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Whose Space?
MySpace Caters to Majors, Not Indies

BY BOB FRANK

As president of Koch Records, the No. 1 independent in the United States, it is my obligation to counter MySpace’s effervescent statements that patronized the independent labels and informed us that we were being offered the same deal as the majors. In a nutshell, MySpace has given equity to the majors in what appears to be an unhealthy and anti-competitive arrangement while treating the indies as second-class citizens.

A recent MySpace quote regarding Carelle Underwood shows a mind-boggling lack of understanding of the marketplace, or, as I like to say, the field of battle. It’s as if zero market analysis was done. It reads as follows: “If MySpace features an independent or unsigned artist next to a major-label artist like Carelle Underwood, that helps us traffic to the non-major label artist.” Incredible! For our upcoming Hatebreed and Bubba Sparxxx records we can only hope to be so lucky. Koch Records has been the top U.S. independent for seven years running. We have had many platinum downloads, ringtones, hit singles and No. 1 albums. Last week we had the No. 1 independent album in the States with DJ Khaled’s latest. Maybe if we had positioned him next to Underwood, we would have done 60,000 copies instead of 50,000 the first week. We’ll never know. We don’t need to be close to Carelle (although I do wish she was signed to us).

The global independent sector includes many labels like Koch. We are a public company with a global presence and our peers are the many other labels including Beggars, Domino and Epitaph that have global heft and which will be the major players of value of MySpace. Yet MySpace seems to view the indies as all operating out of garages and basements. It is unconscionable that it gives equity positions to the majors and treats independents as lowly serfs after having built its service on our backs—MySpace acknowledges. Independents made up 27.5% of the global music market, according to the most recent stats from Music & Copyright (2006), yet no consideration was given.

In regard to the equity issue, which is at the crux here, should we ask how this happened? When this service was first announced, we were thrilled and didn’t think the independents would be left to fend for ourselves, as happened in the Kazar settlement with the majors. My first thought after learning of the equity play was that MySpace didn’t understand that the major-label market share numbers include many embedded independents. We can only assume it was ignorance. Indies distributed by the majors should ask where their equity is.

This agreement reduces competition by putting majors in a better position. Their equity makes them stronger. We have to ask ourselves, “Did MySpace push the majors to lower their standard penny rate per stream in return for equity?” This may be the big question that independents need answered. It smells like reverse-engineered, 21st-century digital price fixing. We do not feel we are being quintox. It’s simply about fair dealing in the marketplace. MySpace doesn’t have a monopoly on social networking sites and this was shortsighted on their part. Essentially the majors have the same deal as the majors. They are now MySpace. It makes no sense that the majors will benefit from the utilization of our content via their equity without our participation.

To be clear, our issue is not with the majors having equity but with MySpace believing that we would accept this without similar terms. The most obvious solution to solve this was an equity independence for the independents would be to deal with Merlin, the global rights body for indies. Koch is one of the founding members of Merlin, which was established precisely to enable services like MySpace to deal simply and easily with the diverse independent community, and we support its efforts. MySpace continually says it is embracing the independents. Well, it’s still a pretty cold and listless embrace.

Bob Frank is president of Koch Records (kochrecs.com).

Feedback

We recently learned of your first act since the passing of Neil Aspinall and it is a sad day for mom-and-pop record stores and Beatles fans who choose to shop with record stores. Where once Apple releases would be made available to all music stores, the Beatles’ legacy is now jeopardized by your decision to select Best Buy as the exclusive retailer of the DVD documentary “A Together Now” about the Beatles and Cirque du Soleil’s “Love” show. This is a very sad turn of events and one that I hope will not become the standard practice for future Beatles projects.

To Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Olivia Harrison and Yoko Ono I implore you not to listen to the siren song for this type of business practice. We understand the lure of big marketing plans but there is a better way, and it should always include record stores. We still hold out hope that Apple will once again remember that it was a record store owner who first loved the Beatles and gave them their wings. We ask that you to treat us lovingly and cherish what we bring to the music community.

Peace and love.
Michael Kurtz recordstoreday
Indies Mull More Aggressive Stance In Digital Market

When it became clear that independent labels were not going to acquire equity stakes in the MySpace Music venture that the major labels received, the reaction from the indie community was swift and impassioned (see Opinion, page 4). The emotional response reflects a renewed desire among indies to press for equal treatment in a digital music market that is rapidly becoming more competitive.

There was a time when the independent community had much of the digital playground to itself, as major labels were reluctant to license their music to services other than online retailers and monthly subscription services that only provided downloads wrapped in digital rights management restrictions.

Times have changed. During the last year, the majors have reversed their position on DRM-free downloads and free on-demand streaming. Last.fm, in turn, and, most recently, MySpace all now offer full-track on-demand streaming of major-label content when previously they were forced to limit streams to 30-second samples or block the music completely.

David Pakman, outgoing CEO of indie music subscription service eMusic (billboard.biz, Sept. 29), says he feels confident that indie labels will retain an edge in the digital music market.

"Sure, the indies are going to get more competition as the majors get more competitive in the digital space," Pakman says. "But there are always 10 more deals to be done and 10 more services to support, and the indies are always the first out the door supporting them."

But amid efforts by the majors to extend their online reach and fresh from the recent sting of the perceived MySpace Music slight, indies and their representatives and distributors like Merlin, the Independent Online Distribution Alliance and the Orchard feel compelled to take on more of a major-label-like negotiating stance in pressing their rights. Merlin president Charles Caldas, one of the more vocal critics of the MySpace deal, acknowledges that a shift in this direction is possible.

"We're never going to be in a position to act like we're Universal," Caldas says. "But we can be more strategic with regards to how we deal with new services. We're not going to be asking for anything of that nature, but we are going to be more aggressive going forward."

Yet there is also growing evidence that indies are benefiting from the addition of major-label content to the services they once had to themselves, which may require that they use caution in their quest for equal treatment.

While not providing specific figures, several online streaming services tell Billboard that the volume of music from independent and unsigned artists increases when the service gains access to major-label catalogs. Take Last.fm. Before it finalized deals with all the majors to allow free on-demand streaming, only music from indie and unsigned artists who uploaded their content to the service was available for full-track streaming. In January, the CBS subsidiary added full-track streaming from all four major labels, which has helped boost traffic, although Warners Music Group pulled out in June due to a dispute over compensation rates.

In August, Last.fm had 2.4 million unique visitors in the United States, up 83% from a year earlier, while average time spent on the site totaled three hours and 46 minutes, up 53%, according to Nielsen Online. And a company representative also says Last.fm has seen a surge in on-demand streaming for major-label and indie tracks since it added music from the majors, although specific data wasn't immediately available.

With added traffic comes greater revenue. Indie artists and labels in the past received nothing for allowing services like imeem, Last.fm and MySpace to stream their music; it was purely promotional. These services have since implemented ad-supported models primarily to attract major-label content, from which the indies can now benefit.

Importantly, the equity stake the majors get in MySpace Music—which is at the heart of the independent community's discontent—allows for a much more lucrative ad-sharing deal for all. Sources say the major labels waived the per-stream minimum fees they historically demanded from ad-supported streaming services in return for equity. With that minimum gone, MySpace can simply offer a straight revenue split on ad revenue, which many say makes the model more viable.

"The majors have done a great thing by trying to make that media model work," Pakman says. "It means the model can be profitable, and that's exciting."

But the indie groups believe their content is of vital, if sometimes overlooked, importance to the success of any service. The Orchard CEO Greg Scholl says that services offering only major-label content have failed in the past, while indie-only eMusic continues to thrive, and as such says to expect tougher negotiations going forward.

"Yes, revenue goes up for everyone when majors add their content, because they drive more customers to the site and a rising tide lifts all boats," Scholl says. "But we will continue to be very aggressive as we strike deals with services. We want to drive for parity, and we are focused more on profit sharing. We want to establish a high benchmark for ad-supported services."

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Digital Gains Partly Ease Physical Pain

Three-quarters of the way through 2008, there are signs of substantial shifts in the U.S. music industry, all of them pointing to a digital future.

Combined U.S. sales of albums and track-equivalent albums (or TEA, where 10 digital tracks equal an album) totaled 377.4 million units during the nine months ending Sept. 28, down 5.3% from 398.6 million units during the same period last year, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

That marked a steeper fall than the 4.7% year-on-year sales drop recorded during the first half of 2008, which was about half the 9.1% decline posted during the year-earlier period.

But year-to-date sales through Sept. 28 also represent a slower rate of decline compared with the first nine months of 2007, when sales fell 8.4% from 435 million units a year earlier.

Digital music sales continued to play a crucial role in staunching ongoing heavy losses in physical sales. Combined sales of digital albums and TEA, totaling 126.8 million units, accounting for 33.6% of combined album and TEA sales, up from 24.3% from the same period last year.

As they have during the last two years, digital track sales slowed in the third quarter from the previous two quarters, totaling 231.3 million units, down from 261.3 million in the second quarter and 281.4 million in the first quarter. But year-on-year, digital-trac sales grew remained robust, surging 36% during the quarter from 194.9 million units the year earlier.

Digital track sales during the first nine months of 2008 were also up 30% from a year earlier to 793.8 million.

Digital album sales jumped 32% to 47.3 million, accounting for 15.9% of total album sales, up from 16.0% during the same period last year.

But physical sales into the mix and the picture looks far gloomier. Combined sales of physical and digital albums fell 11.7% to 298 million units during the first nine months of the year from the same period last year, slowing from a 14.2% decline posted in the year-earlier period but accelerating slightly from an 11% decline in album sales during the first half of 2008.

The obvious culprit was tanking CD sales, which dropped another 17.1% to 499.2 million units, again slowing somewhat from an 18.5% plunge a year earlier but worsening from a 16.3% decline posted during the first half.

Eleven albums sold at least 1 million units through the end of the third quarter, compared with 20 during the same period in 2007. The top-selling title was Lil Wayne’s “Tha Carter III,” with 2.5 million units sold. By comparison, Daughtry’s self-titled debut album, the top selling title by the end of third quarter 2007, had sold slightly more than 2 million units.

Among digital albums, Coldplay’s “Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends” was the sales leader through the end of the third quarter with 548,000 units sold. During the first nine months of the year, four albums passed the 200,000-unit mark in album sales, while only two titles managed to do that during the same period last year.

Thirty-four digital tracks reached the million-unit sales mark during the first nine months of the year, led by Leona Lewis’ “Bleeding Love,” which was downloaded 3.1 million times. Six other tracks also topped the 2 million mark. In 2007, when the best-selling track at the end of the third quarter was Gwen Stefani’s “Sweet Escape,” 26 tracks had sold at least 1 million units, and of those, two had passed the 2 million mark by the end of the third quarter.

Sales of current album titles—that is, titles within the first 18 months of their release or older albums that stay in the top half of the Billboard 200 and/or are active at radio—fell 16.5% to 169.3 million units from 202.7 million units during the same period last year. Sales of catalog albums—titles older than 18 months and not meeting any of the other current-title qualifications—are down 4.5% to 281.6 million units from 296.1 million units in 2007.

Looking at gener, sales of rock albums showed the greatest resilience during the first nine months of the year, slipping 4% to 99.6 million units from 103.7 million during the same period last year.

All other genres were down from last year as well. But the genres that managed to limit sales declines to single digits were gospel, down 6.9% to 3.9 million units; new age, down 9.6% to 1.3 million units; and soundtracks, down 8.5% to 14.5 million units. Genres suffering sales declines outpacing the overall 11.7% fall in U.S. album sales included country, down 16.6% to 30.9 million units; classical, down 13.1% to 7.9 million units; and Latin, down 17.8% to 19.4 million units. R&B dipped 18.3% to 55.2 million units, and within that genre, rap was down 19.3% to 25 million units.

Among store types, the decline of financially troubled distributor Handleman and the shift of its business to Ander- son Merchandisers failed to slow declining sales in the mass-merchant sector. During the first nine months of 2008, mass-merchant sales eroded 17.4%, accelerating from a 16% decline recorded during the first half of the year. Meanwhile, independent slowed their decline, with album scans down 7.7% through the end of the quarter, compared with a first-half decline of 8.3%

Nontraditional stores, the lone bright spot in retail, saw sales climb 19% for the nine-month period, albeit with growth slowing slightly from the 20% increase those merchants enjoyed in the first half of the year. In the intervening period, Starbucks, a nontradi- tional account, has scaled back in-store music sales.

In terms of record-label market share, Universal Music Group remained the leader during the first nine months of the year, accounting for 31.9% of U.S. album and TEA sales, ahead from down from 32.2% in the same period last year. Sony BMG Music Entertainment, now known as Sony Music Entertainment following Sony’s ac- quisition of Bertelsmann’s 50% stake in their joint venture, still holds the No. 2 spot with 24.3%, but that’s down from 24.9% a year earlier. Warner Music Group continues to grow mar- ket share, climbing to 21% from 20.2% a year earlier, as does the independent sector, which col- lectively had a 13.6% share of U.S. album sales through the end of the third quarter, up from 13% during the same period last year. EMI, on the other hand, de- clined slightly to 9.2% from 9.7% last year.

HOW THE NUMBERS STACK UP

Sales and Share Trends For The First Nine Months Of 2008

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<tr>
<th>Albums Market Share</th>
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Digital tracks: 2007 2008

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Super Bowl, Super Sales

History suggests that Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band can expect to enjoy a sizable lift in sales after they leave the stage following their Super Bowl XLIII halftime show at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla., in February.

An analysis by Billboard (see chart, right) shows that performances at the big game have boosted album sales by as much as 420% the following week. It doesn’t happen all the time, as Tony Bennett and Patti LaBelle can attest. But given Springsteen’s superstar status and reputation as an album-oriented artist, his catalog is likely to enjoy some post-Super Bowl “Glory Days.”

LEARNING TO FLY

A Super Bowl performance can generate lots of online buzz as well as sales. Look what it did for Tom Petty, who played at Super Bowl XLI Feb. 3. The percentage of U.S. blog posts mentioning Petty jumped Dec. 2, on the news that he would play the halftime show. Blog posts climbed again leading up to the game. And then on game day and the day after, whoa ohh!

TOUCHDOWN

U.S. album sales data for some of the biggest sales jumps following a Super Bowl halftime performance, excluding albums that sold fewer than 1,000 units.

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U.S. album sales data for some of the biggest sales jumps following a Super Bowl halftime performance, excluding albums that sold fewer than 1,000 units.
Jerry Reed
1937–2008

"Son, every dream I ever had, came true."
—Jerry Reed

Memorials to Jerry Reed’s favorite charity: Wounded Warrior Project (https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/)

Photo: www.normanseff.com
**CONSENSUS RULES**

**Industry Backs New Mechanical Royalty Rates**

After years of acrimonious debate and wide ranging proposals over how to best set mechanical royalty rates for the next four years, the music industry responded favorably and perhaps with relief to the U.S. Copyright Royalty Board’s decision not to stray from existing statutory or prevailing industry rates for physical product, permanent digital downloads and master ringtones.

The CRB also adopted the terms of a historic industry settlement on rates for two other types of services: interactive streaming and digital rights management-wrapped downloads. In that agreement involving the National Music Publishers Assn. (NMPA), the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International, the Songwriters Guild of America, the RIAA and the Digital Media Assn. (DiMA), the settlement agreed upon, in general, a mechanical royalty rate at 10.5% of revenue, less composition performance royalties, for interactive streaming and limited downloads.

The CRB’s decision wrapped up the first mechanical royalty proceedings since the development of legal online music services and were thus the first to set statutory rates for digital music.

Until now, permanent digital downloads, such as those at Apple’s iTunes store and Amazon, were set by industry agreement at 9.1 cents, while rates for master ringtones were negotiated but typically calculated at around 10% of a ringtone’s retail price. Even though proposals for the new physical and digital song rates were all over the board, ranging from 4 cents from DiMA to the 15 cents sought by the NMPA, industry groups say they welcome the CRB’s decision to keep rates, with all issuing statements expressing satisfaction with the decision because it ends the uncertainty that digital music service providers had been facing, even if the actual rates don’t give any one party what it wanted.

“We are happy that the judges recognize the importance of songwriters and music publishers to the music industry,” NMPA president/CEO David Israelite says. “These events will bring clarity and order to an environment that for the last decade has been hampered by litigation and uncertainty on all sides.”

DiMA executive director Jonathan Potter also says he was pleased with the CRB’s decision. “Keeping rates where they are will help digital services and retailers continue to innovate and grow for the next several years, which will benefit songwriters, artists, labels and publishers,” he says.

RIAA chairman/CEO Mitch Bainwol struck a similar tone, observing that “no party got everything it wanted, yet at the end of the day, the certainty provided by this ruling is beneficial.”

Meanwhile, Apple, which has been facing the CRB last year that a sharp increase in the mechanical rate on permanent downloads would force the closure of iTunes, said in a statement that “we are pleased with the CRB’s decision to keep royalty rates stable.”

Indeed, the mechanical rate for digital is 44.4% more than DiMA’s proposal for a rate set at 6% of wholesale, which for a $7 album would have worked out to 6.3 cents per track. It is also about 90% higher than the minimum 4.8 cents that DiMA had sought. It is also almost 40% short of the 15 cents per track rate sought by the NMPA. The rate also falls 27% short of the 12.5 cents the NMPA was proposing for physical albums.

“The most important thing is we kept the penny rate,” Israelite says. “We are very pleased we kept the penny rate intact; we didn’t want to move to a percentage rate.”

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**THE HOLD STEADY**

**Royalty Rates Before And After CRB Ruling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Mechanical Royalty Rates</th>
<th>New Mechanical Royalty Rates (All Statutory Rates)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical product 91 cents/song (statutory rate)</td>
<td>Physical product 91 cents/song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent digital download 91 cents/song (standard industry rate)</td>
<td>Permanent digital download 91 cents/song</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastertone ringtones Negotiated, typically about 10% retail price (i.e. about 20 cents for a $1.99 ringtone)</td>
<td>Mastertone ringtones 24 cents/mastertone</td>
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**HOME FRONT**

**360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD**

**BILLBOARD NAMES PIETROLUONGO DIRECTOR OF CHARTS**

Silvio Pietroluongo, who has been Billboard’s associate director of charts since 2006, has been named the magazine’s director of charts. He replaces director of charts/senior analyst Geoff Mayfield, who is leaving Billboard after 23 years to join Universal Music Group Distribution (UMGD) as VP of business analysis and market research.

Pietroluongo joined Billboard in 1989 as an intern and during his tenure has served as chart manager for the Billboard Hot 100, Pop Top 40 and Hot Digital Songs, among others. He has served in various leadership roles, including research supervisor and, most recently, director of charts for Billboard Radio Monitor, which later merged with Radio & Records.

During his tenure overseeing the Hot 100, Pietroluongo has shepherded that signature chart through myriad changes to reflect the industry’s migration to the digital age, including the addition of download sales and streamed and on-demand Internet music content.

In his new role, Pietroluongo will oversee Billboard’s entire charts operation, which includes more than 100 U.S. music and video charts and more than 60 music charts from around the world that appear in the magazine and on billboard.com and billboard.biz. In addition to managing a staff of 12, he will be Billboard’s chief liaison with Nielsen SoundScan, Nielsen BDS and Nielsen RingScan, while leading the company’s charge to expand its menu of social networking charts.

Mayfield began his career in the music business in 1975 as a managing editor of Focus Ohio, a Columbus, Ohio, entertainment magazine, and then became music director at WBRY, a jazz station in that city. In 1981, Mayfield moved to Canton, Ohio, to become a communication specialist for Camelot Music, working in the advertising department, handling radio and TV production, copy and public relations.

In 1985, he moved to New York to join Billboard as associate retail editor, authoring the Retail Track column until 1989, when he moved over to the Billboard charts department. In 1990, he relocated to Los Angeles and took over responsibility for the Billboard 200, which he has handled every week since then. In 1994, he was promoted to director of charts, and he added the role of senior analyst to his responsibilities. In his new role, Mayfield will oversee UMGD’s business analysis department.

“We wish [Mayfield] all the best as he takes on a new challenge ... for Universal Music Group Distribution,” Billboard publisher Howard Appelbaum says.

“We are lucky to have Silvio, a 19-year veteran of Billboard, expand his already strong leadership position in our charts department as the new director of charts for Billboard,” Appelbaum says. “Under Silvio’s direction, I am confident the quality and importance of our charts will continue to thrive as we expand into new markets.”

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EVERYBODY'S TALKIN'

Five Buzz Topics At Popkomm 2008

Organizers of Popkomm, the younger of Europe's two big music biz confabs, are kicking off the 2008 edition of the conference with a commitment to explore the "three Cs" of the music business' creativity, communication and commerce.

A trip to Berlin may not seem as glamorous as sunning yourself in the south of France for MIDEM, but Popkomm, set for Oct. 8-10, retains a reputation across Europe and beyond as an event where deals are done—a talking shop that regularly produces results.

