TICKETMASTER NATION
SPECIAL REPORT ON THE MERGER'S POTENTIAL—AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

CAREER IN CRISIS
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DRIVE TIME
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Song Of The Year
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By A Duo Or Group With Vocals
Best Rock Album

Best Male Country Vocal Performance
Best Country Instrumental Performance

Best Pop Instrumental Performance
Eagles

Best Rock Performance
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Kings Of Leon

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The Mars Volta

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Metallica

Best Rock Instrumental Performance
Zappa Plays Zappa

Best Rock Song
Bruce Springsteen

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Alicia Keys

Best R&B Song
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ON THE COVER: Kings of Leon, photograph by Dean Chalkley.

PHOTOS: THE WASHINGTON POST / GETTY IMAGES

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360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD

HOME FRONT

Events

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A Match Made In Court

BY CARLA VARRIALE

Soon after the boards of Ticketmaster and Live Nation approved a merger, the U.S. Department of Justice opened an investigation into what would mean the loss of two. Amazing: No worries. The combined company, to be called Live Nation Entertainment, would be a ticketing, promotion and merchandise superpower with interests in every area of the music business.

But even superpowers are subject to regulatory review. Under antitrust laws, the DOJ and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) can review and challenge mergers that would create an unfair competitive advantage that could hurt consumers. Usually, when the companies plan to merge, are a certain size, they notify those agencies, which start a 30-day screening. After that, the merger can be subject to a "second request for more information," a protracted data collection process that can involve exhaustive document reviews and considerable legal wrangling.

Essentially, the government looks for indications that the proposed merger will create an unfair competitive advantage or prove harmful to the public interest. Then it either opposes the deal or exacts concessions.

Proposed deals are usually analyzed as "horizontal" mergers (between competitors) or "vertical" ones (between buyers and sellers). The FTC believes that most mergers benefit consumers by allowing firms to operate more efficiently. But mergers that lessen competition can lead to higher prices, reduced availability of goods and services, lower product quality and less innovation—and are less likely to withstand regulatory scrutiny.

According to the FTC, at least two conditions are generally necessary for a merger to have a likely anticompetitive effect: The market must be substantially concentrated after the merger, and it must be difficult for new firms to enter the market in the near term and provide effective competition. The rationale is that firms are less likely to raise prices if it’s fairly easy for new competitors to enter the market.

Whether these restrictions apply, Ticketmaster is no stranger to controversy regarding its business practices, and the company has already withstood government scrutiny, as well as a barrage of lawsuits. In the mid-’90s, Ticketmaster was the subject of a highly publicized antitrust investigation and lawsuit spearheaded by Pearl Jam regarding the company’s alleged monopoly on the ticketing industry. The investigation and litigation eventually fizzled—and technology has made it easier to build a ticketing system in the years since.

But recent changes in the political landscape may signal a departure in policy. During his presidential campaign, President Barack Obama promised that his administration would “reinvigorate antitrust enforcement.” In 2007 he slammed the Bush administration at the American Antitrust Institute, characterizing it as having “what may be the weakest record of any administration in the last half-century.” He further promised to “step up review of merger activity and take effective action to stop or structure those mergers that are likely to harm consumer welfare, while quickly clearing those that do not.”

Whatever happens, this proposed merger could become a test balloon for the Obama administration’s antitrust policy.

—CARLA VARRIALE

FOREX RECORD

The Backbeat photo of the UJA-Federation’s Music for Youth “It’s All About You” gathering, which appeared in the Feb. 14 issue, should have identified Doug Davis (on the left) and Monami Entertainment president Mona Scott-Young (on the right).
TOURING

BY RAY WADDELL

UNITED KINGDOM?

Potential Live Nation-Ticketmaster Merger Sparks Worries

Two live entertainment giants that spent nearly two years maneuvering for advantage are now entwined in an acrimonious dispute. It surprised no one when the proposed merger of Live Nation and Ticketmaster Entertainment triggered an antitrust probe by the U.S. Department of Justice. It could also draw the interest of European regulators (see stories, page 8).

Ticketmaster CEO Irving Azoff and Live Nation president/CEO Michael Rapino both say that their companies aren’t trying to join forces to eliminate competition, and they can point to viable competitors in concert promotion and venue operations. Live Nation can say that it built and launched a global ticketing system in a year, and sources say that Anschutz Entertainment Group and its live entertainment promotion division AEG Live are already well into building their own ticketing system. (AEG executives decline to comment on the matter.)

Still, the potential merger is a legal minefield. Even if it does go through, regulators could require the companies to divest assets.

A new company created by such a merger might also have to renegotiate some of its existing partnerships. AEG’s contract with Ticketmaster has three years left on it, but also includes an exit clause if control of Ticketmaster changes, according to a source. The pact covers as many as 100 venues that AEG owns or runs, including the Staples Center in Los Angeles and the O2 in London and high-traffic theaters like the Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

AEG did not comment, nor did Ticketmaster. But sources say that there would be “never” happen, with Azoff insisting, “I have never overcharged for an artist in my life.”

At this point it doesn’t appear that Live Nation will have a lock on Front Line acts nor vice versa. Live Nation says it promotes about 20,000 concerts annually, less than 15% by Front Line artists. The expansive Live Nation venue footprint requires volume. Conversely, Live Nation needs to play nice with others, as the company says more than half of its shows are staged in venues other than its own.

continued on >p6

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The conflict of interest posed by a management company that negotiates deals with a concert promoter under the same corporate umbrella doesn’t trouble Azoff, who sees no such conflict. “We run a very decentralized operation” at Front Line, he says, “Our managers make those decisions with their artists, the artist has the final decision, and every artist has an individual manager at Front Line, plus their agent, plus their business manager, plus their lawyer. It’s a collaborative process. I would think that Live Nation will probably have to bid harder than they did before.”

Live Nation’s priority is promoting successful events and filling their buildings, Azoff says. “I personally think that we need more promoters and more avenues for acts to find ways to work.”

Even so, Azoff is a notoriously tough negotiator. What if a tour deal contains more benefits for an individual artist than it does for Live Nation? Both men
RECORDED MUSIC
Assuming the merger goes through, Live Nation’s recent $160 deals would continue to be overseen by global music CEO Jason Aronson. Aronson and global music chairman Arthur Fogel. “Eighty percent of those deals’ value is about the touring business, so that’s business as usual,” Rapino says. “L2 is completely the world’s largest tour pieces. And we’ll absolutely live on it. So the recording piece of those deals.”

A source at Live Nation notes that both companies have significant e-commerce operations that can distribute tickets, T-shirts or music. “People should think of Live Nation Entertainment as a vehicle to distribute artists’ stuff to fans,” the source says. “And it’s 100% possible that, whether we own the right or allow or charge some one to use it, that some of the stuff that’s delivered on that pipe could be music.”

Azoff says the deal is serious in that a Target is to bring “what we call the artist and music services.” That includes programs developed at both companies, including merchandising. VIP ticketing, fan clubs and, ultimately, physical distribution. “Those are the things where I think I’m going to add the most to the equation,” Azoff says. “And Michael is going to run the ticketing and the promoting operations.”

VENUES
Third-party facilities are “the battleground, where the war is fought and won,” as one facility executive puts it. “Who controls the manifest: the artist, promoter or the venue?” In reality, third-party venues have no choice but to wait this out. Venues are familiar with both Ticketmaster and Live Nation, but a merged company would be a new species. “As buildings, we know both entities well and most have had good relationships,” says Michael Marion, GM of the Alliant Arena in North Little Rock, Ark. “Ticketmaster and Live Nation worked together for years, but the interesting angle will be the artists’ management element.” Things could be different if agents aren’t controlling all the touring inventory. We are moving into uncharted territory and I think most buildings are passengers on a bus that we aren’t driving.”

The Philadelphia-based venue management firm Global Spectrum has its own ticketing system but Peter Lunkenho, president of Comcast-Spectacor and chairman of Global Spectrum, isn’t concerned that a tour might bypass Global buildings that don’t use Live Nation Entertainment’s system. “The artist and the management have the ultimate control,” he says. “By no means are they going to look to punish our buildings for not being with them. I don’t see that at all.”

Live Nation maintains that tapping into more revenue will enable it to reduce service fees, institute all-in pricing and provide value to fans. “Because they’re not the promoter and not the venue, Ticketmaster will be able to have a very difficult time implementing all-in pricing,” a Live Nation source says. “Our problem is, as we’re rolling out a brand-new ticketing company, how do we go in and make drastic changes to the service fee while justifying investment in a ticketing company? Now you put us together and you have revenue coming from all different sources, you have the right players at the table to have the discussion about how we address consumers’ concerns.”

But during Ticketmaster and Live Nation’s 10-year ticketing deal, it’s not like they used their buying power or their strength to lower fees,” independent promoter and 1% Productions co-owner Marc Leibowitz says. “So now because Live Nation and Ticketmaster are the same company, Live Nation is going to be able to give customers better results, meaning lower service charges? They’re not going to do that; they’ve never done it before. They had the leverage to lower service charges and never did. If anything, they want to raise them and get a share of them.”

Disclosure: Billboard.com features links to buy tickets through Ticketmaster.

Players In The Game
The Merger’s Fate Depends On Veteran Operators

SEN. CHARLES SCHUMER, D-N.Y.
Never one to shy away from a popular issue, or the attendant media coverage, Schumer called for an antitrust probe of the proposed merger after Bruce Springsteen complained about Ticketmaster. Senators have no formal role in reviewing mergers but Schumer has already drawn attention by saying, “We can’t let the screen doors slam on die-hard Boss fans.”

KLAUS-PETER SCHULENBERG
The executive board chairman at CTS Eventim, the German company Live Nation contracted with to provide ticketing services in North America and Europe, Schulemborg is almost certainly unhappy about his new partner’s plans. CTS competes fiercely with Ticketmaster in Europe, although Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino has said that Live Nation will honor its CTS contract.

CHRISTINE VARNEY
A former FTC commissioner, Varney is President Barack Obama’s nominee to head the Department of Justice’s antitrust division. At the FTC, she often joined 3-2 majorities to press antitrust complaints against companies. According to Bloomberg News, however, she’s also known for allowing mergers to proceed as long as firms made moves to preserve competition.

TIM LEIWEKE
CEO of Anschutz Entertainment Group—a private equity group that owns and operates venues and promotes major tours—Leiweke says his company is “very concerned” about the proposed merger. For now, AEG Live is a major Ticketmaster client, although Leiweke wouldn’t address rumors that AEG’s agreement with Ticketmaster could nullify in the event of a merger.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
The legendary rocker has built a career on being a voice of the people, and his credibility with fans gives him gravitas that few pop stars have. He rarely talks about business, especially his own, so his opposition to the merger—and that of his respected longtime manager, Ron Landau—will carry real weight, especially in New Jersey.

IRVING AZOFF
A powerful player in the music business for longer than some concertgoers have been alive, Azoff became CEO of Ticketmaster Entertainment when the company bought Front Line Management, which he had built into a mega-firm that represents more than 200 acts. He has a well-deserved reputation for coming out ahead in almost any deal he’s involved in.

MICHAEL RAPINO
CEO of Live Nation Entertainment, Rapino has led the world’s most powerful concert promotion company since it spun off from Clear Channel in 2005. During that time, the company acquired House of Blues and signed multiyear megadeals with Madonna, U2 and Jay-Z. There has been speculation that even this new company won’t be big enough for him and Azoff.

BARRY DILLER
A veteran Hollywood mogul—now chairman of Ticketmaster and its former parent company, IAC, Diller likes to maintain control over his companies. On a public conference call, he argued that Live Nation and Ticketmaster need to make a stronger case for the merger’s benefit by pointing out that artists set ticket prices.

Reporting by Cortney Harding, Mitchell Peters and Ray Waddell.
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Trust Issues

Merger Will Draw Intense Scrutiny

The U.S. Department of Justice has already indicated it will examine the Live Nation-Ticketmaster deal, with spokeswoman Gina Talamma saying it will "rigorously enforce antitrust laws and therefore thoroughly investigate the proposed deal."

"It's an investigation that could take months or longer," and the DOJ has probed Ticketmaster in the past. In 1991, it approved Ticketmaster's acquisition of its major competitor, Ticketron. But in 1994 the DOJ decided to investigate complaints of anticompetitive practices surfacing.

At that time, members of Pearl Jam allegedly told Ticketmaster's lawyers that the band would use its buying power to keep ticket prices low and that because Ticketmaster controlled access to venues in many major markets, they couldn't arrange an alternative ticketing strategy.

This time, the investigative process of the DOJ and other regulatory agencies—such as the Federal Trade Commission—is hard to predict. Attorney Marc G. Schildkraut, partner in Washington, D.C., firm Howrey, thinks the deal "will be in for an extended investigation, which only about 3% of mergers get. Does it raise barriers to entry? Could an outside party looking to enter the market get into any venues? If entry is easy, then it's not a problem."

Divestiture of assets is sometimes a remedy to the so-called "vertical" issues, Schildkraut says. But after spending such a huge amount of time, money and effort in launching its own ticketing company, Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino says Live Nation Ticketing won't be scrapped.

"A promoter needs to be in the e-commerce ticketing business," he says. "In a fundamental sense, the promoter's job is to buy a show, go and market and sell the tickets. In 2009, you can't be a marketing, ticket-selling company if you own that."

Faced with five years of building Live Nation Ticketing or the opportunity to "accelerate that jump and bolt Ticketmaster onto our strategy today and excel, [the latter] is the strategy," Rapino says. "But in the interim, it's business as usual until this has full approvals from everybody, and we'll 100% continue to build on our ticketing platform and ensure it's working."

The future of Ticketmaster Entertainment president/CEO Sean Moriarty, Ticketmaster chairman Terry Barnes and Ticketmaster president Eric Kornien remain unclear. Moriarty and Barnes are on the Ticketmaster Entertainment board of directors, but a source at Live Nation says Rapino will run Live Nation Ticketing. Bound to play a role in all this is Live Nation Ticketing CEO Nathan Hubbard, the architect of the promoter's ticketing launch. But any structural changes aren't expected prior to regulatory approval.

Additional reporting by Courtney Harding.

To have Live Nation and Ticketmaster become one and the same should fill any self-respecting consumer champion with shear horror. It will lead to a massacre of the price wars. There will be no other player left standing."

—GRAHAM BURNS, CEO OF THE LONDON-BASED ASSN. OF SECONDARY TICKETING AGENTS

"With the advent of the Internet and the emergence of new business lines such as fan clubs and secondary ticketing, the old primary ticketing model has had to reinvent itself. Ticketmaster's October merger with Irving Azoff's Front Line artist management company was the first step in that process. The announced merger with Live Nation is the next step. What's important is that ticketing companies provide the highest possible standards of consumer service along with watertight guarantees."

—ERIC BAKER, CEO OF LEADING EUROPEAN TICKETING COMPANY VIAGOGO, WHICH HAS A PARTNERSHIP DEAL WITH LIVE NATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

"With Ticketmaster tied to Live Nation, the polarization of the market means promoters and venue owners will want a greater choice."

—NICK BLACKBURN, CHAIRMAN OF SEE TICKETS INTERNATIONAL, ONE OF TICKETMASTER'S BIGGEST EUROPEAN RIVALS

Additional reporting by Juliana Koranteng.

DEAL OR NO DEAL?

EU Reactions To The Merger Range From Optimistic To Apocalyptic

As a promoter who, with AEG Live, promotes major acts, including those managed by Irving Azoff, I believe individual managers and acts have to make a decision about what they want. It would certainly be a dangerous policy to have a single entity that handles the management, promotion and ticketing if that's not handled responsibly, it will be scary. But every artist has different needs. When anything within an industry sector becomes that dominant, it gives rise to independent competitors. In this case, offering artists more choices."

—STUART GALBRAITH, CEO OF INDEPENDENT PROMOTION COMPANY KILIMANJARO LIVE AND FORMER MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LIVE NATION U.K.

"We are concerned that the biggest promoter and ticket agency in the world are attempting to merge and would expect the matter to be reviewed fully by the relevant authorities to see how this may or may not impact on the independent festival sector."

—BEN TURNER, CO-FOUNDER OF THE ASSN. OF INDEPENDENT FESTIVALS

Compiled by Juliana Koranteng.
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The Grammy Awards may not have the sales driving power that they once had, but they can still provide a pop for the winners and performers.

Merchants say that album of the year winner "Raising Sand" by Robert Plant & Alison Krauss appears to be the main sales beneficiary among the Grammy recipients, while best new artist winner Adele's album, "19," is enjoying the second-largest sales jump.

But it's not like a couple of years ago when Norah Jones won and her album "(Come Away With Me)" exploded," says Rob Perkins, president of the Manereta, Ga.-based retail chain Value Music. "The Grammy show is not near what it used to mean for sales, but what is nowadays? It may be that there are too many awards shows or it may be the economy or the malaise of the music industry is in.

At Harteins Entertainment in Amarillo, Texas, senior VP of merchandise Alan Van Ogtewelle reports that by midweek, "Raising Sand" was up more than 600% from the week before, while "19" was up 225% at the 154-unit chain.

Newbury Comics head of purchases Carl Mello says that in the two days following the Feb. 8 Grammy telecast, "Raising Sand" had sold seven times more copies than it did in the entire previous week, while Adele was up 2.5 times. With a full week of sales, he expects those multiples to grow.

At Train World Entertainment, director of merchandising operations and new media lan Cuebas says the Plant/Krauss album is seeing a "15-times lift" over the previous week's sales.

Train World is one of the few chains where Coldplay is enjoying the second biggest lift from the Grammy show. Based on early post-sales, Cuebas says he expects sales of the band's best rock album winner, "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends," to grow by a multiple of five, Adele's album by four; and the best alternative music album winner Radiohead's "In Rainbows," by three. Sugarland's "Love on the Inside," Jennifer Hudson's self-titled album and Kid Rock's "Rock N Roll Jesus" all are expected to double their sales, he says.

