately titled “Circus” and finally

delivers a tune in French, “De la Musique et du Bruit.” At

this point the ruling vibe is evident—full-tilt ska and
dancehall reggae married to quirky lyrics. Case in point:

“Mr. Clown,” a midtempo number with a terrific rhythm

bounce and a sly, sardonic lyric that’s as suggestive of a

Fellini scenario as a piece of music can be. Different tex-
tures occasionally surface, offering brief respites from

the furious pace, as on the jazzy “Interlude Barbare” and

the Balkan Gypsy feel of “Parade Acoustique.”—PWY

**THE BLACK ANGELS**

*Directions to See a Ghost*_

*Producer: Erik Wofford*_

*Suretone/Light in the Attic*_

_Release Date: May 13*

If you missed the Black Angels’ full-

length debut, “Passover,” in 2006, let this effort be a

reminder of your mistake. This troupe cranks out hazy, dark rock’n’roll—real, honest-to-God rock’n’roll—with

disarming ease. From the ominous, churning guitars and
tom toms on opener “You on the Run” to the

16-plus minutes of epic closer “Sneaker in the Grass,” the

quartet borrows from the sludgy psyche of the

Velvet Underground, squeezes through the Jesus and Mary

Chain and tops it off with singer Alex Maas’ creep-
tastic, reverb-drenched howl. The breakdowns on songs

like “Dee-Dee-Shee” and “You in Color” truly highlight each member’s technical and dynamic abilities; the

crescendos emphasize their quantum power to make
great art as a group.—HK

**DUFFY**

*Rockferry*_

*Producers: various*_

*Mercury*_

_Release Date: May 13*

The recent surge of European

retrofitting and upgrading 1960s soul rolls on in

swirl styling with this debut from Duffy, a Welsh

singer/songwriter from the school of Jazzy chanteuses

who are here to maximize the international-but-not-
too-international-for-Starbucks style, but sound quite

lovely doing it anyway. “Rockferry” hits the major

notes: “Warwick Avenue” is a string-smeared jazz

number, the title cut is a towering wall of piano-

powered sound with moody lyrics, and first single

“Hercy” is about as summery as summery gets. Like

all such records, “Rockferry” splits its time between pay-

ing tribute to its source material and knocking it off, but

its principal’s vocals, and generally pleasing wall-of-

sound treatment, make it a good move anyway.—JV

**OLYMPIC CIRCUS**

*Dances of Resistance*_

*Producer: Balkun Circuit*_

*Mr Bongo*_

_Release Date: April 29*

Olympic Circus are a highly welcomed return.

_records. “Blame It on Gravity” is a revered,

cautionary tale that’s on every lip in America, from

the good to the bad. But “One Life” is the defini-

tion of the band’s 2004 debut, the single that

became an instant classic with its catchy,

melodically infectious.

*Producers: Mark Hammond, Rob

Hawkins*_

*Word Entertainment*_

_Release Date: April 29*

These three talented

artists—Caroline Meyers, 13; Jordan Yates, 15; and

Caroline Williams, 12—

know how to deliver bright and

bouncy pop that is de-

liciously infectious. Once

again turning to producers

Mark Hammond and Rob

Hawkins, PureNRG manages to

avoid the dreaded sophom-

ore slump: the title track is a

buoyant anthem that will

have soccer moms and their

offspring singing along in

minivans across America. “Girls Can Change the

night (penned by bassist

Murry Hammond, no less). Comfortable and confident

all the way through, and a

highly welcomed return.—AV

**POP**

**COLTON FORD**

*Tug of War*_

*Producer: Quentin Harris*_

*Outsider Music*_

_Release Date: April 29*

A good number among Colton Ford’s target audi-

ence are well-acquainted with the singer’s original line of

work, since this CD’s current track tends to joyfully merge all forms of grown-up entertain-