With a conference, trade exhibition and showcase festival featuring more than 400 acts at 25 venues, there will be plenty to occupy delegates at the event, of which Billboard is a media partner. Following are the key issues attendees can expect to debate in the conference halls and bierkellers of Berlin.

CREATIVES FIGHT BACK

Whether it's the Sony-BMG merger and subsequent byzarre or the European Commission's (EC) attempts to reform collecting society practices, the creative process finds itself increasingly intertwined with politics.

And Popkomm, the event's managing director Ralf Kleinhennz says, "is being increasingly recognized as a platform for conducting public political discussions."

So the Bee Gees' Robin Gibb will use his role as president of CISAC, the international umbrella for collecting societies, to argue against the EC's attempts to reform societies' national agreements with authors.

Another aspect of outside "interference" with the creative sector—this time financial, rather than political—will be tackled by German film producer/director Win Wenders. His speech, investigating the relationship between film and music, will invite debate about the conflict between artistic vision and budgetary constraints.

Sweden-based Peri Lunden, artist manager and president of the International Music Managers' Forum, says he will use his keynote speech to focus on the positives of the 360-degree model.

"We, the managers, had it all along, so what's the fuss about?" he says. With wider adoption of the model, he adds, the industry could have "a shot at real transparency."

Other keynote speakers to watch for include Deutsche Grammophon's South African violin virtuoso Daniel Hope and Eric Garland, co-founder/CEO of digital-entertainment research company BigChampagne.

SOCIAL NETWORKING GOES MOBILE

The past year has seen a string of ventures between music and mobile companies aimed at encouraging users to legally share content through social networking.

After Sony BMG formed a joint venture last year with Milan-based Dada Entertainment to develop Web 2.0 social networking via mobile, Vivendi Mobile Entertainment set up Web portal ZaOza in February. MySpace has hooked up with carrier Vodafone while Vokia plans to promote its soon-to-launch Comes With Music service via its Ovi mobile portal.

The competition between those various platforms and the opportunities they offer the music industry will be a key focus of Popkomm's "Mobile Music" session.

"If you are an act or a major label, one of the biggest problems is getting above the noise and getting people to focus on your work," says the session's joint moderator Ralph Simon, founding chairman of the Mobile Entertainment Forum. "Mobile social networking allows people to broadcast your music, videos, photos to their family and friends."

Steve Mayall, mobile director at London-based consultancy Music Ally and the session's other joint moderator, expects the panel to be animated as participants analyze future challenges.

"How do you translate something that huge, like all the widgets on Facebook, to the mobile?" he asks. "If it's always going to be difficult to market a mobile service that charges users for doing something on their phones."

TURKEY STAKES ITS CLAIM

This year's Popkomm partner country is the sleeping giant of southeastern Europe. Currently, however, Turkey's music industry is attempting to re-energize its business by tackling piracy and expanding performing rights.

There's been recent growth in the country's fledgling digital sector; the number of broadband subscriptions rose to 4.5 million in 2007 and the country now has 61.1 million mobile subscriptions, with more than 7 million ringback tones sold in 2007, according to IFPI. Insiders say the country also has untapped potential as an international touring market.

Domestically, Bucet Porta, chairman of Turkey's IFPI affiliate Mu Yap, says that "piracy, especially Internet piracy, continues to be a threat." However, he adds that a new copyright law "now provides an international framework through amendments made in line with [European Union] legislation." Revenue also looks set to rise through performing rights deals recently struck with Turkish hotels, broadcasters and the country's largest Internet service provider, TTNet.

Key Turkish music companies will be attending Popkomm, which will host three nights of live showcases (pop/rock, folk/pop/traditional/pop) featuring such names as Deniz Seki, Mazhar Fuat-Okzan and Taksim Trio.

With a population of more than 70 million, there's considerable room for expansion of international repertoire sales in Turkey and, with an estimated 1.8 million people of Turkish descent in Germany alone, there are also opportunities for trade in the other direction. Those opportunities will be discussed at two panels. "The Turkish Music Industry" and "Turkish Music in Germany."

TOURING BIZ DEPENDS ON ITS TURF

In the wake of Live Nation's multi-rights deals with Madonna, Jay-Z, U2, Nickelback and Shakira, the question of whether labels are entitled to share in live music's revenue—or vice versa—will be high on the agenda at Popkomm.

Such models represent a new reality that the industry cannot ignore, says Berlin-based artist manager Michael Smilgies of Hidden Force (Xandria, Hatesphere). "These days, almost every label is asking for at least some share of the concert income when they are talking about a new deal," he says.

Smilgies will participate in what should be one of Popkomm's livelier panel sessions, "The Concert Business 2008," as will London-based Antje Lange, European label manager at rock specialist Century Media Records.

Lange remains unconvinced that new models that have the record and live music businesses swapping roles are workable.

"If your car is broken, you should give it to specialists to repair," she says. "It doesn't make sense if labels refuse to work with [outside talent] agents, because agencies don't sell records. And if the labels don't do our jobs properly, the agents won't sell tickets."

MUSIC RECOMMENDATION COMES OF AGE

New online technologies that help consumers discover and recommend music continue to emerge, which is reflected in the nominations for this year's Popkomm Innovation in Music and Entertainment Award, of which Billboard is a media partner.

"Reliable recommendation is still something the industry is missing," says IMIA judge Michael Bornhauser, managing partner at Switzerland-based business development consultancy Yalo Consult. "It remains difficult to find music you like on digital stores because there are so many tracks."

One nominee with a potential solution is U.K.-based Filter, the artificial intelligence music recommendation engine conceived by artist/digital entrepreneur Peter Gabriel. Also vying for the prize is U.S.-based Rawrip's music discovery search engine the Rippler. Filter CEO David Maher-Roberts says the presence of such services on this year's shortlist underlines the fact that "personalized filtering tools and recommendation agents are going to be an essential ingredient in helping companies figure out demand."

Other IMIA finalists aiming to advance the cause of digital music consumption are German on-demand music portal Rokkastere, U.S.-based digital media platform Kyte, Spanish company BMAT's Store online singing rating system; and FUGA, a distribution platform developed by Dutch service provider Independent IP.
Señor Flavio
found member
Los Fabulosos Cadillacs

Nortec Collective Presents
Bostich+Fussible
2008 Latin GRAMMY Nominee

Aterciopelados
Latin GRAMMY Winner
Premio Lo Nuestro Winner

Plastilina Mosh

Mexican Institute of Sound

Eric Bobo
of Cypress Hill

The Pinker Tones
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Mambo & Cha Cha tribute to Kraftwerk

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BOOMING BELGIUM

Thriving Fest Biz Strengthens Touring Draw

ANTWERP, Belgium—Britain’s summer festival circuit had a bumpy ride this year (Billboard, July 19), but just across the English Channel, it was smooth sailing in one of Europe’s unlikely live music hotbeds—Belgium.

The small country has a population of just 10.4 million yet supports around 10 major summer festivals, comparable to the United Kingdom (population 65 million).

Live music insiders say value-for-money pricing backed by promoters’ attention to building infrastructure and relationships with international agents paid off this year, making 2008 the best year yet for Belgian festivals.

The summer’s trendsetter was metal event Graspop in Dessel (June 27-29) with headliners Judas Priest, Kiss and Iron Maiden, which reported attendance up 35% from 2007 to a daily average of 45,000. Elsewhere, attendance at Pukkelpop in Hasselt (Aug. 14-16) rose 17%, with 50,600 attendees per day sheathing out for Metallica, the Killers and the Flaming Lips.

“We’ve been able to boost our attendance year after year,” Graspop organizer Peter Van Geel says. “Alongside attractive programming and well-equipped camping facilities, he says, “Free public transport and keen ticket rates seem attractive to foreign festivalgoers.”

“Belgian festivals come out cheap” for customers, Pukkelpop organizer Chokri Mahassine says. Pukkelpop’s three-day advance ticket—including free travel from any Belgian station—cost €135 ($198) this year and similar Graspop tickets cost €130 ($190.60). In comparison, the United Kingdom’s Glastonbury and Reading festivals charged £155 ($287.20). Food and drink is also cheaper than at comparable U.K. events.

Other, smaller events also reported audience gains, from 7% at world music festival Sfinks Mix’d (July 25-27) in Bochouto to 20% at Suikerman (July 25-27) in Tienen.

Herman Schueremans, organizer of the long-running Rock Werchter festival (July 3-6), says it has sold out its 80,000 daily capacity for the past four years. But this year, it did so earlier than ever with a bill including Radiohead, R.E.M. and Neil Young.

Mahassine says Belgian promoters have been proactive in building overseas contacts. “We’re a small country,” he says, “but fought a fierce battle to put our festivals on the map and make sure [international] acts don’t overlook us.” He adds that increased overseas media attention and word-of-mouth via the Internet has helped bring international audiences to Belgium’s festivals.

Schueremans says 30% of Rock Werchter’s 2008 audience came from abroad, mainly from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Ireland and Spain, while Van Geel says nearly half of Graspop’s attendees were from abroad.

For overseas acts, says agent Mark Ngu of London-based Primary Ticket International, “festivals such as Werchter and Pukkelpop have a very good reputation—particularly among American artists—as being extremely well-organized.”

That compares favorably to the United Kingdom, he adds, where “production and organization varies wildly, from the carefully planned and well-executed to those that fall apart at the seams from the minute someone came up with the idea.”

Primary booked more than 30 acts at Rock Werchter or Pukkelpop this summer, including Panic at the Disco, Mark Ronson and Babyshambles, Ngu says. Agents confirm that most artist fees generally compare favorably to major U.K. events—and are better than most European festivals—although top headliners’ fees lag behind those in the United Kingdom.

Along with pricing, Schueremans puts “top billings and comfort for the audience” as equal priorities for Belgium’s festivalgoers. Fan comfort is also emphasized by other promoters, who note that, while mud remains the bane of most U.K. festivalgoers’ existence, it’s been less problematic for key Belgian events in recent years.

Werchter’s three festivals (Rock Werchter, Werchter Classic, Werchter Boutique), for example, are on a dedicated site maintained all year long, with a permanent backstage road network. During Werchter and Pukkelpop, organizers also keep repair/refurbishment teams on standby to deal with weather problems.

“Weather is unpredictable, like everywhere in Northern Europe,” Mahassine says. “It’s how you deal with it that’s important—we do everything we can to keep our public out of knee-deep mud.”

Additional reporting by Tom Ferguson in London.

GLOBAL NEWSLINE

>>>FRANCE STANDS BY “THREE STRIKES’ BILL”

The French government is insisting that “three strikes” legislation against online piracy, introduced last year by President Nicolas Sarkozy, can move ahead despite the European Parliament’s vote to adopt a telecom regulation amendment that would bar governmental restriction of end users’ rights. The parliament voted Sept. 24 on a string of amendments to existing European telecom regulations to provide a blueprint for new national laws in European Union member countries. The French bill has yet to be debated in either house of the nation’s parliament; it would introduce a “three strikes” scheme under which persistent copyright offenders would lose their Internet connection upon a third and final warning from their Internet service provider. French minister of culture Christine Albanel claims that the proposed legislation would not impact “the rights and freedoms of end users.” —Aymeric Pichevin

>>>RIGHTS BODY UKMUSIC LAUNCHES

The U.K. music industry has joined forces to launch a new umbrella lobbying body, UKMusic, that will represent the interests of AIM, the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters, BPI, the MCPS-PRS Alliance, the Music Managers Forum, the Music Publishers Assn. Ltd., the Musicians Union and the Graphic Performance Ltd. UKMusic officially launched Sept. 25, when British Music Rights—which represented the views of composers and songwriters to policy makers—ceased operations. The new organization will be headed by CEO Feargal Sharkey and chairman Andy Heath, both formerly of BMR. All former BMR staff have moved to the new London-based body. UKMusic will not affect the role of individual trade bodies but will represent the industry in specific areas, including public policy and lobbying, external awareness and public opinion, research and analysis, and education and skills.

—Andy Payne

>>>EMI OZ OPENS DOWNLOADS STORE

EMI Music Australia has launched an MP3 store (music.earworms.com.au) offering half a million digital rights management-free tracks ranging from international acts, including Robbie Williams, Coldplay and Queen, to such local signings as Paul Kelly and Operator Please. The site allows downloads to all MP3 players, including iPods, and mobile phones, with payment by credit card or PayPal. Individual tracks are priced at $1.69 Australian ($1.34); standard albums cost $17.99 Australian ($14.29). The site is powered by London-based content aggregator/digital delivery company 7digital and carries a link to that operator’s site.

—Christine Eliezer

>>>CARIBOU WINS POLARIS

Dundas, Ontario, alternative act Caribou’s “Andorra” (Merge) has won the third annual Polaris Music Prize, which honors the best Canadian album of the year. Singer/songwriter Dan Snaith has been recording as Caribou since 2004. The Polaris judging panel named him the winner of the Polaris prize at a gala held Sept. 29 at Toronto’s Phoenix Theatre. The event featured performances by several of the 10 nominees, including alt-country singer Kathleen Edwards and Vancouver psych-rock act Black Mountain. Caribou collected a $20,000 Canadian ($19,096) prize for “Andorra,” which was released in August 2007. The album has won critical accolades for its inventive style, which merges electronics with sprightly late-'60s psychedelia. The previous winners of the Polaris Prize were Montreal-based Patrick Watson (2007) and Final Fantasy (2006).

—Robert Thompson

>>>SGAE JOINS WARNER/ CHAPPELL’S PEDL

Spanish authors and publishers collecting society SGAE has joined Warner/Chappell’s Pan-European Digital Licensing initiative. Pan-European digital licenses in Warner/Chappell’s Anglo-American repertoire will now be available from the Spanish body. The PEDL encompasses nonexclusive rights over the Warner/Chappell Music catalog to collecting societies. The first societies to sign the initiative were the United Kingdom’s MCPS-PRS Alliance, Germany’s GEMA and Swedish body STIM earlier this year (Billboard.biz, Jan. 30), followed by France’s Sacem in June.

—Howell Le Jawdun

For 24/7 global news and analysis, see billboard.biz/global.
The Customer Is Always Right
What Apple Understands But The Major Labels Don’t

I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: The major labels will never succeed in selling directly to consumers until they embraceetail’s most important axiom: “Give the customer what he wants.” Examples abound of the labels’ seeming indifference to the consumer experience, such as releasing an album and then putting out a “deluxe” version months later with more songs in hopes of persuading consumers to buy the album again. Or releasing multiple “exclusive” versions of the same album at different retailers, forcing diehard fans to buy all of them for the obligatory bonus tracks or, as is probably more common, encourage them to download the exclusive tracks from peer-to-peer networks.

This attitude extends to the online market as well. One example: Atlantic Records’ recent experiment with pulling Estelle’s “American Boy” single from digital download stores (Billboard, Sept. 6). By doing so, the label effectively also pulled her album “Shine” from Apple’s iTunes store because of its policy of not bundling tracks as albums-only purchases unless those tracks are exclusive to iTunes.

Consumers have spoken loud and clear: They want to be able to buy individual digital tracks. Just look at the numbers: 777 million digital tracks, or 77.7 million track equivalent albums, have been purchased so far this year in the United States, compared with 46 million digital albums during the same period, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

So why did Atlantic pull “American Boy”? Because the track was selling far better than the album and the Warner Music Group imprint clearly wanted to boost sales of the latter. Atlantic’s Estelle experiment lasted almost three weeks, a digital take on something that harks back to when Led Zeppelin manager Peter Grant wouldn’t let Atlantic release “Stairway to Heaven” as a single in 1972. Amazingly enough, some in the press saw it as a Warner vs. iTunes gambit. Others suggested that the experiment was so short because iTunes had supposedly threatened to retaliate against WMG. But the experiment didn’t end because iTunes was flexing its muscles. It ended because the label left an estimated $150,000 on the table after pulling the “American Boy” single failed to drive sales of “Shine.”

iTunes may be a powerful partner that can dictate pricing terms, but it is not a retail bully that gets into snits over label strategies. If it was, it would charge price and position for its front page. Sure, every major-label executive in the world is adamant that they won’t let P2P migrate to the Internet. But I would bet that resolve would quickly crumble if competitors play ball on the day when iTunes starts charging for home-page placement.

iTunes being smart when it doesn’t allow labels to bundle songs as part of album-only purchases. Apple can see that brick-and-mortar retailers are victims of the labels’ cavalier attitude toward consumers, and it won’t let the labels drag it down too. Apple has the power to look out for the consumer, which in turn means it’s looking out for itself.

An Apple spokesman declined to comment. A Warner spokesman says that the company has “aggressively experimented with a variety of product windowing and bundling strategies uniquely tailored to each artist and their fan base in an effort to optimize revenue and promote long-term artist development.”

It’s perhaps also worth noting that Warner chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. said during the 2006 Music Matters conference in Hong Kong that “new developments have made what was once feared as the death knell of the industry—the unbundling of the album—into the greatest opportunity the industry has ever had.”

A final note on recent experiments with digital releases: Labels and some artists would prefer that consumers buy albums. On the other hand, many consumers only want to buy tracks. So why haven’t we seen a compromise? That is, why hasn’t anyone tried selling an album download that can’t be purchased as individual tracks save for the single of the moment? That way, you satisfy casual fans who only want the single, and labels and artists preserve the integrity of an album.

Ironically, doing so would take us back to the days of vinyl 45s. But then, that dredges up the unhappy memory of how the majors phased out 45s during the ’90s in order to drive album sales. Don’t even get me started on that. •
Name That Venue

Bank Deals Raise Uncertainty Over Naming Rights

Performance venues love blockbuster events, but not the kind that are currently affecting their naming-rights partners.

The stunning takeovers of big banks like Washington Mutual (WaMu) and Wachovia are forcing venues with long-term naming rights deals with these institutions to grapple with unexpected branding challenges. Some even face the prospect of losing a partner at a time when replacing one lucrative naming-rights deal with another could be a difficult task at best.

The WaMu Theater at Madison Square Garden in New York, the WaMu Theater at Qwest Field in Seattle, the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia and the Wachovia Arena in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., are among the venues being forced to deal with the fallout of the U.S. financial crisis.

Mergers, acquisitions and takeovers are nothing new, so name changes have become relatively common in this age of widespread corporate branding of venues. But millions of dollars are spent positioning and branding arenas and theaters, so a name change creates unwanted headaches.

"It's a difficult situation," says Bob Cavalieri, senior VP of business development for Philadelphia-based facility management firm SMG, which runs the Wachovia Arena in Wilkes-Barre. "Any time you take a brand, an identity, and you change that identity, you cause confusion amongst the public. You really have to start spending some money to change the brand in consumers' minds."

For the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, rebranding has become old hat. The building opened as the CoreStates Center in 1995 in a 29-year naming rights deal that brings in an estimated $3 million per year in fees. CoreStates became the First Union Center in 1998 before being renamed Wachovia Center in 2003.

Branding efforts related to the name changes have cost about $1 million each time, with the tab picked up by the banks that acquired the naming assets, according to Peter Luukko, president of Comcast-Spectator, the Philadelphia-based management firm that runs the Wachovia Center.

"It's unbelievable how many things the name of your building is, from signs in the facility to chairs, trash barrels, napkins," Luukko says. "It's hard to see the Sixers, the Flyers, Bruce Springsteen, the Rolling Stones," he says. "They know where the building is."

A Wachovia representative in Philadelphia who oversees the Wachovia Center deal couldn't be reached for comment.

Rebranding a major venue is an effort that includes advertising and promotional efforts in addition to physical changes. Who pays for what is completely dependent upon the deal," Cavalieri says. "If it's a bankruptcy situation, the court will just reject that deal—it's done, it's over, it's gone. If it's a buyout, it becomes legal in nature."

The Theater at Madison Square Garden became the WaMu Theater at the Garden in 2007 in what was announced as a multiyear deal, although financial details weren't released. Following JPMorgan Chase's deal to acquire WaMu, Garden spokesman Barry Watkins released the following statement: "Today's news will have no impact on the operation of the WaMu Theatre at Madison Square Garden or on our customers. We empathize with our business partner and its employees and, at the appropriate time, will speak with the proper people regarding the future."

Garden executives declined to comment.
Cast Your Ballot

Help Choose The Winner Of Billboards Concert Marketing & Promotion Award

Vote. It's a matter of duty. Make sure your voice is heard and your opinion registered.

I'm talking, of course, about the second annual Billboard Concert Marketing & Promotion Award. The award, the only Billboard touring award determined by popular vote, was created to acknowledge a key segment of the music business—a sponsorship or promotion that benefited the concert industry at large by stimulating attendance to live events, providing value to fans and promoting the artist and brands involved.

The site (billboard.com/vote) is live now and voting is open until Oct. 31. Our original intent with this award remains the same: to acknowledge the specific success of sponsorships and promotions in this market segment. We want votes from people in the music and marketing businesses, as well as fans and industry observers. Many thousands have voted already. The winner of the 2008 Billboard Concert Marketing & Promotion Award will be announced at the Billboard Touring Conference & Awards, set for Nov. 19-20 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York.

