MY LIFE: BILLY JOEL AT 60
THE PIANO MAN OPENS UP ON HIS HIT ALBUMS, HIS NEW TOUR AND HIS 'CRAZY-ASS JOB'

GREEN DAY'S PUNK OPERA
THE BAND RETURNS WITH A '21ST CENTURY BREAKDOWN'

WHAT MYSPACE'S NEW MANAGEMENT MEANS FOR MUSIC

SWINE FLU AND LIVE LATIN MUSIC

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**Online**
- **GREEN DAY**
  - Read this week's cover story with Green Day and then head to billboard.com/greenday to dive into an online-only Q&A about the trio's new tour and "21st Century Breakdown," their first studio album in five years.

**BILLY JOEL**
- Ahead of his big summer tour with Elton John, visit billboard.com/billyjoel to read an in-depth Q&A with the piano man himself.

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**ON THE COVER:** Green Day photograph by Marina Chavez. JOEL: Keith Bedford/Reuters

**360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD HOME-FRONT**

**MAY 9, 2009 | www.billboard.biz | 3**
Some people just can’t take “yes” for an answer—especially when it comes to the future of the Internet.

A few years ago, when it became evident that the Internet was changing the way people access information, groups like Public Knowledge saw that creators were at risk from illegal copying and counseled them to develop new business models to compete with free content.

Flash forward to 2009, and creators are embracing all sorts of new distribution platforms. MySpace Music, iTunes and Hulu have proven that making content available in legal terms can be more lucrative for creators than it was a few years ago. YouTube has entered into new partnerships with the creative community to offer professional content that creates and delivers a new revenue stream for songwriters, musicians, filmmakers and software developers to earn a living. Not only do they show down proposals that could address digital theft, they offer new ideas of their own—except the superficial notion that creators are no longer worth anything.

But instead of cheating those efforts and extending a collaborative hand to help find better solutions, many self-proclaimed Internet rights groups still complain that the media business is still “acting as if it were 1995.” They even lament YouTube’s decision to work with content creators, saying it makes the Internet “less free.”

These critics seem inclined to overlook the massive digital theft that threatens the ability of songwriters, musicians, filmmakers and software developers to earn a living. Not only do they show down proposals that could address this issue, they offer few ideas of their own—except the superficial notion that content should be free.

As consumers, we all like “free”—if anything really is free in the final analysis. But we also like “value”—even when we have to pay for it. Both professional content and the networks that carry it come as the result of large investments aimed at generating revenue, not by being given away but by delivering value. That model works because by both law and social contract, property rights get the respect that enables innovation to earn its reward. For some Internet rights groups, it seems, this respect ends when property gets digital.

With the exception of perfunctory statements saying, “We don’t condone piracy,” many of the most vocal opponents pay more than those who use very little. Having first toured such pricing plans as reasonable, they now label them “mis-erable” ideas. To them, users who would prefer an Internet cleared of the congestion from illegal traffic appear not to matter at all.

Considering how much permissive-ness they favor, they seem to enjoy saying “no”: no to digital rights management, “no” to traffic watermarking, “no” to traffic shaping, even “no” to bandwidth pricing proportional to one’s use of a network. They say “no” just to any model that acknowledges content as a resource worth protecting.

Maybe it’s time for the members of this chorus to come up with some fresh ideas of their own—one that acknowledges that innovation isn’t about “competing with free” but about creating a digital economy that works for consumers and creators. If they’d rather keep saying “no,” we can only remind them of the old adage that if you aren’t part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

Mike McCurry and Mark McKinnon are co-chairman of Artists-Labs, a collaboration between the technology and creative communities. McCurry worked as the White House press secretary from 1995 to 1998. McKinnon is a veteran political consultant who has worked for George W. Bush.
**DIGITAL** by Antony Bruno

**MYSPACE RELOADED**

Management Shakeup Could Portend Changes At Music Joint Venture

Just five months after MySpace Music hired former MTV digital strategist Courtney Holt as its president, the division's parent company has gone through an executive shakeup that could have significant ramifications for its young music service.

MySpace co-founder/CEO Chris DeWolfe is out, with co-founder/president Tom Anderson negotiating an as-yet-unclear new role within the organization. Taking over as CEO is Owen Van Natta, former head of Project Playlist and CFO of MySpace rival Facebook. Joining Van Natta are former AOL senior VP Mike Jones as COO and former Sling Media and MTV digital exec Jason Natta as chief product officer.

Holt appears to have come through the management upheaval unscathed. The veteran of Interscope and MTV has won rave reviews among label sources involved in the MySpace Music joint venture for improvements to the service, such as expanding its search features, adding new playlist tools and introducing album pages (Billboard, April 11).

Blame for the service's problems has landed at the feet of the outgoing management team. In addition to its oversight of what is widely regarded as a sloppy launch for MySpace Music, industry observers also fault DeWolfe's team for MySpace's erosion of relevance as a hub of online culture.

Since News Corp. acquired the then-darling of the Internet for $580 million in 2005, MySpace has lost ground to Facebook in terms of traffic, innovation and registered users. In March 2008, MySpace had 72.8 million unique visitors in the United States, more than double that of Facebook's 35.5 million, according to traffic figures from comScore. But in March of this year, MySpace's unique visitors had fallen to 70.1 million, just 13% more than Facebook's 61.2 million uniqueness.

Worldwide, Facebook claims 200 million registered users, compared to MySpace's 130 million. And Facebook's open development platform has attracted more than 50,000 applications to the site, versus only about 8,000 for MySpace, according to information disclosed by both companies.

"It doesn't have that cachet anymore. It's not the Internet property that really is setting the cultural scene."

— A MUSIC INDUSTRY SOURCE

DeWolfe was out there for his own name and not paying attention to things that members of the joint venture would have liked to have seen in the timeline of launch," says one source close to the labels involved. "News Corp. properly saw the issues were with that level of leadership."

These same sources consider the incoming team as a welcome improvement. Those who have worked with Van Natta during his brief tenure at Project Playlist call him a tough and effective negotiator. When he arrived, the company was being sued by the major labels for copyright infringement, with MySpace and Facebook blocking access to the service shortly after he came on board. He quickly struck licensing deals with Sony Music Entertainment in December and EMI Music in March. Although Universal Music Group's and Warner Music Group's lawsuits are still pending, label sources say the majors consider him a CEO they can work with.

"He definitely did a lot with a little bit of time at Playlist," another label source says. "It's no small feat to agree to a pretty complex deal, going from a lawsuit.

As the digital executive who oversees the development of MTV's Urge music service, Hirschhorn has a similar degree of familiarity and respect within the music industry. But his role as chief product officer has raised some questions about how he'll work with Holt. Although MySpace Music exists as a separate entity, it is also MySpace's key point of differentiation from Facebook and in that central to the company's efforts to regain momentum in the wake of its rival's recent gains.

The optimistic view is that Holt and Hirschhorn may see eye to eye on the future of MySpace Music and work well together. Already, label sources say News Corp. chief digital officer Jonathan Miller—who was believed to be behind DeWolfe's ouster—has promised to be more directly involved in MySpace Music. That could translate into more resources and execution of strategy.

The pessimistic view is that Holt and Hirschhorn may clash for control and resources. Also, DeWolfe hired Holt, and new management tends to put its own executives in place.

"Anybody who was hired under the old regime will be at risk and be under pressure to deliver," says a source familiar with the situation. "If Hirschhorn owns product, he's going to want to innovate on the music product there. So there'll be some conflict."
After The Fall

IFPI, RIAA Data Show Details Of '08 Decline

The continued decline in physical unit sales is being accompanied by downward pressure on retail and wholesale prices for physical product as consumers continue to migrate to lower-marginal CDs to digital downloads, according to an analysis of recently released sales data from the IFPI and RIAA. The numbers also reflect slowing digital growth as market mature and mixed success in mobile music.

Fueled by a large drop in CD sales and lower wholesale values, the U.S. market posted a steeper decline in total revenue during 2008 than the global market, according to IFPI. U.S. recorded music trade revenue dropped 18.6% in 2008 to $5 billion, while physical revenue plunged 31.2% to $3.1 billion and digital revenue jumped 16.5% to $1.8 billion. By contrast, global recorded music trade revenue fell 8.3% to $13.8 billion, physical revenue declined 15.4% to $13.8 billion and digital revenue surged 24.1% to $3.8 billion.

