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The Promise Of Sound Exchange
The Collecting Organization Fires Back At The Orchard

BY JOHN SIMSON

For nearly 75 years, recording artists and record companies were never compensated when their sound recordings were played on any type of radio in the United States, unlike most other countries around the world. In 1995, that changed when the Digital Performance Right in Sound Recordings was passed. It was a giant step for artists and labels. Today, 13 years later, digital streaming of music has become an important new revenue source for recording artists and record labels, but one that also provides an opening for opportunists who want to exploit this new revenue stream.

Such digital services as satellite radio, webcasters, simulcasters and cable music services pay royalties to artists and labels—but both the majors and the independents—for the use of sound recordings. In 2001, to facilitate the reporting, collection and distribution of digital royalties, SoundExchange was created as a nonprofit collection organization by those who share in these royalties—artists and labels.

SoundExchange has tracked more than $2 billion in revenue and paid out more than $150 million to tens of thousands of artists and thousands of labels, while accruing the lowest administration fee of any comparable collection agency worldwide (less than 6% in 2007).

SoundExchange’s unprecedented efficiency means that as webcasting and other services continue to expand their digital channels, SoundExchange will ensure that artists and labels receive maximum payouts and accurate reporting. That’s just as it should be, since it’s only fair that the creators of music should be properly compensated for their work.

Because there are new laws and regulations that govern this relatively new process, SoundExchange is moving forward in a responsible, guarded manner to assure that the interests of artists and labels are fully protected.

A few weeks ago in these pages, in an extremely misleading opinion piece, the CEO of the Orchard—a for-profit enterprise that charges a commission to labels for receiving their royalties from SoundExchange—accused SoundExchange of not paying the Orchard royalties for labels it claimed to represent. SoundExchange has one responsibility: to protect the interests of artists and copyright owners, period. SoundExchange generally pays royalties to record labels and recording artists directly, but we cooperated with the Orchard’s request to make payment through the organization in hopes of reaching out to more labels. Though we lack the space here to expound on the details, the fact is that SoundExchange was doing its job by ensuring that the Orchard complied with the law and the agreement it signed with SoundExchange, which it had not done at the time of its “editorial.” For example, the Orchard failed to provide the legally required tax documents, thus preventing SoundExchange from paying royalties owed to many labels.

Another grossly misleading statement from the Orchard designed to create a misperception is the claim that we collected $140 million last year but distributed less than $40 million. Any one familiar with collection procedures knows that there is a lag time between collections and distributions. Accounting rules require that SoundExchange “book” collections in 2007 even though they weren’t even received until early 2008. In fact, in April 2008, we distributed approximately $50 million, the largest distribution ever in SoundExchange’s brief history.

The Orchard even deceptively complained about receiving royalties from tracks for which it doesn’t own the rights when the Orchard knows full well SoundExchange must rely upon data received from the services when allocating royalties. Improper payments naturally occur, and we dedicate significant resources to correcting these errors. It is the Orchard’s duty to inform SoundExchange of such errors reported.

It was never our intention to debate these issues here, and indeed this matter is being addressed directly between SoundExchange and the Orchard. But the Orchard’s public statements required a response and provided us with this opportunity to emphasize what is all too often lost in the rush to exploit sound recordings. There are dedicated, hard-working people behind the creation of music, and their rights must be carefully protected. While we recognize the value that companies like the Orchard bring to independent labels, we must exercise extreme caution when entering complex deals that require us to pay someone other than the copyright owner.

As SoundExchange leads the way through this uncharted and sometimes challenging terrain, we will continue to put artists and copyright owners first. We will continue to execute our responsibilities in a deliberate and prudent manner and will continue to evolve state-of-the-art collections and reporting systems. We will continue to hold those who seek financial gain by exploiting the works of artists and labels to the highest ethical and legal standards. And, apparently, we’ll continue to absorb a few cheap shots along the way. It goes with the uncharted terrain.

John Simson is executive director of SoundExchange.

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In<br>the<br>recording industry and<br>the<br>majors<br>their<br>and<br>reduced<br>ing,<br>leading up<br>and<br>development<br>means including<br>Universal catalog in software<br>to<br>the<br>digital rights manage<br>in<br>creative<br>being used<br>sands<br>“It’s the single largest<br>served<br>of<br>and<br>demand<br>“Getting Paid,” page 8<br>“Amazon, Everywhere,” page 10<br>Q&A: MySpace CEO Chris DeWolfe, page 22<br>MOBILE: For 24/7 news and analysis on your cell phone or mobile device, go to: mobile.billboard.biz

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>>> STEVEN TYLER SUES BLOGGERS<br>Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler sued unknown bloggers who the singer said impersonated him on the Web, writing about the death of his mother and other “intimate details” from his life. In a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles, Tyler, 60, accuses the bloggers of public disclosure of private facts, making false statements and misappropriation of likeness. In the lawsuit filed he also said he believes the same group was responsible for similar postings in 2007.

>>> JAY-Z, STARGATE FORM LABEL, PUB CO.<br>Jay-Z and Norwegian songwriting/ production duo Stargate have joined forces under the StarRoc banner, which will feature a record label and publishing company under Jay-Z’s Roc Nation venture with Live Nation. According to the principals, “the focus is to find new talent and develop artists through mutually beneficial global partnerships, which include music distribution, publishing, touring and merchandising.”

>>> ARJONA SIGNS WITH WARNER MUSIC LATINA<br>After spending the majority of his career signed to Sony, and later, Sony BMG, Guatemalan singer/songwriter Ricardo Arjona has signed a long-term recording deal with Warner Music Latina. The deal was closed this month, and Arjona will release his new studio album, “Quinto Piso,” Nov. 18. The first single, “Como Duele,” will be sent to radio Sept. 29.

A<br>as the dust settles from<br>the<br>Sept. 25 launch of MySpace's highly anticipated and somewhat controversial new music service, the broader implications of the initiative are becoming clearer. A joint venture of the News Corp. subsidiary and Universal Music Group (UMG), Sony BMG Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, EMI Music and Sony/ATV Music Publishing, MySpace Music Service (billboard.biz, Sept. 24) represents a turning point for the recording industry and MySpace itself.

For the major labels, MySpace is the culmination of more than 18 months of experimentation in new business models and a launching pad for their digital music strategies for the future. While detractors continue to level criticisms against them for their alleged role in hindering the digital music market with complicated licensing demands and other limitations, the majors have largely reassessed their approach to the Internet, spurred by the continued slide in physical music sales.

During the year-and-a-half leading up to the launch, the majors have signed unprecedented deals opening the door to ad-supported free streaming, digital rights management (DRM)-free music sales and reduced licensing costs in return for revenue share and/or company equity.

All these elements are present in the MySpace Music deal. As such, the service represents less of an experiment and more of a template for future agreements.

“It highlights the shift in our business to bring business models to the market that meet where the demand is for more and more of a template for future agreements,” DeWolfe says. “It's the single largest thing we've done to change the way we do business around the way the customer wants to experience music.”

Carasell says to expect further flexibility in digital music deals in the near future. Among other things, this means including access to the Universal catalog in software development kits that give developers the ability to create new applications with built-in music licensing.

“You'll see more from us going forward in this area,” he says. “The notion of creating and enabling more innovation around music than would normally occur under our prior models of doing business is very important to us. We recognize that the way we can think of music is not the only way music can be used online. We would like to see tens of thousands of instances of music being used in creative ways in interesting apps online with less friction and less hassle.”

For MySpace, the service represents a significant expansion from a simple social networking site billed as "a place for friends" to a content-driven service billed as "a place for music," using its core community features as its foundation.

“The whole consumption patterns for both music and video have changed a great deal in the last five years,” MySpace co-founder/CEO Chris DeWolfe says (see Q&A, page 22). "We wanted to put together a music service consistent with those changing patterns and layer a business model around it." The social networking giant has long served two masters—the artists with profiles on the service and the music fans with the same. There are more than 5 million bands with MySpace profiles, and while MySpace doesn't provide a specific breakdown, the vast majority are independent or unsigned artists.

And MySpace's first foray into digital music sales was very much an indie-led effort. The company two years ago partnered with digital registry firm Snocap to add a DRM-free "MyStores" sales widget to artist profiles. Despite signing content deals with individual artists and larger indie aggregators like Independent Online Distribution Alliance and the Orchard, sales from the initiative proved disappointing. Rival imeem owns Snocap, which still offers the MyStores service.

But in launching a music service meant in part to take on Apple's iTunes store, particularly one aspiring to generate advertising revenue based on free music streams and traffic to artist pages, MySpace has opted to focus on the content its members use most.

That means major labels. And while major-label acts represent the minority of artists on MySpace, they account

...continued on p8
Getting Paid

How New Biz Models Compensate Labels, Publishers

The launch of MySpace Music is only one in a series of recent business initiatives by the recording industry to find new ways of generating revenue from recorded music. SanDisk has unveiled its new slot music format, which will feature albums from all four major labels on microSD memory cards. Nokia and Sony Ericsson are preparing to offer music subscription services in Europe that will be available on select cell phones. And on September 23, music publishers, labels and digital music services announced a landmark agreement on mechanical royalties for ad-supported streaming music and subscription services. Here's a look at the royalty agreement and how labels and publishers will be compensated.

ROYALTY AGREEMENT ON AD-SUPPORTED STREAMING SERVICES AND SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

The National Music Publishers' Assn. (NMPA), RIAA, Digital Media Assn., Nashville Songwriters Assn. International and the Songwriters Guild of America have agreed to a mechanical royalty rate structure under which interactive music streaming services and downloads with digital rights management restrictions will generally pay publishers 10.5% of revenue, retractive to January 1, 2008, and 8.5% for the preceding six years back to December 31, 2001, less any amount owed for composition performance royalties. The actual rates paid are also subject to complex formulas that set minimum payments for each class of music service.

The agreement also allows for promotional interactive streaming on artist, label and retail Web sites to continue without mechanical royalty payments. Publishers have agreed to a performance royalties, which are already being collected by performing rights organizations, are unaffected by the agreement.

U.S. Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) judges are expected to rule on the proposed rates by October 2. The judges are also expected to set mechanical royalty rates for physical product, paid music downloads and ring tones by that date.

“This historic agreement is the foundation for a new generation of music distribution,” NMPA president/CEO David Israelite said in a statement. “This agreement provides a flexible structure to support innovative business models in the digital music marketplace that will benefit music fans, creators and online services.”

MySpace Music

Record labels that license their music to MySpace Music will receive a cut of the advertising revenue generated as a result of one of their songs or music videos being streamed. MySpace Music’s initial brand sponsors are McDonald’s, Sony Pictures, State Farm and Toyota.

Labels will also get their standard cut for any of their songs purchased as an MP3 download via Amazon or a ringtone bought via Jamster. And they would also receive a cut of the revenue generated from sales of concert tickets and merchandise that will be available on the site in the future. Neither Amazon nor the labels would break out the precise formulas used to calculate these revenues.

As part-owners of the MySpace Music joint venture, Universal Music Group, Sony BMG Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, EMI Music and Sony/ATV Music Publishing will also receive a percentage of the service’s overall profits.

Publishers will be paid royalties for each interactive stream and digital download. In the case of streaming, the proposed formula calls for the revenue pool to subtract costs in obtaining advertises, with the resulting pool paid out 10.5% for mechanical royalties and the remaining 9% to composition performance royalties. As for permanent downloads, publishers will receive whatever rate is set by the CRB judges.

SanDisk’s SlotMusic

Sources say the list price for aSlot-Music microSD card is expected to be $14.98, with the labels pocketing about $7 of that. Sources say retailers will earn a 35% margin on each card, implying a wholesale cost of $9.76, which would leave SanDisk $2.24 per disc. Sources also suggest that aSlotMusic album card packaged with a handheld music player would allow the labels to pocket $8-$9 per unit. The mechanical royalty rate for slotMusic would be expected to be the same as for a CD, which is scheduled to be determined by the CRB judges by October 2.
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Apple’s iTunes (billboard.biz, 23) remains the world’s most popular music service, with digital music sales. Amazon has taken steps to move beyond its MP3 platform to the mobile music vendor, but has yet to secure the same level of success that its retailing rivals have enjoyed. Amazon’s song downloads, including the Ting Tings, have reached 2 billion, but Apple has sold over 2.4 billion songs, and its iStore is still growing. Amazon is looking to expand its service offering, but is facing challenges from other music retailers and the perceived lack of control over their own music sales.

Amazon recently told Fortune magazine that it expects Amazon will sell about 130 million song downloads by the end of 2008, a fraction of the 2.4 billion song downloads that it expects iNes to sell in the same timeframe. Munster said he expects Amazon’s song downloads to reach 60% in 2009 to 208 million. A key to reaching that figure will be striking deals along the lines of those with MySpace Music and Android.

Add to that the fact that Amazon doesn’t have a wildly popular music player associated with its MP3 store to drive awareness and demand the way iTunes has the iPod and Amazon’s online retailer’s challenges in digital music become even clearer. But Amazon isn’t lacking in competitive advantages of its own. It’s no secret that the recording industry is hoping to foster the development of new music services to compete with iTunes in order to reduce Amazon’s dominance and leverage over digital music sales. That’s largely why labels have agreed to supply Amazon with digital rights management (DRM) free music files, while for the most part Apple is stuck selling restrictive formats.

Meanwhile, business partners like MySpace, Peps and Rockstar, which couldn’t care less whether one online music retailer prevails over another, prefer Amazon as a partner for several reasons. First is the fact that all Amazon music downloads are DRM-free, making them compatible with all music players. While there is little evidence that consumers make music purchasing decisions based on whether a song download comes with DRM restrictions, brands looking to offer their customers digital music want to ensure the tracks obtained under their banner will work with any device, including the iPod.

Second, Amazon has unparalleled e-commerce reach. More than 81 million people have Amazon accounts with credit card information and other data needed to make one-click music purchases. By comparison, iTunes has 65 million accounts with the same capability. Third, Amazon’s affiliate program provides referring partners with 20% of the revenue from any song purchase, up to $1.50 per transaction, a far more generous share than the 5% split that iTunes offers.

Finally, there is Amazon’s Web Services developer program, designed to integrate its commerce features with a given site without requiring users to navigate to Amazon’s site, and all the elements of an open digital music retail platform are there.

“Amazon knows that trying to get everybody to go to one Web site is not the way the Internet works,” Universal Music Group’s lab director said, Mike Caraffe says. “Integrating your service into other people’s devices and services allows you to expand more rapidly.”

Caraffe says that Amazon’s open platform should help it become a significant music vendor. “When you take the benefits of open MP3 formats and the application programming interfaces that Amazon has exposed and the way they incentivize people through their affiliate models, those are all good ingredients to drive rapid expansion,” he says.
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Taking Control

Janet Jackson Leaves Her Label—What’s Next?

Janet Jackson’s break with Island Def Jam (billboard.biz, Sept. 22) didn’t exactly come as a shock, given her recent public unhappiness with the label’s handling of her 1DQ debut album, “Discipline.”

Still, the split raises an interesting possibility: Rather than seeking another major-label deal, might Jackson attempt to strike out on her own? A Sept. 19 statement from her publicist seemed to suggest that such a move was under consideration, saying that “Janet will have autonomy over her career, without the restrictions of a label system.”

Jackson’s manager Kenneth Crear says the artist has been approached by “numerous record companies and private investors,” although he won’t identify the suitors.

“There are so many different ways we can go about this,” Crear says. “She’s one of the very few artists who has such an open playing field still. We still have 360 options, we have [Las Vegas, just many different models we may want to experiment with.”

Jackson is currently on the road with her Rock Witch tour, which is being handled by Live Nation. Might she consider a broader, multitudinous deal with the company, a la Madonna or Jay-Z? After all, her record as a proven hitmaker and strong touring draw with superstar branding appeal would seem to make her a natural fit. “We’re not reaching out to anyone, people are reaching out to us,” Crear says, adding that once the tour is over, “we hope to have a strategic move in place.” Live Nation executives declined to comment.

What other options does Jackson have? We asked some industry experts for their ideas.

CHRIS CASTLE, MUSIC INDUSTRY ATTORNEY: “She’s had kind of a rough go of it with her last several albums, so it’s not a great position to be coming in with. However, she’s certainly got a brand. I’m not slamming Island Records as I’m sure they did the best they could. But if you have someone who will take the kind of care you’d need to really support a three-dimensional artist, someone willing to work it from the ground up and on the ground like a Live Nation, that might be better brand management than signing with a record company.”

JACKSON (above)

HARVE PIERRE, BAD BOY RECORDS PRESIDENT: “Right now, I think Janet should take a little time to adjust to the whole business form. Being the music icon that she is, she can do whatever she wants to, whether it’s indie, major, putting out her own record. So many young girls have grown up listening to Janet, watching her, most people even wanted to be her. I definitely don’t think she should discuss retirement. It’s a name that holds weight, just earning touring off her catalog and her music can keep her busy for years to come.”

MANNY HALEY, IMANI ENTERTAINMENT GROUP CEO: “Although Janet has always been an ‘event’ times are changing rapidly and so many other variables are now at play. Her Web presence, although beautiful, must stimulate fans to be more much more interactive faster. Fans are curious, and to capitalize on that entire experience you have to be forward thinking. Without a record, Janet sells out on tour, so we can only imagine what she can do with a machine that has intuitive people that recognize her raw talent and cultivate it.”

HARVEY LEEDS, HEADQUARTERS MEDIA CEO: “She just needs to get back to the street and play a lot of smaller venues. Imagine if Janet Jackson played some small venues and did surprise shows—it would be the hottest ticket in the world. She needs to do the unobvious but smart sponsorship tie-in. Imagine if Janet Jackson did the Smart Car. . . [She'd be] aligning herself with something that is completely the antithesis of Pepsi and Coca-Cola.”

STEVE ROTH, ROCKET SCIENCE VP OF SALES AND MARKETING: “She really needs to have a really big, crossover hit single. I guess I foresee that being more of a ballad, something that her fan base that goes back 25 years can relate to and find relevant. She’s built herself up to the point where she could conceivably do it without a major label. There’s enough independent elements she can rely on, independent labels and marketing and distribution companies where she doesn’t need a major label. She can do all those things independently and on her own terms. I think she could maintain some street cred with the right producers and put some tracks out digitally, build a story digitally well before an album comes out.”

Additional reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda and Ray Waddell.

Agency Of Record

Sony BMG In-House Ad Biz Snare Clients

New York advertising agency Arcade Creative Group has been on a roll of late, inking deals during the last several months with Coca-Cola’s Fanta, JCPenney and Ralph Lauren. The surprising owner of this upstart agency? Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

Arcade, which quietly opened for business in April at Sony BMG’s offices in midtown Manhattan, is an outgrowth of the major label’s Creative Group, which provides graphic design, photography, Web design, video production and media buying services to all of Sony’s U.S.-based labels. In 2006, the Creative Group, which was previously a free-standing department, was brought under the control of Sony BMG’s Commercial Music Group, which is responsible for business development and strategy for the company, according to Commercial Music Group president John Ingrassia.

By creating its own in-house agency, Sony sets up an entity that can not only give first consideration to its own vast catalog of recorded music but may also one day compete for ad accounts at some of its sister subsidiaries. For example, Sony’s PlayStation account, which is currently handled by Deutsch L.A., is valued at $150 million annually. “We would love to work with the other Sony companies,” Ingrassia says. “To have them as a client would be incredible and we intend to try to work with them. We didn’t say, ‘Wow, we should start an agency because we have all these sister companies.’ But it is another way for us to work with them.”

Arcade has about a dozen staffers, as well as access to 60 other employees in other parts of the company. Arcade’s first TV ad—for JCPenney’s Ralph Lauren-designed American Living apparel line—aired in early September, using the song “Have You Ever” by Columbia Records artist Brandi Carlile. That was followed by the Sept. 21 Primetime Emmy Awards telecast, which marked the debut of an Arcade ad for Ralph Lauren’s new fragrance Notorious. The 60-second spot, directed by Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-Wai and starring French model Laetitia Casta, uses a Miles Davis recording of “The Maid of Cadiz” from the jazz legend’s 1957 Columbia album “Miles Ahead.”

Arcade’s most recent account win came Sept. 15, when the agency learned it had beaten out several undisputed rivals to win Coca-Cola’s U.S. Fanta account. Arcade’s first work for Fanta, comprising TV, events and online elements, is expected to bow in fall 2009. Representatives for Coca-Cola, JCPenney and Ralph Lauren didn’t respond to interview requests.

“We’re just looking for a seat at the table right now,” says Adam Owett, executive VP of Sony BMG’s Creative Group and former global creative director for Grey Worldwide. “The catalog is a great asset but it’s not how we get in the door. If music is an essential part of a brand’s DNA, we have the ability to look at our own assets, other company’s assets or even create our own to meet their needs.”

Sony’s move comes at a time when the music business and advertising industry are seeking new revenue streams that increasingly overlap with each other. In July, ad agency Euro RSCG acquired a majority stake in a startup record label launched in January called the Hours, providing it access to the “Hours’ music for use in commercials it creates” (Billboard, July 19). “There are people who understand the world of marketing and brands and people who understand music,” Euro RSCG global CEO David Jones says. “There are very few people who understand both.”

What does Jones make of Sony’s move into advertising? “We should get together and compare notes,” he says.
Laid-back and chatty, Michael Goldstone is awfully modest for a man who has signed some of the biggest acts of the modern rock era. Known to pretty much everyone as “Goldie,” he got his start at MCA but hit it big at Epic in the early ’90s, signing Pearl Jam and Rage Against the Machine and helping create the soundtrack to Cameron Crowe’s chronicle of grunge-era Seattle, “ Singles.” More recently, he headed up Sire Records before deciding last spring to jump ship and form his own label under the umbrella of management company Q Prime. Billboard broke the story in May, but as Goldie explains, he’s had a productive summer.

1. What’s happened since we last reported on the formation of the label?

Well, we gave the label a name, Mon and Pop, which is obviously pretty important. I wanted something warm and inclusive and spoke to the family environment we’re trying to create. I also wanted something with “pop” in the name, because I was a fan of Sub Pop [laughs]. But Q Prime has a reputation for being a family company, and I wanted to keep it consistent with that. We’re also dealing with RED for distribution, and we’ve signed Josh Radin, who was previously on Columbia. Sara Quinn from Tegan & Sara brought me a band called An Horse, and we’re working on building them.

2. Can you describe some of the deals you’ve struck so far?

The Josh Radin deal is a recorded-music deal. For An Horse, the deal is much more dimensional. We provide the presence of a management company, but there is a lot of flexibility in terms of what next steps the band can take. This is really us seeing how we all work together, but we want to make sure the deal doesn’t become an albatross around their necks, or that we spend two years working them and then they go sign with someone else.

3. Having spent many years in the major-label system, what are some of the main differences you’re noticing being at Q Prime?

