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Why Russia—And Dima Bilan—Scored Big At Eurovision

BY ILYA BUTS

On May 24, Russia won Eurovision, the largest musical TV contest in Europe, for the first time.

Dima Bilan, one of the most successful post-Soviet pop artists of the last few years, has returned home victorious to a country that has been waiting for this moment since 1994. The euphoria of the Russian people was immense, and Bilan was forced to cancel several concerts in his homeland due to the promotional concerns all over Europe that are awarded to all Eurovision winners.

The singer’s PR agency has confidently started mentioning his breaking out in Europe, and the Russian media has gladly picked up this good news which, apparently, is not so far from the truth.

Nevertheless, it’s hard to say that a victory at Eurovision will definitely lead to serious success. First of all, “Old Europe” hasn’t sent any artists with international potential for many years. Great Britain—the undisputed musical trendsetter in Europe—has picked 19th, 22nd, and 25th out of a possible 25 in the last three years of Eurovision.

Secondly, now that more countries participate in the contest, the voting trends have changed.

It’s no secret that the Eurovision TV audience, deprived of the right to vote for the artist from its own country, votes first of all for artists from neighboring countries. No matter how good or bad any particular performances are, Serbia will always get most of its points to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark will give theirs to Sweden, Cyprus will vote for Greece, and Ukraine for Russia. And not only Ukraine. Since 2000, seven new participants from the former Soviet Union have been added to the competition. In addition to Russia’s historical “neighbors” (nine out of 43 voting countries) you can count on a lot of votes from Israel and Germany, where Russian-speaking communities make up a large part of the population.

It’s most likely no accident that the singer’s management added not only Russian figure skater and Olympic champion Evgenie Plyuschenko to the performance, but also Hungarian violinist Edwin Marton. Hungary probably answered with many points.

All of this, combined with uninspired, third-rate performances from countries that used to compete for first place among themselves, couldn’t help but add to some people’s sense of pessimism. Terry Wogan, the show’s British TV commentator, pointed out from the beginning that “political” voting this year would favor eastern European nations.

He ended by saying that the countries of Old Europe should decide whether to continue participating in a competition in which they don’t have the slightest chance of victory.

But it’s the musical aspect of Eurovision in the last few years, especially from Old Europe, that threatens to sink the deep creative crisis of the show.

Great Britain and Germany wouldn’t likely complain about low scores and block voting if Winipegu or Tokio Hotel represented them on Eurovision. But this doesn’t happen. Most of the performers from the countries of Old Europe are either musical/comedy numbers, 70s variety-show pop or ’80s Europop.

None of this reflects the musical predispositions of modern listeners and hands over victory to the countries that send actual regional stars looking for international success, even if they are just second-rate American style pop singers. Eurovision becomes a marketing tool for them, a platform to start a mid-level European career.

That’s what happened with the Eurovision 2005 winner, Greek singer Helena Paparizou, whose albums “My Number One” and “The Game of Love” were released in several European countries, South Africa, and Japan by Sony BMG. Bonnier Amigo and Gallo Record Co. after her victory. And although the sales of these records have not brought Paparizou huge chart ratings in Europe or the rest of the world, she gave her some international popularity and have strengthened her position as a star in her homeland.

Bilan should expect nothing less, if not more than that. His victory at Eurovision seems like a perfectly planned marketing scheme to promote “Protiv Prawli” (“Against the Rules”), the album he is releasing June 19 in Russia, on the Materiya Zvuk label. His management has already revealed that the album would be released in several European countries by Universal.

And, if one victory at Eurovision is not enough for real international success, it will considerably strengthen his status in the domestic market, where he gets paid, according to our sources, an average of $25,000-$30,000 ($39,000-$47,000) for a performance. A Russian artist can keep that up only if he can keep the public talking about him, and his victory at Eurovision will certainly do that.

Ilya Buss is deputy editor of Billboard’s Russian edition.
A CAGEY MATCH
For The WWE, Music Backs The Brand

The theme song for TRIPLE H, top left, seen taking on RANDY ORTON during a WWE event, is 'The Game,' a song by heavy metal act Motörhead, led by singer/bassist LEMMY KILMISTER, above.

Bill McGinley, Shinedown's manager and president/owner of In De Goot Entertainment, says the WWE exposure will help the band reach its target demographic, get out the word about its new single and generate multiple listener "impressions" that could help get the song played on radio. "We feel like it's a three-fold bonus," he says.

Meanwhile, the WWE has established a sizable music business of its own. Theme songs for individual wrestlers are at the core of the WWE's music offerings. Johnston composes most of the entrance themes used in three weekly shows: "Friday Night SmackDown" on the CW Network; "Monday Night Raw" on the USA Network; and "Extreme Championship Wrestling" on the Sci Fi Channel.

Since Nielsen SoundScan began tracking U.S. album sales in 1991, the WWE has released 17 albums that have sold a combined 5.9 million units. Many have appeared in the upper rungs of the Billboard 200, including "WWE: The Music, Vol. 8," which peaked at No. 24 on the album chart and has sold 48,000 units since its March release. The top seller overall, "WWE: The Music, Vol. 3," which has sold 1.2 million units in the United States and was released in 1998 when the WWE was still known as the World Wrestling Federation.

There's also a new album in the pipeline: "WWE Anthology II," a three-CD set of new Johnston music and alternate mixes of older material tentatively slated for release later this year or early next year. Billboard has learned.

But the importance of music to the WWE goes beyond sales totals. Most of its albums are compilations of original songs Johnston composes to accompany the showy entrances that each wrestler makes before every match. These entrance themes are instrumental in shaping the onscreen personas of star wrestlers and in branding the franchise.

On occasion, the wrestlers themselves will enter the recording booth. Fan favorite John Cena released an entire album in 2005 titled "You Can't See Me," which has sold 364,000 units.

"Radio won't play our stuff because their reasoning is that it's promotional," says Johnston. "I'm like, 'Aren't themes a promotion for someone else's album?'"
While Columbia Records is tap dancing around whether the next AC/DC album will come out exclusively at Wal-Mart, as the Wall Street Journal reported June 9, other merchants say they are resentful for being left out in the cold, both figuratively and literally. Two days after the story appeared, retailers were still trying to get information out of Columbia on the issue, including how long Wal-Mart would have an exclusive period to sell the album.

"There is nothing to say," a Columbia representative tells Billboard. "I don't know it's true, I don't know if it's not true. It's very premature."

Albert Productions CEO Tim Prescott, whose company originally signed AC/DC in the early 1970s and handled its hosting worldwide, referred all questions about Wal-Mart to Columbia in the United States. When pressed on plans for how the album would be issued in Australia and New Zealand, where Sydney-based Albert Productions is the distributor, he says, "It is anticipated that in Australia and New Zealand, the album will be available to all retailers."

Calls to the band's management firm, Prager & Fenton in New York, were not returned by press time.

However, sources within Sony BMG confirm that Wal-Mart will have the new album as an exclusive for the United States, but they refuse to disclose details of the deal. According to the Wall Street Journal story, the album won't come out until the fall. It will be the first of many new AC/DC material since the band moved to Columbia from the Warner Music Group in 2002. Usually when an exclusive happens, the labels blame the artist managers. But according to the Journal, Columbia "brokered the pact with Wal-Mart."

A Wal-Mart exclusive, on its AC/DC album "is a horrible idea," says Joe Nardone Jr., VP of Wilkes Barre, Pa.-based regional retailer Gallery of Sound. "Maybe it's a good idea for quick cash to the label and band's bottom line, but it hurts everybody else up and down the line."

Michael Kurtz, who heads up the Music Monitor Network, which includes Gallery of Sound as a member—condemned the AC/DC exclusives as a bad decision in his weekly chart e-mail. "Putting aside the fact that stopping retailers from being able to compete is always a bad idea, in this instance there is a new dynamic," he wrote. "We now have a record label saying to their distribution company, 'You have no purpose, as we will outsource your skills to the largest corporate retailer in the world.' While Wal-Mart will be able to sell the album very nicely, he suggests it will hurt Sony's sales efforts with other retailers."

>> EMI DEAL UNLOCKS BBC ARCHIVE
The BBC has handed EMI Music the keys to its treasure-filled broadcast vault. Through an agreement struck between EMI and BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the BBC, the two companies will now have access to the BBC's archive of TV and radio recordings to create products including DVDs, CDs and digital downloads. On the flip side, BBC Worldwide will be permitted to use EMI artist performances to create new programming for commercial use, including international radio and TV programs.

>> FREE MUSIC TO BE BUNDLED WITH WALKMAN DEVICES
Sony has struck separate deals with Napster and T-Mobile that enable free music to be bundled with certain Walkman-branded portable music devices. Thousands of vouchers will be placed inside the Walkman Wirefree series via the T-Mobile deal, which consumers can use to download five free music videos. Meanwhile, a deal with T-Mobile will pre-load consumers with the Napster service. New Wirefree owners will be offered five free downloadable tracks and a free 14-day trial of the Napster To Go service.

Growing Garden

MSG, Front Line Tie-Up Eyes Touring Gains

Madison Square Garden's acquisition of a minority equity interest in Front Line Management is primarily a reflection of MSG's desire to strengthen its music business, but the potential for significant synergies exists for both sides. Sources say the MSG stake in Front Line is relatively small. Irving Azoff, Front Line's largest shareholder, and MSG executives declined to comment for the record on the deal (Billboard.biz, June 11). But some of the benefits from the acquisition are clear.

Cablevision-owned MSG has been the top-grossing arena in the world for several years running, according to Billboard Boxscore. In terms of album and ticket sales, Front Line, which is partially owned by IAC (Ticketmaster's parent until a planned spinoff takes place) and Warner Music Group, is easily the biggest management firm in the world, representing such major acts as the Eagles, Jimmy Buffett, Van Halen and Christina Aguilera. The firm also has ties to other management companies representing more than 150 additional artists. Coincidentally or not, Front Line also manages J.D. & the Straight Shot, a band fronted by Cablevision chairman James Dolan.

When there is a choice of venues in New York or other MSG markets for a Front Line act, an MSG venue would presumably get the nod. Meanwhile, MSG has growing media distribution platforms like its cable music network Fuse and the MSG sports and entertainment channel. With TV exposure hard to come by for artists, MSG's ability to host live televised events featuring Front Line acts would seem an obvious plus for both sides.

Cablevision moved Fuse from its Rainbow division to MSG a year ago, and has just embarked on a $15 million re-branding campaign positioning Fuse as the only fully dedicated channel for music. The channel has already aired live performances by the Foo Fighters and the Cure from separate Garden concerts, and will also offer concert programming from the Bonnaroo festival. And the MSG cable channel, traditionally a regional sports network, is increasingly adding music from MSG venues to its menu.

MSG recently added the Beach Theatre and the Chicago Theatre to its list of premiere venues. If MSG continues to boost its venue holdings and in-house productions (the company recently announced an arena tour of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular and says it has other properties in the works), the Front Line deal could become more about touring, which for many acts will be the most dependable revenue stream in the new millennium. Adding media distribution of concerts on a national level via Fuse is icing on the cake.

Front Line has long held a close relationship with No. 2 promoter AEG Live, though No. 1 Live Nation promotes hundreds of shows and even complete tours by Front Line Artists, including the recent $93 million Van Halen reunion tour. Live Nation has made huge inroads into the multi-touring, branding, merchandising, recorded product arena through massive deals with such acts as Madonna, U2 and Jay-Z under the Live Nation Artists umbrella.

Live Nation will launch its own ticketing company in a much-publicized split with Ticketmaster next year. There was talk that Live Nation was eying the running stock point to buy into Front Line, with IAC instead getting the nod. If Live Nation is one superpower in this music industry arms race, the Front Line/Azoff axis is sure to be one to watch. As the music marketplace, a mega management firm with the leverage of superstar artists and alliances in the ticketing, venue, concert, promotion, label and media worlds is a powerful entity, indeed. 
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UPFRONT

TOURING
BY MITCHELL PETERS

BOOKING BATTLES
Mergers Reflect Growing Pressures On Boutique Agencies

As more artists turn to the road to make up lost revenue from dwindling recorded-music sales, many boutique booking agencies in the touring business are facing mounting competition for new acts and to keep existing ones.

While a handful of remaining smaller booking firms have maintained their independence, others in recent months have merged with larger agencies as a way to focus less on running a business and more on booking bands, while, in some cases, offering clients additional services. The alignments also provide agents additional protection in a fiercely competitive market, some industry observers note.

One such company is Emeryville, Calif.-based the Kork Agency (Atmosphere, Peachys, the Gossip), which the Agency Group (3 Doors Down, the White Stripes, My Chemical Romance) acquired in May. Kork founder Christian Bernhardt—who brings most of his team and nearly 175 clients to the Agency Group’s Los Angeles office, effective July 1—says that part of his decision to merge was based on a changing climate in the music industry.

“With the record companies becoming more obsolete, it’s important to have a bigger company that can go into areas a smaller company can’t,” Bernhardt adds, saying that his 8-year-old agency had lost clients to larger competitors that offered representation in film, TV, literary and other services. “I think [mergers are] going to become a trend.”

Meanwhile, in March, Chicago-based the Billions Corp. (Arcade Fire, the New Pornographers, Vampire Weekend) acquired Seattle-based Aero Booking (Death Cab for Cutie, Postal Service, Midslake). Following the announcement, Aero founder Trey Many told Billboard that he “wanted to be part of something bigger” while “retaining a certain amount of independence.”

Although he doesn’t see these types of mergers as a “snowballing trend,” Billions president David “Boche” Viecelli admits that the value of touring has risen to an all-time high, which could result in future booking agency integrations.

“A live career has always been an essential building block of an overall music career,” Viecelli says, noting that Billions Corp. doesn’t have immediate plans to acquire other firms. “But now it’s even more important, because it drives the revenue.”

During the past decade, with the rise in popularity of such groups as Arcade Fire and Death Cab for Cutie, major agencies like Creative Artists Agency and William Morris have become more interested in pursuing independent bands, according to the Windish Agency (Justice, Hot Chip, Animal Collective) president Tom Windish.

“Business is more cutthroat,” says Windish, who has had numerous offers through the years to join larger agencies. “There’s more competition to book the next big thing, while also booking the current big thing.”

Last summer, full-service talent agency Paradigm completed the shift of boutique agencies Little Big Man (Coldplay, Franz Ferdinand, Avril Lavigne) and Monterey Peninsula Artists (Dave Matthews Band, Aerosmith, Toby Keith) into its fold. “After 14 years, [Little Big Man] would’ve continued merging and the roster would’ve gotten bigger, but it didn’t feel like that was the logical next step for us,” Little Big Man founder Marty Diamond says.

But some boutiques are opting to go it alone. Robin Taylor, who owns Brooklyn-based inland Empire Touring (Modest Mouse, the Shins, Band of Horses), has been courted by major agencies but prefers the life of an independent agent.

“I’m not freaked out or nervous that if I don’t saddle up with somebody that something will happen,” Taylor says. “I’ve never really had bands that left for the next level based on anything I couldn’t provide for them. But it’s crazy to see all the smaller agents who’ve gone that route.”

BUSINESS
BY COURTNEY HARDING

In Sync
Narnack Records Inks Lionsgate Pact

Lionsgate Entertainment has announced an innovative distribution and publishing agreement with indie label Narnack Records. Billboard has learned. Under the deal, which sources say is the first of its kind, Lionsgate will handle the physical and digital distribution of the Narnack catalog and will administer the publishing rights to all of the label’s new releases and some of its catalog.

The agreement gives Lionsgate low-cost access to music produced by the Narnack roster for potential placement in its films and TV shows. That, in turn, could help uncover new audiences for Narnack acts, which include the Fall and reggae legend Lee “Scratch” Perry as well as a host of lesser-known noise and indie bands.

“This is a new type of joint venture which fosters a relationship between a major studio and an independent label, and allows each to draw from the other’s strengths while still retaining their own autonomy,” Narnack president Stevan Narnack says.

While acts on Narnack will be compensated for the placements, Lionsgate will not have to pay publishing royalties. The studio—which counts among its releases “3:10 to Yuma,” “Why Did I Get Married” and the “Saw” and “Hos
tel” horror franchises—is also free to license Narnack songs to other studios. Lionsgate produces 30 to 34 films per year and has 14 TV shows currently in production. It has a distribution pact with Sony BNG’s RED Distribution.

“I’d estimate that there are more than a thousand placement opportunities for bands every year when you add up all of our films and television shows,” Lionsgate VP of TV music and A&R Russell Ziecker says. “We see this deal as an opportunity to be able to steer an interesting catalog in there.”

In terms of the promotional benefits for the bands tied to each placement, Ziecker says it varies from outlet to outlet. “We always push for songs to be used as part of the promotion and to have ad cards and credits, but in the end, the network makes the decision,” he says. “From the film side, we see the possibilities for doing YouTube exclusives or spinning off singles featuring the Narnack bands.”

Narnack acts have had a few sync deals in the past, but they didn’t constitute a significant part of the label’s business. “The deal benefits Narnack by providing more exposure to our label and artists through marketing and placements in Lionsgate’s film and television productions,” Ziecker says.

An appealing aspect of the deal is that Lionsgate keep the Narnack catalog to itself, Ziecker says. “Our catalog will have Lionsgate’s team tracking, monitoring and placing our music worldwide in a way that an independent, under normal circumstances, would not have the capacity to facilitate to its full po
tential,” he says.

The first record released under the new deal will be Perry’s upcoming album “Repeance,” which is co-produced by Andrew W.K. and features such guest artists as Moby, Don Fleming and Chris Stein of Blondie. Other future releases include Restaurant’s “Returns to the Torns of Giuliano Medici,” out Sept. 30, and IRAN’s “Same Song Over & Over,” which will be released Oct. 28.
Social Life

Investors See Opportunities In Interactive Sites For Artists

Conventional wisdom has it that digital music services are poor bets for venture capital investments. Simply providing access to music—be it via download, subscription or ad-supported streaming—is a commodity business, the theory goes. The cost of music licensing is too high, the margins too low and the competitors too many and dominant. (Read: iTunes.)

But while monetizing online music has proved challenging, digital music services can still attract venture capital investments. They can still attract venture capital investments, because they focus instead on monetizing fan interaction. However, not many recording artists are capitalizing on that opportunity.

That’s a shame because musicians with established fan bases are well-suited, more so than actors or other types of celebrities with the possible exception of comedians, to satisfy consumer interest in premium celebrity content with a strong interactive component, according to Tim Chang, principal at VC firm Norwest Venture Partners of Palo Alto, Calif.

“The bulk of those opportunities exist in music today,” Chang said on a panel at AlwaysOn’s recent On Hollywood conference in Los Angeles. “Musicians are best-suited for this because they require frequent contact with their fans.”

A good example of this mix of premium content, user interaction and branded star power is social networking service BuzzNet, which earlier this year landed a $25 million financing round that included Universal Music Group as an investor and subsequently acquired music blogs Stereogum and Idolator.

BuzzNet was able to attract that kind of investment because of its ability to draw advertisers. Because the service has so much interactive content—such as reviews, user-submitted photos and artist blogs—the gradual addition of full-song streaming keeps users engaged with not only the content, but also the ads around it. Services structured primarily to let people listen to music is too much of a “lean back” experience for advertisers, BuzzNet CEO/founder Anthony Batt says. BuzzNet’s Batt says fostering interaction via premium content and online social networking tools is critical to monetize fan interest—and to draw VC money.

“Investors are looking for products with traction that can be game-changers,” he said. “Music is a wide-open field. If you think you can be a game-changer in music, then the cost of licensing is well worth it.”

According to attendees at the On Hollywood conference, other areas of interest to VCs when considering digital entertainment investments include multiformat services that manage content over the Internet and mobile platforms; online video services and watermarking and fingerprinting technologies, now that lock-and-key digital rights management is fading.

Chamillionaire, second from left, participates in a session about artists and Internet strategy during the On Hollywood conference in Los Angeles.

“Man, we’re doing something really good here, and I’m not just talking about our groove.”

Stanley Baird performing for Armed Forces Entertainment in Japan.

“For a North Carolina jazz band like us, traveling across the world to play for the servicemen and women who protect our country has pretty much been a life-changing experience. I mean, we’re playing for our troops and visiting historic and far-off places we never thought we’d see. I think you can ask anyone from our group, the most meaningful part if it all has to be when we’d get in a real groove up on stage and look out and see the troops letting loose and dancing. It was really something—it made us feel like, man we’re doing something really good here.”

— Stanley Baird – Jazz Artist

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EMI's Restructuring Enters Decisive Phase

EMI's staggered June 11-17 global release of Coldplay's hotly anticipated "Viva la Vida" may soon be known as the denouement line between the old EMI and the new EMI.

In the coming weeks, the troubled label's bold remake—abandoning the traditional label structure that has dominated the industry for decades—is expected to unfold in earnest.

With a mandate from EMI chairman Guy Hands, whose private equity firm Terra Firma acquired the major in a leveraged buyout last August, the company is making decisive moves toward a radically centralized management structure built around function and region, rather than by label. To execute these plans, Hands has assigned EMI veterans to new responsibilities, poached top-flight executives from rival labels and recruited fresh talent from outside the music business.

As part of that process, the imminent departure of Capitol Music Group chairman/CEO Jason Flom and the expected reassignment of Blue Note Records president Bruce Lundvall to new duties will allow for the dismantling of the Capitol group and Blue Note into one front-line label group housing multiple imprints organized around job functions.

While the new U.S. structure has begun to take shape with key appointments to some executives—and winks to others, letting them know they have a place in the future—most of the heavy lifting, including layoffs, is expected to take place between now and the end of June, when Capitol Music president Lee Trink will leave his post. Thanks to their recent successes, Capitol Nashville and the EMI Christian Music Group are expected to stay relatively unscathed for the time being, sources say.

Without separate label presidents calling the shots anymore, Nick Gatfield, head of A&R labels for North America and the United Kingdom, and Jean-Francois Cecillon, head of international A&R labels and president of EMEC, will work with global marketing president Sam van de Velz to set global priorities. Regional A&R and marketing heads will be responsible for identifying local goals. Sources say the heads of each function in each territory will have two reports—a straight line into the global head of their respective function and a dotted line into the territory heads.

In the meantime, further staff cuts and an exodus of top brass has been under way at the company worldwide:

- The United Kingdom: Just weeks after Miles Leonard and Ferdy Unger-Hamilton were promoted in April to the respective new roles as president of A&R labels. Parlophone and Virgin, Unger-Hamilton apparently walked. EMI won't comment on the situation. Other British-based execs to recently depart include EMI Music U.K. senior VP Mark Collen, EMI managing director Terry Feltgale, senior VP of international marketing Mike Allen and EMI Music U.K. senior VP, commercial Mike McMahon.
- France: EMI France will cut 21 positions as it is restructured around three divisions: A&R, music services (including marketing, promotion and sales) and "supporting" services (including finances and IT).
- Italy: EMI Italy underwent a major downsizing a year ago. The organization, which had consisted of 90 employees, is now down to slightly more than 60, of whom half a dozen are managers. Some changes are expected in the next couple of months.
- Germany: After EMI closed its Berlin offices, Birgit Adels made a swift exit as CEO of EMI Germany/Switzerland/Austria in early May.
- Japan: EMI Music Japan president Shoji Doyma has just been poached by Microsoft Japan as VP in charge of consumer and online business effective July 1.
- Additional reporting by Leila Cato in Miami; Christie Elizeer in Melbourne; Steve McClure in Tokyo; Aymeric Piches in Paris; Wolfgang Spohr in Cologne, Germany; and Mark Warden in Milan.

As the dust settles on the hugely successful 37th Annual Country Music Association (CMA) Music Festival, producers still must grapple with persistent questions about its future.

Will acts continue to play for free? And will the event ever leave Nashville?

Addressing talk that one day the CMA's annual music fest might move to another city, CMA CEO Tammy Genovese says "there is absolutely no way" that will happen.

