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—KID ROCK
On Life, Branding And A Sleeper Hit

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ON THE COVER: Ludacris, photographed by Chris Stanford.

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REGIONAL MEXICAN Billboard's Regional Mexican Music Summit—the only event dedicated to this Latin genre—will be capped off by Billboard Regional Mexican Noche Premmusa, celebrating the music's best. More at billboardevents.com.


TOURING Billboard's Touring Conference & Awards unite today's top promoters, agents, managers, venue operators, merch companies and production pros for panels, parties and an awards reception. More at billboardevents.com.

Online
THE HOT 100 AT 50
Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Billboard Hot 100 at billboard.com/hot100. Come back each week through mid-September as we roll out exclusive charts spotlighting Hot 100 Milestones.

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A Sound Exchange? The Orchard Questions Collecting And Payment Practices

BY GREG SCHOLL

A little more than a year ago, in this column, the Orchard shared our perspective on the still-hot issue of digital performance royalties. Our position:

At this important early stage of market development, it is critical for rights holders and webcasters to experiment and innovate, working together as partners, with a high degree of enthusiasm and that mutual transparency. One would hope that the mutual goal would be finding an appropriate balance between underlying rates on one hand and valuable promotion and music discovery on the other.

SoundExchange was granted the exclusive right to do this. At least in our experience, the company talks more than it pays. SoundExchange was, first and foremost, a mechanism to collect and distribute royalties, not a lobbying platform for purity. To paraphrase former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, what good is a royalty rate if you can’t use it?

A very public and very detailed accounting of SoundExchange’s activities is necessary for the proper business practices in order. And, while the SoundExchange board includes respected members of the music industry, where is the governance and oversight one would expect? We’ve proposed that our co-founder Richard Gottehrer join the SoundExchange board, hoping that perhaps we could effect change from within, but that, like our calls for payment, have fallen on deaf ears.

All this said, we wanted to share a letter we sent to the Honorable James Scott Sledge, Stanley Wisniewski, and William J. Roberts, the three judges who make up the Copyright Board, which created SoundExchange. We CC’d Dr. James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress who oversees the Copyright Board, and Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., and Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., who oversee the Library of Congress:

In March 2008, we signed SX’s Digital Aggregator Agreement (a new construct deemed the only way SX could service our company); and

Last August, SX indicated its new accounting system was causing royalty payments to fall behind schedule.

Since then, we have made minimal progress and received no payments of consequence.

In March 2008, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of SX accounting to us. Out of the mere $31,000 paid to us during the course of three years, a paltry $119,787 matched songs we had registered. The rest encompassed royalties for songs where we don’t hold collection rights on songs we don’t even sell digitally—just completely random songs! With that in mind, note that on June 6 of this year, SX posted the following on its Web site:

“The check’s in the mail is a statement that’s music to everyone’s ears. Such fancy is reality for Shelly Espire, widow of the late zydeco giant Beau Joque. Espire will soon receive an unexpected check for $2,000 from SoundExchange of Washington, D.C. The good news is more zydeco and Cajun musicians could have money on the way, too.”

Espire has apparently received about twice as much for her husband’s songs as we have for our half-million-song catalog. No wonder, then, at least, as we can decipher the paucity of information provided in the draft SX annual report for 2007, that despite collecting about $140 million in royalties last year, less than $40 million was distributed.

Playing politics around policy positions might be more glamorous than the blue-collar job of administrative royalties, but the latter is SX’s mandate. One would expect more from an organization that spent more than $10 million of artists’ monies in operating expenses in 2007, including close to $3 million on salaries. An expensive lobbying organization—especially considering SX lobbies for positions not all of its clients—like the Orchard—agree with.

If SX cannot fulfill its mandate, perhaps it is time to look elsewhere for an organization that can. SX should be held accountable. In the meantime, we respectfully await your counsel as to how artists can get paid accurately, and in the future, on time.

Greg Scholl is president/CEO of the Orchard (theorchard.com).

FOR THE RECORD

■ In the Aug. 16 issue, a story about ad-supported music sites should have identified Inmeen’s Steve Jang as chief marketing officer.

■ A story in the Aug. 16 issue about new CD formats in Japan should have said that the new Japanese physical music sales rose by 0.9% in the first half of 2008 from a year earlier.

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LIMEWIRE INKS PACT convicted

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FBI speaker Laura Eimiller said, Cogill faces a maximum of three years in prison if convicted and five years if it's found that he did it for commercial gain.

The Orchard doubles its catalog to more than 2 million songs.

breakout sales of Kid Rock's "Rock N Roll Jesus" album on the heels of strong radio play for its third single "All Summer Long" have re

vived a familiar debate: Can withholding individual-track downloads of a hit single drive sales of an album?

Kid Rock's experience suggests that it can (see story, page 25). And his label Atlantic Records appears intent on test-

ing the concept further by pulling Estelle's single "American Boy" from download stores like iTunes to see if the move can

boost sales of her album "Shine," which is available in the United States only as a CD and a full-album download at non-

Apple retailers. Sources say the label is also considering album-only downloads of Buckcherry's new album, "Black Butterfly," scheduled to release Sept. 16.

Because of iTunes policy of not bundling tracks as album-only purchases, opting out of digital single sales also means opting out of iTunes, which typ-

ically allows the withholding of an individual track only if it is an iTunes exclusive.

Atlantic's moves come at a time when artists and labels are experimenting with new digital release strategies, ranging from widely publicized free-music giveaways by Radiohead and Nine Inch Nails, to selling multiple tracks from an album before its scheduled release (Billboard, July 19) to exploiting the benefits of "unauthorized" album leaks (Billboard, July 19).

"Everybody is watching Kid Rock and what effect its unavailability at iTunes has," Universal Music Group Distribution president Jim Urie says. "We actu-

ally analyzed the Kid Rock situation and don't see the benefit." A senior distribution executive at another major says, "I think they are going down the wrong path," adding that "yeah, it may jack up album sales, but then you are going back to the mentality of putting one good song on the album." Others say the debate of whether track sales cannibalize album sales is a giant step back-

ward. "The consumer has spoken and they want tracks," a major label sales executive says.

Atlantic representatives couldn't be reached for comment, while an iTunes spokesman declined comment. Atlantic parent Warner Music Group said in a statement that "our goal is to employ the full breadth of product release options that the mobile and online platforms offer."

"Shine" easily appeared the most-downloaded track on Aug. 26, the song was the 24/7 most-downloaded track on P2P networks tracked by BigCham-
pagne, with 1.05 million downloads recorded, up from 980,255 in the previous week.

BigChampagne CEO Eric Garland notes that while the vast majority of P2P downloads of contemporary music re-leases "begins and ends in the lit song." That hasn't been the case with Rock.

"While the song is a big deal in the pirate community, prop-

ortionately, it is not nearly as big a deal as the album in its entire-

ly," Garland says. Although updated P2P data for "Rock N Roll Jesus" wasn't immediately available, the traffic indicates that the album is "proportion-

ately far more popular than we would expect," he says.

"You'd think people would be just ripping the song," he says. "But people who are swiping it are clearly interested in swiping the whole album and not just 'All Summer Long.'"

Garland also notes that BigChampagne data reveals consumers who have downloaded Kid Rock tracks have also recently downloaded music by Eminem, Nickelback, Carrie Underwood and Rascal Flatts.

"What audience don't you touch among those fans bases?" Garland asks. "It's like a geneti-

cally engineered hit record."

Keeping It Together

Biz Mulls Shunning Single-Track Downloads

While during the seven-day pe-
riod ended Aug. 3, album sales rose to more than 5,000 units and digital track sales reached about 90,000 units, up from 84,000 in the previous week.

The following week, further gains were recorded in listening audience and album sales, while track sales fell slightly. But the week after that, album sales dipped even as the sin-

gle's sales rebounded and its audience continued to expand.

Soon after sales of the "Shine" album began to ramp, Atlantic told download stores that they could sell "Shine" only in its entirety. To date, "American Boy" has scanned more than 910,000 units, while "Shine" has scanned slightly less than 100,000 units. But downloading patterns at

unauthorized peer-to-peer net-

works suggest that Kid Rock's experience with "All Summer Long" could prove difficult to replicate. During the week ended Aug. 26, the song was the 10th-

most-downloaded track on P2P networks tracked by BigCham-
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RADIO CLASH
Hispanic stations fret about Arbitron's PPM
PLACE TO LAND
Little Big Town goes to Capitol
TAG, YOU'RE IT
Rapper Q, P&G team for MTV special
ONE-WAY TICKET
Going paperless against scalpers
PLEDGE DRIVE
Public TV embraces live music

www.americanradiohistory.com
Bad Reception
Hispanic Broadcasters Warn Of Arbitron's Portable People Meter

As Arbitron’s Portable People Meter moves toward a September rollout in major markets, Spanish-language broadcasters are stepping up their efforts to delay its implementation until their concerns regarding the new technology are addressed.

Market leaders and rivals Univision Radio and Spanish Broadcasting System (SBS) have united with other broadcasters to create the Spanish Radio Assn. (SRA), which is working with Arbitron to “improve” the PPM’s Hispanic measurement. They have also joined with the Assn. of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA), which created a PPM Council to pressure Arbitron, the FCC and government officials to make changes before going to market.

Everyone involved in the dispute agrees that the ratings measurement system needs to move from the paper-diary to the more accurate, granular electronic PPM, but the AHAA and SRA are adamant that there are still key issues to be resolved.

They include consideration of cell-phone-only homes, which both groups contend Arbitron is still undercounting. They also say the PPM fails to take into consideration factors like country of origin (which would affect the listenership of, say, regional Mexican stations on the East Coast, which target a specific population niche). In addition, they point out that currently, Houston, Galveston, Texas, is the only PPM market with accreditation from the Media Rating Council, which accredits audience measurement services. Arbitron says it is seeking MRC accreditation in other markets. In the meantime, however, it doesn’t plan to delay the PPM’s rollout.

The controversy is reminiscent of Nielsen’s switch from diaries to its own meting system for TV some years ago, when major broadcasters in several cities asked for a delay in rollout because they felt minorities were being undercounted. Nielsen fine-tuned the system until it satisfied critics, but the process wound up requiring congressional hearings. (The Nielsen Co. is Billboard’s parent company.)

“We are certainly not going to stand around and do nothing,” Univision Communications executive VP of corporate research Cerdal Shagrin says.

“The more we make the public aware of the issues with the current PPM data, the more that will help.”

The SRA says many Spanish-language stations’ ratings have dipped with the PPM’s preliminary measurements, so the potential impact for such broadcasters ranges from shrinking revenue and ad dollars to overall solvency as a format.

“If this goes through as is, in five years people will look back at this time and say, ‘This was like the potato famine. It devastated the Spanish radio industry.’” SBS/New York VP/marketing manager Frank Flores says.

When asked for Arbitron’s response to the recent criticisms of the PPM’s impact on Hispanic radio, a spokesman forwarded a statement: Arbitron released Aug. 21. “Over the past months, we have regularly provided members of AHAA with an in-depth review of our panel performance across each Hispanic market,” the statement read. “These sample metrics demonstrate that our PPM panels appropriately represent Hispanics and Spanish-dominant Hispanics. In fact, PPM panels are more representative of Hispanics than diary samples on many comparable metrics.”

Moreover, Arbitron VP of PPM sales John Snyder writes in a statement published on his personal Web site that the issue is not that simple. “Rather than asking what is wrong with the ratings, perhaps the better question is, ‘why don’t my ratings look like the diary?’ The difference in ratings between diary and PPM has been quantified, and it is because of the measurement tool.”

The PPM is already in place in Philadelphia and Houston, Galveston, where Spanish-language KLOI (Mega 101) has held steady at No. 5, according to PPM rankings. In an Aug. 8 article in sister publication Radio & Records, PD Omar Bonero was quoted as saying the PPM had been good to the station and that its data was far more useful.

The PPM will begin rolling out to other markets, including New York and Los Angeles, in September with new radio stations added to the PPM panel through 2010. On Aug. 13, four of the country’s top 10 Hispanic markets, including New York, received their first “pre-currency” PPM report. According to Snyder’s statement, the report shows that “some Spanish stations increase their ratings and rank position significantly” in the PPM data.

Although Arbitron declined to release the report to the press, Billboard obtained the numbers for the New York market. Sample data for persons 18-34 from October 2007 and April and July 2008 show wide fluctuations in ranking data for the 6 a.m.-10 a.m. slot at New York’s five Spanish-language stations. WSKQ, for example, was No. 2 in Arbitron’s summer 2007 book, according to diary measurements. In PPM sample data, it went to No. 8 in October, then to No. 3 in April and finally to No. 6 in July.

“Some stations go up and some stations go down, and there is no rhyme or reason,” Shagrin says. “Between the diary stations and the PPM, it should not impact some stations more than others unless it’s sample-related. We use the numbers to make the best programming decisions. But when you don’t believe in the numbers and you make changes just because of the numbers, you are doing a disfavor to the listener.”

Beyond the programming, of course, the big question is how PPM ratings will affect ad rates. “We’re already at the end of the stick in the advertising pie,” Flores says. “We’re going to literally have to look at negotiating buys that are 60%-70% less than what we’re getting now.”

Back In The Saddle
Disa Records Founder Returns To Label

Domingo Chavez, who founded regional Mexican powerhouse label Disa Records with his family more than 30 years ago, has returned to the label as its president, Billboard has learned.

Based in Los Angeles but dividing his time between Mexico and the United States, Chavez will report to Gustavo Lopez, who retains the title of president of Fonovisa and Disa, according to company sources. Both labels are now part of Universal Music Latin Entertainment, a division of Universal Music Group. Disa’s market share of Latin albums so far this year comes to nearly 15%, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Neither Chavez nor Lopez could be reached for comment by press time.

With a keen eye on A&R, Chavez and Disa Records are responsible for launching the careers of artists in a variety of regional Mexican genres, most recently Duranguense, a movement that exploded out of Chicago early this decade. Its stars include Grupo Mon- tez de Durango and K-Paz de la Sierra, which between them have sold more than 1.5 million albums via Disa in the States and Puerto Rico, according to SoundScan.

Disa started out as an independent label and later received distribution by EMI and then Universal Music Group before the Chavez family sold half of Disa to Universal in 2001. Disa experienced steady growth in market share from then on, jumping from 8.5% in 2003 to 13.8% in 2004. Chavez was GM of Disa until Universal bought it out, retaining 50% of the label in 2006. The Chavez family also founded artist management firm Primetime Entertainment, with a roster that includes El Chapo de Sinaloa as well as up-and-comer Julio Chaidez.
Inside Little Big Town's Move From Major To Indie And Back Again

A year after country group Little Big Town released its third album, "A Place to Land," via Nashville-based independent Equity Music Group, it will be re-released—with four additional cuts and new artwork—Oct. 14 on Capitol Nashville.

"To be able to go out into the marketplace, certainly to go to retail, we couldn’t say, ’Here’s a record that you’ve had out for a while. Now we’re going to put our name on it,’" Capitol Nashville president/CEO Mike Dungan says.

Instead, the album, which sold 165,000 the first time out, will be treated “like a brand-new record,” Dungan says.

Little Big Town came to Equity after a short-lived deal with Mercury Nashville and an unsuccessful release on Sony Nashville’s Monument imprint. "The Road to Here" released in 2005, became the band’s and the label’s first success, selling 1.2 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and spawning two top 10 country airplay hits, "Boondocks" and "Bring It On Home."

But two weeks after the Nov. 7, 2007, release of its third record, Equity, which was founded by country star Clint Black, among others, announced that it had aligned itself with two investment groups: Sony’s Mary’s Nest Group and Washington, D.C., venture, and Optimun Venture 3, a California-based fund that includes the co-founder of the Power Bar Energy Bar. Equity president Mike Kruskis, part of the group that launched the label in 2003 and a former Sony Nashville executive who signed Little Big Town to Equity, stepped down.

"There was a shifting of the winds and we were feeling it around the time we turned the album in," the group’s Karen Fairchild recalls. "[It was] proof that we didn’t have a relationship with," she says of the new investors. "You start to feel uneasy in those circumstances. It’s four of the unknowns.

When the group’s hand-picked single faltered at radio, its concerns deepened. "If With The Band" spent 21 weeks on the chart before peaking at No. 32 in November. Still, the group was determined to see the album through. "As we saw the record go into the marketplace and not do as we expected and re- fly under the radar...that’s when we personally started to grieve the record," Fairchild says.

"We were trying our best to do what we knew we needed to do to keep the music going," the group’s Jimi Westbrook says, citing live shows and appearances paid for by the band as examples. With "A Place to Land," the band fulfilled its two-album deal with Equity. And when Equity launched, one of its selling points was that artists would own their own master recordings.

Eventually word filtered out that Little Big Town was a free agent. (While the band’s contract reportedly named Kruskis as a "key man," the fulfillment of the contract allowed LBT to leave.) After an exclusive negotiating period expired, the band began talking to other labels and eventually signed with Capitol.

Because the group felt it offered the best of both worlds.

"The reason you go to an independent is freedom, to do the things that a major wouldn’t try to do, and to try and structure a deal where you might make a little more money," Fairchild says. "The reason you want to go to a major is muscle, know-how, power and relationships. They were people that, under those circumstances, they were going to [do] a deal."

Again to Capitol, "The Road to Here" will also be re-released through Capitol but without new packaging or additional songs.

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Rhyme & Reason

Rapper Q Getting Big Push From TAG, MTV

When he was known as Q Da Kid a few years ago, he primarily appeared on a remix here, a sound track there and the odd compilation every now and again. But now the artist known solely as Q is finding himself much more visible via his branded entertainment campaign backed by some major names.

As the first rapper signed to TAG Records, a joint venture between Procter & Gamble and Island Def Jam, Q represents a bold step for a consumer packaged-goods company. While other brands like spirits maker Bacardi and energy drink purveyor Red Bull have begun dabbling in music, they have had a built-in cachet not necessarily afforded TAG, the same company that makes Pantene shampoos and Always feminine hygiene products.

That’s where Q comes in. The artist was introduced this summer via an extensive marketing campaign featuring TV and print ads for TAG Body Spray by Boston-based advertising agency Arnold. In addition, he embarked on an 11-city tour to find TAG Riff Raff’s "Candi," which appeared in viral video freestyling over Nas’ "New York State of Mind" beat.

The next phase, Billboard can exclusively reveal, will include a branded entertainment special on MTV, "VMAs: Livin’ the Dream." The 30-minute show will highlight Q recording his debut album, talking about his rise from hustler to musician and experiencing the Video Music Awards Sept. 7 in Los Angeles.

The show has a tentative airdate of Sept. 15 and is paid for by P&G, according to MTV and Island Def Jam. TAG brand manager Adam Weber declined to comment on P&G’s financial commitments.

A 30-second promo for the show was shot earlier this month and will be shown during the VMAs. MTV is under no obligation to spin the video for Q’s "Ona Mission," the making of which is shown in the special, according to one MTV senior VP of integrated marketing Tim Rosta. According to Q, one director being considered for the clip is Paul Hunter, who also directed the TAG Body Spray commercials.

"On a Mission" was produced by No I.D. and TAG Records head Jermaine Dupri. Its parent album, "It Was All a Dream," should be out this fall. In addition, "Ona Mission" will appear on a soundtrack tape with DJ Envy, details of which are still coming together.

Snippets from "Ona Mission" will most likely be incorporated into the next round of ads made by Arnold, Island Def Jam strategic marketing VP Jeff Straughn says. Given that Q already has a TV and print campaign and will have his profile raised further at the VMAs, he should garner a significant amount of attention, Straughn says. "You have a TV campaign currently out, a single that falls off, a video that follows that, the VMAs, an MTV segment, a print campaign and then another TV component," he says. "I don’t know of any other new artist getting that kind of support."

For P&G, a sizable expense involved in launching TAG Records and Q is "part of an overall initiative for body spray to build relevance to the male urban consumer," Weber says. "It does that by offering a platform to up-and-coming urban artists. We saw the VMAs as one piece of the pie." P&G also stands to gain brand credibility through association and the respect of the creative community, which might be more inclined to work with the company's future projects. But for Q, who was signed to Dupri’s So So Def label prior to appearing on remixes for Rihanna and Alicia Keys, music comes before any obligations to his branding partners.

"I’m a rapper at the end of the day. I’m not here to just promote the TAG brand," he says. "I’m an artist, and I’m here to promote my music."
Scalping The Scalpers

Paperless Ticketing Offers Tool Against Resellers

Paperless ticketing is emerging as a potential weapon in the efforts of some touring acts to eliminate resellers from the ticket-buying equation.

Tom Waits recently became the first recording artist to use Ticketmaster's paperless ticketing technology during his 13-date U.S. theater tour earlier this summer. Ticketmaster first offered paperless tickets during the NBA's 2007-08 season, when they were used by the Phoenix Suns, the Orlando Magic and the Miami Heat.

Ticketmaster's expansion of its own secondary ticketing business this year through its $265 million acquisition of StubHub raises questions about how motivated the ticketing giant would be to encourage other touring artists to drop paper tickets. But even if paperless ticketing doesn't necessarily pose a threat to the overall secondary ticketing industry, it does provide a new option for artists keen on cracking down on resellers.

Paperless ticketing "can eliminate a lot of scalping and help keep ticket prices reasonable and in the hands of fans who want to buy them, as opposed to people who want to buy them just to resell them," says Michael Marion, GM of the Alltel Arena in North Little Rock, Ark. "It sure beats [paying] quadruple the face value of a ticket."

Ticketmaster senior VP of music David Marcus doesn't expect paperless ticketing to crush the secondary market. "There are no particular outcomes that we're trying to achieve beyond providing the best service we can," he says.

But Marcus notes that more touring artists "are exploring this and trying to understand how it fits into their touring mix. . . . I expect over the coming year we'll see it implemented here and there."

For Waits' sold-out Glitter and Doom tour, which visited 1,400- to 4,600-seat theaters in June and July, fans were given two options to buy tickets—via ticketmaster.com or Ticketmaster charge by phone. To gain access to the show, concertgoers were required to bring the credit card they used to make the transaction, along with a valid photo ID. Only two tickets could be purchased per household, and both guests were required to be present at the time of entry. Ticket prices averaged about $85, plus regular service fees.