Label sales executives suggest that most of the U.S. sales for "Raising Sand" in the week ending Feb. 8 happened on that Sunday, thanks to a combination of its appearance in retail circulars that day and iTunes sales during the Grammy telecast. More than half of the album's sales for the week were digital downloads, a sharp jump from the week before when digital sales accounted for only one-tenth of overall sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Likewise, Adele's album sales almost doubled from about 9,000 units for the week ending Feb. 1 to nearly 18,000 for the week ending Feb. 8, with more than half of the latter's week sales coming from digital outlets, according to SoundScan. Moreover, nearly 33,000 tracks from the album were downloaded the week ending Feb. 8, versus slightly less than 10,000 the week before.

At iTunes, "Raising Sand" jumped from No. 18 on the store's sales chart on the day before the show to No. 3 on Feb. 11, while Adele's "19" moved from No. 6 to No. 4. Coldplay jumped from No. 17 to No. 7, and Hudson jumped to No. 43 after failing to make the top 100 the day before the show, according to iTunes spokesmen Jason Roth. He added that the "Grammy Nominees 2009" album came out of nowhere to reach No. 14 Feb. 11.

With "Raising Sand" having already sold 1.2 million units in the States, some wonder what the upside will be for the week. Rounder Records GM Sheri Sands projects that the album will reach 50,000 units in the week ending Feb. 15, which is far better than the 9,000 it had for the week ending Feb. 8 or the 2,000-3,000 it had in the prior week, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

In anticipation of the show, Sands says she started building inventory at retail by putting the album on deal. Rounder also placed the album in Best Buy's and Target's circulars and plans on doing national TV advertising Feb. 15.

The strong sales and multiple Grammy wins for "Raising Sand" have helped raise Rounder's mainstream profile. The label has focused on roots-oriented music since before the term entered the popular lexicon.

The success of the Plant/Krauss collaboration demonstrates that "an indie label can deliver results for artists," Sands says. "Also, it reinforces Rounder's commitment to releasing quality music.

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WHAT HAPPENS TO CHRIS BROWN?

R&B Singer Faces Uncertain Future After Arrest

As speculation continues to swirl around Chris Brown's arrest on suspicion of making a criminal threat, industry executives are wondering about the R&B singer's future.

The 19-year-old Brown was booked and released Feb. 8 in Los Angeles after reports that he was allegedly involved in an assault on a female the night before.

Though police haven't named the woman, several publications have identified her as the R&B star Rihanna. Both singers, known to be dating, cancelled their appearances at the 51st annual Grammy Awards.

"It's solely up to the fans who buy and listen to music to decide where his career goes from here," says Jeff Anderson, OM of Radio One's urban WCXQ Richmond, Va. "In my personal opinion, his clean image has been bruised. But with damage control of an apology and anger management, he'll find a way to bounce back... if his music is hot.

Some radio stations have already decided that, at least for the time being, Brown's music is anything but. Even though few details about the alleged incident have come out, several top 40 stations have stopped playing Brown's music, including WKST Pitts-burgh, KWZ2 Reno, Nev., and CHUM-FM Toronto. After poll listeners, Clear Channel's top 40 WAKS (96.5 Kiss FM) Cleveland decided to temporarily ban his music.

"We are fans of Chris Brown's music and this is not something that will last forever," WAKS PD Bo Mathews told Billboard sister publication Radio & Records. "But it appears that Chris has made some poor choices. We are following the lead of our listeners and we will not be supporting him on 96.5 Kiss FM until the alleged situation gets resolved."

Other stations have handled the situation differently. Pulling Brown's music is "a little too extreme right now," according to WCXQ's Anderson. "A good percentage of the industry has had its runs with the law, and we still play their music.

D.J. Law, PD of Clear Channel's urban WOW-FM Norfolk, Va., says most of his listeners are waiting to hear more details about the alleged altercation before making a decision. "Most of them are reluctant to turn their backs on him before having all the facts placed before them."

Even so, several advertisers have already backed away from the singer, including Wrigley's Doublemint gum and the Body by Milk moustache campaign. "Those are the real challenges brands face when they align their products with individuals," says Jay Coleman, CEO of Entertainment Marketing & Communications. "You look at their history and make a calculated analysis of risk, but you never know."

Brown, a native of Tappahannock, Va., was named Billboard's No. 1 male pop artist for 2008. His career ignited in 2005 with his first single, "Run It," and since then he has notched 11 Billboard Hot 100 hits, including "Kiss Kiss," "With You" and the Grammy-nominated "No Air," which featured Jordin Sparks. His two albums, "Chris Brown" and "Exclusive," have sold 4 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Until the legal process is further along, it's hard to tell how much damage has been done to Brown's career. His representatives were unavailable for comment, and the singer said he won't appear at the NBA All-Star events set for Feb. 13-15, according to an NBA representative.

David Linton, formerly senior VP of urban promotion at Capitol Records, believes Brown will regain his musical footing, although his image has lost some of its luster.

"The public has become used to celebrities having a variety of legal or public relations issues," says Linton, executive VP of Atlanta-based COS Music. "But I do believe he's hurt his image as an acceptable—by parents—teen idol. That innocent, squeaky-clean image is gone.

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield, Kamau High and R&B's Kevin Carter in Los Angeles.
Universal Still Tops
Publisher Retains Largest U.S. Airplay Share in Q4

Universal Music Publishing Group captured the largest share of U.S. radio airplay among music publishers in fourth-quarter 2008, retaining the top spot for the third quarter in a row.

For the three-month period ending Dec. 31, Universal had a 17.21% share, strong enough to top the fourth-quarter Top 10 Publisher Airplay chart. But its share was down by more than three percentage points from an industry-leading 20.58% in the prior quarter and was also down by nearly five percentage points from the 22.24% it had in fourth-quarter 2007.

Universal was affiliated with 32 tracks among the fourth quarter’s top 100 airplay songs. The label has a share of the No. 3 song, Ne-Yo’s “Miss Independent”, the No. 5 song, T-Pain’s “Can’t Believe It,” featuring Lil Wayne; and the No. 9 song, Rihanna’s “Disturbia.”

Radio airplay share is calculated based on the overall top 100 detecting songs from 1,551 U.S. radio stations monitored electronically by Nielsen BDS for the three-month period ending Dec. 31. The Harry Fox Agency researches the publishers’ splits for each song in the top 100 to calculate their share of those songs.

EMI Music Publishing Group had the second-largest share of airplay in the fourth quarter with 16.72%, even though it had a piece of 35 songs in the top 100, the most of any publisher. They include the top four songs of the period: “Miss Independent,” T.L.’s “Whatever You Like” and “Live Your Life” (the latter featuring Rihanna) and Pink’s “So What.”

Still, EMI’s share slipped from 18.29% in the prior quarter and 18.63% in fourth-quarter 2007.

For the straight second quarter, Sony/ATV Music Publishing ranked third in radio airplay market share. It finished with 16.26%, a bump up from the 15.48% slice it garnered in the prior quarter and better than the 15.61% the company had in 2007’s last quarter.

During the quarter, Sony/ATV had a share of 31 of the top 100 songs for the period, including “Miss Independent,” “Disturbia” and the No. 7 “Better in Time” by Leona Lewis.

Warner/Chappell Music finished fourth for the sixth consecutive quarter, tallying an 11.22% share in the fourth quarter, down slightly from 11.72% in the prior quarter and nearly two percentage points less than its 13.05% ranking it had in fourth-quarter 2007. During the quarter, Warner/Chappell had a share in 22 of the top 100 airplay songs, including the top two, “Whatever You Like” and “Live Your Life,” as well as “Can’t Believe It” and the No. 5 song, Katy Perry’s “Hot N Cold.”

Kobalt Music Group remained in fifth place for the third quarter in a row, finishing with a 4.99% share, up from the 3.82% it had in the prior quarter. In fourth-quarter 2007, Kobalt ranked eighth with 1.84%. Kobalt had a piece of six songs on the top 100 list, including “So What,” “Hot N Cold” and Kid Rock’s “All Summer Long” (No. 21).

The group also landed the No. 14 song, “You’re Beautiful.”

RCA/Sony/ATV Music Publishing Group had the fourth-largest share of airplay in the fourth quarter with 4.99%, a bump up from the 4.88% slice it garnered in the prior quarter and better than the 4.46% share it had in fourth-quarter 2007. During the quarter, RCA/Sony/ATV had a share of 16 of the top 100 songs for the period, including “The Way You Look Tonight,” Katy Perry’s “Hot N Cold” and Kid Rock’s “All Summer Long” (No. 21).

Bug Music/Windswept Holdings ranked eighth by tallying a 1.97% share. While Bug Music improved its market share by two ticks from the 1.95% it had in the third quarter, it fell from the seventh-place finish in the prior period.

Bug claims part of seven songs in the top 100, with its highest-ranking song being John Legend’s “Green Light,” featuring Andre 3000, at No. 29.

Tenth-ranked Words and Music Copyright Administration returns to the Top 10 Publisher Airplay chart with 1.69% in market share, thanks to its share of the Brad Paisley/Keith Urban duet “Start a Band” (No. 41), as well as Dierks Bentley’s “Feel That Fire” (No. 61) and Blake Shelton’s “She Wouldn’t Be Gone” (No. 67).

In the fourth quarter last year, Words and Music ranked sixth in its debut appearance on the chart with a 2.62% slice of the pie.

Finally, Cherry Lane Music Publishing returned to the top 10 airplay chart in the fourth quarter, ranking 10th with a 1.32% share, after falling to chart during 2008’s third and second quarters. It ranked 10th in fourth-quarter 2007 with 1.41%. Cherry Lane had a share in three songs in the top 100, including Beyoncé’s “If I Were a Boy,” the No. 14 track.

Visit georgia.org/music or call 404.962.4052
Music Acts Get In Gear For NASCAR Season

It's early January and occasional downpours drench thousands of Sun & Speed, an annual event featuring country stars and NASCAR drivers. Camo-clad devotés and their children, some dressed in miniature racing suits, line up for an autograph and a picture. The event is the perfect mix for those who consider a Dierks Bentley and Dale Earnhardt Jr. autograph rehearsalitory.

NASCAR fans and country music fans are eager to rub elbows with drivers and artists alike, something both circuits are eager to take advantage of. The 2009 race season kicks off Feb. 15 with the Daytona 500, the season opening event to the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. On hand for the festivities at the Daytona International Speedway will be Keith Urban, who will perform prior to the race. Capitol Nashville labelmate Bentley was scheduled to perform a week earlier at the Budweiser Shootout, which also takes place in Daytona.

Despite the hard economic climate, NASCAR officials and music industry executives believe the time is right to place more emphasis on collaborative marketing—not less. “I haven’t heard anybody say, ‘We’re not doing a concert because we don’t have money,’” says Philip Metz, senior manager of entertainment marketing and talent relations for NASCAR and NASCAR Media Group. “The trick promoters and NASCAR want to provide the most value for the ticket buying fan, so concerts in certain markets provide that value.”

Artists that have the best interest of linking up with NASCAR are those who create a family-friendly atmosphere that fits with NASCAR’s image. “The best types of artists are those that can appeal to all ages,” Metz says, noting that classic rock, rock, pop and country acts tend to fare well with race fans. Jay Williams, a VP at the William Morris Agency whose clients include Bentley, says that NASCAR’s fan base “has broadened drastically” during the past decade.

“There’s a ton of potential for artists to reach new fans now—and the same potential for NASCAR, by broadening their music sponsorship, to do the same,” Williams says.

The acts that have appeared at NASCAR races and events are impressive and diverse. The list ranges from Fantasia and Fergie to Jewel and Janae to Deals Down and Thred Eye Blind, not to mention Jermaine Dupri and Herbie Hancock. “As long as everyone has a clear idea of what audience they are trying to reach, it can be successful,” Williams says.

Kelly Clarkson partnered with NASCAR for the 2007 season, when she was integrated into all aspects of the circuit, including a concert at the Daytona 500, a TV spot for the NASCAR Foundation, inclusion in a NASCAR Image Campaign spot and a performance at NASCAR’s annual awards dinner.

Drivers can also benefit: Sheryl Crow cast Earnhardt to star in the video for “Steve McQueen,” while 3 Doors Down featured Tony Stewart and Earnhardt in its video for “The Road I’m On.”

“Both music and NASCAR are highly individual and personal experiences for fans,” Williams says. “They identify with a driver or two and really connect and feel part of a community of like-minded people.”

NASCAR drivers are very similar to country artists because they are extremely close to their fans and very hands-on when it comes to managing their fans. In 2003, General Motors rebranded the annual Chevrolet Monte Carlo 400 at the Richmond International Raceway as the Chevy Rock & Roll 400. The Richmond event has regularly featured pre-race musical performances by such acts as Nickelback, Daughtry and Three Days Grace.

“It was a way to cross-connect what we have traditionally done in the music and entertainment space with racing,” says Terry Dolan, manager of Chevy Racing. “There’s such a natural affiliation, whether it’s country music or rock ’n’ roll music and racing fans. It is a fun way to show that Chevy is cool, hip and youthful-oriented not only in the products we build but also in the lifestyle affiliations we have.”

Not only do acts perform at the race, they’re sometimes even worked into the paint schemes. In the 2006 Chevy 400, Kevin Harvick drove to victory in a No. 29 GM Goodwrench Chevy Monte Carlo SS emblazoned with images of Barenaked Ladies. The band performed before the race and XM Satellite Radio, now part of Sirius XM, simulcast the concert for its subscribers.

“Like any good business deal there are partners coming together that are looking for solutions that can lead to a win,” Dolan says. “NASCAR has traditionally brought us the ability to expose the artist’s product in front of a large audience.”

Music tie-ins can enhance the value of an event for race fans plunking down their hard-earned dollars. NASCAR’s Metz says. “Music helps put people in good moods and really adds to our show,” he says. “It’s a complement to our fans for attending the races from a live perspective. It also helps fur- ther put us in mainstream pop culture by aligning us with artists that have their own followings.”

Unlike the major labels, indies don’t want to take a bite out of Apple. iTunes’ dominance of digital sales gives the online retailer a distressing amount of leverage in its dealings with labels.

And independent labels believe that most digital retailers and music services, including iTunes, devote a disproportionate share of promotional support to major-label releases.

So why is it that iTunes incurs the wrath of the majors but retains the admiration of the indies? Because iTunes provides indie labels with what they’ve always been denied at traditional retail chains and at mainstream rock and pop radio—a fair shot.

Apple’s overwhelming share of the digital music market means that the majors can’t throw their weight around at iTunes the way they do at big-box stores and in radio land. And that provides indies with the kind of level playing field that they’re rarely enjoyed on other mass-market or promotional platforms.

For instance, the decisions behind iTunes’ placements on the front page of the store or in its “New Music Tuesday” e-newsletter are based on editorial considerations, rather than the kinds of commercial arrangements that always favor the majors. Contrast this to radio, where the majors pour money into promotion to get airplay, or physical retail, where the majors purchase pricey displays and endcaps.

Indie acts and labels reap tangible benefits from iTunes’ label-agnostic placement strategy. On Feb. 4, the top five albums on the chart were all major-label releases; further down, however, it was a different story: Nos. 9, 10, 12 and 19 were all indies.

For bands like unsigned U.K. act the Boxer Rebellion, a placement on iTunes can relaunch a career. After its single was offered as a free download, the band sold 8,000 albums and landed at No. 82 on the Billboard 200 (Billboard, Feb. 7).

Even bands that don’t make the charts can see big sales boosts from iTunes. “We put the Faunts remixes record out as a digital-only release and priced it to move at $5.99 for 14 tracks,” says Friendly Fire Records president Dan Koplowitz. “I did say at this point 40%-50% of our sales come from iTunes. It’s great and a major revenue stream.”

Bob Frank, president of E1 Music (formerly Koch Records), says his experience with iTunes has been “100% positive.” “We don’t control them and neither do the majors—it’s a market unto itself,” he says. “The consumer ends up getting to see everything that is offered and they get to make the ultimate decision.”

American Assn. of Independent Music president Rich Bengloff adds that iTunes is more flexible on album pricing than Amazon’s MP3 store. Although iTunes only recently relented to label demands for flexible pricing on single-track downloads, it had already begun offering deep discounts on albums.

“Amazon went to our member labels and suggested, forcefully, what songs and albums should be at what price points,” Bengloff says. “iTunes, on the other hand, allows labels to decide what price points they want.” An Amazon representa- tive says the company doesn’t discuss its relationships with vendors.

Bengloff also notes that iTunes, like indie-focused subscription service eMusic, has direct relationships with indie labels, not a small detail.

“We have 235 member labels, and two-thirds of them have direct deals with iTunes,” he says, praising Bruno Ybarra, iTunes senior manager of inde- pendent artists and labels. “He works very hard and seeks us out, which is rare. I imagine Bruno is working 90 hours a week.”

As per Apple policy, Ybarra was unable to comment for this story. E1’s Frank says he was amused by a recent press report about a heated Christmas Eve phone call between Apple CEO Steve Jobs and Sony Music CEO Rolf Schmidt-Holzt. “The head of Sony called Steve to yell at him?” Frank says. “Well, I called Steve Jobs on Christmas to tell him I love him.”

HappyTogether
Not All Record Labels Are Ticked Off At iTunes

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KIWI CLAMPDOWN
New Zealand First With ISP Cooperation Law

AUSTRALIA, New Zealand—The eyes of the international music business are focused on New Zealand as it prepares to implement the world’s first “three strikes” law aimed at reducing piracy on peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing networks.

The new law, which takes effect Feb. 28, requires New Zealand’s Internet service providers to develop policies to terminate the accounts of persistent copyright infringers.

“There are discussions going on all around the world on the issue of ISP cooperation, and New Zealand has become one of the leading players,” says Jo Oliver, general counsel for the IFPI in London.

The Telecommunication Carriers Forum, which represents ISPs, issued a draft voluntary code of conduct Feb. 4 to guide its members on how to meet the new law’s requirements.

“We’ve made a big effort to reflect the concerns of copyright holders in the code,” TCF chief executive Ralph Chivers says. “We don’t completely line up on everything. But we are committed to ongoing consultation.”

Campbell Smith, CEO of labels body the Recording Industry Assn. of New Zealand (RIANZ), says his members want a system that “can give users the benefit of the doubt” but also “sends a clear message that what they are doing is wrong and, if they continue to do it, there will be consequences.”