ment. Ford isn’t denying his superstellar adult film roots in

“Tug of War,” whose accompa-

nying video clip for beat-

happy single “That’s Me” fea-

tures the macho hunk shaving and showering in

stages of undress. “Tug” is replete with thick thumps

and breathy, layered vocals, alongside formidable

sing-along choruses—and he’s

proved chart prowess with

2004’s top 10 “Signed,

Sealed, Delivered” with Pepper

Mashay. Ford also deliv-

ers some artful moments here,

foremost in the sweet

love ballad “Wait for Me,”

where he conjures Jon

Sedaca, and “Bluntly

Speaking,” featuring Monaie Ding-

ham, a sensual jam that gradu-

uates from the gay ghetto

with true top 40 potential. A

steel-solid second act.—CT

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**THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS**

**SINGLES**

**COUNTRY**

**ALAN JACKSON**  
*Good Time (3:45)*  
**Producer:** Keith Stegall  
**Publisher:** EMI April/Tri-Angels, ASCAP  
**Anita Nashville**  

The second single and title track from Alan Jackson's chart-topping "Good Time" is a percolating uptempo tune about letting off steam after a long work week. As on many previous hits, Jackson pen's a slice-of-life lyric that courtesies listeners readily identify with, as our blue-collar hero cashes his checks, cleans his truck, puts on his hat and hits the town. As usual, Jackson delivers an engaging performance, while Keith Stegall's fiddle-laced production is perfection. It's a high-spirited country anthem for everyone out there working for the weekend. —**DEP**

**CLAY AIKEN**  
*On My Way Here (4:30)*  
**Producer:** Kipper  
**Writers:** R. Tread, H. Davis, C. Faulk  
**Publisher:** various RCA

Clay Aiken readily admits that despite mass retail and touring success, radio has never been a particularly tight ally. So he recorded "On My Way Here," his first new album of original material in five years, with an eye on simply finding songs that fit him — and lo and behold, the title track could well be one that can AC radio embraces. First, it's co-written by OneRepublic's Ryan Tedder, who has worked with Leona Lewis, Natasha Bedingfield and dozens of other hitmakers. Second, the lyric offers that rare message you actually listen to: "I've seen the best, the worst/I wouldn't change what I've been through/I've touched the sky, hit the wall, but did what I had to/On my way here." Aiken was so moved by this song that it locked in an album theme about growing up and lessons learned. The singer might be accused of excess bravado in the past, but here, he delivers a restrained performance, still ever-emotive. Claymates — who proved tenacity by supporting en masse his just-wrapped Broadway run in "Spamalot" — will be reduced to tears, but even those who have dismissed Aiken in the past will find this "Way" convincing. —**AC**

**DUDE**

**JENNA DREY**  
*All Out of Love* (3:18)  
**Producers:** Giuseppe D., Kevin Churko  
**Writers:** G. Russell, C. Davis  
**Publisher:** Nettongs/Careers BMG  
**Robbins Entertainment**

Robbins has demonstrated marketing muscle time and again, most triumphantly via top 40 top 10 "Everytime We Touch" from Cascada. Its latest offering delivers a full-on up tempo camp version of Air Supply's 1980 no 2 "All Out of Love," sung by dance diva and classically trained three-octave vocalist Jenna Drey. As always, a maestram of mixes are presented to enchant the masses; best is the unbridled Harris/Frangion RADIO REPRISE, beggaring for dance radio play, while the ballad Candleight mix could expose a new top 40 generation to the lovelorn lyric. Dancefloorers are indulged with Giuseppe D.'s Full of Blues Dance mix. As always, something for everyone. "An All-Out" guilty pleasure. —**CT**

**DELTA GOODREM**

**In This Life** (3:50)  
**Producer:** John Shanks  
**Writers:** D. Goodrem, S. Crichton  
**Publisher:** various Mercury/Decca