The biggest difference is that the process moves much more quickly here than at a major. Whenever I wanted to do anything at a major, it would get passed through levels of bureaucracy and take far too long. At Q Prime, I feel like I am empowered to make things happen. The deals are more tailored, too. I feel like what we are doing is creating collaborations and partnerships. With An Horse, we can help build the band but acknowledge how resourceful they are on their own.

4. What are your thoughts on the state of the A&R biz in general, given your history?

Many labels now are supplementing their A&R staffs with consultants and taking on international releases rather than signing new acts. You’re also seeing a trend where you look at a label like Fueled by Ramen, which really has its own cottage industry in their genre, and other labels won’t try to sign bands that fit in the genre because they all go to one label. What has really changed is that a band that sells 100,000 copies on an indie can sign to a major and sell the same number of copies on the major label. It’s not a great business model to assume a band will sell more just because they are on a bigger label. Some artists are just niche artists and they’ll never be blockbusters.

5. What systems and procedures do you have in place to handle potential conflicts of interest between the management side and the label side?

There absolutely has to be a separation of church and state between the management company and the label. I want the managers of the bands we sign to feel like working with Q Prime does not make them vulnerable but is an asset to their acts. And there will be plenty of artists that come in for the management side that would not be a good fit for the label, and we respect that. I look at what Red Light and ATO have done as a great example of making the model work.

6. What sort of other nontraditional partnerships are you planning on entering?

We’re investigating publishing relationships right now, but it’s too early in the process to name names. We’re also not staffing up for a reason. We want bands to have the ability to say, “We want this viral marketing company” or “We want this publicist” and be able to deal with people who are specialized, rather than have in-house people working bands that might not be best suited to work.

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Unlike cheap plastic sleeves, The Jewelsleeve is sturdily constructed from four layers of thick, virgin vinyl. Its solid, reinforced seams are welded on all sides for superior strength and durability. It’s the only sleeve on the market that stores every part of the original CD without risk of damage, so you don’t have to cut, fold, or discard the artwork to store your CD’s. Advanced scratchless, anti-static, non-stick cushions protect both sides of the disk. Custom index labels provide generous room for information. When assembled, the disk, label, booklet, and the tray card! combine to make one strong, slim, CD archive.

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DANCE TO BRANDS TOURS, DUE TO THEIR PERCEIVED ASSOCIATION WITH DRUG USE AND AFTER-HOURS ORGANIZERS. BUT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, SOMETHING HAS CHANGED.

IN ADDITION TO THE USUAL LIQUOR, TOBACCO AND ENERGY DRINK SPONSORS, BIG BRANDS LIKE COCA-COLA, PUMA AND GLACÉAU VITAMINWATER HAVE COME KNocking ON THE DOORS OF DJ'S AND THEIR MANAGERS, LOOKING FOR PARTNERSHIPS, CO-BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES AND EVEN CASH SPONSORSHIPS.

AND WHILE MANY POINT TO THE RECENT SUCCESS OF SUCH ACTS AS DAFT PUNK AND JUSTICE AS A REASON FOR THE DANCE GENRE'S ACCEPTABILITY AMONG MAINSTREAM CONSUMER BRANDS, OTHERS SEE A DIFFERENT ONE: DANCE IS FINALLY UP TO THE CHALLENGE.

"BRANDS WANT TO SPEND MONEY WITH COMPANIES THEY CAN TRUST," SAYS JEN SCHIFFER OF NEW YORK-BASED NIGHTLIFE CONSULTANCY FLAWLESS MEDIA. "AND DANCE HAS LEARNED HOW TO BEHAVE BETTER.

CONSIDER THE CASE OF THE DETROIT ELECTRONIC MUSIC FESTIVAL. IT BEGAN IN 2000 AS A FREE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND EVENT, DRAWING AN ESTIMATED 1 MILLION PEOPLE TO MOTOWN'S HART PLAZA TO CELEBRATE THE CITY'S TECHNO HISTORY. BUT THE FESTIVAL STUMbled THE FOLLOWING YEAR WHEN IT ADDED A GATE FEE AND CHANGED HANDS NEARLY EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER, RESULTING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL MESS THAT WAS HEMORRHAGING MONEY.

"SPONSORS WERE COMPLETELY UNRECEPTIVE IN 2006 BECAUSE OF THE HISTORY," SAYS JASON HUAvere, FESTIVAL DIRECTOR FOR PAXAHAU, WHICH TOOK THE FESTIVAL'S REINS IN 2006. "IN A SENSE, WE DIDN'T HAVE THAT. 'OH, IT'S THE FIRST YEAR, I'M KIND OF SCARED.' WE HAD AN, 'ABSOLUTELY NO, THAT EVENT IS TAINTED.'"

BUT DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS, HUAvere CHANGED THE FESTIVAL'S COURSE BY ADDING TURNSTILES FOR Accurate Attendance numbers, IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE CONCESSIONS AND RESPONDING TO SUCH FAN REQUESTS AS ADDING MORE COMMERCIAL ARTISTS LIKE MOBY TO THE BILL. PAXAHAU ALSO SPENT MORE ON DIGITAL MARKETING, FASHIONING AN INTERACTIVE MYSPACE PAGE WITH A COUNTDOWN FEATURE AND EMPLOYING TWO SEPARATE PR FIRMS, ONE FOR A GRASS-ROOTS, DANCE-ORIENTED OUTREACH AND ONE FOR MORE MAINSTREAM OUTLETS.

TOTAL ATTENDANCE SHOT UP 80% DURING THE FESTIVAL'S THREE DAYS, FROM 45,000 IN 2007 TO 80,000 IN 2008. HUAvere SAYS.

STAGE SPONSORS THIS YEAR INCLUDED SCION AND VITAMINWATER.

"EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT NEARLY THE SAME THING. HUAvere SAYS. "IT WAS A POSITIVE REACTION.

ALSO BACK FOR MORE IS A/X ARMANI EXCHANGE, A LONGTIME SUPPORTER OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC, WHICH UPPED ITS GAME IN APRIL WITH A PRESENTING SPONSORSHIP OF THE DUTCH DJ Tiesto's 40-DATE "IN SEARCH OF SUNRISE: SUMMER 2008 NORTH AMERICAN TOUR." THE PROGRAM INCLUDED RETAIL EXCLUSIVES, SUCH AS A SPECIAL EDITION OF Tiesto's "IN SEARCH OF SUNRISE 7" (BLACK HOLE) COMPIlation, WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR 25% OF THE COMP'S TOTAL SALES, OR 10,000 UNITS, ACCORDING TO Tiesto's BOOKING AGENCY AM Only.

"THE DJ TALENT WE HAVE WORKED WITH HAVE ALL BEEN AMAZING AND WE HAVE HAD GREAT SUCCESS WITH EACH RELATIONSHIP, BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALL UNDERSTOOD THAT DJ/ELECTRONIC MUSIC IS A BUSINESS," A/X VP OF BRAND IMAGE PATRICK DODDY SAYS.

ELSEWHERE, PUMA SPOUNDED IN AUGUST THAT IT WILL BE A PRESENTING SPONSOR OF DEADMAU5's FALL WORLD TOUR, IN A DEAL BROKERED BY THE BILL WILIAM MORRIS AGENCY. WMA Created A JOINT VENTURE WITH BRITISH DJ PETE TONG TO DESIGN, DEVELOP AND PRESENT ELECTRONIC ACTS TO PROGRAM MUSIC EVENTS (SEE STORY, BELOW).

ALSO ADDING TO DANCE'S BUSINESS ARSENAL ARE NEW WAYS TO MEASURE THE AUDIENCE ON THE INTERNET. ULTRA RECORDS PRESIDENT PATRICK MOXEY USED HIS ARTISTS' YOUTUBE VIEWS TO CONVINCE COCA-COLA THAT THEY WERE THE RIGHT FIT FOR ITS WE8 BEIJING SUMMER OLYMPICS CAMPAIGN, A MULTIPROJECT PROGRAM THAT INCLUDED EIGHT ORIGINAL FREE-TO-DOWNLOAD SONGS USING COCA-COLA TONES, UNIQUE COLLECTIBLE BOTTLE DESIGNS, A PRINT CAMPAIGN AND WORLDWIDE MEDIA OUTREACH. "WE WERE ABLE TO TELL COKE THAT THE SONGS HAD BEEN SHARED ON [PEER-TO-Peer NETWORKS] OVER 1 MILLION TIMES," HE SAYS. "THAT'S A BIG STAT.

WITH DANCE ENTITIES MATCHING THEIR SPONSORS IN PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY, THE GENRE'S BRAND VALUE IS FINALLY ABLE TO MARINATE.

"DANCE IS THE ONLY HIGH-END GENERAL-ADMISSION CULTURE," SCHIFFER SAYS.

"IT'S NOT AN AGE GROUP. IT'S PEOPLE WHO NEVER GROW OLD. AND FOR SPONSORS, IT'S PARTICIPATING IN THE GOOD, UPLIFTING PART OF THEIR LIVES."
Famed Drummer
Earl Palmer, 83

Earl Palmer, 83, legendary session drummer who played on seminal sides by Little Richard, Fats Domino and others, died Sept. 19 at his home in Banning, Calif., after battling a long illness.

Palmer was born Oct. 25, 1924, in the Treme section of New Orleans, where his mother and aunt worked as vaudeville dancers. By the age of 5, Palmer had become an accomplished tap dancer and spent much of his boyhood on the road performing in vaudeville and minstrel shows.

Palmer took up the drums at an early age and after a stint in the Army during World War II, he returned to New Orleans, where he joined the band of trumpeter Dave Bartholomew. That led to regular session work at Cosimo Matassa's J&M recording studio, where Palmer played on numerous classic tracks by Domino ("The Fat Man," "My Blue Heaven," "I'm Walkin'") Smiley Lewis ("I Hear You Knocking"); Lloyd Price ("Lawdy Miss Clawdy"); Shirley & Lee ("I'm Gone") and Little Richard ("Tutti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," "Slippin' and Slidin' "). Over time, Palmer became an early pioneer in the emerging musical genre of the day.

"It was Earl Palmer who transformed rhythm and blues' lope into the full-tilt thrust of rock 'n' roll, bowing listeners over with a power previously unheard in popular music," Palmer's biographer Tony Scherman observed in his 1999 book, "Backbeat: Earl Palmer's Story."

After Palmer moved to Los Angeles in 1957, he played on hundreds of other hit records by acts as diverse as Ritchie Valens, Eddie Cochran, Ricky Nelson, Bobby Darin, Sam Cooke, the Ronettes, the Beach Boys, Ike & Tina Turner, Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme and many others. He also found regular work playing drums for theme songs and incidental music on such TV shows as "77 Sunset Strip," "The Odd Couple," "Ironside," "The Partridge Family" and "The Brady Bunch."

Palmer was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2000. He is survived by seven children and his fourth wife, Jeline Palmer.

—Laura O'Connor

DEATHS

Warren Wayne Brown, 92, former VP of MCA Music, died Sept. 15 in Carlsbad, Calif., from an undisclosed illness.

Brown was born in Tower-City, Pa., and raised in Pennsylvania before attending the New York Military Academy. As a music major, he played trombone in the Navy band while stationed in Honolulu during World War II. Upon discharge, Brown decided that he no longer wanted to travel and moved to New York to enter the music business. He began working as a song plugger for Leeds Music, using his keen ear to find hit songs for up-and-coming artists.

Brown was soon transferred to California and became VP of MCA Music when MCA acquired Leeds Music. He retired in 1981 but continued to work on music projects and helped his brother, Les Brown, record several albums.

Brown is survived by his wife, Ruth; his brother, Clyde "Stumpy" Brown; and his children, Teri and Bruce Brown.

—Jasson Lipton

Charlie Adell, 84, veteran R&B record promoter, died Aug. 9 at Northwest Hospital Center in Randallstown, Md.

Born Sept. 19, 1923, in Waynesboro, Ga., Adell was first hired by Brunswick Records—home to R&B star Jackie Wilson—in the late '50s. After seven years there, Adell segued to Stax Records, where he promoted records by the Staple Singers, Isaac Hayes and William Bell. He later worked with Gamble & Huff's Philadelphia International label, whose roster included Lou Rawls and the O'Jays.

Adell is survived by five sons and two daughters, among other family members.

—Gail Mitchell

David McCoy Franklin, 63, entertainment lawyer and entrepreneur, died Sept. 7 due to natural causes. Franklin managed the careers of Peabo Bryson, Miles Davis, Roberta Flack and Richard Pryor.

He is survived by three children, three grandchildren, two sisters and four nephews.

—Laura O'Connor
Not Fade Away
Indie Stores Sound Off On Exclusives And Other Annoyances

The stores that rock America met Sept. 17-21 in Baltimore for the Noise in the Basement Creative Conference.

Offically the 11-chain, 96-store Music Monitor Network's (MMN) annual convention, the confab really serves as a gathering for most of the coolest record stores in the United States, including members of the Coalition of Independent Music Stores, the Alliance of Independent Media Stores (AIMS) and the Southeast Coalition of Urban Retailers (SECUR), as well as J&R Music World of New York; Vintage Vinyl Records of Pottstown, Pa.; and the Value Music Group of Indy Stores. Billboard estimates that about 270 stores with nearly $500 million in annual revenue were represented at the convention.

The Pretenders, the Hold Steady, Nappy Roots, Rashaal Yamagata and many others performed at record-label product presentations during the day and club showcases at night. But amid all the great music, Noise in the Basement attendees also wrestled with some hot-button issues.

EXCLUSIVES: MMN president Michael Kurtz said that all retailers need more transparency when labels are giving exclusives to big boxes. For instance, if indie retailers had known ahead of time that Judas Priest's "Nostradamus" was going to be available exclusively at Best Buy, they would have altered their buying and marketing plans, Kurtz said.

Label and distribution executives said they would try to be more sensitive regarding exclusives, but they claimed that sometimes they didn't have prior knowledge of some exclusives because deals are often cut by artists' managers. They also acknowledged that superstar exclusives are probably here to stay.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment executive VP of sales Jennifer Schaidler said that in return for such exclusives, retailers provide "an unbelievable amount of marketing" behind the release, often spending far more than the label itself would if it distributed a record conventionally.

On the other hand, the practice of providing multiple retailers, each with their own exclusive tracks, may soon be winds down. "The one-off bonus track has worn out its welcome," Schaidler said.

DELUXE VERSIONS: Labels and merchants found some common ground when discussing deluxe versions of albums. Putting out such a release with new bonus materials after a regular version has been out for a while can spur the core fan base to buy the album again, but it alienates them too, retailers said. Retailers told labels that regular and deluxe versions of albums should come out on the same date so that consumers can make an informed purchasing decision. "Lil Wayne was far because the labels told me to chop which one to buy," one source said. "I can't imagine there is a record label that won't be a part of it next year." Schaidler added that when labels decide how to allocate their vinyl dollars, they think that it would be wiser for them to improve vinyl packaging than to opt for higher-grade vinyl.

RECORD STORE DAY: The second annual Record Store Day is expected to be held in April 2009 and will be more global than this year's event. Kurtz said he plans to travel to Japan to meet with indie store owners to help them get Record Store Day off the ground, while Bull Moose VP of marketing Chris Brown said he plans to go to the United Kingdom to meet with merchants there.

Kurtz and other indie retail leaders acknowledged that they had overlooked urban music retailers this year and want to ensure they rectify that next year. WEA VP of urban sales Ray Arcenaeux acknowledged that the labels were aware of the issue and assured merchants that labels are committed to making it happen on the urban end as well.

Northern Exposure
Indie Band Moonlights With Commercial Venture

Los Angeles-based indie band Northern spent the last three years doing all the usual things. "We sang of all and self-released two demos, played all over Southern California, updated our blog, all of it," bassist Mike MacGregor says. "It's no surprise, then, that the band decided it wanted to pursue licensing opportunities, while synchs are often overrated as a pathway to stardom, they can provide income and industry connections. But rather than attempt to place Northern's expansive Brit-influenced pop, MacGregor decided to take a slightly different approach. 'I'd always had the idea to do music for commercials, and I reached out to Jonathan Haffer, who works on synch licensing," he says. "He told me he had a company that needed an upbeat cover version of the Los Lobos song 'Come On, Let's Go,' and I called a friend and we recorded it. We also needed a name for the project, so we came up with Active Passive at the last second and sent it in.'"

The Active Passive version of the song was then placed in an ad promoting a Labor Day sale at Macy's. Under the terms of the deal, Macy's paid the fees to license the track for one week and then returned the master to Active Passive. MacGregor says he plans on relicensing the track and hopes to offer it for sale on iTunes at some point. He also says that he was compensated, although he won't reveal the exact numbers. "We got less than we would have gotten for a typical commercial because it only ran for a week, but I'm not complaining," he says with a laugh. MacGregor adds that he is using the money from the commercial to help fund the recording of a full-length Northern album. He's also planning to continue recording covers with Active Passive. "I've done versions of 'My Way' and 'I Walk the Line' and sent those off recently," he says. "In terms of using the music in the ads to build Northern's career, I'd like to see set up Google searches for any future ads that will direct people to Northern's page and use Active Passive's MySpace [page] to do the same thing. Northern will always be my main project, and I want to use Active Passive to help build it as much as possible." Surprisingly, MacGregor says he knows only one other band who has signed any band for commercial ventures. And Ken Barlage, co-founder of Byrd Barlage, the advertising creative firm behind the Macy's spots, says he hasn't seen any other bands do what Active Passive has done.

Barlage speculates that one reason so few indie bands create commercial side projects is that they fear it will alienate their fan base. "They're all trying to get record stores to carry their stuff," he says. "I think it's good, but it's a good way to do it, too." Barlage and Barlage, the advertising creative firm behind the Macy's spots, says he has seen any other bands do what Active Passive has done.

Another reason bands don't think about doing songs for commercials that are unrelated to their primary band is the misconception that still exists about synch being such a great exposure. "We don't like to see songs like 'Coldplay or U2,'" he says. "It's hard, because very few indie rockers can write like arena rockers and get out of their comfort zone. Another reason bands don't think about doing songs for commercials that are unrelated to their primary band is the misconception that still exists about synch being such a great exposure." Haffer says, "It's really part of the salesmanship on the part of music supervisors to get new artists to give music away. Honestly, 90% of acts see no impact, and you almost never see a ripple with an ad campaign.

"Active Passive are thinking about this in the right way," he continues. "They are using the opportunity to create a narrative and to benefit their creative work."

Asked if he feels there are any downsides to using Active Passive to subsidize Northern, MacGregor replies that he can't think of any. "Back in the day, maybe you would have gotten some negative feedback about selling out," he says. "But I haven't really heard anything bad. It's mostly been a good opportunity for me to try something new and put the income back into Northern. I think everyone involved has benefited."
Zune In Tune

Microsoft Bets on Music Discovery To Battle Apple

A funny thing happened in September when Apple and Microsoft introduced new music-discovery features for their respective music services: Microsoft got the better press.

After two years of taking a beating from critics and Apple fans alike, reviewers like the New York Times' David Pogue are scoring this round for Microsoft.

"The Zune blows the iPod off the map in music discovery and downloading," Pogue wrote Sept. 17.

This is the kind of recognition that Microsoft was hoping for when it first took on the challenge of entering an Apple-dominated digital music space. Its strategy then, as it is now, was to focus its energies on the greatest weakness of the iPod/Apple juggernaut—music discovery.

Its efforts out of the gate, though, were clunky at best.

The device was uninspired and ugly. The Zune user-to-user "squirming" feature was ridiculed for its restrictive digital rights management and the fact that there were too few Zune owners to take advantage of it. And the device's Wi-Fi "differentiation" didn't allow for over-the-air purchases.

But in the almost two years since its release, Microsoft added the ability to tag songs for later download from the built-in FM radio, music recommendations based on user listening habits gleaned from either the Zune staff or a predictive algorithm, a Zune Social community that matches members with similar musical tastes and the ability to download music straight to the device via a Wi-Fi connection.

On the surface, the music-discovery strategy makes sense. According to Jupiter Research, radio remains the top source of music discovery for U.S. adults, at 63%, with recommendations from friends a distant second at 26%.

The new Zune features address both.

In fact, Microsoft is so confident in the Zune's new discovery capabilities that they will soon be the central message in an upcoming holiday ad blitz, overshadowing the device itself.

"We've never marketed the client software as a stand-alone piece [but] it is something that we're starting to do this year," Microsoft GM of global marketing for entertainment Chris Stephenson says. "We're definitely at a place where we can market the software by itself. But so far, this differentiation has yet to result in significant market share. The Zune holds second place in hard drive-based device sales at 11% and is third among flash-based devices at about 4%, according to estimates from Microsoft and industry analysts.

As a music service, about 3.3 million people have downloaded the Zune desktop software, and the number of music files available has grown by about 30% since its launch in September 2006. The music service, which was available only in the U.S., is now available in Canada and was announced in September with a launch in Europe, but not in Japan, Australia or China. The company also plans to release the Zune in several new countries in the near future.

Microsoft has long been in the business of music discovery, having introduced the Zune in 2006, the Zune software and the Zune online music store. The Zune software was designed to work with the device and allowed users to manage their music libraries and purchase new music directly from the device.

Microsoft has since added a number of features to the Zune software, including the ability to tag songs, create playlists and listen to music through a variety of streaming services. The Zune software has also been updated to work with the Xbox Live service, allowing users to access their music library on the Xbox and control their music playback from the console.

In addition to the software, Microsoft has also added a number of new features to the Zune hardware, including a built-in FM radio, a touch screen display and a variety of accessories, such as a wireless headset and a portable speaker.

But despite these advances, Microsoft still faces significant challenges in the music discovery market.

For example, the Zune software is not available on non-Microsoft devices, which limits its reach and potential for discovery.

Moreover, Microsoft's approach to music discovery is not as integrated as Apple's, which is built into the iPod and iPhone.

Despite these challenges, Microsoft has made significant progress in the music discovery market in recent years, and the Zune software has become a popular tool for music discovery.

What's more, the best parts of the Zune discovery features require a $15 monthly Zune Pass subscription, a model the mass market has so far resisted. Yet Microsoft remains a firm believer, saying music fans will subscribe to a solid music discovery experience, if not for the music itself.

"We've been in subscription from day one," Stephenson says, and "we've maintained all along that we're going to stay in this space. But we are going to create a differentiation which will make people realize that subscription is really important. Music is a commodity and you can't compete with free. There's got to be a value-added layer for the consumer."

To be sure, Microsoft has proved itself a resident adversary with the skin deep pockets and infinite patience needed to stick with what at first appeared to be a losing strategy when entering a market late in the game.

When Microsoft introduced the original Xbox in 2001 to establish a toehold in the videogame console market, Sony Computer Entertainment's PlayStation 2 (PS2) had a year's head start in sales and held a whopping 70% market share.