The winner of last year's inaugural award was Jeep's sponsorship of the Tim McGraw/Faith Hill Soul 2 Soul tour, which achieved all of the above. And it was also the highest-grossing tour in country music history.

Our seven finalists this year are: The Beach Boys; the Behind The Voice Male Award; the Rock Band; the Vans Warped tour; presented by AT&T; the Rockstar Energy Drink Mayhem tour; Blackberry Presents John Mayer; the Jonas Brothers burning up tour; sponsored by Burger King; and Corona Extra Presents the Kenny Chesney Poets & Pirates tour.

A panel of Billboard editors and industry experts came up with our list of nominees after reviewing tour title sponsorships, venue naming rights deals, touring artists' endorsement deals, single shows, sponsorship, festival sponsorships, examples of multifaceted tour sponsorship integration and other deals, as long as they pertained to live performances that took place between January and September 2008.

Your sponsorships have evolved mightily since Jovan poured up $500,000 to sponsor the Rolling Stones' 1981 Tattoo You tour, moving from simply a paycheck for "promotes" designation to today's multifaceted, multimedia partnerships that allow artists, venues and events to sink more dollars into production and presentation and give fans an opportunity to interact with artists in new and unique ways.

The stigma associated with corporate sponsorships (remember Neil Young's "This Note's For You") has largely been lifted. The longest-running festival tour at 14 years and counting is also the longest-running tour sponsorship deal, the Vans Warped tour.

This is not a coincidence. Despite what hardcore purists would scream from their pulpits, music in general really don't have a problem with most sponsorships as long as they're not beating over the head with them. If they don't feel they're being pandered to and it's a sponsorship that makes sense in terms of lifestyle and imaging, then, yeah, and fans love free stuff too. Different genres and events require different approaches. Bonnaroo is different from the Virgin Mobile Fest, a Jonas Brothers tour is different from Crue Fest, and the professionals are very good at determining which approach works best.

Live music sponsorships are highly effective at reaching consumers in a very targeted and efficient manner. That's why brands keep coming back. North American-based companies will spend an estimated $1.04 billion on sponsor music venues, festivals, tours and concerts this year, up 4% from $1 billion in 2007, according to research by Chicago-based IEG Sponsorship Report, which tracks sponsorship spending. Heading into this year's uncertain economy, spending had been tracking at double-digit increases for several years.

The best live music sponsorships provide added value to fans, showcase stuff fans are interested in and improve the overall concert experience. The finalists for this year's Billboard Concert Marketing & Promotion Award succeeded in these efforts by achieving a clearly defined marketing goal in a quantifiable way.

So join us in recognizing the most successful tour sponsorship of the year by casting your vote.
Vallenato On The Road
Sony BMG Puts Celedón-Zambrano On U.S. Tour

Vallenato, the traditional, accordion-anchored music of Colombia’s Caribbean coast, has long been seen as a poor cousin of tropical music in the United States.

Although vallenato’s influence can be heard in many Latin music recordings, the music in its traditional form is very much a niche genre in the States.

Now, Colombian vallenato duo Jorge Celedón & Jimmy Zambrano are embarking on an unprecedented 16-date tour that is the most extensive U.S. vallenato tour in recent memory.

Jimmy Zambrano, left, and Jorge Celedón

The Que Bonita Es Esta Vida (This Life Is Beautiful) tour, named after Celedón and Zambrano’s hit song of the same name, kicks off Oct. 3 with a concert at the Arsht Center in Miami that will include a symphony orchestra. The tour then moves on to other locales with Celedón’s and Zambrano’s 14-piece band.

It’s the most ambitious tour to date to be produced and promoted by Day One Entertainment, the artist development arm of Sony BMG Latin.

“We’ve long been discussing taking vallenato to another level,” Sony BMG VP of tropical promotion Carlos Perez says, “to take it out of the niche and expand it. We saw it not only as a way to promote Jorge and Jimmy, but also to open up the doors for the genre here.”

Sony BMG has long been the major with the largest vallenato presence in Colombia, with a roster that includes such stalwarts as Diomedes Diaz and Bionomio de Oro.

But with Celedón and Zambrano, the label has tapped into a youthful audience that has embraced the genre and given it new life. Their song “Que Bonita Es Esta Vida,” an uplifting anthem that extols the joys of life, spent 50 weeks at No. 1 on Colombia’s vallenato chart and 10 weeks at No. 1 for all genres, according to B&K Marketing, which compiles Colombia’s radio charts.

That wave of popularity came hand in hand with a recent surge of Colombian patriotism. After former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and 14 others were rescued in July after more than six years of captivity, they said during their first press conference that they would celebrate with “Que Bonita.”

In the States, Celedón and Zambrano don’t enjoy nearly the same kind of mainstream popularity: the duo’s newest single, “Me Vio Llorar,” peaked at No. 30 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart and at No. 4 on the tropical airplay chart.

But the pair has been patiently and steadily building up a fan base through the years by playing clubs and nightspots.

An extensive tour may be a bit of a gamble. Day One execs say, but they’re looking at long-term benefits as the artists’ partners in this venture.

“We are looking at growing this act,” Sony BMG’s Perez says. Although Day One is promoting and producing the shows, it has hired Carlos Orjuela, owner of Orjuela Music Agency, to book the tour. Orjuela, who has long worked with Colombian acts in the States, sees an opportunity to expand the audience for vallenato without forgetting its populist roots.

“The transition can work, as long as we don’t forget this is popular music,” Orjuela says.

A place like House of Blues, for example, provides a top-quality show with good sound but also allows fans to dance.

“I really think these fans want to hear the music in places they feel safe in,” Orjuela adds.

The tour follows the May U.S. release of “De Lo Nuevo lo Mejor,” an album that includes eight hits plus three new songs. Among them, the single “Me Vio Llorar” was recorded in its original vallenato version and as a bachata version with Hector “El Torito.”

“Prior to this, our promotion in the States was very timid,” Celedón says. “We needed that label support, and now we have it.”

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EN BREVÉ
NEW K-PAZ MATERIAL COMING
Disa Records will release an album of previously unreleased material by K-Paz de la Sierra Oct. 14, as well as a separate DVD containing videos by the group and a documentary about its history. Singer Sergio Gomez. The album, “Una Historia,” will feature duets with Los Horoscopos de Durango and Liberation vocalist Juan Tavera, as well as a Spanish version of “Volver,” a new Christmas song and early tracks later made famous by Grupo Montez de Durango.

The album and DVD will be available through traditional retail and direct-mailing TV spots. Gomez was murdered Dec. 2, 2007. Year-to-date through the week ended Sept. 21, K-Paz de la Sierra had sold 322,000 copies of its various albums in the United States, compared with 242,000 for all of 2007, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

MADONNA ADDS LATIN AMERICAN DATES
Following three sellouts of Madonna’s Sticky & Sweet concerts at Buenos Aires’ River Plate stadium, promoters Live Nation and Time 4 Fun have added a fourth show at the Argentine capital’s venue. The Dec. 3 date follows an announcement of a second date in Rio de Janeiro, a third São Paulo, Brazil, date, and a second show in Santiago, Chile. Madonna’s Mexico City dates Nov. 28-29 have also sold out. Sticky & Sweet is Madonna’s first tour in the region since 1993’s Girlie Show tour. Asked if sponsor pre-sales (such as the ones for Citibank customers) were responsible for the speedy sellouts in Latin America, Live Nation global touring chairman Arthur Fogel says, “Everything helps, but the reality is that it’s her that’s selling the tickets, not them. The fact that she is so big and hasn’t been there in so long is really the reality of it all.” In Mexico, about 70% of tickets were sold online, a proportion much closer to North American online sales than in the rest of Latin America, where ticket forecasts estimate that less than half of the Sticky & Sweet tickets were sold online.

—Aby

THE BILLBOARD IQ & A?

Celebrity impersonator Gilberto Gless is known to the public for performing as Vicente Fernandez, Marco Antonio Solis and Luis Miguel, who’s the most fun to imitate?

In terms of fun, it would be Vicente, because he’s very Mexican personality. He has a lot of sayings that Mexican people like and recognize as their own, he’ll translate and start to say things a little off, and those in the U.S. know how to say it right, but it makes them laugh because he’s saying it wrong.

Are you writing for the audience or being true to the artist?

We’re talking to Pedro for his next album and working on some songs for Conunto Primavera, Margarita, the goddess of the cumbia... I have some songs for her. We have three cumbia groups [released by Disa/Universal] that we’re producing. One is called Cumbia Zero, one is called Cumbia Na Na Na, and one is called Cumbia Che. Na Na Na is a mix of two countries, the girl who sings is from Costa Rica and the boy is from Argentina. Cumbia Che is from Chihuahua... Cumbia Zero are from Mexico, many of them from Mexico City.

The act of doing impressions got me to sing different genres, because I had done impressions of ranchero artists, popartists, grupero and salsa artists, all types of music. As a songwriter it helps me to know more or less how to do each of the genres. I did it thinking about the way each artist sings, in such a way that when I have a song, I think, “How would Pedro Fernandez sing it?”... you have to synchronize your own personality and put yourself in their shoes and in their way of composing.

Parts of your songs have been used as music cues on telenovelas. Are you planning on writing original music for TV?

I’m working on that... in Mexico, a year ago the national Taco Day was implemented. And the song they used for Taco Day was mine.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

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Tape Echo

Specialty Labels Keep Cassettes Alive

I spent much of the '90s listening to musicians wax nostalgic about vinyl. Every time I turned around, Eddie Vedder was penning an ode to LPs, or Neil Young was spouting off about the superiority of the big, dark slabs. And sure enough, while it did take a little while, vinyl came back. College kids bought turntables and raided their parents' collections, and it appeared the circle was complete.

Around the same time vinyl started coming back in a big way, I noticed something else — people my age were talking an awful lot about cassettes. Books like Rob Sheffield's "Love Is a Mix Tape" and Thurston Moore's "Magnetic Realism: The Art of Cassette Culture" began showing up at Urban Outfitters, and sites like "Cassette From My Ex" launched with tales of teenage love gone horribly wrong when someone misjudged the timing and cut off the end of a track. And I knew something was up when I started getting press releases about "tape labels." Maybe vinyl had finally jumped the shark, and magnetic tape was due for a return.

Officially, tapes aren't taking over the market — 274,000 prerecorded cassette sales were sold in 2007 in the United States, which equals 0.05% of all album sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

As Ed Christman pointed out in his July 26 Retail Track column, Universal Music Group and Sony BMG have stopped manufacturing cassettes, the rest of the majors are following suit, and most of cassette manufacturer Pack Central's customer base comprises prisoners.

But many in the indie community, specifically the experimental noise and freak folk followers, would beg to differ with those who think that cassettes are dead.

"In the last five years, I've seen a big resurgence in cassette sales," says Angela Sawyer, owner of Weirdo Records in Somerville, Mass. "We don't stock a ton of tapes, but what we do have turns over very quickly." Sawyer attributes the rise in tape sales to the growth in popularity of noise music, a genre with a rich cassette culture dating back to the '70s.

"Most of the tapes are pressed in very limited runs and distributed person to person," Sawyer says. "Sales of these are pretty much off the grid. A run of 100 tapes is considered huge; most of the time we're talking about 10 or 20 copies of a recording."

Sometimes putting out a limited run of tapes can be lucrative — just ask Erik Gage, whose Gnar Tapes label released nine copies of a recording by acclaimed Portland, Ore., ambient act White Rainbow. Although the tapes cost very little to manufacture, Gage was able to sell copies for $20 each. Considering that Gage pays the same amount for 100 blank tapes, that's a pretty fat profit on each cassette.

Of course, Gage's White Rainbow tape prices are rare; more common price is something in the $3 range, which is the average price of a tape release by Jon Manning's Lost Sound Tapes label. For Manning, who has released 14 albums, tapes represent a unique user experience. "Handmade tapes express a direct human involvement in the project and encourage the listener to become the creator," he says. "Not only do the listeners have ears and eyes to absorb the music and the package as a whole, but they have hands capable to create their own projects, and we want to make sure that they realize that."

As far as the issue of many listeners not having cassette players anymore, Manning says that hasn't been a huge hurdle. "Anyone can go buy a boombox at Goodwill for five bucks," he says. Manning has also experimented with pressing CDs and pressing CDs of the same album in a package.

"Tapes are more tangible than CDs, in my mind," Gage says. "And they're definitely more tangible than an MP3, when my iPod broke, I just gave it up and went back to tapes."

For the time being, neither Gage nor Manning has been able to quit his day job, and both admit that running a tape label isn't a road to riches. But both also insist that cassettes are making a comeback, and Gage is already expanding his executive ranks in preparation. "I quit smoking pot last week and made my roommate my VP," he says. "I'm going to make sure Gnar Tapes gets big."
What Difference Does It Make?

Nevermind The Naysayers—Ditching DRM Was A Game-Changer

It seems the debate over digital rights management just won’t go away. Having abandoned the DRM religion they once cling to so feverishly only to embrace the platform-agnostic nature of an unprotected digital sales environment, the major labels are now wondering whether the move even matters, given the virtually nonexistent effect on digital sales so far.

Summing up the state of the debate is Warner Music Group chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. who, speaking at Goldman Sachs‘ recent Communacopia conference, noted that “DRM on the download business hasn’t really moved the needle, frankly. Growth trends haven’t changed [for] DRM or DRM-free.”

One theory behind the decision to abandon DRM was that the restrictive technology inspired music fans to go elsewhere to acquire digital files — namely, peer-to-peer networks. But without a noticeable bump in digital downloads or measurable slack in P2P usage now that DRM-free music is widely available on various services, the pundit now argue that DRM — or lack thereof — doesn’t have any impact on purchasing decisions.

But it wasn’t until January that Sony BMG became the last of the four majors to announce that it would offer DRM-free downloads. And there are two other key points to keep in mind before hastily dismissing the importance of ditching DRM.

First, to truly go digital, music sales, labels and their retail partners need to do more than simply drop usage restrictions on song downloads. They also need to add other features, like song lyrics, and get more creative with pricing. Competing with free isn’t easy.

The second argument speaks to a bigger picture. The fact that DRM is not an overt factor in purchasing decisions doesn’t mean selling music without DRM isn’t important. Not by a long shot.

Too much of the discussion about the impact of DRM-free sales focuses on Apple’s iTunes store. Not that it should be ignored — iTunes accounts for about 70% of U.S. digital music sales, and it is unlikely anyone will use it anytime soon. Moreover, iTunes users care very little about the fact that iTunes downloads aren’t universally compatible, as it doesn’t affect them so long as they remain within the Apple ecosystem — an environment many are perfectly content with.

But DRM-free music wasn’t about boosting sales on iTunes. It was about enabling other services to sell music that can be played on the only handheld music player that matters — the iPod. Those who say competing services aren’t necessary because iTunes already does the job well are being short-sighted. Apple won’t dominate the digital entertainment landscape forever.

Labels had previously insisted that DRM restrictions enabled new revenue models, such as subscription services like Rhapsody and Napster, which created their businesses around DRM technology. In today’s secular environment, the lack of DRM is a simple fact that needs to be taken into consideration.

The NME recently posted an exclusive download at Amazon’s DRM-free MP3 store.

Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan recently posted an exclusive download at Amazon’s DRM-free MP3 store.

NUTSIE ON ALTLET Wireless operator AltTel has adopted the nuTie music application from MoldoTech, a service that lets users listen to their iTunes music libraries and playlists via mobile phones. The service streams music from users’ iTunes library to their cell phone, so no file transfer is necessary. It also allows users to share playlists with friends who use nuTie and lets them listen to recommended music based on playlists and suggestions from nuTie staff. Ten AltTel handsets are compatible with the service at launch. The service costs $5 per month or $20 per year.

DIY TO ITUNES DIY artists site Pure Play Music will begin distributing music posted to the service to digital music retailers and such subscription services as Napster, Amazon, eMusic and iTunes. Pure Play has a catalog of about 1.5 million tracks from some 6,000 member artists spanning 42 countries. Pure Play will get a link back to its Web site on iTunes’ main page, enabling users to quickly find an artist’s profile page. It will also add the artists’ info to the iTunes database. Additionally, Pure Play Music will list links to all four digital retailers from each artist profile on its site.

ARTS+LABS LAUNCHES The Songwriters Guild of America has joined forces with various technology and entertainment companies as a founding member of new Internet advocacy group Arts+Labs. The group formed to ensure that artists can safely share their work online in a manner that compensates them, as well as inform and educate consumers about the availability of authorized entertainment content on the Internet. Other members include A1&T, Via- com, NBC Universal, Cisco and Microsoft. The group’s co-chairmen are former White House press secretary to president Bill Clinton Mike McCurry and former song- writer and newspaper editor Mark McMillin.
Stepping Out
Puma Embraces Music Branding

German athletic footwear maker Puma has recast itself in recent years as cool, fashionable alternative to its larger and better-known rivals Nike and Adidas.

As part of its most recent efforts to broaden its customer base, the company has been making more conspicuous use of music in its branding.

Earlier this year, Scottish singer/songwriter Paolo Nutini was featured in a global commercial for Puma's Runway collection, performing his song "New Shoes" while wearing, natch, Pumas.

Around the same time, the company released a line of shoes tied to seminal hip-hop show "Yo MTV Raps," which used the program's distinctive design elements on the sneaker's tongue. Puma also sponsored music festivals in Europe.

It's all part of CEO Jochen Zeitz's long-term strategy to build what had been a troubled company that flirted with bankruptcy in the early '90s into a hip lifestyle brand.

"When they resurrected themselves a few years ago, they used retro-inspired stylings," NPD Group chief retail analyst Marshal Cohen says. "It was a nodding to old and new, music and fashion."

Puma's most recent music affiliation is with the Morning Benders, an indie band on +1 Records. In September, the group released a video for the song "Dammit Anna" paid for by Puma, a first for the company.

Puma music marketing manager Ryan Ayaniyan reached out to +1 Records owner Jonny Kaps earlier this year, seeking a band to partner with. Ayaniyan was familiar with the Morning Benders and their conversation led to the band playing several in-store dates.

For the subsequent video, "they called me and said they wanted to do an ad campaign with Nylon magazine, which would mean an ad in Nylon and free video," Kaps says. "I said I would love a free video but I don't want it to be a Puma ad. If the kids decide to wear Pumas in it, that's cool."

The "kids" ultimately did wear Pumas. The video premiered on Nylon's YouTube channel, was posted on MySpace Music's home page in June and will be serviced to music video channels, Kaps says.

"I haven't said no to anything yet because they only come to me with cool stuff," he says. "Some of the problems that can happen with brands comes when they don't regularly deal with hands."

For Puma, such partnerships offer a way to reach an audience that isn't following traditional media quite as closely as earlier generations.

"The band is young, talented, and their following maps really well to ours," Puma North America VP of marketing Barney Waters says. "Music is so important to our audience and so we try and find ways to communicate our brand through music, rather than just traditional media."

As to whether the brand will ever be cool, the company's efforts seem to be paying off, if getting people to wear a band's branded shoe to the act's concert equals as cool. "[MSTRKRFT] have a huge following," Waters says, "and it's got to the point where people in the crowd hold up their Pumas at their shows."

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UNIVERSAL ‘REDEMPTION’
Fuse Uses TV Show To Launch Imprint With Geffen

Geffen Records will play an integral part of music network Fuse’s upcoming reality show “Redemption Song.” Billboard has learned.

Slated to debut Oct. 29, the hour-long, eight-episode series is hosted by WWE wrestler—and lead singer of heavy metal band Fozzy—Chris Jericho. The show chronicles the lives of 11 contestants as they master the intricacies of the record business.

Geffen Records chairman Ron Fair, along with other members of his executive team, will appear on the show and act as mentors to the contestants.

The show will not have permanent judges. Instead, a mix of Universal artists and executives will appear, including Geffen video commissioner Nicole Ehrlich. Geffen marketing director Andrew Flad, Geffen A&R rep Erica Grayson, Interstate/Geffen/A&M Records VP of video promotion and strategic marketing Lisa Frank, former ‘N Sync member Chris Kirkpatrick and Geffen artists Kardinal Offishall and Mya.

The prize is a contract with Geffen Records to record a song and shoot a video. The single will be released on Fuse’s newly launched imprint with the label, Fuse/Geffen Records, and will be put into heavy rotation on the music channel.

The contestants will compete in such tasks as how to fit marks onstage and how to deal with the media, as well as prepare for the physical rigor of performing. Given the state of the business, one task surprisingly absent is financial management. “We’ll save that for next season,” says Eric Sherman, president of the New York-based channel. The contests on the show—who are all women—previously have attempted to make it in the music business. One of them is Angelica Ross, a former child actress whose singing career was derailed due to drugs.

“These are people battling demons,” Fair says. “Let’s just say that there’s a lot more potential for emotions to run high when you get a lot of girls with pasts and tell them to battle it out.”

The show will have a high-profile advertising campaign from New York ad agency the Brooklyn Brothers and Fuse’s internal advertising team. Sherman puts the cost “in the seven figures.” It will consist of TV spots on network and cable, as well as billboards, print and radio.