The sharp drop in U.S. physical trade revenue in 2008 far outpaced corresponding declines in Europe (11.3%), Asia (4.9%) and Latin America (10.1%), according to IFPI.

One factor: growing pressure from retailers for lower wholesale prices to compete with lower-priced (and illegal) digital albums, which in turn compounds revenue losses.

According to the RIAA, U.S. CD unit shipments dropped 24.7% in 2008 while the retail value of those shipments tumbled 26.6%. The average list price of CDs shipped in 2008 was $14.22, down 2.5% from the previous year’s average list price of $14.58.

RIAA figures show that U.S. DVD sales were another source of considerable decline in U.S. physical sales. The retail value of music DVD shipments plummeted 54.7% to $215.7 million. Vinyl has made strong gains in unit sales but the actual value of those sales remains small. Vinyl EP and EP shipments soared 177.7% in 2008 but still accounted for only $56.7 million in retail value. That revenue will probably continue to grow.

While digital music remains a strong, albeit slowing, source of growth, the gains are coming almost entirely from digital downloads. RIAA figures show Total U.S. mobile revenue has dropped slightly in 2008 (see chart, left), as a 36% gain in mobile track download unit sales and an 18% rise in ringback tone sales were more than offset by a 17% fall in ringtone unit sales. The increase in mobile downloads came from a percentage of households with MP3 capable cell phones rose to 15% in 2008, from 12% in 2007, according to the December 2008 Nielsen Communications Trends report.

Meanwhile, digital subscription services have failed to live up to even modest expectations. The value of U.S. subscription revenue totaled just $188.2 million in 2008, down 6.5%. Mobile subscription continue to mirror PC-based subscriptions in their limited popularity. Consumer hesitation toward services with digital rights management, combined with the growing number of smart phones with free or cheap alternatives, will continue to pose challenges for the subscription market. The most popular PC-based subscription service, RealNetworks’ Rhapsody, has 750,000 subscribers, while Best Buy’s Napster reported 708,000 subscribers in its last earnings release for the period ending June 30, 2008. Compare those numbers with the more than 4 million iPhone users who have downloaded the free Pandora application that streams music free of charge.

Even though digital music accounts for far less trade revenue than CDs, improved margins from digital sales offer hope for a soft landing as overall revenue bottoms out. As the recording industry continues to contract, it will have to adjust to the realities of lower revenue and more efficient digital distribution.

HOME FRONT

RAMIREZ NAMED BILLBOARD INTERIM LATIN CHART MANAGER

Rauly Ramirez, currently Latin/ R&B/Top 40 format manager for Nielsen BDS, has added the title of interim Latin chart manager for Billboard.

Ramirez, who will remain based in Hollywood, will report to Billboard director of charts Silvio Pietroluongo, who is located in New York. In his expanded role, Ramirez will be responsible for all aspects of the Latin radio and retail charts, including the compilation of the annual year-end rankings and recaps that determine the nominees and winners for the Billboard Latin Music Awards. Ramirez, a graduate of New York University, joined the Nielsen family in April 2008. While in college, he interned at Rhino Records, Island Def Jam and Bad Boy.

“I am excited to have Rauly join the Billboard charts team,” Pietroluongo says. “He has been a great addition to the Nielsen BDS staff and his passion for music in general, and Latin music specifically, has been readily apparent since we first began to work together.”

Ramirez can be reached at rramirez@billboard.com.

SANDISK RELEASES NEW BILLBOARD SLOTRADIO CARDS

SanDisk has released four new Billboard-branded genre-specific slotRadio cards, each loaded with 1,000 tracks. The plug-and-play cards can be used in conjunction with SanDisk’s Sansa slotRadio player.

The Billboard Rock card includes classic, hard and modern rock hits from Coldplay, Fall Out Boy, the Killers and No Doubt. The Billboard Country card features music from legends and new stars, including Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood. The Billboard Oldies card contains music by such legendary acts as Elvis Presley, the Beach Boys, the Temptations and Smokey Robinson. The Billboard Hip-Hop/R&B card has tracks by T-Pain, Akon, Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye and others.

The Billboard slotRadio cards, which will retail for $39.99, will soon be available at Radio Shack stores nationwide. For more information, go to slotRadio.org.

PRESSURE DROP

After reaching $15.12 in 2006, the average suggested list price of a CD in the United States fell by about 6% during the last two years.

SALES SLOWDOWN

U.S. CD shipments remain in free fall, but their revenue value still dwarfs that of other categories.

CHART SOURCE RIAA
TALENT SHOW

Agency Consolidation To Take Big Leap With WMA-Endeavor Merger

The merger agreement between the William Morris Agency and Endeavor will repackage the map for Hollywood’s talent agencies. Although the deal is awaiting regulatory clearance, the stage is already set for fresh upheaval as rival agencies attempt to lure agents and clients away from the new combine.

The new agency will operate under the moniker William Morris Endeavor Entertainment and position itself as a challenger to the dominant Creative Artists Agency (CAA). The merged agency will re-package WMA’s film and TV departments by bringing in a wealth of talent represented by Endeavor. It also will open the doors to the Endeavor side to have a stronger presence in music, publishing and corporate representation, areas that are WMA’s strengths.

The impact that the deal will have on music side is tough to gauge. The WMA music division, headed worldwide head of music Peter Grosslight and contemporary music head Marc Geiger, boasts a wide range of stars and developing artists in genres including rock, pop, country, urban/R&B and Latin. It also has an active presence on the West Coast; in Nashville, New York, Miami and London; as well as a growing presence in Asia. Its headliners include the Eagles, Kanye West, Pearl Jam, the Killers, Taylor Swift, Rascal Flatts, Snop Dogg, Josh Groban, Nine Inch Nails, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Alejandro Sanz, LMC, Brad Paisley and Brooks & Dunn. Large agencies with strong film and TV divisions like WMA, CAA, International Creative Management, United Talent and acquisitive Paradigm have always leveraged the strength of their other departments to attract a certain caliber of music artists. This won’t change after the merger, although WMA will clearly gain some muscle in this area through Endeavor. Boutique agencies can’t compete in this space, but they can tout their ability to micro-manage touring careers and provide individual attention they say the mega-agencies can’t offer.

For certain acts, such as Billy Joel or Metallica at Artist Group International or in-house booking, these are likely to focus on these artists receive, and that isn’t likely to change in the wake of this merger, or even future agency consolidation. At the highest end of the scale, superstars like U2, Madonna and the Rolling Stones don’t use agents but rely on their tour producers to handle routing, booking and getting paid.

The new agency’s motion picture department will have WMA’s marquee names including Mel Gibson, Denzel Washington, Eddie Murphy, John Travolta and Steve Martin joining forces with such Endeavor-repped talent as Adam Sandler, Matt Damon, Keira Knightley and Shia LaBeouf. The new agency is expected to pull in more than $300 million in annual revenue. WMA CEO Jim Wiatt will serve as chairman of the merged entity, with Endeavor founder Ari Emanuel, Endeavor partner Patrick Whitesell and WMA president David Wirtschaff serving as co-CEOs.

WMA has about 300 agents, Endeavor 80. The new agency is expected to shed about 100 agents, many of whom will come from the WMA ranks. That could heighten a wrestling period of assimilation as the companies blend their disparate cultures.

For rival agencies, the official word of a merger intensifies what has been a frenetic few weeks of combing through agent lists and making discreet calls to their clients.

“It’s the Wild West, that’s the only thing I can compare it to,” says an agent who isn’t affiliated with either company. “You’re basically trying to figure out which agent is leaving, and then you try to decide who on their list might be most vulnerable.”

SWIZZ BEATZ ONBOARD FOR HENNESSY LAUNCH

Hennessy V.S. has tapped rapper/producer Swizz Beatz to help launch a new, limited-time hip-hop campaign called Hennessy Black. The rapper will perform an original song, “When I Step in the Club,” with the JabbaWockeez of “America’s Best Dance Crew” during a launch event May 5 in New York. An accompanying video by director Hype Williams will be unveiled as well.