While the original Xbox console broke ground as the first to include a hard drive and built-in Internet port, it was ridiculed for its bulky controller and boxy design. After a year, it succeeded in capturing only 12% of the market.

Then Microsoft introduced the Xbox Live multiplayer platform, replaced its controllers with more ergonomically friendly ones and scored some exclusive games that added momentum to the effort.

The month before the next-generation Xbox 360 came out, the PS2 remained in first place, but with a reduced 56.3% market share to the Xbox's 24.8%, according to figures from NPD Group.

"Whether it can do the same in the digital music space remains a question," Stephenson hinted at a possible add-supported subscription strategy on the horizon, as well as a long-promised deeper integration with the popular Xbox service. (Thirty-five percent of Zune users also own an Xbox.)

Today, the focus of the digital music market remains the device—namely the iPod—and attempting to compete against that directly is folly. Microsoft is betting that the focus will soon turn to the music—how it is discovered, acquired and shared.

But by that criteria, the Zune has scored a blow. But the fight is far from over.

For more news and analysis, see billboard.biz/digital.
Bigger Can Be Better

Diamond, Vlasic On The Appeal Of Larger Agencies

Marty Diamond thinks independent boutique agencies can still compete in today’s marketplace. "That’s exemplified by High Road Touring and Billions Corp,” Diamond says. "Those are really formidable businesses, and there are a bunch of other ones. And certainly they’ve made their own strategic moves.”

But Diamond told Little Big Man in 2005 to Paradigm Talent Agency, where he is now head of East Coast music. And he says it was the right move.

"I love it,” he says. "I have day-to-day contact with every department head, from TV, to film, to talent, to lit, voice-overs, you name it. I couldn’t ask for a better experience.”

Amid the continuing consolidation of book ing agencies, the prospect of a large agency is becoming ever more appealing for many independent agents.

One of the latest to make the move was Marsha Vlasic, who sold her Marsha Vlasic Organization to International Creative Management in early September. Though Vlasic used to work at ICM, she had become known as an independent spirit in the agency world.

So why move to a major?

"I’ve done it successfully alone for 11 years and I just felt like with consolidation and everything happening, I didn’t want to be that lone soldier on the battlefield, alone,” Vlasic says, adding that she doesn’t expect to change the way she operates. "ICM has been a success and it recognizes the success that I had with the way I did it. There should be no reason why I can’t continue that way.”

ICM president Chris Silberman agrees with that assessment.

"Great agents always have that balance between fiercely independent and entrepreneurial and also working within a culture and a construct, “ he says. "Maybe she saw in us somewhere she could grow and keep that independent spirit and entrepreneurialism while accessing a lot of the stuff we’ve been doing, like international, branding and tour sponsorships.”

Silberman says she’s bullish on the live business and wants to grow it at ICM. "It’s a great time in the live business right now,” he says. "Nothing’s foolproof, but if you work it as a team and are really smart about the risks you take, I think it’s a great area.”

With one-promoter deals and multimillion pacts increasingly prevalent, Vlasic agrees that the role of the agent has changed. "There are agents that aren’t involved in the day-to-day marketing, the day-to-day on-sales, pre-sales and other things,” she says. "But when it comes to Neil Young being a Live Nation tour, I’m as involved in his day-to-day as if I’m booking every minute of it myself. Because, in the long run, if something gets screwed up, Young management and Elliot Roberts looks at me, not them.”

ICM’s acquisition of Vlasic’s business gets its Young, Ben Folds, Elvis Costello, Iggy Pop, Lou Reed, Moby, Muse, Ozzy Osbourne, Paradigm’s Diamond says that Galle and Ellis are talented agents with great clients who will fit in well with Paradigm New York’s office culture. It has been about two years since Diamond made the move to Paradigm, ping pong table and all. "I couldn’t ask for a better experience, and I think Andrew and Matt will feel the same way,” he says.

Paradigm’s Diamond says that Galle and Ellis are both principals in Ellis Industries, who bring to Paradigm a lengthy list of clients, including my Chemical Romance, Dashboard Confessional, Taking Back Sunday, Brand New, Boys Like Girls, Alkaline Trio, Metro Station, Hologoodys, Circa Survive, Thrice and New Found Glory and Say Anything.

Regina Spektor, the Strokes, Van Morrison and others.

Vlasic says her immediate objective is to build a contemporary rock department for ICM. How? "I guess I am starting looking for: people,” she says. "Aggressively? I’ve never been a real poacher. That’s the part I’m not going to do.”

Meanwhile, Paradigm recently signed Matt Galle and Andrew Ellis, both principals in Ellis Industries, who bring to Paradigm a lengthy list of clients, including my Chemical Romance, Dashboard Confessional, Taking Back Sunday, Brand New, Boys Like Girls, Alkaline Trio, Metro Station, Hologoodys, Circa Survive, Thrice and New Found Glory and Say Anything.

Paradigm’s Diamond says that Galle and Ellis are talented agents with great clients who will fit in well with Paradigm New York’s office culture. It has been about two years since Diamond himself made the move to Paradigm, ping pong table and all. "I couldn’t ask for a better experience, and I think Andrew and Matt will feel the same way,” he says.
DIGITAL DESIGNS

Trying Out New Strategies To Sell Latin Music

Discussions of online and mobile strategies will feature prominently at the Billboard Regional Mexican Music Summit (see story, right). In preparation for the conference, we asked industry experts to provide us with examples of successful digital initiatives that have produced tangible results. The following examples show that savvy digital marketing and promotion can work, even on a shoestring budget.

LAUNCHING A NEW ARTIST

When singer/songwriter Crisantos released his self-titled debut album independently in 2006, iTunes made his single “Nuevo Mundo” the iTunes Latino Single of the Week. Then iTunes Latino and AOL Latino simultaneously promoted Crisantos for a week. “The album, which debuted almost a year earlier, jumped to No. 14 on iTunes’ Top Latin Albums chart in only three days, selling more that week than ever before, its publicist Rondine Alcalà says. “Crisantos’ MySpace page received hundreds of hits and prompted the creation of two fan clubs soon after.”

BREATHEING NEW LIFE INTO A YEAR-OLD ALBUM

Vicente Fernández’ “Para Siempre” has sold more than 150,000 copies in the United States since its release in September 2007, according to Nielsen SoundScan. As part of Sony BMG’s final promotional push for the album, the label began discounting the set for online customers to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month, which began Sept. 15. In addition, iTunes featured the album in a banner display on its main page and promoted it on iTunes Latino. “Vote! ‘Para Siempre’ sold fewer than 1,000 digital units during the week ended Sept. 21, but that was still good enough for a more than 500% gain from the prior week and made it the top-selling Latin digital album of the week, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

INDIES PROSPER IN ARGENTINE MUSIC SCENE

BUENOS AIRES—Independent record labels are becoming increasingly important in the Argentine music scene, contributing to the sustained growth of the local market.

In contrast to the decline in music sales occurring in most other markets around the world, music sales in Argentina have risen steadily in recent years, according to the country’s Chamber of Record and Video Producers (CAPIF). Through the first six months of 2008, physical album sales totaled 7.1 million units, up from 6.7 million during the same period last year. Digital music sales, which according to the IFPI accounted for 3% of overall Argentina music sales in 2007, jumped 21% during the first half of 2008 from a year earlier, CAPIF says.

Within the growing Argentine market, indie labels accounted for about one-fifth of total music sales in the first half of 2008, holding steady from first-half 2007, according to CAPIF. CAPIF did not break out indie sales before 2007 because too few indie labels reported their sales to the trade group. Today, CAPIF monitors sales from 29 indies and the four majors.

The Ministry of Economic Development of the City of Buenos Aires estimates that there are at least 100 indie labels operating in the city alone. The upturn in the fortunes of local indie labels is being fueled by the Argentine financial crisis of 2001, when the peso plunged in value against the U.S. dollar. As major labels scaled back their operations in Argentina, small- and medium-size labels jumped at the opportunity to fill the gap. In one such move, indie PopArt Discos signed alternative artist Dante, who had previously recorded for Universal Music. Indies have sought opportunities in niche markets and have signed artists to flexible deals. Eccentric local label Los Aros Luz, for example, offers record deals that include artist management, public relations and tour promotion.

“Small companies add a new value to the concept of brand,” Union of Independent Labels president Victor Ponieman says. “People now relate them to ‘good music.’”

Ponieman is also the director of the independent Random Records, which works locally with such acts as Brazil’s Caetano Veloso or Paris-based electronic combo Goian Project. “The shift in the business made the multinational labels lose their bearing,” Ponieman says. “They were used to working with money. We worked with creativity. That’s why we found better pathways in this time of change.”

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SAVAGE LOVE
Australasian Rappers Buoyed By Chart Success

MELBOURNE—New Zealand rapper Savage’s Billboard Hot 100 success could help fuel a new trend in hip-hop to hit the spotlight. The rapper has been supported by stations across the American Midwest and South, Savage's “Swing” (Dawn Raid/Universal Republic), featuring Soulja Boy, broke into the top 50.

At rhythmic-leaning top 40 station KHHT Tulsa, Okla., OM/director of programming Tod Tucker says he knew “Swing” would be “a mass-appeal record” from first hearing—and he’s “absolutely” keeping an ear cocked for similar sounds from Australasia.

That’s encouraging for the hip-hop scene thriving among the independent labels of Auckland, New Zealand, or the Australian cities of Adelaide and Melbourne. Australia and New Zealand remain predominantly pop/rock markets. On the Australian Recording Industry Assn.’s 2007 year-end top 100 albums chart, for example, Timbaland, Akon and Kanye West were the only major U.S. hip-hop names. However, the 2006 multimillion success (Billboard, July 22, 2006) of Hip-Hop Hoods (Obese) opened the chart doors for other local hip-hop acts like Blis n Esco (Illusive Sounds), Tzu (Liberation) and the Herd (Elefant Traks).

Since then, “mainstream radio’s recognition for Australian hip-hop has grown dramatically,” the Hoods’ manager P.J. Murton says. “We [now] play significantly more local hip-hop,” top 40 station Nova/Adelaide DJ Hayden Elks says. “Listeners respond to the acts singing about Australian experiences—not the American gangsta lifestyle.”

Here, Billboard examines the key scenes in the genre’s growth:

AUCKLAND
The so-called City of Sails, draped between two natural harbors, is also a city of rap. New Zealand’s capital supports around 100 hip-hop crews, dedicated radio stations Mai FM, Flava and Niu FM; quarterly national hip-hop magazine Back2Basics; and key clubs Chocoloate City, Shake and Hennessey.

Pacific islanders and indigenous Maoris make up slightly more than 25% of Auckland's 1.4 million citizens. Like fellow local chart-toppers Scribe (Mushroom)/Warner, Che Fu (Sony BMG) and Nesian Mystik (Bounce), Savage emerged from the “urban pasifika” scene, which incorporates traditional rhythms and instrumentation into U.S.-style hip-hop. “Urban pasifika will be the next major global sound,” says Andy Mur- nane, CEO of Savage’s label Dawn Raid, which recently formed a U.S. marketing/distribution deal with Universal Republic’s Federal Distribution. The label’s key acts include Auckland rapper Marko, whose “White Sunday 2: The Book of Mark” appeared in New Zealand in April. Auckland’s MTC label, home to rapper Tyree, is also eyeing the U.S. market and will release rapper Young Sid to New York in November while investigating stateside distribution.

Leading New Zealand DJ Sir Vere, who edits Back2Basics, suggests that some of the records coming out of Auckland are “getting to the point where [they’re] world-class.”

ADELAIDE
Surrounded by vineyards, this slow-paced southern city is home to the National Wine Center of Australia—but local boys Hill-top Hoods have also helped Adelaide develop a superior vintage of hip-hop talent. The act did that through its national breakthrough and by providing upcoming acts financial assistance and recording time. Hoods’ manager Murton says Adelaide’s small size means its 50 hip-hop acts readily collaborate.

Kirk Wray, who hosts college station 3D Radio’s “Premium Blend” show, praises the scene’s “collectiveness and sense of community,” which he says “gives Adelaide hip-hop a very Australian sound that sounds like nothing from abroad.”

That sound, often featuring exaggerated Australian accents on top of hip-hop’s heavy sampling, is exemplified by Terra Firma’s current album “Music to Live By” (Symbiotic Audio/SHogun) and Funkoars’ forthcoming “The Hangover” (Peepshow/SHogun).

Key Adelaide hip-hop clubs include Rhino Room, Earth, Unibar and Fowlers Live. The latter is also a promoter, headlining from 1980 to 2012. Local shows like Radio Adelaide’s “Hip Hop Mania” and Fresh FM’s “Sny-ergy” also expose as-yet-unsigned acts, currently including Crosshead Mongrels, K21, Jimblah, Social Change, Crackhouse and Butternight.

Additional reporting by Gail Mitchell in Las Angeles.

GLOBAL NEWSLINE

LIFETIME AWARD FOR AZNAVOUR
Veteran French singer/songwriter Charles Aznavour will receive a lifetime achievement award at the 2009 MIDEM international music market Jan. 19 in Cannes. MIDEM runs Jan. 18-21. The 84-year-old artist has written more than 800 songs, and his works have been interpreted by artists including Fred Astaire, Ray Charles, Elvis Costello, Liza Minnelli and Nina Si- mone. His acting career includes more than 60 films. Aznavour is currently on a farewell tour of Latin America. The EMI record- ing artist will also release a new album, “Duos,” later this year featuring duets of some of his best-known songs with an international lineup of collaborators including Placido Domingo, Bryan Ferry, Elton John and Sting.

‘HEAVENLY’ FEST FOR U.K.
Festival Republic, the U.K. promoter behind the Leeds and Reading festivals, is part of a group planning a new outdoor event for 2009 called Heavenly Planet. The organizer is Heav- enly Planet U.K. Festivals, a three-way enterprise created by Festival Republic, local authority the Reading Borough Coun- cil and Thomas Brooman, former artistic director of annual world music festival WOMAD. Although still awaiting local-authority approval, the organizers are confident the new festi- val—which Billboard understands will lean toward world music—will get the go-ahead for its scheduled launch dates, of July 10-11. It will have a 15,000-capacity and should the event become a success, Heavenly Planet U.K. Festivals hopes to extend it to three days.

ROYALTY RATES RISE AT FRENCH RADIO
Many French public radio stations are facing an increase in the license fees they pay for performance rights to labels and artists. The fees will be increased in some cases beginning Jan. 1, a government-led commission has ruled. Since 1967, the rate has been set at 4.45% of stations’ broadcast income; the new system introduces progressive rates from 4% to 7%, in accor- dance with stations’ revenue. It will progressively be applied starting in January and be fully applicable in January 2012. The new revenue scheme applied is similar to the one decided Oct. 15, 2007, for privately held stations.

NEW WAR CHILD ALBUM
U.K.-based charity War Child will partner with EMI’s Parlophone label on covers album “Heroes.” The set will be re- leased Nov. 24 in the United Kingdom by Parlophone and raise funds for the charity, which works to protect children in war zones including Iraq and Afghanistan. The album features Duffy’s version of Paul McCartney & Wings’ “Live and Let Die,” U.K.-dance act Hot Chip’s reworking of Joy Division’s “Transmission” and Beck’s cover of Bob Dylan’s “Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat.” The full track listing has not yet been confirmed. War Child’s first music project, “Help,” was released in September 1995 by Go Disc Records, with contributions from Mc- Cartney, Oasis, Blur and Radiohead.

DOUGLAS TAKES HELM AT ERA
The council of U.K. trade body the Entertainment Retailers Assn. has elected Zavvi managing director Simon Douglas as its chairman for the next year, taking over from independent retailer Paul Quirk. Ben Drury, managing director of digital distributor Frog Digital, will continue for a second year as deputy chairman, Graham Lambdon of distributor EUK remains treasurer. Douglas led last year’s management buyout of Virgin Megastores, rebranding the chain as Zavvi in Sep- tember 2007. ERA represents U.K. retailers and wholesalers of recorded music, video, DVDs and games and its 200 members operate around 5,000 stores.

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Emerging Market

Nigeria's Music Scene Gets A Boost Thanks To MTV, Mobile

JOHANNESBURG—With an estimated population of 140 million in a country twice the size of California, Nigeria has always been a creative hub of music. Now, there are signs that the country could become a much-needed additional legal music market on the continent—at least for touring and mobile music.

The country that brought us Afrobeat pioneer Femi Kuti now has a healthy live scene that is attracting international heavyweights, while many believe the symbolic award of November's inaugural MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMAs) to the city of Abuja will put the market firmly on the music map.

MTV Networks Africa senior VP/managing director Alex Okosi cites Nigeria's "great music heritage and vibrant and exciting youth culture" as reasons for the decision.

"Strategically, Nigeria is also very important to MTV and to our sponsors," he says.

Although a number of international acts have performed in Nigeria through the years, ThisDay festival—promoted by ThisDay Entertainment Group and ThisDay Style magazine, both part of ThisDay Newspaper Group—offer the biggest platform for international talent. Its 2008 edition saw Rihanna, Jay-Z, Usher and John Legend play the ThisDay Africa Rising Festival in Lagos and Abuja in July. Organizers say attendance doubled from 25,000 in 2006 to 50,000 this year.

"Big-name acts can command huge fees [for concerts]," says Solomon Sonya, owner of Lagos-based artist management company Afrozilla, "sometimes as much as three times what they would get in the States.

The local recorded-music market, however, remains blighted by a piracy rate estimated to be in excess of 90% for physical product. With limited legitimate retail outlets, none of the majors have offices in Nigeria and, while Sony BMG and South Africa's biggest indie Gallo have looked at budget CD releases in the territory, the relatively high rate of mobile penetration and mobile companies' willingness to invest in the region mean that most believe mobile music is the best way forward.

"Low home PC ownership coupled with poor bandwidth and no iTunes makes Africa quite different," says Keith Lister, managing director of Johannesburg-based Sony BMG Africa. "But Nigeria is the continent's most populous country so it cannot be ignored—and mobile is the most likely route for us to take."

Kuwait-based mobile operator Zain Group sponsors the MAMAs and says it has invested $55 million in creating infrastructure since 2006. It claims to have 15 million customers in Nigeria.

"It is part of our corporate philosophy to sponsor music across Africa," says Bahreman-based Mwambu Wanendeya, Zain's communications director for Africa, citing sponsored concerts by African and international artists in Nigeria, the Congo, Tanzania and Uganda.

In February, Zain launched CentralStation—an online community platform that will add a MySpace-like upload interface and mobile music downloads by the end of September.

"We are using music to attract the youth market and build loyalty," Wanendeya says.

But as more Western artists and companies eye the region, insiders warn that the live market is not without its problems.

Sonya says that there are just a handful of legit promoters, while infrastructure is also an issue. ThisDay festival founder Ndika ObiGBena reports chartering a plane to bring show gear from the United Kingdom to Lagos after failing to find the right equipment in Africa. Similarly, Okosi confirms the MAMAs set will be built in Italy and freighted to Nigeria.

Security can also be an issue—especially in Lagos.

"International acts are always well protected," Sonya says. "But the audience is vulnerable to being attacked by thugs when they leave the venue," although increased security and more expensive ticket prices have deterred troublemakers recently.

Ringing In Changes

Labels Seek Greater Share Of Ringback Revenue

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—With sales of ringback tones surging across southeast Asia (Billboard, Sept. 13), major labels are seeking a bigger slice of the format's revenue.

With U.S. technology consultancy Multimedia Intelligence projecting that ringback sales in Asia alone will hit $1.5 billion this year, the majors want to move away from the current business model where mobile companies pay a one-time fee to labels for ringback tones on a per-song basis. Instead, they are seeking revenue-sharing deals on the monthly subscriptions paid by consumers. Such monthly fees—set by operators and generally costing subscribers between 50 cents and $1.50 per month—are retained in full by wireless carriers. In countries where such a revenue-sharing model is already in place, the labels are seeking a more equitable split between rights owners and carriers. Their proposed rate is a 60-40 split in the mobile companies' favor, in place of current rates of 70-30 or 80-20 splits.

"We only want what's fair and that benefits the music industry collectively," says Sandy Monteiro, Kuala Lumpur-based Universal Music Southeast Asia VP of digital and chairman of local labels body the Recording Industry Assn. of Malaysia (RIM). The labels had agreed to less favorable ringback deals in the past to encourage carriers to make the necessary investments needed to accommodate the format, industry sources say.

But everything things have become a more pressing priority as piracy hits sales of other mobile formats. Unlike ringtones and song downloads, ringbacks are largely pirate-proof.

In Malaysia, the labels say they have scored a notable victory in persuading Maxis, the country's No. 1 mobile company, to move to a revenue-sharing model on a 60-40 split. The labels say their 40% share is divided among themselves, artists, composers and publishers.

Monteiro says DiGi, Malaysia's No. 1 mobile company, will also soon roll out ringbacks on a revenue-share model, although No. 2 operator Celcom is still paying a one-off fee for each song. All three companies refused to comment, although an agreed representative confirms negotiations are in the final stages.

"Mobile companies have to come to terms with paying a fair fee for intellectual property," Kuala Lumpur-based Sony BMG Malaysia managing director Adrian Lim says. "It's only a matter of time before we start working together on a level playing field."

A one-time fee is "simply unacceptable," says Chan Miew Lian, GM of Malaysian authors' society Music Authors Copyright Protection. "Even with the revenue-share model, mobile companies need to understand that they cannot retain a hefty chunk, because we created and own the product. Without content, they have nothing to sell."

In other countries where the revenue-share model is already in operation, reducing the mobile companies' share may prove more problematic, insiders predict, particularly in markets like Indonesia, India and Thailand, where international product is less in demand. RIM says such artists as Leona Lewis, Gwen Stefani, Kylie Minogue and Avril Lavigne are among the best-selling ringback acts in Malaysia this year.

Nonetheless, Tim Smith, manager of business incubation at Tokyo-based investment company AC Capital, says the revenue-share model will benefit carriers as it enables them to load lots of content at reduced financial risk.

"Labels typically have a few songs that do really well and a lot that don't," he says.

The majors are negotiating on an individual basis with the carriers, but Monteiro warns mobile companies that resist the new deals will feel their collective power when contracts run out.

"We have to negotiate all new contracts with mobile companies on the same terms," he says. "We cannot have double standards."

Additional reporting by Steve McClure in Tokyo.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Chris DeWolfe

As MySpace finally pulls the wraps off its new music service, the head of the social-networking giant talks about its relations with labels and the online ad market.

MySpace Music is rather unique in that it has offered the major labels an equity stake in the joint venture formed to bring the service to market. How much of it do they control?

We're not disclosing any percentages or deals points. Each music company has a representative on the board of directors and influence on the future of the company.

So how are independent labels and their representative groups involved?