Having Jericho, who has a rabid fan base in the wrestling world, act as host is also likely to draw curious viewers.

“I knew of Chris Jericho as a member of Fozzy before I knew he was on the WWE,” Sherman says. “I knew how knowledgeable he is about music and how dedicated he is to his music.”

Now that Fuse has its own imprint the network may consider releasing other music through it. “We see the imprint as a natural extension of the show. We reached out to a number of labels but Geffen had the most enthusiastic ideas,” Sherman says. “I could see other bands coming out on the imprint.”

And similar to the way VH1’s “Flavor of Love” has seen numerous characters spun off into their own shows, Sherman says that the same thing could happen with “Redemption Song.” “If one contestant pops we could spin off a show about them,” he says. “We could see this as a franchise with legs for Fuse.”

While well-known in the music business for his work with Christina Aguilera, Vanessa Carlton and Fergie, Fair may be more familiar to TV viewers for his similar role on the CW’s “The Pussycat Dolls Present: Girllicious.” On that show, he, along with Pussycat Dolls founder Robin Antin and rapper Lil’ Kim, judged a group of women competing to be in the group Girllicious. “I’m like the legit guy from the business who is going to make or break their hopes and dreams,” Fair says.

Hitz In The Family
Jive Takes Equity Stake In A&R Man’s Imprint

While 360 deals are almost standard for new artists, independent label partnerships have largely remained within the realm of marketing and distribution deals. However, Zomba has taken a page from Live Nation’s playbook and inked an all-inclusive, multyear joint-venture deal with Jive VP of A&R Mickey “MeMoHiTz” Wright and his Hitz Committee Entertainment.

Formed in 2003, Hitz will now encompass a record label, music production, music publishing, artist and producer management, and TV and film projects.

“It was one of the easier decisions to make,” BMG Label Group COO Ivan Gavin says. Wright “is very talented. He wants to build a brand in a broad entertainment sense and didn’t want to be pigeonholed. It came down to, ‘Do we believe in him and back him or do we let him go elsewhere?’ So, we went back to him with [a] 360 type of deal.”

Zomba will retain approximately 50% of any profits Hitz accrued as well as shop any film or TV ideas the company hatches. Hitz is obligated to release three artists per year; its 2009 schedule will feature projects from Huey, Traci“I, Chip Tha Ripper and singer Asia Cruise.

“This is like a Jay-Z/Interscope Nation type of deal,” Wright says. “Last time, I had to let Jive hear any artist I found first, but now I can sign them to Jive or to Hitz. This is a full partnership with Jive.” Wright will maintain his position within Jive’s A&R department and continue to work specifically with T-Pain, whom he signed in 2005. The artist’s third album, “Thr33 Ringz,” is due Nov. 11 via Konvict/Jive. First single “Can’t Believe It” is No. 2 on Billboard’s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart this week.

“This deal is great because Zomba hasn’t done a joint-venture deal with an A&R before and it really shows their level of commitment,” Hitz president/COO Glen Delgado says. “It’s also probably the new direction of the music business. Independent companies are going to have to partner with labels for ancillary rights like publishing.”

A veteran A&R exec at another major adds, “You’re going to see a lot more of these deals. It’s an easy way to have an A&R source without having to pay a lot for it.”

Delgado, who met Wright while the Jive executive was interning at Arista Records, says the company’s main goal is to release artists in a timely fashion. “We are also going to staff and now have three positions open in marketing, creative and mix/show promotion,” Delgado says.

Wright says that while Hitz’ current artists are primarily from the South, the Memphis native is open to artists from diverse backgrounds. “From my success with T-Pain, I’ve learned that if the music is there, eventually the public will listen,” Wright says.
As senior VP/GM at Walt Disney’s Buena Vista Concerts division and senior VP of business development at Disney Music Group (DMG), Chip McLean has spearheaded the development of a concert production business that has immediately made a mark in the touring industry.

In less than two years, Buena Vista Concerts has been responsible for three tours—the Cheetah Girls (2006-07), High School Musical: The Concert (2006-07) and the Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus Best of Both Worlds (2007-08)—that have grossed a combined $115 million and moved 2.3 million tickets, according to Billboard Boxscore.

And there’s plenty more to come, with a new Cheetah Girls tour tuck for this fall, “Camp Rock” star Demi Lovato signed to a multimillion deal with DMG and other projects coming together for next year. McLean, a former VP of business and legal affairs at Warner Bros. Records, is working with Disney in building the kind of synergy that most music executives can only dream about, capitalizing on the success of film, radio, TV and recorded music assets to maximize sold-out tours that maintain a national profile while generating excitement locally.

When McLean joined DMG in 2006, its operations were primarily focused on its three music labels—Hollywood, Walt Disney Records and Lyric Street—and its music publishing business. DMG chairman Bob Cavallo and Disney Records president David Agnew gave McLean the mandate to extend the brand, explore new opportunities and take the “Disney magic” into unexplored territory. In an interview, McLean talks about those efforts.

What was your first objective when you came to Disney?

When I got here, the Cheetah Girls record was coming out in a few months. They had done a limited tour on the last release that didn’t do well. I said, “Well, we have another bite at the apple coming up here. Let’s give it a try and I’ll do my best to lose any money and do it smarter, better and with much more attention.”

The decision to form Buena Vista Concerts was a function of the Cheetah Girls tour and the “High School Musical” concert tour succeeding on the level they succeeded. It wasn’t that someone right out of the bat decided we should create a division to do touring. It was really more of an organic decision to try to extend what the music group does to market, develop, promote and extend its properties and the company’s properties, because to some degree the soundtracks are often an extension of a brand on the Disney Channel or a movie.

Why form a live music division as opposed to just selling those tours to an established promoter/producer like Live Nation or AEG Live?

Because there are elements to what we do that really involve much more effort and energy on the production side of the concert as opposed to just selling touring rights to a third party. One element of that in the simplest form is sort of controlling the whole event and the marketing for it, and a lot of the marketing for these tours runs through various Disney platforms. The nature of the way we produce a show and market and promote it involves factors that I don’t think necessarily apply to the run-of-the-mill concert with an artist going out and seeking to market and promote their music.

When we were working feverishly on the “High School Musical” tour, we began talking to the motion picture studio here about the concept of doing a concert film for theatrical release. We started talking about the notion that 3-D would be an interesting format for a concert film, particularly for the younger demographic we were focused on at that time. We didn’t get that arrangement settled in time to do “High School Musical,” but I had already begun discussions with Miley Cyrus’ representatives regarding a possible tour for the next year, so we all focused on that as the first opportunity to explore the possibility of a further brand extension into concert films. The Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus concert film was the first iteration of that strategy and it became the biggest-selling concert film in history.

The traditional model used to be that recorded product drove the career train, with touring built around it. In some ways that model has flipped for many acts, but at DMG everything seems to be equally important.

You’re right. It varies to some degree depending on who you’re talking about. The Jonas Brothers have become a sensation, they certainly have gotten plenty of media attention, but that didn’t stem from a large property that was a massive success solely focused on them in television or theatrical. They grew up really as a traditional sort of pop/rock act with a couple of nice things happening where they developed some relationships and have come in here to Disney Music Group and are benefiting from the various platforms that Disney has to offer them.

Cheetah Girls is an example of a book-based franchise that became a movie. With “High School Musical,” it’s a little different still. It was really the music and the story and kids loved it, and it was at a quality level that our research shows families loved it. Ultimately it all comes down to the music. Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus, more than any other tour, shined a spotlight on the secondary market and the value of certain tickets. Have you considered a strategy to capture that revenue? We certainly have talked about it. We’d be irresponsible not to. But up to this point it’s really been challenging.

I don’t think we’re in danger of going out and competing with Live Nation to get the Rolling Stones. That’s not where we’re headed.

There has been some discussion, which probably happens on almost all tours: Do you hold your own auctions with the thought that that makes it more challenging for a broker to come in and get the tickets? If you really do have the demand in the primary marketplace and people are really willing to play ball on an auction, you take away a lot of the margin that’s potentially there for the people buying specifically with the intent to resell the tickets. But that’s a difficult area because it’s difficult to defend against an argument that you’re adding to the problem, you’re participating in the same thing that parents are railing against.

What’s next for Buena Vista Concerts?

One thing I’m looking at doing here is extending to some extent what we do on the concert side and taking some of that inside marketing and promotional coordination and synergy and plugging it into other artists that are already signed to the label. We’re also looking for projects that are new that might be projects that DMG wouldn’t have previously looked at.

So that would make it a revenue producer above and beyond just your Disney content.

Absolutely. We’re going to be inherently focused on things that make sense for us. I don’t think we’re in danger of going out and competing with Live Nation to get the Rolling Stones. That’s not where we’re headed. Ultimately this is Disney and in terms of doing things on the concert side, right now that strategy involves finding great entertainment still very consistent with all the things Disney represents, but not necessarily within the well-defined demographic Disney is known for.

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IN MID-SEPTEMBER, youthful duranguense group Alacranes Musical debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart with its album “Tu Inspiración” (Fonovisa). With 20,000 copies scanned, it was Alacranes’ best-selling week ever.

A mere 15 days later, banda artist and labelmate Jenni Rivera debuted at No. 1 on the same chart with “Jenni,” moving 16,000 copies, her best sales week to date.

And on Sept. 18, “Para Siempre” by veteran ranchera icon Vicente Fernández shot to the top of the iTunes Latino chart, exactly one year after its original release on Sony BMG Latin. Labelmate Los Pikadientes de Caborca had the top video on the site, and for the past month, the group’s single “Cumbia del Río” has been the top-selling ringmaster for the record label.

It was just a year ago that regional Mexican executives and pundits were bemoaning the crisis of the music industry in general—and the regional Mexican market in particular. Besieged by a surge in anti-immigration raids, skyrocketing gasoline prices and an economic slump, regional Mexican music buyers were feeling the pinch and labels and promoters were feeling their pain.

But today, regional Mexican seems to have gotten at least some of its mojo back, thanks to aggressive pricing, broader marketing and promotional campaigns and an increasing willingness to seek out sponsors and partners.

While sales are far from their glory days of the early 2000s, these individual successes point to a marketplace that reacts positively to different stimuli and where customers still buy CDs.

And as a totality of the market, regional Mexican is outselling other Latin genres more than ever before.

Thanks To An Influx Of Savvy Marketing Schemes, The Genre Is Undergoing A Renaissance

by leila cobo

For the week ending Aug. 24, sales of regional Mexican accounted for 60% of all Latin music sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan. That’s a significant increase over the 51.7% of the total it commanded by the end of 2006 and even the 57% of the total it had by year-end 2007. More important perhaps, while the genre boasts top-selling stars, it also has dozens of developing and even brand-new acts—like Alex Mariscal’s Remo, Los Vasconcelos, and La Banda de la Sierra—that are making a dent on Billboard’s charts and ushering in a new wave of fans to the genre.

Regardless of whether an act is new or established, “we are treating all releases as pop releases, with every detail in the marketing plan covered and executed,” says Gustavo López, president of Disa and Fonovisa, the two leading regional Mexican labels in the marketplace.

This, López says, includes simultaneous release and full support from Disa and Fonovisa in Mexico and actively seeking sponsorship opportunities and endorsements, an area where regional Mexican music has not been nearly as visible as other Latin genres. Rivera, for example, was the first regional Mexican artist featured on Wal-Mart’s “Soundcheck” program with the release of “Jenni”; the appearance was sponsored by Snuggle fabric softener and Surf detergent. López is also looking to aggressively expand Disa’s and Fonovisa’s digital business.

Both labels were previously part of Univision Music Group but are now under the umbrella of Universal Music Latin Entertainment, the Latin music company created after Universal acquired Univision Music last May. Since then, López says, the digital and mobile business for Disa and Fonovisa—UMLE’s two regional Mexican labels—has gone from about 1% of total sales to approximately 4%. López expects that number to grow to 10% by 2009.

Fonovisa’s biggest release of the year will probably be Marco Antonio Solís’ “No Molestas,” due Oct. 7. The Mexican crooner, who has the most No. 1s on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart and is tied for the most No. 1s on Top Latin Albums, straddles the pop and regional Mexican worlds, appealing to a broad audience.

While Solís’ marketing and promotional campaigns have traditionally centered on radio and TV promotional spots (Solís is notoriously reticent about doing promotion), Fonovisa is working on a series of new actions to push “No Molestas.”

They include a national campaign with AMC Theatres and Coca-Cola, and the first-time release of 28 Solís videos on iTunes. “No Molestas” also has premium placement with digital retailers, as was the case earlier this year with Los Ternerios’ “Si Tu Te Vas,” which topped the iTunes Latino sales chart in its release week.

On Oct. 8, Solís will sit for a Q&A open to the media at the
Billboard Regional Mexican Music Summit (see story, page 26).

Treading regional Mexican releases like pop releases may sound like an oxymoron. But regional Mexican has, in a way, always been its own world. Here, many independents function with 360 models that can adapt quickly to change. Artists signed to major labels are more often than not self-contained acts that play constantly within their own, national touring system, often operating completely independently from their labels.

Now, increasingly, labels are seeking to tie all loose ends together for maximum promotion and exposure.

"Regional Mexican has never been regarded as glamorous," says Alan E. Baxter, president/CEO of Far Music and DBGIC Management, which represents Intocable and Los Super Reyes, among others. "But now, everyone is realizing this is where the money is at.

Johnny Phillips, VP of indie distributor Select-O-Hits, got into regional Mexican two years ago and has seen his business in the genre double in the past 12 months.

"I see a lot more aggressive behavior from the regional Mexican labels," says Phillips, who also distributes Serca and DRC, among others. "They really got involved in the promotion and marketing side. And I also see more acceptance in big-box accounts like Kmart.

"Regional Mexican has been and will continue to be strong," Trans World Latin/world buyer Isabelle Salazar says. "But now, more than ever, I've noticed these acts work with an intensity we rarely see in other categories. Mexicans touch their fan base all the time. They tour, they're visiting radio, they do in-stores.

The accessibility and relentlessness, Salazar says, cuts across the board.

"Before, you would always see the top, top acts. Now, you have smaller groups, like Inquietos del Norte, who only sell in certain regions, but that doesn't stop them from promoting all the time." Thus, while radio and TV remain the cornerstone of regional Mexican promotion, the personal touch has gained new importance.

"They go to the smaller regions, they drop by key one-stops with their promotion team. And you see a lot of posters, a lot of promotional material that gets put up in the little mom-and-pop accounts. We use a lot of point-of-purchase promotional material to create knowledge that these releases are coming out.

This doesn't mean, however, that overall sales have risen. Regional Mexican sales for the first 34 weeks of the year stood at 9.7 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. By year's end, with heavy fourth-quarter sales, they should hover close to the 16.7 million units sold by year-end 2007.

But other genres are tracking far less than that. Sales of Latin pop music for those same first 34 weeks of the year, for example, stood at 3.5 million, less than half the year-end tally of 6.9 million that pop garnered in 2007. All told, for the first 34 weeks of the year, regional Mexican represented 60% of all Latin music sales, pop 22%, tropical 9.4% and rhythm & blues 8%, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

One reason for regional Mexican's increased percentages is simply a redistribution of the sales pie. During 2005 and 2006, reggaetón exploded in the United States, inviting a new, younger buyer of Latin music and eating slightly into regional Mexican's prodigious market share. Once the reggaetón wave subsided, regional Mexican—more than any other genre—recovered those percentage points it had lost.

However, Salazar says, regional Mexican labels have also pushed especially hard to remain competitive.

For one, prices have dropped as a way to provide incentive for the regional Mexican music consumers, many of whom are recent immigrants with low income and limited access to broadband and who still prefer to buy physical product.

"The magic price to sell regional Mexican product is $9.99," Salazar says, noting that labels have lowered prices for the past few years. The less-than-$10 approach now applies to most frontline releases, but the price tends to be lower for catalog.

On the other hand, new migration from Mexico is steady, providing a continuous fan base that spans generations.

Mexico's National Council of Population (Census) calculated that more than 500,000 people emigrated from Mexico in 2007, most of them headed toward the United States.
those migrants, independent marketer/promoter Miguel Trujillo says, a CD of Mexican music is part of their basic sustenance.

"The only way to link to those places they left behind is buying the music," Trujillo says. That mentality, many theorize, is particularly acute now, when stepped-up anti-immigration raids make it more difficult for Mexicans to go back and forth over the border, as they did before, forcing them to stay in the United States for longer periods of time.

In turn, a new wave of acts has cropped up. While regional Mexican music buyers are known for their loyalty—Fernandez, for example, is in his 60s and remains one of the most popular artists in the market—they are also known for their progressiveness. That becomes more apparent in a strained economy, where it costs less to break regional Mexican acts than it does pop or even reggaeton.

"The best marketing is shows," Baxter says. "If I'm a pop act and there isn't much support from a label, it will be tough because there are not as many avenues to perform for my fans. Whereas in the regional Mexican market, it's all about interaction with our fans."

But even in that arena, the regional Mexican market has upped the ante to become more competitive.

Veteran management/concert promotion firm Apodaca Promotions, for example, created marketing promotions department a year ago to help move tickets to its shows, where audiences have declined in the past two years because of economic concerns and fear over immigration raids.

"Things aren't where they used to be in the glory days of a few years back," Apodaca national marketing and promotions director Lee Vargas says. "But fans are going out a little more. However, we need to work three times as hard to get ticket sales. Before, regional Mexican dances pretty much sold themselves. Now, we have a marketing department."

Steps include personally involving acts in the promotions of the event for months beforehand. Before, for example, an upcoming show by mariachi star Pedro Fernandez would have been simply marketed by the local promoter. Now, Apodaca devises innovative promotional campaigns—like giving away Pedro Fernandez merchandise. There are ticket giveaways and he does phone interviews months in advance, something that only pop acts used to do.

In addition, just a month ago, Apodaca launched its MySpace and Facebook pages and now sends e-blasts to 18,000 contacts and fans.

"We see the response," Vargas says. "You ask the fans at the shows how they learned about the show, and an increasing number say they did so online."

Digital sales of regional Mexican music, however, are only now beginning to take off.

Regional Mexican made up only 10.3% of Latin digital album sales in 2007, according to Nielsen SoundScan. (Single downloads are not yet divided by genre.) But as of May 11, it made up 13.8% of Latin digital albums year-to-date, more than a 70% increase from where the genre was at the same time last year.

As with other marketing initiatives, the right actions—many being applied for the first time—are having an effect.

Fernandez's No. 1 on the iTunes Latino sales chart, a full year after the release of "Para Siempre," comes in the wake of a special feature that coincided with Hispanic Heritage Month. Label Sony BMG put the product on special pricing and featured it on both Sony BMG Radio's main page and the iTunes Latino page.

Having this kind of sales reaction for regional Mexican in the digital arena was "a question of time," Sony BMG Latin VP of digital business Lorenzo Braun says.

"It had to happen and it's very exciting," Braun says. "I think we're on a roll. Our next regional Mexican album, we'll try to do something that puts them out there with that same strength."

With a record 15 No. 1s on Billboard's Hot Latin Songs chart and a record eight No. 1 albums on Top Latin Albums, Marco Antonio Solis is one of the most enduring, influential and top-selling contemporary Latin artists in the world. Solis, whose career started in Mexico as leader of popular romantic group Los Bukis, has evolved to become one of Latin music's biggest superstars, with a career that enjoys equal popularity from Mexico to Argentina. That Solis has done so by straddling pop and Mexican music is an even greater triumph. The day following the release of his new album, "No Molestar" (Fonovisa), the normally press-shy Solis will sit down for an exclusive one-on-one Q&A Oct. 8 at the Billboard Regional Mexican Music Summit.

**With Marco Antonio Solis**

**You've gone back and forth between pop-leaning and Mexican-leaning albums in the past several years. "No Molestar" is right in the middle. Were you looking for this?**

That's exactly what I was doing. In my shows, I always go back to my repertoire from Los Bukis [in the '80s]. And I see a lot of young people who like those songs. I tell them, "I don't even know why you know these songs, but you deserve something new"—with those same elements but a little better "dressed" or arranged. And I also wanted radio to open up a bit more.

"It's a sound that transcends formats, doesn't it?" Absolutely. And now, Latin pop stations are more open. The main thing is that the songs get the exposure they need, but radio formats sometimes impede that. Many years ago, in Mexico, when we had Los Bukis, there were a handful of very big tropical stations. And that's why we began to record cumbias. We needed to record the songs in two distinct formats: tropical and ballads.

You're speaking at the Regional Mexican Music Summit, but actually, you're an artist who falls under so many genres.

When they call me "regional Mexican," I feel like I'm from a single region. I don't like the term at all. And the evidence is we can be playing anywhere in Latin America and in Spain. With the proper orchestration and the right show, we can play with what's considered regional Mexican, but we can also sing the big ballads, like any other pop soloist. I don't like being stereotyped. Perhaps a better term is simply "Mexican music." What I find across all countries is a very similar sensibility.