At last. Aussie Delta Goodrem has scored eight No. 1 singles at home since 2003, while the first of her three albums spent 29 weeks at No. 1, she's also a mainstay across much of Europe. Goodrem was signed for a minute to Columbia in the United States in 2005, where single "Lost Without You" grazed the AC top 20. Now former Sony honcho David Massey, installed as president of resurrected Island Def Jam imprint Mercury, is championing the stunning 23-year-old singer-songwriter here—and he means business. Oz chart-topper "In This Life" is an ideal vehicle to fuel horsepower, showcasing frantic piano, turbo tempo, a singalong lyric about giving into love ("Three steps fight an honest fight/Two hearts can start a fire/One love is all I need, in this life") and a vocal that illustrates incomparable prowess—not to mention Goodrem's hearing media-friendly persona. The world knows Delta on a first-name basis. It's high time America got with the program. —**CT**

**COLDPLAY**

**Violet Hill** (3:21)  
**Producers:** Brian Eno, Mark Dravis  
**Writers:** G. Berryman, J. Buckland, W. Champion, C. Martin  
**Publisher:** Universal/MGB Songs, ASCAP

Capitol

You can't miss Brian Eno's imprint on "Violet Hill," the lead single from Coldplay's fourth studio album, "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends." The legendary U2 producer, with Mark Dravis, takes the London-based quartet from straightforward balladry to a more blues-based approach. A dramatic deparure from hits like "Clocks" and "The Scientist," "Violet Hill" shifts effortlessly from piano to distorted guitars and back again, anchored by a fervent beat. Vocalist Chris Martin sticks to favored themes like love and reconciliation, but the mood has changed from optimism to wariness. So far, the experimentation has been warmly received: After "Violet Hill" was offered as a free download on coldplay.com in April, fans responded by promptly crashing the site. The release, which showcases Coldplay's renewed energy and purpose, is now cruising onto playlists across multiple formats. —**AC**

**LATIN**

**BABASÓNICOS**

**Mucho**  
**Producer:** Babasonicos Universal Music Latino  
**Release Date:** May 13

An "a little self-criticism wouldn't be bad for you," Babasonicos' Adrían Dáergleo sings on "Nosotros," from the Argentinians' latest album. The group puts its own self-effacing spin on tracks that range from Beach Boys blazing to rockabilly and garage rock, with a little new wave thrown in for good measure. While the songs are uniformly well-written and enjoyable, it is the louder stylistic statements ("Microdancing," "Estoy Rabraso") that lead to the biggest impressions, as the quiter ones will likely float away from all but the biggest fan. This is a literate, well-crafted album that won't change your life, but it'll make for a fun presentation when the band takes its show on the road. —**ABY**

**RAP**

**EMANUEL JAL**  
*Warchild*  
**Producers:** Rosche, Silvastone  
**Song** 360

There's no doubting the chilling authenticity of this rapper's tales of urban warfare. At the age of 8, Emmanuel Jal became a child soldier for the Sudan People's Liberation Army, a horrific experience he pours into the songs "Warchild," his solo follow-up to a 2005 disc he made with Sudanese singer/oud player Abdel Gadir Salim. Jal's lyrics are clearly the focus here — I believe I survived for a reason to tell my story to touch lives, he declares in the title track — but producers Rosche and Silvastone anchor the MC's flow with casually glosse-tripping tracks whose warm melodicism recalls recent work by Wyclef Jean. —**MW**

**LEGENDRIDE**

EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN  
**ALBUMS**

**CHUCK TAYLOR**

**PRODUCER:** Chuck Taylor

**YOU CAN REACH COUNTRY**

**CRITICS' CHOICE**

A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for music lovers.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and reviewers. Review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

**PICK**: A new release predicted to hit the top ten of the chart in the corresponding format.
**Madonna Makes Global Chart Noise**

Timing is everything; Madonna.