The whole idea behind MySpace from the beginning was to create a place for bands to reach out to fans they ordinarily wouldn't have been able to get a hold of. MySpace became this amazing promotional platform where they could reach 120 million people all over the world and we would pick up the cost of the streaming. So we helped create this ecosystem to help them make a living where ordinarily they may not have been able to. With MySpace Music, we're going to provide them tools to further that ecosystem and give them the juicing tools that anyone else has on the site.

But will indie labels also have an equity stake in the joint venture? We're not disclosing the deal points with labels. But what I can say is that an independent artist will have the ability to participate in virtually every revenue stream. So they'll be able to sell downloads, sell tickets, sell merchandise. It's a one-stop shop for them, and we're picking up the cost of the streaming and driving traffic. We fully support the indie community.

Why did you feel you needed to launch without a full catalog of major and independent content? [Ed. note: MySpace finalized deals with EMI and the Orchard on the eve of the service's launch; their music will be added over time.]

We have the majority of music that's in any kind of a major music catalog out there. We've been developing features for the last six or seven months. We've completed the development timeline, and our users have been asking us for this product for a long time. We want to get it out there. We also have major launch partners in Toyota, McDonald's, [Sony Pictures] and State Farm Insurance. The critical mass is definitely there.

So how much input into the strategy and direction of MySpace Music will labels have? It's a very consultative approach. They're experts in the music industry. They're absolutely essential to build any quality music service. They understand music. They understand the promotion of music. They understand A&R. They understand how to package and the presentation layer. They understand theizzle.

We're more of a technology company ... MySpace is all about community. We have a core competency in both advertising and promotional sales, which music companies don't traditionally have. We have 100 people in our sales and creative departments and 240 people who do nothing but specialize in monetization technology. MySpace Music is starting with 120 million users, 35 million of which go to the music service on a regular basis.

So MySpace would present to the labels new technologies and features, along with the monetization play, and then ask them to recommend what content and different packages they could apply to them? Exactly. So can we give Green Day flipcams to take behind-the-scenes footage? Or can artist X interview artist Y since they'll be in the same city at the same time? Can we create a scripted reality show of the new group they just put together? Can we do a digital awards show? Can we do our own tour?

While there's downloadable songs at launch and plans to add ticket and merch sales, it seems the core of this model is focused on monetizing streaming music through ads. It's too soon to tell the exact percentages. The idea is that it's going to be a 360-degree model from both a monetization perspective and a user perspective.

But the perception is that this is being driven by ad sales, and there's a lot of concern about whether the licensing rates for per-song streaming is copacetic with the [cost-per-thousand] rates needed to drive ad revenue. How do you propose to thread that needle?

We've spent on developing this business model and spent years building our sales infrastructure. Every major brand wants to associate themselves with some sort of music. We feel a big part of the future of advertising is brand integration within the content, and that's something MySpace has always done very well.

Yet how do you intend to deal with trends like the fact that internet ad click-through rates are falling and that social networks get so small a share of what's being spent?

It took Yahoo 10 years to get to the billion-dollar mark in revenue. Fox Interactive Media, of which MySpace is the largest part, is pretty close to that number already and we've only been in business for four-and-a-half years. So we're quite pleased with our performance.

The second thing is that the whole way agencies and brands look at MySpace is very different than what it was two or three years ago. Then, they put us in the social media or networking space, for which they reserved maybe 10% of their digital dollars and gave MySpace the lion's share of that. But now MySpace is being seen more along the lines of a portal, because we're getting in the U.S. about 76 million unique users a month. So with 40 [million], 50 million coming to the site on a daily basis and compare that to some of the largest TV shows, which get only 25 [million] to 30 million, it's a great value to advertise on MySpace. It's impactful and measurable, and you get the reach.

We feel a big part of the future of advertising is brand integration within the content, and that's something MySpace has always done very well.
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- **JOHN WREN**
  President & CEO, Omnicom Group Inc.

**PANELISTS INCLUDE:**

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  Senior Equity Analyst, Media and Entertainment Group, Standard & Poor's Equity Research
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SITTING ON A fluffy blue couch in the New York offices of Columbia Records, John Legend is surrounded by walls displaying framed portraits of Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday. It’s seemingly an appropriate setting for Legend, whose 2004 debut, “Get Lifted,” was a collection of urban-tinged midtempo songs, and whose “Once Again” in 2006 featured ’60s-inspired tracks with lush instrumentation.

But as he spoons out Celestial Seasonings tea from a small white cup, Legend, sporting a V-neck T-shirt, dark jeans and high-top sneakers, looks anything but retro. And the music on “Evolver,” his album slated to drop Oct. 28, is anything but nostalgic.

“This album doesn’t sound like me,” he says. “The tempo is faster than I’ve done before. It will be different for people, because ‘Evolver’ has a bit more instrumentation than I’ve used before. But it’s not like you won’t recognize the artist—it’s still me.”

After collectively selling more than 3 million records in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, Legend’s banking that fans will embrace his new sound—and his label and management team are making the singer accessible across numerous platforms to retain their allegiance. For “Evolver,” Columbia is structuring a campaign that embraces Legend’s skills as a live performer and his international appeal, as well as a bolstered Web presence and an innovative pact with iTunes to keep the audience engaged.

From its bouncy introduction, it’s clear that Legend’s first single, “Green Light,” which features André 3000, isn’t his traditional style. The track boasts a galactic spin with electronic keys and shooting-star-like sound effects over a quick two-step drum beat. It was co-written with Rick Nowels and produced by Malay and former Sony urban executive VP of A&R Kwan “KP” Prather. After the song leaked online in June, the video premiered on MTV’s “FNMTV” in August—causing Legend to question the monthlong lapse between the leak and the push to mainstream TV.

“Why’d it take so long?” Legend asks, smiling. “Ask my label.”

Legend and his manager, Gary Gersh of the Artists Organization, say that the pop direction of “Green Light” made some in Columbia’s halls nervous that the single might alienate his core urban AC audience. (When asked directly about the label’s apprehension, Columbia VP of strategic and product marketing Quincy Jackson says that “it was important that the first single be a song that was released worldwide [simultaneously]. ‘Green Light’ impacted urban and rhythm radio formats on Aug. 19 and the video premiered on ‘FNMTV’ on Aug. 22, which worked out well.”)

But Gersh says resistance from a label is par for the course when an artist takes a new direction.

“It never fazed us that we got that reaction,” Gersh says. “When you hear something new that sounds outside of an artist’s zone, you can have two reactions. One: ‘Oh, my God, this’ll scare everyone off,’ or two: ‘This is a natural evolution of where this artist is going.’ Some believed in ‘Green Light’ wholeheartedly; some took a while. We decided to believe it, Sony believes in us, and I think it will bear out for them in a big way.”

The track is Nos. 44 and 39 on Billboard’s Hot 100 and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs charts, respectively. New York’s WQHT (Hot 97) began playing “Green Light” in July. “It’s dope with a great melody and it’s very catchy,” WQHT PD Ebro Darden says. “Both John and André 3000 are core for our listeners. Why would anyone wait?”

Other “Evolver” tracks include “No Other Love,” featuring Legend’s Homeschool Records’ artist Estelle (see story, page 26), in which Legend tries his hand at a midtempo reggae track about loyalty. “Cross the Line” opens with ticks from an 808 under Legend’s smooth tenor just before a booming bass and squashed, fuzzy keys conclude the song. On the Phar-
After Crooning His Way Into The Hearts Of Millions, **JOHN LEGEND** Goes Uptempo On ‘Evolver’ By Hillary Crosley

Photograph By Nabil Elderkin
Estelle Shines For Legend’s Label

Five years ago, John Legend and Kanye West were taking a break from recording “The College Dropout” by grabbing a meal at Roscoe’s Chicken and Waffles, a venerable Los Angeles restaurant that attracts musicians, tourists, hipsters—and where, as it turns out, quite a few business deals are done over maple syrup.

A woman approached them, Legend recalls. “She recognized Kanye—though his first album wasn’t out yet—introduced herself and said that she was making an album in the U.K.,” he says. “She’d heard his ‘I’m Good’ mixtape with my song ‘Used to Love U’ and asked him, ‘What’s up with John Legend?’”

And so began the partnership between Legend and Estelle; he made an appearance on Estelle’s debut album, “10th Letter,” and eventually proved to be the songwriter’s saving grace several years later. After launching Homeschool Records in 2005, Legend signed Estelle as one of his first artists, negotiating her release from her original label, V2 Records. They began crafting her sophomore album “Shine,” which has since sold 110,000 copies stateside, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and 89,000 units in the United Kingdom, where she peaked at No. 1 on the Official Charts Co. singles tally.

“I’m very happy with the album’s success,” Legend says. “She was already established in the U.K., so a No. 1 in there is big, but I’m really excited about her success in the U.S. because breaking a black British artist is not easy.”

The success hasn’t come without its hiccups. In August, Atlantic pulled “Shine” from iTunes in an experimental effort to sell the album as a complete package, rather than track by track. At that point, Estelle’s single “American Boy”—featuring West—was selling more than 80,000 digital copies per week for the first three weeks of August, while “Shine” was shifting around 2,000 each week digitally, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album was reinstated within a week; as of the first week of September, “Shine” has sold 1,000 copies digitally and “American Boy” 1,000. (Atlantic declined to comment on Estelle’s iTunes sales figures.)

As chairman of Homeschool, Legend is keeping it in the family; he’s signed his younger brother, soul singer Vaughn Anthony. Anthony served as the opening act for Legend’s summer concerts and will continue to open for him throughout the fall. —HC

PLATINUM PLUS

John Legend spent more than a year on the Billboard 200 with his 2005 debut. And while the 2006 follow-up trailed off sales-wise and spent significantly less time on the chart, it still cruised past the 1 million-copy mark.

Estelle Shines For Legend’s Label

Billboard 200 Peak Date:
1/27/2005
1/31/2005

Singles:

"Shine"
"American Boy"
"18th Letter"
"Good Life"
"So Good"
"Once Again"
"Once Again (Deluxe Edition)"
"Once Again (Single)"

Records on Chart:
65
59

SOURCE: The Billboard 200 through the Sept. 27 chart; Sales through the week ending Sept. 14 for Legend’s most popular international markets.

Legend also is the first artist to benefit from Sony BMG and iTunes’ Complete My Album international partnership. Starting in July with “Green Light,” “Evolver” tracks are available on iTunes biweekly until release week. The program was such a driving success for Universal Records’ promotion of Lil Wayne’s “Tha Carter III” that Sony BMG and Apple are expanding the platform globally.

In the United Kingdom, Sony and iTunes brokered a partnership with Ticketmaster where fans can have first access to tickets for Legend’s international tour, which begins in theaters in February 2009, if they purchase “Evolver” tracks via Complete My Album or buy the CD via iTunes.

In addition, “John’s Web site is getting a big global push,” Columbia digital marketing executive Kathy Baker says. “So if you’re in Japan, you can log onto johnlegend.com and the site will be translated into Japanese.” Baker says that Legend will blog on his relaunched Web site, along with announcing his fall domestic and international touring schedule.

On the mobile side, Gersh says that partnerships have not been solidified yet but he is negotiating a multiplatform partnership with a national phone carrier that will include music, mobile gaming and webcast performances. Following Legend’s appearance in the Gap’s recent ad campaign, Gersh says he is also in talks to secure other brand- ing opportunities.

“It’s really about those ways in which John can reach his fans and how they want to be reached,” Gersh says. “So few people buy records in record stores anymore: some want to buy their product online and some want to download the album to their phone. We want to do fewer but broader partnerships that make sense on the macro-level, worldwide.”

Legend recently returned from Africa, where his non-profit organization Show Me is working to stabilize several villages in Tanzania. “I just got back from a cluster of villages called the Mbola cluster,” Legend says. “We were able to see new buildings, the school’s increased attendance, an increase in crops from this last year to this year as well as new health centers.”

“We are fortunate that John’s music spans across various audiences,” Columbia’s Jackson says. “John’s songs have universal appeal. ‘Evolver’ is a body of work that allows fans to not have to think about music genre; it’s just phenomenal music.”

For his part, Legend is taking his transition in stride. Go ahead, call his new smooth sounds electronic or pop—just don’t call it adult contemporary.

“I hate that term,” Legend says. “That’s likening my music to the Kenny G of the world—just because it’s mellow and adult-friendly doesn’t mean it’s like that. ‘Once Again’ was romantic and nostalgic. I feel like I’m having more fun on ‘Evolver.’”

HOMESCHOOL SWEET HOMESCHOOL

Estelle, with John Legend in April, introduced herself to him and Kanye West during a fortuitous meeting at Roscoe’s Chicken and Waffles in L.A.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Live Nation and AEG are increasingly battling for top tours like METALLICA, here performing Sept. 15 at London's O2 Arena.

It started quietly enough, with SFX’s acquisition of leading New York promoter Delsener-Slater Presents in the fall of 1996. But what followed was no less than total market upheaval, as by the fall of 1998 the concert business was fully consolidated and what remained bore—and bears—little resemblance to the business created in the ’60s and ’70s by a handful of fiercely independent regional entrepreneurs.

Legendary companies like Cellar Door, PACE Concerts, Bill Graham Presents, Electric Factory, Don Law Presents, Sunshine Promotions, Contemporary Productions, Evening Star, Avalon Productions and many others were now under the same umbrella. SFX paid big multiples of annual earnings, putting millions of dollars and financial security into the hands of a group of pioneers, pirates and gutsy gamblers that built the business.

Today, a decade after Robert F.X. Sillerman rolled up the promoter business in North America and, ultimately, Europe, the music industry at large is vastly different from a decade ago, with the live business arguably supplanting the record labels as the most consistently reliable profit driver for artists and professionals. Certainly not everything that has taken place can be attributed to promoter consolidation—the Internet deserves much credit, as it does in every business—but the impact of the live revolution certainly plays its part. With that in mind, it is perhaps a good time to take stock of what consolidation hath wrought.

The Cliffs Notes version goes like this: In building SFX, Sillerman spent about $2.5 billion rolling up promoters in North America and Europe, most of which had a real estate component in the form of amphitheaters or clubs—or both, in the case of House of Blues (which didn’t come into the fold until 2006). Sillerman sold SFX to radio conglomerate Clear Channel Communications in 2000 for about $4 billion, with Clear Channel forming Clear Channel Entertainment in hopes of synergizing its live and radio businesses.

TEN YEARS AFTER CONSOLIDATION SWEPT CONCERT PROMOTERS, THE DOMINANCE OF LIVE NATION AND AEG DEFINES THE INDUSTRY

BY RAY WADDELL
That synergy never happened in a big way. Several departed executives, disgruntled stockholders and one big write-down later, Clear Channel spun off its live entertainment division to form free-standing, publicly traded Live Nation, directed by CEO Michael Rapino. The resulting company is far bigger and more multifaceted than the sum of its indie promoter parts. Live Nation has evolved into a comprehensive, vertically integrated live entertainment company with its hands in virtually all aspects of the business, adding ticketing, merchandising, licensing, branding, digital rights, recorded music, sponsorships and other services to its concert promotion and venue businesses. It has shed its theatrical, sports and motor sports businesses and wrangled long term, mega-million multirights deals with Madonna, U2, Jay-Z, Shakira, Nickelback and the Jonas Brothers.

And the desired synergy and experience of the Live Nation promoter world finally came into play. “I do know this: When we first sold we were still just a bunch of independent companies, there was no synergy, whether it was SFX or Clear Channel,” Live Nation president of North Central music Rick Franks says. And consolidation is not just about Live Nation alone. This millennium has seen the launch of AEG Live, the concert promotion business of privately held global sports and entertainment firm AEG Entertainment Group. While AEG Live has acquired such promoters as Concerts West and Goldenvoice, the company under CEO Randy Phillips has been more about acquiring personnel assets, with many executives formerly with Live Nation. House of Blues or other promoters now in its fold. With its diversified, deep-pocketed parent, AEG Live fiercely competes with Live Nation for top tours—the company has been proactive in the North American fest circuit—and can offer global one-stop promotion as well.

Last year Live Nation reported Billboard Boxscore grosses totaling $2.1 billion from 9,367 shows attended by 38.2 million people worldwide. AEG Live reported $543 million from 1,347 shows attended by 8.4 million people. For comparison’s sake, in 1998, the entire touring industry reported $748.4 million in grosses and 24.6 million in attendance for 4,258 shows in North America.

Opinions on the impact of consolidation differ, not surprisingly paralleling personal affiliations. “Consolidation has hurt the business and has hurt it critically,” says John Scher, co-CEO of management/promotion firm Metropolitan Talent. For many, promoter consolidation was a natural development, following the consolidation of the radio and record label businesses. “The industry needed to mature, and certainly having companies like AEG and Live Nation controlling a whole tour makes a lot of sense,” says Peter Lukacik, chairman of Philadelphia-based management firm Global Comcast.

One former indie now in the Live Nation fold is happily consolidated. “When I made my deal, it wasn’t about anything other than the check, but now I wouldn’t trade places with an independent,” says Jimmy Koplik, chairman of Live Nation Connecticut and a Live Nation board member. “Working for a consolidated company gives you greater value to me in promoting and also to the artists.”

What follows is an assessment of where the concert business is today in seven key areas.

**TICKET PRICES**

Ticket prices, without question, are much higher today than a decade ago, generally outpacing the 34.7% inflation rate between July 1998 and July 2008 (according to inflationdata.com). There are far more $100 and up tickets today than in ’98 and fewers $20 tickets.

“Dave Matthews Band, which was just gaining traction in 1998, had a high price of $35 and a low of $16. A decade later, with DBM indisputably one of the top touring bands in the world, the range is $75-$312, up 114%-100%. Eric Clapton, a legend firmly in place in 1998, ranged from a then-stout $85 to an affordable $29. This year, Slow Hand charged $250+$242, up 194%-68%.

Many would argue that concert ticket prices were due a market correction to fall more in line with prices for sports and Broadway events. “Ten years ago we were under-priced,” Koplik says.

Eagles manager Irving Azoff credits the secondary market and its transparency today for much of the increase, showing the industry how much fans value the best seats.

“Ticket prices have gone up because the StubHub of the world has educated the business in terms of free-market flow and what people are really paying for tickets,” he says. “The reason ticket prices have gone up is because some people have said, ‘Supply and demand is not of whack.’”

“Ten years ago my [New York] Yankee tickets were $17.50 and this year in the same location they’re $250,” says Dennis Arfa, president of Artists Group International, agency for such acts as Billy Joel, Rod Stewart and Metallica. “Did the music business change, or did the complete entertainment experience change?”

Some would argue high guarantees paid to artists as promoters compete for tours and shows—particularly competition between AEG Live and Live Nation—drives up prices more than anything. “You have to factor inflation into it to some degree, but I don’t think there is any question that the ticket price increase is the result of consolidation,” Scher says. “It’s not only the two major consolidators driving guarantees and therefore ticket prices higher, but it is the greed of the artists and the greed of all of the promoters, because the regional and independent promoters have had little or no choice but to go along with that sort of pricing structure to have the ability to compete at all.”

Franks says competition has always existed and guarantees have always dictated ticket prices. “Forget 10 years ago—20 years ago the ticket price was always derived by how many tickets we had to sell to break even,” he says. “Where does my liability stop? How many tickets do I have to sell to not lose? Then I can worry about winning.”

**BOTTOM DOLLAR**

Given ticket prices are higher, it is no surprise that concert grosses are also up—a big way. Artists are working the road more in the face of declining revenue streams from other sources; touring traffic and overall box office reporting are both up significantly. According to Boxscore, ticket dollars from January to August this year in North America are up 133% from the same period in 1998. On a show-by-show basis, the average gross per show so far this year is $206,391, up 17% from a decade ago. So, given that concert promotion is a low-margin business at best, are profits up in line with grosses? “Everybody’s making a lot of money. I’m making more money than I’ve ever made in my life, and so is everybody else,” says TMG/AEG Live president Louis Messina, once part of the SFX family and now tour promoter for Kenny Chesney and George Strait. “But I wouldn’t say companies are making much money. No disrespect for Live Nation, I think Michael Rapino has done a great job, but come on. They’ve never made any money. They had a quarter where they netted a $1 million. When your grossing billions and you net $1 million? I make more money than that in a quarter and I just have two acts.”

Live Nation reported a second-quarter 2008 net income of $1.2 million, or 2 cents per share, down from a net profit of $9.9 million, or 15 cents per share, during the same period last year. Revenue rose 18% to $2.1 billion from $963 million.

But gauging profitability is a moving target, particularly with only one public company in the mix. “In our industry you never have been able to get most concert promoters to tell you the truth about their profitability—good, bad or indifferent,” Scher says. “It was too good, and they were participating in anancies that the artist didn’t participate in, they didn’t want to tell you the truth. If they were bad, they didn’t want to tell you the truth because you’d look worse.”

Of course, with a public company the numbers are, well, public. “In the live concert business there’s only one public company; they report and their numbers speak for themselves as to their profitability for any given quarter or year, or lack thereof,” Scher says. “If the market leader is making or losing a lot of money, logic would dictate that the people who follow behind them in line, from big to small, are probably experiencing similar results.”

**ATTENDANCE**

The veteran acts remain on the road. New acts are coming up all the time. Overall attendance of 31.5 million so far this year in North America is up 28.2% for this time period a decade ago. But per-show attendance is down substantially. From January to August 1998, average attendance per show was 5,777, so far this year, average attendance is 3,717, a decline of 35.6%. “That doesn’t show you the casino business, a lot of special events,” Arfa says. “That’s the whole picture.”

Scher, meanwhile, pins the decrease in attendance mostly on ticket prices. “It’s not so much that ticket prices cost so much to a given show that people won’t go, but if they do go, their leisure dollars have shrunk so they can’t go to something else,” he says.

If per-show attendance is down and the number of shows is up, one could logically be a function of the other, “and that can be a good thing if there’s more touring,” Lukacik says. “For a while it seemed if you didn’t sell out, you couldn’t make any money. But now, buildings, promoters, managers and agents are being more creative with things like packaging, so you’ve got more product, [a show doesn’t have to sell] 20,000 seats to make it. Ten thousand or 5,000 can make it, and I think that’s a good sign.”

Koplik draws no correlation between decreasing attendance and consolidation. “Too much volume? I can’t imagine why anyone would believe that if they say it,” he says. “God forbid the only shows that went on the road were the ones that sell out. It wouldn’t be a business if that were true.”

**THE FAN EXPERIENCE**

Fans have more opportunities to connect with the artists than ever, overwhelmingly due to the opportunities provided by the Internet. Promoters and venues have learned to tap into these opportunities and, of course, make money.