In this day and age when musicians are focused on brand- ing, it appears you don't have any sponsorships. No. I'm here for the songs. I don't feel comfortable selling products. I want to give honesty to the name and not tie it with business transactions. It's taken me a long time and I want to take care of it as much as possible. What's important to me is what I leave on the stage.

Your new album is titled "No Molestar" (Don't Bother), after the single of the same name. Where did the song come from?

From where they all come from. They're all there, lost in the air. Everything is always there, floating invisibly. There are many things we don't see, but we feel. That's what I capture. If I go walk somewhere, for example, you can feel the energy, the positive vibrations, the quietness, and suddenly the words come.

Do you still record with a little tape recorder? Oh, they all laugh at me, because I sometimes take it with me to the gym. "Oh, my God, a cassette," they say. But I like it. Plus, I record the melodies there as they come to me, and my voice reflects the emotional state I was in when I recorded them. And always, always, I write on my little slips of paper. There is strength in paper. When I get to my studio, I begin to give shape to my scribbles. I sit at my keyboard and I write the bass and little by little construct the harmonies. By then the essence of the song is there. Everything else is easy. And the melody always counts first. Always. Melodies for me are something divine. They come from a divine place. A melody alone moves me, makes me vibrate.

—IC
Praised Be!

WORSHIP MUSIC JUMPS FROM THE CHURCH TO THE CHARTS
BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

Clockwise, from top:
MICHAEL W. SMITH,
LINCOLN BREWSTER and
ISRAEL HOUGHTON
It's a warm summer night at Houston's famed Lakewood Church—the home of popular author/pastor Joel Osteen—but on this Friday evening more than 13,000 of the faithful have gathered not to hear a sermon, but to join Michael W. Smith in worshipping God. There's an electricity running through the audience, and as the evening progresses the crowd is on its feet, faces turned up to heaven, hands lifted in praise and voices singing along. Smith is joined by Lakewood's worship leader Israel Houghton, the African Children's Choir, special guest Coalo Zamorano and a 250-voice choir. But this is not your average Christian music concert—it's an emotional experience that Smith is capturing for his CD/DVD project "A New Hallelujah," scheduled for an Oct. 28 release.

"To me, it's love songs to God," Smith says of worship music. "It's expressing how grateful you are for what He's done for you. People do that in different ways and it's so much bigger than music. I've always believed that worship is a lifestyle."

Worship music is different from other types of Christian music in that it is sung directly to God, as opposed to the artist singing to entertain an audience. Worship leaders exert listeners to sing along, and many such songs have repetitive choruses that are often displayed on screens to help the audiences as they join in praising and worshipping God.

It's a genre that has spread beyond the church to become a major force in the Christian music industry, thanks in large part to the popularity of Smith. A veteran singer/songwriter known for scoring mainstream pop and Christian radio hits alike, Smith's "A New Hallelujah" is poised to be the top-selling Christian release during fourth-quarter 2008. The CD—produced and arranged by Smith and executive-produced by Michael Blanton, Bob Ezrin and Terry Hemmings—will be followed by a DVD release in 2009.

Smith has two previous praise and worship albums, 2001's "Worship" and 2002's "Worship Again," have sold 1.7 million and 769,000 units, respectively, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and are among the landmark projects that helped propel praise and worship music to the forefront of the Christian music industry.

"Michael brought a level of commercial recognition to worship music that was not there before," Provident Label Group president/CEO Terry Hemmings says. "God uses people in lots of different ways to bring people into his presence and on those two worship projects, he used Michael in a big way."

Smith's release is just one of a series of high-profile titles coming this fall, including Chris Tomlin's "Hello Love," Lincoln Brewster's "Today Is the Day" and a greatest-hits compilation from Paul Baloche that point to the continuing strength of the genre.

Though there are a variety of musical styles under the Christian/gospel umbrella, worship music is a very different expression—some consider it to be the purest form of faith-based music.

"Worship music is so important to believers because it teaches us how to pray," says Mark Hall, frontman for Atlanta-based worship band Casting Crowns. "We know how to ask God for help but we want to go deeper in our friendship with Him. Worship music is basically scripture set to music. It reminds us that God is listening, that God is a person and not a book, and that we can know him and talk with him... When you boil it all down, worship teaches conversation and relationship—how to pray without asking for anything."

Praise and worship projects were once primarily recorded at various churches, featuring little-known worship leaders and choirs. Maranatha, Vineyard and Integrity were the labels known for specializing in the music, and in the last decade the genre has exploded as a commercial force in the Christian music industry, thanks in large part to acts like Smith, Third Day, Newsboys, Rebecca St. James and CeCe Winans. (Since Christian SoundScan began tracking data in 1993, the five acts have sold a combined 22.4 million albums in the United States.)

"In the late '90s and the early 2000s," Hemmings says, "major artists who were primarily known for their commercial viability and success—like Michael W. Smith and Third Day—took songs that were written for the church specifically by worship leaders... and adapted them for a more commercial setting."

Third Day recorded two highly successful worship projects—2000's "Offerings: A Worship Album" and 2003's "Offerings II. All I Have to Give," which have sold 961,000 and 764,000, respectively. "We did worship songs on our very first album," Third Day lead vocalist Mac Powell says. "Fans said a favorite part of the night is when we did our worship songs. So we just thought, 'We'll make a record for our fans,' and as a result it opened up more doors for us."

The genre has also benefited from the rise of such popular worship acts as Tomlin, Brewster, Israel & New Breed, Casting Crowns, Brewster, Charlie Hall, the David Crowder Band, Matt Redman and Martha Munizzi. "In the early '90s, we were definitely nameless, faceless church music," Integrity Music GM John Coleman says. "Then out of that, different worship leaders began to arise in terms of having greater influence. That dynamic is real and will continue. There are certain individuals God has gifted to lead worship."

Tomlin's "Hello Love," which sixtep records/Sparrow Records released Sept. 2, came in at No. 9 on the Billboard 200 and No. 2 on Billboard's Top Christian Albums chart, selling 52,000 copies its first week.

Some have voiced concerns that worship music is a trend that will peak and fade, others disagree. "Worship is not a fad. It's what the church does every Sunday and has been doing for longer than the music industry existed," Coleman says. "It's not going away. This label has been focused only on praise and worship, in terms of actual recorded product, for 23 years, which is certainly more than a fad."
Tomlin sees praise and worship as a unique segment of the Christian music community. "It's a special thing," Tomlin says. "It's different. It's not like writing a pop song for radio. It's a unique thing we do when we get together. It's more than just a song. You are really expressing your heart to God. That's a powerful thing and that will never fade."

Brewster, whose sixth Integrity Music project, "Today Is the Day," was released Sept. 23, began his career in mainstream music recording and touring with former Journey frontman Steve Perry and was courted by several major labels as a solo artist. "Getting to do what I thought was my dream ever since I was a kid, I actually found an extraordinary amount of emptiness in that experience, which shocked me," says Brewster, who is the music and arts pastor at Bayside Church near Sacramento, Calif. "Someone asked me recently, 'What's the main difference between what you do now and what you did then?' And I said, 'That's easy—purpose. It was never a struggle to walk away...because of that.'"

Those in the Christian industry often describe praise and worship music as "vertical music," songs sung directly to God as opposed to "horizontal" songs, which deal more with earthly relationships and more introspective concerns. "It's not going to be defined by a specific musical style," Coleman says. "It can range anywhere from gospel and traditional hymns to a more contemporary pop-rock style. Worship is what you're going to hear when you go into a church on Sunday morning."

In recent years, worship music has expanded to become a major force on Christian radio and has sent casual registers ringing at retail. Its prominence has also been recognized in the industry, as the Gospel Music Assn. added the worship song of the year category to the Dove Awards in 2004.

"Over the last 10 years, worship became established as a mainstream music product with the success of 'Songs4Worship,'" says Coleman, citing the popular series, which is a joint venture between Time Life Music and Integrity that has released more than 30 volumes and sold more than 20 million CDs, according to the company.

"Songs4Worship" launched in late 2000 and gave many fans their first chance to hear praise and worship in their homes performed by top worship leaders," Time Life VP/executive producer Mitch Pfefer says. "We had so much visibility on television in early 2001 that we were able to take the brand beyond [Christian Bookstores Assn.] retailers and into general retail with tremendous success. We've kept the brand going by keeping up with the newer worship songs and moving into other categories like urban and Latin with the brand. Recently, we had a huge success with a new recording, 'Songs4Worship Country,' featuring top country artists like Ricky Skaggs and Diamond Rio recording praise and worship songs."


Many feel that worship music has become such a force in the industry because it's reflection of what's happening in the church. "The power of praise and worship is really the overflow of what's going on in church on a weekly basis," Houghton says. "The songs are coming out of church, so it's become less artist-driven and more church community-driven. It's quite a force to be reckoned with as far as sales are concerned and you've got radio stations that are playing songs that come right out of the church. The strength of the church worldwide has made it a force to be reckoned with."

The popularity of worship songs is monitored by Christian Copyright Licensing International, whose chart reflects worship songs being sung in churches. "The increased acceptance of worship songs at radio has helped speed up the process of churches accepting worship songs into their Sunday morning worship. So you see songs rising faster within CCLI," Coleman says. "Because worship is sung every Sunday, the idea of getting a song into the church, the church becomes your radio station, so while you want to focus on radio in terms of getting the song out, getting it into the church has a similar effect because it's part of everyday church life. It provides other opportunities on a grass roots level."

In looking at the future of praise and worship, those who are most passionate about it see it as more than music.

"I think there's a real awakening in the church that worship has to be more than the vertical thing," Smith says. "People are writing songs about putting that into action and being a part of changing the world—whether that's working at a boys and girls club, building a Habitat for Humanity house, building water wells in Africa or reaching out to the poor. We can sing worship songs until we're blue, but if we're not doing something, we've missed it."

Houghton agrees. "It's not just a genre. It's not just an aisle in the bookstore. It's not just a category in Billboard," he says. "It's the overall lifestyle, and that's what the genuine ones want to make sure is still happening." Munizzi feels worship music will continue to increase in impact beyond just the church. "I think there are younger artists and ministers that are writing songs that are reaching the culture and changing the culture," she says. "It's coming through songs that lift up the name of Jesus. I think we're going to see more songs in movies and television and changing the soundtrack of our lives in the culture. I believe that's where we're headed."
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The Billboard Regional Mexican Music Summit was created to fill a need. Regional Mexican music was—and continues to be—the biggest-selling genre of Latin music, by far. At the end of August, sales of regional Mexican music, including subgenres norteño, grupero, ranchera, banda and duranguense, accounted for 60% of all Latin albums sold in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Such a powerful force needed special attention. And so, in 2006, Billboard launched its first Regional Mexican Music Summit, devoted exclusively to the genre.

Now entering its third year, the summit stands out as a gathering of professionals that aims to provide specific insight, guidance and solutions to the most pressing issues of the moment as they pertain to the furthering of the regional Mexican music industry.

The event’s growing importance is evident in its lineup of guests, which includes superstar Marco Antonio Solís—sitting down for an exclusive Q&A session—and in a breadth of sponsors, which spans authors’ societies like SESAC, such publishers as peermusic, independent and major labels, radio group GLR, wardrobe company Pink Horses, independent distributor Select-O-Hits and tour bus company Prevost.

The summit has further solidified its standing as the definitive event for the genre thanks to its new alliance with concert promotion association Promotores Unidos and with AEG Live.

While showcases during the summit will feature performances by some of the top names in regional Mexican music (see story, page 3), equally prominent acts will be speakers at the summit. They include Conjunto Primavera lead singer Tony Meléndez, Los Inquietos del Norte and Los Cuates de Sinaloa, who are all scheduled to speak at the provocative “Macho or Sensitive: The Men of Regional Mexican” panel, presented by ASCAP. The panel, programmed in response to the successful women’s panel of 2007, will seek the male perspective on regional Mexican music and explore where the content of today’s music stands.

Rap/regional duo Akwid, Tucanes de Tijuana lead singer Mario Quintero and Espinoza Paz will be featured at BMI’s “How I Wrote That Song” panel. Already a Billboard tradition, the session features top composers sharing the stories behind their hits and performing them in an intimate, acoustic session.

Beyond the music, however, this year’s summit concentrates on the digital, mobile and sponsorship arenas—all development areas for this ever-growing genre.

In response to a need expressed by the regional Mexican industry, the summit will devote panels to the development of mobile business, Internet marketing and digital sales, and acquiring sponsors and marketing partners.

Panelists include such decision-makers as YouTube strategic partner developer Glenn Otis Brown, PlayPhone founder/CEO Ron Czerny, the Orchard manager of mobile marketing Nathan Thompson, MySpace Latino marketing manager Tanya Bravo and Thumbplay senior VP of content acquisition and strategy Mitch Rotter.

The complexities of royalties and licensing in Mexico and the United States will be made simple at the Harry Fox Agency-sponsored panel “Get the Royal(t)ty Treatment,” featuring speakers from labels and publishers. Prevost, a maker of entertainer coaches, is aptly sponsoring the “Taking It on the Road: New Business Models to Make a Tour Successful” panel, which will focus on regional Mexican tours.

And of course, radio could not be absent from the summit. It will appear at the programming panel presented by GLR Radio Group, featuring such key programmers as Eddie Leon, Pepe Garza, Jimmy Perez and Yesenia De Luna.

The three-day conference ends with a series of round-table workshops, where attendees will get a chance to get up close and personal with key industry executives, including representatives from the Latin and mainstream branches of the Recording Academy.

We have striven to meet your needs at this summit and invite you to take full advantage of its invaluable information and activities.

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Regional Mexican’s Best Take The Stage At Summit Showcases

BY AYALA BEN-YEHUDA AND LEILA COBO

More than any other Latin genre, regional Mexican music is the realm of innovation and new artists. As such, the Regional Mexican Music Summit takes great pride in having showcased acts that invariably go on to make a dent on the Billboard charts. This year promises to be the same.

With a roster of performers hailing from different regions of Mexico and the United States, this year’s showcases span all genres of regional Mexican music. Presented by Promotores Unidos, as well as a host of labels including Warner, Frontera Music, Tropisounds, Ramex Records and Navarro Entertainment, our performers are a trove of established and up-and-coming talent.

Those listed here were confirmed as of press time.

Giovanny Ayala scored a hit in his native Colombia with a cover of regional Mexican song “De Rodillas Te Pido.” Ayala is one of the country’s top new talents in blending norteño with Colombian sounds, a musical wave that has made such artists a force in touring and airplay.

Los Bohemios de Sinaloa’s second album is called “Llévame Contigo.” The group formed in 2005 in Guanáchil, Sinaloa, and has alternated onstage in between sets by such banda stars as La Arrolladora Banda El Limón, El Chapo de Sinaloa and Joan Sebastian.

Los Felinos de la Noche was cast for a State Farm advertising campaign and have been taking its show on the road ever since. The Florida-based norteño group that includes Teo Poot, José Zamarripa and Dustin García will perform the evening of Oct. 7.

Los Creadores del Pasito Duranguense’s Disa album “Listos, Montados y Armados” hit No. 2 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart. The album was produced by the group’s lead singer/co-founder, Alfredo Ramirez Corral, and traverses such styles as corridos, waltz and polka.

Lamento Show de Durango has gone through many incarnations since its founding in 1994 in Chicago by Eleazar Villalba Ramirez. The group, which released its 14th album “Grandes Exitos A La Duranguense” in August, is led on vocals by former Liberacion singer Gerardo Garcia and singer/composer Carlos Galaviz.

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Passion for the extraordinary
Los Cadetes de Linares' history encompasses 35 years since its founding in 1973 in Houston. The northeño group returned in 2008 with a new recording on Discos Ramex. "Dos Vicios."

Warner Music regional Mexican/pop artist Nadia released her sixth album, "A Puro Dolor," this year. The mariachi album went top 10 in Mexico, according to trade group Amprofon, and was produced by Abelardo Rivera.

Brandon de Sinaloa is only 7 years old but has already been hailed as an accordion prodigy and is known by the nickname "the Little Giant of the Accordion." The pint-sized artist has been performing since he was 3 and was scooped up by Navarro Entertainment, which released debut album "Brandon de Sinaloa." The set includes the danceable single "El Camaleón."

Tierra Cali is at the helm of the new wave of música de tierra caliente and has been recording for more than a decade, but only began charting the past year. With its blend of banda and dance, Tierra Cali at one point had three titles on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart, including hit album "Más Allá de la Distancia."

The music of singer/songwriter Violeta Martin is a catchy mixture of Latin pop and tropical rhythms. Born in Los Angeles and raised for several years in Guadalajara, Mexico, Martin is equally at ease singing rancheras as she is ballads. On her debut album, "En Busca del Amor," Martin combines romantic ballads with flirty merengues and cumbias that appeal to a broad listener base.

Sometimes known as El Caballero de la Musica Duranguense (the Gentleman of Duranguense), El Cugar has a romantic take on this danceable music. With a velvety crooner's voice, El Cugar sang religious music as a boy but found his true calling in the duranguense he encountered in Chicago, which led to his recording contract with Disa Records.

Clockwise, from top left: TIERRA CALI, NADIA, EL CUGAR and VIOLETA MARTIN
BMI AYUDANDO A DEFINIR
EL MAPA CON LO MEJOR DE LA
MÚSICA REGIONAL MEXICANA

ESPINOSA PAZ
LOS CREADORES DEL NORTE
TUCANES DE TIJUANA
RAMON AYALA EL CHAPO DE SINALOA
INTOCABLE
CARMEN JARA
LOS ORIGINALES DE SAN JUAN
CONJUNTO PRIMAVERA
LA FIRMA
DINASTIA NORTEÑA
LOS RAZOS
EL PODER DEL NORTE
PATRULLA 81
LUPILLO RIVERA
PEPE AGUILAR
GRACIELA BERTAN
YOLANDA PEREZ
ADAN SANCHEZ
ADOLFO URIAS
ROGELIO MARTINEZ
HOROSCOPOS DE DURANGO
KPAZ DE LA SIERRA
LOS RIELEROS DEL NORTE
MONTEZ DE DURANGO
GRUPO PESADO
ROBERTO TAPIA
BANDA MAGUEY ANA BARBARA
BANDA EL RECODO
JENNI RIVERA
BANDA EL LINDO
BETO Y SUS CANARIOS
DUELO
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Angel Sepulveda is executive director of programming for leading Latin online platform Terra.com. Sepulveda came to Terra from AOL Latino, where he launched music and entertainment initiatives.

Mario Quintero is the lead singer/composer behind legendary corrido group Los Tucanes de Tijuana. In addition to winning 20 BMI Awards, Quintero’s compositions have driven the release of nearly 30 albums and the use of many of the group’s songs in film and TV.

Laura Semple is VP/director of strategic planning at Conill Advertising in Los Angeles. A native of Columbia, Semple works with such brands as Toyota, Lexus and T-Mobile and has more than 15 years’ experience in market research, strategic planning and consulting.

Ivan Fernandez has been a promoter of regional Mexican shows for 25 years. He is co-founder of professional association Promotores Unidos, for which he is serving as its 2008-09 president. Fernandez’s live entertainment ventures include Aragon Entertainment Center, Viva Entertainment and New VS Group.

Jimmy Perez is head of programming at GLR Networks. The radio veteran oversees music, sports and talk content and has experience in the fields of syndication, show development, on-air talent and production.

Jose “Pepe” Serrano Montoya is president of Latin Power Music and a partner/founder of American Show Latin. Serrano has successfully promoted such new groups as Los Primos de Durango and Ponzoña Musical and has also helped form Latin Power Publishing to administer musical works.

Rebeca Leon is VP of Latin talent for AEG Live/GoldenVoice. After a label and management career, Leon has booked such top acts as Conjunto Primavera. Marco Antonio Solís and Juanes for the concert promotions giant.

Dave Bell is VP of business development at mobile media company PlayPhone, where he has secured agreements to distribute content and power mobile destinations for such companies as Wal-Mart, Sony BMG, EMI and Vivendi Universal.

Skander Goucha is VP of digital for Universal Music Latino Entertainment. He has served as director of digital business and new media for Universal Music Latino and previously managed mobile marketing and operations at Universal Music Latin America.

Yezenia de Luna is VP of programming for Luna Communications.
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from pp38

The members of GRUPO YAHARI will be summit panelists as well as showcase performers.

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The chart recaps in this Latin music special are year-to-date, starting with the Dec. 1, 2007, issue, the beginning of the chart year, through the Sept. 13, 2008, issue. Recaps for Top Latin Albums and Top Regional Mexican Albums are based on sales information compiled by Nielsen SoundScan. Recaps for Hot Latin Songs and Hot Regional Mexican Songs are based on gross audience impressions from airplay monitored by Nielsen BDS. Titles receive credit for sales or audience impressions accumulated during each week they appear on the pertinent chart.