"There were rumors that the CMA board was looking to possibly move this event to another city—that's totally untrue because it couldn't happen in any other city but Nashville," CMA fest executive producer Tony Brown says. A lot of the artists live here—you've got the bands, the crews, the drivers and everybody here—so it's not like it's a big schlep for them to come down here and do a 30-minute performance.

Genovese adds that the CMA is not looking at putting together a "road" version of the event, either. "We're not in the business to promote and produce festivals," she says. "We do this because it's been a part of our culture since 1972. We do it to promote country music."

Which leads to a second issue: The artists and celebrities participating in the festival are not paid. The CMA donates half the net proceeds from the event to music education on these artists' behalf through a partnership with the Nashville Alliance for Public Education called Keep the Music Playing. To date, CMA has donated more than $1 million on behalf of the artists who participate in the festival.

Still, the CMA fest falls during prime touring season for artists, and for many of them touring is their primary source of revenue. A day playing the CMA fest—now a hugely profitable event—is a day without a paycheck.

"The way I've always looked at it, once a year as a trade organization that promotes country music asks a number of the country music stars to give up a day or 30 minutes of their time for this event for the fans, for the charity, for the television special," Conway says.

Conway, who in his other life is president of Nashville independent booking agency Buddy Lee Attractions, says the talent lineup came together quicker than ever this year. As to whether playing the festival required a tougher sales job, "that depends on who you're talking to," Conway says.

"Let me put it this way: I have not had any body we've asked to play the music festival tell me they wouldn't play the music festival unless they got their fee," Conway says. He cites multiple performances by such acts as Sara Evans and Martina McBride (11 times each), Brooks & Dunn (12), Diamond Rio (13), Alan Jackson (14) and Billy Ray Cyrus (a record 15 performances) as evidence that playing the event is its own reward.

"They wouldn't keep doing this if they didn't want to do it," Conway says. "It's amazing the support they give, and of course we're not going to ask them or beg them every year because we know they can't." Genovese and Conway say they've developed a bit of a rotation so they don't keep going to the well with the same major headliners, and such stars as Toby Keith, Kenny Chesney, George Strait, Tim McGraw and Brooks & Dunn did sit out the 2008 event.

"We don't want to take money out of their pocket because they could be touring," Genovese says, noting that she won't rule out that one day the CMA may compensate the headliners.

"We want to be proactive and make sure our headliners continue to support the event, and what that means at the end of the day I don't know yet," she says. "We haven't sat down and strategically looked at it, but we will be doing that sometime and looking at where we're going to be in the next five years. Is it something that's going to happen in the next year or so? Probably not.

Meanwhile, with a ticket range of $150-$255 for four days, country music fans continue to flock to the CMA festival. Daily attendance at this year's fest, which was held June 5-8, averaged a record-high 52,000, up 9% from last year (billboard.biz, June 9).

About 180 acts performed at a wide range of venues, including LP Field and Riverfront Park. Among the acts were Evans, Jackson, Rascal Flatts, Kellie Pickler, Jewel, Faith Hill, Carrie Underwood, Montgomery Gentry, Keith Urban, Trace Adkins, Josh Turner, Little Big Town, Dwight Yoakam, Kenny Rogers and Miranda Lambert.

Sponsorships, merchandise sales and exhibit sales were all up. ABC will air a two-hour, prime-time special on the event Sept. 8, adding further juice to the CMA fest and country music brands.

Tickets for the 2009 edition, which will be held June 11-14, went on sale during this year's event, and "gold circle" four-day ticket packages sold out in a record 15 minutes. By the festival's final day, advance sales bested sales during the same period in 2007, by 4.2%. Conway says some 14,000 tickets to next year's event have already been sold without any headliners having been announced.
Award Tour

Networking Opportunities Abound When The Ad Industry Hands Out Prizes

It's award season in the advertising industry and music sellers should pay attention.

The Clio Awards went down in mid-May in Miami Beach at the new Gansevoort South Hotel. The Assn. of Independent Commercial Producers' AICP Show took place June 3 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. And Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival will be held June 15-21.

Then there are the One Show, the Art Directors Club Awards, the Best of Brand Activation Awards, the Luries, the 2008 AICE Awards Show, the Fab Awards, the Ibero-American Advertising Awards and the ADDY Awards.

The first three award shows are the ones that I consider the most relevant to the recording industry. Each gives awards for music honoring such categories as best original music, best adaptation and sound design. The events are cool gathering places for those looking to sell their music to advertisers, offering terrific opportunities to schmooze and create business bonds that can make or break your career.

At the AICP, I was a magnet for those that are seeking musical work. Much of the publishing, licensing and label community attend this sumptuous affair, as do producers, composers and representatives of music production houses from around the world. The AICP is a great way to meet a variety of players in the collaborative matrix of advertising production. I happily judged the category of sound design, and was very pleased and in total agreement about the winners.

At the 49th annual Clio (which are owned by Billboard parent Nielsen), attendees grazed the trendy grounds of South Beach to sweat, party and honor their craft. I again was a judge for three music categories: original music, musical adaptation and sound design. The Clios even had a panel called "How the Advertising Music Business Saved the Music Business." Spread out over four days, the event is an exceptional vehicle for the musically ambitious.

The upcoming Cannes Lions Festival is the crème de la crème. "Best use of music" was the only music category, but in terms of attendance (more than 10,000 paid attendees and an additional 2,000 plus who just came to hang) it is by far the biggest, grandest event of them all. It is a cross between MIDEM (coincidentally held in the same town) and the Oscars. The musical presence is truly global, and several fantastic private parties and private showcases are held every year.

Seminars and workshops on the business happen all week as the parties deliberate on the best in a multitude of advertising, branding and marketing categories including film, print, cyber, media, outdoor and others. As with MIDEM and the Cannes Film Festival, meeting, parties, and general schmoozing are in full effect into the wee hours.

On June 18, my company Grey Group is hosting our second annual music seminar at Cannes Lions called "Talking Music With Tony Bennett," during which we'll speak with the legendary singer and his son Danny, who has expertly managed his father's career for about 30 years. The panel will be moderated by Tim Melo, the worldwide chief creative officer/vice chairman of Grey Group. Tony Bennett is also scheduled to perform an exclusive showcase during the festival. Last year's seminar, which featured John Legend and Donavan, was a real crowd pleaser.

As an experienced late-night schmoozer, my suggestion to nocturnal revelers at Cannes Lions is to be sure to buy a few baguette sandwiches and hide them in secretive, yet accessible places so that you can have something to eat when there's no food available at 3 a.m. Necessary sustenance to the person on the move.

Grey Group senior VP/director of music Josh Rabinowitz writes a biweekly column.

For 24/7 branding news and analysis, see billboard.biz/branding
the word “Oye” (“they” or “listen”) appearing on the screen. The word then turned into a stick figure that danced to a bouncy melody sung by Cruz, who could be heard warbling the tag line, “Sabroso hasta el ultimo buchito.” (“Delicious to the last sip.”)

While Rowland knew of the ad, no one currently at the company had ever seen the spot or heard the jingle. But that changed in April, when Rowland sponsored the screening of the Cruz documentary “Celia the Queen” during the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. And that, in turn, led to another Cruz-related sponsorship involving Apple’s iTunes store.

During the festival, Pilon executives met Omer Pardillo, Cruz’s former manager and handler of her estate, who told them that he had discovered an old reel of the TV spot several weeks earlier while sifting through the artist’s belongings.

That fortuitous meeting prompted Rowland to sign up Café Pilon as a presenting sponsor of musical “Celia: The Life and Music of Celia Cruz” during the start of its international run at Miami’s Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. The musical debuts June 18.

Pilon seeks to market its Café Con Leche drink via promotions with Cruz’s music.

“It just so happened that the musical was coming along,” Rowland VP of marketing J.P. Souto says. “Music is central to most people’s life and we thought a musical promotion with Celia and Pilon was a no-brainer.”

The “Celia” promotion was crafted by BMF Media Group, which in the last year has put together some 20 music-themed events to promote Pilon and Bustelo’s canned coffee drinks.

But the “Celia” promotion stands out for the unusual speed at which it was arranged, and because it focuses on the music of an individual performer, instead of a festival.

At the center of the promotion is the iTunes deal, under which Pilon will insert a postcard in every “Celia” program that will encourage those who attend the show to visit CaféPilonLovesCelia.com, where they will find links to download six free tracks from iTunes that include Cruz songs as well as collaborations and tracks by other artists on Pani’s, Cruz’s former label. Rowland licensed the songs from Emusica, which acquired the Fania catalog in 2006.

Among the free tracks are “Ausencia,” performed by Willie Colon; “Ritmo en el Corazon,” performed by Cruz with Ray Barretto; and “Berrinjaban,” performed by Cruz with Colon. Those who don’t attend the show will be able to visit jaycabana.com to purchase the tracks beginning July 1.

“Celia really hit it big during the Fania years,” says Souto, who personally requested tracks he grew up listening to, like “Ritmo de Coco.”

About 24,000 people are expected to attend the show during its three-week Miami run, according to Brian Feit, a marketing executive with BMF. In addition to the card, BMF will set up Pilon coffee tastings at the Arsht Center and host a red carpet reception on opening night.

Oh, and that old Cruz spot from the ’50s? Rowland will show it on a plasma screen in the Arsht lobby before performances of “Celia.”

The “Celia: The Life and Music of Celia Cruz” programs will include Café Pilon-branded postcards offering free song downloads at iTunes.

We’ve pitched it to a few networks, but if the money’s not right I won’t do it. It’s just basically just following Jenni around, being not just the artist but the mom and the daughter and the sister and the friend and the entrepreneur and the businesswoman. It would be called “Jenni Rivera: My Crazy Life.”

What other business ventures do you have going? Besides the makeup line, the book should be released at the same time my next album will be released. It’s an autobiography, “Mi Vida Loca.” Besides that, we’re in the process of developing the fragrance and a future clothing line.

What producers are you working with? I’m actually the producer. I select my own music and my own songs and what type of arrangements I want with my band. I think it’s really important for me to have total input on all my albums, because I don’t think anyone knows my public better than I do.

—Ayala-Ben Yehuda

Pilon’s been a sponsor for several years. And then Jenifer was having this unusual series of events. It was an opportunity to show that we support her. And at the time, the events were a few weeks away from the Pilon Festival in Miami, where we typically show music together.

—Ayala-Ben Yehuda

In 1951, Pilon ran an ad on Cuban TV that featured a jingle performed by the late salsa queen Celia Cruz, who was still living in Cuba at the time. The black-and-white spot kicked off with Rockland.

Regional Mexican Acts Scoring in Atlanta

Atlanta may be known as the hub for R&B and hip-hop, but regional Mexican acts are finding a welcoming audience there too.

A market research firm Latin Force’s Geoscape data shows Atlanta’s Latino population grew more than 900% between 1990 and 2008, to make up nearly 10% of the city’s total. The survey named Mexico as the dominant country of origin for Georgi a’s Latinos. (Charlotte, N.C., which has about one-third as many Latinos as Atlanta, will experience a whopping 1,680% Latino growth from 1990 to 2013, Geoscape projects.)

And in its second year, Cinco de Mayo festival Fiesta Atlanta grew to at least 45,000 attendees from 30,000 last year, organizer Ralph Herrera of Lanza Group says.

The free event at Centennial Olympic Park opened with performances by a rock and a pop group, as well as Cuban singer Albita. But “the major headliners were Mexican regional because that was what our market demands,” Herrera says. “The show was a huge success for a Hispanic festival and one of the biggest events in the city.”

The major headliners were Mexican regional because that was what our market demands,” Herrera says. “The show was a huge success for a Hispanic festival and one of the biggest events in the city.”

In 2003, Clear Channel launched Viva, a Latino pop station in Atlanta, and based on its success converted an English rock station in the market to regional Mexican 105.3 El Patrón (WBZY) at the end of 2006, general sales manager Al Vicente says.

“There is some cannibalization, so Viva stopped growing as much as it was by itself, but that would’ve happened anyway,” Vicente says. Ad revenue has risen, particularly from national brands, even as ratings have settled since El Patrón’s debut, according to Vicente.

—Ayala-Ben Yehuda

IN ESPANOL: All the great Latin music coverage you’ve come to expect from Billboard—in Spanish! Billboarddespanol.com
La Noche Perfecta
Rafael Rubio
Tapes De Norte Ediciones Musicales

La Tragedia Del Vaquero
Todforn Julio
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Le Compré La Muerta A Mi Hijo
Noberto Quintanilla (SACM)
DOS Sound Music Publishing

Me Duele Escuchar Tu Nombre
Edgar Cortiñez
Adrián Perea
toto
APA House Of Music
Universal-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.

Me Encantaría
Jesús R. Rodríguez
Editora Arpa Musical

Me Quedan Todas
Manuel Eduardo Castro (SACM)
Maximo Aguirre Music Publishing, Inc.

Me Voy
Julieta Venegas (SAGA)
DMM-Blackwood Music, Inc.

Mi Amor Por Ti
Ahmad Barreh
JAM Entertainment, Inc.

Mi Heridas
Espinoza Paz
Editora Arpa Musical

Ni Así Me Ruego
Manuel Eduardo Castro (SACM)
Maximo Aguirre Music Publishing, Inc.

No Puerto Más
Agustín Cejudo
Editora Arpa Musical

Noche De Entierro (Nuestro Amor)
Víctor Cabrera
Hector Delgado "El Father"

Juan Luis Moreno Luna "Wisin"
Francisco Saldaña "Liny"
Lladel Veguilla Malave "Yandel"

Blue Kraft Music Publishing
DMM-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Rompediscoteca Music Publisher
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Píe Pán
Marcos Martínez "Laimy"
Bartolo Mendoza "Wisin"
Lladel Veguilla Malave "Yandel"

EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Pávaso Loco
José Luis Rodríguez

Pegao
Juan Luis Moreno Luna "Wisin"
Emilio Téllez Padilla "Neyx"
Lladel Veggulla Malave "Yandel"

La Mente Muenta Music Publishing
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Pégame
Bicky Martín
Dharmal Music

Pensando En Ti
Artemio García
Cuahhtémoc González García
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Por Ella
Luis "Louie" Padilla
Sera-Ca Publishing, Inc.

Prohibido
Espinoza Paz
Editora Arpa Musical

¿Qué Hisiste?
Jimena Romero
Aguatuné Música Publishing

¿Quieres Me Iba A Decir?
Kike Santander
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Kike Santander Music LLC

Reencuentro
Gerardo Franco (SACM)
Editora Arpa Musical

Salé El Sol
Dan Omar
Crown P. Music Publishing

Se Terminé El Amor
Cuahhtémoc González García
Monarca Musical

Si Tu Amor No Vuelve
Willie Castillo (SAYCO)
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Sin Ti Soy Un Loco
Mario Quiñones
Canciones Primo Music

Sola
Hector Delgado "El Father"
Rompediscoteca Music Publisher
Universal-Música Unica Publishing

Te Compro
Espinoza Paz
Editora Arpa Musical

Tus Palabras
Luciano Luna Díaz
ECG Music Publishing

Un Idiota Como Yo
Marco Antonio Pérez
Rene Trevizo
Sera-Ca Publishing, Inc.

Y Si Volviera A Nacer
José A. Sosa
Cultura Urbana Publishing

De Rodilllas Te Pido
José A. Sosa
Siempre Music

Espinoza Paz
"De Rodilllas Te Pido"
José A. Sosa
Siempre Music

Gustavo Santaolalla
Wisin & Yandel

Songwriters of the Year

Song of the Year

Publisher of the Year
As investors outside the music industry began closely eyeing publishing assets five years ago, music veteran Steve Lewis was forming a little publishing company with private equity backing.

Two years later, with additional rounds of funding, London-based Stage Three Music reached across the Atlantic to land the largest publishing acquisition of 2005: Los Angeles-based Mosaic Music Publishing, a catalog that included prime titles by Aerosmith and ZZ Top, as well as dozens of Nashville hits. Since then, valuations for publishing assets have hit historical highs, feeding a frenzy of catalog sales. Meanwhile, fledgling publishers like Stage Three went to work building their companies.

Now that Stage Three is three years into its international operations, Billboard checked in with managing director Lewis for an update.

1. How is Stage Three doing?
   Great. Our 2007 revenues showed 21% growth over 2006, and NPS [net publishers share, or the amount publishers retain after paying songwriters and other rights holders] showed 15% growth—without acquisitions and without the effect of acquisitions. I’m very confident that 2008 will show 6% further growth in revenues and at least 5% growth in NPS.

2. Sources estimate that you paid in the range of $50 million for Mosaic with an NPS of about $3.5 million. That should make Stage Three’s current NPS nearly double that amount, right? We’re privately funded, and all I can say is NPS is a commercially sensitive issue.

3. To what do you attribute your recent growth? We just did our job as music publishers. We had a very good year in Nashville in 2006, and the income flowed through to 2007. Last year we more than tripled the number of country music cuts we secured for our writers—revenue that we’ll see in 2008 or 2009. We grew A&R with bands like Mattafix and the Decemberists. We’ve had a number of songs in the videogames “Guitar Hero,” “Singstar” and “Rock Band,” and there is a dedicated Aerosmith “Guitar Hero” game to be released imminently.

4. You’ve been one of the initial bidders for some significant publishing catalogs in the last couple of years, but you haven’t acquired any in a while. Why not? There have been several catalogs we’ve looked at, signed a [nondisclosure agreement], looked at the books and made offers. On some, I’ve recommended we not go back into another round of bidding because others have bid so high. For other catalogs, we haven’t wanted to bid for numerous reasons, like the quality of the copyrights. My board supports this. We believe there’s going to be a correction in the market [pulling prices down]. It’s much better to keep our powder dry—to hold back and keep something in reserve—so when the correction comes about, we won’t be hampered by catalogs that we’ve overpaid for.

5. What size catalogs are you willing to buy? My investors would probably do an eight- or nine-figure deal.

6. How do you ensure that you have a stable asset base for your company? In our writer agreements, I always look for a long retention period [of the copyright]—I don’t want to rent songs for a short period of time. I also look for what I believe are acceptable margins—the compensation we’re allowed to keep for the job we do. For example, I won’t pay a new band 80% of mechanicals. That’s a superstar royalty.

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Join Billboard as we celebrate the MUSIC of MADDEN NFL

This special 20th anniversary feature will:
- Highlight the impact that this game has had on the music industry through its soundtracks
- Profile key artists whose music has helped to make this franchise so successful
- Spotlight the past, present and future of this top selling game

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Issue Date: July 19 / Ad Close: June 23 / Art Due: June 30
Sneaker Pimps

Converse Recruits Indie Artists For Centennial Campaign

Spend any time at a rock club with a high stage and you'll probably find yourself at eye level with a pair of Chuck Taylors. The iconic sneaker has been the unofficial footwear of the cool crowd for decades, and as its parent Converse celebrates its centennial, the company has decided to make some of those hipsters a part of its new ad campaign. In addition to featuring major acts like N.E.R.D., such indie newcomers as U.K. dance- rock band Does It Offend You, Yeah?, Deerhunter's Bradford Cox, Yacht's Jona Bechtolt, The Fiery Furnaces' Eleanor Friedberger and Kid Sister are all included in the promotion.

"Converse are really the ultimate rock accessory," says Jon Cohen, co-founder of marketing firm Cornerstone, which curated the talent and coordinated the photo shoot for the campaign. "We came at it from the perspective of really celebrating the fact that the two things most artists really need are their guitars and their Chucks."

The campaign already received advance buzz when it was announced that a song, co-written by Pharrell, the Strokes' Julian Casablancas and indie girl Santogold would be released online and used in ads as part of the promotion. The print ads have recently begun appearing in magazines and will run, according to Converse chief marketing officer Geoff Cottrill, at least through the end of the year.

"The artists will not be ID'd in the print ads," Cottrill says. "But a big part of the goal of the campaign is to introduce consumers to these new acts. So to that end, we have created a Web site where consumers can scroll over the ad and find out who each artist is, listen to clips of their music and be directed to their Web site." As a brand, we stand for optimistic rebellion," Cottrill continues. "This is about us celebrating our heritage and our role as a brand in helping to be a catalyst for creativity.

For the bands included in the ads, what do they hope to gain from the new Converse campaign? "We certainly hope that people see the ad and make a connection," says Startime International founder Isaac Green, who is working with indie act Does It Offend You, Yeah? "But they are also getting played on [Los Angeles rock station] KROQ right now, and there are all sorts of ways people can find out about them. In the end, it's hard to measure how much just the ad will help."

Green adds that the band is happy with the ad and would consider working on similar ventures in the future. "There is not a stigma anymore when it comes to partnering with a cool band," he says. "You have to be open to anything. And hey, the band got free shoes out of the deal, and that's always great."

Mark Kates, one of the managers of MGMT, takes a similar view. "I don't see any drawbacks to the band being part of this campaign," he says. "For a long time, it wasn't cool to be in ads, but that time is over."

In fact, Kates says, "For the MGMT audience, advertising can be a more credible medium than some of the more traditional ones."

In terms of how the ad might bring in new fans, he says, "There are always more people out there to reach, and this ad brings another side of the band's personality. Still, he is unsure how the band will measure the success of its participation. "I don't think we're going to be able to leverage the ad in an overt way, because the process from our end is much more passive. We are in the impressions business, and we feel like the ads make a positive impression, especially because the other artists in the campaign are credible."

Bechtolt, the man behind Yacht, listed his goals for the ad: "To expose the underground to the masses through corporate partnerships and to increase awareness, also sales, also touring offers and other stuff. While all those seem attainable, his additional goal of becoming "a better basketball player through some of these new shoes" might be a little beyond the scope of even the savviest campaign."

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

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JUNE 21, 2008 | www.billboard.biz | 15
## Billboard's TOURING SERIES

**Hits the Road!**

### TOURING FOCUS:

**Mid-Year Charts & IAAM Annual Conference**

As the International Association of Assembly Managers gather for IAAM's annual convention and trade show July 24-29 in Anaheim, California, Billboard will present its special mid-year report on the touring industry's top venues, tours, Boxscores and promoters, featuring exclusive charts and analysis. This special report also will focus on the dynamic changes within the ticketing industry.

**Issue Date:** July 26th  
**Ad Close:** June 30th  
**Creative Due:** July 8th  

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### CONCERT BOXSCORE

#### ARTIST(S)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>GROSS/ NET</th>
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<th>Promoter</th>
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Kids Bop

Jonas Brothers, NKOTB Rock The Road

Live Nation senior VP of touring Brad Wavra watched the Jonas Brothers blow up the United Kingdom before his very eyes (see cover story, page 24).

It started May 26-27 at Carling Academy in Glasgow, Scotland, where the group was opening for Avril Lavigne at the start of a U.K./European tour.

"They walked into Glasgow [May 26], first day of the tour, and nobody had even heard the music," Wavra says. "They played to blank stares the first two songs, and by the third song hands started waving, and by the end of set, I wouldn't say it was on fire yet, but it was good."

Wavra says the act sold $300,000 ($591) worth of merch for the first show and there were four people at the back gate when the band left the venue. "We went in the next day, we did $1,000 ($1,970) worth of merch, the place was on fire from the first song, and there were 50 people at the back gate," he says. "In 24 hours, the word had spread among the kids. The day before, they had absolutely no knowledge of who they were and had not heard the music. By the next day they had all gone on to MySpace and YouTube, they had memorized the words, and the place went crazy. It happened right in front of me. It was pretty trippy."

Calling from London, Wavra says the Jonas Brothers buzz is at a fever pitch in the United Kingdom. "They're doing like five interviews a day. Everybody wants them," he says. "The radio stations are all coming down and the fans are just crazy for them."

Having produced mega tours by the likes of Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync when they were selling out stadiums and arenas, Wavra is no stranger to pop explosions. "I've seen it exactly before, and that's why I'm onboard with this," he says. "The difference between this thing and the old one [is that] these guys are real musicians. This is something we have lived for — somebody who can play every instrument, write the songs themselves and perform them live, not to tracks, and not have the songs written for them. This is Eddie, Alex and Wolfgang [Van Halen]. This is a 20-year band."