LATIN

BY AYALA BEN-YEHUDA

New Strain

Swine Flu Forces Mexican Concert Promoters To Reschedule Shows

In the wake of the recent swine flu outbreak, Ticketmaster’s Mexican Web site resembled an airport departure screen during a snowstorm, with rows of concert listings followed by the same word: “Cancelado.”

To help contain the outbreak, the Mexican government banned large public events in Mexico City, issued advisories against gatherings in other parts of the country and closed schools nationwide. That left promoters and managers scrambling to postpone shows to May 6, when schools are scheduled to reopen. Alejandro Fernández, Marco Antonio Solís, Los Lobos and Alejandro Guzmán are just a few of the acts that have been affected by the cancellations of cultural festivals, theater and sports events. The Jonas Brothers and Metallica are still scheduled to perform sold-out shows in Monterrey and Mexico City, respectively, in the coming weeks.

Though suspected swine flu cases have been reported as far away as New Zealand, the higher number of deaths attributed to the disease in Mexico set off a swift reaction by the live entertainment industry.

An April 24 show by the Finnish group the Rasmus at Mexico City’s Auditorio Nacional was canceled, while an April 25 concert by the Mexican pop act Flá-Ash at the same venue was rescheduled for May 7.

“We will be working normally once the health authorities confirm that this warning has been released,” says Francisco Serrano Carreto, director of the Auditorio’s sister venue Lunario. While others in the live industry also expressed optimism that things would return to normal by May 6, some on both sides of the border were developing alternatives in case health fears don’t subside in the weeks ahead.

John Frias, whose company is promoting a May 9 triple bill of the regional Mexican acts Los Tucumanos, K-Paz de la Sierra and Pancho Barraza inAnaheim, Calif., said tickets had been moving briskly as of last weekend. Still, Frias says he’d be taking note of attendance at Cinco de Mayo celebrations to assess whether he should reschedule his concert, given his target audience of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans, many of whom may have recently traveled south of the border.

“The deal is going to be a huge indication for us. If we haven’t made a decision by then,” Frias says.

At press time, top regional Mexican act Banda El Recodo was still expecting to make a scheduled May 3 performance at a festival in San Diego but had canceled its Mexico appearances through May 8. The band’s booking agent Pepe Serrano says his company, which also manages several acts, would likely lose about $250,000 in May due to canceled dates.

The uncertainty is killing us,” he says, adding that one way to mitigate the losses would be to book more stateside dates.

One Promoters tend to carry expensive cancellation insurance for large international tours, while they don’t for most other shows. Still, “there are always clauses in the contracts for unforeseen events,” says Pablo Vega, manager of the Chilean pop group Kudal, which plans to reschedule some upcoming dates in Cancún. Vega notes that promoters take the biggest hit with cancellations and postponements, having already put money up to promote the original dates.

Chris de Rey, producer of a May 3 Cinco de Mayo music festival in South El Monte, Calif., sponsored by KBUE/KBUA (La Que Buena) Los Angeles was heartened by the strong turnout at L.A.’s Fiesta Broadway a week earlier. Del Rey noted that a free all-day concert featuring top acts and full-size product samples from grocery sponsors may attract more families than ever in an economic crisis.

“I’m trying,” de Rey says, “to do our outlaw with all this bad news.”

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Apple Earns An ‘A’

iTunes Topped U.S. Music Accounts For First Time In 2008

Strong digital music growth and the erosion of CD sales continue to remake the face of the U.S. music account base, according to my analysis of 2008 sales and market share.

Not surprisingly, digital accounts continue to accumulate market share at the expense of CD music merchandisers, with iTunes now the most important retailer of recorded music. And while Apple dominates the market for paid digital downloads, other digital vendors are making gains as well.

In 2008, iTunes’ market share surged to 21.4% from 12.7% in the prior year, coming in as the top U.S. music account surpassing the longtime leader, Wal-Mart, for the first time. iTunes became the first account since Wal-Mart’s prime in the middle of this decade to top the 20% market share milestone.

Most of iTunes’ growth is coming at the expense of physical sales, but it also continues to dwarf other individual digital music service providers.

The top digital accounts combined last year to account for 31.6% of the U.S. market, with the top non-Apel digital accounts accounting for a 10%-overall market share.

The second-largest digital account, and the eighth-largest overall, was Verizon Wireless, which moves up a notch in the 2008 rankings as its market share grew to 2.3% from 1.7%. That’s due to growth in full-track download sales at the service, which had previously relied heavily on ringtones to drive its market share. For the first time, mobile carriers like T-Mobile, Sprint and AT&T each captured more than one-third of annual market share in 2008.

In losing the top spot to iTunes, Wal-Mart’s share also relinquished nearly two percentage points, despite the addition of sales from its download store. It finished 2008 with 14.9%, which comes from combining Anderson Merchandisers’ 14% market share, a portion of Han-dieman’s share and the merger download sales of walmart.com.

Best Buy’s market share fell to 10.8%, from the 12.6% it had at the end of 2007. Napster, which Best Buy bought in October, had 1.2%. Combine the two and you get within striking distance of Best Buy’s previous year’s total. It’s worth noting that Best Buy used Rhapsody as its digital solution before the Napster acquisition, so it’s likely that some of Rhapsody’s share came from Best Buy customers.

Distribution executives say they believe that Best Buy customers are the most susceptible to iTunes overtures, which likely became more of a threat since the Napster acquisition, so it’s likely that some of Rhapsody’s share came from Best Buy customers.

The Rhapsody music service, which by itself would have been one of two hundredths of a percentage point to 8.9%. Target could build on those modest gains in 2009, given the chain’s resonance to the trend among other brick-and-mortar retailers to reduce floor space devoted to music sales.

Trans World also continued to lose market share as it closed unprofitable stores, but it didn’t have as big a drop as Wal-Mart or Borders. The latter merchant’s market share was down nearly one-third in 2008, due to continuous reductions in its music selection. Its market share is expected to dip sharply again in 2009 because it’s further reducing its selection from an average of 9,500 titles per store to about 3,150. SKU count varies widely, with 15 stores carrying a full music inventory of 9,500 SKUs, while 150 stores will carry only 25 titles when the transition is complete. Meanwhile, Hastings remains a top 20 account, but its share of music purchases fell to below 1%.

In the wholesale sector, Alliance Entertainment retained its No. 5 ranking, even though its market share fell slightly to 7.7% in 2008 from the 8.1% in the prior year. Its decline in share was likely related to Circuit City’s problems. Alliance was the sole supplier of music to the now-defunct Circuit City and the consumer electronics chain’s performance was in the second half of the year, when many suppliers had the account on credit hold. That forced the chain to file for Chapter 11, which turned into a liquidation that occurred during the first quarter of this year. Alliance’s market share is likely to erode further, without any sales from the Circuit City account this year. It remains to be seen if Alliance’s own prepackaged Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing will hurt its market share. Elsewhere in the wholesale sector, Super D and the Edge have surpassed Baker & Taylor, which saw its market share tumble to just 0.8% from 1.5% in 2007.

Finally, Amazon’s market share climbed to 4.7% once its digital download store is included in total, up from 3.6% at the end of 2007. The Amazon MP3 store alone would be in the top 20, with 0.8% market share. Overall, Amazon places sixth in the rankings, but that doesn’t include its purchases from one-stop alliances. Super D and Baker & Taylor or sales in the Amazon Marketplace, which consists of other retailers, labels and distributors selling music alongside the Amazon offering. Add all that together and Amazon’s market share reached about 7.5%.

**MILEPOSTS**

Vern Gosdin, 74

Country singer/songwriter Vern Gosdin, known as “the Voice” for his distinctive tone and heart-wrenching way with a lyric, died April 28 in Nashville following a recent stroke. He was 74.

Born in Woodland, Ala., Gosdin’s singing and writing style reflected the strong influence of the Louvin Brothers. He came from a musical family, which gained notice with its “Gosdin Family Gospel Hour” on KVOX, Birmingham.