The idea to go paperless was a conscious decision to "take the secondary market out of the mix," says Stuart Ross, Waits' booking agent at Music Tour Consulting. For the singer-songwriter's 2006 U.S. tour, the Waits camp instituted a will-call-only procedure where either the entire venue or just the best seats were only available for pick up at the box office. The process was effective in keeping tickets out of resellers' hands but created long lines at the venue that delayed performances, Ross says.

With paperless ticketing, "we are now able to construct a 100% will-call pickup with no lengthy lines, ensuring that all of the tickets are sold to the end user at face value," he says. "Everyone wins, except for the brokers."

ROSS admits that a handful of tickets in each market were posted for sale on Web sites like Craigslist and eBay. "It was pretty minor," he recalls. "You're talking about two or three per city, and I don't even know if they sold them."

A notable drawback to paperless ticketing is that concertgoers can't give them away at the 11th hour. "People have legitimate problems that come up, and a concert becomes secondary to a more pressing situation," says Danny Zelisko, chairman of the Southwest for Live Nation, which promoted Waits' June 17-18 stand at Phoenix's Orpheum Theatre. "If it's an iron-clad deal and you can't get it out of it, it will scare certain people off from buying tickets."

Wendy Garrett, director of theaters at the Plaza Theatre in El Paso, Texas, says her venue faced a different problem for Waits' show. "There are some people here who don't own credit cards, so they couldn't buy tickets to the event," she says. "I don't know if they were able to come."

These types of challenges lead some secondary ticketers to believe that paperless ticketing doesn't pose a direct threat to their business. "It certainly takes some of the ability to resell out of the particular venue, but at the end of the day it brings no real added value to the fan," says Sean Pate, head of communications at StubHub, the leading player in the secondary market. "The industry is talking about what is best for [itself], and never thinking about the fan first."

LEGAL ROUNDUP

A flurry of late-summer court decisions could alter the rules of engagement for record labels and other media companies looking to crack down on Internet piracy and other copyright-infringing activity. What follows are the most significant questions being tossed over by lawyers on all sides.

>> SAFE HARBOR

Does the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) provide safe harbor to user-generated Web sites that promptly remove copyrighted materials upon complaint?

On Aug. 27, U.S. District Judge Howard Lloyd ruled that online video-sharing service Veoh isn't liable for copyright infringement for material uploaded to its Web site by users, dismissing a lawsuit brought by adult entertainment production company to Group.

The decision holds important ramifications for the music industry and perhaps signals what a New York court may decide in Viacom's high-stakes copyright-infringement lawsuit against YouTube.

In fact, the landmark 2005 U.S. Supreme Court Grokster decision that established that file-sharing services can hold liable for user behavior. In its defense, Veoh argued a position that YouTube has also staked in the Viacom case. The nation's 32(c) of the DMCA provides."Safe harbor" from liability to any Web service provider that responds to a copyright holder's request to remove infringing material.

In his decision, Lloyd said that the DMCA does indeed provide such protection, spelling out what he sees as the difference between Veoh and earlier services. "Unlike Napster, there is no suggestion that Veoh aims to encourage copyright infringement on its system," he wrote.

There's no doubt that everyone who runs a digital music business is going to now mimic Veoh and cite this case, hoping to be afforded protection from lawsuits," says Carey Ramos, a partner at the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison in New York.

>> FAIR USE

Must copyright holders consider "fair use" before sending out takedown notices?

On Aug. 20, U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel ruled that before takedown notices are sent, copyright owners "must evaluate whether the material makes fair use of the copyright."

The case involved a Pennsylvania woman who had posted a 29-second video of her toddler dancing to Prince's "Let's Go Crazy." After Universal Music Group sent a takedown notice to YouTube, the clip was pulled and the woman, represented by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, sued under a little-noticed provision of the DMCA that allows victims of mislabeled takedown notices to seek damages.

The significance of the judge's ruling remains to be seen, as the order only allowed the case to proceed to trial. But now that the question of liability has been raised, some attorneys believe the music industry will need to proceed with caution. "If [copyright holders] are tasked with making a value judgment on fair use, that's going to be very hard to do," says Randy Friedberg, a partner at Olshan Grundman From Rosenzweig & Wolosky in New York. "Fair use is a very amorphous concept and there's no bright-line rule when it comes to case law."

>> PROOF OF TRANSFER

In alleging infringement on peer-to-peer networks, must the RIAA provide proof of "actual transfers," or is the implied infringement sufficient?

On Aug. 4, U.S. District Judge Michael Davis listened to arguments at a hearing to determine what plaintiffs like the RIAA must prove when alleging copyright infringement on peer-to-peer networks.

The hearing represented a remarkable development in the first case against an individual pirate to go to trial. Last October, a jury ordered a Minnesota woman, Jamie Thomas, to pay $222,000 for sharing songs on the Kazaa network. Seven months later, Davis ordered a follow-up hearing to determine whether he commit- ted a "manifest error of the law" by instructing the jury in the trial that actual proof of downloading was not necessary in de- termining a verdict. He is now weighing his de- cision in the case.

Is the existence of an open share folder, screen shots of music listed and downloads taken, and IP addresses enough "proof"? Or does the RIAA need to show that a particular copyrighted song was sent from one computer to another?

The answer will help determine the validity of the RIAA's controversial claim that merely "making available" copyright music is a sufficient basis for committing infringement. That claim has been the underpinning behind many of the 20,000 lawsuits the industry association has pursued against individual pirates.

If the judge reverses his prior position and orders a new trial in the Thomas case, the music industry may see accused pirates put up more vigorous defenses. Or as RIAA attorney Timothy Reynolds warned at the Aug. 4 hearing, "Requiring proof of actual transfers would cripple efforts to enforce copyright owners' rights online."

—Erik Gardner
Virtual Reality

Danity Kane’s MTV Fame Reels In Marketers

As sales of recorded music continue to fall, extending a music act’s brand into a variety of endeavors provides an alternative means to generate income and broaden the potential audience for its music.

But what happens when it’s unclear what that brand represents?

It’s a question that comes to mind when you consider the recent success of Danity Kane. The quartet was put together during MTY’s “Making the Band 3,” a reality show premised on Sean “Diddy” Combs finding the next big thing.

The act’s August 2006 self-titled debut album bowed at the top of the Billboard 200 and went on to be certified platinum by the RIAA. Danity Kane’s second album on Bad Boy, “Welcome to the Dollhouse,” has sold 529,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and lead single “Damaged” reached the top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100 earlier this year. While second single “Bad Girl” hasn’t done nearly as well—selling 55,000 copies since its release in July, according to SoundScan—“Damaged” received a boost when it was nominated for two MTV Video Music Awards for best pop video and best dancing in a video.

Along the way the group has released a line of denim jeans through apparel maker Dollhouse, been named the latest face of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals’ (PETA) long-running “I’d Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur” advertising campaign and will have its own branded Visa debit card this fall.

Meanwhile, Danity Kane member Aubrey O’Day is performing on Broadway in the musical “Hairspray,” while fellow member Dawn Richard is working with an illustrator to release a comic book this fall. The group is tentatively set to go into the studio in October to record an album that will come out next summer. In addition, the group has plans for fragrance and makeup lines and gets the occasional mention in the New York Post’s Page Six gossip column.

Danity Kane most closely resembles the Pussycat Dolls, a dance troupe turned musical group that has extended its brand into reality TV and product endorsements. “They’re not as big as the Pussycat Dolls, but they’re doing all the right steps to get there,” Bad Boy co-owner/president Harve Pierre says.

But where, exactly, is “there”? Even Pierre acknowledges that “Danity Kane was made via a reality show, and they owe it all to the marketing genius of Diddy.”

As reality show stars, the members of Danity Kane—or the “girls,” as they are referred to by their handlers—remain at a midtier level of celebrity, without the deeper connection to fans that many lesser-selling acts have cultivated through the years.

And when it comes to celebrity, says Tina Wells, CEO of New Jersey-based Buzz Marketing Group, you’re either A-list or you don’t count.

“I feel like we have celebrities and everybody else,” Wells says. “What is the true value for everyone else?” Wells says the trajectory of reality stars tends to follow a prescribed path. “What publicity circuit can they hit?” she asks. “There’s the gossip columns, tabloids and hot blogs, which generate a lot of impressions, but it goes back to who you are as a brand. If you’re looking for just an instant spike, it makes sense, but not if you’re looking for long-term association.”

What does Danity Kane’s manager J. Irving III make of Wells’ observations? “One thing that makes brands credible are those brands that are along for the ride,” Irving says. “Anyone can jump on the Brad Pitt gravy train. He’s 40-something years old. Imagine a brand that was with him 20 years ago. They would be a part of his success now.”

For their part, brand marketers say Danity Kane can help them appeal to a wide audience.

“The thing we love about Danity Kane is they speak to a broad base,” says Danny Klein, president/chief marketing officer at Plastic Cash International, which will be putting out the Visa debit card with Danity Kane’s image. “They’re multicultural and have great exposure.”

PETA director of media relations Michael V. McGraw says the Danity Kane ad campaign will “allow PETA to reach a completely new demographic.”

For Irving, marketer interest in Danity Kane illustrates the group’s continued viability as a brand.

“Danity Kane’s success will beget their success,” he says.

With The Brand

KAMAU HIGH

DANITY KANE’S drive to extend its brand includes an upcoming comic book (insert).
Every Pledge You Take
New York Public TV Buoyed By Police Tour Finale

New York public TV tapped into the final date on the Police reunion tour at Madison Square Garden in a unique fund-raising effort that may serve as a template for stations seeking to invade PBS’ demographics through live music.

About one-third of the tickets for the Police finale were offered as “rewards” for donations to New York public TV sister stations WNET and WLIW, launching their Public Television Rocks marketing initiative and raising some $3 million in funds for the networks.

The deal was orchestrated by the stations’ reps; Entertainment Marketing Communications international founder/CEO Jay Coleman and RZO Productions partner Bill Zysblat, co-producers of the Police tour; and Police/String manager Kathy Schenker. Tour co-producer Live Nation and the Garden also were involved in marketing and promoting the program.

Coleman says the way tickets were distributed opened up a “new paradigm” that could be used again. About two-thirds of the tickets were sold through Ticketmaster (which donated much of its service charges to Police charities), and one-third of the house was distributed over the air and online to serve as rewards for New York PBS pledges.

The first row alone generated $140,000 via an online auction, which Coleman thinks might be the highest-grossing first row for a concert. WNET deputy general counsel of program business affairs Rafni Rivera says the stations wanted to connect with potential donors beyond just over the airwaves. “We put our thinking caps on to come up with other ways that we could draw attention to what we were doing, to reach people who ordinarily don’t seek us out,” Rivera says. “One of the ways we were able to reach folks was to launch a two-wave eBay auction.”

A New Metric
Canadian Indie Rockers Hope Fortune Favors The Bold

Metric could have taken the easy way out. It wasn’t as if the group was flailing. The band had a strong following in its native Canada and a respectable base in the United States, having sold 44,000 copies of its 2005 album, “Live It Out,” according to Nielsen SoundScan. It had prominent fans: The Rolling Stones asked the group to open a New York show, and Bloc Party took it on tour in the United Kingdom. The act played festivals, struck sync deals and even fielded calls from interested major labels.

So it would have been simple to say goodbye to longtime home Last Gang Records and ink a bigger company. But as manager Mathieu Drouin of Equator Music says, “Fortune favors the bold.”

“We’ve wrestled with our situation over the course of the last three albums, trying to find the right deal,” Drouin says. “We found ourselves in a position where the majors were interested, but we knew we had the ability to roll the dice and do it ourselves.”

“‘Long tail’ artists like Metric that have been able to develop a following and career without major help are in the best position to take things into their own hands right now,” he adds. “We can make more money on a smaller volume overall if we’re doing everything ourselves.”

Guitarist Jimmy Shaw says that the band looked at it as a win-win situation. “We decided we could gamble for more success and make more money, and even if we stayed exactly where we were, we’d be making more money by cutting out the middleman.”

To that end, Drouin and Metric decided to renegotiate their contracts with Last Gang and publisher Chrysalis Music, “with a view to taking back the control they need to have over their own rights in order to be free to take liberties, be creative and try to seize the opportunities inherent to the changes that are going on presently,” Drouin says.

Entering the renegotiations meant giving up two traditional sources of advance funding, and Metric had to pony up its own cash to finance the recording of a new album. “Restructuring is expensive,” Drouin says, with a laugh. “The plan for the record, according to Drouin, is multi-pronged. He hopes to strike a deal with Ian Rogers’ Tospins (Billboard, June 28), taking advantage of all the software tools it provides to market directly to fans and measure their responses.

“The established music industry has tried to create scarcity and then make money off it,” Drouin says. “But I think the people who will do well in the future will take advantage of scale. We don’t want to be grouping the public, we want to give them a diversity of choice. Metric are also a band that have a close relationship with their fan base, and many of their fans will buy anything the band does. It gives us a certain amount of security.”

Metric will also release the record in a more traditional format, via a direct deal with iTunes and other unaligned digital and physical distribution partners. “We’d like to keep physical and digital separate, but that’s not a hard and fast rule,” Drouin says. “We’ve explored doing subistro deals with labels for physical only, but we’re willing to see what people bring to the table.” Finally, the act plans to use a number of former major-label employees who have partnered with management companies to start their own shops to deal with marketing, promotion and radio.

Drouin is uniquely positioned to consider multiple offers and take his time. His company, Equator Music, qualifies for the highest level of government funding for broadcasters from the Canadian and Quebecois governments, and Metric has access to that funding. Equator is also a sub company of MindCorp, which was founded by Drouin and a partner, and currently owns a label, publishing company and management firm in addition to Equator.

“In a way, we’re like explorers in the 15th century whose maps showed dragons beyond known waters,” Drouin says. “We’re doing something new and we might drown. But we might also strike gold.”
WatchTV, BuyCD

QVC Sees Opportunity In Physical Music Sales

As CD sales shrink due to the ascension of digital, store closures and music space reductions, cable shopping channel QVC sees an opportunity and is stepping up its offering.

"We see a void in the selling of physical product," QVC director of merchandising Rich Yoegel says. "We acknowledge that the industry is not selling as much CDs as it did in years prior, but it is still selling a lot."

QVC, a subsidiary of Liberty Media, generated $7.4 billion in overall sales in 2007, with $1 billion of that coming from its Web store. The channel features select merchandise like jewelry, household appliances and other items that it can either build shows around or incorporate into its programming, which reaches 166 million households worldwide.

QVC has sold music almost since the channel’s inception in 1986 and even launched a short-lived record label in the late ’90s that released albums by Kenny Rogers, among others.

Although QVC has continued to sell music in recent years, “we weren’t going after it,” Yoegel says. But in 2007, the channel began picking up the pace, promoting seven albums with a show dedicated to each release. The shows feature artist performances and interviews broadcast live from either QVC’s studios or off-site venues. Albums receiving this treatment last year included Alabama’s "Songs of Inspiration," Tony Bennett Sings the Ultimate Songbook, Vol. 1," Goo Goo Dolls’ "Let Love In" and Barry Manilow’s "The Greatest Songs of the Seventies."

Yoegel estimates that in the last 24 months, the company has sold 250,000 units, with QVC’s online store accounting for about 20%. QVC generally likes to get bonus discs with extra songs or live video performances to justify higher pricing, with CD albums averaging between $16 and $20, plus a $3.97 shipping and handling charge.

"Our business is measured on a dollars-per-minute basis." Yoegel says. "We are looking in a prime-time show to do upwards of $10,000 a minute, about $600,000 for an hour."

Manilow’s "Greatest Songs of the Sixties" and "Greatest Songs of the Seventies" albums have been QVC’s biggest recent sellers, having sold 43,000 and 40,000 units, respectively, QVC says. The best sales performance overall on QVC by a recording act was that of Italian pop artist Giovanni, who sold more than 100,000 albums during a two-hour show in January 1998 (Billboard Bulletin, Jan. 19, 1998).

In addition to sales, other factors are considered to measure success, including whether an item creates a buzz for QVC, or brings in new customers aboard, which is what happened with the Goo Goo Dolls release, Yoegel says.

So far this year, QVC has broadcast only two music shows—for Clay Aiken’s "On My Way Here" and Randy Travis’ "Around the Bend"—with a third one planned for Sept. 12 on James Taylor’s "Covers."

A QVC spokeswoman says the channel strives to feature one artist per month, although "depending on artists’ schedules, release dates and our own programming schedules, things often change." She adds that QVC is "working on several new deals for the fall of 2008."

Aiken’s QVC appearance seems to have inspired 25,000 scans through the nontraditional monstore Internet/mail-order/venue category, which accounted for 27% of his album’s first-week sales of 94,000 units in the week ending May 11, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Year to date, it has sold 150,000 units. Meanwhile, Travis’ album sold 14,000 units through the Internet/mail-order/venue category, which was 45% of the total during the debut week ended July 20 of 31,000 scans.

QVC also offers the "stop-by" approach where an artist may appear on a regular show without performing, as "Dancing With the Stars" winner Julianne Hough did in April to promote her self-titled debut solo album on Mercury Nashville.

On many levels, Hough “was almost acting as a co-host, and she got to talk to fans who phoned in,” with her songs played during intervals, Mercury Nashville executive VP of sales, marketing and new media Ben Kline says. "They did a nice job of promoting the album," which he says had a halo effect at brick-and-mortar. "In addition to pre-orders, it was a great way to build awareness because many people didn’t know she sang." The album sold nearly 3,000 units in the nontraditional category in its debut week ending May 25 when total scans reached 67,000 units.

Some label executives say they are impressed with the QVC production. "When a show is on, you can see the sales as it’s happening," through a room where calls are monitored, says one label sales executive who isn’t allowed to talk publicly for his company. "You can see calls spike when they are selling diamonds and the camera zooms in. Also, if a host says something and it generates a phone sales response, the QVC merchandising stuff talks to the host and cameramen through earphones instructing them to repeat that dialogue or camera angle. It is remarkably sophisticated.”

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William Strauss

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Showdown Looming
Labels, Game Developers Quarrel Over Licensing Fees

When you contrast the ongoing financial struggles of the music industry with the skyrocketing success of the videogame market, it’s no surprise record labels are ready to play hardball on future music licensing.

The latest data from NPD Group finds that U.S. videogame sales totaled more than $9.5 billion through the first seven months of 2008, a 35% jump from the same period last year. And in a recent report, UBS analyst Ben Schachter credits music games like “Rock Band” and “Guitar Hero III” as a critical factor in that success—responsible for 15% of game sales so far this year and 32% of the industry’s year-over-year growth.

As such, it’s hard to blame Warner Music Group chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. for wanting a bigger slice of that pie. During Aug. 7 conference call with Wall Street analysts to discuss the label’s fiscal third-quarter operating results, Bronfman made headlines by lambasting the “paltry” per-song licensing fees labels get when making their content available in music games, and that Warner would stop licensing to them if the model did not change.

His comments were a tacit admission that the labels, like many others, continually underestimated the potential of the music games market, and as a result struck a bad deal.

The industry settled for a standard soundtrack licensing approach that provides a royalty based on unit sales for any music included in the game at purchase and a percentage of each downloadable song bought afterward—which amounts to far less than the 70% split labels get from iTunes.

The massive success of these games and their financial impact has labels rethinking their approach. They now want a partnership more akin to how sports leagues like the NFL license their players’ likenesses and other assets to games like Madden NFL, which, depending on the deal, provides upwards of 30% of total revenue.

But it might be too late. Like iTunes before it, these music games have become too powerful to simply ignore. Bobby Kotick—CEO of Activision, who owns “Guitar Hero” publisher Red Octane—is already flexing the music muscles, telling the financial Times recently, “We’re going to favor those publishers that recognize and appreciate how much we can add value to their artists.”

By itself, it’s clear the argument that the promotional benefits in some way trump the need to pay for music is losing out from the start. But he’s got a strong case. In addition to being a new sales platform in its own right—in some cases selling more tracks via the game than iTunes—these games also have a measurable short-term effect on increasing the sales of featured songs on other platforms, from which the game makers see no return. According to Nielsen SoundScan, Aerosmith’s catalog sales jumped 40% after “Guitar Hero: Aerosmith” arrived.

What’s more, the developers of these games spend far more on the programming required to optimize each track for the respective title, resulting in development costs that are a simple digital retail deal doesn’t incur. In essence, game developers are doing exactly what the music industry wants: investing in the music itself to increase its value to consumers.

And then there’s the matter of risk vs. reward. The early versions of “Guitar Hero” contained mostly cover songs because many labels and artists didn’t want to license their masters, feeling it would somehow diminish their art by letting fans play along. Activision and MTV, meanwhile, made the big bets—buying Red Octane for $100 million and Harmonix for $175 million, respectively—and are rightfully reaping the rewards. Hind sight is 20/20 of course, but if the music industry really wanted to make a splash with music games, a label would have bought one of them instead.

So now begins the process of jockeying for position, which won’t be easy for either side. Labels can play the various competitors—hungry for exclusives—off each other more much than they can in the digital retail space, where iTunes is dominant. But game developers can do the same with labels. It will particularly interesting to see how Vivendi’s ownership of Activision and Universal Music Group comes into play.

How this is resolved ultimately will have major repercussions on the next anticipated evolution of the space: the incorporation of an iTunes-like store. Currently, music purchased through the games are accessible only in the game itself. All parties are interested in developing a process by which buying a song for the game would also deliver a copy to load onto a customer’s MP3 player as well.

“This is a real opportunity for us to figure out how people can buy music and get it across different formats,” Red Octane co-founder Kai Huang says. “That’s something we have to work out with the music industry. It could be one year. It could be 20 years. But it may never happen if the music industry doesn’t cooperate.”

But that cooperation goes both ways. It’s interesting that the same critics who gleefully point to the music industry’s mistakes for its current financial situation equally decry the moves taken to fix it. A $1 billion market leaves plenty of middle ground.