Top Latin Albums

1. Wisin vs. Yandel: Los Extraterrestres (Disa & Yandel-Machete)
2. Para Siempre: Vicente Fernandez-Sony BMG Norte
3. Te Quiero: Flex-EMI Televisa
4. La Mejor... Coleccion: Marco Antonio Solis-Fonovisa/UG
5. 95/05: Enrique Iglesias-Universal Latino
6. Kings Of Bachata: Sold Out At Madison Square Garden
7. Todo Cambio: Camilo-Sony BMG Norte
8. La Vida... Es un Ratico: Juanes-Universal Latino
9. Capaz de Todo Por Ti: K-Paz de La Sierra-Disa/UG
10. Historia de Un Idolo: Vicente Fernandez-Discos 605/Sony BMG Norte

Top Regional Mexican Albums

1. Vicente Fernandez (3) Sony BMG Norte
2. La Arrolladora Banda El Limon (4) Disa/Edimonsa
3. El Chapo de Sinaloa (3) Disa
4. El Potro de Sinaloa (4) Machete
5. Conjunto Primavera (5) Fonovisa
6. Daryeyes de la Sierra (9) Disa
7. Alacranes Musical (2) Univision
8. Grupo Monte de Durango (3) Disa
9. Los Creadores del Pasito Duranguense de Alfredo Ramirez (2) Disa/Edimonsa
10. Jenni Rivera (3) Fonovisa

Top Latin Songs

1. Te Quiero: Flex-EMI Televisa
2. Me enamoré: Juanes-Universal Latino
3. Donde Estan Corazon: Enrique Iglesias-Universal Latino
4. Si No Te Hubieras Ido: Mana-Warner Latina
5. Gotas de Agua Dulce: Juanes-Universal Latino
6. Sobre Mis Pies: La Arrolladora Banda El Limon-Disa/Edimonsa
7. Estos Celos: Vicente Fernandez-Sony BMG Norte
8. Te Lloreo: Conjunto Primavera-Fonovisa
9. Hasta el Dia de Hoy: Danayes De La Sierra-Disa
10. Conteo Regresivo: Gilberto Santa Rosa-Sony BMG Norte

Top Regional Mexican Songs

1. Para Siempre: Vicente Fernandez-Sony BMG Norte
2. Capaz de Todo Por Ti: K-Paz de La Sierra-Disa/Edimonsa
3. Historia de Un Idolo: Vicente Fernandez-Discos 605/Sony BMG Norte
4. Una Noche en Madrid: Marco Antonio Solis-Fonovisa/UG
5. Si Tu Te Vas: Los Temerarios-Fonovisa/UG
6. Los Gabrisel... Cantan a Mexico: Juan Gabriel & Ana Gabriel-Sony BMG Norte
7. Y Que Quede Claro: La Arrolladora Banda El Limon-Disa/UG
8. En Vivo: Desde El Auditorio Nacional 09/07: K-Paz de La Sierra-Disa/UG
9. Raices: Los Tigres Del Norte-Fonovisa/UG
10. 2C Intocable-EMI Televisa

Top Regional Mexican Songs Imprints

1. Disa (25)
2. Fonovisa (28)
3. Sony BMG Norte (9)
4. Univision (13)
5. ASL (18)

Top Regional Mexican Songs Labels

1. Fonovisa (29)
2. Disa (16)
3. Edimonsa (9)
4. Sony BMG Norte (10)
5. Univision (13)
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DARK AND CRAZY

Womack Doesn't Sugarcoat First Album In Three Years

Three years after her last album was lauded by the industry but stalled at radio, Lee Ann Womack is back with "Call Me Crazy," due Oct. 21 via MCA Nashville.

The veteran's prior project, 2005's "There's More Where That Came From," has sold 480,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and won album of the year at the Country Music Assn. Awards. Lead single "I Hate Myself in the Morning" reached No. 10 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart, but two other singles failed to crack the top 20, a far cry from the late '90s, when Womack routinely topped the chart.

Things peaked in 2000 with the album and single "I Hope You Dance." The set has sold 2.6 million copies, while the track not only topped Hot Country Songs but also spent 11 weeks at No. 1 on the Adult Contemporary chart.

In the time since the last album, Womack did "family stuff," wrote a lot and worked with 17-year-old daughter Aubrey, an aspiring artist ("Around our house music has a way of sneaking in there," she says).

When she was ready to hit the studio, Womack teamed with producer Tony Brown (Reba McEntire, Brooks & Dunn). "I had wanted to work with Tony since I came to town," Womack says, adding that she's a fan of his work with Steve Earle, Lyle Lovett and George Strait. "I kind of knew what he would like and what he would gravitate toward and it's a lot of the same things that I do."

The album has a dark vibe, with plenty of drinking and love lost, but Womack says it wasn't intentional. "I try to go through the whole process with blenders on and just cut songs that really work for me. Sometimes it ends up being different when I don't even realize it's different.

"It probably seems dark compared to what's been made around here the last couple years," Womack continues. "I don't think it's dark compared to Hank Williams or George Jones. It's what I gravitate toward—songs that make you feel something."

Universal Music Group Nashville chairman Luke Lewis appreciates Womack's honesty. "There's plenty of happy love songs these days. I welcome songs about pain, especially from someone that can sing that well and emot," he says.

Haunting first single "Last Call," which includes the memorable line "I bet you're in a bar because I'm always your last call," is No. 38 on Hot Country Songs.

Country KBEC Kansas City, Mo., PD Mike Kennedy had no qualms about playing the single despite Womack's recent track record at radio. "I was just waiting for the right song and I honestly think this is it," he says.

Not every song is downbeat. Thought-provoking "The Bees," which features vocals from Keith Urban, comes out of left field. Country WKIS Miami PD Ken Borsens says Womack delivers songs that "speak to listeners on a higher level. "I Hope You Dance," for instance, was a message that connected with listeners and encouraged them to live their lives to the fullest. For better or worse, she sings "smart songs"—songs that present a deeper message, a new message or at least a common message in a new way."

"New Again" also has a more positive spin. "I have this fascination with people who are able to fix things or take something old and make them new again," Womack says. "When I first wrote it I was thinking of George Strait, because he can take classic, traditional country music and make it new again."

The set includes a duet with Strait, "Everything but Quits," and a cover of his "The King of Broken Hearts," which Womack says is an anthem in Texas. "I really didn't want to cut the song but I love it—that's why I didn't want to cut it." After hearing her sing it when Strait was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006, Lewis and Brown convinced Womack to record it.

Lewis calls Womack a "mature artist," and she agrees. "I'm at a place in my life that I'm allowing myself to enjoy it more," she says. "Because I've had time off and a chance to breathe, it allowed me to come back with a different kind of energy."
Urban Jungle

Calle 13 Remains Difficult To Classify On Third Album

Being a maverick can be extremely cool. And it can be rough. Just look at Calle 13.

The duo, made up of half-brothers René Pérez (aka Residente) and Eduardo Cabra (aka Visitante), burst onto the Latin music scene with its 2006 self-titled debut, a mix of urban and alternative that was ostensibly reggeaton but whose witty, literary lyrics; electronic loops; and acoustic percussion defined the genre's description.

Moreover, Calle 13 was almost subversively irreverent, its humor ranging from sophomoric to macabre and full of sexual undertones.

It all added up to a hit. Despite limited airplay, "Calle 13" sold nearly 250,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and the duo became a media and critical darling.

But its follow-up, the far darker and racier "Residente o Visitante," didn't do as well, nothing slightly less than 100,000 copies. Now, the duo returns with an album that finds middle ground without really trying.

"Los de Aristas Vienen Conmigo," due Oct. 21 on Sony BMG, is a mix of urban and alternative that sees Calle 13 collaborating with the likes of Mexican alt-group Cafe Tacvba and Rubén Blades. Tracks like "Que Lloren," which pokes fun at reggeaton and pop culture figures, are outright hilarious, strongly reaffirming Calle 13's standing as an urban— or reggeaton—act.

There are more radio-friendly tracks, like the soulful, uplifting single "No Hay Nadie Como Ti." In general, the album expands on the group's Caribbean base and goes on to explore sounds of the world, including Argentina and Mexico, incorporating percussion and tubas that are reminiscent of Los Fabulosos Cadillacs and Akwid.

Altogether, it's a far more palatable release than "Residente o Visitante," which drew controversy with its sexual and religious content. "I think it's a pretty album," says Perez, who writes all the lyrics, while Cabra handles music and arrangements. "Even when I criticize, the controversy isn't as strong. This is an album with many colors, with a broad palette."

Making an album that wasn't "as strong," however, was not a response to the previous release. Perez says. "I flow how I feel," Perez says. "That's the difference between artists and businesses. The problem with the previous album wasn't a bad word here or there, but the ideas. You can't erase an idea."

Regardless of ideas or obsessions, Sony BMG has plans to release "Los de Aritas" simultaneously throughout the region, including Spain and Mexico, where Calle 13 will heavily promote for the first time.

"Los de Aritas" is also being promoted by iTunes Latino, which will release one single per week for the six weeks leading up to Oct. 21. The first track to be offered will be "Que Lloren."

Stateside, the album's release is being promoted in tandem with a mini-concert tour sponsored by MTV Tr3s. The music channel will launch its Tiempo Pass concert series with Calle 13 as the headlining act for six shows, beginning Oct. 9 at the Nokia Theatre in New York.

Because the single features Cafe Tacvba, it offers the opportunity for a wider range of stations to play the song, Sony BMG marketing VP Paula Kaminski says.

Regardless of how the public or radio sees it, Perez says he primarily thinks of Calle 13 as an urban act.

"Being urban," he says, "goes beyond a rhythm or a style of dress. What good is it to dress like a rapper if you sing ballads for me urban is a mix of things. It's what you represent. It brings together everything around us, from dance to sexuality to politics to religion. All that can be urban. And, if in addition to that, you're writing rap, and the music is rhythmically urban, well, it's even more so."
Lost Highway sees "Little Honey" as personifying Williams in a more multifaceted way. "It opens her music up to a wider audience who might not be familiar with the diversity that Lucinda can bring to the table musically," label marketing manager Parker Nashickel says. "Releasing two Lucinda albums fairly close together along with her consistent touring schedule helps tremendously in keeping her name and music at the forefront of people's minds, which never hurts on a retail level."

The label has released five cuts to Amazon, where potential customers can listen to full versions of the songs and vote for their favorite. "Real Love" was licensed to Lionsgate for use in the film "The Lucky Ones," which coincides with the single's release. Last highway also released a seven-song "making of" segment via its Web site, which features a handful of song snippets.

Williams is also sure to garner attention for a digital-only EP of protest songs, "Lu in 08," due Oct. 28. Offer are four live tracks, three of which were covers: Bob Dylan's "Master of War," Buffalo Springfield's "What's It Worth," and the Thievery Corporation/Wayne Coyne collaboration "Marching the Hate Machines Into the Sun." The fourth cut is the Williams original "Bone of Contention," which was originally intended for inclusion on "Little Honey." "Bone" is being given away as a free MP3 to anyone who pre-orders "Little Honey" via Amazon. Williams will be on tour in North America through mid-November.

Another situation rather than it being introspective," she says. "There's a feeling across the album of, 'Just lighten up.' Even though it has some older songs, overall the album says, 'I'm here, and I'm not crawling down a hole. I'm here and I'm rocking out.'"

Williams road-tested many of the "Little Honey" tracks well before a release date was even announced, and she's noticed her fans responding positively. Still, opening up a show with three unfamiliar tunes is a risky move, but Williams says it has paid off. "I'm not just this one thing, and you see that when you see me play live," she says. "I love to do the ballad thing, but the audience wants to rock. People expect that now."

A handful of U.K. shows in October, booked by 13 Artists, is the maximum the band can commit to in touring terms, although dates in Europe and the United States—where the agent is Little Big Man—are being considered. "Touring will depend on how the record does," Maclean says. "The Beta Band had lavish tour budgets so it's a bit more business-minded."

—Steve Adams

Don't mention mellowing out, but the Datsuns' latest album is the New Zealand quartet's poppiest yet.


Now signed to Cooking Vinyl internationally (outside Australia and New Zealand), the band's fourth album, "Head Stunts," appears Oct. 6 in the United Kingdom and Europe. The set is released one week later in Australia through Speak in Spell and in New Zealand by the act's own Universal Music-distributed Hellsquad.

Datsuns vocalist/bassist Dolf de Borst calls the new set a "lot more pop than anything else we've done—but it still sounds heavy."

The Datsuns kick off U.K./European shows Oct. 10 in London, booked through Helter Skelter, before heading back down Under in December for festival dates. For the band, manager Tom Dalton says, "Europe has always been strong, as has Japan. But they have an audience in most territories around the world."

The band is published by Native Tongue (Australasia) and Kobalt Music (international).

—John Ferguson

HUNGRY HEARTS

Music played an important part in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle in the late '70s when the likes of Thomas Mapfumo created the soundtrack for the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia's path to independence. That tradition is being revived in the troubled country today by Comrade Fatso and his band Chabvondoka.

The multicultural act's debut album, "House of Hunger," recently released on its own Xtrib label, is a combination of hip-hop beats, African rhythms and highly politicized lyrics criticizing the rule of President Robert Mugabe.

"I wanted this album to make people look at issues affecting them deeply," says 28-year-old Fatso, whose real name is Samuel Farai Monro, a white dreadlocked rhythm guitarist who sings in English and the Shona tongue of his black back band. Speaking after a show in Johannesburg, he adds, "We're fusing indigenous and Western sounds to create a revolution music to inspire people and break this house of hunger that is Zimbabwe."

The album has been banned by Zimbabwe's state-run radio and the group has been denied permission to sell the album at gigs in its homeland. However, it is available internationally from comradefatso.com and the act, which handles its own domestic bookings, is seeking international live work.

—Nigel Williamson

It takes a fair amount of bravery to tackle writing an opera based on a 16th century Chinese novel in Mandarin, especially when you've never studied opera, spent very little time in China and don't speak a word of the language. But artist Jamie Hewlett and musician Damon Albarn gave it a go anyway—after all, creating a cartoon band sounded preposterous to them in 1999, yet that group Gorillaz went on to sell 4.3 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The opera in question is represented by "Monkey: Journey to the West," released digitally Aug. 24 and on CD Sept. 23 via XL Recordings. And for Albarn, who spent the '90s fronting Brit-pop sensations Blur, and Hewlett, who co-created cult comic "Tank Girl," sales aren't as important as ensuring Western musicians advance eastward.

1. How exactly did you come to write an opera without any prior operatic experience? Albarn: Experience! [laughs] I think the willingness to learn and experiment is more important than knowledge. I was a fan of aspects of opera. It's taken me a long time to really feel comfortable with the vocal technique. Not that we employed that or we had any opportunity to employ that in "Monkey," because it was such a risky putting this together. We didn't have tons of funding. We were working with people who couldn't sing.

Hewlett: I like working with what you've got. I like limitations. I think the reason why we've been able to pull it off is because of the limitations we've set for ourselves and had set for us.

2. What attracted you to the subject matter? Albarn: "Monkey: Journey to the West" is a widely known Chinese novel, so it wasn't like we were choosing something that no one had heard of. And if we're going to go into a certain world, we want to do it as accurately as we can.

Hewlett: We wanted to focus on a particular perspective of what's happening in China today and what's happening in China in the past, and what's happening in the rest of the world. It's a pop opera, like "Godspell," with a lot of pop elements, and a lot of highbrow moments.

3. How are you planning to sell the accompanying record? An opera sung in Mandarin about a monkey's journey doesn't exactly scream "hit."

Albarn: Everywhere you're up against a fairly dumb attitude. To appeal to the masses...you won't get any satisfaction out of your work. The market for music piracy, you can't tell which acts are popular. You can't just base it on record sales because you can place others.

Hewlett: We're going to wrap "Monkey" up and hopefully the production can tour. We have a few new projects we've been working on for the past few months. Essentially all we work in the same way, whether we go back to one of our incarnations or we try something else. We have to be really excited about what we're going to do next. Maybe we'll have a project about pants.
A HIGHER POWER
Latin Christian Music Takes Flight Again

On Sept. 10, radio station KOTK (1420 AM) in Omaha, Neb., converted.

The Salem Communications station, whose format was news/talk, became the network’s sixth outlet in less than a year to switch to Radio Luz (Radio Light), a Spanish Christian talk format that plays a good dose of music.

The change underscores just one piece of a growing Latin Christian movement that, in recent months, has begun to permeate sales and airwaves.

“We're in a spiritual moment in humanity. People are looking for a message—something to hang onto. Something bigger than us.”

—MARCOS WITT

 time, he will release a new album, “El Juicio Final” (The Last Judgement), Oct. 21 on VI/Machete. “I am giving my testimony, so people know how I felt and how I lived,” Hector says about his album, which he describes as a mix of rap and worship.

“El Juicio,” he says, will be his last secular album. “If the Lord wants me to record another album, I will do it, but it will be an album of worship to the Lord,” he says.

For the time, Machete is working the album to secular and Christian accounts. The single “V Lloran” is playing at mainstream Latin radio, but a second track, “Si Me Tocaras,” is playing on Christian radio in Puerto Rico as well.

The bottom line, Witt says, is that “Latin Christian music is simply better now,” as far as production values, lyrical content and creativity. “The second thing is, I think we're in a spiritual moment in humanity. I think people are looking for a message—something to hang onto. Something bigger than us.”

AXEL CAMPOS
The Colombian singer vacillates between acoustic pop reminiscent of trova and rock, whose lyrics can take many meanings. His album "Cuidaré de Tí" in June hit No. 48 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart, but he is most popular in Latin America, where he fills stadiums.

DANIEL CALVETI
The Puerto Rican preacher sings songs of praise and worship that he pens when he’s "alone with God." Signed to Canzión, Calveti this summer peaked at No. 24 on Top Latin Albums with "En Paz."
THE PRETENDERS
Break Up the Concrete
Producers: The Pretenders/Shangri-La Music
Release Date: Oct. 7

In the Pretenders’ 30-year history, frontwoman Chrissie Hynde has been the only constant member, and the four other musicians on the band’s ninth studio album haven’t appeared on any of the previous eight. But while a tumultuous personnel recruit threatens the band’s momentum and consistency, it seems in this case to serve Hynde’s creativity well. The blues- and country-influenced songs on “Break Up the Concrete” are an engaging departure from the group’s earlier hits, while Hynde’s dynamic alto voice gives the set the unmistakable Pretenders identity. Minor chords and vocal reverb make “Almost Perfect” both haunting and pleasingly poppy, while the energetic title track is a honky-tonk work song with a punchy Bo Diddley beat. And with ballads like closer “One Thing Never Changed,” Hynde proves she can turn from rocker to crooner on a dime.—EN

MARGOT & THE NUCLEAR SO AND SO’s
Animal/Not Animal
Producers: Brian Deck
Release Date: Oct. 7

Indiana indie-pop act Margot & the Nuclear So and So’s are going a unique route for a sophomore release with a pair of overlapping 12-track albums released simultaneously. “Animal,” the band’s second full-length, will be available on vinyl, while “Not Animal,” a label-sequenced compilation of five “Animal” songs and seven others from the sessions, will street on CD and as a digital download. Both sets contain noteworthy songs (the dyspeptically psychedelic “A Children’s Crusade on Acid" and the sparse, uplifting singalong "As Tall As Cliffs” stand out), but “Animal” is easily the superior effort, bolstered by the nerdy, string-driven “My Baby (Shoots Her Mouth Off)” and epic centerpiece duet “Maria’s Brazen Overcoat.” Throughout the 19 tracks, the group comes across as confident and capable of charming in varying motifs across the rock spectrum.—JC

JENNIFER HUDSON
Jennifer Hudson
Producers: Clive Davis, Larry Jackson
Arista
Release Date: Sept. 30

No one has electrified the world with a single song quite like Jennifer Hudson did in “Dreamgirls.” Her vocally impeccable, gut-wrenching version of “And I’m Telling You I’m Not Going” brought movie audiences to their feet and won her the best supporting actress Academy Award in 2007. Nearly two years later, her self-titled debut showcases a voice so big, with an interpretive talent so natural, that it seems to burst beyond the confines of the recording studio. Clive Davis and co. put her through the current pop game: guest spots by T-Pain (“What’s Wrong”) and Ludacris (“Pocketbook”), the requisite Diane Warren ballad (“You Pulled Me Through”), Norwegian pop courtesy of production team Stargate (“Spotlight”). But Hudson is so comfortable with singing—whatever the song might be—that she elevates the material, making it sound like nothing you’ve ever heard before. All hail the new diva.—KM

RACHAEL YAMAGATA
Elephants/Teeth Sinking
Into Heart
Producers: Mike Mogis, John Alagia
Warner Bros.
Release Date: Oct. 7

Four years after the release of her impressive debut, “Happenstance,” singer/pianist Rachael Yamagata returns with an ambitious two-part album, mostly produced by Bright Eyes multi-instrumentalist Mike Mogis. On the first part (“Elephants”), she sticks to brooding breakup ballads with long, languid piano chords and lush string arrangements, the perfect soundtrack for the lovesick. Her breathy vocals are soft and soothing on slow tracks like “Over and Over” or “What If I Leave,” while the spare acoustic duet with soulmate Ray LaMontagne (“Duet”) sounds raw and intimate. The mood changes radically on the second part, when Yamagata emerges with gritty, garage-rock tunes a la PJ Harvey, delivering defiant hooks with the energy of someone taking revenge (“Faster”). “We can stay together separately/And we won’t be lonely at all,” she sings almost cheerfully on “Sidedish Friend.”—SP