Under the code, an ISP will issue a warning to a customer if a copyright holder provides it with evidence “sufficient to satisfy a court that an infringement has taken place.” Once a user has received three warning notices in three different calendar months, termination procedures would begin.

Interested parties have until March 6 to make submissions before a final code is published, with the main sticking point likely to be the section on “counter-notice procedures,” which gives consumers the right to formally appeal warning notices.

Smith is concerned that if consumers repeatedly lodge appeals, they would be able to continue to use their account to access P2P networks. A termination notice can only be issued after three undisputed warnings.

As both sides work on a counternotice compromise, rights holders are making plans to target the most persistent offenders.

“We have technology which enables us to identify the IP addresses of those involved in illegal activities,” says Anthony Healey, executive director of New Zealand operations for the Australasian Performing Right Assn. “We will continue to gather that evidence [to] pass on to relevant ISPs.”

Similar government-backed schemes are due to come in France and the United Kingdom during 2009. But Simon Fogarty, senior associate/copyright expert at Wellington-based law firm A.J. Park, warns that the New Zealand legislation could yet be tested in the courts by an ISP or a member of the public.

“It’s not entirely clear when ISPs have to make the call on whether an infringement has occurred—and if they do, will they be safe?” he says. “For example, they could be countersued by the customer for breach of contract.”

Digital retailers hope the legislation will boost download sales. According to the latest figures available from the IFPI, digital music sales totalled $4.5 million in 2007, representing about 10% of overall New Zealand recorded-music sales. Mobile formats account for 63% of sales value, with Vodafone and local telco Telecom major players alongside iTunes.

“If until now, if you point out to someone they are breaching copyright, they say, ‘Who cares?’” says Shaun Davis, founder of the digital music service digiRAMA. “But with ‘three strikes and you’re out,’ people will sit up and take notice.”

Additional reporting by Mark Sutherland in London.

‘Labels want a system to alert file sharers that what they are doing is wrong and, if they continue to do it, then there will be consequences.’
—CAMPBELL SMITH, RIANZ

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BRITs Abroad

U.K. Awards Show Seeks International Viewers

LONDON—The BRIT Awards have long helped boost music sales in the United Kingdom. Now organizers want to expand the show’s impact around the world.

The 2009 awards show will take place Feb. 18 in London’s Earls Court and be broadcast live in the United Kingdom on commercial network ITV1. But with a strong lineup of performers including U2, Coldplay, Duffy and Kings of Leon, organizers are also pursuing a series of TV deals in international markets.

For the second year, the event is being sold around the world by Fremantle Media Enterprises, the production giant behind “American Idol.”

“Last year we did more territories than had been done in previous years, and so far we’re slightly ahead of where we were this time last year,” says Fremantle VP of programming Mark Gray.

Gray says the heavyweight bill of performers is helping the cause, with new 2009 markets for the program including Spain (Turner), Greece (Mad TV), Poland (TV4) and Croatia (HRT).

Broadcasters renewing their rights include Australia’s XYZ, Japan’s WDH, Sweden’s Kanal 5, South Africa’s M-Net and Latin America’s Turner. At press time, Fremantle was closing in on a deal for U.S. broadcast—last year, it sold the show to BBC America.

The BPI, the U.K. trade body that stages the event, hopes the deals will help boost international sales of British music, since the awards have a strong track record of improving sales at home. According to the Official Charts Co., the 2006 BRITs fueled a 23.4% week-on-week increase in album sales, and the 2007 awards netted a 21.4% sales gain. While total album sales actually fell 18.1% after the 2008 ceremony, retailer HMV said...
individual albums by the night’s performers enjoyed sharp increases, with sales of Mark Ronson’s ‘Version’ (Columbia, up 271%) and Kylie Minogue’s ‘X’ (Parlophone, up 242%) among the main beneficiaries.

BPI chairman Tony Wadsworth says the ceremony boosts the "long-term rolling profile of U.K. music" inside and outside its home market.

"There’s been a temptation to measure sales uplifts, and those numbers always confine themselves to two or three weeks after the awards," he says. "In fact, the whole BRIT Awards process starts in early January and gives companies the chance to build campaigns using the awards as the centerpiece."

Gray acknowledges the challenges in getting the BRITs shown in prime time outside of the United Kingdom.

"Just as the record industry has changed dramatically, the way music programming ends up on TV is changing," he says. "You don’t see as much in prime time on major channels. In fact, you hardly see it on free-to-air channels around the world. It tends to be on other channels."

Nonetheless, Fremantle says audiences exceeded 100,000 viewers in many markets last year. And Wadsworth notes that the event can help music releases attract the attention of overseas labels and potential licensees.

"Everyone at EMI supports XYZ’s purchase and promotion of the event on Australian TV, and I will support that via our media and marketing this year," says EMI Australia chairman Mark Poston, noting that Coldplay’s Australian tour begins in Perth nine days after the ceremony. "We’re certainly looking for sales and profile uplift."

In 2008, there were seven albums by British artists among the top 100 U.S. sellers for the second year running, according to Nielsen SoundScan, up from five in 2006, four in 2005 and just three in 2004. With British music on the upswing internationally, Wadsworth says the BRITs have become a highly visible "ambassador" for British talent.

"It’s grown from being a little private party for record companies," he says, "to an internationally known brand."

Additional reporting by Lars Brandale in Brisbane, Australia.

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M.I.A. At The Grammys

Once Again, Latin Artists Were Absent From The Telecast

It was a great night at the Grammy Awards, with stirring performances by the likes of Coldplay and, of course, big winners Robert Plant and Alison Krauss. But something always ruins the party, doesn't it? Yet again, the telecast didn't feature any Latin performances, or even Latin faces.

It's an issue we've touched upon in the past, in hopes that the Recording Academy and CBS recognize that Latin music is an integral part of American culture. No such luck. Save for Ricky Martin's landmark performance in 1999, which preceded the release of his English-language debut, Latin performances at the Grammys have been strictly confined to those acts that pass the "crossover" test. Latin artists who only record in Spanish—in other words, the vast majority of Latin artists who have a significant cultural and commercial impact on the music business—have never performed.

This has contributed to a downward spiral in which Latin music is relegated to pretelecast ceremonies, prompting many Latin acts to skip the main event because they don't have any incentive to attend.

Sources within the music industry say that attempts to secure a performance slot for a Latin artist during the Grammy telecast—even as a collaboration with a mainstream act—invariably fail. CBS didn't return calls seeking comment. (See the Q&A with Recording Academy president/CEO Neil Portnow on page 19.)

Some believe Spanish presents a barrier and that U.S. audiences don't have the patience to sit through three minutes of music in another language. That's ironic, considering that the Italian song "Volare" won record and song of the year honors at the first Grammy Awards in 1958. During the last several years only one Grammy

against the Grain

Unconventional Tactics Help Duelo Top The Charts

The progressive norteño group Duelo's first No. 1 debut on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart defined two conventions of success in the Latin music world—and region in particular.

First, the single wasn't a national radio hit when the album topped the chart. Second, a slightly higher-than-usual amount of the album's sales came from digital downloads.

Airplay of the title track, "Necesito Mas De Ti," has been concentrated in the south-central region of the United States, particularly in Duelo's home market of Texas, according to Nielsen BDS. And one-third of the album's sales have come from Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The single was buzzing under Billboard's Regional Mexican Airplay chart at press time.

"This was a phase of the album, a tactic that reflects Fonovisa's stepped-up digital focus since Universal Music Group took over the one-time indie in May 2008. About 5% of the album's first-week sales were downloads, a greater digital share than the 3.8% of sales that's been average for Latin albums so far in 2009, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Duelo's young fan base avidly seeks out the band online, says drummer Jose Luis Ayala, who also writes the band's Que Dice Duelo (What Duelo Says) feature on the group's Web site. While on the road, Ayala updates the band's promotional schedule on the site from his mobile phone. He notes that in the week after "Necesito Mas De Ti" was released, the group's MySpace page views rose by 100,000, an effect he attributes to the band's name-checking its MySpace during radio show appearances. "It really motivates you to keep going and make music," Ayala says.

Duelo, whose rock-leaning arrangements reflect influences ranging from Los Tigres del Norte to the Beatles, didn't release a studio album in its trademark relaxed romantic style since 2007, having followed that collection with a hits collection, a corridos album and a live set.

Shakira Opens School

Colombian star Shakira has founded a new school and community center in her hometown of Barranquilla. The Fondación Pies Descalzos (the Barefoot Foundation School) is the largest school for underprivileged children that the singer has funded and opened in Colombia. Nearly 62% of the approximate $6 million cost of the project was provided by Shakira's charitable organization Fundación Pies Descalzos, with additional help from philanthropist Howard Buffett, the Robin Hood Foundation, Hard Rock Cafe, Comunidad de Madrid and German TV channel RTL, among others.

The school and community center include an auditorium, sports complex and community theater. It can accommodate 1,500 children of all school ages and will serve up to 8,400 young people and their parents in the area through various community programs. Fundación Pies Descalzos operates five schools in three needy areas in Colombia and serves about 5,000 children and 37,000 residents.

BILBOARD LATIN CONFERENCE ADDS PANELISTS

Producer Kike Santander and singer/songwriter Jorge Villalimar will participate in the BMI-sponsored "How I Wrote That Song" panel at the 20th annual Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards, which will be held April 20-23 at the Eden Roc Beach Resort & Spa in Miami Beach. Other recently confirmed conference participants include Live Nation senior VP of touring Kate Ramos, who will join the touring panel; State Farm Insurance Co. advertising director Ed Gold, who will participate on a panel on branding opportunities; and Felipe Jaramillo, founding partner of 10Music and manager of Colombian artist Fonseca, who will join the licensing and sponsorship panel.

For more information on the conference and awards, go to billboardlatinconference.com.
Ready Steady Go
Tour Sponsorships Weather The Tough Economy

Even as the economy adds insult to the music business' injury, lucrative sponsorship deals for live entertainment are holding their own. Deals have been lined up for acts ranging from Britney Spears (Virgin Mobile) to Keith Urban (KC Masterpiece/Kingsford) and Rascal Flatts. Live Nation recently announced a multiyear corporate partnership with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, under which Starwood will become the promoter's official hotel partner (billboard.biz, Feb. 5).

"There are definitely tour sponsorships being secured, but there are a lot of different properties vying for the same dollars," says Marcie Cardwell, president of MAC Presents and one of the architects of the Urban deal. "Brands are not going to stop spending money, but they are going to be more strategic about how their money is spent and how they can measure their ROI."

Sponsorship opportunities exist beyond the biggest companies. "If their budgets are tight or they have certain windows of opportunities, we have the ability to creative and flexible enough to build a program around exactly what they need," Wallach says. "So all of that has given us the opportunity to go in and talk to a lot of brands. In some cases, we are going to blue-chip brands, trying to carve out our share of the overall media budget. And in other cases we have to work to find companies that are not the biggest brand in the world and companies that may not be the traditional companies spending money in the sponsorship world."

In terms of tour sponsorships, Wallach says the schedule is shaping up nicely after such successful partnerships as Burger King's sponsorship of Jonas Brothers and State Farm's backing of Maroon 5 and Counting Crows last year. "We're fortunate that we're out in the market selling sponsorship opportunities for some pretty major tours," he says. "So far, companies are still excited about tour sponsorships, it works well for a lot of brands from a timing standpoint. Companies and brands still have dollars out there for this summer and they know it creates a lot of excitement, PR and promotion."

MAC Presents' Cardwell agrees that timing is important. "The brand should figure out what artists have upcoming tours, albums, press activities, etc.," she says. "Sponsors should align with artists who speak to their target demographic and who have an organic connection with the brand."

Wallach adds that Live Nation is still doing well with venue sponsorships, locally and nationally. "We're in the process of some big renewals. We've got some big new deals like Starwood, which is something we've been working on for the last six months," he says. "We'll be announcing some more sponsorship deals probably within the next 60 days."

The biggest growth area for Live Nation is sponsorship and advertising on livemix.com, Wallach says. "We're a top 12 music site now, so all of a sudden we're on the radar screen of every digital media agency in the country," he says. "We get 100 Requests for Proposals a week to respond to our relationship to digital media and what we call the Live Nation network, which includes livemix.com and our artist sites."

Certainly budgets are tighter in the auto, financial and apparel industries, but Cardwell points out that other brands are actually increasing their budgets. "McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, Family Dollar and consumer packaged goods companies are in the middle of expanding their campaigns," she says. "As more and more brands are cutting their traditional advertising budgets, music properties offer a unique way to connect to consumers' emotions that are running high even during these difficult economic times."

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KEITH URBAN

Russell Wallach, president of national alliances for Live Nation, says the economy has forced everyone in the sponsorship space to work harder and be smarter. In the last 90 days, Wallach says he has hired "eight superstars in the sponsorship sales and creative area" because "we wanted to have more great people and great ideas out in the marketplace."

Another Live Nation strategy has been focusing "not just on the sponsorship budgets, but the overall media budgets, and being able to demonstrate to clients that we believe music sponsorship can be more impactful and drive more business compared to traditional media."

Live music as a brand promotion vehicle has three axes: interactivity, efficiency and the ability to target specific consumers. "The beauty is we're able to attack that consumer on a one-to-one basis, which is tougher and tougher in traditional media," Wallach says. "We can touch them at our venues, online, via ticketing through our database, so we use all of those assets to show the advertiser how we can really create excitement and impact against what we know is a huge passion for so many people."

For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see billboard.biz/touring.
Fair For All
Labels Not To Blame For Latest Dust-Up At YouTube

Funny how a seemingly benign concept like fairness—or, more specifically, fair use—makes people so combative.

The Electronic Freedom Foundation fired the most recent salvo by offering to represent YouTube users who want to challenge the record labels and other copyright owners who request that their videos be removed.

The EFF’s complaint, echoed by fans, is that while labels have the right to remove their music videos, extending that ban to a user’s own creations is wrong. The argument is that when users incorporate music into their videos, it’s fair use, and therefore outside the scope of copyright law and enforcement.

Since when? Fair use as defined under U.S. copyright law allows the use of copyrighted works in a certain form for such purposes as criticism, review, and academic citations. But even under a casual interpretation of the doctrine, none of the most common ways that copyrighted music appears in user-generated content can be considered fair use, such as using a recent hit song as a soundtrack for a video, filming a scene that has music playing in the background or lip-syncing to a song.

In any other case, such usage would require a synch license, complete with consent from the artist and the publisher. Just because new technology and services emerge to make it easier to create and share user-generated content doesn’t mean the law should change. It just means the business model should change, and that’s where the fight should remain.

For all the static they have gotten for being slow to pursue new business models in the digital age, record labels receive little credit for the unprecedented departure they took from traditional licensing practices to cut deals with YouTube in the fall of 2006 (Warner Music Group [WMG], Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment) and the spring of 2007 (EMI Music).

Under their agreements with the video portal giant, the four majors agreed for the first time to grant what amounted to a mass synch license to let consumers post videos including their music without having to go through the traditional licensing process, with the labels retaining the right to ask YouTube to remove certain content.

It’s a business model based on the understanding that rights holders will be compensated for the use of copyrighted music in user-generated videos. The music industry is not asking users to pay for this. They’re asking YouTube to pay for it, since YouTube would profit from the activity on its service.

The catalyst for the revival of this debate is the licensing dispute between WMG and YouTube that erupted in December. After talks over compensation reached an impasse, the label pulled its content and asked to have YouTube’s Content ID filtering tool automatically remove or mute any video identified as containing WMG content. It’s not just WMG. Every label (and TV network and film studio) has at some point asked YouTube to remove content from the site.

WMG doesn’t want to block YouTube members from using its artists’ music. It simply wants better compensation for its artists’ video streams. Critics are quick to forget that WMG was the first major to strike a licensing partnership with YouTube. By doing so, they sources say, it secured less favorable terms than labels that held out longer—a situation that WMG is now trying to resolve.

The proliferation of home music and video editing software coupled with the distribution power offered by YouTube has fueled a new generation of creative expression. Fans are no longer content with passively consuming entertainment. They want to put their personal stamp on it as well. Restrictions such usage would be a serious misstep for the music industry.

But YouTube shouldn’t be the only one to profit. It’s hypocritical to mock the majors for past mistakes like failing to strike licensing deals with the original Napster, and then condemn them for trying to find a business solution with YouTube. Fair use has to be fair to everyone.

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Bits & Briefs

Verizon-Timbaland Partnership

Verizon is extending its partnership with hip-hop producer Timbaland to create exclusive music for users of the new BlackBerry Storm mobile phone. Starting with a collaboration with Rihanna, Timbaland will work with various artists to remix their songs as singles available only to Verizon customers as a free download. The debut single will be a remix of Rihanna’s “Rehab,” recorded during Grammy Week in Los Angeles.

New ‘GTA IV’ Music

The videogame “Grand Theft Auto IV” is almost a year old, but its developers are introducing a new expansion to the game that will be available Feb. 17 as an Xbox 360 download. Along with the new missions, story line and characters comes new music, something the “GTA” franchise is well-known for curating. Five of the in-game radio stations have been updated, including new hip-hop and rock stations. Funkmaster Flex is programming one of the new stations, which will debut a new single from Busta Rhymes as well as a taped interview.

MyMusicSite Launches

MyMusicSite.com has become the latest online service designed to let independent acts post and promote their music. Participating artists can sell tracks, albums, ringtones and physical goods on the site, which claims 5,000 members. It also has a range of fan management tools, such as e-mail list organization and message-sending features.

Hot Ringmasters

1. Me Thru the Phone
   KARATE KID
   MUFASA
   RINGMASTER
2. Me Thru the Phone
   KARATE KID
   MUFASA
   RINGMASTER
3. Me Thru the Phone
   KARATE KID
   MUFASA
   RINGMASTER
4. TURKHMEN
   RINGMASTER
   RINGMASTER
5. DIVA
   RINGMASTER
   RINGMASTER
6. YOU COMPLETE ME
   RINGMASTER
   RINGMASTER
7. ALL SUMMER LONG
   RINGMASTER
   RINGMASTER
8. WHATEVER YOU LIKE
   RINGMASTER
   RINGMASTER
9. BLAME IT
   RINGMASTER
   RINGMASTER
10. LONG DANCE
    RINGMASTER
    RINGMASTER

Rock the House

Cisco’s Wireless Home Audio stereo system is designed to take digital music from your computer and put it in your living room. The Wi-Fi-based product family, which Cisco unveiled in January at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, includes a 50-watt amplifier called the Director, a wireless “extender” called the Player and a portable all-in-one system with built-in speakers called the Conductor. A wireless touch-screen device controls all of the components.