The Beat Goes On
Replacing vinyl with iPods on the turntable can be a controversial move for many DJs, but Sony’s new Xross Fade shelf system tries to up the ante a bit. While many such dual-social “mixmasters” suffer from the lower sound quality inherent in MP3s than one gets on vinyl, the Xross Fade features an MP3 Booster system that aims to improve audio quality by restoring the sound lost to compression. Other features include a beat blender that adds a layer of preprogrammed percussion and loops over the mix, an AM/FM tuner and 450 watts of output. The Xross Fade will be available in September for $500 at select retailers. —AB
BMI keeps going and growing. For the fiscal year ended June 30, the performance rights organization posted revenue of $901 million, a 7.4% increase from what it collected in the prior year. It will also disperse $786 million to songwriters, composers and copyright owners, an 8% increase over the prior year. Both figures represent milestones for the organization.

In order to get a handle on how BMI is keeping up its forward momentum, Billboard called BMI president/CEO Del Bryant.

1. How has BMI shifted internally to accommodate the new realities of the recording industry?

BMI has been very fortunate in that we have always looked at the world in that it may change in any number of ways. It’s almost as though we have continuously employed the concept of zero-based budgeting. We don’t make the assumption that the following year will be as good as the year that we have just experienced. We are excited about the future and when you don’t put your head in the sand, you can see some of the stuff that’s coming.

2. In past interviews you have referred to a tradition of technology leadership. Can you elaborate on that?

Our process is very automated and it has been for 10 years. We will be using a [recognition] technology known as Blue Arrow, which is owned by landmark, an LLC of BMI, for performance data from radio and other broadcast media. We also have a high amount of information coming in from a majority of the licensing partners including cue sheets from TV and cable. We marry the information from producers’ cue sheets to our database of songs and composers. What we get is 24/7 accurate information... so we get 99 point precise information as to what is being played on radio, TV, cable. We had 9 billion performances last year.

3. In the last three years, BMI’s new-media revenue has gone from $16 million in 2006 to $11 million in 2007 to $15 million in your latest fiscal year. What can you say about that?

We used to collect for ringtones, and there was a court case... where a summary judgment was somewhat negative on our ability to collect for downloads, and of course a ringtone is a download. So we lost a tremendous amount of income with that decision.

But in building it back up, we had over probably 500 or 600 new Web site licenses this year, so that there are approximately 5,500 covered now. We also are aggressively licensing mobile applications. Fortunately, ringbacks are still going strong. There is really no question that a ringback is a performance; it certainly is not a download.

4. What are you doing to expand your artist roster?

Music is dependent on the young, new and hot, and it has been for years. Today, we have Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers. We have Collie Buddz, Alesund & Air, and then in the urban areas— but I call it pop music because it’s popular— we have Lil Wayne, Soulja Boy, T-Pain and Fines, and of course Kanye West. We have Daughtry and Seether. In country, we have Miranda Lambert, Lady Antebellum, Little Big Town and Heidi Newfield.

We understand country. We grew up with country. With urban and R&B, our executives understand it and we really go after it. Especially in a world where record companies are starting to change the paradigm and aren’t putting out as many records by new acts. It’s very important for us to go out and try and find these artists and help them by providing stages and opportunities for them to be heard.

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ANTONY BRUNO
Executive Director of Content & Programming for Digital/Mobile,

Billboard
Flex Your Power
'Te Quiero' Joins Elite Company
At Top Of Hot Latin Songs Chart

In Mexico and Central and South America, he's known as Nigga. In the United States and Europe, he's known as Flex.

Regardless, the Panamanian singer, real name Felix Danilo Gomez, has just tallied 20 nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1. on Billboard's Hot Latin Songs chart with "Te Quiero," from his U.S. debut album of the same name. The track, a simple love song whose beat Flex has labeled "romantic reggaeton," is now tied with Juanes' "Me Enamora" and Son by Four's "APuro Dolor" with 20 weeks at the chart's top position. Only Shakira has more weeks at No. 1: he hit "La Tortura," featuring Alejandro Sanz, notched 25 nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1.

For a flex, a debut artist in the United States, the staying power of "Te Quiero" has been based on its broad appeal, as well as a radio strategy that has allowed the song to straddle multiple formats.

The story starts when Flex, recording for an indie label in Panama, was co-producing a compilation of local acts titled "La Monarquia." After the CD was mastered, he says, he realized he hadn't done a song of his own.

"I was supposed to contribute a song as an artist, but I forgot," Flex says. "So, we [with producer Mister Bombo] wrote down a beat and I quickly wrote the lyrics." Unlike the more rugged reggaeton of the moment, Flex infused the song with the tenderness based on that first high school love," he says. "La Monarquia came out at the beginning of the school year in Panama, and we wanted to have a good song for the young people.

"Te Quiero" became a hit in Central America and boosted Flex's standing as an underground phenomenon with a big following. By June 2007, he was touring Mexico to successfully sell Televisa/EMI signed him to a record deal. By November, Flex's Televisa EMI debut, "Te Quiero," had climbed to No. 1 on Mexico's Amorpop chart and the title track had spent 10 weeks at No. 1 on the radio chart.

That success fueled U.S. interest, and EMI released "Te Quiero" Dec. 15. The song entered the Hot Latin Songs chart Nov. 24 at No. 42 and climbed steadily to reach No. 1 April 5. While some are calling this an "organic" rise, there is no such thing in radio.

"You keep a No. 1 up there with different versions," EMI Latin VP of promotion and radio Jorge Ramos says. Ramos first worked "Te Quiero," in its original version, at Latin rhythmic stations — the natural place for it — and also at pop stations on the West Coast and in Texas, which are heavily influenced by Mexican airplay.

A remix featuring Puerto Rican reggaeton singer Angel followed, leading to play at pop and tropical stations in Puerto Rico, which propelled the track to No. 2 in February. Then, Flex recorded an acoustic version of "Te Quiero" with labelmate and teen pop star Belinda.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, "Te Quiero" was surprisingly getting play at pop and regional Mexican stations, says Pedro Reyes, who books and promotes Belinda. It seemed logical to attempt a regional Mexican version.

EMI Televisa approached producer duo Adolfo and Omar Valenzuela (known as the Twins), who injected regional Mexican flavor into a remix of the track. The effort was immediate. On July 12, "Te Quiero" entered the regional Mexican airplay chart at No. 27, thanks to early airplay from KBBE (105.5 FM) Los Angeles, and quickly climbed to No. 7. It is currently No. 14.

Meanwhile, EMI Televisa has begun to work a new single, "Escarbe." "It will be very difficult to match the success of "Te Quiero,"" Reyes says. "But we don't want people to see he's a quality act, he's recording a new album for 2009 and he's on the way up."

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Additional reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda.

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

GETTING IN THE GAME
Latin Music Slowly Gains Videogame Prominence

Latin music, until recently virtually absent from videogames, is slowly but surely gaining a foothold in the industry.

At least three major, newly announced games will prominently feature Latin music in their soundtracks. They include EA Sports’ "FIFA Soccer 2009" and SEGA’s "Samba De Amigo," a Wii music game.

Most of the 40 tracks on the "Samba" soundtrack, in particular, are Latin, including cover versions and original recordings. The roster includes Ricky Martin’s "Livin’ La Vida Loca" and Chayanne’s "Salome," both in cover versions, as well as the original recordings of Gipsy Kings’ "Bamboleo" and Ozomatli’s "Como Va." The latter is Latin-themed and therefore calls for a Latin soundtrack, other games are now more open to Latin sounds, says Tomas Cookman, president of indie Nacional Records.

"[Game makers] understand very well that the games go to the world, and they program their music that way," he says.

While games don’t represent an enormous portion of Nacional’s synch business, it is a growth area, and Cookman has placed at least 20 songs in games this year. They include four tracks in "FIFA Soccer 2009" (by alternative acts the Pinker Tones, Señor Flavio, Plasmática Mosh and DJ Bitman) and one in "NBA 2K6 NFL 2009." At EMI Music Publishing Latin America, Andres Zambrano, director of repertoire and exploitation for Latin America, sees a growing trend toward using Latin music in gaming. "Grand Theft Auto IV," for example, includes a Latin radio station—San Juan Sounds—in the game (although no Latin songs made the actual game soundtrack CD). Three of those songs are EMIs, including Don Omar’s "Salió El Sol."

"The trend toward music in games is bigger all the time," Zambrano says. While rock and urban remain the Latin genres of choice for games, gaming is regarded as a "major promotional and exploitation target," he adds.

Granted, Latin companies are still not getting rich via games. Labels and publishers usually get paid a flat sync fee that fluctuates between $3,000 and $6,000.

However, small indie films pay even less for song usage, and the exposure from a game is enormous.

"The best thing about a game is that it's worldwide and you get your music into so many more hands," Cookman says. "Plus, a lot of these artists are gamers, so they love being there."

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FONOVISA READIES IDOLOS

Fonovisa Records is preparing to launch a new branded series of regional Mexican music albums titled "Idolos De Mexico Para el Mundo." The first edition will feature tracks by such acts as Marco AntonioSolís, Grupo Mon tez de Durango and Jenni Rivera. The set will go to retail Sept. 16 and will be promoted via a national TV spot campaign and also through a direct marketing campaign on multiple TV channels.

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Spanish text not available. For full text, go to www.americanradiohistory.com.
Producer Jerry Finn Dies At 39

DEATHS

Pete Kameron, 87, business entrepreneur/philanthropist, died June 29 in Beverly Hills, Calif. Kameron was born March 18, 1921, in New York. A co-founder and former board chairman of L.A. Weekly, he also played an integral role in the creation of L.A. Style magazine, L.A. Weekly’s sister publication, which he co-founded in the ’80s. “Without Pete Kameron, L.A. Weekly probably wouldn’t exist,” former publisher Michael Sigman wrote in an appreciation that appeared in the publication in July.

During his 65-year career, Kameron was involved in artist management and co-managed the Modern Jazz Quartet. He also was score supervisor on early James Bond films and was involved with concert production. He was part of the Who’s management team and co-founded Track Records, the band’s label, in the late ’60s. At Track, he worked as an executive producer on such Who albums as “Who’s Next” and “Quadrophenia.”

Hugh Mendel, 88, influential British producer and A&R man who signed such acts as Genesis and David Bowie to Decca Records, died July 7.

Born Aug. 6, 1919, in London, Mendel was educated at University College in Oxford and had readied himself for a career in diplomatic service. However, the call of music proved too much. Like many top executives, Mendel worked his way up, starting in the mailroom of Decca Records, where his grand­father was chairman.

Mendel was called for duty during World War II but still managed to find a purpose for his love and knowledge of music, presenting a jazz show on Palestine Radio and reading the news for British Mediterranean broadcasting on British Armed Forces Radio.

After the war, Mendel returned to Decca, where he was instrumental in signing Bowie, Genesis and John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers and also gave a break to Tommy Steele and Lonnie Donegan, among others. He also executive-produced the Moody Blues’ second album, “Days of Future Passed” (1967).

“Hugh was one of the great A&R men of his era, capable of spot­ting and encouraging unique and unusual talent,” recalls Max Hole, Universal Music Group International executive VP and Asia-Pacific region president. “He got me started in this business when I was managing and producing bands, by offering me and my business partner a three-year deal with Decca,” Hole adds. “We used to look forward to our fortnightly meetings with him, which were like a seminar in the music business coupled with a good gossip.”

Mendel remained with Decca until 1979 when he suffered a heart attack. He retired the following year and moved to Devon in southwest England, where he opened an antique store.

Mendel describes the late executive as “a real gentleman, kind and intelligent, with a wicked sense of humor. Countless artists owe their start in the music business to him.”

Mendel is survived by his wife, Beverley, and four children.

—Lars Brandt

Blink-182 and Morrissey producer Jerry Finn died Aug. 21 at the age of 39. He had suffered a massive brain hemorrhage in July and was taken off life support Aug. 9.

Finn got his start as an engineer in the early ’90s before shifting into production on such albums as Rancid’s “... And Out Come the Wolves.” Among his best-known production credits are Blink-182’s “Enema of the State” and Morrissey’s “You Are the Quarry.” Finn also worked with Green Day, Bad Religion, Sparta, API and the Offspring.

Most recently, Finn lent production to Morrissey’s new set, “Years of Refusal,” due in February.

According to a family friend, plans for a donation or scholarship fund are in the works.

—Jonathan Cohen

Latin GRAMMY Awards Preview

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Slash And Burn

Canadian Arts Cuts Leave Indies Hurting

TORONTO—Huge cuts in government arts funding will hit Canadian music exports hard, according to industry insiders.

The Conservative government recently axed two major funds benefiting the music business: the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's annual $4.7 million Canadian ($4.5 million) PromArt Program, which provided travel grants to Canadian artists, writers and musicians, and Heritage Canada's annual $9 million Canadian ($8.6 million) Trade Routes program that supported the export of artistic endeavors.

"It is outrageous and so short-sighted," says Melissa Greiner, manager of Toronto electronic band Holy Fuck. "Canadian companies and acts have to go outside of the country to make money. That's just the way it is. This will make us look like a laughingstock to other countries."

Holy Fuck, signed to the Young Turks label, a subsidiary of Reggae Group, was one of the acts singled out as having received "inappropriate" funds from PromArt, with a government spokeswoman announcing: "The money was going to fringe arts groups that, in many cases, would be at best, unrepresentative, and at worst, offensive." Canadian hitmaker Tal Bachman was also named.

Greiner, who applied for a $3,000 Canadian ($2,870) grant to help subsidize a 21-date European tour, says the government named her band in order to generate headlines.

"This is about sensationalism," she says. "This is really not about Holy Fuck or Tal Bachman. They were just the artists singled out so the bigger issue could be ignored."

Canadian Independent Record Production Assn., president Duncan McKie says the cuts will affect the indie's ability to access and expand in foreign markets.

McKie led a Trade Routes-funded CIRPA trade mission to Japan last year and is also integrally involved in Canadian promotion at the annual MIDEM conference in Cannes. He says last year's Japanese trade expedition involved 11 labels and resulted in 90 deals with an estimated value of $1.4 million Canadian ($1.3 million).

"We had been gaining momentum," McKie says, adding that while the 2008 Japanese trade mission is safe, it will likely be scrapped in 2009. "[The missions] provided results. This is all so strange, especially considering Canadian music is so hot right now."

McKie cites such talents as Feist, Broken Social Scene and Arcade Fire as Canadian independent acts that have left their mark on charts outside of the country.

But many fear the government isn't done yet.

According to McKie, one of the main funding programs for Canadian indie labels, the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings, could also be at risk. The annual $14 million Canadian ($13.4 million) program helps Canadian artists with recording and video production costs and is funded partially by radio broadcasters and government ministry Heritage Canada.

"Don't assume FACTOR is safe," McKie says, with some government observers suggesting it could cut $5 million Canadian ($47.8 million) in arts funding before it's done slashing.

Others remain hopeful that some of the programs could return in revised form. While Heritage Canada declined to comment directly on the cuts to Trade Routes, a representative referred Billboard to Heritage Minister José Veréerse's previous statement that the government is "looking into other options."

"We want to be able to increase our reach abroad with measures that reflect today's reality," Veréerse added.

But McKie says it is hard for the government to argue that the money used to promote Canadian music abroad has been misspent. "For the government to say we're not achieving anything is just baloney," he says.
GLOBAL BY MARK WORDEN

TOTAL EXPOSURE

New Italian Acts Find 'The X-Factor' At Last

MILAN—Italy’s got talent. Indeed, after years of underachievement, the country’s reality TV shows have finally delivered some hit acts. Italy’s current pop sensation, Giuly Ferreri, has seen her debut EP, “Non Ti Scordar di Me” (Sony BMG), top the Italian album, download and airplay charts after she came in second in the inaugural Italian season of “The X-Factor,” which aired March 10-May 27 on state network Rai 2.

According to the label, the EP has sold 150,000 units since its June 27 release—excellent sales for any act in Italy these days, but remarkable for a debutant. Italian executives are convinced this marks a watershed moment for the genre.

“The Italian media and public used to consider talent shows a bit of a fake,” Sony Italy CEO Rudy Zerbi says. “But the international success of Leona Lewis has given them credibility.”

Lewis, who won the U.K. edition of “The X-Factor” in 2006, has been one of 2008’s big breakout successes. Her album peaked at No. 2 in Italy.

Italian “X-Factor” winner Aram Quinet also reached the top 10 with its debut album, “Chiaramente” (Sony BMG). Another talent show, “Amici (Di Maria De Filippo)—which has had minimal chart impact since first airing in 2001—has also produced two hit artists this year after its seventh season, which ran Oct. 20-April 16 on Silvio Berlusconi-owned network Canale 5.

The winner, Marco Carta, signed a three-album deal with Warner (which had the option for the show) and the first of these, “Ti Rinconterò,” has been a top 10 regular, with sales of 70,000 units since its June 13 release, according to the label. The runner-up, pop singer Roberta Bonanno, also made the top 10 on Sony BMG.

“This is the first time talent shows have worked in Italy,” says Warner Music Italy president/CEO Massimo Giuliano, who also credits the success to the Lewis effect.

Previously, “Operazione Triumfo,” the Italian version of Spain’s “Operación Triunfo,” lasted just one season on another Berlusconi station, Italia Uno, in 2002. The Italian version of “Popstars” ran 2001-03 on Italia Uno, but his notable act, girl group Lollipop, disbanded after two albums and little success.

“The X-Factor” and the last season of “Amici” saw contestants perform specially penned compositions as well as cover versions of hit songs, and show insiders say this also helped their credibility with the audience.

“Better coordination with the record industry has also been important,” Amici musical director Mario Lawezzi says. “In previous years, the winner would be announced in May, but the album would be released in October. This year we made sure the winner’s album came out quickly.”

Some executives suggest if the trend continues, it could even threaten the Sanremo festival’s position as the traditional forum for breaking new Italian acts.

“The fact that this year’s Amici compilation has outsold the Sanremo compilation is significant,” Giuliano says, citing sales figures of 80,000 and 60,000, respectively. “The new genre is part of Sanremo is no longer valid.”

Sanremo, due to be held in late February/early March 2009, is widely regarded as being in decline (Billboard, Feb. 9), while another flag-ship TV event, Festivalbar, was canceled this year (Billboard, July 5).

“The X-Factor” jury member Mara Maiozchi, an industry A&R veteran, says the next edition of the show will begin casting in October and air from January to April. “This means it will actually coincide with Sanremo,” Ferreri’s manager, Fabrizio Giannini says. “Which will be interesting.”

****SONY ERICSSON LAUNCHES DRM-FREE MUSIC STORE****

Sony Ericsson has rolled out its PlayNow arena, an over-the-air download service that will sell digital rights management-free music as well as games and applications. The expanded mobile music service went live Aug. 25 in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway. Each country will have localized content in the relevant language; in Sweden, full-track downloads cost 9 kronor ($1.42).

The London-based joint venture between Sony and Ericsson has secured the global rights to 5 million tracks. Universal Music Group is the only major not to sign with the service. Sony Ericsson says the service will launch in other European markets this year, followed by Latin America and the Asia Pacific region in 2009.

Sony Ericsson’s Walkman and MP3-enabled phones from the 2006 K800 model onward will be compatible with the service. Customers will get a high-quality, DRM-free MP3 delivered to their computer and a protected lower-quality file sent directly to their phone.—AP

****DESTRA TO SHED ENTERTAINMENT DIVISION****

Australian digital media company Destra plans to shed its Destra Entertainment division during its 2008-09 financial year. The division includes labels Rajon Music, Central Station Records, Compass Records and MRA Entertainment, as well as budget audio/video content publisher/distribution company Payless Entertainment. “The global structural decline in the CD market and maturing DVD market, both of which have negatively impacted the company, have not yet been offset by growth in the corresponding digital businesses,” the company said in a statement. Sources say that Destra, which was established in 2003, has approached a number of major labels about buying the division.—Christie Eliezer

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A Legal Matter

Push To Lower Drinking Age Could Boost Live Biz

In a development with implications for the touring business, debate about the U.S. drinking age has fired up again, sparked by a Vermont-based nonprofit called Choose Responsibility that supports lowering the legal drinking age from 21 to 18.

The argument gained momentum in August when presidents of more than 100 colleges and universities joined the Choose Responsibility campaign as part of what they have dubbed the Amethyst Initiative. They argue that current laws contribute to unhealthy drinking habits among college students.

It's a tough sell, though. A July Gallup poll says 77% of Americans would oppose federal legislation to lower the drinking age. In the '70s, drinking ages in various states were often below 21, but in 1984 the federal government passed a law that tied highway funds to the drinking age, and by the end of the decade almost every state had the 21-and-over law in effect.

But social issues aside, lowering the drinking age makes perfect economic sense for the music industry. Clubs are the fertile ground for artist development. Eighteen-year-olds seek out new bands. Clubs host these bands, but usually don't do the heavy lifting. Do the math.

For younger skewing bands that play clubs, the industry has adapted by staging "all ages" shows, using wristbands and other means to keep booze out of the hands of underage drinkers. But such practices are somewhat labor-intensive and require watchful security. Moreover, they can leave the venue vulnerable to lawsuits and bad PR if teen drinkers admitted to an all-ages show managed to get served alcohol anyway.

Lowering the drinking age "would be positive," says Tom Windish, president of the Windish Agency [Chromewave Sea Wolf]. "Think about it. It opens up the number of people that can attend a lot of concerts, all of the shows at 21-and-up venues. You would have a larger pool of people that could attend these events."

Bruce Houghton, president of boutique booking agency Skyline Music, wrote recently on his Hyperbol blog that the music industry should follow the lead of the college presidents.

"Whatever the moral or scientific arguments for or against lowering the drinking age, there is one indisputable fact: A lower drinking age would be good news for music and the music industry," Houghton says.

Curbing drunk driving was the motivating force behind the current laws, but Houghton says the social stigma of drunk driving is well ingrained in the public consciousness. "It's only fair that when we bestow upon an 18-year-old the responsibilities of citizenship that we also give him the accompanying rights and privileges," he says.

"Based on past experience, lowering the drinking age to 18 will lead to more venues presenting more music on more nights of the week. That's good for the touring industry and good for music. Clubs serve a vital function as 'entry points' for new bands, i.e., the first venues bands play when they begin touring the United States," Windish says. He notes that the key cogs in this network are Chop Suey and Neumos in Seattle, Spaceland in Los Angeles, Empty Bottle and Double Door in Chicago; Hellhole and Doug Fir in Portland, Ore.; and Bobo's, Bottom of the Hill, Cafe Du Nord and Mezzanine in San Francisco, the Belly Up and Cabb in San Diego, Johnny Brenda's in Philadelphia, the Larimer Lounge in Denver, and the Mercury Lounge in New York.