LAMBCHOP
OH (ohio)
Producers: Mark Nevers, Roger Moutenot
Merge
Release Date: Oct. 7

Kurt Wagner’s deep, quavering baritone remains at the center of Lambchop’s 11 albums, especially as they’ve become more restrained in recent years. Perhaps in an attempt to shake things up, Wagner divided the songs on “OH (ohio)” between top Nashville producers Roger Moutenot and Mark Nevers. The former’s crisp, sparkling production on such tracks as “National Talk Like a Pirate Day” and “Sharing a Gibson With Martin Luther King Jr.” highlights the sound of each individual instrument in the band, while the latter’s touch on tracks like the pretty, elevator music-style opener “Ohio” and “Slipped Dissolved and Loosed” seems to further enhance the songwriting and the melodies. While the upbeat Lambchop records of the past are missed, “OH (ohio)” is a well-paced and engaging trip through Wagner’s lush, scenic tunes.—LW

OASIS
Dig Out Your Soul
Producer: Dave Sardy
Big Brother/Reprise
Release Date: Oct. 7

Since its mid-’90s heyday, Oasis’ albums—while still selling well everywhere outside the United States—have been comfort food for pedestrian affairs, usually rescued by a couple of uncomplicated singalong stadium anthems. “Dig Out Your Soul,” however, is the sound of a band Rediscovering its snarl. Lead single “The Shock of the Lightning” sets the template: It may not have a chorus as such, but boy, does it make a fantastic racket in search of one. Much of the album sounds similarly wired, with songs like “Bag It Up,” “Waiting for the Rapture” and “The Turning” relocating the air of menace Noel Gallagher’s songwriting seemed to miss after “Definitely Maybe.” On the downside, Liam Gallagher’s Lennon-esque “I’m Outta Time” is really instant enough for drunk people to warble in fields. Still, who needs tunes when you’ve finally got your mojo working again?—MS
Award-nominated "Joy in the Journey" project with another strong set showing why they are one of the Southern gospel community's most successful acts. Opening track "Ephesians Chapter One" is a buoyant anthem that reminds us of the promise in that scripture. "All You Need When You Need It" is a smooth, soulful ballad with a potent lyric, while "Something to Goin' On (When Mama Prays)" is a tender tribute to devotion and love. The prayers, "Robe and Crown" is a high-spirited, foot-stomping number sure to be a crowd-pleaser. A must-have for Southern gospel fans or anyone who appreciates life-affirming music.—DEP

VITAL REISSUES

THE CLASH
Live at Shea
Producer: Guy Johns
Epic/Legacy
Release Date: Oct. 7

Having fired then-junkie drummer Topper Headon months earlier, the Clash that charged into Shea Stadium in October 1982 to open for the Who wasn't necessarily firing on all cylinders—not by purist standards. But with Headon's predecessor, Terry Chimes, back on the stool, it was still firing. Fittingly, the band reins 1977's "Stomping Career Opportunities" down on the sold-out crowd like so many lead baseballs. "Live at Shea" rather remarkably captures the band conquering the soon-to-be-demolished stadium, turning the cold, sprawling space into a sweaty Brighton clubbing. The Clash plays to the larger-than-life versions of favorites like "Police on My Back" (where one can literally hear how the group could have transitioned to a stadium act) and a thrilling "The Magnificent Seven"/"Armageddon Time" funk-reggae sandwich.—WO

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

ANNUALS

Such Fun
Producers: Adam Baker, Jacqueline King
Columbia
Release Date: Oct. 7

This North Carolina-based sextet's major-label debut is as rich and diverse as 2006's "Be He Me," unfolding with layers of piano and string flourishes, crumpling guitar jams and vibrant pop melodies. Gone are the Flaming Lips-style psychedelic bursts of its predecessor, as the group is a handful of countrified tunes ("Down the Mountain," the slide-guitar-backed "Alway Do") that lend the album a more scenic quality throughout. The season-appropriate melody of "Spring Time" is disrupted by pounding drums before coalescing into a chorus that's as forceful as it is beautiful. "Hot Night Hounds" plays out like Sufjan Stevens embracing his love for electric guitar solos, and the driving pop of "Confessor" boasts a string-laced, harmony-rich chorus. With each additional listen, "Such Fun" reveals something new.—JM

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

www.americanradiohistory.com

• "Jesus, Why Are We Not Perfect yet?" (Nov. 27)
• Portugal, The Man, "Censored Colors" (Equal Vision)

LEGEND & CREDITS

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

CONTRIBUTORS:
Ayala Ben-Yehuda, Troy Carpenter, Jonathan Cohen, Evie Nagy, Keri Mason, Michael Menachem, Jill Menzer, Wes Orshoski, Sven Philipps, Deborah Evans Price, Sherd Reed, Mark Sutherland, Chuck Taylor, Chris Williams, Mike K. Wood, Lavinia Jones-Wright

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

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

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

TAYLOR SWIFT
Love Story (5:53)
Producers: Taylor Swift, Nathan Chapman
Writer: T. Swift
Publishers: Sony/ATV Tree/Taylor Swift, BMI
Big Machine Records

"Love Story" serves as the first taste of Taylor Swift's highly anticipated sophomore album, "Fearless," due Nov. 11. It's an enchanting offering that finds Taylor, a writer—and now, producer—serving up a musical version of Romeo and Juliet with a twist: a happy ending. The 18-year-old penned the story of a youthful romance foiled by parental objections, but in the end love prevails and the couple finds its happily ever after. The production has a swirling, dreamy quality, and Swift's vocal is all sweetness and light. One of her strengths is that she writes and sings material that is age-appropriate and relatable to her audience—but one doesn't have to be a love-struck teen to be captivated by this engaging single. Country's own love affair with Swift will only gain momentum with this "Story"—DEP

R&B/HIP-HOP

LUDACRIS Co-Starring Chris Brown and Sean Garrett
What Them Girls Like (4:06)
Producers: Darkchild
Writers: C. Bridges, C. Brown, S. Garrett, R. Jenkins
Publishers: Brown

In terms of flow and charisma, Ludacris is a rapper's rapper. Not only does he have incredible rhyme skills on the mic, but his personality and humor give him a true authenticity among peers. With "What Them Girls Like," the first single from Ludacris' upcoming "Theater of the Mind," Ludacris delivers what he does best. As co-stars Chris Brown and Sean Garrett help out on the chorus, he raps about knowing what women want. Producer Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins crafts a memorable beat, actually played as an Arabic scale. While the content isn't overly novel, the music is certainly a nice change of pace. Ludacris has nothing left to prove as a rapper, so who can blame him for giving the people what they want?—SR

AC

CELINE DION
My Love (4:09)
Producer: Linda Perry
Writer: L. Perry
Publishers: Stuck in the Throat/Famous,ASCAP Columbus

"Taking Chances" possesses dubious rights as Celine Dion's least-successful album from the past 15 years—or, in fact, any artist in the past 15 years. But Dion has forgotten that nearly all of her original Sony proponents have exited the company, leaving few to embrace her command of an everlastng base—i.e., that of labelmate Barbra Streisand—if only properly promoted. Previous single "Alone" was a disaster, failing to even chart at AC. But now, as Dion's two-year worldwide tour reaches North America, "My Love," written and produced by Linda Perry, has struck programmers' fancy—and it is truly an inspired choice from "Taking Chances." Highly emotive and yet graciously understated, "My Love" oozes ache and uncertainty, as Dion pleads, "My love, can you give me strength, somehow I forgot how to ease my pain/I stand tall to get by, no matter how hard I try to hide." This splendid composition and Dion's atypical delivery offer potential to save a career in commercial turmoil. If Sony has any intention of protecting its investment, "My Love" needs a meaningful embrace.—CT

THE KILLERS
Human (4:07)
Producer: Stuart Price
Writer: B. Flowers
Publisher: not listed

After the platinum success of 2006's Springsteen-inspired "Sam's Town," the Killers team with electronic super-producer Stuart Price—best known for his work with Madonna—to bridge the gap between the album's more modern rock sound with that of their 2004 debut, which incorporated '80s new wave influences. Lead single "Human" from new full-length "Day & Age" (Nov. 25) does that trick convincingly, merging a radio-friendly hit with a New Order-injected rave-up. While the lack of prominent guitarists may alienate some rock purists, credit the Killers for stretching the soundscape of alternative rock, which has increasingly become difficult to differentiate between mainstream rock. It is straight-upousing start at alternative, where "Human" makes the group's highest entrance inside the top 15.—CW

TRIPLE A

RYAN ADAMS
Fix it (2:57)
Producer: Tom Schick
Writer: R. Adams
Publishers: Bariland/Bug, BMI Lost Highway

The outrageously productive Ryan Adams has been busy writing his first book, "Infinity Blits," which arrives next year, but he hasn't stopped making new music. In fact, the alt-country wunderkind sounds better and more focused than ever. The first cut from his upcoming 11th studio set, "Cardiology"—his fourth with his backing band the Cardinals—is an impassioned, rock-leaning talk about love gone wrong, driven by killer guitar licks that lock into a nostalgic bar-band groove. Simple and well-crafted, "Fix it" overflows with sharp melodic hooks, and Adams' bittersweet howl stretches out in the gently anthem-chic, making this one of his catchiest tunes to date. I know it's not a game," he pleads. "But it feels like losing when someone you love throws you away."—SP

FOR THE RECORD

In the Sept. 27 R&B/hip-hop single review list of "My Life" by the Game featuring Lil Wayne, the producers should have been listed as Cool & Dre.
Bloody Good

My Bloody Valentine Reunites With A Rather Loud Bang

Despite having sold just a shade more than a quarter-million copies in the United States since its 1991 release, according to Nielsen SoundScan, My Bloody Valentine’s “Loveless” is considered one of the most influential rock albums of all time. But nothing quite prepared observers for the response to the Irish band’s first North American shows in 16 years: nearly 26,000 tickets purchased for seven sold-out shows, well more than $1 million in gross and thousands of eardrums battered by the band’s frenzied psychedelic assault.

And that’s not counting another 3,000 fans who packed into an upstate New York resort to watch MBV perform and curate the All Tomorrow’s Parties Festival the weekend of Sept. 19, an event so successful that tickets are already on sale for its 2009 edition.

It’s a highly unlikely turn of events for the Kevin Shields-led group, which dropped off the face of the earth in the mid-’90s while trying (unsuccessfully) to complete the follow-up to the lavishly praised “Loveless.” The band’s mystique only became more potent due to the hiatus, during which Shields would occasionally turn up guesting on other artists’ albums or contributing music to film soundtracks, only to vanish once more.

Fans never thought they’d have the chance to see MBV live again, but some in the biz held out hope, particularly Frank Riley, who was the band’s booking agent at Monterey Peninsula Artists. When he left to open High Road Touring in 2001, he kept MBV on his active roster for three years on the off chance Shields would call one day. Offers would occasionally come in, including a long-standing invitation from Goldenvoice’s Paul Tollett for the band to headline the Coachella Festival, “but there was no indication Kevin was interested in doing that,” Riley says.

Then a year-and-a-half ago, “I got a phone call from Kevin saying he was thinking about it,” Riley recalls. “In a weird way, it wasn’t that much of a surprise.” (Shields declined to be interviewed for this story.)

Tolltett came in with an enormous offer for the band to play the 2008 festival, which would have made it financially feasible for Shields to re-form and properly equip MBV. But the band wasn’t ready to take the stage by late April, so Shields opted instead to team with All Tomorrow’s Parties co-founder Barry Hogan for an opening salvo of U.K. dates starting in June, followed by some international festival appearances. MBV also agreed to headline the New York ATP show and then build a short North American tour around it.

Then came the hard part: Riley had to figure out the proper venues for a band that hadn’t toured here since the first Bush administration.

“The most important thing for MBV was making sure that whatever they sounded loud,” Riley says. “That requires a certain amount of equipment and power and volume and staging. I had to find venues that could accommodate that.” Next, I had to consider which markets could fully support something within those sound specifications, which included no OB limits, an open floor in front of the stage and a certain capacity that could generate the income necessary to make the thing affordable.

Playing for a guarantee sources say was six figures not counting sizable merch sales, MBV laid waste to audiences with crushingly loud 90-minute sets, each of which ended with the wall-rattling feedback barrage “You Made Me Realize.” “It sounded like a plane crashed at 3,000 miles per hour for 25 minutes,” says Adam Fleming, who marked the show at the San Francisco Design Center Live Nation’s Jason Grant, who promoted the gig at Toronto’s Kool Haus, adds, “If I was one of the most powerful and primal rock shows I’ve ever attended, let alone promoted.”

In Chicago, MBV played the Aragon Ballroom, which is four times the size of the venue we did on the 1992 tour, and it sold out in a day. It was one of the more exciting things I’ve seen in awhile,” says Jan Productions VP of concerts Andy Cirrinni.

Shields admitted to the New York Times that he spent more than $500,000 preparing for the shows, which means MBV won’t wind up with a lot of take-home pay this time around. But the stage is now set for more touring, and much bigger paydays, at some point down the road. Riley will only say, “With the success of what we’ve accomplished, I think they’ll consider additional dates in the future,” Hogan adds, “It would be foolish not to continue. People want to see more of it.”

All the more impressive is that the entire endeavor was pulled off without the assistance of a manager. Instead, MBV has “a group of people that surround them and support them and function on their own, responsibly and productively,” Riley says, singling out European tour manager Gabriella Traub and her North American counterpart Eric Fisher for praise. “A lot of them were with the band in 1992.”

With the tour finished and the prospect of a new MBV material looming (Shields told the Times he plans to complete the aborted third album and then start another one), Riley says the situation is “entirely unique.” The band is still together enough and capable enough to go back and reconnect with their music and then maybe find out that there’s a larger audience for them now than there was all that time ago.”
WINNING THE WAR

Adopting a self-described "slow burn" strategy with their debut record has paid off for the Cold War Kids, who saw their second Downtown album, "Loyalty to Loyalty," debut this week at No. 21 on the Billboard 200, selling 22,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The band's previous record, "Robbers & Cowards," has sold 173,000 copies since it was released in October 2006, but never made it higher than No. 172.

"As a band, we really want more of an R.E.M.-type career," lead singer Nathan Willett says. "They made lots of records before they got huge, and while they had a lot of hit singles, you can't really point to one song or record that defined them. We want to be socially conscious but also open to playing the game. When we make decisions about licensing, for example, we want to make them in the right way and be smart about it." The Kids might have a hit on their hands with the new album's lead single, "Something Is Not Right With Me," which has sold 11,000 digital copies in the five weeks since it was first released and has been added into rotation at influential modern rock station KROQ Los Angeles. The song is No. 38 on Billboard's Modern Rock chart this week. Two months before release, Downtown began playing the album for music supervisors; the first single has already been featured in episodes of "Entourage" and "CSI:NY." "Something Is Not Right With Me," which was released early via blog RCRD LBL (a joint venture with Downtown), and the resulting discussion and reposting sent the track to the top of the Elbow's music blog aggregator chart. Even with a heavy focus on online marketing and blogging, the band is embracing physical retailers, "We are playing in-stores at record shops on this tour, and it's a great opportunity to connect with fans in a more intimate way," Willett says. The band played at the Casbah/Louie's in San Diego; Finger Prints in Long Beach, Calif.; Music Millennium in Portland, Ore.; and Easy Street in Seattle during street week.

Another reason to keep a close eye on sales: The album is the first in a new partnership between Downtown and Fontana Distribution.

-Cortney Harding

COLD WAR KIDS

GRAHAM SLAM

A diverse array of country, pop, Christian, bluegrass and Americana artists populate "Billy: The Early Years," the soundtrack that accompanies the upcoming film on the life of evangelist Billy Graham. Featuring Brad Paisley, Sara Evans, Third Day's Mac Powell, Brooks & Dunn, Brandon Heath and Patty Griffin, among others, the 12-song collection drops Oct. 7, three days before the film opens. Released by Arista Nashville and Essential Records, the project will be worked to country and Christian markets.

"I'm a huge fan of Billy Graham and have always supported his ministry. I know his life story is going to affect the lives of millions of Americans," says Evans, who sings the first single going to country radio, "Low."

Far from a predictable collection of country and gospel tunes, the project features unique collaborations. Sierra Hull—a 16-year-old bluegrass artist who portrays Graham's sister, Catherine, as a young woman—sings "Just As I Am," backed by an all-star choir of John Cowan, Harry Stinson, Ronnie Bowman, Ronnie McCoury and John Wesley Ryles. Elsewhere, Powell trades lead vocals with Brooks & Dunn's Ronnie Dunn on Johnny Cash's "Over the Next Hill.

Gospel Music Assn. new artist of the year Heath covers Griffin's "Heavenly Day." "He's one of the orators in history that I really look up to simply because of the way he communicates," he says.

Also featured is the Paisley instrumental "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," which will be found on his Nov. 4 album "Play!" Paisley says, "I came up with that arrangement myself and I did that in an afternoon. You can hear me thinking as I'm playing it."

The album's multimarket nature has resulted in an array of promo opportunities, according to Arista Nashville VP of marketing and artist development Jon Elliott. Evans will appear on "Good Morning America" during release week and join Josh Turner to perform their respective songs from the soundtrack Oct. 5 at the Grand Ole Opry.

"We are trying to work alongside the theatrical marketing campaign everywhere we can," President Label Group senior VP of sales and marketing Ben Howard says.

—Deborah Evans Price

COLE BROWN CLARK/DAN DEKAY, WALTER下称 DANYEL BROOKS, ROBERT HARTFORD
Music Recession-Proof? Not Completely

When I saw a car on the freeway with a homemade sign that said “Bail Out People, No Banks,” I chuckled, but I also thought about the one issue on which music sales pioneer Henry Droz and I differed the most.

Droz, the longtime president of WEA Distribution and later chairman of Universal Music Group Distribution, firmly held the opinion that recorded music is a recession-proof market because it represents a relatively inexpensive product that is long on value.

Cognizant of the crater labels and music retailers fell into during the late ’70s, when the economy suffered double-digit inflation and double-digit unemployment, he blamed the album downturn of 1979-1982 on other factors: disco going from white hot to stone cold with no genre taking up the slack; the abandonment of the 8-track configuration; and home taping.

A similar triple threat at the start of this decade helped initiate the slump that has seen albums sales decline in six of the last seven years, with teen pop, rather than disco, hitting the freezer in the early ’80s, and the cassette representing a configuration that was subtracted from the market.

And home taping? In the late ’80s, peer-to-peer swapping, whether on the Internet or a CD burner in a college dorm, had replaced blank cassettes as the culprit of lost sales, although digital copying is a far more insidious foe.

In the ’80s, a good pair of blank cassettes were just a couple of bucks cheaper than an LP, while today’s cost difference between a blank CD and a recorded one is significant. Beyond that, in my college years, it took 45 minutes to tape a 45-minute album, whereas a digital copy happens in a few minutes, if not seconds.

In a recent article about Wall Street woes, the most possible impact on the music business, Billboard, Sept. 27, Koch Entertainment chairman Michael Koch echoed the opinion I heard from Droz almost 20 years ago, boosting music’s ability to uplift at an economical price. And, it could well be that the price of gas and worries over the economy’s health might enhance the perceived value of albums as gifts in this year’s holiday-selling period.

Still, I can’t shake the notion that Mr. and Ms. Consumer feel woozy about how far a dollar might go or job security, music purchases can become vulnerable for the simple reason that there have always been ways to consume music without buying it.

According to a Pew Internet study released in July, 55% of U.S. householders have access to broadband, unleashing myriad ways to enjoy music without needing to buy or steal a download. A home with satellite TV or digital cable picks up at least a dozen music video channels and jocks of satellite radio music Choice channels.

Even during the early ’80s post-disco crash, a guy who didn’t bother making cassette copies of albums could turn on his favorite radio station to satisfy a music craving.

Since the dawn of the iTunes store in 2003, the consumer has been taught that an album download is worth $9.99. Earlier than that, DVDs had already proved to be a more popular purchase than similarly priced CDs.

I’m first to agree with the notion that albums are a better value than movies, but through the week ending Oct. 14—even with Wal-Mart absent from Nielsen VideoScan’s store sample—the average No. 1 Top DVD Sales for 2008 stands at 424,527, versus 247,978 for a No. 1 album.

With album sales again trailing prior-year pace in 2008, the economic climate gives labels and retailers reason to scrutinize the average cost of a CD after its first week or two on the market.

THREE: Metallica’s “Death Magnetic” becomes only the third 2008 release to top the Billboard 200 for as many as three weeks and just the second to do so for three straight frames. Selling 132,000 copies (down 61%), it is also the only album on this issue’s chart to surpass 100,000.