Ala. Gosdin and his brother Rex moved to California in the early 60s, where they performed with the bluegrass group the Golden State Boys. That act included such notables as Chris Hillman and Don Parmenter. When Hillman left the group to form the Byrds, the Gosdin brothers became a duo, often performing with and opening shows for the Byrds. Gosdin relocated to Atlanta in the late 60s after minor chart success with his brother. He signed with Elektra in 1976 and began having solo hits with “Hanged On” On, “Yesterday’s Gone” and “’Till The End.”

Nicknamed “the Voice” for his boundlessly expressive baritone, Gosdin issued many hits on various labels, most notably “Chiseled in Stone,” which won the Country Music Assn. song of the year award in 1988. That track was one of many that Gosdin wrote with the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame member Max D. Barnes. He also co-wrote his 1982 hit, “Today My World Slipped Away,” with producer/loader executive Martin Wright, who was later hit for George Strait.


A public visitation will be held noon-4 p.m. May 2 at Mount Olivet Funeral Home in Nashville. Funeral arrangements were still pending at press time.

—Wade Jessen

Sammy Davis Jr., the Isley Brothers, Dionne Warwick, the Four Tops and Bobby Womack.

While running the agency, Bowen also co-founded and headed a civic and social club called the Rinkydinks, which was made up of famous musicians’ wives. The club aimed to assist minority children in reaching their educational goals.

“I have had two great agents—Dick Allen at William Morris, with whom I signed in 1979, and Ruth Bowen, who’s been with me since 1962,” Franklin told Billboard in a 2003 interview. “When you have two long-time industry people like Dick and Ruthie, who are very savvy, you really don’t need a manager. They have both done a great job.”

After the death of her husband in 1982, Bowen married long-time friend Clarence “Billy” Bryant. Bowen is survived by Bryant and her brother, James Ed ward Coode.

—Lara Marsman

**DEATHS**

Ruth Bowen, 84, a booking agent who represented jazz and R&B luminaries like Dinah Washington, Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin, died April 21 in New York after battling a malignant brain tumor.

A native of Boynton, Va., Bowen moved to New York to attend New York University, where she met and married William “Billy” Bowen, a member of the Ink Spots. Bowen accompanied her husband on the road, where she met many other prominent artists of the day, including Washington, who hired Bowen to be her publicist. At Washington’s urging, Bowen obtained her booking license and founded Queen Booking in 1959.

The agency prospered with Washington’s backing, booking acts at the Howard Theatre in Washington, D.C., the Apollo Theater in Harlem; and the Regal Theatre in Chicago. After Washington’s untimely death in 1963, Queen Booking continued to grow. In 1974, Bowen rechristened her agency Renaissance Talents, eventually renaming it again as the Bowen Agency. During her more than five decades in the music business, Bowen boasted a client roster that included Charles, Franklin, 

www.americanradiohistory.com
Dixie Fried

Warped's Kevin Lyman Lays Groundwork For Multi-Artist Country Tour

Kevin Lyman has a pretty warped view of country music, and that could be a good thing.

The co-founder of the Vans Warped, Rockstar Taste of Chaos and Rockstar Mayhem tours now has his sights set on a similar country tour: multi-alt, multicast, sponsor-driven and conservatively priced.

Lyman has a solid track record. But country?

While the West Coast-based Lyman might appear to be an unlikely fit for Nashville, it's really not that big of a stretch. Lyman says he's been interested in revisiting the country genre since helping produce the Down From the Mountain tour nine years ago.

He believes country music fans are open to the concept. And Music Row is listening.

Lyman's team came to Nashville in January and started meeting with labels, managers and agents on an exploratory trip, and interest was high.

"Everyone was saying the time is right," he says.

Nashville is notoriously wary of "carpetbaggers," but Lyman is committed to the market. In fact, his 4Fifty Productions has opened an office in Nashville: Sarah Baer and Kate Truscott relocated there from Chicago to join new employee and former Clear Channel online music manager: Allison Skiff.

The first version of the vet-to-be-named tour will go out in 2010. "We’re getting everyone's opinions," Lyman says. "We want to customize what we’ve been able to do with Warped [in the punk genre], and last year with Mayhem in metal. We invested a lot of time with the metal labels before we put that tour into motion and we’ve put a lot of time into this [new] project.

Lyman's not crazy about people calling this a "country Warped" but understands why people might feel that way, and want to associate it with something, he says: "Warped for many years was under the radar and now has been able to cross genres of music and is able to support a scene on a year-round basis."

He describes the reaction from Nashville labels as very encouraging. "When we first came down here we had two official meetings lined up, and by the fourth day we were having back-to-back-to-back meetings," he says.

Major, indies and sub-labels are all welcome. And just as sub-genres can be found on Warped and Mayhem, country is also diverse in its affiliations and styles.

"My daughter has Taylor Swift. Fall Out Boy and Akon on the same shuttle of her iPod," Lyman says.

Lyman's not interested in putting FOB and Akon on the same bill with Swift (we think), but he's all about tapping into country’s eclecticism, including mainstream hitmakers, singer/songwriters and Americana, bluegrass and heritage acts.

Indeed, Nashville is as much "songwriter city" as Music City, and Lyman says he fully intends to have a strong songwriter element to the tour. With only about 20-25 quality support slots open each year on headlining country tours, there's a big talent pool to dive into.

"There are some very successful 'A' artists in country," Lyman says. "It’s a scene that’s been very successful for many years and continues to be strong. You also have a lot of acts that have been able to have that one radio single then go to the fair, and there has been a real building ground playing that circuit. Then there’s a lot of stuff right in the middle, kind of like what we’ve been able to do by taking Slipknot and Disturbed to the amphitheater level by putting the right package around them on Mayhem, or taking bands like Paramore and putting them into the Warped system. And then they go off and headline some really large tours on their own.

The inaugural country tour will probably look about 13-14 acts and 10-12 singer/songwriters, Lyman says. He also envisions ancillary events with such possible partners as the National Tailgating Assn., the World’s Toughest Cowboy and action sports exhibitions.

"It's very wide open, we're not down to those details yet, but we're not discounting anything," Lyman says.

Live Nation works with Lyman on the Mayhem tour, and he says a similar model would be likely for the country trek. "There is a commitment from them to support if we can put the right project together," Baeer and her team are actively seeking sponsors for the country tour, and Lyman says they're already garnering interest. "That's one reason we need to come up with a name pretty soon."
ORGANIZED K-OS

Canadian Rapper Brings Pay-What-You-Like Model To Touring

TORONTO—Terry McBride has often used free music to promote his artists. Now the Netwerk Music Group CEO is extending the concept into the live concert business.

McBride manages the Canadian hip-hop star K-os, who is giving away all the tickets to his current 10-date Canadian tour on a first-come, first-served basis on the night of a show and asking fans to pay whatever they feel it's worth.

"K-os believes fans will be able to make donations once they're in the venue. Those who pay—or make what McBride dubs "karma donations"—will receive K-os' "Yes It's Yours" CD, which contains fan-created remixes of tracks from his new album "Yes!" (Universal Music Canada), released April 14. Attendees can also qualify for a CD by making merch purchases or on-site donations to the David Suzuki Foundation, a Vancouver environmental protection advocacy group.

"This is a natural step and we honestly believe the fans will support the artist," McBride says. The tour is part of an aggressive marketing strategy that involves Universal, the concert promoter. Live Nation and Toronto-based tour sponsor Rogers Wireless.

McBride says Rogers is paying for about 60% of the tour's overall costs. In return, the carrier will use the tour to promote its uusic.ca Web site, which sells music downloads and concert tickets. It also receives 100 tickets per show that it will give away on the site.

"K-os has cross-genre appeal, and he's very relevant to our youth demographic," says Robin Walters, Rogers director of music, portal and content.

The tour kicked off April 30 at the Vancouver Commodore Ballroom and plays 1,000- to 2,500-capacity venues, wrapping May 16 at the Halifax (Nova Scotia) Cunard Centre. The last two K-os albums—2004's "Joyful Rebellion" (EMI Music Canada) and 2006's "Atlantica: Hymns for Disco" (EMI Music Canada)—sold 160,000 and 60,000 copies, respectively, in Canada, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"Can the tour make money while relying on the largesse of K-os fans? Neither Netwerk nor Rogers would put a figure on the tour's total costs, but touring sources estimate they could run around $230,000, taking into account such variables as promotion costs, payroll, buses, trucks, lights, sound, hotels and per diems, hall rentals and allowing for the lower production costs associated with hip-hop tours.