Promoter Seth Hurwitz of I.M.P., who owns the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C., says he never had any issues when the drinking age was 18. "Even when it was 18-only in the District of Columbia and it was 21 in Virginia and Maryland, it wasn't like busloads of kids came here to drink," Hurwitz says.

"I travel around the world a lot and I can tell you that where there is no drinking age, it's not as enticing to the youngsters because it's not taboo," Hurwitz continues. "I see when kids are told they can have it they don't want it just because they can. You need to understand and accept defeat that kids are going to drink if they want to drink."

Houghton says the music industry needs to "be brave enough to acknowledge our own enlightened self-interest and actively support lowering the drinking age to 18 again."

Alcohol abuse at any age is a bad thing. Houghton stresses. "But I suspect that most of us in the music industry have always thought it was hypocritical to tell kids they could vote and fight in a war but weren't old enough to have a drink, he says. "It's time for both artists and the music industry came out in vocal support of lowering the drinking age to 18. Some will call it opportunistic, but in our hearts we'll all know we're right."
James Stroud

The veteran Nashville producer and executive has launched two new labels and is reveling in the freedom to ‘do whatever I want to do.’

After spending many years in the music business as a studio musician, music publisher, hitmaking producer and label executive, James Stroud is in startup mode again.

Stroud, who established the Nashville divisions of Giant Records and DreamWorks, launched his own Stroudavarious Records imprint in July. The label, which will be distributed by Sony RED, has signed Darryl Worley, former Lonestar frontman Richie McDonald and songwriter Anthony Smith.

Stroud has also started an associated label, Country Crossing, as a home for such established artists as John Anderson and Lorrie Morgan. That label is affiliated with an ambitious country music-themed destination resort of the same name that’s being developed in Houston County, Ala., near the Florida Panhandle.

It’s all quite a shift for Stroud, who stepped down in January 2007 as co-chairman of Universal Music Group Nashville. By going indie again, Stroud says, “I will do whatever I want to do and I will not do what I don’t want to do, for as long as I can.”

That freedom has already allowed him to make some unusual moves, such as cutting a deal with cable shopping channel QVC to release a collection of Christmas music that features top Nashville session musicians who will be paid artist royalties, rather than the standard session fee. Stroud says it’s a way for him to repay the players who helped him produce hit records for the likes of Alabama, Clint Black, Tim McGraw and other acts.

In an interview with Billboard, Stroud talks about his new ventures.

You could, if you wanted to, just continue to produce. Why start this new label? And why now at a time when the music business is taking such a beating? When we were getting ready to open [DreamWorks Nashville in 1997], we were already starting to smell some trouble here in town. I said, “Guys, this is going to be tougher [than], say, opening it up five years before.”

David Geffen looked at me and said, “Perfect timing.” And I said, “What do you mean?” And he said, “The cream will rise to the top; entrepreneurs in our business will do well even in bad times, because that’s what makes the good times.” We all have hills and valleys, and right now for me I think it’s perfect timing. I get to have a label that is completely and totally run by me. I can do whatever I want to do.

What did you learn from your stints at Giant, DreamWorks, Capitol [where he was Nashville A&R chief] and Universal Music Group that you’re going apply to your new venture? Because of the size of our company and the structure of our company we don’t have to necessarily look at it from a corporate [perspective]. It’s a small ship, so I can turn it easy.

Right now with the way the music business is, you have to be able to think on your feet, you have to be able to make a decision and then act quick on those decisions. In less than one month, Stroudavarious Records had an agreement with QVC to sell a holiday record and we have a guarantee of what they would purchase. We cut the record in nine days, and we had the Christmas album, which we did with the Stroudavarious Orchestra.

And these are studio musicians that you’ve used through the years? That’s right, the best musicians in the world. I produced [the Christmas album] and they received what an artist would receive as a royalty every time a record is sold.

The other thing that we’re doing is that I’m having two labels. We have Stroudavarious and then we have Country Crossing. I believe that there is a business that we can do with established, iconic artists that have been here in town that may not have an opportunity to be signed to a label right now. For instance, I’m signing John Anderson, Lorrie Morgan—what an amazing trend-setting female artist.

The other thing is that people like Lorrie Morgan and John Anderson, they tour quite a bit, and they’ve toured just as much as they did 10 years ago, five years ago, so there is a business there. They are doing live music, which is what country music is about anyway; it’s about getting to the people. We’re going to make sure as a label that we furnish these fans the products that they want from these artists that’s not 4, 5, 6 years old.

We’re also doing a development that’s going to be in Alabama called Country Crossing. There is going to be an amazing venue for our country artists. And we’re going to have several artists that will have venues down there. For instance, there’ll be a John Anderson Steakhouse, let’s say, or a Lorrie Morgan Fried Chicken or an Aaron Tippin workout gym. And then there’s going to be a venue there to play. It will be a better version of Branson [Mo.], because if you go to Branson you’re not going to see John Anderson, you’re not going to see any of the newer artists. When you go to Country Crossing, you’re going to see artists that are viable right now.

We’re going to tie the record company into cross-promoting that so that we all benefit.

You’re outsourcing your radio promotion to Big Picture, which also represents Live Nation’s country releases. Does it concern you at all that Big Picture’s attention may not be focused just on your music? No. The ones that we’re using are only working for two labels [Stroudavarious and Live Nation], so they are not stretched out. You really have the focus you need that maybe a major label can’t do because they have more artists that they are working for. So we feel like we are very lucky.

As a producer and a musician, what concerns you about the future of the business? Well, my concern is that we’re playing this copycat thing again that we did in the late ‘80s where everybody was making that pop candy kind of country music. It was quality music, it just wasn’t identifiable. [Then] all of a sudden, you see Randy Travis show up, Clint Black, Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, and all of a sudden we are defining our country music. I feel like right now we are starting to [revert to a formula in] these records and we have to be really careful.

You met Elvis Presley when you played drums for Jerry Lee Lewis. What was that like? I went over to Elvis’ place with Jerry Lee Lewis’ bodyguards and walked to the back of Graceland and I was standing there while the two bodyguards were talking and I looked up in a tree and Elvis was in the tree, sitting there. We spoke for a while and then we went back around to the front and I asked the bodyguard, “Why is he up in the tree?” And he says, “Well, you know, he can’t leave the compound because people just run him crazy, and he sorts sometimes back to the things kids used to do, things he used to do as a child. And one of the things he used to love to do was to climb a tree.” So that was my meeting with Elvis.

You can reach Stroud at Stroudavarious Records, 2203 Adams Lane, Ste. 110, Nashville, Tenn. 37205; 615-383-9000; strat@stroudavarious.com; www.stroudavarious.com. For more on QVC and Stroudavarious Records’ first album, go to www.stroudavarious.com.
REEL LIFE
WITH THE RELEASE OF 'THEATER OF THE MIND,' LUDACRIS BLENDS HIS MUSIC AND MOVIE PERSONAS

BY GAIL MITCHELL
PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS STANFORD

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Best-known to music fans as Ludacris, Chris Bridges is contemplating a new moniker.

"I have a new album and two movies coming out within two weeks of each other, so Mr. October is my new nickname," the rapper says with a laugh.

Like the original Mr. October, Major League Baseball's clutch hitter Reggie Jackson, Ludacris is positioning himself to hit several home runs out of the ballpark this fall. He is completing the final tracks for his sixth Disturbing tha Peace/Def Jam album, "Theater of the Mind," Bookending the album's Oct. 21 release are his co-starring roles in "Max Payne" (Oct. 17), adapted from the popular "Rockstar" videogame, and Guy Ritchie's "RocknRolla" (Oct. 31).

That's not counting his earlier at-bats this year. Ludacris opened his first restaurant, Stratts Atlanta, almost six months ago. On the heels of that opening, he launched two Web sites, WeMix.com and MyShotta.com. There's also his co-hosting stint with rocker Tommy Lee on environmental reality show "Battleground Earth," which ends its run on cable channel TLC in September.

Amid these forays into film and new media, Ludacris and co-manager Chaka Zulu are busy restructuring their DTP imprint (see story, page 24). And prefacing the rapper's upcoming album are his guest stints on several other projects, including the song "Chopped & Screwed," recently chosen as the second single from T-Pain's third album, "Thr33 Ringz," slated for Oct. 28.

Rapper. Actor. Entrepreneur. These personas are in keeping with Ludacris' and Zulu's concerted efforts to transition the artist beyond the short career spans most contemporary rappers encounter. It's a music-and-more balancing act that jump-started in earnest with his last album, 2006's "Release Therapy."

Following critical and popular acclaim for his acting roles in "Crash," "Hustle & Flow" and TV's "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," Ludacris cut his trademark braids and adopted a more serious demeanor for his fifth album. Club jams ("Money Maker") shared equal time with more emotional and introspective tracks ("Runaway Love" featuring Mary J. Blige; "Freedom of Preach"). The album earned him his first Grammy Award for best rap album in 2007.

"I felt like I reincarnated myself as a rapper," says Ludacris, who has racked up 21 top 10 hits (including four No. 1s) on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart (see chart, page 24). "I know this is album No. 6, but I consider it No. 2 after "Release." There's LL Cool J working on album No. 13 and Jay-Z, who's on album No. 10. I'm energetic and I'm hungry. So I'll continue to strive."

Zulu adds, "We took two years and knocked out four movies. Now is the perfect time for him to step back into music. That's how we gauge the balancing act: on where he may be personally in life and what expressions he may need to get off his chest. Both music and acting are creative forms of expression. The balance comes with him being true to himself as an artist."

Ludacris' rap and acting personas intersect on "Theater of the Mind." The album comprises tracks envisioned as short plots from movies. And in Ludacris' special brand of musical theater, the featured guests—including T-Pain ("One More Drink"), the Game ("Call Up the Homies") and T.I. ("Wish You Would")—are billed as co-stars. Helping out on the A&R side is DJ Khaled and producers include Dre & Vidal and 9th Wonder.
Among the additional track selections is the healing-themed “Let’s Stay Together,” Armed with a beat and hook from artist/producers Juicy J and DJ Paul of Three 6 Mafia, Ludacris—starring as a music fan—enrols artists to quilt his beats and come together to make better music.

The set’s official lead single is the bouncy “What Them Girls Like,” co-starring Chris Brown and writer/producer Sean Garrett as Ludacris’ female-loving sidekicks. During the video’s Aug. 24 shoot at the Microsoft House/Studio in Los Angeles, the trio’s natural camaraderie and magnetism were in keeping with the video’s premise: three fly guys who know what women like. The Chris Robinson-directed video takes its cue from the Mel Gibson movie “What Women Want,” with balloon pop-ups revealing the female extras’ thoughts.

“The theater of the Mind” is all of my albums put together,” says Ludacris, who still hopes to hook up with Eminem for the album. “There’s the funny Ludacris, the serious Ludacris and the story-telling Ludacris as well as the movie-making Ludacris.”

The strategy behind developing his blossoming acting career is a team effort involving his William Morris agent Dana Sims. Zulu and the rapper himself. The aim is twofold: find diverse, challenging roles in mainstream movies, and the rapper himself. Ludacris, along with his other companies, will produce, and Zulu will manage; they’re a Tremence Howard (“ Hustle & Flow”), you’re going to learn a lot,” Zulu says. “It challenges him to really get in there and make a name for himself.”

Favorable early buzz on his portrayals in Ritchie’s “RocknRolla,” to really get in their dinner for invited guests during the rapper’s annual Labor Day charity event, billed as Ludac Day Weekend. Now 6 years old, the Ludacris Foundation recently staged its annual back-to-school event, distributing school supplies, haircuts and clothes to inner-city youth.

While his XM satellite radio show has been put on hold—citing his busy schedule—Ludacris and Zulu are ramping up other business associations. Several months ago, the pair launched the two aforementioned Web sites: WeMix.com and MyGhetto.com. WeMix.com is a joint venture with Mega Mobile TV (billboard.biz, March 20). Designed as a portal for the music community, the site helps unsigned singers, songwriters, musicians and producers create and expose new music, collaborate digitally with each other globally and receive tutorials from Ludacris and other major artists. MyGhetto.com is more of a personality-driven social network site, according to Zula. It enables visitors from urban neighborhoods around the world to connect and share info to gain a greater understanding of social issues and lifestyles.

Later this year, Ludacris and Zulu will put on production hats and begin shooting the pilot for “Halls of Fame.” The scripted TV show, described by Zula as a “loose interpretation of Fame” from back in the day but with a new spin,” is being pitched to Starz Media for broadcast pickup next year. “That’s who our primary goal is for that project,” Zulu adds. “But we are also developing content ideas for TCI, Discovery, Planet Green and Nickelodeon.”

Also on tap for next year is the release of another film starring Ludacris, the futuristic action film “Game.”

Beyond the restaurant, films, TV and Internet sites, Zulu is busy connecting the dots on more major branding opportunities for Ludacris. Coming soon is a new AT&T commercial featuring the rapper, a former pitchman for Pontiac’s Solstice roadster. On the branding front are tie-ins for everything from clothing (the rapper’s CP Time line is being re-examined) to electronics to sports-affiliated projects.

“We’re just taking our time, making strategic decisions about brands that are relevant to our audience,” Zulu says. “It’s great to be presented with a lot of ideas and opportunities—but failed opportunities and failed ideas hurt the brand. But we have some amazing new things coming down the pipeline.”

That includes overseas opportunities as well. Zulu notes that sponsorship and endorsement deals with regional brands in territories where Ludacris is quite popular—including China, Africa, Dubai and South America—are in the offing. “We will have a few billboards popping up soon in other countries with him being a pitchman for everything from safe sex to food,” Zula says.

And with “The theater of the Mind” due to be released simultaneously overseas, a world tour is also being planned.

Zulu says where he sees Ludacris five years from now, and he quickly ticks off four items. “More franchising of his restaurant at least two international properties. Land and business development already in motion here and overseas. Transitioning into a major power player in Hollywood. Still running DTP. And a touring artist who will continue to push music boundaries.”

Not planning to slow down anytime soon, Chris “Mr. October” Bridges says he’s definitely going to keep on swinging. “You only have one life to live and life is short. It’s not easy juggling so many hats. But I still have a lot to prove.”

Additional reporting by Natalie Der-Mesropian.
RADIO PLAY OF 'ALL SUMMER LONG' HAS RESURRECTED 'ROCK N ROLL JESUS,' RETURNING IT TO THE TOP OF THE CHARTS. BUT KID ROCK ISN'T DONE SCHOOLING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY.

BY RAY WADDELL
It’s a summer afternoon at Nashville tequila bar Agave, but rather than pounding them back, Kid Rock is taking a few shots of a different kind. ★ Make no mistake, Rock, born Bob Ritchie, is not pissed off, and why should he be? A decade into his major-label career, the Detroit rocker is riding his biggest wave yet, powered by the worldwide hit of the summer in “All Summer Long.” ★ It’s an old-school success story of patience, working the road, sticking to a plan and selling albums instead of digital singles. So while some things still stick in his craw—mainly aspects of track-by-track digital sales, pop radio programmers and a particular judge in Georgia—Kid Rock is actually feeling pretty good these days.

The double-platinum success of “Rock N Roll Jesus,” released to a No. 1 debut last Oct. 9 on Atlantic, is all about “All Summer Long,” the record’s third single. It’s a tale of young summer love and partying, spiced with an inspired mash-up of Warren Zevon’s “Werewolves of London” and Lynyrd Skynyrd’s “Sweet Home Alabama” that taps into Rock’s DJ skills.

“I thought it would work. I really believe in the power of ‘Sweet Home Alabama,’ ” Rock says. “To be able to start with that as a motor to build a car around and give it a beautiful paint job and everything else, it’s a good place to start.”

The single is a multifORMAT, worldwide monster hit. It’s his first Billboard Hot 100 airplay hit since “Picture” in 2003; has gone top 10 at Mainstream Top 40, Adult Top 40, sister publication Radio & Records’ Heritage Rock chart and Country; and is only his second top 20 at AC (see chart).

“When he played us the album we knew we had a great record. Then he played ‘All Summer Long’ and we knew we had something special,” Atlantic Records’ GM/executive VP of marketing Livia Tortella says. So special that it was hard to wait to release it. “There were people that wanted to run it early, believe me,” says Ross Schilling, Rock’s co-manager at Vector. “All Summer Long,” followed “So Hot” and “Amen” as singles, resisting the temptation to work a summer-themed song while there was still snow on the ground in Rock’s native Michigan. “We knew the ace in the hole was ‘All Summer Long,’ but we had to be patient.”

Waiting until the following summer allowed a solid plan to be built. “Jesus” had already sold 1 million records and Rock was on a hot tour before “Summer” ever hit. “Our radio department really felt strongly about shipping it early in March so we could capitalize on the theme of summer, set it up and give it plenty of time to happen,” Tortella says. Patience is hard to come by these days, Atlantic president Julie Greenwald admits. “It used to be back in the day ... you always saved your biggest joint for second or third; you never went out the door with your biggest record because you always built it up to it,” she says. “This one definitely went back to the old days of knowing you’ve got your biggest joint and you’re holding it in your pocket to roll it out at a later date.”

The album is selling at a 100,000-copies-per-week clip, surely driven in no small part by the fact that it is not available as an iTunes track in the United States. Rock’s co-manager Ken Levitan is sure that the single’s lack of digital availability has aided sales but feels this success is about a song and an album that resonates with fans. “It’s helped sales tremendously, but I also think having a massive hit record with an audience in the 100 million range, you can’t turn your back on that, either,” Levitan says.

Rock has been an outspoken critic not only of track downloading but Internet piracy. In a “smartass” public service announcement he recently advised people to steal everything. Rock recites some of it at the Agave bar: “I understand people are pilfering songs—it’s just a song. I’m not going to complain. Tommy Hilfiger’s rich, too, but you can’t walk into a fucking department store and steal a pair of jeans. I don’t care, steal my songs if you want, but let’s level the playing field. You know how much money the oil companies have? You think they’re going to miss it if you fill up your gas tank and drive off?”

Eschewing iTunes also proves a point, Rock adds, “Tell people in my organization, ‘Do not ever come up to me and say, “This is what everyone’s doing and how they’re doing it.” Don’t ever give me that lame-ass bullshit,’ ” he says. “As soon as someone says, ‘You have to be on iTunes ... they’re the No. 1 retailer ... I don’t have to. Because I remember being a kid when I heard a song that I liked, I would jump on the bus, ride to Detroit, get a $2.50 transfer and walk a mile to the hip-hop store to buy the new Eric B. & Rakim record. You’re not going to stop people from obtaining what they want if it’s available at some level.”

Greenwald says “Rock N Roll Jesus” will be available soon digitally in the States as an album at digital service providers like Amazon, walmart.com, Rhapsody and bestbuy.com.

“We get so caught up in technology and ease of downloading a single ... there’s nothing wrong with listening to a whole record from start to finish,” Levitan says.

In Rock’s view, iTunes is the McDonald’s of music. “It’s extremely convenient, no question about it. I think Apple is one of the greatest companies in America,” he says. “But just because McDonald’s is convenient doesn’t mean people won’t make reservations or wait in line to eat elsewhere if the food is what they want, or the atmosphere. That’s proven every day.”

Speaking of mass consumption, what’s Rock’s take on pop radio demands, especially since the driver behind the success of “Summer” has been radio? “If there’s two pop stations in one town, they’re not going to play the same song, they need their own version of it,” he says. “I say, ‘Go fuck yourself.’ I’d like to say that loud and clear to pop radio: ‘Go fuck yourself. You’re fucking up music. Play the good songs and play them on all the stations that want to play them.’ I understand the politics and advertising and want-

LIFE ACCORDING TO ROCK

‘I LIKE BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES WHEN IT’S SOMETHING I’M INTO, AND I’M DEFINITELY INTO BEER AND CIGARS.’

SOMETIMES THOSE PROGRAM DIRECTORS HAVE TO BE REMINDED, “YOU ARE NOT THE FUCKING SUPERSTAR. IF YOU’RE THAT FUCKING GOOD, GO WRITE THE GODDAMN SONG.”’

‘IT WAS A GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED FIGHT AT THE WAFFLE HOUSE—NO GUNS, NO KNIVES.’

www.americanradiohistory.com
are not the fucking superstar, you’re a fucking program director. If you’re that fucking good, go write the goddamn song.’ I don’t know who the fucking program director at KIHS-FM [Los Angeles] is, but somebody needs to tell him, ‘You are not a fucking superstar. Just because it’s the biggest population in the world, don’t think for a second that it’s not the fucking comest, because it is. And you’re in charge of that fucking bubble gum shit, motherfucker.’

But Rock isn’t pissed off. Really. He’s actually happy that most of his headlines these days are about his music after becoming tabloid headline fodder. Rock signed with Vector after splitting with longtime manager Punch Andrews just as “Rock N Roll Jesus” hit the street. It was something of an inauspicious beginning.

“He hired us on a Monday, the album debuted on Tuesday, and on Sunday we were bailing him out of jail in Atlanta at 5 a.m. from the Waffle House incident,” Vector’s Schilling says. “You just kind of buckle up and say, ‘Hey, we’ve got a No. 1 artist in the country, and he’s in jail.’ We all kind of chuckled about it. We’re ready for the roller-coaster ride.”

Ah, the Waffle House incident, where Rock was arrested in an early-morning October brawl outside of Atlanta and later sentenced to a year’s probation, fined $1,000 and ordered to undergo six hours of anger management counseling—for the second time (for more details, see the Rock Q&A on billboard.com)—and perform 80 hours of community service.

Rock takes exception to the DeKalb County judge who ordered him to appear in court on the assault charges in the midst of his sold-out, four-day stand in Detroit. “I’m doing something positive, creating commerce for thousands and thousands of people, and this guy’s like, ‘You tell him to go get his fucking ass down to Atlanta on Monday’—in between the shows,” he says. “I had already went to the Waffle House and raised $15,000. I took a bad thing and turned it into something fun and positive and gave to a homeless shelter to help some homeless families. They didn’t care.

“Let’s not take this out of context. It was a good, old-fashioned light at the Waffle House—no guns, no knives,” he adds. “But the judge sentenced me to 80 hours of community service; so by the way, while I’m doing this community service, I’ll never donate another dime to any charity in Atlanta, just because you’re a fucking asshole.”