Amphitheater attendance, which had fallen off in recent years, has rebounded of late, and Live Nation’s attention to the fan experience has helped drive that rebound. “We’ve paved the parking lots, our VIP clubs are a lot
better, we've replaced seats, recarpeted," Koplik says. "Live Nation is much quicker to spend this money on capital expenditures in order to improve the experience. If it was my own money, I'm not sure I would've acted so quickly."

### COMPETITION

Those independent promoters that weren't swallowed up by consolidation were, not surprisingly, concerned that they would be unable to compete against the deep pockets of powerhouse corporate promoters. "That argument is over," Koplik says. "If they're good promoters, the agents know better; they'll sell to whoever they think the best promoter is."

It is true that, for the most part, independents have survived and even thrived in post-consolidation, and new, creative independents, most notably C3 Presents, have risen up. "Anybody with a checkbook can get in," Azoff says.

In many cases, independent promoters are focusing on markets and shows under the corporate promoter radar. Messina says that independents that have survived have found a specific niche, diversified or done both. But Messina does admit that his "competitive spirit" makes him miss the action he enjoyed with PACE Concerts. "I miss being the guy," he says. "It breaks my heart when Bruce Springsteen or AC/DC comes to town and I'm not involved. These are bands I started with. But that's the only thing I miss. Let somebody else have the next bypass surgery."

### CONCERT PROMOTING

For concert promoters and the touring industry that depends upon them to make shows work, few could argue that the art and science of promoting shows is at its highest level.

"Ten years later the marketing efforts are much more concentrated and unique," Azoff says. "The information gathering and reaching your fans is easier and better, and I think, all in all, shows are promoted better."

New and better tools exist, but they're not always put to use. Messina is one who doesn't believe that, by and large, concert promotion is better today. "It's sloppy. I think the people in the marketing departments have too much on their plates and they can't pay attention to every little bit," he says.

Frank says his Live Nation promoters do a better job because they communicate. "We have the personnel and the ability to share what's working," he says. "If this worked in Des Moines (Iowa), it will definitely work in Greensboro [N.C.] or out in Seattle. To see similar demographics in similar-sized markets and similar buildings and campaigns, basically you have the sun at your back."

But Arfa believes some of the entrepreneurial spirit that made great promoters is missing. "There are some talented people, but there is a pool of them," he says. "Much of it to me today is waiters and waitresses taking orders. These original guys were very entrepreneurial; they had to make a living and scratch it out."

These guys today are looking over their shoulders at corporate bosses. It's a different mentality."

### ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

The future of the music business rests on artist development, and it remains a thorny issue. "There has been a significant drop in the amount of acts that first emerged in the last 10 years that are now consistent year-in and year-out headliners at arenas, amphitheaters or even large theaters," Scher says. "You can go back over the last 10 years and look at acts that exploded and did big grosses—even record-setting grosses—on the Billboard charts... in three years later their career is over."

Scher cites Hootie & the Blowfish as an example. "How is it possible that they're not a big band? Lots of hits, millions and millions of records sold, good live band, but there was some disconnect," he says. "And I think that disconnect was caused by things that had to do with consolidation of radio, consolidation of record labels and consolidation of concert promoters."

Live Nation maintains that its network of 40 theaters and clubs, plus 11 House of Blues venues, fosters artist development more than any other promoter. "That's a tremendous investment into the talent spectrum to figure out where these next acts are coming from," Frank says. "We're investing in talent, investing in our future."

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### PAY FOR WHAT YOU GET

One can still see superstar artists like Celine Dion and Eric Clapton for reasonable prices. But if you want the best seats, you'll pay exponentially higher than you did a decade ago.

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*CHARTS SOURCE: Billboard Biz*
THE R(EVOLUTION) WILL BE TELEVISED!

REAL HIP-HOP NETWORK
JOIN THE REAL HIP HOP R(EVOLUTION)
Please visit us at www.rhn.tv
It has been three years since Billboard established its annual feature on Urban Songwriters to Watch. And in that time, a diverse array of talented artists has been profiled—many of whom have advanced to go-to status. Looking back, our 2006 inaugural edition showcased such creative forces as Johna Austin, Sean Garrett, Ne-Yo, Bryan-Michael Cox and the Clutch. The following year, Akon, Terius “the-Dream” Nash, Nate “Danjahandz” Hills and T-Pain helped round out the 2007 survey. In coordinating this year’s lineup with input from key publishing executives and our own chart experts, we discovered that the R&B/hip-hop writing pool still runs deep. See for yourselves.

ROBERT ‘ROB. A’ ALLEN

Robert “Rob. A” Allen is part of a Los Angeles collective called Graffiti, similar to Atlanta writing team the Clutch. Graffiti includes Allen, Andre Merritt, Chris Brown and Great Brinton and has penned Rihanna’s “Disturbia” and Brown’s “Forever.”

Originally moving to Los Angeles to pursue his own singing career, Allen, a native of southern New Jersey, met Brown’s choreographer soon after. The dancer heard some of his songs and suggested the 22-year-old share his work with Brown. Eventually the pair linked and wrote “Forever” for the rerelease of “Exclusive.” Realizing their chemistry, the two assembled the rest of Graffiti and are aiming to craft Brown’s next album together.

Now Graffiti is crafting songs for the Jonas Brothers, Britney Spears, Brandy, Mario and LeToya Luckett, as well as books for Plies and Flo Rida. Allen has a publishing deal with Sony/ATV.

ADAM BLACKSTONE

For Adam Blackstone, it was worth having his dad miss Sunday mass every once in a while.

“I played whatever instrument was needed in service—drums, the organ if my dad had to miss church for work, bass if the bass player was there,” the 26-year-old musician/songwriter says. “I was, if you may, forced to learn.”

It paid off for the South Jersey native, who got his first break playing bass for MCA recording artist Jagua Wright.

In 2004, the ASCAP writer started to dabble in songwriting and got his first two major placements with a group called Jazzy Phat Nasty and another with Vivian Green. He now has an administrative publishing deal with Jellybean Benitez.

Blackstone has since written for Jill Scott, Al Green, Musiq and Usher, among others. Currently, aside from prepping to hit the road as musical director for Janet Jackson’s upcoming tour, he’s also in the studio with Brandy, Kem and Kindred.

CRISTYLE

After losing a third-grade talent show and then joining an all-female singing group two years later that disbanded shortly after, singer/songwriter Crystyle was left “tore up.” But those early disappointments made the Atlanta native work harder, and it’s recently paid off.

Spending her teenage years honing her writing skills, and following an impromptu meeting with Jermaine Dupri, the 24-year-old signed to EMI just last year.

Since then, she’s put pen to pad for the likes of Natasha Bedingfield, Jennifer Lopez, Brandy, Beyoncé, Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Usher, Akon, Young Jeezy and the Pussycat Dolls. She’s been tapped to collaborate with Nick Carter next.

MACK McKinNEY

Music may be in Mack McKinney’s blood—his father, Mike, played bass for Michael Jackson—but the multi-instrumentalist (piano, guitar, drums) cites a more intriguing songwriting influence: a four-year stint in the Navy.

“I saw a lot of the world and learned about a lot of different music,” the Los Angeles-based artist says. “It definitely helped diversify my sound.” Mentored by songwriter/producer Rory Bennett (KCi & JoJo’s...
“All My Life”), McKinney earned writing credits through projects with Color Me Badd and Pes. The SESAC writer has since launched his own company, A Grand Jam, and written for Marques Houston (“Wonderful”), Danya Kane (“Damaged”) and Joe (“Why Just Be Friends”).

Having wrapped up work on J. Holiday’s sophomore effort, McKinney is set to head back into the studio with Chirsette Michele and Brandy Spears. “I didn’t want to be a touring musician playing someone else’s music,” he says. “On this end of the business, you get to create your own sound.”

ANDRE MERRITT
A Las Vegas high school classmate of Ne-Yo’s, Andre Merritt knew early that he “couldn’t get away from music; it was this or nothing.” So he passed on college in favor of songwriting.

The gamble is paying off: Signed to Universal Music Publishing, the ASCAP writer and member of the Graffiti collective is celebrating back-to-back hits for his work on Rihanna’s “Disturbia” and Chris Brown’s “Forever.” Prior to that, his first taste of success was on singles by Marques Houston (“Favorite Girl”) and Omarion (“Entourage”).

Just starting to learn guitar, Merritt describes himself as “a melody type of writer. It’s weird because I don’t play instruments. But I can hear harmonies as chords in music, as if I’m playing them.”

Upcoming projects include collaborations with J. Holiday, Beyoncé, Brandy, Lady Gaga and the Jonas Brothers. Also in the wings: his own solo album. In fact, Merritt is featured on a new Brown track currently on YouTube, “Flying Solo.”

RICK NOWELLS
Picking up a pen at 13 years old, Rick Nowells has more than 20 years of pop hits under his belt. The musician/songwriter got his first break in 1986 crafting the Stevie Nicks hit “I Can’t Wait.” Since then, the BMI- signed writer has penned a stream of pop hits: Belinda Carlisle’s “Heaven on Earth,” New Radicals’ “You Get What You Give,” Dido’s “White Flag,” Madonna’s “Power of Goodbye” and Santana’s “The Game of Love” featuring Michelle Branch.

Now, after wetting his feet with Anita Baker’s sultry “Body & Soul,” the San Francisco native is transitioning into urban songs. Joining John Legend in Atlanta last year, the pair wrote the R&B singer’s first single, “Green Light,” featuring André 3000.

ERIKA NURI
Erika Nuri may have musical roots (her father was a songwriter, producer and A&R rep at Arista Records), but it was poetry that first inspired her to write songs.

“I started writing poems at age 12, and at 18, I started turning them into songs,” the Los Angeles native by way of New York recalls. That same year, Nuri got her first song placement—a track called “Heat You Up” by group 1, 2, 3.

That cut led her to work with such acts as Ascape, Tony Rich and Mistah, among others, and in 2002, Nuri signed with Babyface’s Edmond Music. While under contract, she has written tracks for K-Ci & JoJo, B2K and J.U.L.

Now, Nuri is part of a writing team aptly named Writing Camp and has an administrative deal with Royalty Networks. Aside from already penning Fantasia’s “When I See You,” she is slated to work with Brandy, David Archaleta, Christina Milian, Ashley Tisdale and Britney Spears.

ROCK CITY
Twenty-five- and 26-year-old Timothy and Theron Thomas, respectively, opted to leave their native St. Thomas to pursue their dreams a few years back, but their ties to their native land got them their big break.

“Our friend Benny D, who is Akon’s DJ, grew up with us. In 2005, he played one of our songs for him and Akon decided to use it for his album,” younger brother Timothy says, in reference to “Rain,” which appeared on 2006’s “Konvicted.”

Since then, the siblings, who now reside in Atlanta and are signed to Universal Music Publishing, have joined forces for the likes of Janet Jackson, Mariah, Sean Kingston, Rich Boy, Enrique Iglesias, Busta Rhymes, Leona Lewis, Jennifer Hudson and the Pussycat Dolls, penning the Dolls’ recent chart-topper, “When I Grow Up.”

Aside from working on their own album, “Wake the Neighbors,” slated for a late ‘08 release via Kon/Life/Interscope, the brothers are in the studio with Fantasia.

STEVE RUSSELL
While most songwriters get their start in a group, few can say they began in a successful act. But as lead singer of R&B group Troop, Steve Russell has since penned hits like “No Air” and “Take You Down” for Jordin Sparks and Chris Brown, respectively.

Taking a breather after Troop disbanded in the late ‘90s, Russell says he was “traumatized” by the industry’s business pitfalls, but found support by joining the Underdogs production camp. Now, the Rondor/Universal- signed writer has started his own production company, Status Entertainment, and has two acts in the pipeline, Official and Teyonie. In addition, he’s busy writing for Jennifer Hudson, Britney Spears, David Archuleta, Elliot Yamin and Charlie Wilson.

“After working with the Underdogs, I’ve seen them do a lot of business and I’m going to continue the tradition with Status,” Russell says.

FRANKIE STORM
Aside from tutoring a distinctive name, Frankie Storm is someone who’s successfully veered off her initial path. Beginning as a student studying computer science, the Philadelphia native was also a Pepsi-Cola factory security guard by night. Accustomed to the city’s music circles, Storm was asked by a local MC to pen a few hooks—and once she heard her voice in the recording booth, she laid down 17 additional tracks and created a rough demo. Upon hearing the demo, her sister began spinning the songs at her upscale beauty shop and they eventually reached the ears of production duo Dre & Vidal. Soon she met her manager, Todd Rubenstein, and ended up in the studio with Norwegian production team Stargate.

“The first studio session I had was with Stargate,” says Storm, who has a publishing deal with Sony/ATV. “The first two songs I wrote were ‘Please Don’t Stop the Music’ and ‘Song’s On,’ which was also on Rihanna’s album [“Good Girl Gone Bad”]. When you’re writing, you don’t know it’s going to be a hit. I can’t believe I get to hear my song on the radio.”
FROM RUSSIA, WITH POP

Valeriya Sets Her Sights on Western Exposure

BY ILYA BUTS

At home, Valeriya is one of Russia's most recognizable pop stars, with 10 successful albums to her credit. Now she is aiming for acclaim in the West. The artist, who in true superstar fashion uses only her first name, enjoyed a flurry of high-profile press coverage this summer in the United Kingdom, coinciding with the release via iTunes there of first U.K. single "The Party's Over." The track appears on Valeriya's current album, which was released last year in Russia under the title "Out of Control" through indie label Nox Music, run by the singer's husband, producer Joseph Prigozhin. Work on the album began with songwriter/producer Sergey Galoyan, known for his work with t.a.T.u., the Russian duo that broke through on the Billboard Hot 100 in January 2003 with "All the Things She Said." Then Prigozhin and Valeriya decided to start seriously focusing on the international market. Their first contact was Queen producer David Richards; Valeriya recorded part of her album in Richards' Mountain Studios in the Swiss village of Attalens.

Among those who contributed to the album are producer/songwriter George de Angelis (known for his work with Kylie Minogue, the Pet Shop Boys and others); his collaborator, lyricist Francesca Aeschlimann; songwriter Ray St. John (who wrote Sade's "Smooth Operator"); and songwriter Chantal Kreviazuk (Avril Lavigne, Gaelle Stefani, Kelly Clarkson). "Out of Control" was mixed by Simon Gogerly, who won a Grammy Award for his mixing work on U2's 2004 album "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb."

"Serious professionals have faith in our success and wish to share in it with us," Prigozhin told Billboard's Russia edition.

Among Valeriya's other supporters in the West are Robin Gibb, who added his vocals to Valeriya's new recording of Bee Gees classic "Stayin' Alive," which was released in Russia. He also recorded a duet with the singer on her song "Broken Wings," which will appear on the international release of her album and Gibb's own upcoming album

"She's a great artist," the former Bee Gee said in an interview with British TV network Channel 4. "She's been around for a long time and has my admiration."

Gibb was at the March 15 launch of the Russian and English versions of "Out of Control" at Moscow's Most club. Prigozhin also invited several British journalists to the launch and, in the months since, Valeriya has been featured in such British newspapers as the Daily Mail, the Sun and the Sunday Express tabloids and broadsheets like the Daily Telegraph and the Independent, which gave her cover treatment in its Sunday magazine. She was also a guest on several popular English TV shows where she's been dubbed the "Russian Madonna."

Valeriya—a 40-year-old mother of three—was born Alla Perfilova April 17, 1968, in Atkarsk in the Russian province of Saratov. She began her pop ascent in Russia with a debut album in 1992, "The Taiga Symphony," credited to "Valeria." Russia has one of the highest music piracy rates in the world, with unauthorized recordings accounting for some 55% of sales in the country, according to the IFPI, and no independent certification of album sales is available. But by Russian accounts, Valeriya has sold millions of albums in her homeland.

After a break from her career in 2001, Valeriya returned to recording in 2003 in partnership with Prigozhin and Nox Music. In 2006, in Russia, she published an autobiography that described a violent and troubled first marriage, the reason for the break in her career. She cited that experience in August when she was nominated as a goodwill envoy for the International Organization for Migration, which fights human trafficking, including abuse of women.

Unlike in the United Kingdom, "The Party's Over" was released solely as a "white label" promotional single, says Vladimir Voronkov, project coordinator for Nox Music U.K. It has sold 300 copies, according to the Official Charts Co. Voronkov adds that the album and second single "Break It All" will come out early next year on Nox Music. The single is due at the end of January, with the album to follow in early February. A title for the U.K. album and its distributor has not yet been confirmed.

Nox Music has set up a dedicated U.K. Web site for Valeriya at valeriya.co.uk, and additional promotion for her album, coordinated by London-based Quite Great, is to kick in during October, with a London showcase planned for late November.

"It will be a full-scale show," Voronkov says, "for the media, industry and high-profile guests. She will be singing live with a 14-piece band—we'll make a big splash."

Next stop: the United States. "We would like to acquaint America with this fine live performer," Prigozhin says. "We invested our money and labor in the creation of a competitive product and we offer those who would want to become our partners to earn together with us." But we expect a fair, equal partnership. We are not looking for someone's budget or money. We dream of putting on a big show in America," Prigozhin adds. "We would like to bring to the album that is being released in England and we hope that it will find an audience in America."

For more information about Valeriya, visit www.americanradiohistory.com
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As Latin Grammy Awards Move To HOUSTON, Univision Plans Multiplatform Celebration

By Ayala Ben-Yehuda

Organizers of the Latin Grammy Awards pulled off a coup last year, bringing the show’s signature artist pairings and collaborations to Las Vegas, with its tradition of extravaganzas in residence. With buzzworthy performances by Ricky Martin with the Blue Man Group and Calle 13 and Orishas with the cast of “Stomp!,” the 2007 awards on Univision pulled in 12 million viewers and notched the highest ratings in the 18-34 demographic in the history of the telecast, according to Nielsen Media Research, a sister company of Billboard. Now with the ninth Latin Grammys coming to Houston’s Toyota Center Nov. 13, the Latin Recording Academy and Univision are pulling out all the stops to surpass expectations.

“We have been able to communicate more and better to the audience the prestige and pride of being awarded the Latin Grammy,” says Latin Recording Academy president Gabriel Abaroa, who has signed on for another three years at the helm of the organization.

As the nation’s fourth-largest city, according to the U.S. Census (and the third-largest in Latino population, according to the Houston city government), the Texas metropolis is a logical host for the awards.

“We really see Houston as a viewer multiplier and the epicenter of a musical movement that is key for us,” Univision Network senior VP of programming and promotions Otto Padron says.

Citing Houston-bred acts from Selena to A.B. Quintanilla to La Mafia, as well as the success of 2005’s televised “Selena Vive!” concert from the city, Padron adds, “You’ve got a great bed of music there that we will try to embrace... And we can’t discount that Beyonce is from Houston.”

Despite Houston’s association in the Latin world with tejano music, “We’re not going to turn it into a rodeo,” Padron says. As for what the city can offer as far as production values, he adds, “You would be surprised at the warmth of the Houston fan that will compensate for the Vegas showmanship.”

As it has in the past, Univision will summon all its platforms—its broadcast and cable TV networks, its radio network and Univision Online—to draw viewers.

Telefutura will warm up to the awards with content on “Escandalito TV,” and cable channel Galavision will feature Latin Grammy-nominated music. Univision Radio stations will have special countdowns and popular morning radio show hosts, such as Houston’s Raul Brindis and Eddie “Polin” Sotelo, will discuss the nominations on their programs.

Local TV stations will conduct Latin Grammy-related polls to engage viewers, and Houston’s Univision TV station, Channel 45, will do live studio specials.

“It’ll be such... a three-dimensional piece that there won’t be a Hispanic viewer who won’t know that the Latin Grammys are taking place in November in the city of Houston,” Padron says.

That blanket exposure has made the Latin Grammys a highly sought-after performance spot for artists. Martin has used such appearances to launch albums in close proximity to the awards show, as he did with last year’s “Live Black & White Tour!” album and 2006’s “MTV Unplugged.”

Martin’s manager Bruno del Granado says that with such timing, “you have a good solid eight weeks of promotion around it... the impact is across the board on CD sales, ticket sales, exposure and awareness of the artist.”

Though coveted performance spots are usually given to veteran performers, less-established acts can get an even bigger boost. Calle 13 saw sales of its Sony BMG release “Residente O Visitante” jump 132%, according to Nielsen SoundScan, after its career-consolidating 2007 Latin Grammy performance.

With the Latin music industry facing an ongoing crisis in recorded-music sales, labels don’t have as many resources to pay for high-concept performances. Last year, Martin and Calle 13 covered most of their own costs.

The key is not to allow the music industry’s woes to affect the quality of the performance, Abaroa says. “We sit down and negotiate. We try to keep it simple. We try to make sure we are focusing on the main elements of music.”

But sometimes, he adds, “if you want to do something that can be compared to any show on the air, you have to spend money. But if that’s what’s required... hey, it’s worth it. Because it’s good for music.”
ASCAP CONGRATULATES OUR LATIN GRAMMY AWARD® NOMINEES

KANY GARCÍA
4 Nominations
Afro Bop Alliance
Alexis & Fido
Adolfo Angel
Marc Anthony
Ricardo Arjona
Joe Arroyo (SAYCO)
Sérgio Assad
Chuco Avellanet
Aureo Baqueiro (SACM)
Tito El Bambino
Black:guayaba
Belanova
Andrea Bocelli (SIAE)
Cabas
Tego Calderón
Juan Campodonico (AGDU)
Walter Castro (SADAIC)
Manu Chao (SACEM)
Chetes
Daddy Yankee
Vanessa Da Mata
Randy Ebright (SGAE)
José Feliciano
Pedro Fernández (SACM)
Vicente Fernández
Ana Gabriel (SACM)
Alejandra Guzmán
Alejandro Lerner
Toby Love
Gian Marco (SGAE)
La Mari (SGAE)
Sergio Mendes
Miguelito
Robert Miranda
Walter Morciglio
Emilio Navaira
Ednita Nazario
Fito Paez (SGAE)
Laura Pausini (SIAE)
Conjunto Primavera
RBD
Remi
Tony Renis (SIAE)
Jesús Adrian Romero
Rosario (SGAE)
Gonzalo Rubalcaba
Rey Ruiz
Gilberto Santa Rosa
Fernando Santullo (AGADU)
Olga Tañón
Tingui
Tommy Torres

ANDRES CALAMARO (SGAE)
4 Nominations

VICTOR MANUELLE
3 Nominations

JOAN SEBASTIAN
3 Nominations

TONY PELUSO
2 Nominations

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Six Questions with Gloria Estefan

By Leila Cobo

For the first time in its young, nine-year history, the Latin Recording Academy and its board of trustees is honoring a woman as its Person of the Year. But the honor for Gloria Estefan goes way beyond gender. With a career that spans more than three decades and 70 million-plus albums sold, Estefan is the original Latin crossover international star.