Given the sales pattern of recent years, there's no shame in first-week sales of 280,000 for her new "Hard Candy," coming in faster than the first-week sales of her last studio album. After all, with album sales in 2007 down 15% from 2006, and this year's pace off by 11%, artists who have topped the Billboard 200 in recent months have often done so with slower starts than they saw earlier.

In March, for example, Janet Jackson's 181,000-unit opener for "Discipline" was 39% lighter than the launch of her 2006 chart-topper '20 Y.O..." While recent No. 1 bows by Alan Jackson, Jay-Z, and Rascal Flatts each began with smaller starts than their prior albums had. But just two weeks after another featured chart queen, Mariah Carey, scored a career-best first week, Madonna's opener falls 20% lighter than the start of her 2006 album "Confessions on a Dance Floor."

Even though Madonna's start looks impressive in the context of 2008—the third-largest stanza by any album this year—comparisons to the 463,000-unit bow by Carey's "E-MC2" are inevitable. Madonna's landmark full-services contract with Live Nation only adds more scrutiny to the total earned by the seventh No. 1 album of her career. Among female artists, only Barbra Streisand, with eight No. 1s, has more chart-toppers.

Of course, the recent fan bases that Madonna and Carey each command, major catfight squabbling will surround artist-dedicated Web sites and blogs. Fans of the latter will laud their gir! not only sold more, but did so 18 years after her career began. Madonna's minions can brag their fave scored No. 1 status in more global territories than Carey.

Warner Music Group reports "Hard Candy" was No. 1 in 24 markets outside the United States, including 15 of the territories represented on the Hits of the World menu at billboard.biz. Included in Madonna's No. 1 parade are Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. In contrast, Carey did not score any No. 1 in the territories Billboard tracks outside the States. "Candy" tops Billboard's Albums Eurochart, compared with a No. 3 peak for "E-MC2." Each of Madonna's last three studio albums before "Candy" bowed at No. 1 in the Eurochart: "Dance Floor," "American Life" (2003) and "Music" (2000). In addition, this week, her "4 Minutes," featuring Justin Timberlake, is also perched at No. 1 on Euro Digital Singles, along with No. 1 on the Radio Airplay and Single Sales Eurocharts.

Back home, both chart divas' lead singles have sold well. Madonna's "4 Minutes" has moved 1.8 million sales—downloads in seven weeks, according to Nielsen SoundScan, averaging almost 169,000 per frame. Carey's "Touch My Body" just moved 869,000 in six weeks, an average of nearly 145,000 per week, to go along with the 742,000 copies her album has sold in three weeks' time (now No. 2, 95,000). Madonna's song has sold more, but Carey's has found more traction at radio, reaching No. 2 on the all-format Hot 100 Airplay, where "4 Seconds" advances 13-11. Carey also had a mid-season promotional ramp-up: than Madonna, as "E-MC2" took over her TV talk that included "American Idol," "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and "Good Morning America," while Madonna's only major tube exposure during release week was a visit to BET's "106 & Park."

Whether Carey's additional TV and radio impressions explain why her first week was 183,000 copies stronger than Madonna's is a debate we will leave to these artists' fans. Given today's music landscape, both ladies' projects look like success stories to me.

**King for a Day**

It appears that neither Madonna nor Mariah Carey will lead next week's Billboard 200. Instead, a veteran artist whose career dates back longer than Madonna's appears in line for his first No. 1 set. Neil Diamond's "Home Before Dark" led Nielsen SoundScan's May 7 Building chart, with unweighted first-day sales of 30,000 at nine top accounts. A source close to the album projects a start of at least 125,000 copies.

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**Funk Phenom**

Tim Cubbins

"Bringing Back the Funk" lands at No. 1 on Top Contemporary Jazz Albums with 7,000, the best sales week of his chart debut. It's the third No. 1 for the multi-instrumentalist.