OK, then.

And Rock’s notoriety is extending beyond the States. “Rock N Roll Jesus” and, in particular, the “All Summer Long” single, are successfully kick-starting Rock’s career in Europe.

Rock admits he has never really focused on international. “I like to put myself in the category of making that very Americana, blues-based rock ‘n’ roll music, with all the other stuff I do,” he says. “Being kind of Captain America like I consider myself, I wanted to go where other countries what I think is the true voice of the people, not just New York and Los Angeles. Maybe be an ambassador of good will in some way through the music.”

In contrast to his approach in the States, “All Summer Long” has been made available as a full-track download and video, with “Rock N Roll Jesus” also available via all mobile and online digital stores across Europe.

The song has been a radio smash across Europe this summer, racking up $8,672 plays, according to Nielsen Music Control. “All Summer Long” peaked at No. 1 on the European Hot 100 Singles chart, hitting the top spot in Austria, Flanders, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

“Rock N Roll Jesus” peaked at No. 5 on the European Top 10 Albums chart.

“We always believed that ‘All Summer Long’ was going to be a huge international hit for us,” Atlantic senior VP of international Torsten Luth says. The strategy was to break “Summer” first in Central Europe, then the rest of the continent and the United Kingdom, propelled by a “very impactful” promotional visit from Rock that included print, TV and live performances.

Rock says touring internationally cost him $150,000, and management was along for the ride. “As a management company we said, ‘Hey, we’ll take the hit with you, we’ll split it with you,’” Schilling says. “We’re going to back in December and next year, his visibility will be sky high, and hopefully his audiences will follow.”

On the road in North America, Rock is putting up his best numbers yet. So far, he’s averaging about $353,000 per night and close to 10,000 in ticket sales, according to Billboard Boxscore. (The four-night stand in Detroit grossed $2.5 million and drew 63,062 fans.) Rock is following up his Rock N Roll Revival tour with Peter Wolf, Dickey Betts and Rev Run with a brief co-headlining run with Lynyrd Skynyrd that’s filling major venues.

While the summer tour was booked and routed prior to the single taking off, “management knew they were sitting on pocket aces and we booked the tour accordingly,” says Rick Roskin, Rock’s responsible agent at Creative Artists Agency. “Everything has fallen into place; a chart-topping single, huge album sales and a sold-out concert tour.”

And he’s putting up these big grosses with one of the lowest start ticket prices in the business. “I’ve always kept my ticket prices fair. That’s always been one of the things I’m most proud of,” Rock says. “I’d rather walk down the street and have people palm me as ‘What’s up, Rock? You’re a good guy,’ than drive through the street in my brand-new Bentley with the windows tinted not being able to talk to anybody.”

As summer comes to a close, Rock’s label already is planning the next single to continue the album’s momentum. “Once ‘All Summer Long’ has played its full course, we’ll start ‘Roll On,’ God willing, for Christmas time and the holiday sales and he can enjoy another wave,” Greenwald says.

Rock played “Good Morning America” with Skynyrd Aug. 22 and is set to appear at MTV’s U.S. and European Video Music Awards.

And the Kid Rock branding machine is now in full gear, with the artist and his Twisted Brown Trucker band cutting a new song, “Warrior,” for a National Guard commercial. It will be downloadable in its entirety on the National Guard’s Web site once the commercial airs. He’s also looking at launching signature beer and cigar products. “I like [branding opportunities] when it’s something I’m into, and I’m definitely into beer and cigars,” Rock says. “You probably won’t see me on the cover of a Wheaties box or selling Tide detergent, because it’s irrelevant to me.”

Maybe a Waffle House endorsement?... Additional reporting by Andre Paine in London.
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Urban Latin music, dominated by reggaetón, has seen a sharp drop in sales since its boom several years ago. But the popularity of the music and its associated image persists, thanks in no small part to a new generation of artists who are making innovations to the genre and its business models. Below are five urban Latin acts whose profiles and chart performance are on the rise.

**BABY BOY**
In less than two months since the release of his debut album, "No Llores...Let Me Love You," newcomer Baby Boy has risen to the top of Billboard's Latin Rhythm Airplay chart with the album's title track. The song, a mix of R&B crooning, hip-hop beats and pop appeal, peaked at No. 7 on Hot Latin Songs, quite a feat for a brand-new artist. Baby Boy's tune has nothing to do with the Beyoncé song of the same name. Born Roberto Borroto in New Jersey to Puerto Rican parents and currently living in Orlando, Fla., Baby Boy is signed to indie Siente Music, a joint venture with Universal. With major distribution and grassroots appeal, Baby Boy has also held his own in sales; in August he cracked the top 40 on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart and an upcoming promotion with Wal-Mart will only further his progress.

**EDDY LOVER**
Panamanian crooner Eduardo Mosquera, aka Eddy Lover, broke state-side as the featured vocalist begging forgiveness of the woman he scorned on La Factoria's hit "Perdóname." The song went to No. 12 on Billboard's Hot Latin Songs chart and reached No. 1 on the airplay charts in Mexico, according to Nielsen Music Control. Fittingly, Lover's new album on Machete is titled "Perdóname" and features such singles as melancholy reggaetón slow jam "No Debiste Volver" and "Luna," an ingenious mix of midtempo reggaetón with guitar and flute touches. Lover's career got a major boost in Latin America in 2004 when he hooked up with famed producer Predicador, who is also producing the new album, on a series of compilations. He signed with Panama Music in 2006 and has since toured all over Latin America with La Factoria.

**MARRY PLACE**
This group from Brooklyn and the Bronx brings a twist to the urban bachata formula. Made up of C.C., Billy and Joey, the trio's vocals are far more pop-inclined and R&B-tinged than those of comparable groups. In addition, a series of remixes have made the threesome attractive to dance enthusiasts as well. Marcy Place is signed to El Orfanato, the new label launched by reggaetón star Don Omar, and as such, it has heavy-duty street cred. A full album is still to be released. But the single "Todo Lo Que Soy," featuring Don Omar, is No. 4 this issue on the Tropical Airplay chart after reaching No. 2 last week. Thanks in no small part to rotation on tropical WSKQ (Mega 97.9 FM) New York.

**TONY DIZE**
Puerto Rico's Tony Feliciano Rivera, aka Tony Dize, got his start as a featured artist on albums by Lumpy Times ("Mas Flow Z") and Wisin & Yandel ("Pa' Mi Mundo"). A hit track for Dize was "Quisás," a song on Wisin & Yandel's "Los Vaqueros" compilation from 2006. Dize also toured with reggaetón's top duo in the United States and Central America; that endorsement as well as his uniquely strong singing have paid off. Dize's first solo project on WY/Machete, "La Melodía de la Calle," went to No. 8 on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart and spawned his biggest hit to date, the electro-tinged "Permíteme," which hit No. 18 on Hot Latin Songs. The album, for which Dize wrote on all the tracks, is a continuation of reggaetón's signature drumbeat as well as the strong techno bent that his mentors have made red hot.

**VAKERO**
Rapper Manuel Varela developed a solo career out of his underground success as part of pioneering Dominican duo Perfecto Clan. A hard-hitting, witty lyricist whose beats blend American-style trap with tropical sounds, as Vakero, he released his album "Pa' Ke Te Mate" last year on Jeromy Records. The label is represented for publishing, administration, digital distribution and marketing in the United States by New York-based Sunflower Entertainment, which releases its product via the Orchard and has direct mobile deals with Orange Dominicana, Thumbplay, NewRius and Vringo. Vakero's new album, "El Cantante de los Raperos," is due in September with production from Villano Sane. Joe Arroyo and artist-producer Propheta. Sunflower is pursuing merchandising deals on behalf of Vakero, in such areas as clothing and footwear. Meanwhile, the artist is featured on a track on "Chosen Few III: The Movie."
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For a few years between Mellow Man Ace’s “Mentirosa” in 1990 and Daddy Yankee’s “Gasolina” in 2005, rap made by Latin artists in the western United States peeped out of the underground and enjoyed mainstream buzz. At the beginning of this decade, rap en español by Akwid, Jae-P, Kinto Sol, Flakiss, Don Abusivo, Spotty Loco and Crooked Stilo scored deals with major labels, with a distinctive mix of hip-hop beats and varying degrees of banda, cumbia and socially conscious messages dubbed “urban regional.”

Led by Fonovisa founder Guillermo Santiso’s Headliners Records (licensed to Univision), the artistic wave represented what seemed like a convergence of demographics and listening habits whose time had come. “When the movement started I think there came a moment when it was, ’U.S. Latin, Mexican, let’s sign them all,’” says Sergio Gomez, one half of Akwid with his brother Francisco Gomez.

Lope de la Cruz, who was a marketing VP at Univision Music Group from 2001 to 2005, says Latin rap from the West Coast still hasn’t reached its full commercial potential, considering “the sheer number of young people that are Latino de Mexican descent who were brought up in a bicultural world listening to both urban and Latin music.”

Despite some mild success at radio, airplay and widespread label support have been hard to come by. Add to that an insufficient touring circuit, a dearth of U.S.-born artists skillful enough in Spanish to rap in it and a stubborn street aesthetic, and Latin rap is still relatively under the radar, industry sources say.

Formerly with Univision Music Group, Los Angeles DJ Crooked Stilo released its latest, “Cumbia Urbana,” independently: “Univision’s specialty was regional Mexican, so they [tried] to market the music the same way, but it’s not the same,” the act’s Victor Lopez says.

And just as hip-hop in Spanish was starting to take off, a more danceable Latin urban genre—reggaeton—exploded on the scene, flipping radio formats and capturing a national audience. With the reggaeton craze stabilizing, those stations are turning in many cases to pop or English songs, with Spanish rap still crowded out.

Lighter West Coast urban music in English by Latin artists has fared better, says Streetlight Entertainment CEO Tony Harrell (aka Flossey), whose company produced such hits as Down A.K.A. Kiló’s “Lean Like a Cholo” and Lil’ Rob’s “Summer Nights.” Los Angeles DJ/producer Julio G, who helped break everyone from N.W.A. to Kid Frost and Cypress Hill, says the tough street vibe adopted by many Latin rappers can take you only so far in the States. “When [artists] start making hardcore music, sometimes they realize they turn a bigger audience off. If you’re going to go that route, it’s cool, but it keeps you very local.”

Some Latin rap artists, either in English or Spanish, have been able to sell on a local or regional level with little or no airplay. Texas artist South Park Mexican’s albums have sold a combined 2 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Swap meet, car shows, mom-and-pop stores and such Web sites as urbankings.com also provide crucial retail outlets for lesser-known artists. Major labels have dipped their toes into that underground market, with self-described “taco circuit” master Chingo Bling and L.A. legend Jesus Jackson signing distribution deals with Warner/Asylum and Universal Music Latino in the last year.

Even with strong album sales in some cases, “the promoters that control the venues didn’t like the people we were bringing in,” says producer Byron Brizuela, who has worked with urban regional acts Jae-P and Flakiss, amongst others. Though the acts fared well at festivals, “family-style events don’t attract beer sponsors,” Brizuela says.

But West Coast rap finds a receptive touring market abroad, in the cases of Akwid and Cypress Hill (the latter just played in Israel). Crooked Stilo, which is of Salvadoran descent, is playing a Salvadoran festival in Canada. On a recent promo trip to El Salvador, “to our surprise, people were familiar with [our] music,” Lopez says. “The support was there from all types of media.”

The most commercially successful purveyors of the West Coast rap movement in the United States are brothers Francisco and Sergio Gomez, better-known as Akwid. The duo’s current album, “La Novela” (Univision), like all Akwid albums, was produced by the brothers, this time together with Adolfo and Omar Valenzuela (the Twins). The two spoke with Billboard about crafting a unique yet commercial sound and the challenges of producing rap for the U.S. Latin market.

Your sound is unique, blending distinct styles: rap and traditional regional Mexican. Did it take a long time to achieve a balance?

Francisco Gomez: We knew the sound we wanted, but we didn’t know equipment-wise how to get things done. And with every album, we worked with different technicians that introduced us to new technology, and little by little we’ve been building our own technology in our own studio. There are a lot of people now that can produce a whole album from their computer at home. It’s not the same.

You’ve always been into real instruments as opposed to synthesized. Why?

Francisco: I don’t think even the latest plug-ins achieve the same sound as real instruments. We had never recorded with real instruments before (landing a deal with Univision Records). We could never afford it. But we knew it was the sound we wanted.

There must have been a “Eureka!” moment when you realized you had finally achieved the sound you wanted.

Sergio Gomez: When we did the single “No Hay Manera” [from debut album “Proyecto Akwid” in 2003]. We’d been making music in our garage for about 18 years, so we were learning. We were copycats. We copied what we heard on the radio. But the minute we made “No Hay Manera,” we said, “Shit, this is fucking amazing.” Mixing the regional Mexican and the rap, that’s the hard part and that’s the magic and that’s the formula. It’s something that we can’t explain. That’s what makes us, I guess.

Don’t you think that by blending two such completely different genres, you’re trying to reach two completely different audiences?

Francisco: When rap first started, it was rap, and that’s what it was. But when these producers started mixing old Michael Jackson songs with rap, people were against it. Now, it’s acceptable. Now, you have little kids saying, “Hey, I like that song,” and they don’t realize the original is from the 1970s. I think my music is a little like that.

You had also begun to produce other acts, but have stopped. What is happening with that?

Sergio: Our genre is going through some kind of face-lift. A lot of reggaeton artists aren’t doing that anymore, for example. They’re getting into hip-hop. And we need to know where the market is at before we make some invention. If we build something within our genre, it may not be accepted, unless it’s a big movement like disco or reggaeton. We get a lot of demos, but it’s hard to find someone who really blows you away.

Some people argue that English is the language of rap, and that that is one of the reasons it’s hard for a Spanish-language movement to really take off.

Francisco: I don’t believe that. Sergio: Rap is poetry with a beat. I think rapping in English is a lot tougher. You run out of words. Especially for us, because it’s a second language. “No Hay Manera” we recorded in English first. But it felt far more natural to do it in Spanish.

For more information, see the Billboard Web site for a sneak peek at the stars of our Latin West Coast Rap Radar feature: "Summer Nights." www.americanradiohistory.com
While Sales Of Urban Latin Music Decline, Its Image And Lifestyle Take Over

BY LEILA COBO

If one is to go by sales data alone, Latin urban music is one sick puppy. Following the reggaeton explosion of 2005 and 2006, sales have declined dramatically within the genre, with a handful of acts commanding major numbers and few others coming up in their wake. But if one is to simply look around, it's a Latin urban world, with the lifestyle permeating everything from TV to fashion like never before.

The dichotomy between sales and imagery is but one of the many contradictions facing a genre whose expansion has been fragmented by the many niches it occupies.

Latin urban is a wide category that encompasses everything from Puerto Rican reggaeton performed in Spanish to straight-up R&B in English performed by Latin artists. "We're five, six different audiences," says Los Angeles DJ/producer Julio G, who has been on the road with Cypress Hill this summer.

When it comes to Latin rap, adds Edward "E-Dub" Rios, producer of nationally syndicated radio show "Pocos Pero Locos," "we're already talking about a subgenre of hip-hop... And within the subgenre there's other subgenres... So it gets really confusing, especially for an outsider who doesn't live and breathe it every day... It's hard for the regular suit in the office to really get a hold of it."

"Everyone has a different opinion of what Latin urban is," says Kevin "Pills" Montano, president of Creative Media Group and owner of the Latin Urban Mixx conference, which brings together artists and DJs, among others.

"Some people may consider Latin urban to be a ghetto kind of thing. But then you have other people that consider Latin urban what they live and what they know and what they spend money on. There are different views. Reggaeton is not the only thing that is urban."

Reggaeton certainly isn't, but it is what put Latin urban music on the map in a big way. In 2006, when reggaeton was in its heyday and experiencing significant sales, industry execs in all areas were talking about how it had "opened the door" to a vast realm of possibilities within Latin urban music.

But none of those possibilities has quite crystallized. According to RIAA 2007 year-end numbers, net shipments of urban music, after returns, dived from 4.2 million in 2006 to 2.4 million in 2007: a 43% decline and the biggest percentage drop of any genre.

But those numbers don't incorporate subgenres like urban bachata or such urban-leaning merengue groups as Grupo Manía, which vacillate between urban and tropical. And naturally, they don't incorporate the hip-hop or R&B performed in English by acts that happen to be Latin and whose theme is overwhelmingly Latin.

But if one is to adhere to the Spanish-language rule that has long defined what constitutes Latin music in this country (as far as radio, retailers and institutions like Billboard and the Grammy Awards), there are several things clearly happening in the Latin urban realm.

First, save for a handful of acts like Wisin & Yandel and Daddy Yankee, newcomers like Tony Dize, who is a Wisin & Yandel protégé, reggaeton sales have declined. Second, sales of Latin rap—that is, rap in Spanish—have in the past years failed to rise beyond a largely underground phenomenon, save for exceptions like Akwido and Kinto Sol.

The original movement generated a few years ago has largely fizzled out.

Finally, the urban-tinged music that seems to connect the most with a Latin audience is music that has a dance beat, including urban bachata (a La Aventura—the big name in the genre—and Xtreme), romantic reggaeton (newcomer Flex) and Panamanian reggaeton (such as La Factoria).

"There are different rhythms: bachata, merengue; interesting stuff," Universal Music Latino director of A&R Pedro Guzmán says. "Reggaeton albums are acquiring a more tropical facet and veering into a more, perhaps international sound. The songs are more melodic and more danceable. Essentially, they're opening their reach so they can get to more targets and play in more formats. But the essence of the artist and the movement they represent continues to be urban Latin. Urban has always gone hand in hand with dance and clubs."

George Zamora, formerly president of La Calle Records, now under Universal, is one of those who has pushed different, urban-based fusions, including urban bachata and urban merengue.

"The sound is changing and getting more pop and R&B," Zamora says. "And the young kids are buying this. If you look at the market for reggaeton acts that are still selling and urban bachata acts, it's the same: bilingual kids from all over the country."

At bilingual TV station mun2, much of the programming doesn't necessarily follow sales, for example, and urban-themed programming makes up more than half of mun2's lineup.

"It's a question of reflecting our audience," mun2 manager of music scheduling Roberto Isaacs says. "And reggaeton and hip-hop are a big part of what we identify them.

An act like R.K.M. & Ken-Y, for example, hasn't released a new album recently, yet it's always requested. Acts like Los Super Reyes, who vacillate among pop, regional Mexican and hip-hop, aren't big in radio or sales, yet, they're supported by mun2 viewers.

A key factor, Isaacs says, is that mun2 follows youth. "We're always looking for a new sound and a new thing. And it's not necessarily something radio is supporting," he says.

"Kids are now going to concerts and downloading tracks and buying merchandising," Isaacs adds. "It's not so much the album sales, but everything else."

If one looks at the mun2 playlist, reggaeton and dance-tinged hip-hop and R&B are big, to the degree that the station's highest-rated show had featured Wisin & Yandel.

Pure Latin rap, however, is barely visible.

"Kids who can connect with rap and hip-hop tend to go to mainstream acts," says Eddie Fernández, senior VP of Latin America for Universal Music Publishing. "Older listeners, they want melodies and a story. And younger listeners, they need something bilingual or in English."

This split in the audience is what leads people like Rick Valenzuela of RikRaf Entertainment, which specializes in Latin R&B and hip-hop, to note that urban music should be considered Latin if the artist and content are Latin.

"I think the new movement is urban music done by Latinos, regardless of their language," Valenzuela says. "That realm includes acts like MC Hammer and Paula DeAnda as well as small, regional ones like Gemini and Lala. Also under that umbrella are acts like Interscope's Prima J., which sing in English but are geared toward Latinos."

On the purely Spanish end, Latin rap has received label support in the past, but major commercial success has been rare.

"Hip-hop in Spanish competes with hip-hop in English," Guzmán says. "They are only separated by language. Meanwhile, subgenres like reggaeton or urban bachata are also separated by rhythms and beats that make them unique. So when it comes to reaching the end consumer, it's a challenge..."

Additional reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda.

Urban’s Slide

The changing fortunes of Latin urban music can be seen in Nielsen SoundScan's tally of the top-selling Latin albums for the first six months of 2006-08. In 2006, reggaeton ruled the roost, with three out of the top five albums (including No. 1 Daddy Yankee's "Barrio Fino") falling under the genre. Five of the top 10-selling albums of the semester were reggaeton.

In 2007, two reggaeton albums were in the top 10, plus urban bachata top seller Aventura with "Kings of Bachata." By 2008, only one reggaeton title, Wisin & Yandel's "Los Extraterrestres," was among the top 10, along with two other urban-tinged acts: romantic reggaeton singer Flex and Aventura, underlying audiences' increasingly romantically leanings.

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Sept. 11th Chumash Casino
Santa Ynez, CA
Oct. 3rd Coliseo Center
Cuenca, Ecuador
Oct. 4th Coliseo de Ambato
Ambato, Ecuador
Oct. 25th Arena Monterrey
Monterrey, Mexico
Nov. 7th Auditorio Nacional
Mexico City, Mexico
Nov. 14th Auditorio Telmex
Guadalajara, Mexico

Enrique Iglesias & Aventura

Sept. 20th American Airlines Arena
Miami, FL
Sept. 27th Allstate Arena
Chicago, IL
Oct. 3rd Patriot Center
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Fit For Kings
Stars Abroad, Tennessee Rockers Finding Footing At Home

Kings of Leon may be from Tennessee, but so far, the band's music has resonated in a bigger way overseas than it has in its own backyard.

The group and its team believe that will change with "Only by the Night," due Sept. 23 via RCA.

Kings of Leon's previous three records have sold a combined total of 620,000 in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, topped by "Aha Shake Heartbreak" in 2005 at 232,000. But overseas, the numbers are more robust.

"In the U.K., they're nearly double-platinum [at] nearly 600,000, they're platinum-plus in Australia, and they have other markets that are building, like the U.S.," RCA executive VP/CM Tom Corson says. "We have some catching up to do. It's healthy, but we feel like this is a gold-plus act, so that's where we have our heads at and we're going for it."