First as lead singer of Miami Sound Machine and later as a soloist, Estefan has successfully straddled success in two languages, with her albums in English and Spanish still released in every market that Epic covers worldwide.

During a break from her European tour, Estefan answered six questions for Billboard on what it means to be Latin today.

You are touring arenas, in front of tens of thousands of people. Of course, you've done this most of your life. But is there a routine you follow right before taking the stage?

I try to open all my chakras and I think of all my points of communication. I do a prayer that everything comes out the best it can, and we exchange energy. I imagine a point in the top of my head, in my hands, in my solar plexus.

Do you have any superstitions or talismans?

No, no. I can't stand it. It would be very constructive. If one day you can't do it (or don't have them with you), then you're freaking out. And pretty much, before a show, I try to do things as normally as possible and not make a big deal of what's going to happen. If I start to think that there will be a thousand people staring at me, it's pretty daunting.

Almost from the onset, you had a bilingual recording career, which is still rare. How did this work?

We grew up in a city that allowed us both identities, so we believed very early on that this could work. We were signed with Discos CBS [later Sony Discos] and we did four albums for them, with the bulk of the songs in Spanish. [The single] "Dr. Beat" was on an album called "A Toila Maquina." But we took the original English track and cut a 12-inch single that we took to the record pools and exported to Europe. At the beginning they thought [in Europe] we were an Italian group, when all of a sudden, we go! Epic calling and saying they want to sign us. And we said, "We are signed to you, on your international label!" And they took us over. So, we rushed to the studio and recorded the rest of the songs in English and called the album "Eyes of Innocence," and then we talked them into letting us do the next album in English. And then, we went backwards. When they released albums in English, I would cut the single in Spanish and Sony Discos would promote it.

You were already a star in English when you decided to go back to Spanish with "Mi Tierra." Why?

It's part of who I am. It would have been a travesty to ignore one side of me. I learned English when I started school in the first grade. Spanish is my first language. And it's important for me that my kids be bilingual at the very least, and to know who they are. Imagine ignoring half of my culture. And I think it's just smart to be as broad as you can. It would be a real shame for us to not speak to so many people in the world who speak Spanish. Especially in music. If we hadn't had that Latin edge, I don't think we would ever have had a chance.

You are known for your uptempo fare and your ballads. Any preference?

I initially played mostly ballads because that's what I could play on the guitar. My first song was called "Su Amor Comigo." It was on the B-side of "Renacer." That was 1975, and [husband] Emilio Estefan Jr. said, "I'd like to do an album where we can do some original stuff for the group." And I said, "Well, I've written some poetry, but I've never written just a song. But I'll try." And I did.

But I tend to be very economical as a singer, because as a songwriter, the melody is incredibly important to me. When writing a song, I try to decide which note will really move me. You won't hear me doing many acrobatics. So, even though I feel equally comfortable in both, my music are the ballads. Those are the songs that have had the most lingering impact in my fans' lives. The ones where I can actually communicate an intimate thought.

Even when I write a song, I think very much of what a person will be feeling when they hear it. Will they feel empowered? Will they get ideas? I do think very much about the listener and what impact it's going to make.

In the United States, do you see more and more Latinos turning to English instead of Spanish?

As the Latin population grows in the U.S., the economic and political power we're getting as Latinos has really given us the possibility of being proud of being Latin. Teens will focus more on being American, but if you stress as a family the importance of keeping your culture, it will come back to you later in life. It's not for everyone. Had I grown up in Omaha [Neb.], maybe that would have been impossible. My mother was an exile, I was born in Cuba, and she raised me very much a Cuban because she thought we were going back. It was never to be. But that circumstance in my life is what made me possible in this way.

But that's what's great about the U.S.: If you're in a stew, it doesn't mean you have to dilute the stew.
A Glance At Key Categories For The Latin Grammy Awards

By Ayala Ben-Yehuda and Leila Cobo

The Sept. 10 announcement of the nominees for the ninth annual Latin Grammy Awards began a final round of voting for this year’s honorees. A full recap of the nominees named by the Latin Recording Academy can be found at grammy.com/latin. Here is a quick look at the contenders in three key categories: best new artist, song of the year and producer of the year.

**BEST NEW ARTIST**

Sónia García’s hits from her debut album on Sony BMG, “Cualquier Día,” include “Hoy Ya Me Voy,” “Esta Soledad” and “Amigo En El Baño.” The Puerto Rican singer/songwriter, who blends accessible melodies with bracingly personal lyrics, opened for Franco de Vita on his 2007 tour of Europe and the United States.

Colombia native and Berklee College of Music alumna Mónica Giraldo won Billboard’s 2007 We Hear the Future competition. The singer/songwriter released her bossa nova-, folk- and jazz-influenced debut album, “Todo Da Vueltas,” on Codiscos/Triposounds this year.

Samba artist Diogo Nogueira released his “Ao Vivo” live album on EMI last year. The son of renowned artist João Nogueira kicked off his own career with a big show in 2005 alongside other samba greats in tribute to his father and has since been touring all over Brazil.

Roberta Sá is nominated in the best Brazilian album category for her “Que Belo Estranho Dia Pra Se Ter Alegria” on MP, BDisco/Universal. She brings a contemporary vibe to classic and modern Brazilian music, particularly samba and bossa nova.

Mexico’s Ximena Sariñana went gold with her Warner debut, “Mediocre,” an introspective yet plain-spoken album with alt-jazz sophistication. The actress and singer/songwriter co-produced her album with Tweety González and Juan Campodónico from the band Bajofondo.

continued on p40

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SONG OF THE YEAR

Cafe Tacuba’s “Esta Vez,” written by the Mexican alternative rock band, is from the group’s latest album on Universal, “Sino.” A moody meditation by someone who doesn’t recognize himself, the song alternates between quiet and aching moments, punctuated by soaring keyboards.

Kany Garcia’s “Hoy Ya Me Voy” from her Sony BMG debut, “Cualquier Dia,” is a piano- and guitar-driven breakup song that hit No. 22 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart.

“Todavía” is one of two new songs on Gian Marco’s album “Desde Adentro,” a collection on Caracola Records of songs the Peruvian singer/songwriter had written for other artists. The simple piano and string arrangement, composed during a break in recording, is an example of what Marco calls “organic minimalism.”

“Me enamoré” from Juanes’ album “La Vida... Es Un Ratito” was inspired by his daughters, Luna and Paloma, then 4 and 2. “I fall in love with their eyes,” Juanes quotes from the song. “And they are like my eyes. The song comes from them. From that love that they give.” Joyful and optimistic, the track’s broad appeal made it an international hit. In the United States, the song spent 20 nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart, a feat beamed by only two other acts.

“El Presente” by Julieta Venegas is from the album “MTV Unplugged.” The track is one of four new songs featured on Venegas’ “MTV Unplugged” set. The album and TV special, recorded in Mexico, feature Venegas as co-producer (along with Brazilian cellist Jacques Morelenbaum) and a departure from her more typical, sparse format of guitar, bass and drums. “MTV Unplugged” features 14 musicians, including a string quartet. “El Presente,” the album’s first single, is based on Mexico’s traditional nortena music (the album also features a tuba player) but “it has a strong element of nostalgia,” Venegas says.

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

Italian producer Benoizzo, who has worked on albums by the likes of Ricardo Montaner, Alejandro Sanz and Alexandre Pires, among others, collaborated with DJ Alejandro Acosta and musician Roberto Camacho, a member of Spanish group Chambo, for work on a single album: Chambo’s “Con Otro Aire.” Released earlier this year on Sony BMG, the set features Chambo’s distinctive flamenco chill fusion, with traditional sounds merging with electronica and loops. Chambo’s single “Papeles Moidos” is up for best alternative song but the album itself is not nominated in any category.

Although he has other Latin Grammys to his name, the prolific Sergio George has been up for the producer award but has yet to win it. This year, he comes with a variety of credits under his belt, including Marc Anthony’s album “El Cantante” and tracks by such acts as Gloria Trevi, Tito Nieves with Marco Antonio Solís, and DLG. George’s forte is tropical music, to which he brings contemporary appeal and sophistication.

Newcomer Ximena Sariñana co-produced tracks on her debut album, “Mediocre,” with Tweety González, a veteran Latin alternative music producer. Argentine-born González (real name: Fabián A. González; Amado) already has a Latin Grammy to his name, as co-producer of Gustavo Cerati’s “Ahi Vamos” in 2006. But he’s also known as a keyboardist/producer who long worked with Soda Stereo and who has credits with the likes of Fito Páez and Celeste Carballo. With Sariñana, González achieved a delicate balance: “Mediocre” has been praised by the alt crowd, but it also garnered commercial success, particularly in Mexico.

Respected flamenco guitarist Javier Limón has a discography as a producer that includes acclaimed albums like “Lágrimas Negras” (by Bebo Valdés and El Cigala), which propelled him to win the producer award in 2004. Although Limón initially garnered fame as a flamenco producer, he is now regarded as an expert in music from around the world. This year, he comes to the table with albums by flamenco singer Buika, jazz/pop Chapman/Soledad Gómez and fado singer Martiza.

Argentina’s Cachorro López has also previously won a Latin Grammy as producer of the year. Known for his versatility in pop, Latin rock and Latin alternative music, López’s contributions this year are no exception. His work sticks the gamut from pure pop to salsa to rock and fusion, to the rock of Andres Calamaro, whose album “La Lengua Popular” is nominated in the rock solo category and has tracks nominated in the rock and alternative categories.
Congratulations to our Latin Grammy nominees

Cafe Tacvba
Juanes
Gustavo Santaolalla
Gloria Estefan
Ximena Sariñana
Humberto Gatica
Pepe Aguilar
Emilio Estefan, Jr.
Flex
Mototov
Circo
Djavan
Alberto Gaitan
Ricardo Gaitan
Sergio George
Gilberto Gil
Alí Jey
Jimmy González y Grupo Mazz
Kenny G
Aníbal Kerpel
Kumbia All Starz
Jorge Liderman
Cachorro López
Los Creadores
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LET IT RIP

By Deborah Evans Price

Paisley Plugs In, Rocks Out On Mostly Instrumental Album

It might seem a bit ironic that after winning the Country Music Assn. and Academy of Country Music’s male vocalist titles, Brad Paisley’s next album is an instrumental project. But then Paisley has developed a reputation as a multifaceted maverick who always keeps things interesting, and he does just that on “Play,” due Nov. 4 via Arista Nashville.

“When we settled on Election Day for the release of the album we realized we’re taking a bit of a chance, but we’re taking a chance with this record anyway, so why not?” he says.

“Play” comes on the heels of Paisley’s 2007 album “5th Gear,” which has sold 1.2 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and spawned four No. 1 country singles. He recently scored his eighth consecutive No. 1 on Hot Country Songs with “Waitin’ On a Woman,” a song originally released on his 2005 album “Time Well Wasted,” which he’d promised the song’s writers would eventually be a single.

In recording “Play,” Paisley worked with longtime producer Frank Rogers to record an album that would be palatable to fans who were not guitar aficionados. “The last thing people want to hear is stuff that you have to have a music degree to enjoy. We made this record a little more relatable and commercial than expected,” says Paisley, who won the Grammy Award for best country instrumental performance this year for “Throttlehead” from “5th Gear.” “That’s why we’re taking six months and focusing on it instead of putting it out simultaneously with ‘5th Gear’ or in the middle of any other record.”

“Play” spotlights Paisley’s prowess on the guitar and also includes duets with the late Buck Owens, B.B. King, Steve Wariner and Keith Urban. “Start A Band,” which finds Paisley and Urban trading vocals and guitar licks, is the project’s lead single.

“Move Than Just This Song,” co-written by Paisley and Wariner, is a tribute to their mentors. Wariner salutes Chet Atkins, and Paisley honors a hometown hero. “My guitar mentor was a guy named Hank Goddard, who was a great fingerstyle jazzeroo player somewhere between Les Paul and Chet Atkins in feel,” Paisley says. “I studied with him and he let me in his band when I was a teenager. On the record, Steve plays one of Chet’s guitars and I had Hank’s old Gibson. Each of us tried to play not like ourselves but like our mentors.”

The backbone of the project is Paisley’s soulful guitar playing on such tunes as “Huckleberry Jam,” penned for his son, and “Kim,” inspired by his wife. “Sometimes in a song like that, the spaces can mean as much as any note, especially when it’s a name like Kim. There’s a part where it breaks down into a minor section and gets dark, and trust me, that happens in real life as well,” he says with a laugh.

“Waitin’ On a Woman” appears as a bonus track and features Andy Griffith speaking, as he did in the video. “That was probably the biggest response we’ve ever gotten to one of Brad’s videos,” Arista Nashville VP of marketing and artist development Jon Elliot says. “Brad does that version in concert with Andy on the big screen. We thought it would fit the album really well.”

Paisley is slated to appear on “Good Morning America” Nov. 4. “Obviously people will be tuning in on their way to work,” Elliot says. “He was also on ‘Good Morning America’ on Sept. 17 as part of their 50 States in 50 Days campaign. He performed two songs on a farm in Ohio and talked about the new album.”

The election timing also lends itself to “some interesting viral stuff,” Elliot says. “We think this will be one of those albums that if word-of-mouth starts on it, it could be one of those coffee-table albums people want to have in their collection. It fits a lot of different formats and a lot of different age groups.”

Paisley admits people frequently comment after his concerts that they were stunned by his guitar skills. “I think what’s happened over the years about some of the things I’ve done probably could be credited to this instrument as much as anything, allowing me to open up my mind and go some places unexpected,” says the artist, who began playing at age 8.

And while “Play” is somewhat of a departure from his usual studio albums, Paisley thinks fans will enjoy the ride. “It is my love affair with this instrument,” he says. “Hopefully, we won’t lose momentum with this record. If we do, then I’ll just have to work twice as hard to get it back, but it’s worth the risk because it’s such a labor of love for me.”

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The Upward Spiral
Clean Keane Looks To Reconnect Globally

The multiplatinum English band that was almost derailed by personal problems has relocated its mojo. Keane by name and keen by nature, the melodic rock trio from Sussex has sold about 8 million copies of its two albums, according to its U.K. label, since emerging some four-and-a-half years ago. With the subsequent drink- and drug-related tribulations of lead singer Tom Chaplin now firmly in the past, the band’s creative enthusiasm is refueled to overflowing.

“I’ve seen what it’s like on the other side, and I don’t ever want to go there again. This is a liberated record,” Chaplin says of “Perfect Symmetry,” due Oct. 13 internationally and the following day in the United States on interscope. “When you sail so close to the edge and then come back, you learn to appreciate what it is [you enjoy] again. We didn’t have that sense of fun for a while. We were pretty earnest.”

Keane’s 2004 debut, “Hopes and Fears,” racked up global sales estimated at 5.5 million by Island. So a mere 2.5 million for 2006 follow-up “Under the Iron Sea” was something of a letdown. Nielsen SoundScan shows the respective U.S. figures as 976,000 and 373,000, although “Sea” charted higher, debuting at No. 4 on the Billboard 200. “Hopes” had peaked at No. 45.

“We’ve built up a huge live following in America and the first record obviously did incredibly well,” Chaplin says. “We toured there with the second record and the crowds got bigger, but [the album] didn’t seem to impact as much as the first one. Whether the Americans get this record or not I don’t know, but I hope the openness and poppiness of it will have a big impact.”

“Symmetry” was introduced by perhaps its most uncharacteristic-sounding track, the synth-driven “Spiralling,” which was initially available in the United Kingdom as a free download from Keane’s Web site (Billboard, Aug. 23). Although not an official single, its subsequent availability as a paid download saw it climb to No. 23 on the Official Charts Co.’s Sept. 13 singles tally.

“We put ‘Spiralling’ around the markets,” Universal Music Group International London-based senior VP of international marketing Tony Harlow says, “and maybe it’s gone further than we expected it to, onto playlists in places like Holland. In other markets, you’ve got [the album’s official first single] ‘The Lovers Are Losing.’ The U.S. [has made] ‘Spiralling’ their single. You can do that these days—we’ve effectively gone with a two-single plot.”

Tom Land, London-based UMGi director of international marketing for Interscope/A&M/Geffen, says “Spiralling” shipped to college and specialty radio the week of Sept. 2 and had an early add at alternative rock KVGS Las Vegas. The video had its U.S. broadcast premiere Sept. 27 on VH1. “Interscope have always taken a lot of ownership in the band,” Harlow says, “and that’s helped drive a real global picture. For example, March 2009 is already blocked out for a Latin-American tour. Not many of our bands can go into those markets [like that], but they’ve built that fan base already.”

A U.K. launch show Sept. 29 at London’s Forum precedes a European tour confirmed for Oct. 27-Nov. 20. Tickets for a 13-date U.K. arena tour kicking off Jan. 23 went on sale Sept. 25. But further hands-on work is required to develop the band’s audiences in Japan and Australia, Harlow adds, “where we didn’t get to at the end of the last campaign. With Keane we’re more international than almost any other new rock band.”

“There’s so much playing safe with bands these days,” Chaplin says. “It seems a lot of them burst onto the scene and then for the next five years are essentially making the same record. We feel we’ve made a record that’s been lurking in us for a long time. With this album it was, ‘It’s our band—we can do what the fuck we like.’”

Big Mama Thornton-inspired version of “Hound Dog.”

“They’re head arrangements, which means we didn’t have [formal] class or anything. It’s an amazingly flexible group; we would do seven takes of a song like ‘Witchita Lineman’ or ‘It’s Growing’ and, by God, there they were.”

A special CVQ edition of the album includes four more songs — Wilton Pickett’s “In The Midnight Hour,” Eddie Floyd’s “Knock on Wood,” the Sillouettes’ “Get A Job” and “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning” from “Oklahoma”—which may also be made available as a digital EP for buyers of the regular version of “Covers.”

Hear Music/Concord Records senior VP of marketing Margi Cheeks says the label has high expectations for “Covers,” especially after the top 20, gold-certified showing of 2007 live album: “One Man Band.”

“This is right in the pocket for pretty much any consumer,” she says. “It’s a beautiful record. The band is stellar. Fans who saw [Taylor] live this summer already heard a lot of these songs. We just need to make sure that his core audience and other people that are adults know it’s out and hear it and buy it.

The campaign for “Covers” actually began with Taylor and the band playing on QVC Sept. 12 and on ABC’s “Good Morning America” Sept. 15. He also has appearances lined up on “The Colbert Report” (Sept. 30), NBC’s “Tonight Show” (Oct. 7), Public Radio International’s “The Tavis Smiley Show,” (Oct. 8) and an Oct. 22 stop on PBS’ “Charlie Rose” with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who played on “Suzanne.”

Taylor is also taping a segment for Sundance’s new “Spectacle: Elvis Costello With…”

Other promotional plans for “Covers” include a special Oct. 7 in-store performance at Borders Books & Music’s headquarters store in Ann Arbor, Mich., for the company’s “Live at the One” series and an inclusion on Borders’ “Shortlist” e-mail, along with 30-second and longer direct-response TV spots. Hear Music has also put together a series of making of electronic press kits of various lengths that will be distributed to art film houses and used in Delta Airline’s In-Flight entertainment package. A full-page ad in USA Today will remind fans that these are songs they heard Taylor and company play during the summer tour.

“This Is Growing,” meanwhile, went to AC stations Sept. 22, while triple-A will be presented with the album.

“We just throw these things out there and take a run at it,” Taylor says. “There’s something about this band and the context in which we recorded the songs, the sort of live energy that the thing had, that makes this very special. I think that translates into what people will hear.”

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Michael Guldimann says, while the album sold 300,000 copies. Released Aug. 11 in Denmark, “Electric Cabaret” peaked at No. 2 on the IFPI/Nielsen chart and shipments have passed 22,000 units, according to the label. The album contains two radio hits, April’s “Downtown Boys” and “Whenever You Need Me,” released in August.

Guldimann is plotting European releases with Border Breakers’ licenses. Germany/Austria/Switzerland will be first on the list, through EMI. “They will lead with ‘Whenever You Need Me’ and follow up with ‘Downtown Boys,’” Guldimann says. “The first single will be out this year, and the album will be released in most territories early next year.”

According to Guldimann, EMI is also considering releasing the album in the United Kingdom, United States and several other territories. Booking is handled by Copenhagen-based AHM and London-based Marshall Arts Talent. Inernal’s music is published by EMI Publishing.

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The vines

Michael Smirke
LIVIN OUT LOUD

Livin Out Loud seemingly exists in series of alternate universes. In the United Kingdom, a handful of the R&B quarter's singles have been in rotation at dance clubs and urban radio, remixed by prominent DJs, for the last four years. In the American South, they've attracted listeners and programmers at adult R&B radio. In Japan, the act has sold 2,000 vinyl copies of the single "More Than a Fantasy," released via Mo's Music. Not bad for a group based out of Hollywood.

"I guess we have what you call crossover," Livin Out Loud member and creative producer Reuben MacCalla says. "Whatever you call it, the foursome is having some obvious success drawing attention on this side of the Atlantic (and Pacific): Two singles, "Lately" and "I Can't Stop," have made it onto Billboard's Hot Adult R&B Airplay chart, with the latter currently sitting at No. 59. But Livin Out Loud earned its acclaim in England first before winning over audiences in the United States. When MacCalla's brother and business partner Thomas shopped the band's 2003 single "More Than a Fantasy" to U.K. DJs, he made an immediate fan out of Mike G from Choice FM, who spun the track the same afternoon he heard it.

From there, producers and DJs like Karl "Tuff Enuff" Brown, SAM Productions and 2Darck started making their own remixes of the effort. Livin Out Loud was soon invited to open for Ne-Yo at the Hammersmith Palais in London and completed its full-length effort, "Then and Now," in 2004. A sampler of that set went out with 80,000 copies of (ill-fated) British magazine Blink. "We know the competition for airplay (in Los Angeles) is tough so we wanted to try to start somewhere different. We just never thought it'd be 10,000 miles away," MacCalla says. To tackle "competition" stateside, the group left its future in U.S. radio in the hands of promotion veteran Jesus Garber, who has worked his magic on stations like KOKY-FM Little Rock, Ark., and KMEZ New Orleans. Additionally, the group's song "So Amazing" was the featured track in director Bob Mardis' documentary "Keeping the Faith," which examined the role of faith-based organizations in the rebuilding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

"I Can't Stop" is culled from the group's most recent album, "What About Us," released digitally Aug. 19. The physical release will hit stores Nov. 18 with distribution from Fontana. Livin Out Loud also has a digital release deal with Urban Essentials/Pinnacle in the United Kingdom.