Options also include an iPod docking station and direct Internet access to such music services as Rhapsody in the United States or Audiolounge in Europe. Users can mix and match devices and features to customize their experience.

The Director will be available for $450, the Player for $300 and the iPod dock for $80. Pricing for the all-in-One Conductor has not yet been released.

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Much of the story of this year’s Grammy Awards can be told by the numbers: a three-and-a-half-hour live telecast, more than 19 million viewers, a record 24 performances and two last-minute cancellations that generated countless tabloid headlines.

The TV ratings for this year’s show were up 11% over last year, when the Grammys’ 50th anniversary garnered lowest ratings among adults 18-49 since at least 1992. U2, Miley Cyrus, Taylor Swift and Jonas Brothers were just a few of the blockbuster acts that performed on the Feb. 8 telecast, and Jennifer Hudson’s Grammy win and her performance of “You Pulled Me Through” injected genuine emotion into the glitzy proceedings.

Other numbers may also help revitalize interest in the awards. Since the Recording Academy started extending the Grammy brand into social networking in late November, the Grammys have amassed 7,000 Twitter followers and 6,000 Facebook fans. The organization says traffic to Grammy.com more than doubled over last year on Grammy night and the following day; and there were 7,500 downloads of the Grammy iPhone application.

In addition, audio tracks and videos of performances by Hudson, Katy Perry and Coldplay with Jay-Z at this year’s ceremony have been made available for sale at iTunes. Audio tracks from the show were also for sale in 15 countries through the Nokia Music Stores.

Recording Academy president/CEO Neil Portnow spoke to Billboard about boosting viewership, educating Congress about the industry’s concerns and pulling Al Green out of the tub.

Viewership of the Grammys rebounded from last year’s all-time low. What do you think contributed to the bounce? Not to downplay the bounce, but last year was an anomaly because of the writers’ strike, so a great deal of the audience had migrated away. Whatever happened, we would have expected this to be a better year. But they’re not small numbers, they’re rather extraordinary increases. We had a great year in terms of recordings and creativity, so our nominations were filled with great music. Secondly, we booked an extraordinary show in terms of talent. Third, there was a very concerted and specific marketing campaign this year on many different levels.

In the key 18-49 demo, the show was up 14% from last year, but that’s still the third-lowest ratings showing during the past decade. Are there still ratings challenges to overcome? [We were] first in viewers, first in adults 25-54, first in adults 18-49, adults 18-34—we were first in every category. And also in the younger demo, which is a very gratifying development for us in terms of cultivating more of the youthful audience.

Did the Miley Cyrus/Taylor Swift/Jonas Brothers factor help with that? Clearly. And they’re deserving.

This year’s show was heavy on performances. Is this the template for the future?

I look at every year as a fresh can-vas. And I think if you get too att-ached to one way of doing things, or if you think that something be-comes a template, then I think you may miss opportunities to be cre-ative. Certainly when we’re at the point of building next year, we’ll look at the elements that worked this year and put it in the context of what were the nominations and what was the music like in the year and what is the climate in the country and in the world. Because all of that has a definite impact. How did the current economy affect the show’s programming?

What happens in the world affects artists and creative people. Some of the programming for this year’s show had a reflection of the times. But in terms of the audience, people look to the creative community for plain entertainment and escape but also for inspiration and hope.

So you had everything from Katy Perry being lowered in a banana to U2’s “Get On Your Boots.” Exactly the point. The other thing about this year is that, in general, I think we provide perhaps the greatest-three-and-a-half-hour live concert anywhere. At a time when people may have some thoughts about discretionary spending, they can easily have a great night of music in the comfort of the living room or bedroom.

You found out at about 2 p.m. Sunday that the performances by Rihanna and Chris Brown weren’t going to happen. Did you think of Al Green right away? How did that come together?

Because of the complexity of this show, the number of performances, the fact that it’s on three stages and so on—it’s quite a herculean task to make any changes once you have a rundown. But those things are doable. It’s re-ally about getting the music right. We thought about, “Who’s here? What might work? What kinds of songs? What kind of themes?” And sort of kicking it around, one thing led to another and we started thinking about A, and when you think about A, [you think of] the Memphis connection. We know Justin [Timberlake] is from there and very connected to it. So in theory that sort of makes sense. We knew Boyz II Men were at the pre-telecast ceremony, and Keith Urban was set to be a presenter but wasn’t actually performing.

As we started asking, people were saying, “Yeah, man, count me in, I’ll do that,” by the time the idea had surfaced, we’d had some conversa-tions with managers and artists and our music director Ricky Minor and some of the guys in the band. So between 2:30 and 3 p.m., the begin-nings of the head arrangements for the actual backing track were already in rehearsal.

Al wasn’t in the house, he was at his hotel taking a bath, basically, and they got through to him and pitched the idea and he was like, “Yeah, man.” He was getting ready to walk the carpet, so he came right over. Justin was in the house at that point and hopped right up on stage, as did Keith. We pulled Boyz II Men over from the pretel and within an hour this was being rehearsed and the di-rector was taking a look and doing lighting cues and camera cues and so on. It really was extraordinary.

The Grammys didn’t feature any Latin artists as performers or presenters. Was that a conscious decision, given that the genre has its own Grammy show?

No, not at all. The fact that we have the Latin Grammys in no way on any level diminishes our enthusi-asm or our intentions that the Grammy stage is one for everybody. Every year the nominations are dif-ferent in every category; the way the show gets built leaves room for cer-tain things and not for others. In terms of Latin performances and presenters, we absolutely did have some ideas, did make some in-quiries. The things we thought were going to work best weren’t things that we were able to put together.

Will you broadcast the Grammy nominations concert again this year? If so, what kinds of changes are planned to help boost viewership?

We’re talking about that. We haven’t fixed anything yet because we don’t even have a date for the show. But I think there is a great appetite for it, and I think it’s pretty likely that we would do that again.

The Recording Academy and the Recording Artists’ Coalition recently merged their lobbying ef-forts on Capitol Hill. What’s at the top of your agenda?

Top of the legislative agenda, per-formance royalties. Top of our agenda, pragmatically, is relation-ship development with the new Congress to the extent that there are some new folks there that don’t know us and don’t know our issues all that well at this point. So there is a bit of an education process we will be embarking on quite soon, so they are aware of the issues and hopefully come in and support some of these things that are im-portant to us. No. 1 would be perfor-mance royalties.

How long do you think it will take to get that passed?

I don’t really have a good guess on it. But the fact that it’s introduced and has some great support is put-ting it on a good track.

If you get too attached to one way of doing things, or if you think that something becomes a template, then I think you may miss opportunities to think a little differently or be creative.
KINGS OF THE ROAD

After Conquering
The U.K. And Europe,

KINGS OF LEON

Are Finally Getting Their Due At Home

BY RAY WADDELL
Nathan Followill breeze into his local Nashville watering hole, and it’s obvious that he’s well-known and well-liked by the crew at McCabe’s Pub. Clad in sweats and a Yankees cap, the Kings of Leon drummer comes off more as a cool local guy than international rock star. Nothing in this manner indicates that his band’s fourth album is finally making the Kings as big in the United States as they have been in the United Kingdom and Europe since 2004, when it had back-to-back No. 1 singles in the United Kingdom. The band’s label, RCA, says “Only by the Night” has sold almost 3 million copies worldwide, going platinum in Canada, Australia, South Africa and Belgium. They’ve been multiplatinum in the United Kingdom for quite a while.

Until now, that kind of success has eluded them at home—the band’s three previous albums never broke the 300,000 mark—but that’s beginning to change. So far “Only by the Night” has sold 397,000 in the States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and Kings of Leon are now making their home country their target market.

Ken Levitan, founder and president of Vector Management, which handles the group, says the game plan was to first break the band overseas, partly because of the chance that Americans weren’t ready for a Nashville-based rock band and partly because of staff changes at RCA. “We tried to break it out of Europe first. We thought they really might get the music and the story quick with them than they did here,” Levitan says. “So basically we hopped on a plane, got the guys over, hired a publicist, got the label fired up and away it went.”

The band—brothers Nathan, Caleb and Jared and their cousin Matthew—has a well-documented back story. But the Followills’ childhood of traveling with their Pentecostal preacher father didn’t resonate at home as it did in Europe. “Over there, we stepped off the plane and they were amazed we had socks and shoes, had all of our teeth and didn’t have our tongues stuck in a bottle of Jack Daniel’s.” Followill says.

In retrospect, Followill reckons, the story has helped more than it has hurt. “Nobody believed it,” he says with a laugh. “They thought some publicist spun this whole story, [that] they stuck us in with [producer] Angelo [Petraglia] and he wrote all our songs for us. We actually had a publication in Europe that brought swabs to an interview—they wanted DNA, didn’t believe we were all related. My idea was to take the swabs and get sampler from a black fan, a little person, a Japanese fan and a woman and send them back. They’d get the results and say, ‘See, they’re not related.’

Although the band’s U.S. growth was slow, it was also steady, which suits Followill fine. “We had friends in bands that came out and sold 4 million records in their debut and that’s amazing,” he says. “Then they come back and sell 3 million on their second and it’s considered a failure. The bar gets set so high, you have so much pressure to replicate what was so successful about the other one, which kind of sticks them in a rut.”

“Only by the Night” has already topped the domestic sales numbers of 2007’s “Because of the Times” (226,000), 2005’s ‘Aha Shake Heartbreak’ (262,000) and the band’s 2003 debut “Youth and Young Manhood” (218,000).

“We’ve had our frustrations” in the States, Levitan says. “Obviously, it would have been great if the whole thing would have blown up really quickly. But when you’re doing it this way, laying it brick by brick, your foundation gets much stronger and I think you’re in for a much longer ride.”

The band is still riding on the new album’s debut single. “Sex On Fire”—it spent eight weeks at No. 1 on the Modern Rock radio chart and has sold 460,000 digital downloads—while the second single, “Use Somebody,” is starting to make noise at the format.

“[This has been one of those projects where the band makes the right record, you lay out a plan and the plan works,” RCA VP/GM Tom Corson says. “The market has come around to the band. It’s just time. The band has put in the work over the years, they have their finest album to date, and consumers are into it.”

Nashville is notoriously nonchalant about its stars in public (“Even your freak fans here are still nice, sweet people,” Followill says), but Followill’s days of going to bar without being mobbed are numbered.

By his own estimation, Followill has spent only a few months at home in the four years he’s lived in the West Nashville neighborhood, a testament to the Kings’ nonstop touring/recording cycles since debuting with “Manhood.” The band has played live in a wide range of configurations, from opening for U2 in arenas and playing secondary stages at festivals, to headlining their own club, theater and arena shows and topping the bill at the largest outdoor events in the world.

Only a few days earlier Kings of Leon marked a career milestone by selling out New York’s Madison Square Garden for the first time. “It was cool to see we had that many fans,” Followill says, “especially considering we never really had a hit.”

More recently, the band performed at Clive Davis’ pre-Grammy Awards party for an audience that included Prince, Jay-Z and Jennifer Hudson.

BROTHERS IN ARMS

The band’s genesis wasn’t auspicious, to say the least. “Jared had never picked up a bass, Caleb had never picked up a guitar, Matt had taken two guitar lessons,” Followill says. So what made them think they could pull this off?

“Boredom. Stupidity,” Followill says. “When we signed the deal [with RCA] it was just me and Caleb. The label said, ‘OVER THERE, WE STEPPED OFF THE PLANE AND THEY WERE AMAZED WE HAD SOCKS AND SHOES, HAD ALL OF OUR TEETH AND DIDN’T HAVE OUR TONGUES STUCK IN A BOTTLE OF JACK DANIEL’S.’”

—NATHAN FOLLOWILL
'We're gonna put you a band together,' and we were like, 'We don't want to be Evan & Jaron. We're gonna buy our little brother a bass, he's a freshman in high school. Caleb will teach himself to play guitar. Our cousin played guitar when he was 10. I'll play the drums. I played in church when I was little,' They said, 'Alright, we'll come down in one month and see you guys.'

Levitan worked with the band from its most formative stages. Nathan and Caleb "came into my office and sang a cappella in the corner about eight-and-a-half years ago," Levitan says. Later, when informed they were recruiting their teenage brother and cousin to round out the lineup, "there were some raised eyebrows. But when we heard the music and saw the determination and that they had a vision, it was like, 'Let's put this together and roll with it.'

Armed with a Led Zeppelin boxed set, "we kidnapped our cousin from Mississippi, told his mom he was coming for the week and just never let him go home," Nathan Followill says. "We locked ourselves in the basement with an ounce of marijuana and literally spent a month down there. My mom would bring us food down. And at the end of that month, the label people came and we had 'Molly's Chambers,' 'Californiia Waiting,' 'Wicker Chair' and 'Holy Roller Novocain.'

Principal lyricist Caleb continues to impress his older brother. "He's my brother, I've grown up with him, but his songwriting is a part of his personality he really doesn't let out," Followill says. "He's kind of a reserved guy. He doesn't really do that much talking when he's sober. He does a lot of shit talking when he's drunk."

Followill says he considers the Kings fortunate to "get a record deal where the label was willing to grow with us, let us take our bruises and figure out the kind of band we were and the band we wanted to be."

When touring the world early in their career, oldest brother Nathan pretty much assumed the father role for the band. "I definitely worried the most," he says. "I mean, that was my 14-year-old brother, we're in Hamburg, Germany, and he's out with God knows who. Now it's definitely democratic. Every decision we make, we all four sit down and talk about it."

But just as the Vector team sorts through the band's options, "me and Caleb will weed through the shit and then take it to Jared and Matt," Followill says. "They could give two shits less about some of this stuff. The same way there's stuff me and Caleb could care less about but Jared and Matt are really into, like who styles us on our photo shoot. As far as publishing or something like that, me and Caleb are like, 'That's the money side of it. We need to really pay attention to it.'"

Caleb Followill calls the new album "the least cringe-worthy album that we've made. I'm pretty proud of these last two records we've made, maybe there's a little more professionalism than previous records. Maybe it's because we're stronger musicians and I feel as though I'm a stronger songwriter. I just didn't want to be the weak link."

Kings of Leon are definitely not a "formulaic" band in their studio approach, even though they once again tapped Petraalia as producer, with engineer Jacques King as co-producer. "We spent six weeks doing this record, and out of the six weeks the most we spent was two hours [recording] in one day," he says. "We'd drink and play wall ball. Most people would record then reward themselves by taking a break. We play wall ball and reward ourselves by going in and recording."

And if the Kings can't play a song live, it doesn't make the album. "There's nothing worse in the world than having a record you love and going to watch that band play and they've either got two guys on keyboards behind a curtain, they're playing to tracks or they don't have that and the song sounds empty," Nathan Followill says. "We've got a couple songs on [the new] record that have keyboard parts, so our cousin, Nacho, is our stage manager and we have him play keyboards on a couple of songs. We make sure people can see him. We're not trying to be the Wizard of Oz."

Now the game plan is to make the global footprint of Kings of Leon even bigger. "This band has doubled or tripled their audience in every market where they had a meaningful audience already, from Germany to Australia to the U.K. to the U.S., Holland and Denmark," RCA's Corson says. "The team will attempt to maximize the impact of "Sex On Fire," then of "Use Somebody, which is already off to a huge start at rock radio," Corson says. "We have a real opportunity to solidify the rock formats and then get into the pop formats."

The band's first U.S. arena tour, announced last week, will follow the Followills far from McCabe's Pub. Before the year is up, the band will headline arenas in Australia, the United Kingdom and Europe; headline a number of large festivals, and make another run through U.S. arenas. Scott Clayton at Creative Artists Agency books the band, and Vector's Andy Mendelson handles day-to-day managerial duties.

"All the success we're seeing right now, it's great, we love it," Nathan Followill says. "But if it ended tomorrow, we've had an amazing run. We've made enough records to put out a mini boxed set if we wanted to."

And, as he heads out the door of McCabe's, he adds, "Wish us luck at the Grammys." (For the record, Kings of Leon won for best rock performance by a duo or group with vocals for "Sex On Fire.")

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**PEAK PERFORMERS**

Sales for Kings of Leon's album "Only by the Night" and the digital track for "Sex On Fire" have remained consistent for the better part of three months. SOURCE: Nielsen SoundScan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Type</th>
<th>Album/Digital</th>
<th>Sales (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Only By The Night&quot;</td>
<td>album sales; weekly</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Sex On Fire&quot;</td>
<td>digital download sales; weekly</td>
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**FEBRUARY 21, 2009**

www.americanradiohistory.com
If anyone had any doubt that touring is where the money is in the music business, a quick look at the 2008 Money Makers should hammer the point home. Regardless of genre, retail sales or radio play, each of the 20 acts on Billboard’s Money Makers list toured in 2008. (Taylor Swift mostly opened for Brad Paisley but doesn’t get credit for that revenue.) For almost all of them, touring generated the most revenue. And in a year when recorded-music sales declined yet again—and the economy turned south—many earned more at the box office than ever before. Remarkably, the top five Money Makers are also the five acts that earned the most on tour, and in the same order, according to Billboard Boxscore. Eight of the top 10 Money Makers are in the Boxscore top 10. Even more remarkably, the top Money Maker—Madonna—ranked only 50th on the list of top album sellers (that counts her new album, plus all the others). She ranked 14th on the list of digital track sellers and didn’t place in the top 100 on the ringmasters chart. Her place on Money Makers—like her estimated $242,176,466 income—comes from her tour, the highest-earning outing that took place within 2008. Madonna’s Sticky & Sweet tour took in $229,886,340 at the box office. Extravagant production might have cost up to 40% of that gross, according to industry estimates, but that’s still a startling total. And nothing helps reduce tour production costs like more touring. So Madonna will perform another run of concerts this summer—25 shows in the United Kingdom and Europe—that will only add to the take of the top-grossing tour by a female or solo artist. The problems of the recorded-music business don’t look like they’re going away anytime soon. But judging by the 2008 Money Makers, artists are still thriving on the road.