The game plan from the beginning was to break the band overseas first, a strategy taken up for many reasons, not the least of which are the often misguided perceptions of a Nashville-based rock band and staff changes at RCA. "We felt like we had better go start a story somewhere else, so we went directly over to England, hired a publicist and really started working it," says Ken Levitan, the band's manager at Vector.

Frontman Caleb Followill says he's not sure why fans in the United Kingdom and other foreign markets tapped into the Kings so quickly and have stayed with the band. "In a way I think they're proud of themselves for discovering us and they're not going to give that up," he says. "It's almost like they're holding onto us as long as they can. They've made our careers. If it weren't for them, I'm sure we would have been dropped by the label years ago and we might be painting houses again. I just want to work over here without losing our fan base over there. I don't want to lose one side of the pond because the other side likes us."

Now RCA is ramping a fresh round of promo for "Only by the Night," an album of songs that seem more accessible and perhaps more ambitious musically than previous efforts. There's more layered, atmospheric production; innovative song structure; and syncopated rhythms and fewer three-minute, hell-bent-for-leather rockers. Followill's vocals in particular are more declamatory, which the singer says was a conscious effort on his part.

In the past, "I always felt that people would look at me as a guy from Tennessee who dropped out of high school and try to point out everything that I said that wasn't necessarily proper or intelligent," he says. This time, "I was writing these melodies that I felt were so pretty and so deserving to be heard properly" [that] I just kind of hit the bull's eye and said, 'Sing the way that you know how to sing. Just try it for one record and if it doesn't work, you can go back to your shelter.'"

An online giveaway of album track "Crawl" and selling debut single "Sex on Fire" via iTunes six weeks prior to street date have built early interest. Corson says there were nearly 100,000 downloads of "Crawl" in a seven-day window, and "the first week on 'Sex on Fire'—mind you, it hadn't even charted on rock radio yet—was nearly 8,000, and that's nearly three times their last week ever on any single on iTunes."

To support the band's summer tour, which included opening for Pearl Jam in the States, "we implemented a long, extensive online awareness campaign with a customized widget and search engine marketing campaign," RCA marketing VP Nick Pirovano says. "To date the SEM campaign has received more than 40 million impressions and the widget has been embedded in over 4,000 different sites."

The press machine is also rolling, with a Spin cover coming around street date and TV appearances including "Late Show With David Letterman."

Fans were able to opt in and pre-order the album via iTunes when tickets for a fall tour went on sale through Ticketmaster. They can also upgrade to a deluxe version of "Only by the Night" that includes a bonus track, an exclusive video for "Crawl" and the official video for "Sex on Fire." All pre-orders will come bundled with CSS' remix of "The Bucket" from 'Aha Shake Heartbreak."

Followill admits it can be a bit strange to play sold-out arenas and headline huge festivals overseas, only to come back and hit smaller stages in the States. "But in a way it's kind of awesome, because we come back to America with the same type of set list and big lights, but it's in smaller venues where the kids really get to experience it up close and personal," he says. "That's changing pretty quickly. I know that people don't want to hear that, but we're actually playing bigger places now in America."
LATEST BUZZ

FEELING ‘LUCKY’
Kenny Chesney is plotting an Oct. 14 release for his next album, “Lucky Old Sun,” which has already spawned the hit “Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven.” The track debuted at a career-best No. 41 last week on the Billboard Hot 100. “We didn’t think the record would be ready until next year, but the music we’ve been making is so inspiring,” Chesney says. “We’ve been on a real creative jag.”

PART ‘DEUX’
Fall Out Boy will release its fifth album, “Folie a Deux,” Nov. 4 via Island, the same day as the U.S. presidential election. The project was heralded Aug. 25 with the release of an online mixtape, “Welcome to the New Administration,” featuring snippets of five songs likely to make the cut. Among them was the album’s first single, “I Don’t Care,” which will hit radio Sept. 15.

BACK ‘HOME’
Dido has slated a Nov. 4 release date for her oft-delayed third album, “Safe Trip Home” ( RCA Label Group). Album track “Look No Further” is available as a free download from didomusic.com, while the proper single, “Don’t Believe in Love,” will be issued digitally and on CD on a date to be announced. The set was co-produced by Jon Bion, Dido and brother, Rollo Armstrong, working together under the moniker Ark.

FRESH SNOW
Snow Patrol’s fifth album, “A Hundred Million Suns,” will arrive Oct. 28 via Polydor/Fiction/Geffen. First single “Take Back the City” is due Oct. 13 in the United Kingdom, in tandem with a video shot by Alex Courtes. The band spent several months recording at Groove Lodge in Ireland and also logged time at Berlin’s Hansa Studios, where such famed albums as U2’s “Achtung Baby” and David Bowie’s “Low,” “Lodge” and “Heroes” were tracked.

Reporting by Jonathan Cohen.

BAND PRIMES UNDEROATH FOR ANOTHER IMPRESSIVE DEBUT

The biggest metalcore band in the land happens to be a Christian sextet that, for a second time, is primed to crash into the upper echelons of the Billboard 200. Due Sept. 2 via Solid State/Tooth & Nail, “Lost in the Sound of Separation” follows 2006’s “Define the Great Line,” which has sold 366,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Without any significant radio play or mainstream push—the band has never charted on a Billboard singles tally—“Define” debuted at No. 2, the highest-ever showing for a Tooth & Nail act.

“I really have no idea,” Underoath guitarist Tim McHugh says of the band’s success to date. “We’re writing real songs for real people, and we don’t really polish anything up or down-play anything to make anyone in any big office in any big corporation happy.” Instead of the typical avenues of exposure, Red Light Management’s Randy Nichols says the band has fallen back on a fenc, two-ponded model of touring and Internet marketing.

“The other marketing—the press and the magazine covers—those are definitely helpful,” Nichols says. “But more than anything it’s that fan-to-fan interaction that’s created online.”

Already fixtures on MySpace, the band set up a webcam for fans to follow the recording of “Separation.” Then, it went a step further: The band charted with fans live whenever members had downtime and even held an impromptu interview with one of them, Nichols says.

For the six or so years the current lineup has been together, Underoath has relied on touring “with any band we could” and forging a bond with fans that extends beyond a 30-minute set on a sweaty, multi-hill gig.

“We’ve built a more honest fan base, I think,” lead singer Spencer Chamberlain says while on the phone from one of the final stops of the Rockstar Energy Drink Mayhem Festival run.

That summer trek, headlined by Slipknot and Disturbed, and an upcoming fall jaunt with Saosin, the Devil Wears Prada and P.O.S., typifies Underoath’s almost indiscriminate approach to choosing touring partners. It’s a strategy that deserves as more relational than strategic or based on a belief system.

“I wouldn’t hang out with you if you were an atheist or… hang out more with you if you were a Christian,” says Chamberlain, who has a habit of giving shout-outs to Jesus onstage. “If you’re a cool dude, you’re a cool dude either way.”

“The fact that they’re a Christian band makes no difference at all because every band should have a core set of beliefs,” Nichols says. “They don’t have that, I’m not really interested in working with them—but it’s a Christian band, a Jewish band, a straight-edge band or whatever it may be.”

Tooth & Nail director of marketing John Frazier says “that due to the landscape of the business” it may be unreasonable to expect the new album to match its predecessor’s lofty numbers. But more conservative projections haven’t kept Tooth & Nail from trying new things, like making “Lost in the Sound of Separation” available in four formats: a regular jewel-case version, a CD/DVD edition, a vinyl set and a deluxe box that includes all versions plus a hard-bound 56-page book.

“Those things are going to sell out. The kids are going crazy about that,” Frazier says of the deluxe $69.99 bundle, which has already shifted 3,000 of its 5,000-edition stock. In addition, 10 of the limited-edition packages and other Underoath merchandise were bundled in custom-designed suitcases, hand-painted by artist Justin Nelson and sold on Underoath’s Web site for $250. They all sold out in less than an hour, according to Nichols.

Other pre-release strategies included listening parties and presales at Hot Topic stores, 15 “lifetime show passes” hidden in the various versions of the new album, exclusive merchandise at Hurley and Paul Frank stores and a song placement in EA Sports’ “MadMen” franchise.

All of these strategies, Nichols says, are more about catering to a culture than a particular kind of music fan.

“It’s not just marketing to one reguer or one type of kid,” Nichols says. “It’s people who… are into a cool underground culture that we just want to tie into. It’s the same culture that the band is already fans of.”

Variety Is The Spice

Eclectic Singer Downs Attracts Big Names, Bigger Crowds

For 10 years, Lila Downs has crisscrossed the continent in the traditional Oaxacan path of her mother’s homeland, singing rancheras and cumbias to performing arts center patrons and regular folks alike. It’s safe to say there isn’t another artist quite like Downs, who is of Mixtec and American descent and sings in Spanish, English and indigenous languages. She has found a home on public radio in the United States, on film (in the movie “Frida”) and on plaza in Mexico.

That uniqueness has earned her a steadily growing touring base and fans around the world, including Spanish rock legend Enrique Bunbury, one of several guest vocalists on Downs’ “Shake Away,” due Sept. 2 on Manhattan/EMI.

“I didn’t even know about his music, but I’d heard from some people that he was really into Mexico and alianism,” Downs recalls. “I brought my mother to Spain with us on tour and [they] struck up a conversation back stage.” When Downs decided to put feelers out for collaborations on the album, Bunbury “was the first one who said he would do it.”

To Downs’ surprise, a slew of other high-profile guests came onboard for duets: Mercedez Sosa, Spanish flamenco-pop star La Mari, Cafe Tacuba’s Ruben Albaran, Rudy Mlidin and Gilberro Gutierrez.

GLOBAL PULSE

SINGH-SONG

Snoop Dogg is swapping Hollywood nights for Bollywood lights with the title song to Indian blockbuster “Singh Is Kinng.”

The song features a collaboration among Snoop, U.K.-based north Indian bhangra trio RDB and top Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar.

The “Kinning” soundtrack dropped July 4 on Mumbai-based indie label Junction Music, the soundtrack arm of Times Music (owned by leading newspaper group The Times of India). According to Junction CEO Adarsh Gupta, it has sold more than 500,000 units.

The romantic comedy featuring Kumar and Katrina Kaif recorded the highest opening-weekend box-office gross ($14.9 million) for an Indian film after its Aug. 8 release, according to its distributor, Mumbai-based Indian Film Co.

Snoop’s involvement was coordinated by Los Angeles/Mumbai-based promotions agency Cashmere Asia, whose chairman Ted Chung is also VP of A&R at Doggystyle Records. Dogg features in the promo video sporting a turban and Indian attire.

-Jyväkshåsh

www.americanradiohistory.com
After going it mostly alone on vocals for seven albums, Downs concedes with a laugh that she’s built up enough “credentials” to attract guests of this caliber. Her 2004 album, “One Blood/Tina Surge,” won a Latin Grammy Award for best folk album, and her duet with Caetano Veloso from “Frida” was nominated for an Academy Award.

Paul Cohen, Downs’ manager, saxophonist, musical director and husband, estimates her average venue topped out at a capacity of about 1,000 four years ago. These days, they’re playing to bigger houses as well as festivals in the States and Europe. Downs’ upcoming dates include the Kennedy Center, the Hollywood Bowl (with Ozomtli, Spearhead and Norteño Collective) and Mexico City’s Metropolitan Theater.

“I’ll’s public has expanded a lot around the world. It’s starting to get a little bigger, so when we come back to a place, people have been waiting to hear her in concert for a while,” Cohen says.

On “Shake Away,” Downs applies her powerful, husky belt to diverse melodies, traversing Latin territory as well as gentle acoustic ballads and even a klezmer-like bump (“Perro Negro”). Downs also never strays far from socially conscious material, often referencing migrants and their roots (as on “Minimum Wage” or “Tierra de Luz”).

“The idea of the horn on the album, the trumpet... all of these instruments have something very much in common—it’s very much a Pan-American thing. We use these instruments for parties and celebration,” Downs says. “This album was kind of an idea to somehow express that we aren’t so different from one another.”

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**ROCK** by Gary Graff

**Unexpected ‘Gift’**

Lindsey Buckingham Returns To Unfinished Album

With “Gift of Screws,” Lindsey Buckingham has given a surprise present to his fans—and his record company.

“The record just showed up. We didn’t expect it at all,” Warner Bros. Records COO Darnell Quinn says. “Lindsey wanted to get it out quickly. He’s got a window he has to deal with, and we’re willing to do whatever he needs us to do for him because we think he’s great.”

It’s indeed a small window that Warner Bros. and Buckingham are dealing with for “Gift of Screws.” With a Fleetwood Mac tour, and possibly some new recording, looming in early 2009, the album comes out Sept. 16, while Buckingham hits the road for six weeks of dates Sept. 7 in Saratoga, Calif. The label is working the single “Did You Miss Me?” first to triple A radio, with hopes of crossing it over to other formats, while a special promotion bundles a copy of the album with ticket purchases for the tour.

“It means turning around quickly, getting the (single) and the album into the marketplace,” Quinn says. “The overriding sentiment is that we’re here to support him in whatever he wants to do.”

Warner is also enthusiastic to back an album that even Buckingham acknowledges is “a little more accessible and familiar” than some of his other solo releases, including 2005’s acoustic-oriented “Under the Skin.” “Gift of Screws,” in fact, has an interesting history that dates back to the beginning of the decade.

Buckingham was making a solo album with that title—including sessions with the Mac rhythm section of Mick Fleetwood and John McVie—in 2001 when Fleetwood Mac decided to reconvene for sessions that became 2003’s “Say You Will” album and the world tour that followed. Buckingham allowed the group to pifer several of the songs intended for that album—with, he hastens to explain, no regrets on his part.

“It’s happened maybe five other times in the past that the machinery or the politics of Fleetwood Mac moved in, intervened and something was put on the shelf,” says Buckingham, who joined the group with then-girlfriend Stevie Nicks in 1974, left in 1987 and rejoined for “The Dance” in 1997.

“So that’s been a pattern. It’s always seemed to me that’s the right thing to do. ‘Gift of Screws’ as an album wasn’t really finished, so I was trying to do the right thing for the good of the whole.”

Buckingham’s initial “Gift of Screws” recordings have been widely bootlegged, and the current version includes several of those songs, among them the title track, “Right Place to Fade” and “Wait for You.” Fleetwood and McVie still appear on the album, as do the musicians who accompanied Buckingham on his “Under the Skin” tour and appear on the “Live at the Bass Performance Hall” CD/DVD that was released earlier this year.

“I didn’t really go in there and plan to make a rocking album,” says Buckingham, who produced all but two of the 10 songs. “For whatever reason, this seems to hearken back to earlier work, Fleetwood Mac in particular. I think that’s something the record company recognizes and feels good about.”

The label began the “Gift of Screws” campaign in early August with a performance at the triple A radio convention in Boulder, Colo. In addition to the ticket promotion, Warner also recorded a song-by-song interview that will be used on Buckingham’s upgraded Web site and MySpace page and with “key online partners,” including Borders.

Quinn says the label is working to lock up some TV appearances around the tour’s New York and Los Angeles stops. “A big part of this is going to be reactive,” he says. “We hope ‘Did You Miss Me’ sticks, and if the song takes hold, who knows what he’s going to want to do or have time to do.”
Calls To Action

Tomlin’s Worship Songs Strike A Chord At Home, Abroad

With inspiring lyrics and easy-to-sing melodies, Chris Tomlin creates music that has saturated church services and Christian radio airwaves. With his Sept. 2 EMI/Sixstepsrecords release, “Hello Love,” he wants to keep affecting those listeners as well as increase his international presence.

“I think about the audience and the people who will be singing the songs when I’m writing the songs,” says Tomlin, who recently returned from an extensive international tour that included stops in Manila, Philippines; Johannesburg; Cape Town, South Africa; London, Stockholm; and Jakarta, Indonesia. “I think about the church in general: How can I write this so people can sing this song? How can I write this so it can really translate through different cultures, different age groups?”

Tomlin’s widespread appeal has made him one of the most successful worship leaders in Christian music. His 2006 release “See the Morning” has been certified gold and his previous release, “Arriving,” is platinum. He’s the Gospel Music Association’s reigning male vocalist of the year, an honor he’s claimed for the past three years, and he has two Dove Awards in the artist of the year category.

Tomlin’s “How Great Is Our God” was named worship song of the year at this year’s Doves and is ranked No. 1 on the Christian Copyright Licensing International chart, which monitors the use of songs in churches. Such Tomlin songs as “Forever” and “Holy Is the Lord” are also mainstays in the CCLI top 10.

Tomlin says the idea behind the title “Hello Love” is “pretty simple. When you bow worship down, to me it’s about love. The Bible says, ‘Love the Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength’ and ‘to love your neighbor as yourself.’ That’s why ‘Hello Love’ seemed appropriate.”

Tomlin’s current single, “Jesus Messiah,” was the most-added song at the Christian AC, top 40 and inspirational formats, receiving 97 adds its first week, a record number in the Christian format.

There was a time when worship songs were generally relegated to church services or conferences, but Tomlin helped make such music palatable to radio. “Chris’ songs are well-produced and well-written. I think the core of what they communicate is stuff that people want to say to God,” sixstepsrecords chief strategist/director of label operations and artist management Shelley Giglio says.

“In Chris’ case, the songs got so popular through the church route and people were singing them so readily at every turn that it almost demanded that radio put them on. It was [as if radio] was missing the biggest thing and I think it finally awakened to that.”

EMI Christian Music Group and Sixstepsrecords’ marketing and distribution partnership and both companies have high expectations for Tomlin’s new record. “There’s a really aggressive online marketing campaign that aimed at connecting people with the music,” EMI CMG VP of marketing and artist development Leisa Byars says of promotions with gospelmusicchannel.com, ccm.com, christianmusicplanet.com, iTunes and other outlets. “It’s also getting an exclusive song, ‘My Beloved.’

To aid churches anxious to have their congregation sing Tomlin’s new music, there will also be a special-edition CD featuring additional content aimed at teaching worship leaders how to utilize these songs. It will include sheet music and an instructional video from Tomlin.

Giglio says consumers who purchase either edition of the CD will have first access to tickets for Tomlin’s upcoming tour. “We want to reward people for supporting Chris and buying his music,” she says.

Though Tomlin’s sales have increased exponentially the past few years, he refuses to feel pressured to top himself with each new release. “I just try to be me and hopefully people will continue to be inspired by these songs,” he says. “I’m always blown away by how much people love the music, and it’s incredible to me. I’m always thankful.”

ALMOST POP

McLaughlin Dabbles In Crossover Sounds On Island Album

COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC as an example of the kind of creative freedom he covets. Fields says McLaughlin idolizes such acts as Sting, Seal and U2—"artists with pop hits but who have something deeper to their music."

"OK Now" was originally to have included a would-be pop hit called "Smack Into You," which was written and produced by the Dream and Tricky Stewart, the team behind Rihanna’s "Umbrella." Yet after McLaughlin and Fields completed the rest of the album, the singer decided "Smack Into You" didn’t really fit in" with the other tracks. "As you sit with a record you start changing your mind about certain things," McLaughlin says. "That wasn’t the only song that was going to be on the album that we took off."

Fields says he can understand the label’s desire to hook up McLaughlin—a great-looking guy who looks like a lifeguard— with proven hitmakers. But he insists "Beating My Heart," the album’s lead single, has serious top 40 potential as well, which earned him and McLaughlin some leeway in the studio. "When we made that song I knew it was something special," the producer says. "That was the first track we handed in, and they loved it. It was like, ‘OK, do whatever you want.’"

Island Def Jam president Steve Bartels expects "Beating My Heart"—which in July was featured in promo spots on ABC—to broaden McLaughlin’s audience beyond the 18- to 34-year-old females he calls the singer’s core. McLaughlin just completed a headlining tour that Bartels says was intended "to connect Jon’s new music with his fans and have them experience his growth and progression as an artist," and he’ll begin a stint on Hard Rock Cafe’s Pinktober trek Sept. 29 in Chicago. "We plan on keeping this artist out on the road for the rest of the fall doing what he does best: engaging, connecting with and earning new fans," Bartels says.