The Jonas Brothers are booked by David Zedock at Creative Artists Agency, another pop superstar who has orchestrated tours by Backstreet Boys, 'N Sync, Britney Spears and Janet Jackson.

The sibling trio is scheduled to return to North America from July 4 at the Molson Amphitheatre in Toronto. The threesome will play amphitheaters and arenas throughout the summer, and it will be doing some serious business.

THE OTHER KIDS: Meanwhile, it's deja vu all over again for Brad Wavra as he helps orchestrate the upcoming New Kids on the Block tour. Initial on-sales for the arena shows, which begin in September, went up a month ago and virtually sold out within minutes, with more shows added for markets including Boston, Chicago, and Toronto.

"When they first came to me and said they could do double Boston, Chicago and Toronto, I said, 'Are you guys on glue?'' " Live Nation's senior VP of touring recalls. "Who does doubles nowadays? We didn't envision the possibilility that rolling into doubles could really exist in today's environment, especially for a band that hadn't been around in 15 years."

NKOTB will end up with just over 40 shows, and Wavra thinks he will see a similar sales pattern across the country. As I said to some of my guys, 'If we sell out Cleveland, we're selling out everywhere.' " Wavra says, adding that at 7,400 on the on-sale, Cleveland was looking good to go clean. "This is going to be the sleeper tour of the fall, and it's going to go worldwide. It's off the hook."

A pre-sale forecasted the buzz around the tour, but Wavra and the Live Nation camp were cautiously optimistic that the tour would continue. When the general on-sales began, Wavra saw that the demographic is broader than original New Kids fans.

"I think you have a core group of people who were New Kids fans back in the day, and for many of them this was the first concert they ever went to," he explains. "Then you have the 25-30-year-old girls that knew about the New Kids but didn't get to go see them. They're the ones that are saying, I'm going to see the New Kids on the Block."

For information and updates on the Jonas Brothers and NKOTB, check out their websites at www.thejonasbrothers.com and www.nkotb.com. To see the Jonas Brothers in action, check their May 26-27 show at Carling Academy on YouTube.

For more info go to: www.iamm.org and click on AMC under Meetings

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Ever heard of the Dvorak keyboard? It’s an alternative to the standard QWERTY keyboard that rearranges the keys so that typing on it is much quicker and more efficient. Yet few outside of hardcore computer programmers use it because replacing the existing QWERTY standard would be too costly and difficult.

It’s for exactly this reason that new digital music formats face an uphill battle replacing the tried-and-true MP3.

According to the Korea Times, its inventors say the new format will replace MP3 as the standard for all digital music. They’re dreaming, and here’s why.

From a technical perspective, replacing MP3 with a new digital music standard would be easier. Digital retailers in a matter of months could refresh their entire database with music containing the new format—just look how quickly Napster and Walmart switched from digital rights management to non-DRM formats.

But to do so, these retailers would need their label partners to provide them with music encoded in the new format, meaning all the major labels and the host of independents would need to one day agree to start using a new technology to sell their music.

Then they would need audio manufacturers—most importantly Apple—to start making new products that supported the format and its capabilities. The average life span of today’s MP3 player is about eight to 12 months, so it would take time to reseed the market with new devices.

And then there’s the issue of uncertain licensing terms.

The MP3 format is so widespread in part because it is cheap and easy to license. That’s also the case. The mobile industry several years ago developed and agreed upon a standard for mobile DRM, called OMA 2.0, but the administrator set such unworkable licensing rates and terms that no mobile phone manufacturer would agree to them.

The fact is, implementing a new digital music format would require an unprecedented level of cooperation among the labels, digital retailers and manufacturers to implement. Sure, it’s possible to attempt a staged rollout ... where only a computer can access the full features of the new format while portable devices still caught up, but that default would make it far less interesting to the music fan.

“The value proposition to the consumer is linked to the functionality,” says Napster COO Christopher Allen, who oversaw the company’s format change to MP3. “So if I can do something on my PC with a client player but I can’t do it on the Web or my device, the value to the consumer of that format is not as exciting as if there were a whole ecosystem that could take advantage of the new format’s capabilities.”

These issues have combined to start new music formats in the past. In 2001 Coding Technologies created the mp3PRO format and licensed it through Thompson, which administers the original MP3 technology. It featured an advanced compression system that allowed encoded files to take up half the storage space of a traditional MP3, with improved sound quality to boot. However, only the Thompson-owned RCA made products that used it, and as such failed to achieve any traction.

Thompson eventually discontinued support for it.

Thompson tried again in 2005 with mp3Surround, which made the same mistake and died quietly without any support from any manufacturers.

Yet despite the difficulties, a new digital music format is exactly what the music industry needs to kick-start digital sales. The incumbent MP3 format doesn’t offer digital retailers enough of a differentiated product than what fans get already ripping their CDs.

The only benefit to buying an MP3 online is a slightly higher-quality file, and that has not yet proven enough to lure customers away from the CD.

But a new digital music format that added lyrics or video to each song could be displayed on a portal device or computer: while playing could change things, as would one that added advanced Pandora-like tagging features making it easier to build custom playlists.

What the industry should do is determine what kind of features it wants from a new music format, and then push for a standard that meets that need, rather than trying to shoehorn some new cool technology into the existing business model.

MP3 INDUBITABLY
Why A New Six-Channel Digital Music Format Won’t Prevail

DRY DOCK
This is certainly a new one. While most multimroom speaker systems stream music from such Internet-based sources as Rhapsody or Pandora, the Eos system takes a decidedly more pedestrian approach as an MP3-player docking system.

iPods, Zunes, satellite radios and even a home PC or stereo can be plugged into the base station, which then streams music up to 150 feet in 2.1 stereo to the amplified wireless speakers. Each speaker has its own volume control, integrated power and plug-and-play setup. The Eos bundle ships with one base station and one wireless speaker for $250. Additional wireless speakers are available for $150 each.

—Antony Bruno
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Director, Interactive and Social Media, Alloy Media + Marketing

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CEO, Courage

RAHMA SUBRAMANIAN
VP, The Land’s End, Spokeswoman, Retailer

JEREMY WRIGHT
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PARIS—Long considered high-possible to export, a new wave of French music is finally breaking on U.S. shores.

When French-Israeli pop singer Yael Naim’s "New Soul" (Atlantic) hit No. 7 on the Billboard Hot 100 in February, it marked the highest position for a French artist in 40 years—and also indicated a new U.S. openness to music from France.

Through touring, sync placements and Internet savvy, other French acts are hoping to swiftly follow Naim’s lead.

This year’s Coachella festival (April 25–27) featured 14 French artists/DJs, including leading names like Justice, Dimitri From Paris and DJ Mehdi. That compares favorably with eight acts appearing in 2007—self-a sizable improvement on 2006, when Daft Punk was France’s sole representative.

“We can now much more easily find bookers [for French acts] in the U.S. than before," Paris-based EMI France international development director Laurence Muller says.

A key role in exposing local talent to U.S. audiences has been the New York-based arm of the French Music Export Office, funded jointly by France’s government and music industry bodies. In 2006, it booked programmers from U.S. festivals—including Coachella—to meet French industry execs in Paris.

At its Paris headquarters, executive manager Sophie Mercier notes that while the U.S. market remains hard to crack, "now French artists often tour twice in the same year, which is something new."

Yael Naim’s U.S. breakthrough came after "New Soul" was featured in a TV ad for Apple’s MacBook Air. Indeed, her French label Tot ou Tard says a U.S. release had not been planned until that campaign came about.

France’s other 2008 U.S. TV ad stars have included a pair of electro acts: the Because label’s Justice with "Genesis" (Cadillac) and Boxon act Prototypes with "Je Ne Te Connaiss Pas" (Mitsubishi).

While Justice says sync placement is the Export Office’s next priority, Paris-based specialist Bonus Track has already notched several U.S. successes since its launch in 2003.

"Bonus Track launched [because] we realized there was a lot of interest for French songs in the U.S., but France had a terrible reputation for cleaning rights," co-founder Stephanie Giraud says.

Bonus Track’s proactive approach has resulted in U.S. placements for French acts including Tahiti 80 and Mellow, while Giraud was involved in drawing Apple’s attention to Naim.

French labels also praise the power of the U.S. blogosphere when it comes to spreading the word about their acts.

Toto-un manager-director Vincent Freibuss recalls, "One day—the sync placement with Apple—the blogger Perez Hilton posted a link to Yael Naim’s page. She received 70,000 visits in 48 hours."

While the strongest U.S. album sales for the current wave of French acts are for Naim and Justice, there’s still been some room for rock.

Along with the success of French-born Latin alt-rocker Manu Chao, melodic rock act Phoenix’s latest album, ‘It’s Never Been Like That,’ has sold 34,000 copies on Astralwerks, while metal band Gojira played 40 U.S. shows during 2007, selling 24,000 copies of current album “From Mars to Sirius” (Prosthetic Records), according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Phoenix is one of a growing number of French acts—including Naim—to embrace singing in English. "A good song will transcend lyrics," says Jim Powers, owner of Chicago-based label Minty Fresh, "but singing in English is a smart move to get more exposure, especially on radio."

Minty Fresh’s roster includes Tahiti 80, whose frontman Xavier Boyer sings in English, and electro-pop trio Prototypes, which occasionally features English lyrics.

Looking forward, Freibuss opines that Naim’s success "certainly opens doors for future opportunities" for French acts. Certainly, he suggests, it could dispel any inferiority complex his countrymen might have when considering the U.S. market.

"Now," he says, "we have no hang-ups."
A Passage To India
Music Matters Moves Spotlight Away From China

HONG KONG—International music companies looking to expand into Asia should target India, rather than China, according to executives at the Music Matters conference.

And attendees at the third annual confab June 3-5 were urged not to delay by Peter Mukerjea, Mumbai-based chairman of music entertainment channel INX Media, speaking during a panel discussion about the Indian market.

"Get on a plane and get to India quickly," he said. "If you look at China and miss India, you're missing out."

Many Asian execs agree, saying a key factor in India's favor is the enormous potential for growth of visual media in a country where Bollywood films play a crucial role in disseminating music.

"Unlike other markets, the music industry is not stand-alone and is inextricably linked with films," says Mandar Thakur, Mumbai-based GM of digital content aggregator Soundbuzz India. "Hence it is part of a much larger ecosystem."

Thakur notes that mobile penetration in India hit an estimated 250 million subscribers as of February and is projected to hit 500 million by the end of 2010, when broadband Internet connections should reach 20 million. Thakur adds that with at least six major national carriers and further licenses being issued, new mobile technologies and applications find their way to consumers very rapidly.

"The Indian market could offer better growth opportunities for foreign partners," says Atul Churamani, VP of A&R, publishing and new media at Mumbai-based label Saregama. "Our vast English-speaking population could facilitate the growth of this industry quicker than it might in China."

Churamani says India's copyright system, based on British law, is another plus point for the region, although U2 manager Paul McGuinness, a keynote speaker at the event, said he still holds out hope for Chinese copyright enforcement.

"Why shouldn't China lead the world in terms of enforcing intellectual property rights?" he asked during a press briefing session.

However, less optimistic surrounded the talk of opportunities in China, which has traditionally received plenty of attention at Music Matters and from the wider international business community.

"There is no business model that works in China," Warner Music Asia Pacific executive VP Calvin Wong said during the "Markets That Matter: China—Breaking an Artist in the Middle Kingdom" panel. "I want to work with telcos and service providers. But if they don't give us more of a share, I can't work in China."

However, many Western execs remain bullish about Chinese opportunities.

"The economy is there, but it has shifted," Linkin Park manager Rob McDermott said on the same panel. "The economies are only going to come en masse. You need to co-brand the experience."

Music Matters in Brief
■ The conference got off to a rocking start with a performance on the main stage of the Grand Hyatt hotel's ballroom by unsigned Chinese "human beat-box" artists Gui Jing, Jing Xing and Jiang Ling Hu. But its amazing, high-energy performance nearly didn't happen—Music Matters president Jasper Donat said the act ran into trouble at the Hong Kong-China border and almost wasn't allowed in.

■ Event organizer Branded says attendance was up from last year, as the total number of delegates, including media, climbed 25% to 750, while the number of companies in attendance rose 28% to 320.

■ Sponsorship revenue increased 40% with new sponsors including Sony Ericsson and Singapore Stadium.

■ IFPI chairman/CEO John Kennedy got big laughs when he told the Music Matters wrap-up session of his dream about what might be on the agenda at Music Matters 2009, proposing a keynote speech from "President Obama, calling for greater global respect for intellectual property."

■ He also quipped that Steve Jobs would announce "an Apple subscription, launched with a major advertising campaign around Gloria Gaynor's new recording, 'I Will Subscribe.'"

■ Attempting to read Jobs' mind was also a feature of McGuinness' keynote speech. The U2 manager updated his MIDEM call to arms for Internet service provider responsibility, but also predicted: "Apple will before long reveal a wireless iPod that connects to an iTunes 'all-in-the music, wherever you are subscription service. I would like it to succeed, if the content is fairly paid for."
Winding Down Handelman
What To Expect From The Rackjobber's Liquidation

The industry may not harbor the same sentimental feelings for Handelman Co. as it did for Tower Records, but the news that the rackjobber is exiting the music business and probably being liquidated is just as somber as the demise of the now-defunct retailer. At the same time, Handelman's expected liquidation probably won't be the financial disaster that Tower's closing turned out to be.

On June 2, Handelman announced it was selling inventory and other assets related to its U.S. Wal-Mart business to Anderson Merchanidisers and that it had also agreed to sell or transition its Canadian operation to Anderson. The company tried to portray the move as marking its exit from North America's music business. But in an interview, Handelman CEO Al Koch said the plan is to sell off the company's various assets and liquidate.

Founded in 1934, Handelman is downright anachronistic in the context of the music industry. Depending on who you listen to, it got its start as a drug wholesaler or a condom distributor that replenished dispensing machines in pharmacy rooms. Either way, it's got history. In 1958, the company was still called Handelman Drugs, even though it began selling music to accounts in 1953. A decade after getting into music, it went public. During the next 20 years, it diversified, adding books and magazines in 1975, home computer software in 1983 and video in 1985.

But in 1998, Handelman decided to concentrate on music and jetissoned all other production lines, even as it slashed its discount account base from more than 100 to just nine chains. While that strategy proved successful short-term, it ultimately proved to be a disaster as music sales peaked in 2000.

By 2003, Handelman was thinking diversification again when it tried to buy Baker & Taylor, but shareholders shot down the deal. In 2005 it bought REPs, a merchandising sales force, and videogame wholesaler Cramer. But those moves were too little too late.

Then came a $55.7 million loss for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2007; a $31 million loss in the first nine months of the current fiscal year; and a credit crunch from suppliers and the banks. It all proved too much for the Handelman board, which decided to pull the plug and wind down operations. The company is still capable of returning some capital to shareholders. "It's another chapter in the industry's history closing," Reedy co-owner Tor Hansen says. "It's sad."

But the wind-down of Handelman isn't likely to be as ugly as the closing of Tower Records was. In fact, not only will all suppliers get paid, but the company expects to have money left over to cover employee severance costs and distribute cash to shareholders.

The company should soon release its year-end numbers, and if its balance sheet is similar to what it was at the end of the nine-month period when receivables exceeded payables by $50 million, Handelman could pay vendors from receivables alone.

But that scenario is unlikely, considering Handelman also had $116 million in inventory at that time. While Handelman tries to manage down inventory as it waits for Sears/Kmart, Shopko, Pamida and Best Buy to find replacement vendors, vendors will likely be paid in a combination of cash and returns, but paid they will be. Koch denies there's any chance that the liquidation will turn into a Chapter 7 or Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

The U.S. portion of the Wal-Mart deal could realign Handelman as much as $34.3 million, including up to $21.5 million for inventory, $5.6 million for retail display fixtures and another $2.5 million for pick, pack and ship costs; warehousing costs; billing; management; and transition costs incurred by Handelman in connection with the closing. Handelman could receive another $4 million if it identifies, sells or transitions to Anderson any other business that adds value to the U.S. music transaction. Meanwhile, terms of the Canadian deal have not yet been disclosed.

Handelman is required to use 75% of the cash proceeds from the Wal-Mart deal to pay down bank debt. At last count, it owed $63.2 million to Silver Point Finance, which is secured by the company's accounts. In order to fund that plan, Koch says the company will continue to shop its Crave and REPs, as well as other assets.

Finally, the wind-down is expected to exact a heavy toll on the company. Employing about 2,300 according to a regulatory filing, about 240 employees could become part of Anderson in the States. The Canadian operation employs 236, most of whom are also expected to be hired by Anderson. But 265 employees who work at headquarters will likely be laid off in the next few weeks.

Likewise, expect layoffs at the labels due to Handelman's demise. At the major level, the distribution companies each serviced the account with a team of employees. A number of indie labels have reps dedicated to those accounts too.

EMI Back On Top
Sony/ATV Surges To No. 2, Trailing By Universal, Warner/Chappell

U.S. radio airplay for first-quarter 2008 lands EMI Music Publishing back on top of the quarterly publisher market share chart for the first time since Universal Music Publishing Group took the lead in early 2007. But the more dramatic rise is in Sony/ATV Music Publishing surging to the No. 2 slot for the first time—and behind by only 0.01% of the market.

With the two publishers splitting the largest market share, EMI’s current quarter’s three previous high, which ranged from 23.28% to 23.51%. Still, EMI beat three of its five previous No. 1 shares, which peaked at 23.56% when the Publisher Airplay Chart first launched in Q1 2006.

Among the top 100 tracks tracked by Nielsen BDS for this chart are EMIs in Chris Brown’s "With You," Alicia Keys’ "No One," Fergie’s "Clumsy," Rihanna’s "Don’t Stop the Music," Three Days Grace’s "Never Too Late" and Brad Paisley’s "Letter to Me." The Sony/ATV surge marks the greatest single-quarter leap since the chart’s inception. The publisher added 9.27 points to land at No. 2 with 21.35% of the market. The publisher has been growing steadily since hitting a low of 7.54% when it came in at No. 5 in Q1 2007. It jumped to 13.08% the following quarter after its acquisition of Famous Music.

Sony/ATV boosted its position with songs like Flo Rida’s "Low" featuring T-Pain, Timbaland’s "Apologize" featuring OneRepublic, Sara Bareilles’ "Love," Collie Caillat’s "Bubbly" and Taylor Swift’s "Teardrops on My Guitar." The publisher shared rights with EMI in "With You" and "Don’t Stop the Music." Universal is now No. 3 with 17.77% share. Its piece of the market is still significantly greater than its 11.5% share in Q1 2007 before its acquisition of BMG Music Publishing. While the current quarter is slightly less than the Q1 2007 combined Universal-BMG share, it does beat all previous combined shares of the two companies.

Universal songs included "Low," "No One," Linkin Park’s "Shadow of the Day," Sean Kingston’s "Take You There," Bruno’s "Kiss Kiss" featuring Flo Rida and J. Holiday’s "Hysteria." Warner/Chappell Music came in at No. 4 with a 10.17% share, its lowest since the chart’s inception. The publisher remained at No. 2 from Q1 2006 through Q2 2007, dropping to No. 3 in Q3 2007. It recaptured the No. 2 spot the following quarter. But since reaching its all-time high of 17.56% in Q3 last year, the publisher’s share has been steadily dropping.

The publishers top songs this quarter include "Don’t Stop the Music," "Never Too Late," Buckcherry’s "Sorry," Mariah Carey’s "Touch My Body" and third time. At No. 8 with 1.99%, the publisher beats its previous shares of 0.15% (No. 9) in Q1 2007 and 1.67% (No. 10) in Q3 2006. The publisher holds interest in songs like "With You" and Trey Songz’ "Can’t Help But Wait."

Kobalt Music Group stays on the chart for the fourth consecutive quarter, but falls to No. 9 with a 1.78% share. The company continues slipping from its all-time high of 2.13% when it first entered the chart at No. 6 in Q2 2007. Songs with a Kobalt interest include Pink’s "Who Knew" and OneRepublic’s "Stop and Stare."

Cherry Lane Music Publishing rounds out the top 10 at 1.25%—just as the Songwriters Hall of Fame is honoring its founder/towner Milt Okun this month (see stories, pages 11 and 45). The share is shy of its 1.41% last quarter when the publisher first entered the chart. The publisher holds interests in Fergie’s "Clumsy" and "Big Girls Don’t Cry," as well as Kanye West’s "Good Life" featuring T-Pain.

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Neil Young

When he couldn’t keep quiet about his distaste for the Iraq War any longer, this rock legend channeled his anger into a controversial album, tour and film.

In the spring of 2006, Neil Young was just a year removed from a near-fatal aneurysm when he became so enraged with the war in Iraq that he quickly wrote, recorded and released the protest album “Living With War.” Not two months after its release, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young launched their Freedom of Speech tour, during which unwitting fans expecting the band’s sweeter side were greeted instead with its serrated edge. During a three-hour-plus concert, the band played nearly all of “Living With War” and many of the political anthems on which its legend was built, like “Ohio,” “Military Madness” and “Find the Cost of Freedom.” Despite CSNY’s anti-establishment roots, the move angered some fans, while inspiring others. The forthcoming documentary “CSNY: Déjà Vu” charts that friction, portraying fans who saluted the group’s efforts and those who felt betrayed by them, while also introducing viewers to Iraqi War vets who are now protesting the war as musicians, politicians and social workers. Directed by Young and due in theaters July 25, the film blends concert and behind-the-scenes footage with short news features created by CNN correspondent Mike Cerre.

One of the film’s most powerful scenes shows Atlanta fans angrily filing out of the venue, not before telling you to go to hell, and that’s putting it kindly. When you look back on the tour, are there faces and middle fingers in particular that stick out?

I remember some faces. There’s one guy I remember for sure, and he’s not in the movie. This was a harrowing experience at times, and it’s not an experience that I would like to repeat. I think it was a one-off. I think if I did this kind of thing for the rest of my life, I’d become like CNN and I don’t really respect that very much. It’s like the same thing on a loop. I don’t see the need for that. I like to be a full-length program, not a repeating segment.

Besides Atlanta, I know the reaction in Orange County [Calif.] was particularly bad, and even spurred fights. Did the negative reactions cause you to second-guess yourself at all?

There was never any sense of giving up or anything. We went from July 4 to Sept. 10 on the tour, and I remember feeling glad that we weren’t playing on Sept. 11. There were moments throughout it where you just shook your head and said, “God, what are we doing?” But the songs were there, the feeling was there, the audience was there, and we were doing it.

Crosby, Stills & Nash play to a different crowd than you do as a solo artist. You must have also been aware of the fact that there was less preaching to the choir going on than there would have been on your own tour. I guess so, ‘cause they’ve been pretty mellow for a long time. But if you look at the roots, if you look at the original music—“For What It’s Worth,” “Ohio,” “Military Madness,” “Long Time Gone,” “Déjà Vu” and all these songs that were written back then—immigration, “Teach Your Children”—all that stuff is rooted in the same message as this. It’s just a different time. Of course, between then and now, they’ve been singing about things they’ve believed in, and a lot of love songs, a lot of songs that people enjoy, so it could become kind of like date night, going to see them.

But I put out “Living With War,” it had “Let’s Impeach the President” on it, and it was on all the networks, and so [the audience members] had to know something about it. We called the tour the Freedom of Speech tour. And we went out and did these songs. They had to know something was happening. So there’s still an element of surprise, and you saw that in Atlanta, but a lot of people knew what was going on.

But those guys [Crosby, Stills & Nash] were into it 100%. Stephen [Stills] does not like people to not like him, and I respect him for that. He’s a very sensitive guy. He kept saying, “Well, it’s like a political cartoon, you have to see it as that,” and he was always trying to soften the blow a little. And it’s not the way he is, and that’s cool. But I think he was with us, and he believed in what we were doing, or he wouldn’t have been there. And [David] Crosby and [Graham] Nash were right there from the beginning, because they don’t care so much how the reaction’s gonna be.