—Ray Waddell
MADONNA: $242,176,466
Anyone questioning whether Madonna deserves her reported 10-year, $120 million 360 deal with Live Nation might reconsider. Even though she's sold more albums in the past, she made $229,886,340 on the road this year and also probably raked in more than $18 million in merchandise sales at her various performances—not counting her licensing business. This year looks to be even more lucrative: Madonna will play stadiums in Europe, where she'll gross several million dollars per night. Madonna has spoken about extending several of her past tours, according to her tour producer Arthur Fogel, chairman of global music for Live Nation, but this is the first time she's done so. "She loves the show, she's had a great time, and she's excited about playing new markets." —Ray Waddell

BON JOVI: $157,177,766
Last year Bon Jovi reaped the rewards of an album with legs ("Lost Highway," from 2007), a career-best tour (the ninth-biggest ever, which earned $210 million in 10 months in 2007-08) and its new status as a rock icon. The group came in at No. 89 on the list of top album sellers, but the last legs of the Lost Highway tour is when the real money rolled in. In 2008 the group earned $149 million playing stadiums in Europe and arenas in North America, and a free show in Central Park generated so much exposure on both sides of the bridges and tunnels that the group's merchandise sales could have been worth about another $18 million in 2008. —RW

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: $156,327,964
New Jersey's other rock warrior, Bruce Springsteen, also toured behind a project from 2007 ("Magic") and did solid but not spectacular business in record stores: He was the 92nd-best-selling album artist of 2008. But nearly 1.8 million fans in North America and Europe paid to see the Boss and the E Street Band perform what some, including Springsteen himself, describe as the best shows they've ever played. Based on his numbers from October 2007 to September 2008, Springsteen's concerts were named top tour (for gross) and top draw (for attendance) at the 2008 Billboard Touring Awards. All those shows could have generated another $15 million at the merchandise counters. —RW

THE POLICE: $109,976,894
Last year's top Billboard Money Makers, the Police, are making their second—and presumably final—appearance on the chart, capping a reunion run that ranked as the most successful reunion tour and the third-highest-grossing tour ever. The total gross was more than $360 million. Even the group's 2008 "Victory Lap," mostly of North American amphitheaters, put the band fourth among the year's touring acts with a gross of $107 million. The Police didn't rank very high in terms of album sales, digital tracks or ringtones. But they also earned money on a live DVD set exclusive to Best Buy, "The Police: Certifiable," and merchandise sales that could have added up to another $7 million. —RW

CELINE DION: $99,171,237
Celine Dion spent 2008 proving she's still a force to be reckoned with outside the Colosseum at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, where her five-year residency drew nearly 3 million fans. Touring for the first time in five years, Dion sold out venues around the world and ranked fifth on the Boxscore chart. She also ranked 57th on the list of best-selling album artists, partly due to her successful "My Love: Essential Collection." A source says Dion is negotiating a return to the Colosseum at some point which would almost certainly bring her back to the list. Dion grossed $185 million there in five years. —RW

LIL WAYNE: $57,441,334
Lil Wayne calls himself "the best rapper alive." At least in terms of 2008 earnings, he's certainly the richest. Last year he sold 2.8 million copies of "Tha Carter III," the best-selling album of the year. He also had the second-best-selling digital track with the hit "Lollipop," which sold 3 million copies. (Only Leona Lewis' "Bleeding Love" sold more.) His second biggest download was "Let It Rock," a track by Cash Money's first rock artist, Kevin Rudolf, on which Lil Wayne made an appearance. The rapper also sold more ringtones than any other artist, 5.5 million, to top that chart. Next year he'll make more from touring. —Mariel Concepcion

AC/DC: $56,505,296
With the success of its new album, "Black Ice," AC/DC became one of the few rock acts to make more money selling CDs than concert tickets. Available exclusively at Wal-Mart, the album sold 740,000 copies its first week in stores, the biggest week for a rock act since 2004. The first leg of the band's tour drew 310,792 fans to 21 shows that grossed $23.8 million. The group doesn't sell digital tracks, but it ranked 27th on the list of ringtone sellers. Wal-Mart generated more cash for the group by setting up special departments to sell a variety of band merchandise, clothing and a special AC/DC version of "Rock Band." —MP

MICHAEL BUBLÉ: $50,257,364
Canadian crooner Michael Bublé has won plenty of loyal fans since the 2003 release of his self-titled debut. He sold 1.4 million albums last year, more than one-third of them copies of his 2007 release, "Call Me Irresponsible." Bublé didn't place highly on the ranking chart, and he ranked 84th in digital track downloads. But while the vast majority of jazz singers tour clubs, Bublé mostly plays arenas, and his 2008 tour included 78 performances seen by 870,000 fans. The outing earned $35.9 million, with ticket prices ranging from $50 to $85. Bublé's success as a touring act earned him a nomination for breakthrough artist at the 2008 Billboard Touring Awards. —MP

MILEY CYRUS: $48,920,806
Just like her song says, she's "just brrn" Miley—and the kids are still buying it. Last year that meant Cyrus sold slightly more than 3 million albums and 7.7 million digital tracks; her top track was "See You Again," which sold 1.8 million alone. Cyrus also added to her earnings with her media not counted here: The "Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert Tour" DVD had a No. 1 debut and made $65.2 million in theaters. Making it the top-grossing concert film of all time. And the third season of the Disney Channel's "Hannah Montana" is consistently watched by more than 3 million viewers per episode, according to Nielsen Media Research. —AD
KENNY CHESNEY: $90,823,990
Country is the only genre where the same artists dominate radio, retail and the road, and few epitomize this like Kenny Chesney. Last year he had two No. 1 country hits, "Better As a Memory" and "Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven." He was the 17th-biggest seller of albums—that's thanks mostly to 2008's "Lucky Old Sun"—and ranked 29th among sellers of digital tracks and 39th for ringtones. He also enjoyed his sixth consecutive year of drawing more than 1 million fans and ranked seventh on the Boxscore tally, even with charging modest ticket prices. That left fans more money to spend at merchandise tables, where he may have grossed another $10 million. —RW

NEIL DIAMOND: $82,174,000
At 68, Neil Diamond is the senior member of this Money Makers list, and he's certainly enjoying his golden years. The quintessential boomer arena act, Diamond had his sixth highest-grossing tour of 2008. Attendance for the 69 shows reported to Boxscore was 924,052, and a conservative estimate of his merchandise revenue would top $2 million. Diamond also made an appearance in the album sales rankings at No. 76, thanks to "Home Before Dark," a new album produced by Rick Rubin that debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200. Diamond didn't rank in the top 100 on the ringtone chart, although one would think that "I Am, I Said" will win a place there at some point.

RASCAL FLATTS: $63,522,160
This trio, Chesney and Jonas Brothers are the only acts among the top 10 Money Makers to rank in all four categories. Flatts placed 21st in album sales, 28th in digital tracks, ninth in touring and 67th in ringtones. The group's last album of new material, 2007's "Still Feels Good," has sold 2.2 million copies, and a greatest-hits collection released last year sold more than half a million. That may have helped make the group's Bob That Head tour its most successful trek yet. Attendance at the 65 shows reported to Boxscore was 941,827. And the band likely generated another $6.5 million in merchandise revenue. —RW

JONAS BROTHERS: $62,638,814
Malia and Sasha Obama weren't the only ones who professed their love for the Jonas Brothers last year. The band was the subject of an on-pitch Disney marketing campaign that included the made-for-TV movie "Camp Rock"—which in June became the Disney Channel's second-most-popular made-for-TV movie by reaching 8.9 million viewers in its initial showing—the act sold 33.6 million in its top of arenas. The Brothers' second Disney album, "A Little Bit Longer," sold 1.4 million in 2008 and debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200; catalog sales of their previous album, "JONAS Brothers," reaped another 936,000. The array of band clothing and merchandise available stores would boost the group's total considerably. —Ann Donahue

COLDPLAY: $62,175,555
Coldplay made money by giving things away: first the new song "Violet Hill," which was downloaded 600,000 times in 24 hours, according to the group's label, EMI; then, 12,000 tickets to a June 23 concert at Madison Square Garden. Fans must have liked what they heard: Coldplay's 2008 album, "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends," debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, with 721,000 copies sold; by the end of the year the band had sold more than 2.6 million copies of all their albums. Many of them were purchased on iTunes, and the group ranked 10th on the list of top digital-track sellers. Coldplay's U.S. arena tour drew more than 467,000 concertgoers to 32 shows, earning $32.7 million. —Mitchell Peters

THE EAGLES: $61,132,213
In 2007, the Eagles made headlines when they released their first full album of new material in nearly 30 years as a Wal-Mart exclusive and sold 711,000 copies in the first week. But in 2008 they made more money. Last year the group sold more than 1.1 million albums (its 2007 set, "Long Road out of Eden," accounted for 500,000) and 1.6 million digital tracks. But they really took off on the road, where they soared into the eighth spot on the Boxscore list of top tour earners. The Eagles pulled in $49.1 million from 35 concerts that drew 439,500 fans. They probably made another $4 million on merchandise, too. —MP

TAYLOR SWIFT: $45,588,730
Last year Taylor Swift lived up to the title of her second album—"Fearless"—perhaps because she had little reason to worry. She sold 4 million albums in 2008, taking her top album seller of the year. (Lil Wayne had the top set, but Taylor sold more albums in total.) "Fearless" isn't slowing down: It spent eight nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200. Her digital numbers are just as impressive—she sold 8.8 million digital tracks, placing her at No. 3 behind Rihanna and Lil Wayne, and ranked 13th in ringtone sales. Swift also saw success on the synth front when NBC repeatedly played "Change" during its Summer Olympics programming. —AD

JOURNEY: $44,787,328
The band may be on its fourth lead singer (the other members found new frontman Arnel Pineda on YouTube), but fans didn't stop believing. Exposure for "Don't Stop Believin'" in the 2007 final episode of "The Sopranos" helped the track sell 917,000 downloads and set the band up for "Revelation," a Walmart-exclusive release that featured a disc of new material, a disc of rerecorded hits and a live DVD. It debuted at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 and sold 569,000 copies last year. Last summer, a handful of U.K. performances and an amphitheater tour with Heart and Cheap Trick grossed $30.3 million from 57 concerts that drew more than 695,000 fans. —MP

BILLIE JOEL: $44,581,010
The Piano Man's all-star moment was his Last Play at Shea, a pair of July concerts at the New York Mets baseball stadium that sold more than 15,000 tickets and grossed nearly $12.9 million. Earlier in the summer, Joel performed 10 shows at the Hard Rock casino in Uncasville, Conn., which grossed $9.6 million and sold 96,100 tickets. All told, Joel earned $40.6 million in touring revenue last year, making him the 11th-highest earning touring attraction. Without new material, except a deluxe reissue of "The Stranger," Joel didn't rank among the list of top album sellers. But he earned more than $1 million selling 1.7 million digital tracks. —MP

MARY J. BLIGE: $43,472,850
The top R&B star on the Money Makers chart got her by selling concert tickets, not albums. Mary J. Blige, whose last album, "Growing Pains," came out in 2007, didn't have any radio or tour dates or guest appearances last year. But she still sold 981,000 albums—758,000 of "Growing Pains" and the rest catalog—plus 1.3 million digital tracks and 295,000 ringtones. And she made most of her money on the 25-venue Heart of the City tour, which she co-headlined with Jay-Z. Together they made $33.1 million. (Blige's aforementioned earnings total reflects this entire amount.) But no other R&B star did much business as a live performer. —MC

KANYE WEST: $42,552,402
While Kanye West is no longer the top-selling rapper—as he was in 2008, with a gross of $35 million—he certainly got his money right. He sold 6.9 million digital tracks, 2.1 million more than the No. 2 acts, mostly due to the popularity of catch tracks like "Lockin' Deep" (1.9 million) and "Heartless" (1.1 million). He also sold 1.5 million albums: more than 1 million copies of "808s and Heartbreak," plus a respectable amount of catalog. Unusually for a rapper, West made most of his money on the road: His Glow in the Dark tour earned $23 million and helped make the case that live hip-hop could succeed in an arena environment. —MC

MAKING MONEY MAKERS
We Money Makers ranking is the most comprehensive report of rock's best-paying careers, utilizing proprietary data from the Billboard (Boxscore archives and concerts gross), Rolling Stone (Guitar Series sales and concert data) and Nielsen SoundScan (chart and album sales). To determine the industry's top revenue-earning artists, the chart includes sales for any album released in 2008, including reissues. The calculations do not factor in fans who have combined attendance at multiple dates. The chart covers every major sector of the music business and includes exclusive deals, special sales, pre-sale, radio, promotion, licensing, publishing and other revenue. The calculations account for all revenue from all marketplaces. Each artist's album sales and radio airplay are normalized to reflect how much an album sold or radio airplay would have earned if it sold a million copies or played a billion times. —John Berg

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Starry, Starry ‘Night’

Leading Lights Of Indie Rock Unite For AIDS Benefit Album

In 1993, Nirvana, Sonic Youth, Soundgarden, the Smashing Pumpkins and Pavement brought AIDS activism into the bedrooms of grunge-obsessed teens on the benefit album “No Alternative,” marrying music to message in a way that registered strongly with Generation X.

The project, organized by the Red Hot Organization and released by Arista Records, sold 292,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and generated several modern rock radio hits. But the success was a mixed blessing; other major labels went out of their way to discourage radio play, because they thought it would compete with their own promotions for the artists. (Geffen famously refused to allow Red Hot to use Nirvana’s name on the packaging.)

Red Hot isn’t dealing with any of those problems as it prepares for the Feb. 17 release of “Dark Was the Night,” a sort of indie rock sequel to “No Alternative” curated by the National’s Aaron and Bryce Dessner. To be issued by 4AD, the 32-song collection showcases the leading lights of the genre, including Spoon, Arcade Fire, Cat Power, Sufjan Stevens, Bon Iver, Grizzly Bear, Iron & Wine, Andrew Bird, Yo La Tengo, the New Pornographers and the National itself. Proceeds will benefit a yet-undetermined AIDS organizations.

“On this record, we tried to capture this musical renaissance, which may not have the cultural impact of grunge or punk, but is equally significant from a cultural and creative standpoint,” says Red Hot co-founder John Carlin, who executive-produced the album. “It’s an assertion of Aaron and Bryce’s generation. These artists are not fringe or marginal.”

Carlin has known Aaron Dessner since 1999, when he hired him fresh out of college to work at his Web design company, Funny Garbage. He was an early supporter of the National, which became Dessner’s full-time job in 2005, and the pair remained close as the band eventually signed with Beggars Banquet and garnered international renown.

Two years ago, they presented the idea for an indie-centric Red Hot album to Beggars Group heads Martin Mills and Richard Russell, who agreed on a budget and stepped aside while the creative process got rolling. “Dark Was the Night,” which also boasts tracks from My Morning Jacket, Kronos Quartet and Feist, is the first Red Hot project to be released by an indie label.

Night moves: Members of the National (top left) scored exclusive tracks from Blonde Redhead, Feist, Andrew Bird and Spoon for “Dark Was the Night.”

“Bryce and I found ourselves in the midst of all of our peers and in a position to invite them to participate in this,” Dessner says. “Almost everybody was willing to donate their time and their music.” Carlin adds, “The enthusiasm of the people at Beggars/4AD has been fantastic. They genuinely love the music.”

Dessner says they spent “a few thousand dollars per track,” but “a lot of the artists wouldn’t take the money. And everybody donates the publishing, including the covers. You could only do a cover if we could get a gratis clearance. Beggars agreed to be really transparent about how it’s done, so as much money flows to the charity side as possible.”

“Dark Was the Night” is loaded with intriguing collaborations, including Feist with Ben Gibbard and Grizzly Bear, Dirty Projectors with David Byrne, the Books with Jose Gonzalez, Aaron Dessner with Bon Iver, and Bryce Dessner with Antony.

The Dessner/Antony track is a cover of the early Bob Dylan song “I Was Younger When I Left Home,” which the artists did in one take. In the case of the Dessner/Bon Iver pairing, Aaron sent Bon Iver’s Justin Vernon a piano instrumental, dubbed “Big Red Machine” in tribute to his Cincinnati hometown, in the hopes he’d “feel like collaborating. Then I was in Finland when I got an e-mail from him with a fully written song. It’s incredible he could trace the music in the way that he did.”

Songs from the album, which is also available with a different sequence as a triple-vinyl set, were rolled out one-per-day on a dedicated MySpace site leading up to street date. In addition, several of the acts, including the National, Yeasayer and Grizzly Bear, filmed acoustic performances of their songs the week of Feb. 9, which will hit the Web shortly thereafter. Carlin says talks are under way for a “big live event” in May at a New York venue to be announced, while the Brooklyn Academy of Music has already offered a date in December 2010 to commemorate Worlds AIDS Day.

“This is a project about the best of new music, but there are old-fashioned pleasures, like listening to it in sequence and holding the package in your hand,” Carlin says. “The intent was not for folks to cherry-pick a track from their favorite artists, but to see it as a coherent, creative expression.”
**SUPER SNOOP**
Rapper/actor Snoop Dogg, who recently split with Interscope Records, has signed a multirights deal with MTV to distribute, market and promote his next album, “Malice in Wonderland,” due later this year. An MTV representative says details are forthcoming on how the entertainment giant plans to get the album into retail stores. Financial terms weren’t disclosed. “Malice in Wonderland” will feature tracks by Pharrell and famed composer Lalo Schifrin, as well as longtime collaborator Dr. Dre.

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**KINKY REGGAE**
Nas is at work on an as-yet-untitled collaboration with reggae star Damian Marley. The pair has been recording quietly in Los Angeles for the last several weeks. Nas’ manager, Anthony Saleh, tells Billboard the project will most likely be released in the spring. It’s not clear which label will release it. Nas is signed to Def Jam, while Marley records for Universal.