That’s fine by McLaughlin. "You’ve got to support your fans who are supporting you," the singer says, adding that for the moment he’s more concerned with the number of shows he plays than with the number of records he sells. "You could sell $5 million and not see any long-term benefit," he says. "Or you could sell 100,000, keep doing it the right way and watch it build."
HIP-HOP
ICE CUBE
Raw Footage
Producers: various
LunchMoney
Release Date: Aug. 19

1. There's little sign here that Ice Cube's family film work has dulled the sociopolitical fury he first vented on N.W.A.'s 1988 breakthrough, "Straight Outta Compton." Throughout "Raw Footage," Cube holds forth in vivid detail against politicians, wack MCs and pundits who blame his brand of gangsta rap for creating inner-city troubles. Cube has decried a growing trend of blaming inner-city trouble for inspiring gangsta rap. Unfortunately, there is reason to suspect that middle age (or material comfort) has dulled the sharp edges of Cube's wordplay. "Now what this got to do with the price of tea in China?" he asks in "Here He Come:" "Nothing, motherfucker, just don't act like a vagin." Yikes. Occasional clunkers aside, the impassioned delivery and stripped-down G-Funk grooves are still more potent than plenty of efforts by rappers half Cube's age. He just might hire an editor next time.—MW

GZA/GENIUS
Pro Tools
Producers: various
BabyGrande
Release Date: Aug. 19

2. Even in this post-Wu-Tang days era, GZA remains easily and unfairly overshadowed. He doesn't have the odd ink appeal of Ghostface, the smoked-up rasp of Method Man or the RZA's holywood resume. But he does have five solo records to his credit now, and a purpose: "All I need is a beat," he opens on "Alphabets," and commences three minutes of liquid rhymes that spray out without any detectable effort. "Pro Tools" is the opposite of flashy. You could count the number of hooks on one hand and most tracks clock in at the three-minute mark, ostensibly to GZA's recommendation. But it's worth a listen here: what seems, suspiciously, image-heavy tricks still emerge from his notebook (particularly on the war-charged "Colombia Ties"—"A president's madness responsible for losses, political forces/land littered with corpses"). It's worth at least two to allow those words to sink in.—JY

ROCK
UNDEROATH
Lost in the Sound of Separation
Producers: Adam Dutkiewicz, Matt Goldman
Solid State/Tooth & Nail
Release Date: Sept. 2

3. Unrelenting and often harrowing, Underoath's newest is filled with the band's characteristic bone-crunching riffage and a reduced role from drummer/vocalist Aaron Gillespie, allowing frontman Spencer Chamberlain's guttural howls to take command. Throughout its 41 minutes, "Lost in the Sound of Separation" occasionally teeters on the precipice of unfamiliar territory. Chamberlain trades his screams for sung parts on "Too Bright to See, Too Loud to Hear," and the sparse, electronic-based closer "Desolate Earth: The End Is Here" is largely instrumental except for a few lines. With "Separation," it's clear that the band has not turned the genre on its head. Even so, Underoath has made definitive strides at progress without abandoning the muscular, broad-shouldered hardcore that made it a household name.—EL

APOLLO SUNSHINE
Shall Noise Upon
Producer: Quintus Stoltzfus
Headless Heroes
Release Date: Sept. 2

4. Bright and dynamic Massachusetts collective Apollo Sunshine's third album is a delightful head-trasher that explores old and new elements of psychedelic alke, from string sections, meting organ and echoey vocals to gritty, feedback guitar lines and lyrics about love and reincarnation. The band creates a trippy collage that passes the baton between instrumentalists like the serene and atmospheric "Happiness" and rockers sung in gorgeous vocal harmony by all three band members like "666: The Coming of the New World Government." While this has never been a band that could be summed up in a single word or song, "Honesty" is the best example of its signature versatility. The maniac-infused horn parts, fute solos and surpery, layered melody defy genres but still charm the listener completely.—LW

YOUNG JEEZY
The Recession
Producers: various
Def Jam
Release Date: Sept. 1

5. Young Jeezy balances commercial/ pop aspirations with core hip-hop sounds on "The Recession," getting a lift from DJ Toomp, Drumma Boy, Midnight Black and longtime collaborator Shawty Redd on thissonically enjoyable follow-up to 2005's "The Inspiration." Previously criticized for odd songwriting and strange rhymes and repeating lines, Jeezy delivers some great turns of phrase on songs like "Wordplay," where he answers claims of glorifying drug dealing with the couplet, "They want wordplay and I got bird play." Considering Jeezy's admission that he's a bit uncomfortable making female-skewed songs, the blend manifests itself most clearly on "Taking It There," with Trey Songz crooning a romantic chorus. While fans may gravitate more toward cuts like "Vacation" and "Yeah," "Taking It There" could wind up being the track Jeezy needs to cement himself as a mainstream artist and not just a favorite of rap aficionados.—HC
MICHAEL FEINSTEIN
The Sinatra Project
Producer: Bill Elliott
Concord
Release Date: Sept. 2

You wouldn’t want just anyone toying with the Frank Sinatra canon, and Michael Feinstein isn’t just any- one. He’s the keeper of the Aces and standard-bearer for a for- mer apprentice to its Gershvin so dedicated to the archival cause that the Library of Con- gress appointed him to its Na- tional Recording Preservation Board. So it would follow that he’d create arrangements remi- niscent of Sinatra’s swingin’ originals, dig up two unknown Sinatra songs (one never re- corded, one never released) and record his tribute in Capri- to’s famed Studio A. You can still sit in Ol’ Blue Eyes’ fa- vorite chair Feinstein’s pleasant voice doesn’t have the natural timbre and emotion of Sinatra’s, but whose does? With classics like “Too-Ri-Ri,” “The Song Is You” and “Begin the Beguine,” you can’t go wrong.—KM

ELECTRONIC
THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS
Brotherhood
Producers: Tom Rowlands, Ed Simons
Astralwerks
Release Date: Sept. 2

The Chemical Brothers’ Grammy Award-winning catalog of sonic booms gets its second-best-in-five years with “Brotherhood.” But this one does that rare thing: It gives something meaningful—meaningful they didn’t have before (in addition to token brand-new track “Keep My Composure”). Since ’92, the Chems have made a habit of releasing works-in-progress on vinyl to a small group of select DJs to test them out on dancefloors. Most went on to become B-sides or album tracks on five of their six long-players, in extended, more-developed-wise tweaked forms. All 10 of these “Electronic Battle Weapons” are included on disc two of “Brotherhood,” offering a unique snapshot of the duo that possesses the elegant em- bracement of three “Brotherhood” tracks fans can track how “Weapon 3” became the tauter, more relentless “Under the influence” (on 1999’s “Sur- render”) or finally find that song from the live show with the Freddy Krueger sample (“Weapon 7”).—KM

WORLD
CHIWONISO
Rebel Woman
Producer: Keith Fanquard
Concord
Release Date: Sept. 2

Chiwoniso Mariaire has something of a split per- sonality. The daughter of Zimbabwean parents, she spent a good part of her youth in Olympia, Wash. She absorbed a lot of stateside music, but on “Rebel Woman” she gives us a dozen tunes rooted in South Africa and the distinctive sound of the mbira. That es- sential mbira voice is evident on the song “Matotsi,” as Chi- woniso laments the struggle of working-class men. The mood shifts dramatically with “Gomo,” a busy celebration of Chiwoniso’s family roots, ani- mated by a solid horn section and relentless percussion. She sings in English on “Listen to the Breeze,” a beautiful song about serenity. Her power, however, ex- pansiveness so typical of such African players as Hugh Masekela and West Nkosi. The title track, sung in Shona and English, testifies to the strength of women in war and in peace.—PV

POP
PINK
What So (3:36)
Producer: Max Martin, Shellback
Pink, M. Martin, Shellback
Publisher: not listed
LaFace

After releasing her 2006 comeback album, appropriately titled “I’m Not Dead,” it took third single “U + Ur Hand” to resuscitate Pink’s challenged career. The lead single from upcom- ing fifth album “Funhouse,” “So What,” pairs personal lyrics (and jests) about her recent divorce (“I guess I just lost my husband,” I don’t know where he went) with insatiable melodic verses meant for massive car singalongs and a chorus combustion followed by a fist-in-the-air refrain. Pink reunites with frequent col- laborator Max Martin for what already appears a can’t-miss. Around the world, the song instantly topped digital downloads and is locked in at No. 2 at iTunes stateside. Radio can’t be far behind with an ir- resistible soundscape that will transform listeners into rock stars singing their very own breakup song.—CW

JON McLAUGHLIN
Beating My Heart (3:52)
Producer: John Fields
Writer: J. McLaughlin
Publisher: not listed
Island

It’s high time for singer/songwriter Jon McLaughlin to earn his due. While the 25-year-old grazed the top 30 at adult top 40 radio last year with the Beautiful Disaster” he has become a frequent on- screen contributor including TV’s “Scrubs” and “Ghost Whisperer” and films “Georgia Rule” and “Enchanted.” Where his “So Close” earned an Academy Award nod “Beating My Heart” launches the launch of second-full-length “OK Now” (doses a gorgeous un- tempo romantic romp, fea- turing hook after hook, from tinkling piano to driving percussion and a start-and- stop bridge, and along- way effortless vocal that soars with falsetto to the high heavens. The flawless comp- anying video is simple enough, but effectively illustrates McLaughlin’s charm as a palatable sex symbol. “Heart” pumps with instantaneous hit potential, and proper promotion of it could propel the artist to superstar status.—CT

ROCK
SIXX:A.M.
Tomorrow (4:05)
Producer: James Michael, DJ Ashba, Nikki Sixx
Writers: various
Publishers: various
Eleven Seven Music
Sixx:A.M.’s sound- track for bassist Nikki Sixx’s best-selling book “The Heroin Diaries” soared a deserved hit with “Life Is Beautiful.” Eleven Seven follows that warm reception with “Tomorrow.” The pace of the midtempo track contrasts the soaring affirmation of “Life” and concentrates on how drug- ging away internal pain doesn’t eradicate whatever causes it. The chorus points out, “Tomorrow we’re gonna have to live with the things you say. We’ll have to cross bridges that you burned today”— meaning you’ll have to live with the damage you caused while high. Aside from being a cool rock jam, its universal message of considering the conse- quences of one’s actions is appealing. The tough-love track opens a new chapter for “Diaries,” as the Sub- stance Abuse & Mental Health Services Adminis- tration has made it a theme to National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in September.—CT

COUNTRY
TRISHA YEARWOOD
They Call It Falling for a Reason (3:30)
Producer: Garth Fundis
Writers: M Berg, J Collins
Publisher: not listed
Big Machine

Trisha Yearwood’s buoyant “They Call It Falling for a Reason” cap- tures the exhilaration of cascading into love that spine-tingling rush that takes one’s breath away and makes heart and head spin. Written by Matraca Berg and Jim Collins, the infectious uptempo tune has a soaring melody and upbeat lyric that listeners will identify with and chant right along to. Yearwood turns in a gorgeous, en- gaging vocal performance, shimmering with sassy charm. This single is one more reason that her “Heaven, Heartache & the Power of Love” is one of the finest albums by a country female artist in years.—DEP
Hymns You Can Hum

MercyMe’s Millard Scores Again With Traditional Tunes

When MercyMe frontman Bart Millard first stepped out as a solo artist with 2005’s “Hymned,” it was to fulfill a promise to his grandmother to record the songs of praise he’d grown up with. When the INO Records collection became a surprise hit, an encore was an obvious choice. Enter “Hymned Again,” which strolled Aug. 19 and bows at No. 8 on Billboard’s Top Christian Albums chart this issue with first-week sales of 5,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“It’s good for people to step out and take chances,” Millard says of taking a hiatus from MercyMe’s pop/rock sound to record “Hymned Again,” a collection of classics that he reinvents on a broad musical canvas.

“It’s not your mother’s hymns,” INO Records president Jeff Moseley says. “It’s uptempo and it’s fun. It brings a little Dixieland, a little jazz/New Orleans kind of soul. It’s kind of a musical gumbo.”

“Hymned Again” features Millard’s unique take on “Victory in Jesus,” “Grace That Is Greater,” “Leaning On the Everlasting Arms,” “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” “I Saw the Light” and other church standards. “I Stand Amazed” is the first single for Christian AC and inspirational formats, while “Brothers We Have Met to Worship” is being voted to Southern gospel and positive country stations.

There’s also one new tune, “Jesus Cares For Me,” which Millard co-wrote with Thad Cockrell and recorded as a duet with Vince Gill. Millard originally intended to do the song as a duet with Cockrell, but when Gill came into singing harmony, things changed. “I loved it and I was sitting there thinking that Vince’s voice would kill on this song,” Millard says. “So I called Thad and said, ‘Here’s the deal: Do you want to be singing on my record or would you like a song that you wrote to have Vince Gill singing on it?’ And he said, ‘Are you kidding me? I want Vince to sing on the song I wrote!’”

Millard says there aren’t any plans to do a solo tour, but he will step out during MercyMe’s fall shows and do one or two songs from “Hymned Again.”

He’s also taped a five-song performance for the Gospel Music Channel. They’re going to use several songs on GMC for their “Kitchen Sink” program as well as take a song from that and put it into rotation for a live performance music video. Then they will stream a couple of the videos on GMC.com, INO senior VP of marketing Dan Michaels says.

Michaels says the project has also benefited from strong on-line campaign. “We’re more focused on leveraging some of the MercyMe assets that weren’t utilized last time—everything from text subscribers, e-mail database and blogging,” he says. “The success of the first one has just inspired more activity with this one.”

There wasn’t a pre-sale campaign with the first record, but “Hymned Again” benefited from advance sales through iTunes and Music Christian. During street week, Millard could be heard on key Christian radio outlets, including Jon & Sherry Rivers’ show on K-LOVE. He visited Moody Broadcast- ing in Chicago and even took select radio folks to see a Cobue game. He also did a special promotion with Family Life Radio in Tucson, Ariz., where contest winners came to the station for a meet-and-greet.

Will there be another “Hymned” project? “If I have anything to say about it, yeah, there will be a ton of them,” Millard says. “If I could make a career of this—not that I want to leave MercyMe—I’d do them from now on. It’s the most fun I’ve ever had making a record.”

UPPING THE ANTE

Independent regional Mexican act El Guero y Su Banda Centenario has scored three singles on Billboard’s regional Mexican airplay chart. But this week the quintet lands its first entry on Hot Latin Songs with “Antes,” which debuts at No. 47.

The song is a cover of pop singer/songwriter Obie Bermúdez’s tune, but produced with a light brass arrangement by Ramon Gonzalez Mora, owner of El Guero y Su Banda Centenario’s Texas-based label, A.R.C. Discos. Beyond remaking a pop song in a bouncy duranguense style, “El Guero y Su Banda Centenario’s interpretation of the song grabs everybody’s attention,” central U.S. promotions rep Carlos Alvarez says. “In the musical arrangement, you have a slight R&B touch while still being duranguense. He’s appealing to a younger audience, as well as attracting the main demo of regional Mexican music.”

Indeed, the R&B vocal inflection may reflect the U.S. upbringing of El Guero (real name: Jorge Hernandez), a Milwaukee native who spent part of his childhood in his parents’ home state of Jalisco, Mexico. “Most of our young fans listen to R&B and hip-hop,” Hernandez says, citing Mary J. Blige and Brian McKnight among his favorite artists. Though he admits he took a risk with his sound starting with the group’s second album, he adds, “Everything is working out perfectly.”

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

HAPPIENING NOW

MUSIC

SASHA

HIGHLY INVOLVING

There’s a point midway through Sasha’s new mixed compilation, “Involver 2” (Global Underground), when the whole vibe changes. Ladytron member Helen Marnie’s disembodied voice jumps out from the mix like a stalker from behind a tree, and the mix goes from tense to intense in a flash. But this isn’t your average DJ/mixed magic moment. Sasha’s too inventive for that.

Released in 2004, the first “Involver” saw the veteran DJproducer mixing not entire tracks, but pieces of tracks together, creating something entirely unique. It has sold a tremendous 55,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. He set out with the same ambitious vision for “Involver 2,” due Sept. 9 via Global Underground.

“The thing with the ‘Involver’ albums is when you get all the separate parts to these tracks, you really have the freedom to create what, as a sound, you want,” Sasha says. “It’s not like how you put a mix CD together where you’re bound by other people’s productions. You are taking their precious music and giving it your own slant and your own interpretation. That’s a responsibility.”

Especially when you’re toying with the work of big names like Ladytron (“Destroy Everything You Touch”), M83 (“Couleurs”) and even Thom Yorke (“The Eraser”). Each act not only agreed to allow Sasha to slice and dice their originals, but also to give him a back-end piece of the resulting remix: A testament to his own strength as an artist.

The recognition did not come overnight. It’s been 15 years since Sasha was famously tagged (to his own chagrin) as “the Son of God” by the British press and 10 years since he helped bring progressive dance music to the United States via a landmark residency at New York nightclub Twilo with partner John Digweed.

Since then, he’s defined himself with his restlessness. He was one of the first jocks to openly experiment with “laptop DJ’ing,” or the use of software to mix live, and he’s launched a series of boundary-pushing labels—emFm, Fundacion and Involver—under which to tour and release music.

“I think you have to do something interesting to pique people’s attention,” he says. “It’s too nice to look back at things like, that was a period of time, and then you move forward.”

Sasha starts a 10-date U.S. tour Oct. 23 in Denver.
Higher’ Ground

Vanguard Keeps Growing Latest Nathanson Album

A year after the release of his Vanguard debut, "Some Mad Hope," singer/songwriter Matt Nathanson is seeing a fresh round of old-fashioned attention turn toward his project. Unlike the instant success some of his contemporaries have seen via synth, Nathanson has enjoyed a steady growth in the past year in everything from album sales to radio airplay to touring. "Some Mad Hope," which bowed at No. 60 on the Billboard 200, has now sold 70,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The single "Come On Get Higher" peaked at No. 3 on Radio & Records' Triple A chart and sits at No. 19 on Adult Top 40, with more than 10,000 downloads the week of Aug. 18, up from 2,500 in March. "It's very healthy and very organic and real," Vanguard director of marketing/A&R development Joe Girard says. "It was, like, blown away." Nathanson says of hearing the news. "It was like somebody was saying, 'Wow, you're making the cut.'"

According to Brower, the key to continually reaching new and existing fans has been visibility across all platforms. Special promos trickled onto the Web in the weeks leading up to the album's street date, and Nathanson's songs have landed everywhere from in-flight radio stations to VH1 rotation and TV spots on "Private Practice" and "One Tree Hill."

Tie-ins with radio along with touring outreach have been particularly effective in targeting a wider demographic. In addition to opening for Lifehouse this spring, Nathanson is on his second headlining run of the year, which this time around finds him at larger venues. Ourstage.com has partnered with the tour for a contest to win an opening slot alongside Nathanson in some markets.近日に、"Come On Get Higher"が週間チャートでNo.3に達した。彼の新作アルバムは、これまでの成功を支える大きな要因ともなった。

RED(NECK), WHITE & BLUE

Country-artist-turned-radio-personality Chad Brock—who topped the airplay tally with "Ordinary Life" and "Yes!" in 1999 and 2000, respectively—is singing on the radio again. Mind you, he's been on the air in between, doing mornings for WTRS Ocala, Fla., and then WQYK Tampa, Fla. And get this: He's running for president.

With new single "Put a Redneck in the White House" as his platform, Brock says he hopes to make a difference in the upcoming elections. "I don't like politicians, period. They don't have our best interest at heart," he says. "Whoever's putting money in their back pocket, that's who they care about."

Apparently others agree. On his Web site, redneckinthewhitewhouse.com, hundreds have signed a virtual petition. "It's kind of a grassroots deal," he says. "People want to hear the song and then they understand what I'm talking about."

While the track, which opens with a version of "Hail to the Chief," is tongue in cheek, Brock says the message is serious. "People are tired of what's going on in this country. We need to think about the people that live in this country first and foremost."

As of Aug. 27, the song has been played more than 3,500 times on Brock's MySpace page. "Redneck," written by Michael Huffman (Conway Twitty's "Tight Fitin' Jeans"), Dean Scallen and Frank Jeffus, has gotten airplay not only on WQYK, but also on WIRK West Palm Beach, Fla.; WXBM Pensacola, Fla.; and WBAM Montgomery, Ala., among roughly a dozen other stations, according to Nielsen BDS.

Brock is quick to point out that in his mind, "redneck" is not a derogatory term. "When I say 'redneck,' I mean hardworking middle-class people who get up every day and work hard for their families."

"I can do this kind of stuff now," Brock says, noting that he's not worried about repercussions like he would if he were still an active recording artist. (During a concert in July 2000 in Greeley, Colo., Brock suggested immigrants learn to speak English, which angered members of the town's large Hispanic community.)

"Meanwhile, don't look for Brock to give up radio anytime soon. "I miss performing," he says, before adding, "But they're going to have to kick me out of here. I love it."

Proceeds from the song, which is for sale on the Web site, go to charity, including Brock's favorite, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. —Ken Tucker

Kenny's Country

Seventy-year-old superstar Kenny Rogers is celebrating 50 years in the music business and has invited Cracker Barrel Old Country Stores along for the fun.

Sold exclusively at Cracker Barrel stores and on crackerbarrel.com, "Kenny Rogers: 50 Years" includes some of the artist's biggest hits, including "The Gambler," "Lucille," "Coward of the County," "Lady" and "Islands in the Stream" (with Dolly Parton). There are also three new songs—"She'll Believe in You," "Something's Wrong in Vegas" and "Only Time Will Tell"—which were produced by Tony Brown (Brooks & Dunn, Reba McEntire).

Rogers, who has worked with a number of producers through the years, had never worked with Brown. "I try to change producers not for any other reason other than it's fun for me to hear what other people think I should sound like," Rogers says. "Tony is one of a handful of people that have their pulse on where country music is today. The idea is to have [the music] stand up if you play it after Big & Rich or Kenny Chesney."

The CDs are an important piece of Cracker Barrel's lifestyle puzzle. More than 36% of the store's patrons are heavy country music listeners, according to VP of marketing Peter Keiser, and 80%-90% of its patrons are country music listeners on some level. "We utilize country music to help further define our brand and it's a key way to connect emotionally with our guests," Keiser says.

"There's generations of Cracker Barrel guests that have listened to his music," Keiser says of Rogers. "He's a true icon in American history and that really works very well with our positioning as an 'old country store.'"

"It's the very audience that buys our product," Rogers adds.

It's important for its music program to appeal to the chain's "multi-generational target," according to Keiser. "We blend of some of the icons, such as Kenny Rogers and Merle Haggard, as well as some of the younger artists to make sure we continue to extend our reach," Keiser says, citing Josh Turner as an example.

Cracker Barrel, which has released sets by Alison Krauss & Union Station, Alabama, Amy Grant, Ricky Skaggs and Sara Evans, has sold more than 3 million units of exclusive music since launching its CB Music label in 2003, according to the company.

—Ken Tucker
Dropping Apple Echoes Of The '90s Thinking

OK, it's official. Atlantic's decision to remove a developing artist's album from iTunes is proof positive that these days the music industry is living the Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times."

Go back more than five years, when all music sold came as physical product—and barring a credit hold or an egregious street-date violation—and you couldn't imagine a label pulling a new artist's album from one of the top two U.S. retailers.

Yet, in simple terms, Atlantic's toe-to-toe battle with iTunes over a la carte song sales comes down to just such a maneuver, as Estelle's set "Shine" disappears from Apple's download store (see story, page 7).

Obviously, back in the day, Tower Records, Trans World Entertainment or any other retailer could not break out individual songs from an album for sale, as stores relied on the commercial release of a single. But writing that last sentence only reminds me of my conviction that labels' late-'90s retreat from retail-available singles are one of the factors that inspired peer-to-peer swapping.

Consumers had been complaining since at least the mid-'90s that there were too many albums by artists who were not yet familiar where only one or two songs seemed worthwhile. Yet, even armed with that research from a joint RIAA/NARM study, the majors clamped down further on singles, withholding radio spins like Chumbawamba's "Tubthumper." Sugar Ray's "Fly" and Natalie Imbruglia's "Torn" from retail release in the naïve hope that when kids couldn't find the singles they wanted in stores, they'd whip out a $20 bill to buy a full-length CD.

It was, frankly, the kind of thinking that suggested it had been a while since key music executives had spent any time in a store or otherwise interacting with real consumers. I recall that in those days, the president of one conglomerate would call a label on the carpet when it elected to release singles like that as CD singles.