As the film’s director, did you draft an outline and say to yourself, “I want to get X, Y and Z in this film. I want these people in the film”?

No. I met Mike Cerre, who was a [CNN] correspondent who had been to Iraq and Afghanistan five times. I said, “Embed in this tour and do what you do—travel in one of the buses, come with us everywhere and do whatever you want to do, and cut together 10 episodes, like you were cutting together episodes for CNN or MSNBC, and give ‘em to me, and that’s it.” I’m gonna do whatever I want with them. You do what you do, give ‘em to me, and I’ll do what I do.” That was my direction.

What do you hope to gain from the release of the film?

Discussion. Debate. Open forums. And it does that to people. You’ll see what happens when this film comes out on the Internet—you’ll see people talking. It’ll be interesting. It’ll open up a thing, and that’s what it does. That’s what the music did. That’s what happened in the audience. I saw families fighting within the families, the kids wanting to stay and the parents going, “We’ve got to get out of here. This is no good.”

I saw families fighting within the families, the kids wanting to stay and the parents going, “We’ve got to get out of here. This is no good.”

Since the ‘06 tour, you’ve been working on your “Archives” project. Are you leaving politics alone for the moment?

I’m not really focused on music right now, as far as new music. I have a couple songs in the back of my head, and if they come to the front of my head, I’ll write ‘em. But as far as my life goes, I’m totally focused on eliminating roadside refueling, with a big car, not some little rinky-dink thing that you can’t get in. An American car that doesn’t need oil, that doesn’t need gasoline, that doesn’t pollute and doesn’t need gas stations. That’s what I would like to make. We can eliminate roadside refueling and we can change the world. That’s bigger than a song.
THE JONAS BROTHERS

Dominate A Multimedia World

BY ANN DONAHUE

6/21/08
"Look at him!" shrieks the 11-year-old girl in the shocking pink tutu and stripy tights, as Joe Jonas executes a Marty McFly knee slide across London's O2 Arena stage. "He's well lush."

For British tweens right now, "well lush" (rough translation: "My, what an attractive young man") is perhaps the ultimate compliment. Trouble is, at a time when much of the old British pop infrastructure ("Top of the Pops," Saturday morning kids TV, Smash Hits magazine) has been axed, there's been a distinct lack of pop hunks upon whom to bestow the epithet. Which is why much of Avril Lavigne's crowd of 20,000-odd grimped-up "punk" princesses are reacting to the opening band like they've just taken hormones.

Homemade banners flutter in the front rows and deafening high-pitched squeals fill the arena every time Nick, Joe or Kevin Jonas appear anywhere near the front of the enormous stage.

"Mum, I need the toilet," Miss Tutu and Tights' kid sister demands.

"You'll have to wait," Mum snaps, with a scary glint in her eye. "I'm enjoying this."

And when you've got the Mums hooked, you're really in business.

"It really is a little frightening," Hollywood Records GM Abbey Konowitch says. "We've seen them in shows where they shouldn't be this good yet, where they shouldn't be this big yet."

But they are. And Disney is responding.

All the cogs of one of the world's biggest entertainment companies are operating to inundate the pop culture scene with the Jonas Brothers' music and image. A multimedia attack plan has been sketched out for the next eight months—everything from a new album to a TV movie to an international touring schedule to a theatrical-release 3-D film.

It's something of a 360 deal: wide, with Team Jonas under a separate contract with each Disney entity: a traditional label deal with Hollywood, and then additional contracts with the TV, theatrical and publishing divisions. "The great thing about Disney is we have relationships with each of those [divisions], and they have relationships with each other," says Kevin Jonas Sr., the act's father and manager. "In every single case we found people that are open to the boys, recognize their talent and found a way to communicate with the other departments to give the boys the best opportunity."

The Year of Jonas has already begun: The Disney Channel is currently running a 16-episode shortform reality series titled "Jonas Brothers: Living the Dream" that gives a glimpse of life on the road. But the promotional machine hit its top gear June 20, when the Disney Channel debuted TV movie "Camp Rock," starring the Jonas Brothers and featuring a breakout performance by another Disney talent, Demi Lovato (see story, page 27).

But Disney isn't just debuting the rock romance on its cable platform. During the first weekend, the movie also will air on ABC, ABC Family and disney. (As a teaser, the soundtrack premiered June 14 on Radio Disney.) The movie will be piped into Disney theme parks, resorts and cruise ships. Finally, "Camp Rock" will debut internationally throughout the summer.

"It's what we do," Disney Channel Worldwide president Gary Marsh says. "For many companies, synergy is a dirty word. For us, it's really about creating opportunities for the talent and for the properties we're creating."

While the full "Camp Rock" soundtrack—and an expanded edition with a behind-the-scenes DVD—will be released June 17, a single CD teaser for the grand finale song, "We Rock," already is gaining traction through its exclusive release at Target. Containing the song, a preview of the movie, a Juneteenth and a poster, the disc retailed for $3.99 and sold 11,000 copies its first week of release.

Wall Disney Records senior VP/VGM Jim Weatherston says the CD single also contained an optional poll that participants could take on their computer. The results were surprising. More consumers between the ages of 16 and 18 bought the disc than Disney anticipated.

It's this older crowd—who doubt driving their little sisters—that are expected to throng to the Jonas Brothers' 48-date Burnin' Up tour through North America this summer. Live Nation signed the band in January to a two-year, multimillion-dollar worldwide touring deal, and Live Nation VP of touring Brad Wawra says that based on the current pace of sales, the amphitheater/arena trek will be entirely sold out. (Two nights at New York's Madison Square Garden in August have already gone clean.)

"We're averaging well into the 12,000-14,000 [range of tickets per night] right now, and this is before we see the debut of 'Camp Rock' and prior to the album release on Aug. 12," he says.

Amid all this, the Jonas Brothers are preparing a new album. The group was famously dropped by Columbia in 2007 after its 2006 debut, "It's About Time," sold just 65,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. (A Columbia representative didn't respond to a request to discuss the band's tenure at the label.)

But the act's self-titled 2007 Hollywood Records debut was a left field smash, connecting with the younger demographic to the tune of 1.3 million copies sold (see chart, page 26). On the upcoming "A Little Bit Longer," the band wrote its own music, under the guidance of Hollywood VP of A&R Jon Lind and producer John Fields.

The first four tracks being eyed as singles definitely show a progression for the band. "I think we grew up on the road a little bit," Joe Jonas says. "It's not like we were immature and now we're changing our sound or anything like that, but we're getting older and I think..."
we've learned more from life in the last couple of years.

While the catchy pop power pop hooks remain, the Jonas Brothers show some daring with their songwriting and musicianship. Catchy lead single "Burnin' Up" is reminiscent of Maroon 5 and Justin Timberlake. It's destined to be a crowd pleaser—it's no coincidence that the upcoming tour takes its name from the track.

The next single, "Love Bug," is a complete departure for the band. Stripped down at the beginning—and featuring an interlude with the sound of Joe Jr dancing—it builds to a traditional, catchy pop ending.

"We think that the group will be big enough that we can get radio to react to it instantly, instead of being frightened to death," Hollywood Records president Bob Cavallo says.

Scheduled third for release is "She's," which has guitar-driven undertones much like early Weezer. Finally, there's "A Little Bit Longer," a ballad written by Nick Jonas out of fear and frustration when he was diagnosed three years ago with Type 1 diabetes.

"Pretty much we were writing all these songs when we were on tour, and we didn't have time to go into a studio and record," Jonas says. "There's a lot of time when you're on the tour bus where there's a lot of waiting around. We have like four hours a day where we could really do something."

Thus, the majority of the album was written and recorded on a tour bus that has been retrofitted as a recording studio. Sponsored by Gibson Guitars, the vehicle shuttled the trio around during its "Look Me in the Eyes" tour last year. It's additional proof of the Jonas Brothers' ability to multitask—something that will again come in handy on the "Burnin' Up" tour, which will be filmed for a movie that will be released in theaters in 2009.

Modeled after the hugely successful "Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus Best of Both Worlds Concert Tour" film—which earned $65.2 million at the box office, making it the highest-grossing concert film of all time, and featured a guest appearance by the Jonas Brothers—the band's own movie also will be shot in 3-D and feature behind-the-scenes interstitial segments with the brothers.

Art Repola produced the "Hannah Montana" theatrical release and is onboard again with director Bruce Hendricks for the Jonas Brothers feature. The movie will be filmed during the July 13-14 concerts at the Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif., and the day-in-the-life features will be shot during the tour. Repola says:

"We're going to be in rehearsals before the tour opens, watching and picking our camera angles based on the show and the choreography," he says. "We're really excited about shooting these guys in 3-D—they play an amazing show with a lot of physical stunts."

When the tour and film are complete, the Jonas Brothers will settle down in Los Angeles to work on a scripted TV series—tentatively titled "J.O.N.A.S."

GIRL POWER CHORDS

Not long ago, 15-year-old Demi Lovato was sitting in a conference room on Disney's Burbank, Calif., lot with a dozen high-powered executives from across the conglomerate's divisions.

She had submitted an audition tape, and the assembled bosses wanted to talk to her about auditioning for a few upcoming TV pilots. Disney Channel Worldwide president of entertainment Gary Marsh asked on a whim: "Do you know any songs?"

"I know you sing—would you mind sharing something with us?"

"They kind of put me on the spot," Lovato recalls. "I didn't mind it. When people put me on the spot, it's kind of like, 'Hey, I'm not going to get nervous. I'm just going to do what I do.' So I did what I did." What she did was belt out a spot-on rendition of Christina Aguilera's " Ain't No Other Man." And, with that, she had landed the lead in the Disney Channel's summer movie "Camp Rock."

"Our jaws just dropped," Hollywood Records senior VP/GM Bob Cavallo says. Lovato signed a record deal, and her first album will drop later this year.

Lovato's sweet show of vocal prowess as Cinderella-with-a-guitar-in "Camp Rock" also led to another professional milestone: Now she's teaming up with her co-stars in the movie, the Jonas Brothers, on the music side of her career. Not only will she be on the sprints for their upcoming tour, Disney also enlisted them in crafting her pop sound for her upcoming album, due in November, by co-producing and co-writing.

"I'm more of a writer of stuff that wouldn't make it on a Disney album," she says, laughing. "It's too dark. My mom's like, 'Oh my gosh, go on!' So I came to the Jonas Brothers and said, 'Um... I need help writing catchy stuff just because, well, my target audience isn't metal music.'"

"Don't rule it out just yet, Demi—if there is a sequel, "Camp Heavy Metal" does have a nice ring to it. —AD
The Young Latin Demographic Represents An Alluring—But Elusive—Audience

By Ayala Ben-Yehuda

On a rainy February night, 20-year-old Elizabeth was living her dream. As a winner of MTV Tr3s’ “Rock Dinner,” she had her favorite artist, Baby Bash, over to her family’s house in the San Fernando Valley for a home-cooked meal and a live performance. The college student and her friends nervously watched the rapper eat the beef enchiladas they’d made, and talked about their Mexican roots. (Bash: “My grandparents are from Zacatecas.” Elizabeth: “Zacatecas, that’s us right here too!”) Meanwhile, Elizabeth’s brother Eric watched the taping from a couch on the other side of the dining room. “Do you think you guys could do the same show, but with me and Alicia Keys?” he asked the producers nearby.

With a seemingly endless number of entertainment options in English, Spanish and Spanglish at their fingertips, U.S. Latinos—54% of whom, or about 25 million, are under the age of 30—represent a tantalizing riddle for the music industry. On one hand, Hispanic buying power is expected to top $1 trillion in 2012, and since 1990 has grown more than twice as fast as that of consumers as a whole, according to a 2007 report by the University of Georgia’s Selig Center for Economic Growth. Entertainment spending by Hispanics topped $21 billion in 2006, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, an increase of more than 30% since 2000.

On the other hand, it’s a fragmented market. Some speak English, others prefer Spanish. Some identify strongly with their Latin American roots, while others are very comfortable with their identities as Americans. With marketing budgets finite, where should bets be placed?

Traditionally, for artists, the model has been to firmly establish a career in Spanish and then cross over, as Shakira, Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias have done. But with second-generation Latinos representing the fastest-growing segment of the Latino population, an increasing number of bilingual and bicultural acts are trying to crack the English- and Spanish-language markets simultaneously.

Figuring out a young Latino’s language preference in everyday communication, not to mention music, can be tricky. According to 2008 data from Geoscape on language use and acculturation, 42% of Hispanics younger than 18 prefer English, about 28% are equally bilingual, and about 30% prefer Spanish.

“It’s an elusive experience, people living simultaneously in two cultures,” Prima Media manager Jorge Hernandez says. “It’s hard to grasp what the opportunity is and what this audience is seeking.”

Spanish-language entertainment outlets, not just bilingual acts, are struggling to find the right balance of English to mix in. Telemundo-owned bilingual TV channel mun2 commissioned a study that showed its viewers identified strongly with their individual countries of origin and that the vast majority regularly listened to music in Spanish. Jesus Lara, senior VP of music and talent/artist relations for Spanish-language MTV Tr3s, says that in general his audience also looks to the channel “to program those songs in Spanish. If they want songs in English they can look to other outlets.”

Some of those other outlets appear to be radio, at least when it comes to the 12- to 17-year-old demo. With the exception of a small Latin urban format, that age group makes up no more than 6% of Spanish-language radio listenership, according to Arbitron, suggesting that those listeners are migrating to English radio formats or the Internet.

Latin pop radio network Super Estrella switched to a 70/30 Spanish-English format last summer, but among its target audience of 18-34 Hispanics, its ratings stayed essentially flat in its flagship Los Angeles market after the move. Worse, the station slipped from ninth to 11th place in the rankings, according to Arbitron’s fall 2007 book. The network has since increased its Spanish content and seen its ratings rise as well.

Meanwhile, Telemundo’s “Mas Vale Tarde,” a late-night talk show that targeted bilingual Latinos, was canceled May 2 after just a few months on the air.

Beyond the rigid formats of Spanish-language radio and TV, the digital space offers a great opportunity to work bilingual acts.

New acts, not all of them radio darlings, have been featured in MTV Tr3s’ “Descubre y Download” program. It offers a free track download,
photos, video and interviews. Past artists include Kat de Luna, the D.E.Y., Pacha Massive and Gaby O'Donn.

For Prima J, which is featured on the soundtrack to Disney Channel's "Jump In!", its approach to breaking has been notably viral — and English. "Rockstar," the group's version of the "Brazz" soundtrack, has garnered 4.3 million YouTube views via Universal Music Group's upload alone. According to Nielsen SoundScan, the track sold 30,000 ringtones and 166,000 downloads, without being worked at radio. (The song was used in episodes of "Gossip Girl" and "The Hills"). In the run-up to its release, Prima J covered Alicia Keys' "No One" in Spanglish, calling it "Nadie." The video has since become another online hit, with about 2 million views.

Fittingly, Prima J is the subject of 16 online and on-air segments on mun2, in a series about the making of its album called "Prima J: Inside Out.

Still, a heated debate between new acts and industry veterans at the last Billboard Latin Music Conference showed that the jury is still out on the best way to reach young Latinos.

For a panel sponsored by MTV TiVo producer and La Galé Record's VP Sergio George insisted, "You have to break in the Latin market first.

George, known as a tropical music innovator who has worked with Marc Anthony and Celia Cruz, counts Spanish-language urban bachata group Xtreme as one of his recent successes.

"You gotta break Latin radio and respect [programmers'] tastes," George advised his co-panelists Katie de Luna and the D.E.Y. "You have to adjust your music to what they're playing... you can branch out from there. You cannot reinvent the wheel.

Barring that, George added, "You're not building a base. You're making noise.

D.E.Y. singer Elan, whose group's debut album is a mix of English and Spanish, said, "I agree when he is talking about your foundation. But we have to think about building new homes... if Univision feels they need a more Spanish song, we're going to cut it for them." But don't count on every D.E.Y. song being recut in Spanish, she said. "That is why the D.E.Y. started, so we can do both at the same time.

Bilingual channels are betting hard they can provide a new platform for acts like the D.E.Y. that defy easy categorization. But "it comes back to is radio going to really support that?" asks mun2 programming VP Flavio Morales, citing mainstream radio support for rapper Pitbull in big cities as a rare example of a big bilingual success.

But too often with new acts, Morales adds, "There's no follow-through. You're solely depending on radio and video to do all the magic. What is going to be the massive means of communication? Is it MTV proper? Is it going to be radio? Is it going to be positioning these artists in a film? It's those same tools that have to be applied to these artists.

Another challenge to breaking a bilingual act, Fuerte Group principal and former Columbia Records executive Jerry Blair says, is poor communication within major labels. Unless mainstream and Latin labels "have a vested interest together from a business and legal perspective," they're not "setting a foundation as far as marketing and connecting all the dots." There is no strategy," Blair says. "They do not operate with the mind-set... let's take an artist and say, 'This is a dollar. We're doing it together.' It's never coordinated from moment one with that process involved.

Sony BMG/Day 1 Entertainment managing director Ruben Leyva cited the bilingual success of "White Up" to show what happens when labels faction are in sync. The song reached No. 43 on Billboard's Hot Latin Songs chart, thanks to its division promoting the single. Meanwhile, "White Up" also went to No. 29 on the Billboard Hot 100, selling 91,000 ringtones and 65 million downloads, while de Luna's album sold 57,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Leyva says talks have begun about his division working the D.E.Y. "It's not like you can lump all these artists together and say the approach is going to be the same," he says. "Breaking a new act is difficult in one language. If you want to go multiformat, it's certainly not going to make it easier.

ACTS TO WATCH

Prima J

Mexican-American cousins Jessica and Janelle Martinez will release their self-titled Geffen debut June 17. They are recording a Spanish version of the album. Prima J's management has trademarked the word "chilena," a Latin version of girl power, to create Prima J-branded merchandise. Creative Artists Agency is pitching the brand, and management says it's considering offers for a "denim clothing line, cosmetics, sleepwear, fan merchandise and marketing campaigns with major retailers." The group will hold a news conference May 22 to promote the release of their album, "Prima J" on sales, radio and video.

Omar Cruz

Under a joint venture with BY1 Entertainment, Interscope Geffen A&M will release rapper Omar Cruz's "Sign of the Cruz" in late third-quarter 2008. Street tracks have been out for a while, but Interscope Geffen A&M (IGA) will handle radio promotion for single "To The Top" featuring Frankie J. Marketing at clubs, stores, car shows and swap meets will be handled by BY1's own team, in much the same way as Latino rappers Lil Rob and Chingo Bing developed their own regional fan bases.

"We do the things that maybe they won't do or don't know how to do," Cruz says. "As a new artist especially a new Latin artist on a major label on the urban side, you need that push.

At BY1's nexus is famed tattoo artist/entrepreneur Mister Cartoon, whose ventures also include the Joker clothing line, Rhyme magazine, a traveling car show, a Nike shoe model and his own Sole'd design. IGA's deal with BY1 will initially focus on Cruz's album, but Geffen head of A&R Thom Panunzio says it could extend to events similar to one held recently in Los Angeles.

"There was tattooing, there was a car show, Mexican women with carts making tamales, and Omar performed," Panunzio says. While the joint venture doesn't apply to Mister Cartoon's existing projects, Cruz-related merchandise that Mister Cartoon would design is part of the deal.

La La

It was a low-key, themed launch, "La La La," on Casey Romeo's MySpace page got her picked up by hip-hop KDAY Los Angeles two years ago. Since then, she's been signed for management by Priority Records founder Bryan Turner, who heads Mole Entertainment, and for publishing by peermusic.

"La La La" is the theme song to MTV Tr3s' "Karlifornia" show; the singer is launching a clothing and accessories line for sale through her MySpace page. MySpace Records will promote La La's debut album, "Love & Respect," due Aug. 19 on Melvee via Universal's Fontana distribution.

First single "Sprung on a Thug" featuring the Game has been picked up by urban KFWR (Power 106) Los Angeles and rhythmic KZKA Dallas, among other stations in the west where La La's touring car show airs on rhythmic radio stations in top Latino markets.

"We broke some number on MySpace that's really impressive to labels," La La says. But "every time I go to sit down with a label... I have to tell them about the culture and why the music is coming from La La. I partially financed and service her own video for her song "Homegirlz" to MTV TiVo, where it hit No. 1 on the countdown.

Monte Negro

The strategy for breaking the Los Angeles modern rock quartet is to "tour their life away," Epic's Stimmell says. The label is providing tour support as the group hits the road this summer, from June to July dates with I Hate Kate and Luna Halo, to Canada's Pemberton Festival with Coldplay and Jay Z.

"They are out there trying to find sponsors with me. It doesn't feel like I'm by myself," manager Gil Castellon says of Epic's involvement with the band's promotion of merchandise. The band's bilingual digital EP "Give Me Love" has moved 3,000 track downloads since Epic released it Jan. 15, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The project is scheduled to release a full-length album in August.

First single "Give Me Love (No Lores)" will be pitched to English-language radio in July, but the group plans to play Spanish repertoire on radio programmers an Entrainment Communications convention that month.

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MUSIC LEGEND MILT OKUN HONORED FOR A LIFETIME OF VISION

BY SUSAN BUTLER
Two men stood shoulder to shoulder, singing into microphones hanging in a drab recording studio. One was a cute 20-something, wearing geeky oversized eyeglasses. The other, at 40, was dark and dashing, at times waving his arm about dramatically. Their eyes focused on the sheet music guiding their parts. Suddenly, halfway through their performance, American folk star John Denver and Spanish operatic tenor Plácido Domingo looked at each other. Smiles spread easily across their faces. Domingo threw his arm around Denver’s shoulders, then the two men turned their faces back to the microphones and sang on. They knew it was working.

Sitting in the control room was the man whose foresight brought Domingo and Denver together. On that last day of March 1981, record producer Milt Okun was creating another “first” in music with this recording. And it’s this career-defining vision that has earned Okun this year’s prestigious Abe Olman Publishing Award from the Songwriters Hall of Fame (see story, page 45).

“When Milt suggested ‘Perhaps Love’ with Plácido Domingo and John Denver singing a duet, I was a little taken aback,” says Emmy Award-winning composer Lee Holdridge, who arranged the song and conducted the session. “Two men singing a love duet?”

Not since Frank Sinatra and other Rat Pack crooners had any men recorded such a duet, and certainly no one had paired an emerging opera star with a folk singer.

“In a strange way, matching that great operatic tenor with the beautiful, crystalline folk voice gave birth to that whole era that has since produced the Three Tenors, Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli,” Holdridge says. “They’re all an evolution out of that one, simple idea to do that record.”

Domingo’s album, “Perhaps Love,” was the tenor’s first crossover recording and the first of seven such albums produced by Okun.

“Milt is the first person who believed that I could do that kind of music,” Domingo says. “Basically, he found my voice, even though operatic, had the elements for a sound that could fit into that repertoire. With the crossover recording, it made me known by many, many other people who came to the opera because of those albums. It was a very special time of my life.”

This time was not only important in Domingo’s career. Okun, at 57, was at yet another turning point in his.

DOMINGO HITS THE ‘LIST’

After producing nearly 20 albums for Denver—and landing the folk singer his first record deal 13 years earlier with RCA Records—Okun had just been fired as Denver’s producer by an RCA executive. He didn’t like the latest album Okun produced, which included Denver’s solo performance of “Perhaps Love.” It would not be released.

Okun had been set to produce Domingo’s album for CBS Masterworks Records, which included a cover of Denver’s “Annie’s Song.”