Contact: Reuben MacCalla, reuben.maccalla@kin-productions.com

CATCHING UP WITH UNDERGROUND ALUMNI

Project Jenny, Project Jan (Feb. 4, 2006) are featured acting in, and on the soundtrack to, "Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist," opening Oct. 5...O'Dea (June 7, 2008) signed with Kemado Records, which will release "Broken Hymns, Limbs and Skin" Oct. 29...Jordan Burgar at the Agency Group has signed on as the agent for Katie Herzig (June 7, 2008)...Lockley (June 18, 2005) will headline MTV's Choose or Lose tour this fall.
**The Billboard Reviews**

### ALBUMS

#### ROCK

**TV ON THE RADIO**

*Dear Science*

**Producer:** David Sitek

**Release Date:** Sept. 23

On "Dear Science," TV on the Radio utilizes the same recipe that helped it cook up indie cred with its critically acclaimed albums "Desperate Youth, Blood Thirsty Babes" and "Return to Cookie Mountain." Take Tunde Adebimpe's gritty, eerie vocals; add skidding indie to "2008's"; and top it off with the heavy orchestrations of producer David Sitek. It's all well and good, but we've mostly heard it before. There are cool sounds to explore, like the choir of reedy voices on "Golden Age," the '70s exploitation movie guitars of "Red Dress" and the dramatic piano ballad "Family Tree." Yet without any real progression from previous work, "Dear Science" seems destined to be the wallflower in TV on the Radio's catalog. —LJW

**JACKSON BROWNE**

*Time the Conqueror*

**Producers:** Jackson Browne, Paul Dieter

**Inside Recordings**

**Release Date:** Sept. 23

Six years after his last set of original material, Jackson Browne has a lot to say—big surprise, eh? The veteran troubadour has never pulled his lyrical punches, and "Time the Conqueror" muses on Browne's usual mix of politics and the human condition, with a dose of nostalgic sentimentality that bears all the rich melodic and intricate nuance of his vintage work. He asks, "Why is imprinting not on the table?" in "The Drums of War"; trips through the horrors of Katrina-battered New Orleans in the gritty "Where Were You?"; and questions U.S. foreign policy on "Going Down to Cuba." The past, meanwhile, informs "Giving That Heaven Away" and "Off to Wonderland," in which Browne recalls innocent days of "living with an unknown band" and laments that that halcyon era "didn't really leave us with the love to find our way."—GG

**BEN FOLDS**

*Way to Normal*

**Producer:** Dennis Herrig

**Epic**

**Release Date:** Sept. 30

Returning to his signature goofy and rocking style after 2005's decidedly sober "Songs for Silverman," Ben Folds exorcizes personal demons (he recently finalized a protracted split from his wife) on this ambitious and energetic effort. But excluding the semiserious ballads "Kylie From Connecticut" and "Cologne," the album as a whole is a vessel for childhood and, pianist behavior (the snarky "Bitch Went Nuts") and weird instrumentation (the musical theater-esque "Effington"). It's been a small while since Folds thumbed his nose at adulthood as the frontman for Ben Folds Five, yet he's missed it with rapid-fire piano jars. But although he seems to have rediscovered his panache, the music supporting his narratives is still lacking the originality of his best work. —LJW

**BLITZEN TRAPPER**

*Furr*

**Producer:** Eric Earley

**Sub Pop**

**Release Date:** Sept. 23

For its Sub Pop debut, this Portland, Ore., sextet dials down the obscurity heard last year's "Wild Mountain Nation." "Furr" is a more consistent body of work, a perfect fall soundtrack rife with woody imagery. Popper rockers like "Sleepy Time in the Western World," "Gold for Bread" and the Wilco-esque "War Against Machines" match nicely against the backwoods tales of the title track and the rootsy "Black River Killer." "Saturday Night" would make the Scissors Sisters smile, and a creaky old piano usher in "Echo/Always On/Ed Con" before breaking into a trippy '70s keyboard jam. Following the breakthrough success of Fleet Foxes, Sub Pop scores again with this promising combo. —JM

#### R&B

**JAZMINE SULLIVAN**

*Fearless*

**Producers:** Various

**J Records**

**Release Date:** Sept. 23

Jazmine Sullivan may be just 21, but the singer's songwriter proves herself a veteran in the game of love on her debut, which has already spawned the No. 1 Billboard Hot R&B/Hi-Hop Songs chart hit "Need U Bad," produced by mentor Missy Elliott. She sure doesn't sound like someone whose bad side you want to visit, based on songs like the Salaam Remi-produced "Bust Your Windows," where a brokernhearted Sullivan confesses to smashing the windows of her cheating boyfriend's car, and "Call Me Guilty," about murdering an abusive partner. Luckily, the Philly native sounds less scorched on the encouraging, whistle-laden "Dream Big" and the playful, doo-wop inspired "Switch," which details her liking a date's best friend. —MC

#### ELECTRONIC

**THE ELECTRONIC CORPORATION**

*Radio Retaliation*

**Producers:** Rob Garza, Eric Hilton, T.I.-Beatz

**ESL Music**

**Release Date:** Sept. 23

It's fitting that Thievery Corporation chose this campaign season to release its highly political fifth studio album, with tracks condemning war, government dishonesty and suppression of freedoms. The Washington, D.C.-based dub/electronica duo also went with a popular approach to promotion, previewing the full album via Like and Facebook five days before release. "Radio Retaliation" is nothing if not inclusive, featuring musicians and vocalists from Nigeria, India, Japan, Iran, Latin America and the United States. While the set could be more dynamic with greater variation in tempo, the producers blend their vast range of influences in innovative ways, such as injecting bold funk horns into the sitar-dominated "Mandala" or setting an engaging mix of synth, guitar and African percussion to a cha-cha rhythm on "The Forgotten People." "Superfly"-worthy funk tune "The Numbers Game," featuring Chuck Brown, is also a standout. —EN

#### COUNTRY

**KELLI PICKLER**

*Keller Pickler*

**Release Date:** Sept. 30

The 17-year-old country star's self-titled album is a refreshingly honest effort with tracks like the catchy "Let Me You Know," which details her liking a date's best friend. —MC

**NELLY**

*Brass Knuckles*

**Producers:** Various

**Universal**

**Release Date:** Sept. 16

There's only one track on the new Nelly album that doesn't include cameos from such urban-music A-listers as T.I., Snoop Dogh, Usher and Fergie. (As it happens, the sole solo cut is called "One and Only.") Considering that "Brass Knuckles" is the St. Louis rapper's off-delayed follow-up to 2004's somewhat underwhelming "Sweet/Suit," project, skeptics might wonder if the sprawling guest list is an admission of falling commercial prowess. So it's to the MC's credit that "Brass Knuckles" still feels like a party. Check out "Body on Me," on which Akon and Ashanti surround Nelly's verses with sizzling melody, and "Let It Go," where the headline act rides a funky Neptunea beat. Throughout, Nelly and his high-wattage pals throw down with abandon, not anxiety. —MW

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**ROBIN THICKE**

*Something Else*

**Producers:** Robin Thicke, Pro J

**Star Trek/Interscope**

**Release Date:** Sept. 30

Don't take the title of the follow-up to 2006's platinum plus "The Evolution of Robin Thicke" as a sign that this well-connected R&B crooner has changed up his style. He did between his grab-bag 2003 debut and "Evolution." Long on breathy sensitive male ballads about how he understands your hopes and shares your desires, "Something Else" picks up right where Thicke left off with the last album's hit single, "Lost Without U." Given his weakness for bongos and syrupy strings, the new set isn't without a whiff of schmaltz; more than once you'll think he's about to cover "Take My Breath Away." Fortunately, Thicke's strong singing—and a few winning uptempo numbers, including the infectious "Magic" and the R. Kelly-ish "Sidestep"—right the ship. —MW

**ANI DIFRANCO**

*Red Letter Year*

**Producers:** Mike Napolitano, Ani DiFranco

**Righteous Babe**

**Release Date:** Sept. 30

Ani DiFranco's 16th studio album is unlike...
all the ones that came before it. There are still the incisive metaphors, the artfully wielded acoustic guitar, the political made personal and back again. But the dominant force on "Red Letter Year" is comfort rather than restlessness. The 37-year-old singer-songwriter is a new mom in love with her daughter's dad, and the experience has saturated every element of her work, from the way she sounds, to her voice and guitar, to the lessons learned at the end of her familiar narratives. "I don't mind traffic cops or the TSA/Long as I'm with you I'm having a good day," she sings on "Smiling Underneath," about the peace of happy coupledom. That's not to say that she's gone soft. The long-time activist still takes on nuclear energy ("The Atom"); religion ("Alla This") and all of the incarnations of the patriarchy. -KM

PETE SEEGER
At 89
Producer: David Bernz
Applesseed
Release Date: Sept. 30
The folk icon's first record since 2003 is less an album than the audio version of whiling away an afternoon at Seeger's upstate cabin. It's a pleasingly indulgent collection of songs, stories and detours that will be something of a treasure for longtime fans and packs at least a dozen treats for relative newbies. (There are 32 in all, 26 previously unrecorded, including stories, introductions and at least one "Nameless Banjo Riff.") Seeger grudgingly nods to his own mortality on tracks like the extremely sweet "Little Fat Baby," a grown-up narrative with lines like, "Some day, we'll be saying so long/Some day, it'll be time for me to move on/Best of all is 'False From True,'" a rat-a-tat throwback that finds Seeger settling into a sweeter melancholy tale of nostalgia and hope and "separating true from false." -JW

JAZZ
PAUL MOTIAN TRIO
2000 + 2
Live at the Village Vanguard, Vol. II
Producer: Stefan Winter
Winter & Winter Records
Release Date: Sept. 9
This is certainly arecommended album for anyone who harbors a penchant for the more abstract jazz forms. Drummer Paul Motian leads a trio—Larry Grenadier (bass) and Chris Potter (tenor sax)—and augments his threesome with pianist Masabumi Kikuchi, alto sax man Greg Osby and viola player Max Manieri. The seven tracks include five original pieces, though the two covers, "Till We Meet Again" and "If You Could See Me Now," are so thoroughly reinterpreted that they may as well be originals too. Osby and Potter embark on an extended flight of free-form fancy on these tracks, as we hear quite vividly on "The Third Walk." The vitality of the improvisational impulse that rules this disc is most compelling on the tune "The Divider," a striking ensemble performance that's equal parts discipline and spontaneity. -PVV

LEGEND & CREDITS
EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS) AND CHUCK TAYLOR (SINGLES)
CONTRIBUTORS: Marcel Conception, Hilary Creasy, Gary Greff, Eve Hagg, Jim Mason, Michael Mencher, Jill Menzo, Deborah Evans Price, Shad Reed, Chuck Taylor, Kim Tucker, Phil Van Vleck, Jeff Vosbel, Chris Williams, Mike Wood, Levina Jones Wright

R&B/HIP-HOP
KANYE WEST
Love Lockdown (4:30)
Producer: Kanye West
Writer: K. West
Publisher: not listed
Roc-a-Fella
Despite the overt familiarity of his vocals, tribal drum sounds and piano help "Love Lockdown"—the first single from Kanye West's upcoming '808'S & Heartbreak'—grab an authentic, innovative vibe. As he's doing throughout '808's & Heartbreak', this is still hip-hop, utilizing the extreme auto-tune effect that has been so popular lately. But rather than emphasizing the novelty so much as many of his contemporaries, West wisely structures the song around percussion and allows the instrumentation to outshine his own voice. After performing the song at MTV's Video Music Awards, West, in typical blusterous fashion, called "Love Lockdown" his best song ever. That's belying the truth (see "College Dropout" track "Family Business''), but it's definitely a fine moment from one of hip-hop's forward thinkers. -SR

ESTELLE FEATURING KANYE WEST
American Boy (3:57)
Producer: Will.i.am
Writer: W. Adams, E. Swaray, K. West
Publisher: not listed
Atlantic
S Rapper hip-hop song about an African Boy" is finally percolating at multiple radio formats. After hitting on 18 various global charts—including No. 1 on the U.K. singles chart—the trans-Atlantic partnership of hip hop producer Estelle and Kanye West is destined to earn its due. Her elegant delivery and confident vocals offer a refreshing alternative to much of what's permeating the radio. Praise reminiscent of the pretty R&B voices of the '70s that sweetened up love songs and classic R&B disco. Will.i.am lends his skills to songwriting with West and Estelle, along with production duties, including a not-so-subtle sample of his own 2007 "Ima Pain." But this is hardly a recycled masterpiece. It's the launch of a bold new career. -NN

CHRISTINA AGUILERA
Keeps Gettin' Better (3:03)
Producer: Linda Perry
Writers: C. Aguilera, L. Perry
Publishers: various
RCA
It's hard to believe it's been 10 years since Christina Aguilera and her Disney teen pop crew ("The Inkredibles," "Inkredibles," "Ride." "Dido" is a solid cut, deserving of airplay. Hood needs to unveil more creativity to move beyond nodown status. -HC

ACE HOOD
FEATURING TROY SONGZ
Ride (4:28)
Producer: The incredibles
Writers: M. Carpenter, L. Elliott, J. Molliens, T. Pain, T. nieves
Publisher: not listed
Island/Mercury
At this point in hip-hop, it takes little more than paint-by-numbers to create a hitmaking rapper. Enter Ace Hood. A prototype of hip-hop mover DJ Khaled, Hood tries his hand at the obligatory female-skewed radio track with "Ride." Offering synthesizers, thick keyboard chords and a double drum beat, this incredibles-produced track itself is a recipe for radio spins. Meanwhile, crooner Troy Songz' hook, sweetly describing what a hustler like Hood needs to do survive, almost overshadows his own lyrics, however good they are. Ultimately, while "Ride" is a solid cut, deserving of airplay, Hood needs to unveil more creativity to move beyond nodown status. -HC

COUNTRY
SUGARLAND
Already Gone (4:35)
Producer: Byron Baltimore
Writers: Jettles, Bush, Pinson
Publisher: not listed
Mercury Nashville
The Inkredibles's second single from third No.1 country CD "Love on the Inside" could be a more dramatic departure from the country/pop sound of previous chart-topping "All I Want To Do." "Already Gone" is a counry waltz that spins around three scenarios, each sung with characteristic passion by Jennifer Netyles, who, in a short period of time, has become one of the genre's most distinctive voices. Each verse takes a journey, with the third carrying aching emotional weight, as vivid lyrical images detail a failed relationship. While it's nice to finally hear partner Kristen Bush, who does his best. Jon Bon Jovi imitation at the tail end of the song, it doesn't fit the overall theme. But it's a safe bet that "Already Gone" is going to be another signature hit for this power-house duo. -CW

CHAD HUDSON
Somebody Find Me a Preacher (3:40)
Producer: Mickey Jack Cones
Writers: S. Minor, W. Mobley
Publishers: EMI Blackwood/ Shane Minor/Warner- TAMERLANE, BMI
Robertson: Nashville/Timberlake, Spars) Brand new song sounds more urgent or exuberant than in the potent debut single from Austinitte Chad Hudson. His warm, wonderfully textured voice grabs listeners by the heart and will have them hanging on every word as he launches into the chorus: "Somebody find me a preacher, somebody find me a man with a bible who can't be a knot. No long white dress, no little white church, just you in your cut-off jeans and my old 'T-shirt.'" The lyric captures the intense feelings of a guy eager to make the ultimate commitment and Hudson's personality-packed vocals make this song a definite winner. It's a breath of fresh air that deserves to be heard, from burgeoning imprint Robbins Nashville. -DEP

ACAB TRIP
BASS, RHYTHM & DRUMS
THOMAS "BONE" MCINTOSH
BASSIST
"I try to keep my bass sound solid and punchy so that it can tie in with the rest of the band. I'm not afraid to experiment and try new things in the studio and on stage. I enjoy collaborating with different musicians and exposing myself to new sounds every day." -B.M. 

DIDO
Don't Believe in Love (3:54)
Producer: Jon Brion
Writers: D. Armstrong, J. Brion, R. Armstrong
Publishers: Universal/MGB, ASCAP
Aria
The millionaire is just blossoming when Dido captured in the United States with top 40 No. 3/AC No.1 "Thank You" from debut disc "No Angel," followed by top 40 No. 8/AC No.2 "White Flag" from "Life for Rent," which has sold 21 million copies stateside in 2003. It's a lifetime later in pop's paradigm, but Dido hasn't forgotten Dido's innate charms—and adults are likely to follow suit. Ambling, downtempo "Don't Believe in Love" covers mighty familiar ground—and creatively, that's disappointing—but the song's moody disposition conjures comfort, familiarity and immediacy. Sarah McLachlan's return with radiant "I Want Me 2" is comparable: Those searching out singers they adore will find kinship in Dido's full-length "Safe Trip Home, "due Nov. 4. -CT

www.americanradiohistory.com
Whole Lotta Hank

Agreement Paves Way For Williams Treasure Trove

It took a fortuitous find and years of legal wrangling, but some of Hank Williams' lesser-known recordings will soon be available for mass consumption. "The Unauthorized Recordings" includes performances from the "Mother's Best Flour" radio program, which Williams hosted on the legendary WSM-AM Nashville in 1951.

Time Life will release the 143 recordings in various packages in the next three years through an exclusive agreement with the Williams estate. The first set is due Oct. 28.

Williams and his band prerecorded 72 shows to run while they were on tour. The shows were later recorded on 16-inch acetate discs that were later thrown into the trash during a station move in the '60s but salvaged by WSM employee Les Levett.

In the 80s, Jerry Rivers, who played fiddle for Williams as part of the Drifting Cowboys Band and later recorded daughter Jeti Williams, told her about the "Mother's Best" show. He then introduced her to Levett, who turned over the original acetates. But getting the rights to the music wasn't simple: "I had possession of the acetates but they had already been duplicated way before I had entered the picture," Williams says.

Indeed, they had. PolyGram Records claimed exclusive rights relying on Williams' contract with its predecessor in interest, MGM Records. Meanwhile, Legacy Entertainment claimed rights to the recordings under a chain of title. At one point Levett had assigned his rights to former Drifting Cowboy Bill Bumtrum, who had in turn sold them to Legacy, which had actually replaced the Drifting Cowboys with another band on its version. A series of suits eventually ruled in favor of the Williams estate, ending an eight-year legal battle.

Enter Time Life. While the company usually focused on licensing and packaging previously released material, in recent years Direct Holdings America, which licenses the Time Life brand, has focused on developing new material and acquiring original content. Through its Saguaro Road label it has recently released albums from Patty Loveless and Joan Osborne, among others.

Williams says that even devotees of her father's music will find something new here. "Unless you were listening that morning in 1951, you've never heard that version of "Cold Cold Heart,"" she says. "You may have heard the master, but you've never heard the Feb. 3, 1951, version of Hank Williams singing it."

"The fidelity of these recordings are better than his MGM masters," she says. "These have not been enhanced or tinkered with. It's as if it was 1951 and my dad was recording it right then. It was a one-time take."

In addition to Williams' best-known material, the recordings include 40 songs he was never known to have performed and others he never recorded commercially, including "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," "Coochie Boogie" and "On Top of Old Smoky."

Time Life will spread the word about the set through publicity, online marketing and giveaways with Web sites and radio stations. To a lesser extent, direct-response TV advertising will also be employed. "Our model is so old it's new," senior VP of audio and video retail Mike Jason says with a laugh. "We're talking directly to consumers."

While the basic boxed set, with more than 40 pages of liner notes, three discs and 54 songs, will carry a price point of $39.98, there will be alternate packages with varying prices. The three-CD set is augmented with a DVD for a Sam's Club exclusive, which includes a series of conversations involving Jeff Williams, Drifting Cowboy Don Helms, artist and Big Bill Lister and WSM engineer Glenn Snoddy.

The basic three-CD set is augmented with a fourth disc, which includes three complete shows, for Reader's Digest mail order. The Wal-Mart single CD features 15 songs, plus a bonus track of Williams and WSM personality Louie Buck talking, while truck stop radio personality Barjan will tell a set that features 12 gospel songs, one of which, "I'll Fly Away," isn't available elsewhere.

Unlike many releases, Time Life sees itself as having a different life span, according to Jason. "We sometimes sell more of something six or eight months after it's on the market," he says. "We have that slow-steader-patient-sharing-it-with-everybody-approach."
TRIBAL TRAIL

As a former Royal Marine and one of U.K. TV's best-loved adventurers, Bruce Parry is used to challenges—but can he master the music business? Parry is the star of BBC TV's award-winning series "Tribе," which followed his experiences living with some of the world's most remote communities. Co-produced by the BBC and the Discovery Channel, it ran for three seasons (2005-07).

"At the end of 'Tribe," Parry says, "my life had become this extraordinary gift. Yet some of these tribal communities are having a really hard time. They're being persecuted and losing their land and dying of disease. That juxtaposition made me really want to give something back."

Parry duly approached a string of artists and labels with the idea of donating their services to an album that would be a fund-raiser for human rights organization Survival International. The resulting double-album, "Amazon: Tribes for Survival," was released digitally Sept. 15 with a physical U.K. release to follow Oct. 6 on London-based, PIAS-distributed Knseltown Records, owned by producer Martin Terefe (KT Tunstall, Martha Wainwright).

Parry says he gave the artists a DVD showing the charity's work plus a simple brief for their contributions: "It's about tribal people and it's about the Amazon."

"I was just delighted to be part of it," says Tunstall, who donated a new song, "The Hidden Heart." "It sounded fantastically exciting from a creative point of view and [was a] really worthwhile, fulfilling project from a social perspective."

The set features acts as diverse as Tunstall, Hot Chip, Yusuf Islam (the former Cat Stevens) and New Zealand rockers the Ruby Suns. The first disc features songs inspired by the DVD. The second contains dance/really worthwhile, fulfilling project from a social perspective." The set features acts as diverse as Tunstall, Hot Chip, Yusuf Islam (the former Cat Stevens) and New Zealand rockers the Ruby Suns. The first disc features songs inspired by the DVD. The second contains dance/really worthwhile, fulfilling project from a social perspective."

For more information, visit www.americanradiohistory.com.

RIGHT AS RAY

Ray LaMontagne appears to have a hit on his hands with "You Are the Best Thing," the first single from his upcoming third studio album, "Gos-sip in the Grain."

The soulful, horn-laden tune, which is also the opening track on the 14- track RCA release, jumped five spots to No. 16 on Radio & Records' Sept. 26 Triple A chart. Not bad for a tune that was one of the last things LaMontagne and producer Ethan Johns came up with for the album.

"We had kind of finished the record and felt like we were missing that song," LaMontagne says. "There wasn't anything to open the record. Ethan and I talked about trying to shift the track list, and we still couldn't find anything. That's when we knew we had to go back to the studio and do something.

I just flew back over [to England, where the album was recorded] and started rummaging around in the bag to see what I had.

What LaMontagne found, however, was something different from the up-tempo final result. "It was written as a real sort of slow jazz ballad with a very different structure," he says. "But I also had in my head the version you're hearing. It's important, I think, when you're writing songs not to get attached to the form of them. You always have to be open to making something better."