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**NEW NEIL**
On the heels of his 2008 album “Home After Dark,” which debuted at No. 1, Neil Diamond “just started writing” for his third consecutive collaboration with producer Rick Rubin. And while “Dark” and its 2005 predecessor, “12 Songs,” were largely stripped-down, drum-less affairs, Diamond told Billboard before the Grammys, “I think we’ll may take a little turn—a little direction change for fun. It all starts with the songs. The songs that come out are the ones we have to work with.”

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**SATANIC VERSES**
Heaven and Hell, the band featuring the post-Ozzy Osborne members of Black Sabbath, will release its first album under that name, “The Devil You Know,” April 28 on Rhino. The set by Ronnie James Dio, Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler and Vinny Appice is their first studio release since the 1992 Sabbath album “Dehumanizer.” It was preceded by three new songs on the recent compilation “Black Sabbath: The Dio Years.” Reporting by Jonathan Cohen, Mariel Concepcion and Gary Graff.

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**DANCE**
**BY RICHARD SMIRKE**

**In The Money**

With VC Funding, The Prodigy Goes Indie For New Album

“It’s an owner! The writing’s on the wall,” snarls a venomous Keith Flint on “Omen,” one of the standout cuts from the Prodigy’s new album, “Invaders Must Die.” For most acts with 20 years and millions of record sales behind them, the likely interpretation would be that the band was finally calling it a day. But in fact, “Invaders Must Die” heralds the start of a new era for the British dance-rock group. Following the culmination of a career-long deal with XL in 2005, “Invaders Must Die” is the first Prodigy release on its own label, Take Me to the Hospital, backed internationally by British indie Cooking Vinyl. The record drops in most international markets Feb. 23 and stateside through Rocket Science a day later, through an iTunes exclusive, before the CD hits stores March 3.

Then there’s the money. To support its production and marketing, two music venture capital trust funds managed by London-based Ingenious Media made available £2 million ($2.8 million) of funding. Cooking Vinyl and the VCTs formed a new company, Cooking Vinyl Ventures Prodigy Ltd., to create and own the master copyrights for the 11-track record, which are then licensed back to Cooking Vinyl.

“We were looking to partner with strong labels, artists and management companies who were looking to do it differently,” says Ingenious investment director Paul Bedford. “This seemed ideal.” The band’s musical mastermind, Liam Howlett, says the deal gives the band more freedom than signing to a major. “It goes against all the band’s ethics to do something like that,” he says. “So we took what we liked about XL and tried to re-create all of the elements.”

“Invaders Must Die” is the group’s first record since its 1997 global smash, “The Fat of the Land,” to feature vocalist Flint and Maxim alongside Howlett. According to Nielsen SoundScan, “Land” sold 2.8 million copies. In contrast, its belated 2004 follow-up album “Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned,” which featured guest vocalists including Juliette Lewis and Liam Gallagher, sold only 85,000 copies.

“That last record was a necessary move for the band to continue,” Howlett says. “Me and Keith weren’t talking and basically I decided that was the record I wanted to make.”

“We realized that the strength of the Prodigy is when we write a tune that can carry live,” he adds. “This album was all about making a record that we can play live from beginning to end.” The result is a hard-hitting, bass-driven dance-rock record that occasionally harks back to the band’s ‘90s rave roots. It’s a combination of 2009 and vintage Prodigy,” says Cooking Vinyl president Martin Goldschmidt, who describes leading the band for a two-album deal as “one of those ‘pinch me, I’m dreaming’ moments.”

The Prodigy plays European dates in February and March followed by a 10-date U.K. arena tour in April. With “Omen” already picking up college and specialty radio play, the U.S. campaign begins with a headlining performance at the Ultra Music Festival March 28 in Miami. Three further stateside trips are planned for 2009, according to manager Mike Champion of Brantree-based Fusion Music Management, with global live booking through William Morris.

“Live is crucial for them,” Goldschmidt says. “They’ve never been about TV or radio. It’s word-of-mouth and now, more than ever, word-of-mouth is the most powerful form of marketing. It’s the right time for a band like them.”

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**ROCK**
**BY MIKAEL WOOD**

**Glory Days**

Pop/Punk Vets Find New Home At Epitaph

When New Found Glory’s deal with Geffen expired last year, the members of the Florida-based pop/punk band weren’t exactly tripping over themselves to renew their contract. “Their biggest concern was all the regime changes at Geffen, from the people that signed the band through Jordan Schur through Ron Fair,” the group’s manager, Larry Mazer says. “Stability had become very important to them.”

“Our biggest records were with the old staff,” guitarist Chad Gilbert says. “Coming Home,” New Found Glory’s final Geffen studio set, sold 147,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan; the group’s biggest seller, 2002’s “Sick in the Head,” sold 864,000.

“We sort of had this great thing going, like we were a whole team on the same path,” Gilbert continues. “But it got to the point where every few months we were meeting a new person. Eventually, we didn’t really know anyone who was working with us.”

According to Gilbert, Fair wanted to move the band to the A&M/Octone imprint, which convinced the musicians that the company wasn’t sure what to do with New Found Glory. “At that point we were like, ‘We’re just gonna leave,’” Gilbert says. “It was an opportunity to start fresh.”

An initial round of talks with other majors didn’t satisfy. “Everything was based on numbers,” Gilbert says. “None of these guys were like, ‘We love these songs and we’re gonna blow this record out of the water!’ They all came to the meeting talking about how much they could afford to spend on an advance if the record didn’t sell.”

Turned off by what they perceived as a lack of enthusiasm, Mazer and the group began looking for new labels. Epitaph Records chief Brett Gurewitz, whom Gilbert says

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**GLOBAL PULSE**
**EDITED BY TOM FERGUSON**

**TICKETS TO RYDER**

Canadian Serena Ryder is at the start of a whirlwind of touring and promotion. EMI Music Canada released the singer/songwriter’s latest album, “It’s O.K.,” in the fall, and it is available in the United States as a download from Atlantic Records’ Web site; a physical release date is not yet confirmed. In Canada, it debuted at No. 22 and has sold 20,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan Canada.

Ryder just played the States and will kick off a Canadian tour in March before beginning U.S. shows and promotion. The 26-year-old had few expectations as she worked on material for “It’s O.K.”

“It would be like picking out how your child would look before they were born,” she says. “Until it was all done, I had no idea how it would all come together.”

Following the American success of Canada’s Feist, there are high hopes for Ryder, whose music ranges from alt-country to pop folk.

“She’s the real deal,” says EMI Music Canada president Deane Cameron. “I remember the first time I saw her and wondering why a dozen other labels hadn’t signed her.”

Ryder is booked in North America by Paquin Entertainment Group and managed by Pandamonium Management.
was the first person to call him following New Found Glory’s departure from Geffen. “Bret was like, ‘Everybody at the label loves you—I wanna sign you right now!’” the guitarist recalls with a laugh.

Mazer had his doubts about an indie’s ability to provide the kind of exposure his clients wanted for “Not Without a Fight,” which they’d recorded with Blink-182’s Mark Hoppus while still unsigned. But during a visit to Epitaph’s offices, “As I walked through each department I saw a legitimate passion for New Found Glory,” the manager says. “Bret had an 18-page marketing plan for this record. I totally drank the Kool-Aid.” Epitaph signed the band to a three-album deal: “Not Without a Fight” arrives March 10.

Gurewitz says his label is the right one for New Found Glory. “You’re not going to leverage the best minds at Universal for a pop/punk band on their fifth record,” he says. “But you can do it at Epitaph.” He insists there’s no ceiling for what the band can sell, though he adds, “If we go out there and sell 350,000 CDs instead of 3.5 million, that’s still a huge win for us.”

Pointing to Thursday and Story of the Year, two other ex-major-label acts Gurewitz recently scooped up, Fuse VJ Steven Smith compares Epi- taph to the Vans Warped tour. “It’s not necessarily a place for bands who want to play Madison Square Garden, but it is a place where bands can go to succeed and have longevity,” he says. “And probably make more money, too.”

Between selling more than 3 million albums and singles, touring the world and recording a new album, 30 Seconds to Mars has kept busy since its 2005 studio release, “A Beautiful Lie.” The band is also fighting a $30 million lawsuit filed last year by Virgin/EMI over 30 Seconds to Mars’ termination of its contract, in which the band cited a California law that governs the ability of entertainers to end their contracts after seven years. The band countersued the label last fall, alleging breach of contract and “creative accounting” that it says resulted in unpaid royalties. There isn’t yet a release date for the new album, but the band and producer Flood talked to Billboard about what to expect.

1 What experiences did you have on the road that you brought into this album?

Shannon Lefo: There’s a song that we have that encapsulates the sound of 30 Seconds to Mars these days, called “Kings and Queens.”

Jared Leto: I had written a verse right as we were going to the airport—I literally almost missed the flight because I picked up the guitar and this song came out. You have that moment of discovery that’s exciting.

2 Flood, what was it like working with these guys, compared to working with the Smashing Pumpkins and other bands?

Flood: Every band I’ve worked with brings something unique. These guys wanted to move into a different place, and that’s always a big challenge. They’ve established themselves very firmly in one arena, but when Jared first talked to me, it was about trying to make a “classic album.” And that’s by pushing ourselves and me and all of us to a place that you may not have expected to go.

Jared Leto: He has a karmic ability to be with bands at pivotal moments in their creative lives. And I said to him that I really felt like that is where we were at a band, ready to take new chances and ready to challenge ourselves in ways we hadn’t before. And I think all the years on the road, all the years of struggle, the battles we’ve fought, have really helped make us who we are. We were ready to say something unique in creative terms and Flood was the perfect person to help us achieve those goals.

3 In light of the lawsuit that Virgin filed against the band, how do you insulate yourself from that strike?

Jared Leto: You can’t. You try. But we always felt, and we still feel, like it was the right thing to do, because what we fought for and what we’re still fighting for is fairness and for what we believe is right. It’s interesting that all of this is happening along with the madness of the financial crisis, the creative challenges, the lawsuit. It’s an intense time and I think you can feel that on the record.

4 Where are you right now with the lawsuit? Is it close to a resolution?

Jared Leto: You never know with these things. Some days you think there could be a resolution, and other days you prepare yourself to take it all the way. It’s dependent on a lot of moving parts. We certainly have always been a band that has had a very rewarding, and more than civil, enjoyable relationship with our record label and the people in our lives that we’ve done busi-

5 Will you end up releasing this album independently?

Jared Leto: There is a very real possibility of that. We’re looking at all our options, and there are some wonderful, really exciting options out there, and we’re really grateful for that.

6 The band has become popular in many countries. How do you explain that global appeal, regardless of language and culture?

Flood: Wishing them at a few concerts, it seems to be that people who are interested or don’t fit into normal groups seem to feel a sense of attraction to this band, because they don’t feel as though they’re outsiders.

Jared Leto: It’s more the collective consciousness than it is just us. We really share ownership. I really believe that our fans have a sense of how much this means to us as well, that we’re not just chasing a single or an album or just a song or a piece of merch or a party. They know this runs deep, and it’s everything for us.
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LIVING THINGS
Habeas Corpus

Producers: Michael Ilbert, Living Things Jive
Release Date: Feb. 17

When it comes to the current geopolitical situation, Living Things’ mantra is closer to “Maybe we can.” On their first album in four years, the St. Louis-formed quartet eschews Obamania to point out during the course of 11 songs that are still raging, the economy is still floundering and power still corrupts. Frontman/lyricist Lilian Berlin urges his listeners to “take to the streets,” if necessary, to enforce the will of the people. It’s a heady manifesto, but “Habeas Corpus” never gets bogged down in rhetoric. Instead Living Things spring through a referential set of bouncy, glam-styled rock, dipping into dance/new wave flavors on “Mercedez Marist” and “Oxy-gen,” rootsy Americana on “Island in Your Heart;” blues on “Snake Oil Man” and “Shake Your Shimmy” and punk anthems on “Brass Knuckles” — G6

ASOBI SEKU
Hush
Producer: Chris Zane Polyvinyl
Release Date: Feb. 17

On their third album as Asobi Seku, Yuki Chikudate and James Hanna seem perfectly content polishing their pair of secret weapons: her trebly little-girl warble and his gauzy neo-shogaze guitar. The dozen tracks on “Hush” offer more in the way of tone and texture than they do melody and groove — there’s nothing here but catchy as ‘Thursdays’ from 2006’s “Citrus,” which could’ve been a lost Joy Divi- sion song as remixed by Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine. But there’s a surmounting-ness to Asobi Seku’s swirl of sound that makes cuts like “Familiar Light” and “Me & Mary” worth savoring even if you can’t remember them once they’re over — MW

MORRISSEY
Years of Refusal
Producer: Jerry Finn Attack/Cold Highway
Release Date: Feb. 17

Morrissey is no stranger to the artful expression of frustration, but here he bows off steam with an unusually high level of rock intensity. At times reminiscent of 1992’s “Your Arsenal” and 2004’s “You Are the Quarry,” the latter also helmed by the late Jerry Finn, “Years of Refusal” is full of satisfying attitude, from the driving distortion of “Something is Squeezing My Skull” to the confident swing of “All You Need Is Me.” But as with much of Morrissey’s work, there is a deceptively joyful energy in the music itself, especially present in songs like “I’m Throwing My Arms Around Paris,” which is almost pastoral in its resolution that “only stone and steel accept my love.” Though a few tracks like “That’s How People Grow Up” fall back on overused Morrissey formulas, others like the Latin-tinted “When Last I Saw Carol” add welcome variety — EN

THURSDAY
Common Existence
Producer: Dave Fridmann Epitaph
Release Date: Feb. 17

It takes guts to leave a band like the Drive-By Truckers, a group whose rep and sales numbers are increasing in step with its critical clout. But Jason Isbell was able to back up this belief with a killer 2007 debut album in “Sirens of the Ditch.” Sadly, that momentum doesn’t transfer to the follow-up. The Americana is first-class, be it on crunchy, boozy romps with Stinging Solos or the slow-burning acoustic fare, but this batch of tunes proves far less memorable. Theamped-up rockers are missing a chorus you can really cling to, and the sleepy ballads are a bit too glacial. Everything feels just a little too safe. So it’s a relief when closer “The Last Song I Will Write” sheds its mid-tempo skin en route to a cathartic, cymbal-bashing finale — WD

Jazz

CLAUDIO RODITI
Brazilliance x4
Producer: George Klabin Resonance Records
Release Date: Feb. 10

Trumpeter Claudio Roditi made this stellar jazz project with a trio of notable Brazilian players: pianist Helio Alves, drummer Duduka da Fonseca and bassist Leonardo Cioglia. The album title refers not only to the latter three, but also to the ruling vibe of the music: bossa nova. Several tunes were authored by Brazilianists, including Johnny Alf’s “Rapaz de Bem,” highlighted by fluent solos from Roditi and Alves, and Victor Assis Brasil’s “Pro Zeca,” featuring a fiery Duduka da Fonseca solo. Roditi’s original “Song for Nana” is a lazy samba, illuminated by the glow of his warm horn sound. The disc closes with “Gemini Man,” an uptempo Roditi original recorded live. He and Alves embark on a hectar, deliciously articulated solos, punctuated by Fonseca’s percussive comments — PIV

Blues

JIM SULER & MONKEY BEAT
Tijuana Bible

M. WARD
Post Time
Producer: M. Ward Merge
Release Date: Feb. 17

Fresh from reaping critical acclaim with actress Zooey Deschanel as the duo She & Him, M. Ward goes into the release of “Hold Time” with a higher profile than ever. And it’s a good thing too, as the album could serve as an excellent point of entry for a new crop of fans. From the shimmering, upbeat opener “For Beginners” to the ominous instrumental “Outro,” “Hold Time” highlights the full range of the singer-songwriters’ styles. Ward, a master guitarist, had a little help from his friends as well. Deschanel’s sweet voice backs him on “Never Had Nobody Like You,” the perfect driving song, while his duet with Lucinda Williams on blues tune “Oh Lonesome Me” pairs his dusty guitar grooves with her gravel-road voice — KH

N.A.S.A.
The Spirit of Apollo
Producer: N.A.S.A.
Ant
Release Date: Feb. 17

There isn’t enough space here to mention all the stars (A-list and otherwise) who crop up on the debut by N.A.S.A., a new global-groove duo made up of Brazilian DJ Zegon and Los Angeles-based producer Squeak E. Clean (aka Sam Spiegel). Suffice it to say that it’s unlikely there will be another album in 2009 with appearances by Tom Waits, Kanye West, Seu Jorge and the late O’ Dirty Bastard (unless Norman Cook completes a second BPA album before the end of the year). That overstuffed guest list doesn’t necessarily work to the exclusive benefit of “The Spirit of Apollo,” as sometimes the clutter makes it hard to hear precisely what kind of music Zegon and Spiegel are trying to make here. It definitely contains beats and voices, though — that much is evident — MW

www.americanradiohistory.com

FEBRUARY 21, 2009 | www.billboard.biz | 33
Producers: Tom Hambridge, Jim Suler
Underwood Records

(long list of tracks and reviews)

Dark Jim Suler has been George Thorogood's lead guitarist for the past decade. But he's also led his own band, Monkey Business. But quite a while with it, Suler conjures up a serious Texas roadhouse blues-rock mojo. The album opens with the title track, simmering in a low-down buzz that truly sets the tone for what's to follow. Elvis Binson takes on the slide guitar chores on his song "Drunken Hearted Boy," and Suler and his crew take on AC/DC's "Up to My Neck In You," summoning the requisite fury in preparation for Suler's blasting guitar solo. The beautiful thing about this album is that it starts out nasty and just gets meaner. "Chaos in Tejas," "Years of Tears," "Mexicali Run" and "I Could've Had Religion" deepen a groove that is ultimately Texas julep joint paradise.—PVV

CHRISTIAN

JOY LIPPARD

Joy Lippard
Produced: Todd Wright. Joy Lippard
Patton House Entertainment
Release Date: Feb. 24