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**Over the Counter**

**GEOFF MAYFIELD gmayfield@billboard.com**

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**Market Watch**

**A Weekly National Music Sales Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Unit Sales</th>
<th>Year-To-Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALBUMS</strong></td>
<td><strong>DIGITAL TRACKS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks</strong></td>
<td><strong>2007</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>This Week</strong></td>
<td>7,557,000</td>
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<td><strong>Last Week</strong></td>
<td>6,869,000</td>
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<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Weeks Last Year</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
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*All album sales are also counted within weekly sales.*

**Weekly Album Sales** (Million Units)

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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.9M</td>
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<tr>
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**Digital Tracks Sales**

**2007**

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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>295.8 million</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>379.5 million</td>
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**SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT**

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<tr>
<td>CD</td>
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<td>Cassette</td>
<td>138,000</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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**Total Albums**

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**For weeks ending May 4, 2008. Figures are rounded.**

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**Distributors’ Market Share:**

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<th><strong>UMG</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sony BMG</strong></th>
<th><strong>WMG</strong></th>
<th><strong>Indies</strong></th>
<th><strong>EMI</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
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For weeks ending May 4, 2008. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a variety of sales data, this report includes compact discs, digital tracks, and streaming audio.
### Top Singles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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### Top Video Clips

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### Pop 100 Digest

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### Video Monitor

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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### R&B/SHIP-POP AIRPLAY

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<tr>
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<td>LOLLIPOP</td>
<td>JUICY JAY</td>
<td>HIP HOP/HUSTLE SOUNDS/UNIVERSAL MOTOWN</td>
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<td>HIP HOP/HUSTLE SOUNDS/UNIVERSAL MOTOWN</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SEXY CAN I</td>
<td>2 PAC feat. STEFANO</td>
<td>POLYDOR/REPUBLIC RECORDS</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>恵愛語</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>GO</td>
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### RAP SONGS

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Data for week of May 17, 2008 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page I-04
Almost six years after his first chart appearance, James Otto crowns Hot Country Songs for the first time, as "Just Got Started Lovin' You" steps 2-1. The soulfully delivered song tops his previous peak on the chart, noted when "Days of Our Lives" stopped at No. 33 in 2004. He got his first chart ink when "The Ball" bowed June 22, 2002. Otto is the first artist to claim his or her first No. 1 on this list since Taylor Swift did so with "Our Song" on the Dec. 22, 2007, chart, and the first solo male to hit No. 1 for the first time since Rodney Atkins with "If You're Going Through Hell (Before the Devil Even Knows)" in August 2008. Otto’s broad span between his first charted song and his first No. 1 isn’t the format’s longest, in recent history. Atkins got his first No. 1 after charting singles for nine years, as did Jack Ingram when his “Wherever You Are” reigned for one week in May 2006. — Wade Jessee

"Just Got Started Lovin' You" (Sony Songs)
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<td>27</td>
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Data for week of MAY 17, 2008 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 104

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

www.americanradiohistory.com
**Latin Airplay**

**Pop**

1. **Maná** - "Perdoname" [Sony BMG Norte]
2. **Alejandro Fernandez** - "Te Entendi (Special Edition)" [Sony BMG Norte]
3. **Los Deberes de la Sierra** - "Tu Te Las Perdone" [Sony BMG Norte]
4. **Alejandro Fernandez** - "Perdoname" [Sony BMG Norte]
5. **Daddy Yankee** - "Daddy Yankee con The New King" [Sony BMG Norte]
6. **Diego Torres** - "Ay Ay Ay" [Sony BMG Norte]
7. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]
8. **Juanes** - "Papi" [Sony BMG Norte]
9. **Aventura** - "Go-Go & La Bella" [Sony BMG Norte]
10. **Los Auténticos Decadentes** - "El Auténtico Decadente" [Sony BMG Norte]