With Rogers' 60% share of the costs totaling about $138,000, the tour would need to take in an average of $11,000 a night to break even. That's assuming a nightly audience of 1,000 people paying an average of $11 per ticket, a target that sources believe is achievable.

McBride declines to comment on who would cover any potential losses.

"There won't be a shortfall," he says. "The tour is in line with all the concepts we're developing for him. It is an authentic interaction with his fans."

Live Nation Canada promoter Jason Grant says the company is focused more on building a long-term relationship with K-os than reaping a short-term financial gain from the dates.

"None of us can say with any certainty how much people will be willing to give in exchange for the great show they're going to get," Grant says. "We can't let that be the only measurement of success."

However, if successful it proves, Grant believes it's unlikely to become a regular business model for artists of K-os' stature. Meanwhile, K-os himself insists he has no concerns. "If I didn't want to do this, I'd work for a corporation," he says. "If I wanted the same thing to happen every day, I wouldn't pick music as my occupation. There's so much energy in this idea."

Additional reporting by Ray Waddell in Nashville.

Catch Me If You Can

Illegal Russian Download Vendors Still Operating Despite Copyright Law Change

MOSCOW—Two years after the closing of the notorious online music vendor AlloFMP3.com, other illegal Russian digital music sites continue to operate despite changes in the law designed to shut them down.

GoMusic (gomusic.ru) has recently generated Internet buzz in the West, where its ultra-low download prices of 9 cents to 15 cents per track have attracted a following. Further discounts are available on albums: At press time, U2's "No Line on the Horizon" (Island/Interscope) was available for just 89 cents.

GoMusic is one of many Russian-based sites under investigation by the IFPI, although many local recording industry executives say they're unaware of its existence.

"We've never heard of GoMusic and we've never sold them any license," says Sergei Baidin, GM of SFA Music Publishing, which represents EMI Music Publishing. Similarly, Olga Kaznova, development director at Universal Music Russia, confirms that Universal doesn't have any agreements with the site.

GoMusic has been inaccessible in Russia since April 17, although at press time it was open to U.S. visitors. MP3Search.ru, an apparent sister site that features the same user interface, remains accessible from within Russia. MP3Search includes a notice on its site claiming that it pays 50% of its sales proceeds to the "Federation of Authors and Rightsholders for Collective Management of Copyright in Interactive Regime," a defunct Russian collecting society that closed after Jan. 1, 2008, change in copyright right.

That copyright law amendment required all sellers of digital content to have direct agreements with rightsholders, rather than with collecting societies. The local music business credits the new law with a decline in the estimated value of the illegal download business, which fell to $30 million in 2008 from $40 million in 2007, according to the Moscow-based research company X Consulting.

But while some well-known outlets stopped operating, IFPI general counsel Jo Oliver says many other sites continue to "sell music without permission from rights holders, breaking local copyright law and making recordings available illegally."

"The music industry reserves the right to take action against these sites and seeks to persuade the Russian authorities to effectively enforce their own copyright laws," she adds.

The industry did take action against the most notorious of all Russian sites, AlloFMP3.com, in December 2006, when the RIAA filed a $1.7 million U.S. lawsuit against it on behalf of the major labels. In August 2007, shortly after AlloFMP3 ceased operations, a Moscow court cleared former owner Denis Kvasov of copyright violations. The RIAA dropped its suit the following year. But one site still in operation, MP3sparks.com, is believed to be a direct descendent of AlloFMP3.

"Those cases dragged out for a long time but led nowhere," X Consulting analyst Yelena Krylova says. "Until someone is seriously punished, sites are set to remain in business."

Piracy continues to hamper attempts to establish a legitimate digital download market in Russia. Digital music sales totaled just $3.4 million in 2007—the latest figures available—according to the IFPI, with mobile formats accounting for all sales.

Roman Romanenko, head of Sony Music Russia, told Billboard that he's "optimistic about the future of legal downloading in Russia." But he admits that the market is "doomed to be unprofitable." Romanenko says, "Companies we have agreements with, like muz.ru, Soundkey and Stereokiller, are in a difficult position."

Muz.ru has agreements with Universal, Warner and Sony and sells digital rights management-protected tracks at 20 rubles (59 cents) each.

Alexei Nikitin, co-owner, general director and namesake of the Moscow-based label Recording Company Nikitin, says, "the market is 99% controlled by pirates."

His label recently announced a licensing deal with Warner Music International to market and distribute Warner digital content in Russia, Ukraine and other markets in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

"We will fight piracy on a public level," Nikitin says. "But in order to really defeat it, steps on a government level should be made."

Additional reporting by Mark Sutherland in London.
Nuthin' But A 'G' Thang
As Sales Slow, Music Game-Makers Turn To Hip-Hop And Electronic For Growth

Just how important is the upcoming "DJ Hero" game to Activision Blizzard?

So important that the videogame publisher tried to buy a rival game that was scheduled for release before "DJ Hero" hit stores. When that failed, Activision acquired the game's developer in hopes of stealing the process.

At least that's the claim made in a recently resolved lawsuit against Activision by Genius Products, the publisher of "Scratch—the Ultimate DJ." In March, a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge ordered Activision to return to Genius the "Scratch" source code, which Activision had acquired earlier this year after buying 7 Digital, the company that was developing "Scratch" for Genius.

Until this drama unfolded, "Scratch" was merely a footnote in the music-game maker's quest to develop a virtual reality experience. "Scratch" is part of Genius Products in a DVD distribution company that's never been involved in making a videogame before, and only a handful of press outlets have mentioned the pending "Scratch" game. Activision, meanwhile, has racked up more than $2 billion in sales from its "Guitar Hero" franchise alone and is one of the largest videogame publishers in the world.

But the David vs. Goliath tale drummed up all kinds of attention for the smaller game's expected June release, which may have been what Genius Products intended all along. And the fact that Activision would walk into this mess speaks volumes about how crucial "DJ Hero" is to music gaming.

Simply put, sales of music-based games have peaked. Activision's "Guitar Hero World Tour" and MTV Games' "Rock Band 2" sold considerably fewer units than the previous installments of both franchises. The playlist comes at a time when overall game sales in March fell 17% from the same time last year, on the heels of a 2.7% dip in February. That's not to say that music-oriented titles won't keep generating significant revenue, but it does highlight the need to expand to other genres and attract new fans.

The "Guitar Hero" and "Rock Band" franchises are driven primarily by rock, specifically classic rock. To date, expansions of either franchise have focused on their existing audience, with music that takes advantage of the games' plastic guitar and drum controllers. "The "Guitar Hero" games dedicated to Aerosmith and Metallica are variations of the same theme, as is the Beatles game that Harmonix is preparing for release in September," says Mike Kutcher, analyst Michael Pachter.

By contrast, "DJ Hero" and "Scratch" will focus on electronic and, more important, hip-hop. Activision hasn't yet revealed what songs will be included in "DJ Hero," but "Scratch" will have about 60 licensed tracks from the likes of Kanye West, the Black Eyed Peas and Run-D-MC. The Beatsteeks' Mix Master Mike serves as a creative consultant to the game and is adding his own content as well.

"It's a really important category, and they want to figure out how to exploit it among people who are into the music-game genre," says Wedburn Morgan gaming analyst Michael Pachter. "My guess is a big chunk of the interest in "DJ Hero," probably disproportionate to the population, is African-American. African-Americans are considered a particularly under-served demographic for videogames, due to research suggesting that African-Americans spend more time playing videogames than their white peers. Pachter also believes the game will attract younger players than "Guitar Hero" and "Rock Band.""

According to market research from Activision's Red Octane subsidiary, which oversees "Guitar Hero," more than half of consumers expressing interest in buying "DJ Hero" don't own any "Guitar Hero" titles, suggesting that the focus on new music may bear fruit.

Taken as a whole, it's understandable that Activision wanted to have this particular market to itself, or at least come to market first. But don't expect either "DJ Hero" or "Scratch" to immediately generate a spike in music game sales. Pachter projects that Activision will have only 500,000 to 1 million units available for the fall launch of "DJ Hero." Fit sells out, there could be a few months of delays as the company ramps up production in the new year.