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Down Cherry Lane

Hound Dog—Elvis Presley • Day-O—Irving Burgie • Stormy Monday—T. Bone Walker • Tears On My Pillow—Little Anthony & The Imperials
Turn Around—Harry Belafonte • The Marvelous Toy—Tom Paxton Can't Help Falling In Love—Elvis Presley • Puff the Magic Dragon—Peter, Paul & Mary • Leaving On A Jet Plane—Peter, Paul & Mary
Take Me Home, Country Roads—John Denver • Soul Bossa Nova—Quincy Jones • Rocky Mountain High—John Denver
Annie’s Song—John Denver • Mister Magic—Grover Washington, Jr.
Afternoon Delight—Starland Vocal Band • Anarchy In The UK—Sex Pistols
Sweet Music Man—Kenny Rogers • I'm Every Woman—Chaka Khan • Last Dance—Donna Summer • Stomp—Brothers Johnson • Just The Two Of Us—Bill Withers & Grover Washington, Jr.
One Hundred Ways—James Ingram • Perhaps Love—John Denver & Placido Domingo • P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)—Michael Jackson • “Nine”—M. Yeston • Get Closer—Linda Ronstadt • Yah Mo Be There—James Ingram • Solid—Ashford & Simpson • Shy Boy—David Lee Roth • A Love Until The End Of Time—Placido Domingo & Maureen McGovern • Dr. Feelgood—Mötley Crüe • From A Distance—Bette Midler • “Jekyll & Hyde”—L. Bricusse & F. Wildhorn • All My Life—K-Ci & JoJo • Happy Hour Hero—moe. • When You Believe—Mariah Carey & Whitney Houston • “American Beauty”—Thomas Newman • “Pokémon” Theme—J. Loeffler, J. Siegler • “Gladiator”—H. Zimmer, K. Badelt, L. Gerrard • “Shrek”—H. Gregson-Williams, J. Powell • A Little Less Conversation (JXL remix)—Elvis Presley • Across The Nation “RAW” (WWE) Theme—J. Johnston, B. Scott, P. Kennison • Where Is The Love—The Black Eyed Peas • “Queer Eye For The Straight Guy” Theme—I. Nieman, R. Webbi • Let's Get It Started—The Black Eyed Peas • The Passion Of The Christ—J. DeBney • Ordinary People—John Legend • “Little Women”—J. Howland, M. Dickstein • Glamorous—Fergie • When You're Mad—NeYo • Woman—Wolfmother • Big Girls Don’t Cry—Fergie • Need to Love You—Madi Diaz • American Boy—Estelle • Good Life—Kanye West • What’s Your Name—Usher

Create. We’ll handle the rest.
www.cherrylane.com
from >>p32

Song" with Denver on guitar. So Okun played "Perhaps Love" for Domingo, who loved it. Okun suggested the pairing.

After completing Domingo's album, and believing very strongly in the music, Okun met with independent radio promoter Tony Scotti.

"It's very beautiful, but there's no chance at all of this getting on the air," Okun recalls saying. "When the record comes out, call me, and I'll give you the names of some "beautiful music" stations that will play it. You won't get it charted, but you'll get some action on it."

When the album was released in September 1981, Okun received a phone call on a Friday afternoon from the president of Masterworks. He said the duet was getting played every hour on the hour in Philadelphia by one of the five biggest stations in the country, Okun recalls.

Okun went to see Scotti, who said he didn't believe it. Scotti called his friend, the owner of the Philadelphia station. The owner said that the PD had been out sick, so all the record company promoters had brought their records directly to the owner. When the CBS rep mentioned Domingo, the owner said his wife was in love with the tenor.

But the station owner couldn't get the record player to work; he gave the album to the DJ to play so he could hear the music on the speakers, Okun says. After "Perhaps Love" hit the airwaves, the station's phones began ringing and never let up all day, he adds.

Scotti brought his entire staff into the office for the weekend and used the story to promote the album to other stations, Okun says. The song entered the Billboard Hot 100 chart four months later, in January 1982. Since then, the album has sold almost 4 million units worldwide, according to Sony BMG Masterworks, and is still at retailers today.

"As an opera singer, you never think of the Billboard list," Domingo says. "Without any doubt, it really helped my following records."

It is this kind of commitment, passion, talent and loyalty that transformed Okun from musician and arranger into music director, conductor, producer and proud owner of Cherry Lane Music Group. Even getting fired spurred his career.

THE TRIO YEARS

After teaching music in the New York borough of Queens for a few years in the 1950s, Okun landed a gig playing piano and singing with the Belafonte Folk Singers. He later became the group's arranger and conductor. But when Harry Belafonte fired Okun, he found himself working in 1960 with a trio of unknown singers: Peter, Paul & Mary.

The group called Okun its music director. He notated scores and made suggestions for the trio's vocal arrangements. Noel Paul Stookey recalls. It would be 1962 before the trio made the Hot 100.

"We didn't discover how much help we needed until well into [our] second or third year with Milt," Stookey says. "He was patient. Can you imagine three untrained singers going through every part that they could think of for something that Milt could have written—and did write—for

continued on >>p36

Congratulations to Milt Okun and our friends at Cherry Lane
Dear Milt,

Congratulations on this much deserved honor from the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

From our days producing in adjacent studios at Mercury Records right up until today, I have been honored to call you friend and colleague.

With deep love and admiration,

Q
Milt Okun, left, helped make John Denver one of the top stars of his era. The pair is seen in Aspen, Colo.

Musician, Singer, Arranger, Conductor, Producer, Publisher...

In his more than 50 years in the business, Milt Okun has done it all — with style and grace.

Here's to you, Milt. Along with your many other titles, we're proud to call you our client and friend.

GT Greenberg Traurig

[1750 Attorneys in 29 Offices] [USA Law Firm of the Year, 2007 Chambers Global Awards]

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We didn't discover how much help we needed until well into our second or third year with Milt.

—Noel Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul & Mary

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Other artists? He encouraged the special ingredient of the trio, which was to have integrity for each of our parts. It sounded like three people singing melody lines, only two of them were actually singing harmony. Milt made order out of chaos."

As Okun worked with the singers during the next decade, he became more akin to a producer than a music director.

"I was so naive," Okun says. "I thought the guy with the money was the producer, so I listed myself as music director and arranger. Then I would watch some guy from Warner Bros. walk up and accept awards."

During a six-year period, 19 of the trio's recordings entered the Hot 100. Five made the top 10: "If I Had a Hammer" (1962), "Peter, Paul & Mary (1963), "Blowin' in the Wind" (1963), "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" (1965) and "I Dig Rock and Roll Music" (1967). But the No. 1 spot eluded the act, at least for a while.

Okun had also been working with other folk groups, like the Brothers Four and the Chad Mitchell Trio. When Chad Mitchell decided to leave the group in 1965, John Denver was among those auditioning. He landed the gig.

Spotting Denver's songwriting talent, Okun signed him to the music publishing company he'd started five years earlier, Cherry Lane Music Publishing. Okun then brought one of Denver's songs to Peter, Paul & Mary.

It was Denver's composition that landed the trio at the top of the chart. "Leaving on a Jet Plane" was No. 1 as 1969 came to a close.

COUNTRY ROADS

For Denver, it was a slow drive to the top. After beating on practically every label's door, Okun finally found Denver a record deal at RCA around 1968. But Denver wasn't an immediate success, and folk groups were breaking up.

Okun, believing his own career was over, moved his family to London where his daughter attended an school. He would occasionally return to the United States to record solo albums for some of the folk artists, including Denver.

With Denver's fourth RCA album, "Poems, Prayers and Promises," he finally had a hit. The single "Take Me Home Country Roads" entered the Hot 100 at No. 99 in April 1971. By the end of the summer, it reached No. 2. Okun moved back to the States. Okun doesn't recall the exact number of albums he produced for Denver, but it comes close to 20. They spawned 27 charting songs. Four made it to No. 1 on the Hot 100: "Sunshine on My Shoulders" (1971), "Annie's Song" (1974), "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" (1975) and "I'm Sorry" (1975). Four more made the top 10: "Take Me Home Country Roads" (1971), "Rocky Mountain High" (1975), "Back Home Again" (1974) and "Cajun Girl" (1975).

"Milt didn't necessarily put a lot of emphasis on trends," says music supervisor/executive music producer Joel Sill, continued on >>p38.
To Milt and Cherry Lane Music Publishing, thanks for 12 years of a great musical partnership.

- Programming broadcast in over 130 countries, in 23 languages
  - Over six million CDs sold worldwide
  - 16 million unique web visits every month
  - More than 15 million domestic viewers each week

Thanks for your help Milt, and congratulations!
— your friends at World Wrestling Entertainment
from >>p36  whose credits appear on dozens of films including "Forrest Gump." "He was almost counterculture. Strangely, he wound up setting a lot of trends."

COMING FULL CIRCLE
Forever the teacher, Okun in 1981 began Cherry Lane's Music Alive! program. Geared for fifth through 10th graders, it consists of a student magazine featuring articles on music, a CD of original artist recordings that provide examples of music described in the magazine and a teacher's guide with music lesson plans.

The program now reaches more than 400,000 students across the United States. With some luck, it will continue to have the same effect that Okun had on his students more than 50 years ago.

"Mr. Okun would come in with his guitar, playing folk music," says Florence Peterson, a Fordham University School of Law adjunct professor and one of Okun's former students. "He opened the cultural world up for us." She and her friends still recall their big musical productions in which everyone could participate, a way Okun encouraged them to aspire to greater heights.

Okun now works with productions on a much grander scale. Keeping opera ever close to his heart, Okun serves as one of the managing directors of the Los Angeles Opera. He was also instrumental in helping Domingo become general director.

"Milton's great passion is his music, and one of the things he loves the most is opera," Domingo says.

Okun still misses Denver, who died in an experimental aircraft accident in 1997. But he laughs as he recalls taking Denver to hear Domingo perform for the first time.

The two men sat in the fifth row, listening to Domingo's operatic voice resound throughout the theater. Suddenly, Denver began looking around, scanning the corners of the theater and the balcony above. Okun thought, "Is John wondering if anyone recognizes him?"

"What are you looking for?" Okun asked him.

"Where are the speakers?" Denver asked, looking for the amplification of Domingo's voice.

"There are no speakers, John," Okun replied. "This is live."

Congratulations to Milt Okun on the Abe Olman Publisher Award from Budde Music!

Your partner in

Germany - Austria - Switzerland - Poland - Russia

www.americanradiohistory.com
Dear Milt:

Congratulations on being honored by the Songwriters Hall of Fame with the Abe Olman Publishers Award. Over twenty-five years ago, our first collaboration, the album “Perhaps Love,” was a defining moment in my career. Since then, I have been grateful to you for being a marvelous professional partner as well as a great friend to me personally.

As Broad General Director of Los Angeles Opera, I am grateful to you for your leadership as a member of our Board of Directors and your longtime generous support for the Company as a member of the Domingo’s Angels. We are particularly indebted to you for your incomparable work chairing our Board’s Education Committee. Your commitment and guidance are inspiring and will help instill a future generation's love of music and opera.

With my very best wishes,

Plácido Domingo
Eli and Edythe Broad General Director
LA Opera
Milt Okun sits in his office, located in the front of his modest Beverly Hills, Calif., home. His phone rings off the hook—Cherry Lane executives, artists, some of his former students—calling to congratulate him on being honored by the Songwriters Hall of Fame. His office is decorated with various photos—John Denver, Plácido Domingo—and books from his world travels. His wife, Rosemary, walks in and sits by her husband. They are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. When asked the secret to a lifelong marriage, Rosemary replies, “Neither of us like to live the hyper life. The hyper life can wear you out.” The two prefer to be under the radar—close to family and friends—far away from the spotlight. Humbled by success, they enjoy the life they have together and the family they have raised. Billboard caught up with Okun about his storied life and career.

How do you feel about receiving the prestigious Abe Olman Publishing Award from the Songwriters Hall of Fame?

When I heard about this award I started getting all these phone calls of congratulations from Cherry Lane employees. I e-mailed them back and said, “Imagine how good I could be if I worked more than two hours a week?” (laughs) You know, conventional wisdom is that the founder and the originator of the company is a genius, and when the second generation comes to spoil it, the third generation kills it. This is exactly the opposite: Cherry Lane has blossomed under current management far more than when I was running it. It’s great that an independent small company can still be important.

How did you become a music teacher?

Well before I was teaching, I was planning to be a concert pianist, and I got sick when I was 15. That was before there were antibiotics to cure that kidney infection. The cure was to go to bed for two years. I felt no pain though, but when I got up, I couldn’t play (at that level) anymore. So I went to a bunch of teachers to try to get it back. I finally found a marvelous man and I went to his studio and he said, “You’re lucky you’re not going to be a concert pianist. It’s a very lonely life.” He was married to a concert pianist. “You spend half your nights in a lonely hotel room. The better you are, the more people resent you. There are a bunch of other ways to make a living in music.” I became a music teacher and I taught for five years and I really enjoyed it. One
summer I went out as a pianist for Harry Belafonte. He offered me a full-time job, so I quit teaching.

He also fired you, didn't he?
He fired me twice. I was so dumb that I would have done for Harry what I eventually did for myself. I was bringing in artists and writers, but he fired me and I started doing it on my own. So I went from a pianist to a teacher to an arranger to producer. As for my producing life, of all the successful producers I know, I have the widest client list—from the Muppets to Plácido Domingo.

How did you meet John Denver?
I was producing, arranging for the Chad Mitchell Trio. One of the dumb things I had done was to allow the trio to be called the Chad Mitchell Trio, because Chad left. I auditioned dozens of people, and Mike Kirkland of the Brothers Four recommended John. He auditioned and we hired him, and he immediately improved the group. He played guitar, which none of the others did, and he added a light of energy. They couldn't keep the name so they became the Denver Boys, but the whole thing was over anyway.

How did Denver get signed with RCA?
Every label had rejected us because folk was supposedly over. I played Harry Jenkins at RCA the tape and he liked it. He said, "What kind of deal do you want?" I hadn't been prepared, but I said, "I'd like a $20,000 advance." He looked at me and I quickly added, "That's for four albums." The contract came back with four albums guaranteed. No one had four-album deals back then. John happened on his third album, speaking of luck. The third album had "Take Me Home Country Road" on it.

What's your fondest memory of Denver?
Connecting him with Plácido Domingo. The last concert I heard John do before he died was out in Thousand Oaks [Calif.]. We drove back together. I said, "John, I have never heard you sing so beautifully as you did tonight, and the audience went nuts." He said, "I've been better lately. I learned from Plácido... Listen to the way Plácido colors his words with his voice. Everything he sings, he uses his voice to explain the words. I've been getting his opera records, and I don't understand Italian or French, but I know exactly what he's singing, it's so emotional. He's so open. So I've been re-evaluating my singing."

Do you have any projects in the works?
I haven't recorded in 10 years, but I'm doing another album. It's Rosemary's idea. We had such a success with Domingo's crossover album. She said, "Why don't you do an album of all John Denver songs sung by great opera voices?" And we're going to do the "We Are the World" treatment for "Annie's Song"—they're all going to sing and trade lines.

'Cherry Lane has blossomed under current management far more than when I was running it.'
—MILT OKUN, FOUNDER OF CHERRY LANE MUSIC GROUP

Congrats Milt and thanks for a lifetime of keeping the 'Music Alive'... see ya at the Tennis Club for the soup of the day...8:30am sharp!

Peter, Mike, Dan, Rich, Phil, Keith, John and Caroline
Congratulations to Milt Okun on being honored with the Abe Olman Publisher Award.

From you friends at NASCAR

Milt: Thank you for the honor of your company; The music was as sweet as the good, red wine. Thanks for the company, And thanks for the harmony; I'm here to say the honor was all mine.

Tom Paxton

OKUN'S TOP FIVE

From all the songs Milt Okun has produced, arranged, directed, published and otherwise influenced throughout his career, here are the five he calls his favorites, and why.

—Susan Butler

'MATTHEW'
Written and performed by John Denver. From the 1974 album "Back Home Again" (RCA). Produced by Milt Okun.
"The song is about John's uncle during the Great Depression. It strikes me as a beautiful piece, with almost the impact of a novel about the period."

'DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT'
Written by Bob Dylan. Performed by Peter, Paul & Mary. From the 1963 album "In the Wind" (Warner Bros.). Music director: Milt Okun
"It has harmonic suspensions that you never hear in pop recordings, and the kids didn't even know what they were doing!"

'PERHAPS LOVE'
"Three current opera stars—Rolando Villázón, David Pittsinger and Kobie van Rensburg—all said in interviews that they listened to this duet and that's what turned them into opera singers."

'ANNIE'S SONG'
Written and performed by John Denver. From the 1974 album "Back Home Again" (RCA). Produced by Milt Okun.
"John came in one night to a session and said, 'I have a great new song.' He went to the piano and played it for me. I said, 'John, the first four measures is a direct steal from Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, second movement. It's already been a pop song 50 years ago—'Moon Love.' So he sat at the piano for 20 minutes or so and fixed it so it didn't sound like Tchaikovsky. Then it was his idea to do a humming chorus, with him doing all the voices. I just love that record."

'LITTLE BRAND NEW BABY'
Written and performed by Tom Paxton. Published by Cherry Lane Music Publishing. On the 1997 album "Goin' to the Zoo."
"Tom wrote it when my son was born about 40 years ago. It has a great lyric."
Not far from New York's Times Square, more than 100 people lined the block leading to the New York Times bookstore. The year was 1970. The "New York Times Great Songs of the Sixties" songbook, with songs arranged by Milt Okun, was about to go on sale. The only problem was that the book wasn't ready yet. The ad placed in the Times had the wrong publication date. The good thing was that the company clearly had a top seller on its hands.

"It was major production, and it was very special," says Herb Nagourney, former head of the book-publishing division of the New York Times Magazine. "Milt arranged the music so it was easy for people to play on their guitar, and it had the best songs of the '60s selected all in one book. It sold over 1 million copies for us."

Okun's arrangements became the foundation of Cherry Lane Music Group, founded in 1960. He had been arranging songs for folk music acts in the '50s, and without thinking much about it, he would take his works to General Music's David Kapp to handle the publishing rights—at least until Okun's wife, Rosemary, began to question him.

"Why are you giving him the publishing?" she asked Okun. "Why don't we do it?"

Cherry Lane was... continued on >>p44
Dear Milt,
It's been our great honor to be associated with you and Cherry Lane Music.

Congratulations on receiving the Abe Olman Publisher Award from the Songwriter's Hall of Fame!

Bravo!!

from "Behind the Scenes of a Famous Publisher Office"

formed when Rosemary's sister, Jean Dinegar, left RCA Records to run the publishing company. By September, Okun signed Tom Paxton as the first writer.

Okun met Paxton when he auditioned for the Chad Mitchell Trio. After a week's rehearsals, it was clear that Paxton's voice just didn't blend with the group. But Okun liked a song he had written and sung during rehearsals called "The Marvelous Toy.

"Without exaggeration, I owe my career to this man," Paxton says. "Musicians and writers instinctively love him. He was always honest with us and supportive."

Even though other writers like John Denver would join the Cherry Lane fold, it was Okun's arrangements that would make a mark in history. They forever changed the print music business when Okun began matching the arrangements in song portfolios to the recorded music on albums.

"When the pop and rock scenes took off, it was hard to find sheet music for the songs," says Emmy Award-winning composer Lee Holdridge, who has a co-publishing deal with Cherry Lane. "When you finally found it, it was atrocious. The arrangements were nowhere near close to what was on the record, sometimes not even the right chords."

Perhaps the turning point for Okun came when, while producing Denver's albums, he noticed the same problems with the artist's sheet music.

Denver's print rights were assigned to another company, Okun says, and the songbooks were selling well. But then one Christmas, Okun took all the books with him to London and played the arrangements.

He says he was "appalled". The basslines were all wrong, and the arrangements were haphazardly put together. Denver did not re-sign with that publisher.

Instead, Cherry Lane had acquired a small publishing company in New York and began selling its own songbooks.

"I discovered that when you do the arrangements correctly—the right chords and basslines—where kids can play along with the record, you sell much more," Okun says. "My new little company had one salesman, and Warner Bros. Publications had many salesmen. We would sell the same songs with new arrangements and outsell Warner's 3-to-1."

Okun would ultimately write arrangements for hundreds of songbooks.

For the first 20 years of Cherry Lane, the signings were mostly a result of Okun's activities as a producer. It functioned primarily as an administrator of copyrights. By the mid-'80s, however, the company was experiencing growing pains. It was also publishing magazines and books.

Okun called in his nephew, Peter Primont, to consult for the company and to make some recommendations on future operations. Primont later joined the publisher as full-time CEO. By the mid-'90s, the company focused back on music publishing primarily.

In addition to owning Denver's catalog, the publisher today administers songs in the Elvis Presley and Quincy Jones catalogs. Some of its top contemporary signings include co-publishing deals with Grammy Award-winning writer/artist John Legend and Black Eyed Peas co-founder/writer/producer Will.i.am. Among the film music rights it administers are those of DreamWorks Pictures, Icon Productions, the Weinstein Co., and Hans Zimmer's J's Free Productions.

"We shaped the company by believing that we have to make the songwriters' lives easy and create income for them," Primont says.

"That has been the stamp that Milt put on the company. Now, be honest and forthcoming, and don't make people wait for checks."

"A marvelous singer with the best arrangements in the world could be destroyed by an unfeeling producer"

Milt Okun

Many thanks for "that" feeling
and
Proud to be a part of the Cherry Lane Music Family

Pelikan Mützik
www.pelikanmuzik.com

"Milt arranged the music so it was easy for people to play on their guitar. It sold over 1 million copies."

— HERB NAGOURNEY

Folk singer TOM PAXTON, right, with MILT OKUN in 1973, was the first songwriter signed to Cherry Lane Music.

www.americanradiohistory.com
WHERE THE MUSIC BEGINS

Songwriters Hall Of Fame Awards Honor The Craft's Best BY JIM BESSMAN

Despite the country's current financial woes, Songwriters Hall of Fame chairman/CEO Hal David is customarily upbeat on the eve of this year's annual awards dinner June 19 in New York. "Even in this time of economic problems, we're doing very well," David says. "We seem to have hit a spot in the heart of the music business where it considers our show to be something special. "There are so many other awards and shows, and all are very valid and valuable," David adds, "but we're the one organization that deals with songwriters, and that's the underlying basis: There's no record without us. Singers don't have songs to sing and bands don't have songs to play."

Honorees this year include, from left, LORETTA LYNN, JOHNNY RZEZNIK, PAUL ANKA and ANNE MURRAY.

(Sources on FIPQ5)
The hall’s mission, then, remains the same: “To recognize the songwriter,” David says, “and very often it’s the unsung songwriter. But there’s been a change to one extent in that with the Internet, we can have a virtual museum that’s open to everyone. The number of hits we get is enormous.”

But Songwriters Hall of Fame president Linda Moran does point to one change in its mission statement: “Besides celebrating and educating the public about accomplished songwriters, our mission is to develop young writers,” Moran says. She notes that to this end, the hall offers workshops involving songwriting craft and music business issues, singer-songwriter showcases and networking sessions for developing songwriters. “This year we’re offering ‘Mastering the Music Business Maze,’ ‘The Songwriter in the Recording Studio’ and ‘How to Write the Songs’ workshops, while continuing the Meet the Songwriter Networking Group and Songhall New Writers Showcase events,” Moran adds. To be continued, too, are the Meet the Songwriters nights featuring established songwriters like Julie Gold, the Master Class showcases that have featured such songwriting legends as Jimmy Webb and David himself, and the hall’s “Words About Music” series of conversations and music focusing on especially admired songwriters, lyricists and composers, which debuted in February with an intimate look at Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik of “Spring Awakening” fame.

Here’s a look at the honorees announced for this year’s event.

**The Abe Olman Publisher Award**

**MILTON OKUN**

Milton Okun has served in numerous sectors of the music business, with music publishing among the most noteworthy (see story, page 31). A musician, teacher, conductor, arranger, producer, music publisher, author and editor, he has worked with such legendary acts as Peter, Paul & Mary, John Denver, Placido Domingo, Harry Belafonte, Laura Nyro and the Brothers Four.