**Rhythm**

1. **Chayanne** - "Me Entendi" [Sony BMG Norte]
2. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]
3. **Nelly** - "Umbrella" [Sony BMG Norte]
4. **Yandel** - "Esa Mujer" [Sony BMG Norte]
5. **Jennifer Lopez** - "Papi" [Sony BMG Norte]
6. **Pitbull** - "El Mismo Sol" [Sony BMG Norte]
7. **Jesse McCartney** - "Everytime" [Sony BMG Norte]
8. **Lil Jon** - "Move That Body" [Sony BMG Norte]
9. **J Lo** - "Goin' In" [Sony BMG Norte]
10. **Daddy Yankee** - "Daddy Yankee con The New King" [Sony BMG Norte]

**Latin Albums**

**Pop**

1. **Alejandro Fernandez** - "Te Entendi (Special Edition)" [Sony BMG Norte]
2. **Maná** - "Perdoname" [Sony BMG Norte]
3. **Alejandro Fernandez** - "Perdoname" [Sony BMG Norte]
4. **Diego Torres** - "Ay Ay Ay" [Sony BMG Norte]
5. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]
6. **Juanes** - "Papi" [Sony BMG Norte]
7. **Aventura** - "Go-Go & La Bella" [Sony BMG Norte]
8. **Los Auténticos Decadentes** - "El Auténtico Decadente" [Sony BMG Norte]
9. **Chayanne** - "Me Entendi" [Sony BMG Norte]
10. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]

**Rhythm**

1. **Chayanne** - "Me Entendi" [Sony BMG Norte]
2. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]
3. **Nelly** - "Umbrella" [Sony BMG Norte]
4. **Yandel** - "Esa Mujer" [Sony BMG Norte]
5. **Jennifer Lopez** - "Papi" [Sony BMG Norte]
6. **Pitbull** - "El Mismo Sol" [Sony BMG Norte]
7. **Jesse McCartney** - "Everytime" [Sony BMG Norte]
8. **Lil Jon** - "Move That Body" [Sony BMG Norte]
9. **J Lo** - "Goin' In" [Sony BMG Norte]
10. **Daddy Yankee** - "Daddy Yankee con The New King" [Sony BMG Norte]

**Regional Mexican**

**Pop**

1. **Vicente Fernandez** - "Te Entendi (Special Edition)" [Sony BMG Norte]
2. **Los Deberes de la Sierra** - "Tu Te Las Perdone" [Sony BMG Norte]
3. **Alejandro Fernandez** - "Perdoname" [Sony BMG Norte]
4. **Diego Torres** - "Ay Ay Ay" [Sony BMG Norte]
5. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]
6. **Juanes** - "Papi" [Sony BMG Norte]
7. **Aventura** - "Go-Go & La Bella" [Sony BMG Norte]
8. **Los Auténticos Decadentes** - "El Auténtico Decadente" [Sony BMG Norte]
9. **Chayanne** - "Me Entendi" [Sony BMG Norte]
10. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]

**Rhythm**

1. **Chayanne** - "Me Entendi" [Sony BMG Norte]
2. **Ricardo Arjona** - "Nada de Nada" [Sony BMG Norte]
3. **Nelly** - "Umbrella" [Sony BMG Norte]
4. **Yandel** - "Esa Mujer" [Sony BMG Norte]
5. **Jennifer Lopez** - "Papi" [Sony BMG Norte]
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8. **Lil Jon** - "Move That Body" [Sony BMG Norte]
9. **J Lo** - "Goin' In" [Sony BMG Norte]
10. **Daddy Yankee** - "Daddy Yankee con The New King" [Sony BMG Norte]
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**ALBUMS**

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**TOP RADIO AIRPLAY**

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**TOP SINGLE CHRISTIAN**

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It's all in the family at Heatseekers: The Cab is on tour with the band of No. 4 and it recently wrapped a tour with the act at No. 5.

At No. 1, 5th Wonder's and Buckshot's new collaboration starts at No. 1. The act's subsequent albums are immediately Eligible to appear on the Billboard Top Heatseekers chart data. See more data about The Heatseekers at www.americanradiohistory.com.