You'd have to hire NPD or some other research house to confirm my thinking, but I sincerely believe that while the notion of music for free was an obvious catalyst for the original Napster and the other peer-to-peer networks that followed, that part of what fed that phenomenon was the consumer saying, "Hey, you're not giving me what I want—the ability to buy the particular hit that I want—so I'll get it someplace else."

This many years after the genie flew from the bottle, it just feels like withdrawing a developing artist from digital's la carte market becomes an opportunity for LimeWire—or for some other peer-to-peer play that we haven't heard of yet.

The phenomenon that sees Kid Rock sell close to 2 million albums without downloads in the mix applies to an established artist with 10 years of chart history, whose typical fan is likely at least 30, so it's unrealistic to expect the same dynamic to play out for a lesser-known artist.

In fairness to Atlantic, its decision to release the T.I. track "Whatever You Like" a month before his album comes out not only stirs Billboard Hot 100 history (see Between the Bullet, page 50), but also proves the label won't view this issue with a one-size-fits-all mentality.

NEW GROUND: On the Billboard 200, who: do Ice Cube (No. 5), Family Force 5 (No. 30), George Jones (No. 79), Five Finger Death Punch (No. 124), the Dandy Warhols (No. 128) and We the Kings (No. 180) have in common? All six are sold by EMI Music Marketing through third-party sales and marketing deals with EMI labels, part of the major's ongoing effort to reshape its business model.

In the case of Family Force 5, which was dropped last year by Warner Bros. label Maverick, the Christian acts uses this conduit to funnel its own TMG label into the market. The result: the group's second No. 1 album on Top Christian Albums and its best Nielsen SoundScan sales week.

The "Dance or Die" moves 13,000 in its first week. Last album "Business Up Front/Party in the Back," released in 2006, sold fewer than 4,000 during its best sales week.

## Market Watch

### Weekly Unit Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Week</td>
<td>6,994,000</td>
<td>11,940,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>7,348,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Week Last Year</td>
<td>8,054,000</td>
<td>927,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>-11.2%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
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*Digital album sales are also counted within album sales.

### WEEKLY ALBUM SALES (Million Units)

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<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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### Digital Tracks Sales

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>38.4 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>70.0 million</td>
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### SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT

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<tr>
<th>Format</th>
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<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>264,313,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>30,804,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
<td>216,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>657,000</td>
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### Year-End Sales

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unit Sales</th>
<th>Digital Sales</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>177.0 million</td>
<td>149.2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>118.9 million</td>
<td>114.5 million</td>
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### Catalog Album Sales

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<tr>
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<th>Unit Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>114.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>118.9 million</td>
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*Quote from Billboard.com*
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<th>ARTIST</th>
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<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>NOW That's What I Call Classic Rock</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAREYES DE LA SIERRA</td>
<td>Con Banda</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>NOW 27</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JESSE MCCARTNEY</td>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLEN CAMPBELL</td>
<td>Meet Glen Campbell</td>
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<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>VAMPIRE WEEKEND</td>
<td>Vampire Weekend</td>
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<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVENGED SEVENFOLD</td>
<td>Avenged Sevenfold</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOO GOO DOLLS</td>
<td>Vol 2</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE LITTLE PRINCE</td>
<td>Who We Are</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROBERT PLANT &amp; ALISON KRAUSS</td>
<td>Raising Sand</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANDY TRAVIS</td>
<td>Around The Bend</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAMES OTTO</td>
<td>Sunset Man</td>
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<td>THE HUMAN ABSTRACT</td>
<td>Midheaven</td>
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<td>JULIANNE HOUGH</td>
<td>Julianne Hough</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLO RIDA</td>
<td>Mail On Sunday</td>
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<td>The Sip</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUN B</td>
<td>Tool</td>
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<tr>
<td>WILLIE NICHOLS &amp; WINTON MARSLIS</td>
<td>Two Men With The Blues</td>
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<td>MILEY CYRUS</td>
<td>Meet Miley Cyrus</td>
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<td>WE THE KINGS</td>
<td>WE The Kings</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGUR ROS</td>
<td>Med Sud / Eyrum Vid Spilum Endalaust</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLEX</td>
<td>Te Quero</td>
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<td>DJ SKRIBBLE</td>
<td>Total Club Hits</td>
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<td>NATELLE GRANT</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
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<td>Flight Of The Conchords (Soundtrack)</td>
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<td>REBA MCENTIRE</td>
<td>Reba Duets</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUNDTRACK</td>
<td>Step Up 2: The Streets</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>M<em>E</em>O*</td>
<td>Seeing Sounds</td>
<td>166</td>
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<tr>
<td>GARY ALLAN</td>
<td>Living Hard</td>
<td>166</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORAH JONES</td>
<td>Noname Jones-Vs-The Anti Mother</td>
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<td>LEWIS BLACK</td>
<td>Anticipation</td>
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<td>NOEL GOURDIN</td>
<td>After Me Time</td>
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<td>THE DOORS</td>
<td>The Future Starts Here: The Essential Doors Hits</td>
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<td>MARY J. BLIGE</td>
<td>Growing Pains</td>
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<td>166</td>
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<td>TOKIO HOTEL</td>
<td>Scream</td>
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<td>JASON ALDEAN</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
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<td>CASTING CROWNS</td>
<td>The Attar And The Door</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALANS MORRISSETTE</td>
<td>Flavors Of Entanglement</td>
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<td>06/29/08</td>
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<tr>
<td>BILL &amp; TINA WHITEHURST &amp; THEIR FRIENDS</td>
<td>Skin Deep</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>06/29/08</td>
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</table>

The eight-song CD/DVD set, called from the band's tour, includes a music video for the song "Slow Face."
**ARTIST / PROMOTION LABEL**

**HOT 100 AIRPLAY**

1. **Holler if You Love Me**
   - T.I. ft. Keyshia Cole
   - Epic / Sony BMG

2. **A Milli**
   - Lil Wayne
   - Cash Money Universal

3. **Best Ya Ever Had**
   - Lil Wayne ft. Plies
   - Cash Money Universal

4. **Kiss It Better**
   - Chris Brown
   - Def Jam

5. **You Make Me Feel Like...(Puff Daddy Intro)**
   - T.I.
   - Capitol

6. **Wanted on a Weekend**
   - LeAnn Rimes
   - MCA / Universal Music Group

7. **Lollipop**
   - Juicy J ft. Lil Wayne
   - Atlantic

8. **Get Like Me**
   - Keri Hilson
   - Epic

9. **Disturbia**
   -中 Alesso & Showtek
   - Epitaph / Universal Music Group

10. **The Way You Love Me**
    - Tim McGraw
    - Republic

**HOT DIGITAL SONGS**

1. **Whatever They Like**
   - T.I.
   - Atlantic

2. **Paper Planes**
   - M.I.A.
   - Interscope

3. **What About Us**
   - The Pussycat Dolls
   - Interscope

4. **Crush**
   - Florence + The Machine
   - 57th & 9th

5. **Viva La Vida**
   - Coldplay
   - Parlophone

6. **I Kissed a Girl**
   - Katy Perry
   - Capitol

7. **When I Grow Up**
   - Kylie Minogue
   - Parlophone

8. **Boyz N The Hood**
   - Marley Marl
   - Loud Records

9. **Pocketful of Sunshine**
    - Sting
    - A&M / Universal Music Group

10. **Dreamer**
    - Bon Jovi
    - Island

**ALBUM CHARTS**

1. **Survival**
   - Daughtry
   - Sony BMG

2. **Holler If You Like It**
   - Yung Joc
   - Def Jam

3. **American Boy**
   - Estelle ft. Kanye West
   - Def Jam

4. **Thank You**
   - Demi Lovato
   - Hollywood Records

5. **Teenage Love Affair**
   - Alesso
   - Atlantic

6. **One Step Too Far**
   - Tony! Toni! Toné!
   - Columbia

7. **Burnin' Up**
   - Timbaland ft. Beyoncé
   - Interscope

8. **It's Not Over**
   - Maroon 5
   - Interscope

9. **Give It Up to Me**
   - CeeLo Green ft. Brandy
   - Atlantic

10. **Swing It**
    - Jamie Foxx
    - Interscope

**SINGLES CHARTS**

**HOT 100 AIRPLAY**

1. **Holler If You Love Me**
   - T.I. ft. Keyshia Cole
   - Epic / Sony BMG

2. **A Milli**
   - Lil Wayne
   - Cash Money Universal

3. **Best Ya Ever Had**
   - Lil Wayne ft. Plies
   - Cash Money Universal

**HOT DIGITAL SONGS**

1. **Whatever They Like**
   - T.I.
   - Atlantic

2. **Paper Planes**
   - M.I.A.
   - Interscope

3. **What About Us**
   - The Pussycat Dolls
   - Interscope

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   - Marley Marl
   - Loud Records

9. **Pocketful of Sunshine**
    - Sting
    - A&M / Universal Music Group

10. **Dreamer**
    - Bon Jovi
    - Island
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Clocks</th>
<th>Performing Label</th>
<th>Promotion Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>ALL SUMMER LONG</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>VIVA LA VIDA</td>
<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>I'M NOT MY TIME</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>VIVA LA VIDA</td>
<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>COMIN' ATCHA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>COMIN' ATCHA</td>
<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>CHASING PAVEMENTS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>CHASING PAVEMENTS</td>
<td>EMI</td>
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<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>EPIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>#7</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
<td>EMI</td>
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<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
<td>EMI</td>
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</table>
### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>llama</td>
<td>Raw Footage</td>
<td>Raw Records</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart includes a variety of artists and their respective albums, such as LIL WAYNE, RIHANNA, and YONG BORG. Each entry includes the title of the album and the label associated with it.

### Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
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<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NEED U BAD</td>
<td>RHYME REASON</td>
<td>CD5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section lists songs that are popular in the mainstream R&B/hip-hop category, with titles like "Need U Bad" by Ryme Reason and "Porcelain" by ODB.

### Adult R&B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HEAVEN SENT</td>
<td>FLOBOATS</td>
<td>Raw Records</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Adult R&B chart highlights songs with themes that are generally considered less explicit, such as "Heaven Sent" by FloBoats.

### Rhythmic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DANGEROUS</td>
<td>LIL WAYNE</td>
<td>Cash Money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Rhythmic chart covers a broader range of genres, including dance and pop, with songs like "Dangerous" by Lil Wayne.

### Hot Rap Songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GET LIKE ME</td>
<td>MIKE WILL MAKES IT</td>
<td>C Fundamental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section features the most popular rap songs, such as "Get Like Me" by Mike Will Makes It.
### HOT DANCE CLUB PLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CHART DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE CARPETS</td>
<td>&quot;Still Into You&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>THE PHANTOMS</td>
<td>&quot;Take Me Higher&quot;</td>
<td>MAPLE LEAF RECORDS/SPILL</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE NATIVE HEROES</td>
<td>&quot;Let's Go&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>THE SPACE BOYS</td>
<td>&quot;The Right Time&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>THE PHANTOMS</td>
<td>&quot;Take Me Higher&quot;</td>
<td>MAPLE LEAF RECORDS/SPILL</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOP ELECTRONIC ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CHART DATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>METRO STATION</td>
<td>&quot;Take Five&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRIKER</td>
<td>&quot;The Rhythm&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>&quot;The Groove&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAY</td>
<td>&quot;Bring It On&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANTOGOLD</td>
<td>&quot;Lights Out&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### HOT DANCE AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CHART DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>METRO STATION</td>
<td>&quot;Take Five&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRIKER</td>
<td>&quot;The Rhythm&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>&quot;The Groove&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAY</td>
<td>&quot;Bring It On&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANTOGOLD</td>
<td>&quot;Lights Out&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### HOT CHRISTIAN ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CHART DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY FORCE 5</td>
<td>&quot;Our sequel&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD DAY</td>
<td>&quot;Breakthrough&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRANDON HEATH</td>
<td>&quot;The Sound of Your Name&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILLSONG UNITED</td>
<td>&quot;Inexhaustible&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVID CROWDER BAND</td>
<td>&quot;Let It Go&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTING Crowns</td>
<td>&quot;I Am&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### HOT CHRISTIAN AC SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CHART DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALL MY NAME</td>
<td>&quot;Trust You&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JESUS MESSIAH</td>
<td>&quot;I'm Letting Go&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ѓ</td>
<td>&quot;Greatest&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ń</td>
<td>&quot;I Will Not Be Moved&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ё</td>
<td>&quot;What Life Would Be Like&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ѓ</td>
<td>&quot;Something To Say&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
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### HOT CHRISTIAN GOSPEL SONGS

<table>
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<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CHART DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRY ME BOY</td>
<td>&quot;He Has Made It Easy&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK IT OUT</td>
<td>&quot;Let It Be&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILLSONG UNITED</td>
<td>&quot;Let It Be&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>JESUS</td>
<td>&quot;I'm Letting Go&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>JESUS MESSIAH</td>
<td>&quot;I'm Letting Go&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
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<td>JESUS MESSIAH</td>
<td>&quot;Trust You&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
<td>1992-09-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>JESUS MESSIAH</td>
<td>&quot;I'm Letting Go&quot;</td>
<td>DANCEBOP RECORDS/WAR</td>
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**Data for week of September 6, 2008. For chart reprints call 646.654.4633**
### United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Track(s)</th>
<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paul McCartney</td>
<td>One Day</td>
<td>192,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>107,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>96,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nelly &amp; Tubaba</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>87,704</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rihanna</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>74,774</td>
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### Canada

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jonas Brothers</td>
<td>psilon</td>
<td>224,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td>168,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operation Triunfo 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>107,267</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anaral</td>
<td></td>
<td>90,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Come Back To Black</td>
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<td>87,704</td>
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### Australia

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Script</td>
<td></td>
<td>272,270</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td>212,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operation Triunfo 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>181,630</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Anaral</td>
<td></td>
<td>159,100</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>137,340</td>
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### Europe

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>paul</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>321,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>291,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>236,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nelly &amp; Tubaba</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>216,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rihanna</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>196,464</td>
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### France

<table>
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<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coldplay</td>
<td></td>
<td>301,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Testament</td>
<td></td>
<td>261,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operation Triunfo 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>191,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anaral</td>
<td></td>
<td>171,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Come Back To Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>151,460</td>
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### Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<th>Track(s)</th>
<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>281,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Testament</td>
<td></td>
<td>241,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operation Triunfo 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>171,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anaral</td>
<td></td>
<td>151,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Come Back To Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>131,460</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<th>Track(s)</th>
<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>筹集修哥</td>
<td></td>
<td>281,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>241,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>171,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nelly &amp; Tubaba</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>151,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rihanna</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>131,460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Track(s)</th>
<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>301,460</td>
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<td></td>
<td>261,460</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operation Triunfo 2008</td>
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<td>191,460</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anaral</td>
<td></td>
<td>171,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Come Back To Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>151,460</td>
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</tbody>
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### Netherlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
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<td>Paul</td>
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<td>321,970</td>
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<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>291,460</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>28 Days</td>
<td>236,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nelly &amp; Tubaba</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>216,384</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rihanna</td>
<td>All Summer Long</td>
<td>196,464</td>
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### Austria

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>272,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td>212,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operation Triunfo 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>181,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anaral</td>
<td></td>
<td>159,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Come Back To Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>137,340</td>
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### Switzerland

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<th>Position</th>
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<th>Track(s)</th>
<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>159,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Come Back To Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>137,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: Island and Mercury Records name Stephen Ferrera executive VP of A&R. He was senior VP of A&R/staff producer at RCA Music Group.
BNA Records in Nashville taps Chris Waters as manager of Southeast promotion. He was promotions director at country WSM-FM Nashville.
Acrobat Music in London names Michael Del Tufo VP of U.S. sales and label operations. He was VP of sales at Trustkill Records.
BMG Label Group appoints Kevin Beisler senior VP of development, film, TV and theater. He was senior VP of special programming and publicity at RCA Music Group.
Amathus Music in New York names Chris Panaghi managing director. He was A&R director.
Arista Nashville promotes Lori Hartigan to senior director of regional promotion. She was director.
Show Dog Nashville names Rick Mosley VP of promotion and Bill Kennedy VP of sales. Mosley was VP of promotion at BNA Records, and Kennedy was VP of sales at Capitol Nashville.
EMI Music ups Marcelo Castello Branco to head of A&R for Brazil and to chairman of EMI Music South America. He previously headed up EMI Brazil’s offices.

TOURING: M.P.I. Talent Agency in Los Angeles taps Rich Rees as booking agent. He was president at Earthonite Music.

MANAGEMENT: RPM Management names Ryan Bitzer chief strategy officer. He was director of interactive programming at Blue Frog Media.

TV/FILM: Fuse names Angie O’Keefe VP of business development. She was VP of business development at Kick-Apps Corp.

RELATED FIELDS: Vivendi Entertainment promotes Yolanda Macias to senior VP of business development and acquisitions. She was VP.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOODWORKS
FLEA, FRUSCIANTE ROCK4CHANGE
With its first benefit concert scheduled for Sept. 4 at the Gibson Amphitheatre in Los Angeles, Rock4Change is aiming to be the “next generation of what Live Aid has done,” co-founder Bryan Baisman says.
Comedian Dane Cook will host the organization’s inaugural benefit concert, which will feature performances by Red Hot Chili Peppers members Flea and John Frusciante, along with Tom Morello: The Nightwatchman and Charlie Wilson, among others.
Tickets for the event cost between $65 and $150, with net proceeds going toward reforestation and clean-water initiatives in Darfur and Uganda, respectively. Rock4Change hopes to raise $500,000 from the concert, according to Baisman. “These two projects will change millions of people’s lives for the better,” he says.
Rock4Change plans to host a concert each quarter in different cities around the world for various causes. “We already have people interested in partnering with us in Toronto and Japan,” Baisman says. “Eventually the goal is to film all the Rock4Change concerts for broadcast as a television special.”

—Mitchell Peters

BACKBEAT
Atlantic rock act Staind played a special in-store-only show Aug. 19 at New York’s Hard Rock Cafe Times Square. The concert celebrated the release of Staind’s new album, “The Illusion of Progress,” which debuts this week at No. 3 on the Billboard 200. Backstage after the show, from left, are Staind bassist Johnny April, drummer Jon Wysocki and singer Aaron Lewis. Atlantic chairman/CEO Craig Kallman, at right, congratulates Mike Nishok, above, co-owner of the cafe.

BILLYBOARDS PRESENTS
LEFT: Hip Records artist Leigh Jones performed at Billboard’s Los Angeles office for Club R&R to promote upcoming album “Music in My Soul.” From left are Kenny Gentry Enterprises partner/manager Kenny Gentry, Billboard director of special features and West Coast sales Aki Kaneko, Jones and Billboard R&B senior correspondent Gail Mitchell.
BELOW: Academy Award-nominated actor Terrence Howard, third from left, helped promote debut album “Shine Through It” (due Sept. 2 on Columbia) with a visit to the Billboard Cafe for an intimate performance and interview. Pictured after the acoustic set are, from left, Billboard talent and special projects manager Kristina Tomiz, Columbia digital publicist Malaika Baston, Howard and Billboard associate chart production manager Alex Vitoulis at billboard.com editor Jessica Letkemann.

INSIDE TRACK
HAPPY TRAILS
After three wildly uneven records for Interscope, rock outfit . . . And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead is back in friendly indie confines . . . sort of. The group’s next album, due in January, and a teaser EP, “Festival Time,” due in October, will come out on its own Richter Scale imprint through Universal-distributed Justice Records. “It’s kind of ironic that we’re still in the family,” drummer Jason Reece tells Track, likening the situation to when Wilco was dropped by Warner Bros., only to re-sign with fellow WEA label Nonesuch. Mainly, the group is just happy to be focused on new music, and what Track has heard so far is very promising.
“Tidal Sea” builds from a measured, midtempo rocker to a furious instrumental finish, and the snappy “Fields of Coal” conjures an inspirational chorus that Reece says reminds him of the Summer Olympics. Another untitled track is fast and punky, with an Unwound-style feed-sack barrage. The album is also expected to include the songs “The Isis Unveiled,” “Halcyon Days,” “Insaatible,” “Luna Park” and “Pictures of an Only Child,” while the EP boasts a whacked-out cover of the Replacements’ “Within Your Reach.”

www.americanradiohistory.com
Before Three Dog Night’s Aug. 22 performance at the Cerritos (Calif.) Center, Universal Music Enterprises/Universal Music Group president/CEO Bruce Resnikoff presented the rock group with a plaque to commemorate RIAA-certified double-platinum sales of the album’s hit single “Three Dog Night’s Cory Wells, Resnikoff, Three Dog Night’s Danny Hutton and UMe senior VP of A&R Andy McKay.

More than 3,500 fans came to hear country star Randy Travis at the Epcot Events Centre at the South Peace Community Multiplex in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. From left are Global Spectrum Facility Management operations manager Andrew Nash and GM Gunner Fox. Travis and Global Spectrum Facility Management event manager Chelsey St. Pierre and assistant GM Ryan MacLvo.

EMI Music Publishing’s superstar songwriter Kelley Lovelace recently received EMI’s Silver Note Award. The honor recognized Lovelace for writing 10 No. 1 singles. Lovelace was presented with the award by EMI’s Rodger Faxon at the publisher’s new York office. From left are EMI/nashville executive VP/GM Gary Overton, Lovelace and Faxon.

HUNYPOT’S SECRET PROMOTION

Hunympot, a music supervisor-led event planning organization, held a weeklong promotion for the recently released Germs biopic “What We Do Is Secret.” It started with film director Rodger Benzaken, the cast and original Germs members joining Hunympot CEO John Anderson and COO PJ Bloom on their weekly radio show and ended with everyone attending the film’s premiere party held in conjunction with one of Hunympot’s many events, which features a DJ (Shani O’Connor) and live musical acts.

Above Left: From left are the Germs’ Don Bolles, Lorna Doom and Pat Smear at the RockWalk induction ceremony honoring the Germs, a band that had an influence on Krautrock music. Above: From left are Hunympot’s John Anderson, Germs bassist Lorna Doom, actor Noah Segan and Segan’s companion, Morgan Michie. Left: Hunympot’s Stacey Coleman, left, and the Germs’ drummer Don Bolles.

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Backbeat 
Edited by Kristina Tunzi

Billboard 62 | September 8, 2008

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