Okun founded Cherry Lane Music in 1959 and has fashioned it into one of the world’s leading independent music publishers. Its current roster includes the Black Eyed Peas, John Legend, Quincy Jones, Wolfmother, Ashford & Simpson, Hans Zimmer, Irving Burgie, Maury Yeston and the classic catalogs of Denver and Elvis Presley. Meanwhile, Okun’s Music Alive! nonprofit publication reaches more than 400,000 students across the country.

**Towering Song**

**‘TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME’**

This year’s award goes to baseball’s unofficial anthem, which is celebrating its centennial year. Jack Norworth wrote the words in 1908, having been inspired by a baseball advertisement on a New York subway train car. With music from Albert Von Tilzer, it was first performed by Norworth’s wife, Nora Bayes. (The Norworth and Bayes pairing was also responsible for hits like “Shine On, Harvest Moon.”)

Traditionally sung during the seventh-inning stretch of a ballgame, the song became so popular that it provided the title for the 1949 baseball movie musical directed by Busby Berkeley and starring Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly, who sang it at the start of the film.

Crowds at the New York Polo Grounds would sing ‘Take Me Out to the Ballgame’ after the song was written in the city in 1908.

**DESMOND CHILD**

She Bangs

Congratulations on your induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame!

From all your friends at...

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Los Angeles  Nashville  London  Stockholm
Howie Richmond
Hitmaker Award

ANNE MURRAY

Anne Murray certainly deserves this accolade, renamed this year after publisher Howie Richmond, one of the Songwriters Hall of Fame's esteemed founders. The Canadian songstress has delivered unforgettable hits to the pop, country and AC charts, many of them by legendary songwriters.

"You Won't See Me," "Day Tripper" and "I'm Happy Just to Dance With You" all came by way of Lennon-McCartney. "Cotton Jenny" was penned by Gordon Lightfoot, while "Danny's Song" was a Kenny Loggins copyright. She also scored with Henry Mancini's "Send a Little Love My Way" and John Stewart's "Daydream Believer," further demonstrating her ease with a variety of source material in befitting her position as a true songwriter's friend.

ANNE MURRAY performs in London in 1972. She'll be honored for her choice of songs from an array of great writers.

Johnny Mercer Award

PAUL ANKA

This prestigious award, which is reserved for a songwriter who is already a Songwriters Hall of Fame inductee, goes this year to Paul Anka—whose body of work truly meets the required criteria of high quality and impact set forth by the award's namesake.

Among the rock era's foremost teen idols, Anka matured from such landmark 1950s hits as "Diana" and "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" to continue his hit-making prowess even up to the present. Career landmarks have included his composition of the "Tonight Show" theme, the Frank Sinatra standard "My Way," '70s hits like "(You're) Having My Baby" and his 2005 "Rock Swings" album set of contemporary standards. The versatile tunesmith even returned "Diana" to the charts as a Latin hit in 1996.

Hal David Starlight Award

JOHN RZEZNIK

This award recognizes gifted young songwriters who are making a significant impact in the music industry, and Goo Goo Dolls guitarist/vocalist John Rzeznik perfectly fits the bill.

His compositions have resulted in a string of hits for the Goo Goo Dolls (including "Name," "Iris," "Slide," "Black Balloon," "Broadway," "Here Is Gone," "Big Machine," "Sympathy," "Better Days," "Stay With You" and "Let Love In") that became hit AC radio mainstays. ("Iris" spent almost a year on Billboard's airplay charts and held down the top spot for 18 weeks.) Currently, he is ensconced in the Buffalo, N.Y.-based group's studio preparing the follow-up to its 2006 top 10 album "Let Love In." continued on >>p48

The nation's foremost mechanical licensing, collections, and distribution agency for music publishers.

Howie Richmond
Hitmaker Award

ANNE MURRAY

Anne Murray certainly deserves this accolade, renamed this year after publisher Howie Richmond, one of the Songwriters Hall of Fame's esteemed founders. The Canadian songstress has delivered unforgettable hits to the pop, country and AC charts, many of them by legendary songwriters.

"You Won't See Me," "Day Tripper" and "I'm Happy Just to Dance With You" all came by way of Lennon-McCartney. "Cotton Jenny" was penned by Gordon Lightfoot, while "Danny's Song" was a Kenny Loggins copyright. She also scored with Henry Mancini's "Send a Little Love My Way" and John Stewart's "Daydream Believer," further demonstrating her ease with a variety of source material in befitting her position as a true songwriter's friend.

ANNE MURRAY performs in London in 1972. She'll be honored for her choice of songs from an array of great writers.

Johnny Mercer Award

PAUL ANKA

This prestigious award, which is reserved for a songwriter who is already a Songwriters Hall of Fame inductee, goes this year to Paul Anka—whose body of work truly meets the required criteria of high quality and impact set forth by the award's namesake.

Among the rock era's foremost teen idols, Anka matured from such landmark 1950s hits as "Diana" and "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" to continue his hit-making prowess even up to the present. Career landmarks have included his composition of the "Tonight Show" theme, the Frank Sinatra standard "My Way," '70s hits like "(You're) Having My Baby" and his 2005 "Rock Swings" album set of contemporary standards. The versatile tunesmith even returned "Diana" to the charts as a Latin hit in 1996.

Hal David Starlight Award

JOHN RZEZNIK

This award recognizes gifted young songwriters who are making a significant impact in the music industry, and Goo Goo Dolls guitarist/vocalist John Rzeznik perfectly fits the bill.

His compositions have resulted in a string of hits for the Goo Goo Dolls (including "Name," "Iris," "Slide," "Black Balloon," "Broadway," "Here Is Gone," "Big Machine," "Sympathy," "Better Days," "Stay With You" and "Let Love In") that became hit AC radio mainstays. ("Iris" spent almost a year on Billboard's airplay charts and held down the top spot for 18 weeks.) Currently, he is ensconced in the Buffalo, N.Y.-based group's studio preparing the follow-up to its 2006 top 10 album "Let Love In." continued on >>p48

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DESMOND CHILD: Starred in '70s group Desmond Child & Rouge prior to focusing on songwriting, breaking through in 1978 with Kiss' atypical cop hit "I Was Made For Loving You." He quickly solidified his stature on the rock side of pop with huge hits for Bon Jovi ("Livin' on a Prayer") and Aerosmith ("Dude Looks Like a Lady"). But Child has shown remarkable range, delivering hits for Michael Bolton ("How Can We Be Lovers") and Ricky Martin ("Livin' La Vida Loca"), and songs covered by the equally varied likes of Joan Jett, LeAnn Rimes, Iggy Pop and Kelly Clarkson. He had his own solo hit in 1991 with "Love on a Rooftop."

ALBERT HAMMOND: His credits span both sides of the Atlantic, starting with "Gimme Dat Ding," his 1970 novelty hit for the Pipkins. By the end of the decade he had added the Hollies' "The Air That I Breathe" and Leo Sayer's "When I Need You" to a growing catalog that would be sweetened in the '80s with Starship's "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" and the Willie Nelson/Julio Iglesias duet "To All The Girls I've Loved Before," which he co-wrote with Songwriters Hall of Fame chairman David. The English singer/songwriter has had his own hits as well, most notably "It Never Rains in Southern California," which he took to No. 5 in 1972.

LORETTA LYNN: A beloved member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, thanks to songs like the autobiographical "Coal Miner's Daughter," which became the title of her written memoir and Academy Award-winning biopic, not to mention a Grammy Hall of Fame song. But her 1970 signature hit was just one of many Lynn classics, among others like "You Ain't Woman Enough (To Take My Man)" and "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin' (With Lovin' on Your Mind)," and her many duet hits with Conway Twitty. That the veteran star remains relevant was certified in 2004 when none other than the White Stripes' Jack White produced her acclaimed comeback album "Van Lear Rose.

ALAN MENKEN: Composer/lyricist Menken burst upon the scene in 1982 when he converted (along with late playwright/lyricist and longtime Menken collaborator Howard Ashman) the movie "Little Shop of Horrors" into an off-Broadway, then Broadway musical hit. The Academy, Grammy and Golden Globe Award-winner has also collaborated with the likes of Tim Rice, Stephen Schwartz, David Zippel, Lynn Ahrens and Glenn Slater. Other Menken musical theater pieces include "God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater" and "A Christmas Carol," but he is best known for the music for numerous Disney animated features, among them "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin" (which featured the hit song "A Whole New World") and "Pocahontas" ("Colors of the Wind").

JOHN SEBASTIAN: Will always be known as the frontman of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame group the Lovin' Spoonful, for which he penned such timeless '60s hits as "Do You Believe in Magic?" ("What a Day for a Daydream," "You Didn't Have to Be So Nice" and "Summer in the City"). But he also scored a hit in 1976 as a solo artist with "Welcome Back," the theme song that he wrote for the TV sitcom "Welcome Back Kotter." More recently he has returned to his roots in folk and jug band music, reuniting for an album collaboration with legendary bluegrass mandolinist—and former college classmate—David Grisman.
‘Walk’ Hard

Post-Oscar Win, Three 6 Mafia
Stays True To Its Roots

What do you do after becoming the first African-American rap group to win an Academy Award for best song? If you’re Three 6 Mafia, you stay focused on what brought you to the game in the first place: music.

Fresh off their first European tour, Three 6 Mafia members (Jordan “Juicy J” Houston and DJ Paul) Beurregard are anxious to spread the word stateside about their latest studio album, “The Last 2 Walk.” The Hypnotize Minds/Columbia Records project bows June 24.

“We’re grateful for the Oscar for ‘It’s Hard Out Here for a Pimp’ from: ‘Hustle & Flow’),” DJ Paul says during a visit to Billboard’s Los Angeles office. “But we polished it, put it on the shelf and went back to the same frame of mind we’ve had the last 18 years.”

“It’s time for us to shake hands, throw back with the locals and make new friends as we promote this album,” Juicy J says. “We had to get back to the main thing: music and our fans.”

Right now, the fan base is building around the pair’s high-energy dance single “Lolli Lolli (Pop That Body).” Featuring Project Pat, the song’s co-producer Superpower and Hypnotize Minds artist Yung D, the song recently picked up adds from L.A. stations KDAY (urban) and KPWR (rhythmic). It’s No. 50 on the Billboard Hot 100 this issue.

“It’s a different single for us,” DJ Paul says. “But all of our singles have been different. We put out various songs over the last year [including “Doe Boy Fresh,” “Like Money” and recent street single ‘I’d Rather'], trying to make sure we got the right one. This is our fastest-growing song in Three 6 Mafia history.

Sparkling the “Lolli” momentum was the pair’s guest stint on CBS drama series “Numb3rs.” In advance of the episode, which aired May 9 during the spring sweeps, CBS mounted a major print, online and TV campaign that utilized the song. In addition, the episode opened with Juicy J and DJ Paul (in their roles as hip-hop artists) performing “Lolli.” Earlier that same week, the song was featured on MTV’s “TRL” and its video premiered on MySpace.

Preceding “Numb3rs” was the set’s 2007 Ashton Kutcher-produced MTV reality show, “Adventures in Hollywood.” Both members agree that acting is easier than appearing in a reality show. “It’s not as easy as people think,” Juicy J says. “From 6 a.m. to 12 a.m., the cameras are right there. It’s not about ‘Action!’ and then: ‘Cut!’ But there’s not a second season of ‘Hollywood’ because we wanted to get back on this music road.”

According to Columbia VP of product marketing Liz Hausle, targeting the group’s core fans through online and viral means is going to be the label’s major thrust.

“There are definitely challenges in terms of marketing music these days,” Hausle says. “But the great thing about Three 6 Mafia is their great cult following. It’s really diverse and across the board.”

A key component in this campaign is the label’s deal with KYT. Using a tiny phone currently available only overseas, KYT is able to shoot video footage that is comparable to that of a high-definition camera. Through its KYT channel (similar to YouTube), Three 6 Mafia documented its recent European tour for fans.

An earlier promo sweep in March to the group’s core Southern markets will be followed by promotion blanketing the rest of the country starting the week of release into July. Promotional tie-ins with Boost Mobile and Virgin Mobile, a June 10 preorder launch with iTunes and a weekend stunt on Sirius Satellite Radio’s “Hip-Hop Nation” round out the marketing strategy. The album, set for release overseas at a later date, will also have a deluxe version in the United States that includes a bonus DVD.

Three 6 Mafia’s biggest single to date is 2005’s “Stay Fly,” which peaked at No. 9 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and No. 13 on the Hot 100. The hit was a spinoff from the group’s 2005 album “Most Known Unknowns,” selling 1.1 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, the album ruled at No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums and No. 3 on the Billboard 200.

Produced primarily by Juicy J and DJ Paul, “The Last 2 Walk” also features guest stints by Akon, Good Charlotte, UGK and Lyfe Jennings, among others. The album’s title is a reference to the group’s remaining two members.

“We’re the last two dudes to walk,” Juicy J says of the former six-member Memphis group that became an indie force in the early ’90s. “We’ve managed to stay true to our plan: making good music and building our label/production company. We are the two people who saw the dream. We’ll never stop doing our thing.”
Movement Of The People

Inside Reggae's Roots Rock Renaissance

A widely held perception among music aficionados is that quality new reggae passed away with Bob Marley in 1981. Although no current reggae acts possess Marley's mesmerizing stage presence and his unparalleled appeal across various social, racial and religious divides, several recent releases from contemporary artists are weaving new strands into reggae's drum-and-bass-dominated fabric, collectively galvanizing a roots revival.

Celebrated Jamaican saxophonist Dean Fraser produced several of the finest CDs constituting this roots rock renaissance, including Tarrus Riley's "Parables," Duane Stephenson's "From Augusta Town" and Luciano's "I'm My Navigator," all VP Records releases. Fraser, who estimates he has played on more than 1,000 albums, was for 13 years the musical director for Luciano, the honeyed baritone regarded in the '90s as roots reggae's strongest contender for post-Marley-era glory.

However, sales of Luciano's CDs were modest and the anticipated crossover success never materialized. As the increasing dominance of computerized dancehall beats nearly relegated authentic reggae rhythms into obscurity in Jamaica, Fraser says roots music "lost it somewhere." Yet he is confident that a new generation of artists— including Riley, Stephenson, Richie Spice, Etana and Queen Iriki, each developing lyrics that encourage social ills and exalt Rastafarian principles—is capable of restoring roots reggae to prominence within the international market.

"We want roots reggae to regain the Marley-period level of appreciation," Fraser says. "Marley was very much about his musical development and artists like Tarrus are trying to emulate what happened during that time."

Any arguments suggesting roots reggae's richly textured instrumentation and lyrical sincerity exclusively belong to a previous generation are immediately quelled after watching Riley perform with his 10- to 15-member band, hand-picked by Fraser to "play our music a cut above how it sounds on the record."

Riley, whose regal female tribute "She's Royal" was the biggest reggae song of 2007, is in great demand at reggae festivals throughout the United States and Europe, but most promoters are reluctant to pay for his large entourage. "I like Tarrus to be backed by a full ensemble, horn section, percussionists, harmonies," Fraser says, "but economics play a great part in our music not being properly heard. A lot of artists are scared to say, 'I am not going to perform without my musicians,' because they don't want to risk not working. But it is a necessary sacrifice for the development of the music."

The scant commercial radio airplay roots music receives presents further challenges in taking it beyond its core audience, VP director of promo/marketing Cristy Barber says. "With dancehall artists, we can go to urban radio, but with roots reggae, radio does not traditionally offer them airplay. Barber says. "So they must come up with different ways of getting the music out there."

One Jamaican act doing just that is six-member outfit Rootz Underground, whose recently released debut "Movement" (Riverstone/Mystic Urichn Records) provides ample reasons to get excited about current reggae. The band, which appeared at South by Southwest earlier this year, has concocted several cyber strategies in its pursuit of a global audience, including online distribution of the "Movement Mixtape," the band's collaboration with Philadelphia's Solomonic Sound System.

"Basically we revoked tracks from 'Movement' on popular riddims in dubplate style and then built them into a mix with other riddims from popular artists.

Rootz Underground guitarist Charles Lazarus says. "We created a download link, blasted it on our Facebook, MySpace, imew, Hi5 sites and recruited friends who run similar sites or blogs to push the download. In three days we had over 1,000 downloads, and it grows every day."

While the band's marketing methods are progressive, Rootz Underground's authentic one-drop beats anchored in rumbling basslines and layered with crunching guitar riffs evoke the synergistic efforts of iconic roots bands like Inner Circle, Third World and Bob Marley & the Wailers. That collective ap-proach to music-making is so far removed from the dominant practice found in Jamaican studios, where singers and DJs record over premeditated rhythm tracks, that at home Rootz Underground has been branded an alternative band.

Despite that moniker, "we feel blessed to be at the forefront of a movement of people who are playing instruments and bringing an organic sound back again," Lazarus says.

JAMMYLAND

Six Essential Albums Heralding Roots Rock's Resurgence

Tarrus Riley, "Parables" (VP Records)

Tarrus Riley's exquisite tenor and well-constructed lyrics; the superb musical accompaniment by Kingston, Jamaica's finest; and Dean Fraser's inspiring production deliver the roots rock revival's quintessential CD. "Parables" includes crossover hit "She's Royal," but the stirring Rastafarian tribute "Lion Paw" and the breathtaking "Africa Awaits" demonstrate the expansive of Riley's talents.

Rootz Underground, "Movement" (Riverstone/Mystic Urichn Records)

Lead singer Stephen Newland's compelling vocals offer smart, searing commentaries supported by intricately crafted, infinitely durable one-drop rhythms with subtle rock undertones. They could all prove invaluable in attracting a much-deserved broad-based following.

Etana, "The Strong One" (VP Records)

Etana's dynamic vocal resonance (think Miriam Makeba meets India Arie), displayed on her hits "Wrong Address" and "Roots," presents uncompromising, self-empowering messages and a welcome challenge to the perception of reggae's female vocalists who rarely get to transcend the role of background singer.

Taj Weekes & Adowa, "Diedem" (Jatta Music)

St. Lucia-born singer/songwriter/guitarist Taj Weekes' emotive vocals are underscored by somber reggae beats and lyrics emphasizing an array of global calamities on this poignant release.

Duane Stephenson, "From August Town" (VP Records)

Duane Stephenson's solid introductory effort offers beautifully nuanced vocals and heartfelt lyrics that convey romantic longing and the an-guish of ghetto realities with equal conviction.

Morgan Heritage, "Mission in Progress" (VP Records)

Highlighting its urban edge was a wise move for this Brooklyn-born sibling aggregation's 10th album and its first to top Billboard's reggae chart. The reason? "We listened to our children and updated our sound," keyboardist Una Morgan says. "We...

REGGAE BY PATRICIA MESCHINO

LATEST BUZZ

>>> 'LONG' AND LONGER-ER

Maroon 5's latest A&M/Octone album, "It Won't Be Soon Before Long," will be reissued in expanded format July 8. The new edition includes a DVD with four music videos and a full show taped last summer in Montreal, plus five B-Sides tacked onto the original album. The group's new single with Rihanna, "If I Never See Your Face Again," is also included. "Won't Be Soon" has sold 1.9 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

>>> NAS, NOT YET

Nas' new album has shifted on the Def Jam release schedule yet again, this time moving from July 1 to July 15. Last month, the rapper dropped the disc's original title, "N'gge," and reclassified the album as an untitled project. Its first official track, "Hero," was produced by Polow Da Don. Album contributor Green Lantern has also steered a new Nas hit mixtape, "The N'gge Tape."

>>> DEEP GROOVE

Buddy Guy, Eric Clapton, Robert Randolph, Susan Tedeschi and Derek Trucks in his corner on "Skin Deep," his next Silvertone/Zomba album. Due July 22, the set is led by the title track, which features Trucks. Clapton appears on "Every Time I Sing the Blues," while Randolph guests on "Out in the Woods" and "That's My Home." The album is the follow-up to 2006's "Can't Quit the Blues," which reached No. 2 on Top Blues Albums.

>>> RASCALS ON SCREEN

Rascal Flatts will appear on screen and perform in the upcoming Hannah Montana movie, which is filming in Tennessee. "American Idol" alum Bucky Covington and new artist Marcel, both labelmates with Flatts on Disney-owned Lyric Street Records, will also appear in the movie Disney's "Hannah Montana." The movie is scheduled for release in 2009 and stars Miley Cyrus and her father, Billy Ray Cyrus.

Reporting by Jonathan Cohen, Hillary Crosley and Ken Tucker.
The Future's So Bright
Judas Priest Rolls Out 'Nostradamus' Concept Album

"Everybody," Judas Priest vocalist Rob Halford says, "is eager to grab the full metal opera."

Halford is talking about "Nostradamus" (Epics), the veteran U.K. metal act's 16th studio album—and its first concept work. The double-disc set, due internationally June 16 and one day later in the United States, tells the story of 16th-century prophet Michel de Nostredame, better-known as Nostradamus.

Firmly targeting physical sales, the album is available in three configurations, London-based Sony BMG VP of international Dave Slack says. "It's an amazing opus that has been a mission of love, so the band wanted to do something special," he says. "The band came up with the [marketing] ideas," he adds, "and it's Judas Priest's way of rewarding their fans. The sets retail at very competitive prices."

Fans can buy the regular version of "Nostradamus" in a jewel case with a 20-page artwork book designed in conjunction with artist Mark Wilkinson, who has worked on numerous Judas Priest albums. Or they can choose the "regular deluxe" version, which has the double-CD housed in a 48-page hardbound book.

A third, "super-deluxe" release includes a triple-album vinyl version of the set and an exclusive poster; plus the hardbound CD/booklet package. That version will be available through normal retail channels internationally, but in the States is exclusive to Best Buy stores. Sweetening the pot for fans, select packages will include a code redeemable for a free lawn ticket to see the band on this summer's Live Nation-promoted Metal Masters tour with Heaven & Hell, Motörhead and Testament.

"Judas Priest, in general, might be a little bit of a harder audience to reach, so we've got to go to a lot of different places. But a large target audience is reached through Best Buy," Epic VP of marketing Scott Greer says. "The band had their best sales there on the last record (2005's 'Angel of Retribution'), so it made sense to go back there."

"It's a sign of the times. You have to be really rigorous in all aspects of the way you present something of this size," Halford says. "The consumer, more than ever, has multiple choice. You really have to relate to the experiences that are out there for the listener, and that's what we're doing."

The initial response to the band's new music has been "sensational," Halford adds. "When we recently put the 'Nostradamus' track on the Live Nation Web site, we had about 100,000 hits in a matter of two or three days."

Roadwork forms a major part of the album's promotion. Judas Priest began a world tour June 3 in Finland, with European dates running through July 13 followed by a seven-date North American tour beginning July 22 in Seattle. The band then headlines the Metal Masters tour Aug. 6-31.

"Nostradamus" is the second album since Halford returned to the band in 2003 after doing other musical projects for 12 years. Previous offering "Angel of Retribution" (Epics) has sold 184,000 copies in the States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, with Sony BMG reporting global sales of 500,000.

GLOBALPULSE

EDITED BY TOM FERGUSON

>>> SPARRO FLIES

The emergence of Australian-born London resident Sam Sparro on the U.K. charts represents a textbook artist launch for Island/Universal. The single "Black & Gold" climbed to No. 2 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. sales survey in early May, and the swinging soul track has sold 260,000 copies to date, according to the OCC. That set up the May 10 top five U.K. debut of Sparro's self-titled debut album, which has sold 60,000.

The retro-flavored electro-soul of the 23-year-old Sydney native recalls such American acts as Prince, Funkadelic or Cameo and reflects the fact that as a youngster, Sparro moved with his family to Los Angeles. The vocalist, who is signed to EMI Music Publishing, co-wrote "Black & Gold" with his co-producer Jesse Rogg.

Sparro is signed worldwide to Island, where London-based U.K. product manager Emily Conway says the success of "Black & Gold" was "no surprise, [but] thankfully Sam delivered a remarkable album to back it up."