**TOP HEATSEEKERS.**

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**REGIONAL HEATSEEKERS #1s**

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**PROGRESS REPORT**

**NEEDTOBREATHE, "The Heat"**

The album notches its fifth consecutive sales gain and best week since September as it rises 50-14 on Top Heatseekers with a 34% increase. The set's "More Time" is making inroads on the Triple A chart in sister publication Radio & Records.

**BREAKING & ENTERING**

Third time's a charm for London-born soul singer Jamie Lidell, whose third album, "Jim," earns him his first Billboard chart ink at No. 7 on Top Heatseekers. Visit billboard.com/breaking to discover developing artists making their inaugural chart run each week.

Data for week of MAY 17, 2008 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
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LEGAL NOTICE

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Chapter 11
Cred No. 06-10562 (MLG)

NOTICE OF SALE OF THE ASSETS OF
TELEVIE TOWNS, INC.
Debtor.

Please be advised that Detroit Televie Towns, Inc. (the “Debtor”), in its capacity as the manager and operator of, among other things, Televies (the “Televies”), pursuant to the approval by the Court of the Sale Motion dated April 2, 2008, seeks the approval of the Sale Agreement (the “Sale”) which contemplates the sale of the Televies to the highest bidder (the “Buyer”) at a public auction to be held on June 12, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. (the “Sale Date”) at 1200 13th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

The Sale Motion is scheduled to be heard on June 9, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. (the “Hearing Date”) in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New York.

The Bankruptcy Court has approved the Sale Motion and will require the Debtor to sell the Televies to the highest bidder on the Hearing Date.

The Sale Motion will be considered by the Bankruptcy Court and will be held on June 9, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. (the “Hearing Date”) in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New York.

May 28, 2008

STEVENS & LE, P.C.
485 Madison Avenue, 26th Floor
New York, New York 10022

Hearing to be held:
June 9, 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

May 9, 2008

STEVEN & LE, P.C.
Attorneys for the Debtor at Petition
By: Alex A. Ostroff
Alex P. Dwyer
Tanya M. Porak
485 Madison Avenue, 26th Floor
New York, New York 10022
(212) 319-8510
apost@stevenslee.com
ct@stevenslee.com

Addr: New York
May 1, 2008

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EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

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RECORD COMPANIES: Sony BMG's Commercial Music Group promotes Chris Gannett to VP of strategic marketing. He was senior director of marketing and strategic partnerships at Legacy Recordings.

BMG Label Group appoints Ivan Gavin to COO. He was COO at EMI Recorded Music North America. EMI Music Germany/Switzerland/Austria in Cologne, Germany, names Wolfgang Hanebrink chairman. Hanebrink is responsible of commercial and marketing.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment elevates Julie Swidler to executive VP of business affairs and general counsel. She was executive VP of business and legal affairs for BMG U.S. Label Group and RCA Music Group.

Arista Nashville promotes Leasy Tyson to director of national promotion. She was director of regional promotion.

California Nashville names Brooke Kujawa promotion coordinator. She was production coordinator at Sony BMG Nashville.

Provident Label Group ups Laurie Chimento to senior director of marketing. She was associate director of marketing.

PUBLISHING: Primary Wave Music Publishing taps Robert Horowitz as COO/head of business development. He was a director at Credit Suisse. The International Confederation of Music Publishers appoints Jerry Matton secretary general. Jenny Vachar previously served as general counsel and ran operations for ICMP.

Murrah Colton Entertainment names AJ Burton manager of A&R resources. He was coordinator of business affairs/creative at Bug Music.

BMI ups Joey Menard to director of Latin writer/publisher relations and media licensing. He was manager of Latin markets and media licensing.

Cherry Lane Music Publishing promotes Joe Mondry to manager of creative services and marketing. He was coordinator of film and TV music.