As for the lawsuit, it's probably not the last. The music game genre has proved to be a magnet for litigation, with Gibson Guitars and Konami both targeting the "Rock Band" and "Guitar Hero" franchises.

"It's less related to the genre and more related to the success they've had," Pachter says. "The more successful the business, the more it's going to attract people making claims against one another."
Bilingual Reality
Mun2 Will Feature Xtreme In New TV Show

The urban bachata duo Xtreme sold 1.39 million copies in the United States of its 2006 major-label debut, “Haciendo Historia” (Machete), which became one of the following year’s best-selling albums by a new Latin act. The duo’s 2008 album, “Chapter Dos” (Machete), hasn’t done nearly as well, selling 200,000 copies since its release in November.

But Xtreme has generated a loyal following, as evidenced by the nearly 4.4 million visits to the group’s MySpace page and a busy road schedule that includes gigs at venues ranging from clubs to college campuses.

Ranking on the pair’s bicultural youth appeal and its potential to reach a wider audience, NBC Universal’s bilingual channel mun2 will soon launch a new reality series based on the lives of Xtreme members Danny D and Steve Styles.

“Xtreme: On the Verge,” as titled because of the premise that the group is on the verge of a commercial breakthrough, premieres May 23. The weekly half-hour reality show will run for 16 weeks.

“This guys, being from the Bronx, being bachelors with a hip, pop vibe, are definitely what mun2 is about,” mun2 programming VP Flavio Morales says.

Xtreme isn’t new to artist-based reality programming, having already tried the concept with Pitbull’s “La Esquina,” which ran for the last two seasons. But while “La Esquina” was more of an entertainment/interview show set in the Little Havana section of Miami, “On the Verge” has more in common with “The mun2 Hook Up,” a show that pairs young Latinos with professional role models, including doctors, athletes and recording artists.

People want to be let into a celebrity world,” Morales says, noting that viewers want to know more about the nitty-gritty details of the music business. “The feedback we got was, ‘Wow, if the person writes the song, then they get money.’”

Mun2 considered several acts for the series, ranging from tropical to regional Mexican performers. Xtreme’s willingness to allow the channel unfettered access gave it an edge over other acts. In addition, the prospect of shooting the show in New York was a plus for the channel, which has been geographically focused on Miami and the West Coast.

The start of the series coincides with Xtreme’s release of “Lloro Y Lloro”—the second single from “Chapter Dos”—and a U.S. tour.

“The guys were bilingual and bicultural and compatible with the channel,” Universal Music Latino/Machete president Walter Kolm says. “And we were launching promotion of the new single. I think it will all contribute to this second phase of the campaign.”

As was the case with Pitbull’s “La Esquina,” “On the Verge” won’t feature full-length artist performances, nor will it explicitly promote the music of its stars. But Xtreme’s recording career is, of course, at the heart of the show.

“A lot of the content has to do with the working of their album,” Morales says. “In the first episode, for example, we get a very realistic understanding of how royalties work. So, it really is a deep dive into what these artists are going through.”

Fans can also watch the show online at holamon2.com, where Danny D, Styles, their manager Ben DeJesus and Danny D’s mother Glady’s Bryan will participate in online discussions. Additional content will be available to subscribers of Verizon Wireless, which is sponsoring the show along with Toyota.

THE BILLBOARD IQ&A

Telemundo president Don Browne singled out Miguel de Narvaez at the recent Billboard Latin Music Conference as a product of the network’s “dream factory” of original content.

The Colombian songwriter has written original music for such telenovelas as “La Viuda Del Blanco” and “Decisiones.” But he’s struck a bigger chord with Telemundo’s highest-rated telenovela to date, the gleanly over-the-top “Sin Senos No Hay Paraíso” (Without Breasts, There Is No Paradise).

De Narvaez sat down with Billboard at the conference to talk about “Sin Senos” and how he and his collaborators write music for TV shows.

What’s the music strategy for the show?

The way we incorporated music into the show is by including a lot of songs for each of the characters to identify them. And people have really connected to the songs. They always write on the blogs, “Who’s the singer?” “Who wrote the song?” “What are the lyrics?” That’s because the songs get cut during the scene and they want to hear the whole thing. The singers of the main theme are Hernan Saraza, a great Colombian singer, and one of my favorite Colombian singers, Natalia Gutierrez. She has a group, Arsenal, that’s signed to Sony. She’s one of my favorite telenovela singers because she’s so versatile. They’re not very known. They’re session singers, mostly, for jingles or advertising.

Have you been able to launch singers’ careers through your telenovela songs?

No, not until now. I’ve noticed that everyone has gotten interested in these songs and connected to the story, to the problems of underdeveloped or developing countries, with women, narcoafflicters, their sexual preferences, their adventures.

Do you follow a TV script when you write?

When you do music for TV, they bring you a script, as well as a review of the personalities—the psychology of each character. Then you have to go by episode—it’s not just the opening and closing theme. You’ve got love, terror, sadness—everything.

Often the background music is based on the main theme so that viewers are constantly reminded of it. We’ll make it romantic, sad, erotic in a thousand ways.

Why has the music been so popular with this telenovela? Is it just because people like the show?

I think it’s also a reflection of Telemundo’s work in promoting the show. It’s also an indication that young people are watching the channel. We’re also on mun2. It bridges the generation gap between the audiences we’re trying to reach. It’s not just the accents or the story, but also the music...it’s not the traditional music you would hear on the radio—probably because it’s not a common story.”

—Leila Cobo

WISIN & YANDEL’S DIGITAL BONUSES

Fans who pre-order Wisin & Yandel’s upcoming WY/Machete album, “La Revolución,” at iTunes will receive a password for a Wisin & Yandel concert presale at Ticketmaster.com. The offer runs from April 28 to May 25. The duo’s tour is set to hit at least 13 U.S. cities. Another “La Revolución” digital bonus: an embeddable widget that will soon be available at www.wisindy.com and www.yandelpr.com, which will allow fans to receive news and request a show in their city.

—ABY
The free-form radio station WFMU in Jersey City, N.J., has a reputation as a programmer of avant garde music. Now it's applying this sensibility to a new online project.

In early April, WFMU launched its Free Music Archive, a music blog that features a collection of downloadable tracks curated by radio stations like KBOO Portland. Ore., and KEXP Seattle; such labels as Providence, R.I.'s Cash Music; and venues like Brooklyn's Issue Project Room. All the uploaded tracks are cleared for use through a Creative Commons license or a direct agreement with the FMA.

If an artist or label licenses a track to the FMA, the archive gets to make a song available for download but agrees not to alter, perform, adapt or otherwise redistribute the track. There are a number of different Creative Commons licenses, but the most popular one on the FMA seems to be the Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike license, which allows users to share and remix the track for noncommercial uses as long as they properly credit the artist.

The idea for the FMA had been percolating for a while, but a grant from the New York State Music Fund, which distributes payola settlement money to music education and advocacy programs, jump-started development of the project.

"We're not running at full capacity yet," says WFMU station manager and FMA executive director Ken Freedman. "But we feel like it is important to start getting out there and making a statement. There are limits to what you can do with free music. We want people to collectively make stuff for free, but we also realize that not everything should be free."

This attitude, and the curated aspect of the site, set it apart from many other blogs. And the size of the FMA may soon dwarf other sites as well.

"We have a huge library of recordings that we are planning on adding to the site," says Marc de Giere. KBOO's Web coordinator. "We have a licensing form bands fill out when they play sessions on the station, and a lot of stuff is precleared. We also have a huge archive of reel-to-reel recordings and cassette tapes that we are going to start digitizing and getting permission to share."

De Giere adds that the FMA will benefit community stations. "The audience for the site is music lovers, but it will be a huge boon for smaller stations that can't afford to pay large fees," he says.

"FMA is also great about driving users to support the artists by linking to places to purchase the album and posting tour dates."

Artists involved in the site offered a variety of reasons for their participation.

"We all love WFMU and want to give people access to as much music as possible," says John Dwyer of Thee Oh Sees.