Island international product manager Emily Conway says the single is making strides in Germany, Italy and other territories, while the album is rolling out market by market in Europe and beyond to coincide with peak airplay or promotional visits. "21st Century Life" will be Sparro's next U.K. single, due July 21; he is playing British shows throughout June, booked by Coda Music Agency.

—Paul Sexton

>>> INNER STRENGTH

After three whirlwind years, releasing two U.K. chart albums—"The Music" (2002) and "Welcome to the North" (2004) through Virgin/EMI—and touring extensively, British rock quartet the Music was facing burnout.

The rock'n'roll lifestyle was taking its toll on the quartet of 20-year-old former school friends, primarily through singer Rob Harvey's drug and alcohol addiction. But surviving that experience informed much of the act's third album, "Strength in Numbers," released June 16 in the United Kingdom on Polydor/Universal subsidiary Yes Please Recordings.

After the band's initial success—U.K. sales for "The Music" stand at 175,000, with the follow-up selling 90,000, according to the Official U.K. Charts Co.—Polydor senior A&R manager Peter McGaughrin says, "The pressures became immense, and maybe they lost their way slightly. [But] coming back with that experience and knowing the highs and especially the lows, yet still having ambition? That's the ideal band to work with."

To highlight the act's rock and electronic elements, McGaughrin teamed it with producers Flood (U2, Depeche Mode) and Paul Hartnoll (from U.K. dance act Orbital). The Music's current 18-date U.K. tour, booked by the Agency, runs through July 5. Shows in Korea, Japan and Australia will follow.

The band is a global signing, but McGaughrin says Universal's initial focus is on the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia, adding that "once that starts to grow, we'll look to other territories." The Music is published by EMI Music Publishing.

—Steve Adams

>>> ROCK ON

There are some who wonder why rockbility ever went out of fashion, let alone enjoyed a 1980s revival. Now the classic blues/country/rock'n'roll fusion is back in the United Kingdom, and among the leading pack of new talent spearheading its reinvention is the youthful Kitty, Daisy & Lewis.

The teenage London siblings have been drawing mainstream media attention ahead of the July 28 launch of their self-titled debut album on Sunday Best/PIAS.

The trio's unflinchingly vintage approach mixes 1950s covers like "Roll Over Beethoven," "You Got the Love," "Oh! Pretty Woman" and "Rock with Me" with their own original songs. The band's lead single, a cover of Canned Heat's "Going Up the Country," appears July 7 in the United Kingdom on vinyl, CD and download. International release plans are not yet finalized. (Publishing is Copyright Control.)

Sunday Best product manager Julian Peck praises the trio's "striking persona—as a band and as individuals." Rather than spending time "experimenting with their look" or trying to impress local scenesters, he adds, "You'll find them arguing about the purity of their recording, the quality of their playing and striving to protect their integrity."

Coda-booked Kitty, Daisy & Lewis will play U.K. festivals this July, including Rise, Bestival and Standon Calling, followed by Belgium's Pukkelpop. —Hazel Davis

EVERYBODY: Judas Priest vocalist Rob Halford says, "is eager to grab the full metal opera."

HALFORD: "It's an amazing opus that has been a mission of love, so the band wanted to do something special," he says. "The band came up with the [marketing] ideas," he adds, "and it's Judas Priest's way of rewarding their fans. The sets retail at very competitive prices."

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JUDITH OWEN

Contact: Blake Zidell, publicist, blake@blakezidell.com

“I’ve noticed that very dark people are really funny and every funny person I’ve met has their dark side,” Judith Owen says. This is the perfect summation of the charming singer/songwriter, who has made an impressive career out of boring her tormented thoughts, then allowing herself and her audience to laugh together after each last note.

The Welsh-born entertainer moved to America in the late ’90s, signing initially to Capitol! but then getting out of her deal in 2000 when the label experienced a shake-up and never released her debut set. Her newest album, “Mopping Up Karma,” released earlier this month via her own label Courgette Records, was gathered from the remnants of that dropped album, originally recorded with Glen Ballard.

It too, though, is a page torn from her own personal history book, a recorded diary of her emotional strife to overcome depression and anxiety disorders, and come to grips with the suicide of her mother when Owen was 15 years old. “The most-used word in my music vocabulary is ‘mother.’ You can literally trace my mental health and coping by listening to every CD I’ve made,” Owen says.

Altogether, she’s released eight albums on her own, selling a combined total of 13,000 units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “My father, who sings opera, is the reason I sing. He gets so much joy from it, it was his form of escape. So I sing for him, I write for her.”

Being such a personal craft, Owen’s songs have a very theatrical quality to them, with big arcs and intense arrangements. Her husky, melodramatic croon has graced several TV and film placements, including “Today” and an episode of “The Simpsons.” While she is “proud to say, I didn’t sleep my way onto ‘The Simpsons,’” it certainly doesn’t hurt that her inspiration, “biggest fan” and husband/actor/musician Harry Shearer is one of the animated show’s longstanding stars.

The pair met in Britain when Shearer was decked out in his full “This Is Spinal Tap” costume and Owen was singing a “stupid gig” at a hotel in 1993. The pair immediately hit it off and Owen eventually asked Shearer to marry her. They now spend time between Los Angeles and New Orleans. They’ve whipped up several collaborations, including 2005′s “Christmas in July” EP and perform such collaborations live together. “We laugh so much together. He’s a devout lover of music. Harry needs music and I need comedy.”

Owen will tour in support of “Karma” throughout the summer and May join touring companion Richard Thompson on the road. She has contemplated releasing other artists’ music, but concedes that her goal of releasing one album per year “has kept my hands tied.” However, she has three projects on tap in the next year or so: a trio album with bassist Sean Hurley and drummer Dave Mattacks, a collection of Welsh ballads and another stint of “Christmas” shows.
THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

ALBUMS

VARIous ARTISTS

Camp Rock
Producers: various
Wait Disney Records
Release Date: June 17

As the “High School Musical” troupe troops to the big screen, Disney brings forth its next potential franchise concept—“Camp Rock,” a summer sojourn to a place where “you can feel the beat, running through your feet,” as the cast tells us in the opening number, “We Rock.” This is ostensibly a vehicle for the fast-rising Jonas Brothers, but 15-year-old Miley Cyrus (like newcomer Demi Lovato in the breakout seat as the aspiring Mitchie Torres, daughter of the camp cook and looking for her break. Neither Joe Jonas nor Lovato dominate the soundtrack, however, though they each have solo showcases as well as a Big Moment duet (“This Is Me”). The Jonas Brothers get to rock out on “Play My Music,” while the rest of the album is a contemporary (if not cutting-edge) pop smorgasbord featuring techy dance tracks, Avril-style chick rock, a touch of hip-hop and “deep” self-affirmations.—GO

N’ER’D
Seeming Sounds
Producers: The Neptunes
Star Trak/Interscope
Release Date: June 10

LISTEN TO THE WORDS on the third album by the Neptunes’ side-project rock band and you’ll wonder if Pharrell Williams does anything but doubt the motives of the various women crowding the margins of his adventures in clubland. For a less depressing experience, ignore the lyrics and direct your full attention to N’ER’D’s full-color beats, which after a dip in quality on 2004’s “Fly or Die” reype close examination here. Dig the way “Yeah You” layers a pop-soul saxophone lick over a funky jazz-rap baseline or how “Spaz” answers the long-burning question of what Stereolab would sound like if they were a metal group. Thematically starred, “Seeming Sounds” is nonetheless a sonic feast.—MW

ROCK

THE OFFSPRING
Rise and Fall, Rage and Grace
Producer: Bob Rock
Columbia
Release Date: June 17

It sounds weird to say about a band of brainiac 40-somethings well into their second decade of work, but the Offspring makes an argument for its evolution—and, indeed, relevance—on this ambitious eighth disc, which is utterly devoid of pretzels, funny guys or summer-barbecue anthems. Sure, the snot-rocket punk band putting on its big-boy clothes thing has been done before, and the Offspring don’t quite live up to the “American Idiot” here. Lyrically, Dexter Holland focuses more on big-ticket targets in the “shit is fucked up” sort of vein, and producer Bob Rock conjures standard rock crunch on tracks like “A Lot Like You” and the Snow Patrol-channeling “Fix You.” There are potent moments like the rise-and-fall ballad “Kristy, Are You Doing Okay?” and the fierce “Nothing,” but “Rise and Fall, Rage and Grace” sounds more like a tentative step in the Offspring’s new direction.—JV

COLDPLAY
Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends
Producers: Brian Eno, Mark Dravis
Columbia

Release Date: June 17

They’ve got the commercial clout, but now they want the cred. On their fourth album, the members of Coldplay reframe their gizillion-selling pop/rock through a more nuanced lens, drafting producers Brian Eno and Mark Dravis to help them craft more diverse, experimental music. Radiohead they ain’t, “42” sounds like three different songs awkwardly stitched together in ProTools, and often the layers of production seem to come at the expense of memorable melodies. Two of the best songs are instrumental: opener “Life in Technicolor” is a propulsive heart-melt that deftly straddles the acoustic/electro divide, and the effects-drenched “Chinese Sleep Chant” finds Coldplay discovering its inner My Bloody Valentine. The rest is closer to the Coldplay we know: a competent blend of heavily orchestrated redemption songs (“Viva La Vida,” already the biggest hit of the band’s career), twirly arena rock (“Lovers In Japan”) and life-stinks-without-you ballads (“Strawberry Swing”) likely to resonate with the same bells and whistles.—JC

POP

ANTHONY DAVID
Acy Deucy
Producers: various
Soulbird Music/Universal Republic
Release Date: June 17

This Atlanta-based singer/songwriter makes his

LIL WAYNE
Tha Carter III
Producers: various
Cash Money/Universal
Release Date: June 10

He’s the self-proclaimed “best rap
per ever,” has made more than 40 guest appearances since 1999 and has been the most hyped hip-hop artist in recent time. But with help from A-list guest stars (T-Pain, Robin Thicke) and producers (Kanye West, Swiss Beatz), Lil Wayne backs up the boasts on the oft-delayed “Tha Carter III.” In case you were on the fence, he reminds us how “ill” his skills are on “A Milli” (“I’m a venereal disease/like a menstrual I bleeds”), and he drafts fellow Carter Jay Z to diss the haters atop piano and horns on “Mr. Carter.” And while tracks like the played-out-themed “Got Money” and the element-saving “La La” fall shot of the mark, others like the “E.T.”-inspired “Phone Home” and “Dr. Carter,” on which Wayne literally attempts to resuscitate hip-hop, further secure his spot in said genre’s pantheon.—MC

JUDAS PRIEST
Nostradamus
Producers: Glenn Tipton, K.K. Downing
 Epic
Release Date: June 17

This English heavy-metal act’s second album since its reunion with iconic frontman Rob Halford is also its first concept set, a two-disc retelling of the life of Nostradamus, the 16th-century French prognosticator. If that sounds like a thrilling way to spend an hour and 40 minutes, you’ll probably love the music here, which reflects the album’s narrative ambition with a bigger, more flowery sound than on Halford’s comeback disc, Priest’s Angel of Retribution from 2005. (Expect acoustic guitars, strings and keyboards along with K.K. Downing and Glenn Tipton’s usual battery of biker-bar riffs.) If, however, that description causes your eyelids to droop, “Nostradamus” isn’t likely to surprise you—this is softcore for the hardcore.—MW

SILVER JEWs
Lookout Mountain, Lookout Sea
Producer: David Berman
Drag City
Release Date: June 17

Although Wolf Parade’s principal members have kept busy with various side projects (Sunset Rubdown, Handsome Furs, Swan Lake), it’s been a few years since the Montreal band’s last output of new material. But the time between now and its 2005 Sub Pop debut, “Apologies to the Queen Mary,” allowed the group to more fully develop its sound. “At Mount Zoomer” expands upon the bits-and-pieces pop approach of its predecessor debut into a solid set of rock songs. Highlights include the shift from taut opening guitar lines into a woozy bridge heed on “Soldier’s Grin,” the pounding piano and keyboard-led breakdown of “Language City,” the superb dark rock anthem “California Dreamer” and “Kissing the Beehive,” which finds Wolf Parade pulling out all the stops for a sprawling 11-minute epic.—JM

THE NOTWIST
The Devil, You + Me
Producer: The Notwist
Domino
Release Date: June 17

The past two decades have seen more than a few incarnations of German musical eccletic the Notwist. Its 1989 debut was driven by hardcore metal influences, making it just about the polar opposite of recent efforts like 2002’s "Neon Golden," a dreamy, Technicolor lullaby. "The Devil, You + Me" follows in that album’s stunning panama, combining Markus Hübner’s hushed vocals and haunting harmonies with a slowly dissolving pace that progresses from the forward-rushing opening track “Good Lives” to the bare and ambigous closer “Gone Gone Gone.” Throughout, eerie production touches (metallic clinks and synth bleeps on “Where in This World?”) and organic sounds (acoustic guitars and glockenspiel on the title track) fit seamlessly to form the Notwist’s most charming and complex work to date.—JAW

KATy PERRY
One of the Boys
Producers: various
Capitol
Release Date: June 17

She name-checks Gwen Stefani in her press materials, and the title track here covers similar thematic territory as No Doubt’s “Just a Girl.” But Katy Perry’s true foremother is Alanis Morissette. Not since “Jagged Little Pill” has a debut album been so packed with potential hits. The 23-year-old singer/songwriter updates Morissette’s grunge era angst with an energetic, more timeless teen-poppiness, still leveraging it with lines like, “You PMS like a bitch/ I would know.” The 12 tracks are split between smart rock chic pop (“Hot N’ Cold”), sassy novelty tracks for that “She said what?” effect (“I Kissed a Girl,” “UR So Gay”) and big, swaying ballads that show Perry’s exciting mastery of melody (“Thinking of You,” “Lost”). Engineered for short attention spans at just 44 minutes, “One of the Boys” is still more than enough to make this one hot, long summer for Perry.—KJ

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THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

SINGLES

Daughter
What About Now (4:10)
Producer: Howard Benson
Writers: R. Moody, H. Dodges, J. Harttler
Publishers: not listed
19/RCA

Boy, this guy means business. Chris Daughtry has scored five top 10 hits at top 40, rock and adult top 40 so far this year, including two among the five biggest "American Idol!" finalists. He's got (both Grammy Award-nominated): "Home," with 11 No. 1 weeks at AC, and "It's Not Over" with nine atop adult top 40. What About Now" is yet another overachieving rock ballad with a savvy lyric about saving a troubled relationship, co-written by Ben Moody. Daughtry's dexterous voice is ever recognizable, while production from rock hero Howard Benson masterfully blends a blast of guitars and percussion with a slick, runway hook. "Idol" aligned Daughtry with the industry's best, but it's hard to imagine he wouldn't have found notoriety on his own. If this keeps up, the association with "AI" will be a mere footnote.-CT

ALICIA KEYS
Teenage Love Affair (3:10)
Producer: Alicia Keys, Jack Splash
Writers: A. Keys, J. Splash, H. LII
Publishers: various
J Records

Alicia Keys reminisces about youth on "Teenage Love Affair," her sweetest, breeziest yet. The classic R&B cut's nostalgic bass licks alongside simple, crisp drums, accompanied by a catchy, honey-glazed lyric. The butterflies-in-your-stomach feeling is summoned alongside four new songs and added DVD material. The song's video is a digital dream about star-crossed lovers, with one who makes your world stop: "I waited my whole life for this one night, it's gon' be me you and the dancefloor/Dance forever." Or at least, to No. 1.-MM

JORDIN SPARKS
One Step at a Time (3:26)
Producer: Robbie Nevil
Writers: R. Nevil, L. Evans, J. Leon
Publisher: not listed
Jive

Who knew? While "American Idol!" season six champ Jordin Sparks possesses plenty of talent, previous youthful finalists—Katharine McPhee a prime example—have been driven to record painfully bland, soulful number percolating with optimism, produced and co-written by Robbie Nevil, best-known for 1986 smash "C'est La Vie" but more recently involved with "High School Musical!" and "Hannah Montana.

Sparks has ignited potential to become an enduring name brand, propelling past the "Idol!" stamp.-CT

CHRIS BROWN
Forever (4:40)
Producer: Po'Will Don Dan
Writers: C. Brown, J. Jones, B. Kennedy, R. Allen, A. Merritt
Publishers: various
Jive

"Forever!" is an apropos title for the latest from Chris Brown, who has proved 2008's pop/R&B prince that he has talent and charm to command the charts for as long he chooses. His No. 9 debut on the Billboard Hot 100 last issue adds another jewel to his crown, alongside a careertotal of nine pop top 10s. The 19-year-old singer's talent, if stripped down, is really a love song but bounces with elektric production from Po'Will Don Dan to ignite dancefloors. This marks the fifth single from Brown's latest multiplatinum release, being re-packaged as "Exclusive: The Future," to add four new songs and added DVD material. The song's video is a digital dream about star-crossed lovers, with one who makes your world stop: "I waited my whole life for this one night, it's gon' be me you and the dancefloor/Dance forever." Or at least, to No. 1.-MM

PODCAST

BILLBOARDPodcast

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Writers: R. Nevil, L. Evans, J. Leon
Publisher: not listed
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FOR THE RECORD

The producers for Jordin Sparks' title track "I'll Never See Your Face" by Maroon 5 and Rihanna are Mark Ebers- dert, Mike Elizondo, Mark "Spike" Stent, Trickly and Maroon 5.

EDICTED BY JONATHAN COHEN
(AlBUMS) AND CHUCK TAYLOR
(SINGLES)

CONTRIBUTORS: Alexandra Cahill, Jonathan Cohen, Maribel Concepcion, Hillary Crosby, Gary Groff, Kern Mason, Michael Menchini, Jill Mencia, Gail Mitchell, Deborah Evans Price, Chuck Taylor, Susan Vidakovich, Jeff Wrenel, Mikeil Wood, Lavinia Jones Wright

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

CRITICS' CHOICE: A new release, innovative, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for music purists.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 777 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

major-label debut on India Arie's Soulbird Music imprint, comprising tracks from his two critically-acclaimed independent releases, "Three Chords & The Truth!" and "Red Clay Chronicles." With blues as his base and guitar as his musical mate, David cultivates an engaging, mellow sound reminiscent of the fertile '70s but with a contemporary urban feel and gospel stylings on such songs as "Cheatin' Man," "Cold Turkey" and "Red Clay Chronicles." evoke the rhythmic storytelling of Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Gil Scott-Heron and Bill Withers. Meanwhile, his husky voice paired with India Arie (on the brand-new "Words!" and "I'm Already Here." He exited the group last year to pursue a solo career and fulfill a lifelong goal with the release of his first inspirational project. Most country artists who've tapped the Christian market have recorded familiar hymns and gospel standards, but McDonald delivers a collection of new songs that Christian audiences should eagerly embrace. He wrote nearly every song on this project. "What Would He Do?" is a challenge to Christians to put their faith into action, while the title track is a powerful anthem that celebrates the hope and power of God. "The Lord's Prayer" is one of the highlights of this release, tapping into the relationship with God. McDonald should be just as successful in the Christian arena as he's long been in the country field.-DEP

BROADWAY

ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST RECORDING
In the Heights
Producers: Andres Levin, Kurt Deutsch
Ghostlight
Release Date: June 3

The last thing Broadway needs is yet another revival of "Gypsy" or "Guys and Dolls." So how refreshing that "In the Heights," nominated for 13 Tony Awards, has potential to make the Great White Way appealing to someone besides tourists. Unlike last hip staging, "Rent," "Heights" isn't begging sympathy for slacker kids; instead, it is a vibrant cultural snapshot about a close-knit Latino community at the top of Manhattan. The double-CD soundtrack contains 23 songs written by Puerto Rican show lead Lin-Manuel Miranda, who conceived the story and wrote the music for the show lead. "In the Heights." It's hard to imagine he wouldn't have found notoriety on his own. If this keeps up, the association with "AI" will be a mere footnote.-CT

COUNTRY

JOSHUA STEVENS
Rock'n'Roll and Pencascola (3:28)
Producers: Joshua Stevens, Chuck Taylor
Writers: J. Stevens, D. Couch, J. McCormick
Publishers: Circle C. ASCAP, Malaco/Pies/Alternative, BMI
Robbins Nashville
Via S.E.B. Publishing and "Nashville Star" alum Joshua Stevens bows on Robbins Nashville with a song tailor-made for the season, with a breezy melody and picturesque lyric— with images of hot sand, a golf breeze, form-fitting concert T-shirt, breakfast at Denny's— about summer love that ended too soon but left memories that linger. Stevens possesses a warm, likable voice and infuses the song with considerable personality, qualities that signal a bright future for this engaging young artist.-DEP

ROCK

WEEZER
Pork and Beans (3:09)
Producer: Jacknife Lee
Writer: R. Cuomo
Publisher: E.O. Smith, BMI/DGC/interscope

Modern rock quartet Weezer gazes up the genre with surprising insta-hit "Pork and Beans," the lead sin- gle off its third self-titled album. In the Jacknife Lee-produced serving of pop power, frontman Rivers Cuomo embraces his inner nerd with an incisive critique of commercial pop star-dom—as the Harvard grad defi- nitely responds to label execs who encouraged him to use Rogaine, visit the gym and collaborate with Timbaland. In a chorus that demands mass singalong, Cuomo insists in doing what he wants—while he ain't got nothing to prove. The self-deprecating rant is quickly paying off with a No. 1 hit at modern rock and Weezer's first appearance on the Billboard Hot 100 since "Perfect Situation" reached No. 8 in 2001.—AC

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HOMETOWN HEROES

As it prepares to celebrate its 20th birthday, venerable Seattle indie label Sub Pop has a fresh hit on its hands: The band's self-titled debut from hometown rock outfit Fleet Foxes. The set debuted this week at No. 83 on the Billboard 200 with sales of 8,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and also opens at No. 5 on the Tastemakers chart, No. 10 on Top Independent Albums and No. 29 on Top Rock Albums.

The tally is Sub Pop's second-biggest opening-week sum of the year, behind only Flight of the Conchords' self-titled debut, which shifted 18,000 units in late April.

Fleet Foxes hadn't even played outside of Seattle until a couple of months ago. But the group has been quietly laying a foundation at home since 2006, when it began booking local shows and distributing a self-released, Phil Ek-produced EP that frontman Robin Pecknold, now 22, and his brother would release on their parents' basement (Billboard, Sept. 23, 2006).

Between then and the time Sub Pop won a label bidding war late last year, the band's sound morphed from up-tempo, Love- and Beach Boys-influenced rock to a more folk-inflected style featuring a strong emphasis on Crosby, Stills & Nash-ish vocal harmonies, furthering Pecknold's goal for the music to become "more adventurous."

In the spring, Fleet Foxes hit the road for the first time with Sub Pop labelmate Blitzen Trapper and began selling another EP, "Sun Giant," exclusively at Sub Pop's brick-and-mortar store at the band's next show. A run of more than 1,000 copies went quickly, so Sub Pop moved quickly to make it available first on subpop.com and then at retail via Alternative Distribution Alliance. "We're over 10,000 copies on an EP that was just supposed to be a tour item," Sub Pop director of radio promo/A&R Sue Busch says.

The buzz went to another level entirely after Fleet Foxes' multiple performances at South by Southwest in March, resulting in an avalanche of press at home (Rolling Stone, Spin) and abroad (a five-star lead review in the latest issue of Mojo). "We did a listening party on AOL, and the album was streamed on MySpace," Busch says. "These are usual suspects for some of our bigger artists, but it's especially great for Fleet Foxes because they're brand-new."

Sub Pop is also enjoying an unprecedented level of commercial radio support for one of its bands, according to Busch. "We have an add at [commercial] WXPN [Philadelphia], and we have big fans already at KNDN [Seattle] and Indie 102 [Los Angeles]," she says. "That doesn't really happen for us.

A video for emphasis track "White Winter Hygynal," featuring band members rendered as puppets and directed by Robin's brother Sean, will be completed by the end of the month. But the main focus in the coming weeks will be on touring. Fleet Foxes just sold out two U.K. shows of the week of June 9, and a handful of dates are already sold out for a North American run that begins June 26 in Seattle.