DIGITAL: Tim Clark, co-founder of U.K. artist management firm iMusic, has joined the advisory board of digital music marketing company Hip Digital Media.

---Edited by Mitchell Peters

THE EDGE TO HOST MUSIC RISING AUCTION

U2's the Edge will host the Icons of Music Sale 11 May 31 at the Hard Rock Cafe in New York's Times Square. The second annual auction of music memorabilia will benefit Music Rising, the musical instrument replacement fund founded after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita by the Edge, producer Bob Ezrin and Gibson Guitar chairman Henry Juszkiewicz. Singer Aaron Neville, whose family was affected by Katrina, has been tapped to perform at the event. Among the items being auctioned are a handwritten poem by Jim Morrison, a trumpet played onstage by Miles Davis and an MTV Award presented to Nirvana for "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Julie's Auctions will host the event. A limited number of tickets to the event are available via Ticketmaster and the Hard Rock Cafe for $250. Proceeds from their sales go directly to Music Rising. Since its inception, Music Rising has aided more than 2,700 professional musicians and nearly 50,000 students in the Gulf Coast region, according to the organization.

---Edited by Mitchell Peters

ASCP HONORS Q

Quincy Jones was honored with the ASCAP Pied Piper Award at an all-star musical celebration held at the Novo Theatre in New York's Times Square. The award was presented in recognition of his 75th birthday and as one of the foremost exponents of American music and its best ambassador worldwide. From left are: Jones, ASCAP president/Chairman Marilyn Bergman, Tony Bennett and ASCAP CEO John LoFerramento.

---Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS


---Edited by Mitchell Peters

WILLIAM B. GREEN, JR.

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TRIBECA/ASCAP MUSIC LOUNGE
Returning for the fourth year to the Tribeca Film Festival, the Tribeca/ASCAP Music Lounge featured live performances by emerging and established artists. Among those performing during the April 29-May 2 Festival was singer/songwriter Anya Marina, ASCAP assistant VP of special projects Loretta Munoz, ASCAP vice president of pop/rock music supervision owner Alexandra Patsavas and ASCAP senior VP of membership for pop/rock Tom DeSavia.

NARM
For the past 50 years, the annual NARM convention has gathered key music industry players to make deals, hear live music, discover new technology, discuss solutions and network. This year’s gathering took place May 4-7 in San Francisco. Photos courtesy of Lester Austin and Colin Dunne/Universal Image.

LEFT: Kedar Entertainment Group’s Algebra was among the performers featured in the “Celebrating Independent Music” showcase.

RIGHT: NARM president Jim Dono offers a toast at the “Celebrating Independent Music” showcase.

BELOW: B.B. King accepts the Chairman’s Award for Sustained Creative Achievement during the 50th anniversary gala dinner.

ABOVE: Singer/songwriter Rachael Yamagata, Tribeca Film Festival CEO of original programs Annie Leahy, singer/songwriter Anya Marina, ASCAP assistant VP of special projects Loretta Munoz, Chad Shop Music Supervision owner Alexandra Patsavas and ASCAP senior VP of membership for pop/rock Tom DeSavia.

ABOVE: From left: ASCAP assistant VP of special projects Loretta Munoz, singer/songwriter Nick Lowe, Tribeca Film Festival co-founder Jane Rosenthal and Tribeca Enterprises VP of original programs Anne Leahy.

ABOVE: From left: Singer/songwriter Ingrid Michaelson and ASCAP vice president of special projects Loretta Munoz, ASCAP senior VP of membership for pop/rock music supervision owner Alexandra Patsavas and ASCAP director of membership for pop/rock music Supervision Chris Tribbey.

BELOW: From left: ASCAP assistant VP of special projects Loretta Munoz, singer/songwriter Nick Lowe, Tribeca Film Festival co-founder Jane Rosenthal and Tribeca Enterprises VP of original programs Anne Leahy.

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