"People that normally wouldn't hear or buy my stuff will have a venue in which to enjoy it for free," he says.

Contributor Rachel Lyon, who runs the sound art label Free Matter for the Blind and the online coupon service Posterdisc, sees the site as a way to create an archive of rare works.

Lyon, who performs as Mudboy, says most of his releases are intricately packaged and come in limited editions. While he doesn't want to change that model, he also wants more people to hear his music. "Once things go out of print, I try and put them up on the FMA," he says. "It's a great way to extend the reach of the music. And more importantly, it means that if you spend half a year on something and it comes out as a special edition as a cassette in a run of 250 copies, it doesn't mean that only 250 people are going to be able to hear it."

Marc de Giere. KBOK's Web coordinator. "We have a licensing form bands fill out when they play sessions on the station, and a lot of stuff is precleared. We also have a huge archive of reel-to-reel recordings and cassettes that we are going to start digitizing and getting permission to share."

"We want people to collectively make stuff for free," says Ken Freedman, WFMU.
Simon Cowell

The “American Idol” star and veteran A&R executive riffs on music reality shows.

Would “American Idol” judge Simon Cowell want to stay on the show if the series ever slipped from No. 1 in the Nielsen ratings?

Cowell bursts out laughing at the apparent obviousness of the answer.

“Absolutely not,” he says during an interview in his trailer before a taping of “Idol” at CBS Television City. “It’s like running in the 100 meters and saying, ‘I came in fifth’—then why bother?”

Of course, “Idol” doesn’t appear in danger of relinquishing its status as a ratings juggernaut. Though the Fox show’s audience has declined during the past few seasons, it still commands by far the largest audience in U.S. prime-time TV, averaging 25 million viewers per episode, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Still, Cowell says he hasn’t decided what he’ll do once his contract with Fox expires at the end of next season. One possibility: launch a U.S. version of his U.K. singing competition series “The X Factor.” Cowell’s production company Syco produces the show, which became a massive hit and supplant ed “American Idol” predecessor “Pop Idol.” The success of “Factor” was worrisome enough for Fox to forbid Cowell from introducing the show in the United States as part of his current “Idol” deal.

Between the continuing popularity of “Idol” and his ownership of “Factor,” Cowell is sitting in the catbird’s seat. In an interview, Cowell talked about “Idol” and other music-oriented reality shows.

Will producers continue making tweaks to the show’s format next year?

You have to. The minute you start assuming that the audience is very happy to see the same show again, you’re dead. Of course, they’re going to complain, “Why did you change this? Why are you making these changes?” But the simple truth is, if the show looked as bad as it did in season one, it probably wouldn’t be on the air now.

Is there too much product placement on the show?

I don’t think so. I don’t feel that we really are in the hands of the sponsors. Let’s put it this way: We don’t get any orders. So I’ve got a Coke cup in front of me. Who cares? I don’t like Coca-Cola. The Coca-Cola moment [segment of the show] is a conversation. I don’t feel it interferes with the flow of the show. Let’s be honest—to make a show in this day and age, with the production values we have, it’s got to have a little bit of sponsorship and placement.

One thing “Idol” has never done is release the vote tallies. Would that add anything?

We do release it on the night of the finale in the U.K. I’d have no problem doing the same thing again. I think people would be interested.

What about having the wild-card round? Does it make sense to save people that, in all probability, aren’t going to win?

I think it’s a good thing. I really do. Because people like Jennifer Hudson and Clay Aiken wouldn’t have been in the competition without the wild card. What I would’ve done, and we do it in the U.K., is that we should’ve given contestants a survival song. In other words, if at any point they are in that position, there’s one song in the world that they want to sing, instead of hearing the same song again. And I think that’s probably a better idea. We could probably introduce that next year. I think now we’ve got to a point where we can’t change the show too much. But can we bring on another music show? For sure.

Like “The X Factor”?

Yeah, and maybe it’ll be “X Factor.” It might be something new. It’s something we’ve been thinking about but I would definitely do it now. I think it has to be sufficiently different. I think that’s why I’m asking you your question in a roundabout way. Which is, I think the purity of “Idol” works very well, and you don’t want to change it too much. It is what it is. But that also enables you, I think, to bring in another format. In the U.K., there is more than one type of music show running throughout the year. And I think the same type of thing could happen [in America], because for the second half of the year, nothing really happens.

The idea would be Fox doing a music show in the fall to not take away from “Idol” but to complement it? Yeah, I say this because I think there’s an awful lot of people who would enjoy another show. I wouldn’t compete with “Idol” — that’d be crazy.

Does Fox seem open to the idea of doing “X Factor”? Has it been discussed?

I genuinely don’t know whether it would be “X Factor.” It just strikes me that there is room for more than one show, but with the understanding that we would protect “Idol” in the second half of the year. It just seems logical as long as it’s different from “Idol.” You have to look forward to one show one season and then another show afterward.

“The X Factor” in the United Kingdom has done better than “Pop Idol.” It’s done something that other shows haven’t done in the past three years: It’s grown its audience year over year, by quite a significant amount, 10%-15%. I love the show. It’s my baby.

How would “The X Factor” do compared with “Idol” in the United States?

If we have half of the “Idol” audience, we’re doing well. I always believe that shows should increase their audience every time you’re on. That’s just my ego. So “Idol,” actually, I think the ratings could go higher. I don’t accept the argument of fragmentation or declining numbers. That’s bullshit. The Super Bowl goes up every year. You’ve just got to find audiences something interesting.

What other shows do you watch?

I find a lot of the reality stuff boring now. I think I may have to ban all these American composers. This terrible sort of dramatic sort of music, which I hate, on all of them.

And I can see the process, where absolutely nothing is happening on the show and it’s sort of like they put music behind it trying to create something. It’s just like, “Oh, shut up.” So I get irritated by a lot of that. I think “Dancing With the Stars” is very good. And I’m jealous that we don’t own that format because it’s a format you can run for years.

Will NBC’s a cappella show, “The Sing-Off,” work?

It’s going to be boring. Look, you could do a cappella week on “Idol” maybe, but I think any more than that sounds a bit pretentious.

So many music shows have been tried stateside. Why do the copycats fail?

They’re not very good. They are rubbish. There are only, thank goodness, a very small team of people who know how to make great entertainment shows. The “Idol” team—one of the best in the world. And then the guys who make “X Factor” and “Got Talent.” Genius. We’re kind of living in a super brand world. “Idol,” “Dancing With the Stars”—they’re super brands. And they get more money invested in them each year. I don’t really see how anyone could compete with those now.

Have you ever, in your free time, listened to a CD by an “Idol” contestant?

No, you just don’t do that. If one of the particular songs comes on and I like it, OK. But I think it’d be odd if I was driving around Beverly Hills with the roof off playing a Taylor Hicks album. It’s just too weird.

Go to the Hollywood Reporter’s Web site at thr.com/ for an expanded version of this interview, including Cowell’s predictions on who will win “Idol” this season, what he thinks of his fellow judges and why he’ll never again read viewer comments online.
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GREEN DAY Returns With A Rock Opera Thrashtastic Enough For Its Old Fans—And New Ones

BY MITCHELL PETERS

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARINA CHAVEZ
Green Day bassist Mike Dirnt is fatigued from the three stage dives he took last night at Oakland, Calif.'s Uptown Nightclub. For the final plunge, "I decided to climb up to the monitors and dive in from there," says the 36-year-old musician, who's also nursing a mild hangover. "I'm just feeling it today a little bit. But it was a good time."

The mid-April $20 ticket gig was the fourth installment of what drummer Tre Cool calls a "guerrilla Bay Area Green Day assault." In the days leading up to the tightly packed show—the Uptown holds about 750—the Oakland-based trio also played its forthcoming album, "21st Century Breakdown," from start to finish at the Independent and DNA Lounge in San Francisco and the newly opened Fox Theater in downtown Oakland.

The members of Green Day insist the hometown gigs grew from their desire to break away from tedious rehearsals and test out new material in front of an audience. "We've been deprived of playing live for so long that it was kind of a free-for-all, like we were playing as if our lives depended on it," singer/guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong says. "It was kind of like playing your first show all over again."