To cement the band's place in the annals of Sub Pop, the label is featuring Fleet Foxes as part of its upcoming 20th anniversary blowout in Seattle the weekend of July 11. There are also four August support slots for Wilco in the Pacific Northwest, confirmation of which rendered band members in disbelief. "How did we get here? Seriously, what is going on?" reads a Pecknold note next to those show listings on the group's MySpace page.

—Jonathan Cohen

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What A Journey!

Exclusive Deals Propel Classic Rockers Up The Charts

It's been a long time since retail has rolled out the red carpet for Journey, but that's exactly what's happening in conjunction with two completely separate yet exclusive packages at Wal-Mart and Best Buy, released June 3. Like fellow Front Line Management clients the Eagles and Garth Brooks before them, Journey chose to bypass the label system and cut an exclusive deal with Wal-Mart to exclusively feature a triple-disc set, "Revelation!"

The release consists of an album of new material, a re-recorded greatest-hits disc and a DVD of live performances, all for $11.88. For its June 3 street date, it was featured in the June 1 and June 8 Wal-Mart circulars. The results have been nothing short of spectacular: Sources say it sold 28,000 on street date and, according to Nielsen SoundScan, moved almost 105,000 in its first week, good enough for a No. 3 debut on the Billboard 200.

It's the band's highest-charting album and best sales week since "Trial by Fire" debuted and peaked at No. 3 with 145,000 in 1996. Meanwhile, Sony BMG, apparently attempting to cash in on the Wal-Mart package, assembled a new CD/DVD "Greatest Hits" exclusively for Best Buy to sell. The collection repackages a best-of first released in 2006 with a "Greatest Hits" DVD out since 2003. The new version sold 21,000 copies and jumped 3-1 on Billboard's Top Catalog Albums tally.

Source suggests Sony was initially irked by the Wal-Mart package, but opted to make lemons into lemonade. In addition to the Best Buy exclusive, the label put the Journey catalog on deal, using its usual tactic of offering discounts aligned with how much retail was willing to do for a promotion.

For the week of June 3, the Journey catalog scanned almost 35,000 units. Moreover, sales could be fueled by a tour this summer that finds Journey playing alongside Heart and Cheap Trick.

But if Sony BMG is no longer irked by the Wal-Mart exclusive, other labels are. Says one rival: "If I was Sony and supported Wal-Mart the way they do, I would be annoyed that the chain is selling a re-recorded 'greatest hits' instead of Sony's hit package, especially if they don't put a sticker on it saying it's with a new singer [Anneli Pihlaja, who Journey discovered on YouTube]."

The Wal-Mart package acknowledges the material has been re-recorded and shows a picture of the band with IDs for the members. So two different fans can figure it out for themselves. But a casual fan might not realize it doesn't feature the voice so closely identified with the band, that of Steve Perry.

Still, concern is growing that Wal-Mart will continue to sell new versions of "Greatest Hits" rather than pre-existing catalog versions. If that happens, "Wal-Mart is continually asking us for more margin with one hand and taking margin out of our pocket with the other," a sales executive complains.

Sony declined comment on the subject, while Wal-Mart didn't return calls.

MAKIN' A MINT

Three years after clearance delays scuttled its chart chances, Mint Royale's remix of "Singin' in the Rain" has topped the U.K. singles chart—thanks to TV ratings champ "Britain's Got Talent."

George Sampson, a 14-year-old breakdancer, recently won the ITV talent show with a performance backed by Mint Royale's version, which first appeared in a 2005 Volkswagen ad.

The track was originally licensed from Faith & Hope, the indie label set up by the Manchester-based electronic act Neil Haxton, to Sony BMG imprint Direction. With Direction no longer active, the current download-only release switched to Sony BMG's Syco, although mobile rights remain with Faith & Hope.

Syco TV co-produces "Britain's Got Talent," and the label's president Simon Cowell is one of the show's judges.

"We are absolutely delighted," Syco head of media Ann-Marie Thomson says. "With an audience of 13.5 million and 60% share, the song has a huge level of exposure."

In the week after the May 31 release, the track sold almost 46,000 copies, vaulting from No. 28 to No. 1 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. listing. It was serviced to TV and radio June 6 and is playlisted at top 40 network Capital and dance station Kiss 100, while the video has been added at video channels the Box, the Hits and MTV Dance.

Adam Griffin, RCA label group product manager, previously worked at Direction and always believed the track could be a No. 1. He says a three-month delay in obtaining clearance from the estate of Gene Kelly—whose original vocals are featured on the track—"led to a loss of heat" for the 2005 release, although it still reached No. 20.

Haxton didn't watch the show—"I've got two young kids and it was on at bath time," he says—and when he was told it had reached No. 1 on iTunes June 1, he thought it was "a blip."

"The most obvious thing now would be to make some fantastic dance extravaganza video for the track," Haxton says, noting plans to remix 2000s' "See You in the Morning" album and 2007's "Popsicle..." best of, which both feature the track. "We're very happy and it's looking like it's going to be No. 1 again this week."

Syco has also signed female string quartet eScala from "Britain's Got Talent" and is in talks with vocalists Andrew Johnston and Faryl Smith. The company says last year's winner, opera singer Paul Potts, has sold 3 million copies worldwide of his debut, "One Chance."

—Andre Paine
Lil Wayne Ready For Big Start; Pop 100 Fine-Tunes

The top of the Billboard 200 rocks, as crunched Disturbed lands its third No.1 album, but the bigger noise will come next week from rapper Lil Wayne.

By all indications, including Nielsen SoundScan's June 11 Building chart, Lil Wayne's 'Tha Carter III' will mount the largest sales week so far of 2008, with a serious shot to surpass 900,000 units in its first week.

The Building chart had the album's unweighted first-day sales from nine leading accounts at 423,000, the largest opening sum on the Building list since Kanye West's 'Graduation' posted 437,000 from eight accounts in September. That release ended up selling 957,000 units in its first week, the largest sales frame since 2005. The big chart should greet another hefty sum the week after 'Carter' bows, as Coldplay's 'Viva la Vida' hits the market June 17. Retailers' pre-orders for 'Viva' are up to 1.1 million units at press time; the initial shipment on 'Carter' was 1.3 million.

Meanwhile, Disturbed's 'Indestructible' opens at 253,000 copies (see story, page 55). Although not its biggest career week, that does top any frame posted by its last album, 'Ten Thousand Fists,' which moved 239,000 in 2005 when it became the band's second album to bow at No. 1.

**POP LIFE:** The ongoing growth of the digital song market prompts the first significant revision in chart rules for Billboard's Pop 100 since the list's February 2005 launch. The new rules kick in this issue. Like the Billboard Hot 100, the Pop 100 ranks songs' popularity by measuring both sales and radio airplay. But while the almost 50-year-old Hot 100 monitors airplay from all formats tracked by Billboard and sister magazine Radio & Records, the newer chart's radio panel is confined to mainstream top 40 stations. While the Hot 100's mission remains to chronicle the most popular songs in the land, regardless of genre, the Pop 100—as its name suggests—intends to hone in on pop fare. But, the ongoing boom of the digital songs market has obscured the Pop 100's goal in recent months, as songs not supported by mainstream top 40 play have become more prominent on the chart strictly on the musicality of digital sales. Effective immediately, most songs will not be eligible to appear on the Pop 100 unless they reach a base level of 100,000 audience impressions from the 127 mainstream top 40 stations on the chart's radio panel. Previously, the chart had no radio audience requirement. Exempt from the minimum-audience threshold will be any title that reaches the top 10 on Hot Digital Songs, as that dimension of sales success indicates mass appeal, regardless of an artist's primary radio format. The sales stipulation would have allowed some of the better-selling "American Idol" tracks that hit Hot Digital Songs after the week's final week to also bow on the Pop 100, but 15 of the "20 Idol" tracks that bowed on the Pop list in the June 7 issue would not have charted under the new rules.

Aside from the minimum radio audience requirement, the Pop 100's current rules have been adjusted. Songs will leave the Pop 100 after 20 chart weeks unless a title remains in the top 50, while under the original rules, recurrent status happened after 30 weeks for songs ranked lower than No. 30. The sales/airplay ratio has been shifted, from 54/46 in favor of sales in recent weeks to 60/40 in favor of airplay. And, the component Pop 100 Airplay chart has been expanded from 50 titles to 75, with the list's expanded content available at billboard.biz. The 75-title depth matches the depth of Hot Digital Songs.

The implementation of the new rules leads to odd movement on the chart, as "Last Week" numbers reflect the previous methodology. Thus, Coldplay's new "Viva la Vida" shows a 7-10 backward bullet, while Jordin Sparks jumps over it 9-8 unbolstered with the older "No Air," oddities caused because the bullets factor what the songs' points would have been a week earlier had the new factors been in place. Complete chart rules are available from Pop 100 chart manager Gary Trust at gtrust@billboard.com.
At No. 31, Kimberley Camp's "Beyond Measure" shifts 1,000 with an 83% increase thanks to a $5 sale tag at the influential Family Christian Stores chain.

At No. 97, Lady A's duets set increases in sales by 70% following a repeat of an "email" show dedicated to the singer and the album.

A relic of the album last week with three new singles and a remix hits the set by 20%, with its best sales week (38,000) since November.

Chiron's "World of Fantasy/My World of Fantasy" slips from No. 35 (12,000) to No. 37 (8,000).

At No. 6, Garth Brooks' American Man: Greatest Hits Volume II.

At No. 24, Kid Rock's Rock N Roll Jesus.

At No. 16, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 26, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 18, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 28, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 30, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 32, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 34, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 36, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 38, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 40, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 42, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 44, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 46, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 48, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 50, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 52, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 54, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 56, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 58, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 60, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 62, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 64, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 66, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 68, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 70, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 72, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 74, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 76, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 78, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 80, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 82, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 84, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 86, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 88, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 90, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 92, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 94, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 96, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 98, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 100, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 102, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 104, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 106, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 108, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 110, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 112, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 114, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 116, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 118, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 120, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 122, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 124, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 126, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 128, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 130, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 132, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 134, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 136, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 138, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 140, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".

At No. 142, Kid Rock's "I Am" and "Rock n Roll Jesus".
**HOT 100 AIRPLAY**

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<td>What a Memory</td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>It's Not My Time</td>
<td>Adam Levine</td>
<td>Republic</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Let It Be</td>
<td>The Rolling Stones</td>
<td>Rhino</td>
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<td>Sweater</td>
<td>Maroon 5</td>
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**ADULT TOP 40**

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<td>Owl City</td>
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<tr>
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**HOT DIGITAL SONGS**

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<td>Under the Gun</td>
<td>The Smashing Pumpkins</td>
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<td>Adele</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Owl City</td>
<td>Interscope/RCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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**ADULT CONTEMPORARY**

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<th>Label</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bleeding Love</td>
<td>Enrique Iglesias</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
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<td>Sia</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SVT</td>
<td>Pentatonix</td>
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Data for week of JUNE 21, 2008 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 61
### TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>The Life</td>
<td>$23.98</td>
<td>Death Row/Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SNOOP DOGGY</td>
<td>Tha Dogg</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
<td>Death Row/Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BETTY WALTERS</td>
<td>Why Me</td>
<td>$11.98</td>
<td>B&amp;S</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>DR. Dre</td>
<td>The Chronic</td>
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<td>Aftermath/Interscope</td>
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<td>2PAC</td>
<td>Don't Play</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>T.I.</td>
<td>T.I.</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
<td>Grand Hustle/Atlantic</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>50 CENT</td>
<td>Get Rich</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
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<td>Don't Cry</td>
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### TOP REGGAE ALBUMS

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<th>Artist</th>
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<td>Mind Control</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>RAS GAGGA RAGGA</td>
<td>Ras Gagga Ragga</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
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<tr>
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<td>RIHANNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>MATISSEUH</td>
<td>MATISSEUH</td>
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</table>

### ASHANTI GRABS HOT SHOT DEBUT

Ashanti’s “Here I Stand” has another week at No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums while Ashanti inked the Hot Shot Debut at No. 2. Her “The Declaration” also lands at No. 6 on the Billboard 200, shifting 86,000. Her latest studio effort, 2005’s “Concrete Rose,” also started as the R&B Albums runner-up at No. 7 on the big chart with 254,000 sold this week before Christmas. Lahal Hathaway hits new benchmarks with “Self Portrait,” her first top 10, at No. 6 on R&B Albums and best launch on the Billboard 200 at No. 6. Of her previous five albums, Hathaway’s 1999 debut offered its best rank on either at No. 18 on the R&B chart. The late Pimp C opens at No. 24, and Lil Wayne’s “Tha Carter III” breaks early at No. 32 on street-date violations.—Robert George

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

<table>
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<td>1</td>
<td>HEART SLEEP SLEPT</td>
<td>YUNG Joc</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CONFESSIONS</td>
<td>LIL WAYNE</td>
<td>15000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LOLLIPPOP</td>
<td>LIL WAYNE</td>
<td>15000</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LUV IN THIS CLUB</td>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>15000</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>LOLLIPPOP</td>
<td>LIL WAYNE</td>
<td>15000</td>
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### RHYTHMIC AIRPLAY

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**HiTpredictor**

**Country Songs**

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<tr>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim McGraw</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius Rucker</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Miranda Lambert</td>
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<td>Taylor Swift</td>
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**Country Radio**

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<td>Blake Shelton</td>
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<td>Tim McGraw</td>
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<td>Faith Hill</td>
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<td>Keith Urban</td>
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<td>Darius Rucker</td>
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<td>Taylor Swift</td>
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<td>Miranda Lambert</td>
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**Radio And Records Update**

Visit [www.radioandrecords.com](http://www.radioandrecords.com) to sign up for your free daily Country Radio Blast.

---

**Billboard Country: Songs**

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<th>Original Artist(s)</th>
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<td>&quot;The Last Name&quot;</td>
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<td>Eiffel 65</td>
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<td>&quot;Give It To Me&quot;</td>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It's Friday&quot;</td>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wasted&quot;</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
<td>Lee Brice</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Use Me&quot;</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood</td>
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**Billboard Country: Charts**

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<td>Eiffel 65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Give It To Me&quot;</td>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It's Friday&quot;</td>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wasted&quot;</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
<td>Lee Brice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Use Me&quot;</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood</td>
<td>5</td>
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**Crossroads**

Don't miss another important R&R Country Daily Update.

---

**Underwood Scores Another Hat Trick**

Carrie Underwood tops Hot Country Songs for a sixth time, as "Last Name" gains 2.9 million impressions and rises 5-1. No solo female has scored three chart-topping singles from the same album since Underwood herself did so with three tracks from "Some Hearts" (2006-07). Before Underwood's first triplet of "Jesus, Take the Wheel," "Before He Cheats," and "Wasted," Jo Dee Messina was the last woman to go the distance with three No. 1s from one album. She led with three songs from "I'm Alright" in 1998-99: "Bye Bye," the title track and "Stand Beside Me." Rosanne Cash was the last solo female to send a quartet of tracks to the summit from the same album, with four songs from "King's Record Shop" in 1987-88. Cash's feat has yet to be matched, but Underwood came as close as one could on her "Some Hearts" run, when third single "Don't Forget to Remember Me" peaked at No. 2 in August 2006.

—Wade Jessen
### Latin Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Didda Esta Vi Él Amor&quot;</td>
<td>Marco Antonio Solís</td>
<td>Sony BMG Norte</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Y Tu Me Sientes&quot;</td>
<td>Nacho</td>
<td>Sony BMG Norte</td>
</tr>
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<td>&quot;Si Tu Me Engañas&quot;</td>
<td>Mau y Ricky</td>
<td>Sony BMG Norte</td>
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<td>&quot;Lo Que El Corazón No Sabe&quot;</td>
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<td>Sony BMG Norte</td>
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### Latin Albums

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### Japan

**Singles (Official Hall Charts)**

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### United Kingdom

**Singles**

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**Albums**

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### Australia

**Singles**

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**Singles**

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**Digital Songs**

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### Spain

**Singles**

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### Europe

**Digital Songs**

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Data for week of JUNE 21, 2008 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633
**SALES DATA COMPILED BY
NELSON SOUNDSCAN
FOR COMPLETE CHART INFORMATION
TASTEMAKERS

REGIONAL HEATSEEKER *1s

TOP HEATSEEKERS

TASSEMAKERS

BREAKING & ENTERING

William Joseph, a discovery of producer David Foster, rockets to No. 17 on Top Heatseekers with "Beyond." Find out more about Joseph on billboard.com and breaking how his album not only boasts a 72-piece orchestra, but covers from Led Zeppelin and Ennio Morricone.

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

PROGRESS REPORT

Ludo, "You're Awful, I Love You"

The band's album makes its fourth gain out of the past six weeks, moving 41-21 on Top Heatseekers. Ludo, which played Universal Music Group Distribution's presentation at NARM, also sees "Love Me Dead" rise 19-17 on Modern Rock.

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
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**Note:** The table above is an example of how the Billboard Singles & Tracks Song Index would look. This is a fictional representation and does not actually exist in the Billboard publication.
MISS OPPORTUNITIES
MUSIC PRODUCER WANTED;

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For Help Wanted postings in print and online contact Benjamin Alcott: 646-654-5416 or Ben.Alcott@niesan.com

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PUBLISHING: EMI Music Publishing taps Kenny McGoff to be senior VP/head of A&R in the United Kingdom. He was senior VP.

DownTown Music Publishing appoints Sean McGraw director of licensing administration and Jeremy Yokoi manager of copyright relations. McGraw was synchronization licensing manager at Spirit Music Group, and Yokoi was manager of writer/publisher relations at ASCAP.

EMI names David Claassen associate director of writer/publisher relations in Atlanta. He was owner/president of RPS Marketing Group.


DISTRIBUTION: Redeye Distribution promotes Steve Dixon to GM. He was national sales director.

TOURING: Live Nation names Noah Maffett executive VP/GM of LiveNation.com. He was director of e-commerce strategy at Office Depot.

TV/FILM: Lionsgate Music expands its creative team with the promotion of Russell Ziecker to the newly created position of VP of TV music and A&R. He previously oversaw music for Lionsgate's TV slate.

MTV Tr3s appoints Nancy Tellet to VP of research and consumer insights. She was VP/director of media and strategic planning at Hispanic ad agency Siboney USA.

LEGAL: Philadelphia-based law firm of Bochetto & Lentz, P.C. taps Kevin Glickman as special counsel. He has previously provided personal and lifestyle management services to such artists as Rick Ross, Trina and Flo Rida.

RELATED FIELDS: More Music and Media names Andreas Bergmann business development manager in the United States. He was CEO of ETT Event & Travel Touristik AG in Germany.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

R&B SINGER MARIO TOURS BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Having grown up with a mother who was addicted to heroin, 21-year-old R&B singer Mario knows what it’s like to have a troubled childhood. As such, in conjunction with his current tour, which launched June 12 at Six Flags in St. Louis, Mario will visit local Boys & Girls Clubs across the country. “I felt like my story and who I am as an artist would be an inspiration for a lot of kids who may have experienced the same thing,” says Mario, who is touring in support of his third studio album, “Gol.”

The Grammy Award-nominated singer/songwriter/actor will also use the approximately 20-date trek, which wraps July 20 at Six Flags in Chicago, to help spread the word about his recently launched Mario Do Right Foundation (mariodoright.org), which is designed to educate and inspire at-risk kids who are affected by drug abuse. Along with short musical performances and a Q&A session, the singer will also screen his film documentary, “I Won’t Love You to Death: The Story of Mario and His Mom.”

GOODWORKS

THE RIGHT ‘TIME’

Country star John Michael Montgomery is “feeling great” following a 28-day stint in rehab and has a new album ready to drop in September. Montgomery checked himself into the Cumberland Heights facility in Nashville in May, citing sleep disorders and severe anxiety attacks. He calls it the result of 25 years of “roadin’ and drinkin’,” as well as the cumulative effect of surgeries on his legs and hips that led to some painkiller addictions. “Just life in general started catching up with me,” Montgomery, who’s had six No. 1 country hits, tells Track. “I just needed to take a break from it all, kind of just get away from the world for a little while and figure out where I’m at physically, mentally. emotionally. I definitely feel like I’ve done that. Now it’s just taking one step at a time, moving forward.” He is certainly doing that in music as well. He’s released a pair of singles this year, “Mad Cowboy Disease” and the current “If You Ever Went Away,” both of which will appear on “Time Flies,” Montgomery’s first new album in five years and his first for his own label, Stringtown Records. The set is due to drop Sept. 9.

MISSISSIPPI-THE BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICA’S MUSIC CELEBRATES ITS GRAMMY LEGACY

Musicians, industry insiders and fans celebrated Mississippi-born Grammy Award winners at “Mississippi: The Birthplace of America’s Music Celebrates Its Grammy Legacy!” on May 29. The event, hosted by Gov. Haley Barbour and first lady Marsha Barbour, was held at the Jackson Hamiott’s Windor Bedroom in Jackson, Miss. The celebration honored Grammy winners and nominees hailing from Mississippi and served as the first time the Recording Academy has allowed the use of the Grammy name for such an event.

LEFT: From left, Peavey Electronics founder Harley Peavey, Brandy and Gov. Haley Barbour. Brandy was presented with the Peavey Award at the Governor’s Mansion in Jackson prior to the “Mississippi Celebrates Its Grammy Legacy!” event.

BELOW: From left: Jon Hornyak, the Record Academy’s Memphis chapter senior executive director; Brandy; James Burton; Marty Stuart; Haley Barbour; Martha Barbour; Paul Overstreet and the Recording Academy’s director of membership services Angela Bill Sanders (who is, coincidentally, a native Mississippian).

BACKBEAT

Music Rising co-founders music producer Bob Ezrin, right, and Liz’s the Edge, center right, present a photograph to Hard Rock Cafe CEO Namish Dood, left, as musician Aaron Neville, center left, looks on at the launch of Music Rising. It is benefit organization, which was held at the Hard Rock Cafe New York. Music Rising has added over 2,400 professional musicians to the Gulf Coast region in regaining their livelihood after the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple Computer, gave the keynote address to Leadership Music’s graduating class of 2008 and the program alumni in Nashville. The event was sponsored by independent online music publisher Kobalt Music Group and American Roots Publishing. Pictured at the Nashville Public Library room are, from left, Grammy award-winning producer/musician Steve Nishchok, Kobalt Nashville's senior VP of creative Whitney Dane; Wozniak, and Kobalt Nashville's creative coordinator Jeff Skaggs.
**LONDON’S CITY SHOWCASE**

Billboard threw its support behind London’s City Showcase, an annual festival of music that provides a platform for rising new artists that was held June 2-6.

An eclectic mix of international acts took part in a string of day- and nighttime gigs, including Canada’s Land of Talk, South Africa’s Parlotones, Sweden’s Mustasch and New Zealand’s Over the Atlantic. The nonprofit City Showcase, which launched in 2003, has played a hand in breaking Amy Winehouse, Newton Faulkner, Keane, Razorlight, Hot Chip and Lady Sovereign, among others.

Photos: Courtesy of James Sellars except otherwise noted.

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1. Hair and metal was the order of the night when the Swedes took over the Borderline. Shown c: Babylon Bombs’ guitarist Jon. PHOTO: FABIO FERNANDES

2. Hair N’ Diesel cranked up the volume during the Real Rock of Sweden event held June 5 at the Borderline. Pictured are guitarist Slede, left, and bassist Stuenden. PHOTO: RICARDO VARGAS

3. Over the Atlantic frontman Nik Briskman prepares to take flight during the June 4 New Zealand Music Night at the Metro.


5. Walk the Moon’s singer and keyboardist Nicholas Petricca set the tone for the Global Pulse Night with an upbeat set.

6. Wellington’s Batrider found an extra gear at the New Zealand showcase.

7. Mustasch rhythm guitarist Hannes Hansson is caught on camera during the Real Rock of Sweden night. PHOTO: RICARDO VARGAS
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