That attitude is partly responsible for the song's early start, RCA Music Group VP of marketing Aaron Borns says. "The feel and tone of it has been such a fun surprise for people," Borns says. "It's given the project a whole different spin; people were excited about the record anyway, but there's a 'wow' factor to this song."

LaMontagne previewed "You Are the Best Thing" at R&R's Triple A Radio Conference in August in Boulder, Colo., and RCA took the track to stations a couple of weeks later. Amazon, meanwhile, has just premiered a video for the song; it's LaMontagne's first, though he doesn't appear in the clip.

"It gives people a visual aspect of Ray, which we've never had before," says Borns, who adds that the video will be shown wider after an exclusive run with Amazon.

"You Are the Best Thing" is LaMontagne's third charting single, following "Trouble" in 2005 and "Three More Days" in 2006, both of which hit No. 5 on the Triple A tally. —Gary Graff

Who Is Kevin Rudolf?

New Cash Money Signee Rides Wave Of Success

You may not know him yet, but Kevin Rudolf is on his way to being on regular rotation on your iPod. Signed to Cash Money/Universal Republic earlier this year, the 25-year-old musician recently released the single "Let It Rock" featuring Lil Wayne. The track sold 71,000 downloads in the United States this week, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and leapt 33-21 on the Billboard Hot 100.

Hoping to ride the coattails of Wayne's recent success, Rudolf is eying a Nov. 25 release for his debut album, "In the City."

"I came up with the track at home back in June and played it for Wayne. He loved it and wanted to jump on it. We mixed it three days later and it was on the radio a few weeks after that," Rudolf says. "Then, when Wayne did a million in a week, we knew we had to put my record out now to take advantage of his success."

Rudolf, who's been playing guitar since the age of 12, got his start after a chance meeting with producer Timbaland in 2004. "I was always a songwriter, but I got into production after my friend Jimmy Douglas introduced me to Tim," he says. "I brought my guitar to the meeting and ended up playing on a bunch of tracks," including Nelly Furtado's "Say It Right," Lil Kim's "The Jump Off" and Timbaland's "Scarem." A year-and-a-half age, the 25-year-old decided he'd release his own project after getting a "real vision of what I could contribute as a producer, musician and songwriter and tapping into my own voice," he says. One day last January, while at New York's Hit Factory studio, Rudolf met Slim from Cash Money Records. After playing some of his songs for the music executive, Slim offered him a record deal.

Now, the New York native is ready to release "City," which he describes as "a conceptual album that follows the story of my experiences—it's like a coming-of-age story in NYC."

Produced entirely by Rudolf with the exception of a track by the Neptunes' Chad Hugo ("We were in the studio the day and head in the room and said he wanted to do something with us. We banged some music out that same night.") the set features tracks like the epic ballad "Great Escape" and the Big Apple dedication track "N.Y.C.," which will be included on the soundtrack to the film "Fighting," starring Terrence Howard and slated to hit theaters later this year.

To help promote the album, Rudolf will start a radio tour next month and plans on scheduling a national tour later this year.

"I have been very blessed and feel really lucky. I've been hearing some crazy stuff, like 'Let It Rock' is Ryan Seacrest's and Lindsey Lohan's favorite song right now," a stunnued Rudolf says. "There's no info or pictures of me anywhere, yet the track has taken a life of its own. The music is truly speaking for itself."

...
Metallica Holds Strong; Christmas Coming Early

As we view the second chart sum of Metallica's "Death Magnetic," I think of longtime label exec Lou Mann and the old slogan, "It's not where you start, but where you finish.

After nearing half a million copies in a short three-day frame, Metallica's modest second-week dip impresses almost as much as its opening total.

Down 31%, it moves 337,000 copies in its first full week on the market, bringing its sales to date up to 827,000, fairly impressive considering that total was rung in just a 10-day window. Since the album initially shipped 1.4 million copies—a total driven by retailers' confidence—its 800,000-plus peak means the title is not overexposed, especially considering that gift-shopping traffic licks just around the corner. "Death" is the ninth album this year to start at 300,000 or more and the 29th to do so since the start of 2007. Acknowledging that it's a bit of an apples-and-oranges comparison, as none of those other 28 albums began with an abbreviated sales frame, Metallica's second-week decline is the smallest among them.

Prior to this, the smallest percent-age decline from this year's 300,000-plus start had been the 45% slide by Sugarland's "Love on the Inside," which began with 314,000 deluxe-edition sales, then 171,000 in week two when the standard issue arrived. Comparing apples to apples, 800,000-plus for Metallica in a window of 10 days is less than the 1.6 million that Eminem's "Encore" did during a similar window in November 2004, but more than the 780,000 that Metallica's "St. Anger" pulled in the first two chart weeks in June 2003.

BIG OOPS: If you've been reading Billboard long enough to remember when Inside Track spread over three columns, you might fondly remember the phrase "Track Erred." Well, Over the Counter erred last week and I'm shocked no one called me on it.

So, for the record, the last album to debut at No. 1 in an abbreviated opening before Metallica's "Death Magnetic" was the band's "St. Anger," but rather Eminem's "Encore." Like "Magnetic," the Eminem set got slated for a Friday release, the difference being that while the current chart champ was always scheduled for a Friday, that 2004 rap album was rushed from a planned Tuesday start.

In that brief window, "Encore" sold 711,000 copies and then managed to move even more, 871,000, in its first full week of sales.

DENIED: Metallica's strong continuity prevents Ne-Yo from going three for three with No. 1 on the Billboard 200, although his streak of acers remains intact on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums.

His "Year of the Gentleman" opens with 250,000 sold, just 1,000 less than the opening total for his last solo album, "Because of You," which hit the market in May of last year and has sold 979,000 copies to date. The soulful singer/songwriter's best week happened when debut album "In My Own Words" started with 301,000 in 2006. It represents his best seller, having rung 1.6 million to date.


In the interim, Wal-Mart sales prices of less than $10 have the band's classic titles peppering Top Pop Catalog on billboard biz, with "Back in Black" topping the list for a second straight week. The 22-times-platinum set moves 11,000 in the tracking week. Of those, 82% come from mass merchants, and we're guessing most of those are from Wal-Mart.

AC/DC also holds Nos. 16, 23, 25, 28 and 45 on Top Pop Catalog, each with a decided mass-merchandizer share.

EARLY SEASON: Since Josh Groban's "Noel" managed to be the best-selling album of 2007 in just three months' time, there is greater awareness of Christmas albums this year. Thus, Nielsen SoundScan and billboard biz will post the Top Holiday Albums chart next week, the earliest we've ever shown the seasonal chart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>WEEKS</th>
<th>PEAK WEEK</th>
<th>LABEL / DISTRIBUTING / PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Buble</td>
<td>Call Me Irresponsible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim McGraw</td>
<td>Greatest Hits: Limited Edition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasputia</td>
<td>Still Feels Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 selon (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Beautiful Eyes (EP)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interscope (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicente Fernandez</td>
<td>The Greatest Story Ever Told</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Atlantic (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ednita Nazario</td>
<td>Real. En Vivo</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SonyBMG (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Antebellum</td>
<td>Lessons in Love</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Epic (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adele</td>
<td>The Stand Ins</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<td>FloBots</td>
<td>Fight With Tools</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garth Brooks</td>
<td>The Ultimate Hits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Wilson</td>
<td>That Lucky Old Sun</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Good Time</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Interscope (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apexiacha</td>
<td>Finding Beauty In Negative Spaces</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death Cab for Cutie</td>
<td>Narrow Stairs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Matador (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOnn Klang</td>
<td>Northern Songs: Canada's Best &amp; Brightest</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Warner Bros (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ommegang</td>
<td>Last 2 Walk</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Roadrunner (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Kids On The Block</td>
<td>It's Time To Shine</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>SonyBMG (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death Cab For Cutie</td>
<td>Northern Songs: Canada's Best &amp; Brightest</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Warner Bros (18.98)</td>
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<td>New Kids On The Block</td>
<td>It's Time To Shine</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>ONE REPUBLIC</td>
<td>Dreaming Out Loud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eagles</td>
<td>Long Road Out Of Eden</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>Sundown: Music For Unwinding</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Brad Paisley</td>
<td>5th Gear</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Striker</td>
<td>Total Dance 2008: Vol. 2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dragonforce</td>
<td>Screamin'</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death Cab For Cutie</td>
<td>Live From Las Vegas Exclusively At The Palms (EP)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Interscope (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Broussard</td>
<td>Keep Coming Back</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Finger Death Punch</td>
<td>The Way Of The Fist</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kardinal Offishall</td>
<td>Not 4 Sale</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrence Howard</td>
<td>Shine Through It</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
<td>Just Who I Am: Poets &amp; Pirates</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marnie Carey</td>
<td>Never Say Goodbye</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>Saint Sadie</td>
<td>Worlds Corida</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Time Low</td>
<td>One Kind Favor</td>
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<td>Patti Loveless</td>
<td>Sleepless Nights</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>O.A.R.</td>
<td>All Sides</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trace Adkins</td>
<td>American Man: Greatest Hits Volume II</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Mayer</td>
<td>Continuum</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Offspring</td>
<td>Rise And Fall, Rage And Grace</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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<td>Three Days Grace</td>
<td>One X</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
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**Note:** This chart reprints chart data from October 4, 2008.
### HOT 100 Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Whatever You Want</td>
<td>Republic Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Closer</td>
<td>Republic Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Can't Believe It</td>
<td>Island Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Miss Independent</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>What a Girl</td>
<td>Atlantic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>My Life</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>She Never Cried in Front of Me</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>A Mill</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>She Thinks She's Perfect</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>End of the World</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Don't Know Why</td>
<td>Atlantic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>When You Sleep</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Dear Miss Desire</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The Time of My Life</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Hot n Cold</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I Love You</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Locked In</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I'm Yours</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Movers</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I'm In Love</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I Don't Want to Be Happy</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>I'm Still Missing</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>I'm Gonna Be Strong</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Just the Way You Are</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Just Thinkin'</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Never Let You Go</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Never Enough</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Now That We Found Love</td>
<td>Epic Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>No Air</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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### HOT 100 Digital Songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Love Lockdown</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>So What</td>
<td>Universal Republic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Whatever You Like</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gotta Be Somebody</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Need a Bad</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>American Boy</td>
<td>Atlantic Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Leaving</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Numb</td>
<td>Elektra Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Not Ready For Your Love</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Young Love</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I Think I Don't Think About It</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Pocketful of Sunshine</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Body on Me</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>One Step at a Time</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>When I Grow Up</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hot 100 Airplay Chart Notes
- **Title:** Indicates the title of the song.
- **Artist:** Names the artist(s) performing the song.
- **Label:** Lists the record label(s) releasing the song.
- **Certification:** Shows the certification status of the song.
- **Hit Potential:** Indicates the potential of the song to climb the charts.
- **Greatest Hit:** Marks songs that have reached the top 10 on the Hot 100.
- **Weeks:** Lists the number of weeks the song has remained on the chart.

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- **Weeks:** Lists the number of weeks the song has remained on the chart.

**Data for week of OCTOBER 4, 2008**

**Hot 100 Airplay**

**Hot 100 Digital Songs**

**Charts:**

1. Billboard Hot 100 Airplay
2. Billboard Hot 100 Digital Songs

**Pricing/Configuration/Availability:

- **Hot 100 Airplay:**
  - Airplay ratings are based on detections of the song through various radio formats.
  - Songs are rated every week based on detections.
  - Songs are removed from the chart if they fall below No. 20 in two consecutive weeks.
  - Songs are removed from the Hot 100 if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks.

- **Hot 100 Digital Songs:**
  - Digital downloads are rated based on sales figures.
  - Songs are rated every week based on sales figures.
  - Songs are removed from the chart if they fall below No. 20 in two consecutive weeks.

**Format:**

- **Hot 100 Airplay:**
  - Airplay ratings are based on detections of the song through various radio formats.
  - Songs are rated every week based on detections.
  - Songs are removed from the chart if they fall below No. 20 in two consecutive weeks.

- **Hot 100 Digital Songs:**
  - Digital downloads are rated based on sales figures.
  - Songs are rated every week based on sales figures.
  - Songs are removed from the chart if they fall below No. 20 in two consecutive weeks.

**Additional Notes:**

- **Hit Potential:**
  - Indicates the potential of the song to climb the charts.
  - Songs with a hit potential are marked with an asterisk.

- **Greatest Hit:**
  - Marks songs that have reached the top 10 on the Hot 100.
  - Songs with a certification of Gold or above are marked with a gold record symbol.

**Certification Levels:**

- **Gold:** 500,000 copies sold
- **Platinum:** 1,000,000 copies sold
- **Diamond:** 10,000,000 copies sold

**Hot Dance Club Play**

**Additional Notes:**

- **Hot Dance Club Play:**
  - A chart focused on dance-oriented music.
  - Songs are rated based on detections at dance clubs.
  - Songs are removed from the chart if they fall below No. 20 in two consecutive weeks.

**Additional Notes:**

- **Hit Potential:**
  - Indicates the potential of the song to climb the charts.
  - Songs with a hit potential are marked with an asterisk.

- **Greatest Hit:**
  - Marks songs that have reached the top 10 on the Hot 100.
  - Songs with a certification of Gold or above are marked with a gold record symbol.

**Certification Levels:**

- **Gold:** 500,000 copies sold
- **Platinum:** 1,000,000 copies sold
- **Diamond:** 10,000,000 copies sold
**TOP MUSIC VIDEOS**

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<thead>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>DISTURBIA</strong></td>
<td><strong>1100 VONDO BOUND</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DAVID ARCHULETA</strong></td>
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<td>The Time Of My Life, Miley Cyrus, Demi Lovato, Demi Lovato</td>
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<td><strong>THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID</strong></td>
<td><strong>CAM RUSSEL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>IF I NEVER TELL YOU</strong></td>
<td><strong>KELLY CLARKSON</strong></td>
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**VIDEO MONITOR**

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Data for week of October 4, 2008 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 59
## HOT COUNTRY SONGS

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<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
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## TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

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<td>HEIDI NEWFIELD</td>
<td>What Am I Waiting For</td>
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<td>That Lonesome Song</td>
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- **Data for week of October 4, 2008**
- For chart reprints call 646.654.4633
- Go to [www.billboard.com](http://www.billboard.com) for complete chart data.
### TOP R&B/ HIP-HOP ALBUMS

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<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<td>Young Jeezy</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
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<td>Three 6 Mafia</td>
<td>SBE Records</td>
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<td>Brass Knuckles</td>
<td>T-Pain</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
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<td>The Carter III</td>
<td>Jay-Z</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
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<td>Love &amp; Life</td>
<td>Faith Evans ft. Snoop Dogg</td>
<td>J Records</td>
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<td>The Way I See It</td>
<td>R. Kelly</td>
<td>J Records</td>
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<td>B.G. &amp; Chopper City Boyz</td>
<td>Chopper City</td>
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### MAINSTREAM R&B/HIP-HOP

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### RHYTHMIC

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<td>Body On Me</td>
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### HOT RAP SONGS

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<td>Put On</td>
<td>Ne-Yo ft. Nicki Minaj &amp; 2 Chainz</td>
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<td>Body On Me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never Ever</td>
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<td>If I Ever</td>
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Data for week of October 4, 2008

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

Charts Legend on Page 59

www.americanradiohistory.com
### HOT CHRISTIAN ALBUMS

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<td>Brandon Heath</td>
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<td>もう一つ聞かせて</td>
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### HOT ELECTRONIC ALBUMS

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### HOT ELECTRONIC AIRPLAY

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Data for week of October 4, 2008. For chart reprints call 646.654.4633. Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### Billboard HITS OF THE WORLD

**Japan**

**United Kingdom**

**Germany**

**France**

**Canada**

**Italy**

**Spain**

**Portugal**

**Wallonia**

**Switzerland**

**Finland**

**Euro Digital Songs**

**Euro Radio Airplay**

**Euro Singles Sales**

**Euro Digital Songs Light**

**Euro Airplay**

**Euro Airplay**

At No. 4 on Euro Airplay, Paul Rodgers teams with Queen for the latter's first studio album since 1995's "Made in Heaven."
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REAL ESTATE

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High atop the ocean side of Sonoma Mountain, in the Wine Country lies a prestigious, gated, 6 building country estate & world-class recording studio with views of the Pacific Ocean. Situated on nearly 9 acres this compound boasts 7 bedrooms, 9 baths, 6 fireplaces, & lush gardens backed by award-winning landscape design.

There are 2 guest houses, a theater & entertainment suite, exercise gym and pool cabana & bath, a large Pebble bottom heated pool & spa, 3 horse pastures, a poolside kitchen, a 2-story tree house & a world-class recording studio disguised as a New England barn barn across the private road.

The amazing views and the perfect mix of vintage, American & state-of-the-art digital make this one of the most unique & inspiring music creation and recording venues in the world. Included in the sale are all furnishings, decorations, and equipment. INQUIRE ABOUT THE UNIQUE ADVANTAGES OF THIS PROPERTY
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EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: Nacional Records/Cookman International names Gerardo Vergara VP of operations. He was director of national marketing at Univision Music Group.

Sony BMG Nashville promotes Alison Booth to the newly created position of VP for the company's A&R department. She was senior director of A&R administration.

Universal Republic Records appoints Trina Tombarkin senior director for triple A promotion. She was senior director of triple A promotion at Columbia Records.

PUBLISHING: Sony/ATV Music Publishing elevates Jim Vellutato to VP of A&R. He was senior director.

TOURING: Live Nation promotes Jason Garner to the newly created position of CEO of global music. He was CEO of North American music.

MEDIA: MTV Networks International taps Antonio Campo Dall'Orto as executive VP of music brands. He will retain his current responsibilities as managing director of Europe South, which comprises Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

RELATED FIELDS: Licensing consulting company Rights-Flow ups Matt Irvin to senior manager of licensing. He was project manager.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

D-PAN HOSTS GALA FUND-RAISER IN DETROIT

"The only thing a deaf person can't do is hear," says Joel Martin, co-founder of the Deaf Performing Artists Network in suburban Detroit. That's why some 350 people packed the Magic Bag club Sept. 19 in Ferndale, Mich. to celebrate D-PAN's efforts to create music videos for—and by—the deaf, as well as the release of the organization's first DVD, "It's Everybody's Music Vol. 1."

The $100-per-head crowd of hearing and deaf people was feted with a stroll in the park, dinner and raffle tickets. D-PAN's videos for such songs as John Mayer's "Waiting On the World to Change" and Fort Minor's "Where'd You Go," which incorporate the deaf artists' signing as active parts of the performance rather than merely interpreting the lyrics. Songs were performed by Deaf and hearing-impaired signers. The evening also featured a live re-creation of Eminem's "Lose Yourself," while Detroit musicians Liz Lann sang Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful," another D-PAN project.

The evening also rolled out the Feel the Music technology developed at the University of Michigan that allows the deaf and hearing-impaired to feel musical vibrations even more vividly via special floor platforms and wired seating areas. The school is offering a $10,000 prize for any student who can create a portable product for manufacture.

"You have to get into this totally different mindset," says "Lose Yourself" co-writer Luis Resto, also a member of Was (Not Was), who performed a set with his own band that featured two interpreters signing his lyrics for the audience.

Martin, whose Sound studio has been Eminem's main recording base for many years, says the company's videos have scored more than 500,000 hits on YouTube and more than 1 million on D-PAN's own Web site (d-pan.com). D-PAN hopes to produce about 10 clips per year and, Martin says, "create a market that was not there before for the record companies and for the deaf performers."

—Gary Graff

CAPITOL RECORDS PUB CRAWL

Capitol Records Nashville hosted its second annual Pub Crawl Sept. 18 on the streets of Nashville. Approximately 9,000 fans packed Monument Street to hear free live music from artists Trace Adkins, Darius Rucker, Emily West and Luke Bryan, who returned by popular demand for his second Pub Crawl. Photos courtesy of Chris Hollo/Mollo Photography except where noted.

Backstage at Capitol's Pub Crawl, from left: Trace Adkins, Darius Rucker, Emily West, Luke Bryan and Capitol Nashville CEO Mike Duncan


Emily West and Luke Bryan right, interviewing Trace Adkins for "GAC Nights." Photo courtesy of Mollo Photography

Trace Adkins was in Capitol's Pub Crawl, performing current hit single "Lose 'Til You Better (with the Choir of Nashville)."

Capitol Nashville's national promotions VP, Natalia Wels, was dressed in one of the nights' $10,000 prizes.
INSIDE TRACK

WHOLE LOTTA LED

There's not a single note of unreleased material to be found within, but Rhino's upcoming 10-disc Led Zeppelin boxed set is likely to be a hot commodity during the holiday retail season. Due Nov. 4, the package includes all nine of the band's studio albums plus the odds-and-ends compilation "Coda," housed in mini-LP replica sleeves with artwork from the original U.K. vinyl releases. The attention to detail is eye-popping: "Led Zeppelin III" has its gatefold sleeve with a rotatable laminated card disc, while six different versions of the cover for "In Through the Out Door" are featured. Even the complex "Physical Graffiti" inner/outer covers are faithfully reproduced.

As for that pesky Zeppelin reunion, don't hold your breath for Robert Plant's participation. But word is that Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones and Jason Bonham have been rehearsing, and this week the name of Alter Bridge singer Myles Kennedy began circulating through the rumor mill as a possible sub for Plant onstage. Is it Zeppelin without Plant? You be the judge.

Wydell Jean, left, and Sony BMG Commercial Music Group president John Ingrescia attend the Sony BMG party at the Film Lounge during the Toronto Film Festival, held Sept. 10-13.

After playing the first concert at Berlin's new arena, O2 World Spree 12, Metallica was presented with United Buddy Bears statues, which symbolize the city. Picture the vantage from left: Q Prime Management co-founder Peter Mensch, Metallica's Lars Ulrich, Universal Music Germany president/CEO Frank Bruegmann, Metallica's James Hetfield, Universal Music Germany managing director of international Thorsten Koepp, Metallica's Kirk Hammett, O2 World Berlin GM Mike Keller, Universal Music Germany senior director of promotion for international Sven Kithau/Lander, Metallica's Rob Trujillo and Universal Music Group international senior VP Tony Harlow.

STAND UP FOR A CURE

Dave Matthews Band headlined a sold-out benefit concert Sept. 10 at New York's Madison Square Garden. Raising funds for the cancer research group Stand Up for a Cure, Matthews was joined by opening act Ingrid Michaelson and actress Julia Roberts, who hosted the event. Celebrity DJ Samantha Ronson spun tracks at the pre-party.

ABOVE: From left: Dave Matthews, Julia Roberts and Stand Up for a Cure executive director Jordan Belkin.

Below: Original Signal artist Ingrid Michaelson hangs backstage with RED senior VP of promotion Danny Buch after her opening set.

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