This talented 18-year-old—the 2006 winner of the Gospel Music Assn.'s Music in the Rockies songwriting competition—fulfills that early promise with a debut disc that showcases her expressive vocals and insightful songwriting. There's a sweet, vulnerable quality in her voice that lends extra emotional weight to such ballads as "The Other Side" and "Too Much to Ask For." The latter tune is an earnest, heart-in-throat relationship song that has potential to be a major mainstream pop hit. "I Will Write You Letters" is an effervescent tune with a terrific singalong chorus. "Hold In My Pocket," written with Scott Dente, is absolutely infectious. Though the album is targeting the Christian market, Lippard, with her well-honed pop sensibility, mature-beyond-her-years songwriting and that wonderful voice, could find herself embraced by mainstream audiences enthralled by Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus.—DEP

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

AUDREY SESSIONS

Producers: Andrew Scheps, Matt Redosiev
Black Seal/SONY RCA
Release Date: Feb. 17

This Oakland, Calif., quartet cut their teeth on the Northern California coffee shop circuit before inking to the new RCA imprint Black Seal. Those formative years have honed Audrey Sessions' sound into gossamer rock with a surprising edge. "Turn Me Off" has a soaring chorus and catchy melody that could be hit material, and the ballad "New Year's Day" strikes an emotional chord that is likely to resonate with first-time listeners. The band's sweeping, swelling sound lends itself to dreamy landscapes of the mind. Things skew slightly off the mark on tracks like "Nothing Pure Can Stay" with its classic rock rhythms and earnest singing, but for the most part, "Audrey Sessions" stays focused on its shadowy beauty.—LW

R&B/HIP-HOP

RAFAEL SAADIG

100 Yard Dash (2:18)

Producers: Raphael Saadig
Writers: R. Saadig, B. Oznou
Publishers: UGMOE/Universal/Jake & the Phatman/Windswedt, ASCAP/Columbia

"100 Yard Dash" is recorded in the classic tradition of short R&B songs: It leaves listeners wanting more, so they play the record again and again. That's the case for Raphael Saadig's second single from his 2008 critically acclaimed, Grammy Award-nominated album "The Way I See It." The R&B singer wrote, produced and arranged the album (and played drums, bass and guitar on all tracks) and laid down vocals that recall Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye and a mash-up of Motown singers. "100 Yard Dash" is a tambourine-shaking, upbeat but light soul song that is complemented by Saadig's vocal, with emphasis in all the right places. Having produced for D'Angelo, Joss Stone and Mary J. Blige, the former Tony Toni! Toni! singer's reappearance as a solo artist is a refreshing return.—MM

CURT@INS

The Rebel (3:02)

Producer: Don Will
Writer: not listed
Publisher: not listed

High Society Life Co./CurT@Ins (pronounced "curtains") is exactly what hip-hop needs: an MC who's not afraid to break the mold. In an industry climate that is diminishing sales, the majority of artists are merely carbon copies of their peers. But with "The Rebel," CurT@Ins offers a witty style all his own. He says he can't be touched like broads at a peep show," and he is exactly right. Over Don Will's hard beat and solid scratching and cutting on the turntables, CurT@Ins displays an original voice. Since Kanye West first picked up the mic the borough of Brooklyn has given hip-hop some great MCs (Big Daddy Kane, Biggie Smalls, Jay-Z), and the tradition continues as CurT@ins prepares to make his mark. And because this is only a mixtape cut, the best is yet to come.—SR

ROCK

BLUE OCTOBER

Dirt Room (3:25)

Producers: Steve Lillywhite
Writers: various
Publishers: various
Universal Motown

Blue October made an impressive leap with 2006's "Foiled," which spawned the touching apologo "Hate Me" and the more lighthearted "Into the Ocean" on the way to achieving platinum status. With "Dirt Room" the Houston band takes a break from crafting substantial alternative-pop and jams along to meaty guitar hooks andamped-up percussion. The track is a frenzant rant by infuriated singer Justin Furstenfeld, who is torturing someone for taking "the future and the food off his family's plate." Whether this is the psychological flip side to Blue October's masochistic track "Dried a Wire Through My Cheek" or an actual kick flip is uncertain. Here's hoping that for the victim's sake it's all in Furstenfeld's head, because he's got the details planned down to the duct tape, a grave and the ants, bees and honey he's going to slather over his prey. "Dirt Room" ain't pretty, but it's not supposed to be. Look at it on the ironically titled "Approaching Normal," March 24.—CLT

AC

LIONEL RICHIE FEATURING AKON

Just Go (4:18)

Producers: Allanae "Akon" Powell

T.I. FEATURING JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

Dead and Gone (4:59)

Producers: Justin Timberlake.

Rob Knox

Writers: C.Harris, J. Timberlake.

T. Radarx


April, ASCAP

Grand Hustle/Atlantic

With "Dead and Gone" already scaling the upper reaches of the Billboard Hot 100 just weeks after its release, it's clear that T.I. and Justin Timberlake have another hit... (2006's "My Love" reached No. 1 on the Hot 100.) The serious tone of the song sets in early with T.I. mentioning his late friend Philant Johnson. Timberlake's excellent vocals are as thought-provoking as they are catchy and the vibe— which T.I. delivers—are some of his most insightful rhymes to date. The lyric encourages people to think before they act in order to avoid tragedy. The pair's performance at the Grammy Awards will only serve to add more life to "Dead and Gone."—SR

THIAM, GUION TUNFOR

Writers: A. Thiam, G. Tunfort
Publishers: Byefall/Sony/ATV/Piano Music, ASCAP

Island Def Jam

Lionel Richie scored one of his biggest hits with 1983's "All Night Long (All Night)," in which he delivered a festive reggae-toned vocal. Some 25 years later, he conjures a similar vibe with "Just Go," with the added hip factor of collaborator Akon (who's content to let Richie maintain the marquee, only serving up background vocals). Richie's previous album, 2006's "Coming Home," came within striking distance of going gold—one hell of an accomplishment in the sales-starved millennia. AC and adult R&B are already onboard with this, the title track from his Feb. 17 album. The optimistic, caipio-flavored cut is craftedly produced with island percussion, tinkling keyboards and sweeping harmonic vocals that caress the production. If Richie wasn't nearly 60, this would be a formidable bid for top 40 radio—but adults will have a blast with a mightily relevant release from the enduring entertainer.—CT
Grass is greener:
LITTLE HERO

No Small Feat
Little Hero Debuts Atop Reggae Chart

Jamaican artist Little Hero's debut album, "Revelation," debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Top Reggae Albums chart the week of Jan. 31. An extraordinary accomplishment for a singer who is relatively unknown beyond the island's shores.

That week, "Revelation," released on the small Jamaican imprint Inspire Records, surpassed major-label releases, a diamond-selling artist and even two of Bob Marley's sons.

"We prayed that one day Hero would reach a level that would surprise people, because he has done great music but he has been overlooked," says Delroy Roberts, Hero's manager, the owner of Inspire Records and the writer/producer of most of the songs on "Revelation." "This would not have been possible without digital downloads, which have taken us into new areas and given the record a big push." Roberts licensed "Revelation" to Japan's Diamond Edge Records for release there in December 2007; he shopped the album to a few U.S. companies and their disinterest prompted him to release "Revelation" on Inspire in February 2008. Roberts distributed the physical CD with assistance from Florida-based colleague Kevin Steele; for digital distribution, he partnered with reggae specialists Zojak Worldwide (from Jamaica) and Germany's Sound Quake. Neither Roberts nor his distributors can pinpoint the sources of the sales surge that took "Revelation" to the top of the chart, but Till Schumann, the head of digital distribution at Sound Quake, believes it's simply a triumph of excellence over name recognition.

In addition, Schumann says, "Delroy didn't make the songs available on the Web prior to the album's release; something many Jamaican producers do." Sales for "Revelation" number slightly more than 1,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. But the No. 1 debut is generating broader awareness for Hero, whose distinctive sing-speak style vocals and heartfelt lyrics have been a consistent standard-bearer for 21st-century dancehall steeped in roots reggae's cultural sensitivities.

Born Paul Gayle in 1972, Hero first appeared on the Jamaican music scene in 1994 with the No. 1 single "God Alone." He dropped out of the music business for several years following a car accident but returned in 2005 with another No. 1, "Inna De Ghetto," a commentary on the devastation wrought by the preponderance of guns within the island's poorest communities.

"Revelation" features several of Hero's biggest songs, including the acoustic guitar-framed, deeply devotional "Praise God," which topped the reggae charts in Jamaica, New York, South Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands throughout 2008. Roberts, a newcomer to the reggae industry, produced "Praise God" and most of Hero's recent hits, with music created by engineer Horace Campbell and Hero's brother, Andrew Gayle.

Due to the comparative obscurity of his team within reggae circles, Hero was cautioned to expect little from his debut album. "People said we needed popular rhythms, better-known musicians and producers, and had to release it on an established reggae label or it wouldn't go anywhere," says Hero, taking a break from recording at Columbus Studios near his home in Ocho Rios. "But we believed in our thing and it feels good to know we've come this far."

LOST AND FOUND
Little Steven Van Zandt's rock'n'roll empire is expanding yet again with a new label, Lost Cathedral. The first project from the RED-distributed imprint, which will focus on hard rock, is Crown of Thorns' "Faith," due May 14.

Lost Cathedral joins Van Zandt's garage rock label, Wicked Cool, under the banner of parent company Renegade Nation.

"We basically decided to keep Wicked Cool identifiable as a garage rock label, at least for now," he says. "In the last couple of years, we've gotten a lot of hard rock things submitted to us. A lot of it is quite good—a little bit punkier or hard rock than we do with Wicked Cool." Starting with Crown of Thorns made sense too, because the band's frontman, Jean Beauvoir, is also the CEO of Renegade Nation. "He does what he does every couple of years," Van Zandt says. "I know what you mean. It's silly not to put it out." As with Wicked Cool, Lost Cathedral will focus on artist development, which Van Zandt feels is a lost art in the modern music business. "Once upon a time there was a great, collaborative effort involved in making careers," he says. "Things have gone so far toward do-it-yourself—which frankly doesn't work—it's hard to be capable at all of those jobs, let alone good at them."

And, one of the labels may prove a logical place to release Van Zandt's back catalog, which includes several successful solo albums from the '80s. "We're in possession of all of those," says Van Zandt, who now owns the masters. "I just haven't had time to focus on it. We actually should, because my stuff is really not very available. Maybe we'll stick it into one big boxed set!"

Other Renegade Nation initiatives in the works include a TV show based on Van Zandt's popular satellite radio show "Underground Garage" and the rock-focused Web site Fuzztopia, which Van Zandt promises will provide "everything from how to get guitar strings at 2 a.m. in Cleveland to the hippest promoter in Oslo."

—Jonathan Cohen
n Australia, the effervescent Origliasso sisters have long been household names. But identical twins Lisa and Jessica—better known as pop purveyors the Veronicas—have had to ride their time waiting for audiences abroad to catch on. The wait, it would appear, is over. The duo’s single “Untouched” (Engineer/One/Vertigo/Atlantic) has so far reached No. 17 on the Billboard Hot 100, making it the first Australian pop act to crack the top 20 since Kylie Minogue peaked at No. 7 in March 2002 with “Can’t Get You Out of My Head.”

“We’re really excited to see all our hard work translate into that,” says Lisa, back in her hometown of Brisbane after a two-week U.S. promo tour. “That’s the biggest compliment for us—America is saying we’re new and fresh and unique.”

“Untouched” has sold more than 85,000 downloads in the States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and has reactivated interest in its album, “Hook Me Up,” originally released Aug. 26, 2008. A recent No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Heatseekers chart, the set has climbed as high as No. 107 on the Billboard 200 and has so far scanned 65,000 copies.

The band’s previous album, “The Secret Life Of…” peaked at No. 133 in 2006 and has sold 121,000. The act teamed cites support from MTV and other youth TV, key airplay on “So You Think You Can Dance” and “The Hills,” and pop radio play as driving the success of “Untouched.” The duo will make a guest appearance on “90210” later this month, while Nickelodeon’s “The N” will air a special feature highlighting the Veronicas as its artist of the month.

Support slots with Jonas Brothers, Natasha Bedingfield and Hanson have also paid off, while the duo launched its own Web series, also called “Untouched,” through the act’s Yahoo Music channel in October.

U.S. dates are planned for the summer, but in the meantime the stateside success will trigger a wave of international releases, with Warner Music rolling out “Hook Me Up” across the United Kingdom and Europe in March and April, while the record drops March 18 in Japan. The Veronicas are committed to European promo trips beginning in March and running through June.

That means plans to deliver a new album in 2009 are on hold—despite “Hook Me Up” originally being released Down Under in November 2007. The act was signed by Dene founder Seymour Stein and developed in the States but has enjoyed great success in its home market with both albums peaking at No. 2 and spawning several hit singles.

“Their work ethic is just astounding,” says Warner Music Australia and New Zealand chairman/CEO Ed S. John. “For a number of years they were big here and a lot of people didn’t know who they were overseas. That was becoming a bit difficult for them to understand and accept. They don’t have to worry about that anymore.”

“There were definitely times of frustration,” Lisa says. “It has been a somewhat tough road, but right now it’s a good time for music and our music is speaking for itself. Artists like Lady GaGa, MGMT and Katy Perry are breaking, and they’re clearing the way for electro and beat-driven music over there. ‘Untouched’ may not have been the right thing for America eight months ago, but it’s definitely the right thing now.”

DIGGIN’ IN THE CRATE

Aaron LaCrate has been DJ’ing parties and clubs since he was a little kid. “My parents thought I was nuts, but they saw how driven I was and that I was making money,” he says.

Today, LaCrate spins what he calls “gutter;” his own version of explicit, chant-driven Baltimore club music. The difference: The MCs he utilizes can actually rap, and he doesn’t use samples, which are prevalent in Baltimore club.

While LaCrate has been a constant presence on the club music scene (he was interviewed as part of a 2005 MTV special about it), his profile was raised after executive-producing last year’s “Remixology” by Delicious Vinyl All Stars. That collaboration led to an imprint deal with Delicious Vinyl for LaCrate’s Milk Crate Records, which he runs out of New York.

But LaCrate figures to get more exposure than ever with his second album, “B-More Club Crack,” due March 10 on Koch. This week, he flies to Germany to play a series of dates on the Coke DJ Culture tour. For the past few years Coke Germany has been bringing over such American DJs as DJ Premier and Afrika Bambaataa to play sponsored club dates. In addition, the DJs traditionally record their own take on a piece of Coke music.

LaCrate is further diversified with Milk Crate Athletics, a clothing line he started 13 years ago. Whenever the label puts out a remix or mixtape, there is an accompanying piece of apparel. For the current release, that means a T-shirt with the image of one of the rappers on the disc, Verb.

Despite his ever-growing profile the new album’s “Oh My God” was recently added to KPWR (Tower 106) Los Angeles’ “mchv.” LaCrate says he still doesn’t get any respect from his hometown. “Hip-hop is at a real dull point now. It’s relying on beef and gossip,” he says, adding that he and producing partner Samir remixed Madonna’s “Miles Away.” “You’d think they would play it down in Baltimore out of simple pride, but they didn’t.”

Kamau High
While the Feb. 8 Grammy Awards made news last week, the top-selling album of the week happens to come from an act that wasn't nominated for a trophy and didn't appear on the CBS show.

The Fray flies in at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with its self-titled sophomore album, which sold 179,000 copies. This easily surpasses the best sales week that the band's debut set, "How to Save a Life," notched when it sold 150,000 during Christmas week in 2006.

Last week's No. 1, Bruce Springsteen's "Working on a Dream," slips to the runner-up slot with 102,000. It's down only 55%, a less weighty drop than what his last album, 2007's "Magic," experienced in its second week. It premiered with 335,000, then fell 60.4% in its second week.

Springsteen's not-so-bad second-week decline was likely aided by consumers reacting to his Feb. 1 Super Bowl halftime performance. On last week's charts, there were significant digital gains for a number of his sets, likely owed to purchases made on Super Sunday (and the final day of Nielsen SoundScan's tracking week).

Now, with a full week having elapsed since the Bowl, Springsteen's catalog makes more gains. His Walmart exclusive "Greatest Hits" (with the E Street Band) vaults from No. 74 to No. 43 on the Billboard 200 with 13,000 (up 666%), while he also places three albums in the top 25 on Top Pop Catalog.

His 1995 set "Greatest Hits" ticks from No. 16 to No. 5 (8,000, up 71%). "The Essential Bruce Springsteen" climbs from No. 43 to No. 13 (6,000, gain of 91%) and "Born in the U.S.A." debuts on the chart at No. 22 with 4,000 (up 90%). That's the best week for "Born" since November 2004, when it sold nearly 6,000.

Overall, Springsteen's catalog of albums (tucking out "Working on a Dream") sold 45,000 copies in the week ending Feb. 8—a 53% gain compared with what it sold the previous week (nearly 30,000). His overall digital song sales jumped from 121,000 the week ending Feb. 1 to 145,000 last week (up 20%).

Springsteen's top-selling download, the title track to "Working on a Dream," sells 24,000 (up 77%), earning the Boss his first Billboard Hot 100 appearance (No. 68) in slightly more than a year.

Another beneficiary of the Super Bowl is Jennifer Hudson's self-titled debut, which rises to No. 47 with 12,000 (up 57%). On Top R&B/Hi-Hop Albums, the set leaps to No. 16.

Her much-talked-about rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" before the game clearly ignited sales for the album, but the story isn't over yet.

The set will rise again next week, after the full impact of the Grammys is felt. On the show, she took home the first award of the night, for best R&B album, and then later she turned in an emotional performance of "You Pulled Me Through."

"Speaking of the Grammys: Although the Grammy Awards ceremony was held on the evening of Sunday, Feb. 8 (the last day of the tracking week reflected in this issue's Billboard chart), the broadcast still makes waves (see story, page 10). Most gains likely are the result of downloads on Sunday night after the show. Robert Plant & Alison Krauss' album of the year winner "Raising Sand" re-enters the Billboard 200 at No. 69 with 9,000, a gain of 286%. Seventy-nine percent of its 7,000-copy increase came from downloads. Adele, who won best new artist, sees her '19 album vault to No. 27 with an 89% gain. Of its 8,000-unit increase, 82% came from downloads.