Next week’s destined to become just the 12th album this year to sell at least 1 million copies, compared with 20 at this time last year. Two Hollywood titles, Jonas Brothers’ “A Little Bit Longer” (936,000 to date) and Miley Cyrus’ “Breakout” (921,000) are next in line to join that club.

Market Watch

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

Weekly Unit Sales

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The week ending date for this report is Oct. 14, 2008. Figures are on or near cover date. Compiled from a national sample of store sales and catalog sales reports collected and verified by Nielsen SoundScan.

For more information, please visit www.billboard.com/charts.

www.americanradiohistory.com

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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<td>STAND</td>
<td>The Illusion Of Progress</td>
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<td>ALL THAT REMAINS</td>
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<td>SOUNDS TRAIN</td>
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<td>Z-RO</td>
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<td>THE OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW</td>
<td>Tennessee Pusher</td>
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</table>

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**CHRIS TOMLIN**

**METALLICA**

**VAMPIROS PAT RUA**

**SEX AND THE CITY**

**CARNIVAL RIDE**

**JONAS BROTHERS**

**TODAY IS THE DAY**

**SAVING ABEL**

**3 DOORS DOWN**

**GEORGE JONES**

**ORACULAR SPECTACULAR**

**ONE WORD**

**THE ROYALTY**

**SLEEP THROUGH THE STATIC**

**EXIT 13**

**DAUGHTRY**

**JACK BROWNE**

**THE CHEETAH GIRLS**

**THE SOUNDTRACK**

**76**

**60**

**45**

**40**

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**THE BILLBOARD 200**

**Hello Love**

**VAMPIROS PAT RUA**

**Sex And The City**

**Carnival Ride**

**JONAS BROTHERS**

**TODAY IS THE DAY**

**SAVING ABEL**

**3 DOORS DOWN**

**GEORGE JONES**

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**One Word (Soundtrack)**

**The Royality/Less Reazione**

**Sleep Through The Static**

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**Daughter**

**Jack Johnson**

**The Sound Of Madness**

**Live In The LBC & Diamonds In The Rough**

**The Quilt**

**35 Biggest Hits**

**Idiols: De Mexico Para El Mundo**

**Love, War And The Ghost Of Whitney Ford**

**Lost In The Sound Of Separation**

**Palmadra Del Silencio**

**Raw Footage**

**Here I Stand**

**Revelation**

**Jenni Rivera**

**Coldie Calliat**

**Colbie Caillat**

**The Hawk Is Howling**

**Greatest Hits Limited Edition**

**Down To Earth**

**Family & Friends - Rambling Boy**

**Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
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<td>NICKELBACK</td>
<td>All The Reasons</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>MUKERAN</td>
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<td>ESTELLE</td>
<td>Shine</td>
<td>EPIC</td>
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<td>GEFFEN</td>
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<td>LEONA LEWIS</td>
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<td>GARTH BROOKS</td>
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<td>DAVID BANNER</td>
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<td>LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM</td>
<td>Gift Of Screws</td>
<td>EMI</td>
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<td>Beautiful Eyes (EP)</td>
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<td>Worlds Collide</td>
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<td>We Stared Nothing</td>
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<td>ADELE</td>
<td>Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas</td>
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<td>KEITH URBAN</td>
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<td>THE OFFSPRING</td>
<td>Rise And Fall, Rage And Grace</td>
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<td>STYX</td>
<td>Total Dancin' 2006: Vol. 2</td>
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<td>DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE</td>
<td>Narrow Stairs</td>
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<td>O.A.R.</td>
<td>All Sides (14.98)</td>
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## Top Holiday Albums

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<td>BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS</td>
<td>ZYX</td>
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<tr>
<td>THAT'S WHAT I CALL CHRISTMAS! 3</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>ELEKTRA</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHRISTMAS CAROLS THE FATHER'S EMBRACE (MANDOLIN FATHER)</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>SONY BIRMINGHAM</td>
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<td>DECEMBER</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>WARNER BROS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LET IT SNOW (EP)</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>WIND-UP</td>
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<td>THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>GRAMMY SPECIAL PRODUCT (ROYAL CAROL SOUNDS)</td>
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<td>A NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>WIND-UP</td>
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<tr>
<td>HANDEL'S MESSIAH</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>SMG</td>
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## Top Digital

<table>
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<tr>
<td>DEMI LOVATO</td>
<td>Only By The Night</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE PIES</td>
<td>Deep (Part 2)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>TV ON THE RADIO</td>
<td>Sweet Science</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>METALLICA</td>
<td>Full Metal Jacket</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>JAZZINE SULLIVAN</td>
<td>Fearless</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2010-18-9</td>
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<td>COLD WAR KIDS</td>
<td>Loyalty To Loyalty</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2010-18-10</td>
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<td>THEOLOGY CORPORATION</td>
<td>Radio Reputation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2010-18-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEY</td>
<td>Year Of The Gentlemen</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2010-18-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>JENNY LEWIS</td>
<td>So You Know</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2010-18-13</td>
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<td>LED ZEPPELIN</td>
<td>Led Zeppelin IV</td>
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<td>LIL WAYNE</td>
<td>The Carter III</td>
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<td>BUCKHERRY</td>
<td>Through The Secret</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>RED SHELTER RHYTHM &amp; BLUES</td>
<td>Big Word</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHIANNA</td>
<td>Good Girl Gone Bad</td>
<td>18</td>
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## Top Internet

<table>
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<td>METALLICA</td>
<td>The Thankful</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>JONAS BROTHERS</td>
<td>A Little Bit Longer</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAVID GILMOUR</td>
<td>Live in Berlin</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>KINGS OF LEON</td>
<td>Only by the Night</td>
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<tr>
<td>JIM BRICKMAN</td>
<td>Unspoken</td>
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<td>Year Of The Gentlemen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2010-18-8</td>
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<td>BETTE MIDLER</td>
<td>A Year In The Life</td>
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<td>RANDY ROGERS BAND</td>
<td>Screws Yo. Yo. Yo.</td>
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<td>DARIUS RUCKER</td>
<td>Live To Love</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2010-18-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE PIESY</td>
<td>Big World</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2010-18-12</td>
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<td>KID ROCK</td>
<td>Rock 'N Roll Jesus</td>
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<td>Mama</td>
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<td>Family &amp; Friends - Rambling Joy</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>JASON MRAZ</td>
<td>We Sing We Dance We Steal Things</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Fear</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>CECIL THOMSON</td>
<td>To The End Of The Earth</td>
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<td>2010-18-18</td>
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<td>LINDSAY BUCKINGHAM</td>
<td>Gift Of Screws</td>
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<td>TV ON THE RADIO</td>
<td>Dead Science</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2010-18-20</td>
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</table>

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**Between The Bullets**

Katy Perry follows her No. 2 smash "I Kissed A Girl" on Mainstream Top 40 with a second top 10 as "Hot N Cold" sizzles 13-9 (see chart, page 60). Clearly, 2008 proves to be the year of the woman at the format. Perry is the fourth new female artist to post at least two top 10s this year, joining Colbie Caillat, Leona Lewis and Jordin Sparks. (Sparks, in fact has earned three in that part of the chart.) This is the first year in which more than one new female has scored at least a pair of top 10s on Mainstream Top 40 since 2003, when Beyoncé and Staycie Orico did so. In 2002, Vanessa Carlton, Avril Lavigne and Shakira all arrived with similar success.

—Gary Trust
### TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

| Position | Artist | Title | Sales
|----------|--------|-------|-----|
| 1        | Jazmine Sullivan | Fearless | 24,000
| 2        | Ne-Yo | Year Of The Gentleman | 18,000
| 3        | Joe | Year Of The Gentleman | 19,000
| 4        | Young Jeezy | Year Of The Gentleman | 16,000
| 5        | Lil Wayne | Year Of The Gentleman | 14,000
| 6        | The Game | Year Of The Gentleman | 12,000
| 7        | Nelly | Year Of The Gentleman | 10,000
| 8        | DJ Khalid | Year Of The Gentleman | 8,000
| 9        | Eric Benet | Year Of The Gentleman | 6,000
| 10       | Raphael Saadiq | Year Of The Gentleman | 4,000
| 11       | Rihanna | Good Girl Gone Bad | 24,000
| 12       | J. Ro | Crack | 18,000
| 13       | LL Cool J | Exit 13 | 16,000
| 14       | Marvin Sapp | Thru Tha Storms | 14,000
| 15       | Ice Cube | Raw Footage | 12,000
| 16       | Gucci Mane | Definition Of Real | 10,000
| 17       | Big & Choppy City Boy | In The Concrete Jungle | 8,000
| 18       | Uscher | Here I Stand | 6,000
| 19       | Lloyd | Lessons In Love | 4,000
| 20       | David Banner | The Greatest Story Ever Told | 2,000
| 21       | Chris Brown | Exclusive | 1,000
| 22       | Estelle | Shine | 1,000

*Note: The chart data is for the week of October 11, 2008.*

### MAINSTREAM R&B/HIP-HOP

| Title | Artist | Label | Sales
|-------|--------|-------|-----|
| Whatever You Like | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 90,000
| Can't Believe It | T-Pain feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 70,000
| Miss Independent | T-Pain feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 50,000
| Put On | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 30,000
| Got Money | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 20,000
| The Business | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 10,000
| So Fly | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 5,000
| Life | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 2,000
| Take A Bow | Rihanna | Def Jam Records | 80,000
| Get Like Me | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 60,000
| Miss Independent | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 40,000
| Miss Independent | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 20,000
| Nothing Left To Say | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 10,000
| Anything | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 5,000
| Right Here (Departed) | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 2,000

*Note: The chart data is for the week of October 11, 2008.*

### ADULT R&B

| Title | Artist | Label | Sales
|-------|--------|-------|-----|
| You're The Only One | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 90,000
| Magic | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 70,000
| Heaven Sent | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 50,000
| Woman | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 30,000
| 117... | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 20,000
| Never | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 10,000
| Under The Influence | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 5,000
| Right Here (Departed) | Ne-Yo | Def Jam Records | 2,000

*Note: The chart data is for the week of October 11, 2008.*

### RHYTHMIC

| Title | Artist | Label | Sales
|-------|--------|-------|-----|
| Can't Believe It | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 90,000
| Miss Independent | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 70,000
| Put On | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 50,000
| The Business | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 30,000
| So Fly | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 20,000
| Baby | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 10,000
| Whatever You Like | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 5,000
| Whatever You Like | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 2,000

*Note: The chart data is for the week of October 11, 2008.*

### HOT RAP SONGS

| Title | Artist | Label | Sales
|-------|--------|-------|-----|
| Whatever You Like | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 90,000
| Can't Believe It | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 70,000
| Miss Independent | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 50,000
| Put On | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 30,000
| The Business | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 20,000
| So Fly | Young Jeezy feat. U. Cane | Polka Dot Records | 10,000
| Whatever You Like | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 5,000
| Whatever You Like | T-Pain | Polka Dot Records | 2,000

*Note: The chart data is for the week of October 11, 2008.*

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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### HITS OF THE WORLD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Singles</th>
<th>Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAPAN</strong></td>
<td>Billboard Japan Hot 100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNITED KINGDOM</strong></td>
<td>Billboard UK Singles Chart</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GERMANY</strong></td>
<td>Media Control</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EURO DIGITAL SONGS</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EURO SINGLES SALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **FRANCE** | Singles | - |
| **CANADA** | Billboard Canadian Hot 100 | - |
| **SPAIN** | Digital Songs | - |
| **GREECE** | Albums | - |
| **ITALY** | Billboard Italian Hot 100 | - |
| **AUSTRALIA** | Singles | - |
| **NORWAY** | Singles | - |
| **DENMARK** | Chart | - |
| **NETHERLANDS** | Mega Charts 40 | - |

*After a customer's performance of Faith Hill's "There You'll Be" on an American episode of "The X Factor," Billboard placed her on the U.S. Single Chart No. 10.*

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**Notes:**
- Billboard's official site for chart data: [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz)
- Data for week of October 11, 2008
- Charts Legend on Page 59

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**Additional Points:**
- **KISS ME KNIGHTS:**
  - "This Is The Life" by Amy Macdonald
- **AMBER:**
  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry
- **DISTURBIA:**
  - "Doll Domination" by Disturbia
- **THE PERFECT BOY:**
  - "Regular Girl" by Monique Narango
- **SWEET ABOUT ME:**
  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry
- **GOLD HOME SCHOOL:**
  - "Girl" by Colby James
- **GROWN GIRL:**
  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry
- **KISS ME GIRL:**
  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry
- **GIRL:**
  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry
- **THE PERFECT BOY:**
  - "Regular Girl" by Monique Narango
- **GOLD HOME SCHOOL:**
  - "Girl" by Colby James
- **GROWN GIRL:**
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  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry
- **GIRL:**
  - "I Kissed A Girl" by Katy Perry

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**Additional Chart Data:**
- **Billboard Japan Hot 100**
- **Billboard UK Singles Chart**
- **Media Control**
- **Billboard Canadian Hot 100**
- **Billboard Italian Hot 100**
- **Billboard Australian Hot 100**
- **Billboard Norwegian Chart**
- **Billboard Danish Chart**
- **Billboard Netherlands Chart**
- **GeoCharts**
- **Billboard Radio Airplay**

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**Additional Notes:**
- **Billboard Biz**
- **Singles**
- **Sales**
- **Digital**
- **Albums**
- **Country**
- **Official Website**: [www.americanradiohistory.com](http://www.americanradiohistory.com)
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RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Music Group appoints Jeffrey Harleston senior VP of business and legal affairs. He was executive VP/GM at Geffen Records.

EMI Music names Howard Handler executive VP/head of marketing for North America. He was chief marketing officer at Virgin Mobile USA.

Interscope Geffen A&M appoints Martin Kierszenbaum president of pop and rock A&R at Interscope Records. He will continue to serve as head of Cherrytree Records and president of international operations at Interscope Geffen A&M.

RECORDED MUSIC: Sony BMG Label Group on Friday named Sean Rosenberg VP of mobile marketing for sales and business development. He was director of mobile marketing at RCA Music Group.

Sony BMG Entertainment appoints Ole Obermann senior VP of international digital business development for its global digital business division. He was VP of international digital business development.

PUBLISHING: Ole expands the role of Sean Mulligan to include GM. He will continue to serve as director of U.S. film, TV and media.

BMG’s writer/publisher relations department promotes Mark Mason to senior director and Bradley Collins to director. Mason was director, and Collins was associate director.

TOURING: Nederland Concerts in Los Angeles names Janette Bax director of publicity. She was publicity manager for Southern California music at Live Nation.

MANAGEMENT: Union Entertainment Group names Dave Lonczo manager/VP of promotion, Brad Roosa manager/VP of touring operations and Kevin “Chief” Zaruk manager. Lonczo was senior VP of promotion at Roadrunner Records, Roosa was VP at AEG Live in Houston, and Zaruk will continue to run Chief Music Management.

TV/FILM: CMU taps Dee Mc Laughlin as senior VP of brand marketing. She was VP of marketing at Virgin.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOODWORKS

MUSICIANS GATHER FOR PERU CANCER TREK
Members of the F  ix, Fastball and the Alarm, along with 60 cancer survivors, will embark on a trek through multiple destinations in Peru to help raise money for cancer treatment in the country.

Peru Rocks, organized by the Love Hope Strength Foundation, will travel through small towns and villages, where the participating acts will visit with cancer patients and perform acoustic sets. The Oct. 7-18 trip will conclude with a benefit concert in Lima. “We’re going to march around to the top of Machu Picchu,” F  ix singer Cy Curnin says, noting that producer/director Alex Colletti will film the trek for a documentary. Proceeds will be donated to Peru’s National Institute of Neoplastic Disease in conjunction with ALINEN. Daily podcasts of the trek will be available via perurosks.org.

GIMME SHELTER
Rational Animal will hold its third annual Gimme Shelter: Rock & Roll Relief benefit concert Oct. 6 at the Highline Ballroom in New York. Artists on the bill include Debbie Harry, Moby, Jesse Malin and Earl Greyhound with host guests Ad Rock and Gina Gershon.

—Mitchell Peters

INSIDE TRACK

MISSIN’ MISSISSIPPI

Legendary New Orleans artist/songwriterproducer Allen Toussaint has teamed with producer Joe Henry for his next album, a collection tentatively titled “The Bright Mississippi” that’s due out in early 2009 on Nonesuch. “It’s all old standards Joe chose for me to do, along with some wonderful musicians,” Toussaint tells Billboard, explaining that his relationship with Henry dates back to the Henry-produced 2005 soul compilation “I Believe to My Soul: Session I.” “He said, ‘What about me producing something on you one day?’ and I was totally open to it,” Toussaint says. “And I must say he came up with a direction I never would have chosen, but I’m so glad he did.”

Among the songs on “The Bright Mississippi” are such traditions as “St. James Infirmary” and “Just a Closer Walk With Thee,” Duke Ellington’s “Solen- tude;” Thelonious Monk’s “Bright Mississippi;” Django Reinhardt’s “Blue Dragon” and “West End Blues,” which was popularized by Louis Armstrong. Toussaint plays piano throughout the album but is joined by Brad Mehldau on Jelly Roll Morton’s “Winin’ Boy Blues,” while Joshua Redman plays tenor saxophone on Ellington’s “Day Dream.”

Toussaint adds that he’s also still “writing constantly,” and he holds out hope of getting together again with Elvis Costello for a sequel to their well-received 2006 collaboration “The River in Reverse.” “I feel that we probably will,” Toussaint says, “especially because of how good it felt. I would gladly look forward to something like that, even though we haven’t planned anything yet.”

TOUSSAINT

SESCA hosted an all-star in-the-round showcase during the 2006 Americana Music Festival in Nashville, which included a performance by Americana Awards nominee Kristy Watich along with Grammy Award-winning songwriter Don Henry and writer Jim Lauderdale. In the back, from left, are SESAC director of writer/publisher relations Shannon Tipton-Harlee, associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink, and director of affiliate relations Amy Beth Hale. In the front, from left, are Watich, Henry and Lauderdale. Photo courtesy of SESAC

www.americanradiohistory.com
Canadian band Great Big Sea performed at the Foxia Theatre, Sept. 19 in New York in support of their album “Fortunately, the Money Comes,” which was certified gold this week in Canada. Backstage, from left, are band members Kris MacFarlane, Sein McCann, Bob Halliett, Murray Foster and Alan Doyle. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALAN URMAKOV

BIMI caught up with Rascal Flatts at the band’s show Sept. 18 in Louisville, Ky. In addition to care packages, the band members received shiny BMI No. 1 award cups, reflecting their chart domination. Backstage, from left, are BMI assistant VP of writer/publicist relations Nashville ClayBradley, Rascal Flatts’ Jay DeMarcus and Gary LeVox. BMI director of writer/publicist relations Nashville David Preston and Rascal Flatts’ Joe Don Rooney. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ZACH HENDERSON

Billboard senior correspondent Chuck Taylor enjoyed his 20th Celine Dion concert with the singer's Sept. 12 appearance at New York’s Madison Square Garden. From left are Dion’s manager/produced Rene Angelil, Taylor, Dion and Taylor’s partner Aytham Sahin.

Loading Sony BMG and Bertelsmann executives were on hand to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Sony BMG’s German-language label Ariola at a gala for 400 guests in Hamburg, Germany. Sony BMG Germany CEO Edgar Berger, Bertelsmann advisory board chairman Gunter Thielen, Bertelsmann AG chairman Norbert Ostrowski, Bertelsmann Advisory Board member Liz Mohn, Sony BMG Music Entertainment CEO Rob String-Holtz and Ariola founder Monti Lichtner, now chairman of Munich-based Monti-Media Consulting.

Warner Music Group chairman Edgar Bronfman Jr., second from left, was the guest speaker at Hamburg’s annual German media industry dinner held Sept. 25 at the city’s town hall. Welcoming Bronfman at the town hall are, from left, Warner Music Central & Eastern Europe chairman/CEO Bernd Dopp, Hamburg Mayor Ole von Beust and Hamburg senator for culture Karin von Welck.

Backstage with jazz legend George Benson at Hollywood Bowl’s Jazz at the Bowl featuring Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller and Victor Wooten. From left: Time Teleservices Television producer/director Michelle Nguyen, Billboard managing director/copy Edi Kanneke, Benson and Benson’s manager, Stephanie Gonzalez, of Apogees Management.

More than 100 music industry VIPs attended a lunch held Sept. 25 commemorating the launch of the latest version of Kobalt’s online administration system. From left: Blacktop Music Group president Mike Sebastian, attorney Casey Del Casco, ASCAP senior VP Connie Bradley, Kobalt Music Group president Tim Wageman, Kobalt Music Group senior VP of creative Whitney Davies and artist Dobie Gray.

Mayor Jack Diamond proclaimed Sept. 21 Willie Nelson Day prior to Willie Nelson’s concert in Glens Falls, N.Y. From left are Global Spectrum director of marketing Jonathan Frost, Diamond, Nelson and concert administrator Bennett Driscoll.
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