The all-star effort, which was recorded during the course of two years, boasts a cast that includes Audra McDonald and Patrick Wilson. The set isn't eligible for the Top Cast Albums chart, as the last only tallies original and theatrical cast recordings, not studio cast albums. Had it qualified, it would have debuted at No. 5.

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**Market Watch**

**A Weekly National Music Sales Report**

**Weekly Sales (Million Units)**

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**Year-To-Date Sales**

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**Top Tracks**

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**Top Albums**

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**Charts**

- **Billboard 200**
- **Top Pop Catalog**
- **Top Digital Tracks**
- **Top Albums**

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**Go to** [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete chart data.
Starting with 25,000 copies, the band surpasses the opening week of its last album, "Don't You Know It," which sold 25,000 at No. 25 in 2006.

A deluxe edition of the album bowed Feb. 3 with extra tracks, including a cover of Snow Patrol's "Run." The set gets a 24% boost as a result of the release.

The digital version of the set was released with additional songs Feb. 3, thus adding its overall gain of 15%. Its download sales were up by 123%.

The Starbucks release (1,040) features alternative and rock acts doing romantic tunes, including Snow Patrol for Erie (picture) taking on the Cure's "Love Song."

The compilation of Florida-friendly tunes also debuts at No. 1 on Top World albums. Available only at Starbucks, the set includes the track "Nacht und Feuer" (Canto).
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### Top Independent™

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<tr>
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<td>4. JASON NEVINS</td>
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<td>5. Two Tongues</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Journey</td>
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<td>14. Jason Nevins</td>
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<td>16. Secondhand Serenade</td>
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<td>17. Apocalyptica</td>
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<td>18. Journey</td>
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<td>21. Journey</td>
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<td>30. A Day To Remember</td>
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### Top Digital™

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<tr>
<td>1. The Fray</td>
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<td>2. Bruce Springsteen</td>
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<td>3. The Fray</td>
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<td>Interscope/Atlantic</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Fray</td>
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<td>5. The Fray</td>
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<td>6. The Fray</td>
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### Top Cast Albums

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<tr>
<td>1. Thriller</td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>$13.99</td>
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<td>3. Thriller</td>
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<td>5. Thriller</td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
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<td>$13.99</td>
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</table>

### Top Independent Albums

- Three Stupefying releases make their way onto the tally at Nos. 4, 5 and 10. The "Swing Swing Swing" set additionally arrives at No. 1. Top Jazz Albums, making the third Straight set to carry the name since October. Also on the Jazz albums tallies, Antony & The Johnsons "The Crying Light" (voted with a 2% audience to No. 2 following the act's 5/4 poll, 30 profile on NMP's "Fresh Art" project.

### Sales Data Compiled by: Nielsen SoundScan

**Billboard Chart Figures**

- **Sales of the Week:**
  - Top 10 Albums: The Beatles' "Abbey Road" sold 3.8 million copies, joining the 1981 release "Thriller" as the only other album to top the chart with sales of ten million or more in a single week.
  - Top Artists: Adele leads with 119.5 million in sales, while Taylor Swift remains at No. 2 with 111.8 million.
  - Top Singles: "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran is the top-selling single of the week, selling 1.5 million copies.

**Further Highlights:**

- Adele's "25" album sold 1.1 million copies in its first week, making it the second-largest debut of the year.
- Taylor Swift's "1989" sold 700,000 copies in its second week, setting a record for the biggest two-week sales performance for a female artist.
- "Thriller" reentered the chart at No. 1 after a 34-year absence, selling 1.2 million copies.

**Additional Notes:**

- *The Weeknd:* The Canadian artist's "Starboy" album sold 1.5 million copies, debuting at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart.
- *Drake:* His album "More Life" sold 2.9 million copies, becoming the first of 2017 to sell over three million.

**More Charts:**

- deeper charts are available on billboard.biz/charts to find Billboard's complete menu of more than 175 charts—albums, singles, digital, mobile, and more—refreshed every Thursday.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<th>Label</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Your Body</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>RCA/RMG</td>
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<td>10,000 Days</td>
<td>Daughtry</td>
<td>RCA/RMG</td>
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<td>Weekend Runs</td>
<td>John Mayer</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>That Thing Is Wrong</td>
<td>Matchbook Dixie</td>
<td>Hollywood Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I'm Here</td>
<td>LeAnn Rimes</td>
<td>Warner Bros</td>
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<td>Electric Slide</td>
<td>Kanye West</td>
<td>Roc Nation</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Big Time Rush</td>
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<td>Diddy</td>
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<td>Kasey Chambers</td>
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**HOT AIRPLAY**

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<tr>
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<td>Airplane</td>
<td>1000.000 Feet From Earth</td>
<td>Motown</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I'm Not a Robot</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>DGC</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Battle of Atlantic</td>
<td>Nas</td>
<td>Def Jam/Interscope</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Can't Hold Us</td>
<td>Eve</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>One Love</td>
<td>BeBe Winans</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
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**HOT DIGITAL SONGS**

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>When I Was Your Man</td>
<td>Faith Evans</td>
<td>RCA/RCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Love So Soft</td>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>This Is My Love</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td>RCA/RCA</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Mariah Carey</td>
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<td>5</td>
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**ALBUM CHARTS**

**LIQUIDATING ARIA**

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<td>Priority</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Let Me Love You</td>
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**TOP MUSIC VIDEOS**

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<td>7</td>
<td>LOVE, PAIN &amp; THE WHOLE CRAZY WORLD TOUR - LIVE</td>
<td>The Secret Machines</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>LOVE AT STURGIS 2006</td>
<td>Nickback</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9</td>
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**HOT VIDEOCLIPS**

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<tr>
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**VIDEO MONITOR**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>VH1</td>
<td>TURN IN ON</td>
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<td>VH1</td>
<td>ANSWER</td>
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<td>HUMAN</td>
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<td>VH1</td>
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<td>ZAC BROWN BAND</td>
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**ADULT TOP 40**

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<td>HOT N COLD</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I WANT YOU BACK</td>
<td>New Edition</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IF I WERE A BOY</td>
<td>Beyoncé</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>LOVE DOES</td>
<td>landscapers life</td>
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<td>THE WAY I FEEL RIGHT NOW</td>
<td>Talk of the Town</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>IT'S GROWING</td>
<td>It's Growing</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I HATE THIS PART</td>
<td>My Product (of love)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>LUCKY MAN</td>
<td>Kool &amp; The Gang</td>
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**ADULT CONTEMPORARY**

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<td>Plain White Theory of a Deadman</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>WELCOME TO SHANGHAI</td>
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**MODERN ROCK**

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**POP/Rock**

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<tr>
<td>Kanye West</td>
<td>The College Dropout</td>
<td>Def Jam/Interscope</td>
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<td>Miley Cyrus</td>
<td>The Time of Our Lives</td>
<td>Epic/BNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diddy</td>
<td>No Way Out</td>
<td>Bad Boy/DEF JAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>When Love Takes Over</td>
<td>Bad Boy/Def Jam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>Here I Stand</td>
<td>LaFace/Def Jam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common</td>
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<td>Jay-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint</td>
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<td>T.I.</td>
<td>Paper Trail</td>
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<td>Jazmine Sullivan</td>
<td>Fearless</td>
<td>Island Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>The Creek</td>
<td>Island Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>Year Of The Gentleman</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Hudson</td>
<td>The Theater Of The Mind</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akon</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ty-Pain</td>
<td>Tha3 Rings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mariah Carey</td>
<td>The Balads</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<td>Young Jee</td>
<td>The Recession</td>
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<td>B.o.y.</td>
<td>Send One Your Love</td>
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<td>Jazmine Sullivan</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>So Far Away</td>
<td>LaFace/Def Jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyga</td>
<td>Boy Tell Em</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Jones</td>
<td>No Way Out</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ace Hood</td>
<td>100 Ways</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<td>Nelly</td>
<td>The High Life</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Omar</td>
<td>Te Quiero</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gucci Mane</td>
<td>Goosebumps</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plies</td>
<td>Living Proof</td>
<td>Def Jam/IDJMG</td>
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<td>Cassie</td>
<td>The Creek</td>
<td>Island Records</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Goosebumps</td>
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<td>Plies</td>
<td>Living Proof</td>
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### Top Christian AC Songs

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Revelation</td>
<td>2. Matt Redman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. With You</td>
<td>4. Matthew West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Amazing</td>
<td>6. Planetshakers</td>
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### Top Gospel Songs

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<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cover Me</td>
<td>2. Israel Houghton</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Peace And Favor Rest On Us</td>
<td>3. KB</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. My God</td>
<td>5. Mark Hall</td>
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### Top Gospel Albums

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<tr>
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<td>2. Israel Houghton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My God</td>
<td>3. GRANDHISHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. All For You</td>
<td>4. Smokie Norful</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I'm Not Alone</td>
<td>5. Thousand Animals</td>
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### Top Electronic Albums

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<tr>
<td>1. Imagine</td>
<td>2. Nathan Craft</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Soto</td>
<td>3. Tye Tribbett</td>
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<td>4. You And Me</td>
<td>5. Various Artists</td>
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### Top Dance Club Play

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<tbody>
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<td>2. Various Artists</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Heatwave</td>
<td>3. Various Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Fear</td>
<td>4. Various Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Turn It Up</td>
<td>5. Various Artists</td>
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### Top Dance Airplay

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<td>2. Various Artists</td>
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<td>2. Heatwave</td>
<td>3. Various Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Fear</td>
<td>4. Various Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Turn It Up</td>
<td>5. Various Artists</td>
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### Top Christian Albums

<table>
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<td>4. Matthew West</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. Amazing</td>
<td>5. Planetshakers</td>
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### Billboard Top 50

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<tr>
<td>1. I Will Rise</td>
<td>2. One True God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I Will Rise</td>
<td>3. Lord</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. I Will Rise</td>
<td>5. We Will</td>
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Data for week of FEBRUARY 21, 2009 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data
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<td>(THE OFFICIAL FINLAND) FEBRUARY 12, 2009</td>
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<td>JAMES MORRISON FT NELLY / LADY GAGA</td>
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<td>NEW</td>
<td>LADY GAGA</td>
<td>LADY GAGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>THE KILLS</td>
<td>THE KILLS</td>
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<tr>
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Scotish chart view the chart in at No. 4 on the U.K. Albums chart with its top 10 chart, "Which Bitch?" the band's album peaked at No. 1 in 2007.
HELP WANTED

OLE
Majorly Indie

GENERAL MANAGER

OLE is one of the world's largest independent, full-service music publishers. With offices in Toronto, Nashville and Los Angeles, OLE is focused on global acquisitions, songwriter and catalogue development and administration. OLE seeks to be the home for the best songwriters, composers, management talent and intellectual property investors and the first choice music source for creators in all media. The website is www.majorlyindie.com.

The Position

This new position reports to the Chairman and CEO and will be located in a city where OLE has operations. The GM will be responsible for assisting the CEO in setting strategy, the management of daily operations of the company in all locations and the achievement of the annual business plan. The GM will additionally be an integral contributor to the Acquisitions function. The General Manager will:

- Manage the Sr. Managers to deliver maximum results;
- Provide organizational vision and leadership;
- Formulate strategy and observe the political, legal, social and technological issues affecting the business;
- Develop and implement the annual business plan including rigorous monitoring, reporting to OLE's multiple stakeholders including the investors, the company's senior executive and overall and the annual audit process;
- Ensure timely and accurate reporting in all aspects of the business including oversight of Quarterly and Annual Reports;
- Approach interdepartmental activities strategically and orchestrate a smooth workflow;
- Administer the affairs of the corporation in regard to regulatory compliance;
- Lead the management and implementation of the OLE Brand/Marketing strategies;
- Retain and manage the coordination of external legal counsel;
- Manage short and long range property management to ensure availability and continuity in line with the company's growth plans;
- Direct the Informatics Technology function to ensure continuity, business recovery, security to support corporate growth;
- Manage all aspects of the human resources function.

The Candidates

This appointment will require a visionary team leader and manager. It calls for someone who is a driver of business, with a proven track record in leading a music publishing operation and in music publishing acquisitions. The successful candidate will be a strong business strategist and an excellent communicator with a proven ability to lead the day-to-day operations.

Please reply to Steve Mould or John Corso by email ole@intersearchcanada.com referencing Project #29011.

We thank all respondents for their interest and will contact only those whose backgrounds closely meet the criteria.

corso, mould + more

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RECORD COMPANIES: Atlantic Records Group promotes Julie Greenwald to chairman/COO. She was president.
RCA Music Group taps Scott Sussen as senior VP of artist development. He was senior VP of marketing.
Polydor U.K., the domestic division of the Universal Music Group front-line label, ups Orla Lee to GM. She was marketing director.

Sony Music Nashville promotes Paul Barnabee to senior VP of sales and operations. He was senior VP of finance and operations.

Universal Music Germany in Berlin names Dirk Baur managing director of its international division. He was managing director at EMI's Virgin/Labels/Mute unit in Germany.

Sony Music Entertainment names Kathy Chalmers executive VP/chief human resources officer. She was executive VP of human resources at Morgans Hotel Group.

PUBLISHING: BMI names Flana Kwanik director of business affairs. She was an associate at law firm Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton.

TOURING: The Salina (Kan.) Bicentennial Center names Marshall P. Perry director. He was managing director at the Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center in Cambridge, Ohio.

DIGITAL: MSG Media names Carol Albert senior VP of marketing. She was senior VP of marketing at the NBA.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

PLAYING FOR CHANGE UNITES GLOBAL ACTS
Playing for Change co-founder/director/producer Mark Johnson has spent the past decade trying to “figure out how to inspire the entire planet to come together through music.”

So he and a small group of people spent the last four years traveling the world with a mobile recording studio and cameras, filming and recording musicians playing popular songs like “Stand by Me” and “Don’t Worry.” The result was the 2008 documentary “Playing for Change: Peace Through Music,” which features more than 100 global acts combining their voices into a group of five songs.

“We went through different cities, streets, Indian reservations, African villages and would meet different musicians, record their music, interview them about music persevering through struggles and unite them all together with songs around the world,” Johnson says, noting that each song took about one year to put together.

“The idea was to keep trying to get as many different styles, cultures, races, religions and economic and political views to unite through songs.”

The project has also inspired the Playing for Change Foundation (playingforchange.com), which aims to bring facilities, technology, musical instruments and education to musicians and their communities. Through money raised from benefit concerts and private donations, the organization’s first project will be to open the Playing for Change Ntonga Music School in South Africa.

“The idea is to install recording equipment and cameras into these schools so that people can log in and watch recitals in the schools we’ve built,” Johnson says. “That cuts the whole distance barrier and having people say, ‘Why should I help people in Africa? I’m never going to see them.’”

—Mitchell Peters

INSIDE TRACK

GLORY DAYS
After a seven-month, $16 million restoration, New York’s famed Beacon Theatre reopened Feb. 13-14 with concerts from Paul Simon and his band. The improvements are immediately noticeable upon entering the 80-year-old building, which began life as a movie palace before shifting to rock concerts in the ’70s.

A team led by Marc Tarozzi, project manager for Madison Square Garden Entertainment, conquered years of neglect (the crystal ball in the lobby chandelier was being held in place by a coffee can), stripping away paint, seats and plywood to reveal the original ornate details on the walls (some of which were pitch black from years of cigarette smoke) and ceilings.

Beyond upgrades to the fan experience, artists will appreciate a new stage and dressing rooms, as well as a second sound system that delivers a whole new listening experience for people seated in the balcony. “The greatest city in the world should have the most iconic venues,” says MSG president Jay Marciano, whose company took over the Beacon in 2006. “We wanted to restore this to its 1929 splendor.”

Workers restore the Beacon Theatre to its original ornate glory.

2009 GRAMMY AWARDS
The 51st annual Grammy Awards took place Feb. 8 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, ending a week of parties honoring the evening’s nominees and winners. Some highlights included the 2009 MusiCares Person of the Year Tribute to Neil Diamond and the Recording Academy’s annual pre-Grammy gala, saluting Clive Davis, continued on page 54

—Jeffrey Basketball, Photos Courtesy of WireImage

Attending Universal Music Group chairman/CEO Doug Morris annual Grammy viewing dinner at the Palm in West Hollywood, Calif., from left, are Universal Music Enterprises president/CEO Bruce Resnikoff, Universal Records South president Mark Wright and UMG president Zach Horowitz. Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Basketball, Photos Courtesy of WireImage

Taylor Swift poses with Recording Academy president/CEO Neil Portnow. Photo courtesy of WireImage

The 2009 MusiCares Person of the Year Tribute to Neil Diamond was held Feb. 8 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Arriving at the event, from left, are Recording Academy chair/Grady Foundation board members Jimmy Jam Fox Fotobank; Dave Drinkel, Recording Academy president/CEO Neil Portnow, and Foo Fighters Nate Mendel, Chris Shiflett and Taylor Hawkins. Photo courtesy of the Recording Academy and Rick Diamond/WireImage

From left: rapper/producer D1. Quik, T.I., and Quincy Jones after the finale. “I am humbled to be considered the Grammy Award Nominees,” said host E.B. Boyd. Photo courtesy of John Shearer

Coldplay’s Chris Martin (left) and EMI Music chief executive Elton John/scott at EMI’s post-Grammy event supporting the cancer research charity Stand Up for a Cure. EMI artists won 15 Grammys, EMI’s highest tally in the last five years, led by Coldplay with three including song of the year and best rock album. Photo courtesy of John Shearer
2009 GRAMMY AWARDS

continued from page 53

Grannary's country duo Sugarland is surprised during Grammy rehearsals with platinum plaques for its second album: 'Love on the Inside.' From left: Glenn Management president Gary Greenman, and singers Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles. The duo's third album was released in July 2009 and received platinum status two months later.

Whitney Houston, who made her comeback at the Grammys presenting the best R&B album award to Jennifer Hudson, and BET president Debra Lee (left) attend Russell Simmons' "Salute to Grammy Award Winners" celebration at Beverly Hills. Photo: Courtesy of Barry Jengels.

Nick (left) and Kevin Jonas rock the house at the Grammys, photo courtesy of John Shearer/WireImage.

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