The last-minute shows surprised Bay Area concert promoters. "An arena band like that doesn't usually show up at a nightclub, especially in their home base," says Larry Trujillo, co-owner/talent buyer at the Uptown. "You wouldn't see that from Madonna or U2."

A band to continue marketing "21st Century Breakdown," due worldwide May 15 on Reprise/Warner Bros., with an eye to appealing to its longtime fans, as well as the younger audience that came aboard in 2004 with the release of "American Idiot." "I don't think they ever abandoned the roots of where they came from," Warner Bros. chairman/CEO Tom Whaley says. "On top of them not abandoning who they are from when they were a young punk band, they've also become more comfortable about their stature of being one of the best rock bands in the world."

A politically driven rock opera, "American Idiot" moved away from the band's routine three-choir punk anthems and into new territory of religious themes. "And at a time when worldwide there were questioning the actions of President George W. Bush, the social and political messages behind the set helped Green Day earn its first No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 and nab Grammy Awards for best rock album and record of the year. With two top 10 hits ("Boulevard of Broken Dreams" and "Wake Me Up When September Ends") on the Billboard Hot 100, the album has sold 5.8 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It is also Green Day's biggest album next to 1994's "Dookie," which has sold 7.9 million. "American Idiot" peaked at No. 1 on the European Top 100 albums chart and hit No. 1 in the United Kingdom and Australia. Like its predecessor, "21st Century Breakdown" has a narrative structure, telling the story of a young couple. Christian and Gloria, growing up amid the turbulent times of the early 21st century. "The main message is trying to make sense out of desperate times and chaos," Armstrong says, noting that the 18-track set features social commentary about religion, war, politics and love. "We're writing the best material we've ever written in the past five years."

Produced by Butch Vig (Nirvana, the Smashing Pumpkins, Garbage), "21st Century Breakdown" is divided into three acts: "Heroes and Cons," "Charlatans and Saints" and "Horseshoes and Handgrenades." But the band didn't set out to do another concept album. "We went down to Costa Mesa [Calif.] for summertime, let the three of them not take a vacation, and then we hit the small studio every day," Dirnt says. "Billie pulled out all the lyrics and read through them and we started looking at what was making sense, and seeing the correlations from song to song, and what songs were naturally making different chapters of this record."

That includes new musical directions. On "Restless Heart Syndrome," a piano-driven rock tune that morphs into a crunchy four-choir progression, Armstrong sings in falsetto. The album's title track, a melodic midtempo rocker with power chord verses, features Armstrong's summation of society—"My generation is zero/I'd never make it as a working class hero"—and then moves through a Who-style breakdown with sustained guitar blasts and thumping drums before settling again. And on "March of the Dogs" the band experiments with complex song structures, weaving numerous short ideas into a grand final product. Atoxvious riffing, this screams to compare religion to "a dog that's been sodomized," and Armstrong also proclaims, "The sirens of decay will infiltrate the faith fanatic."

So far, U.S. retailers seem confident that "21st Century Breakdown" will be another success. "We're in pretty big on this one," says Jim Pinolf, a buyer for Bull Moose, which has stores across Maine and New Hampshire. "We expect it to be one of the biggest releases of the first half of the year."

"The band's profile is significantly higher now than it was before "American Idiot,"" Warner Bros. senior VP of marketing Peter Stansilh makes. "The marketing plan is more ambitious, too. "21st Century Breakdown" was announced during the Feb. 8 broadcast of the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, where the title was revealed by a voice-over announcer just seconds before Green Day presented an award. The graffiti-style album cover was posted the following day on the band's Web site. In April, 90 seconds of Green Day performing its new punk-leaning single, "The New Kid on the Block," was featured during the opening segment of the NCAA championship game on CBS. Released to radio April 16, the song is No. 1 on this week's Modern Rock chart. It has sold 87,000 digital downloads, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Radio programmers wasted no time adding the track. Within the first 24 hours, it became the No. 1 most-played song in Chile, the No. 1 most played at radio in Australia and attracted attention from several major stations in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy. The "Know Your Enemy" video premiered April 24 in 41 countries. The band also received an unusual promotional boost with the announcement that the Tony Award-winning director Michael Mayer would adapt "American Idiot" into a musical for the Berkeley (Calif.) Repertory Theatre in September (see story, page 19).

In connection with the album's May 15 street date, portions of songs from "21st Century Breakdown"—including "See the Light," "21 Guns" and the title track—will be featured on ESPN. That will be followed by Green Day playing live on morning and evening TV shows from mid-May through June. The band has also signed a deal with Comcast that calls for performances of its recent concert at the Fox Theater in Oakland to be featured on the cable company's on-demand platform beginning in early May.

Overseas, Matthieu Lauriot-Prevost, senior VP of international marketing at Warner Music International, hopes to work "21st Century Breakdown" for the next 18-24 months. Green Day is scheduled to visit the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Japan for promotional activity within the first five weeks of the release.

Warner also hopes to connect Green Day with the rest of the world through the new Web site greenadayworld.net, which launched April 20 after several months of development by WMI and Green Day manager Pat Magnanella. Linked from the band's official Web site (greenday.com), Green Day World has pages in English, Japanese, Italian, French, Spanish and German that give fans multilingual versions of the site's content as well as the ability to buy music from partner sites in local markets (excluding Europe, which uses Warner Music's own e-commerce platform). "The world has changed tremendously, and there are so many options and partners that didn't exist four years ago," Lauriot-Prevost says. "We're definitely looking at different opportunities to be on the most updated and coolest platforms to reach the fans."

Green Day's world tour, its first in more than three years, will start with a 38-city North American arena jaunt, beginning July 3 in Seattle and wrapping Aug. 25 in Los Angeles. Ticket prices for the United States and Canada will be between $25 and $50. Dirnt declined to reveal production details for the summer trek but says it will be "angry and sexy and all that shit." The stage design will reflect the cover art for "21st Century Breakdown," which features a spray-painted sketch of two young lovers embracing against the backdrop of an orange-yellow brick wall.

The North American dates will be followed by performances in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In 2010, the band will hit Japan, Southeast Asia and South America before returning home for more North American shows. Armstrong also hopes to "explore some different places that we've never been before," he says, which could include China.

"They're truly defined as a global touring band, because they can sell tickets in every corner of the globe," says Jason Garver, CEO of global music at Live Nation, which will promote about half of Green Day's performances worldwide. "It's one thing to sell a lot of tickets in one city, state or country, but Green Day has become one of those global touring powerhouses that can sell tickets from Stockholm to Paris to Kansas City to Toronto."

Green Day proved its strength at the box office in 2005, when it cracked the Billboard Boxscore top 10 list of the year's biggest tours, pulling in $36.5 million from 76 concerts that drew more than 978,000 people. For the first time, the band played multiple arena dates and even a few stadiums.

In 2002, a co-headlining tour with Blink-182 grossed $19.6 million from 45 shows that attracted 632,491 fans. The previous outing, in support of Green Day's 2001 greatest-hits album, "International Superhits!" was extraordinarily effective in turning a whole new group of younger fans on to Green Day.

On March 24 Reprise put out new vinyl releases of the band's first two albums, then released "Dookie" on Record Store Day (April 18). About 5,000 copies of each title have been shipped to retailers, Biery says.

Between now and the end of the year, Green Day's remaining albums will arrive in chronological order, some with such bonuses as 7-inch singles and re-creations of original cover art. Also in the works is a boxed set of 7-inch singles that Biery says could cost about $10. All of them will be pressed at Pallas in Dielsdorf, Germany, "which is renowned for making the best records in the world," Biery says.

Reprise also will issue "21st Century Breakdown" June 18 as a limited-edition set of three 10-inch records for $89.99 with a bound 60-page booklet. Those who pre-order it on vinyl will receive a digital download of the album on street date.

"We started noticing that you couldn't find a lot of Green Day records at stores," he says. "Everywhere I went I looked for Green Day vinyl, and there was none—used, new or otherwise. And whatever we happened to come across always seemed to be at collector prices."

Most of the vinyl reissues will cost approximately $20, a price that doesn't completely satisfy some retailers. Dilyn Radekowitz, the co-owner of the six-store Dimple's chain, says the 180-gram vinyl release of "Dookie" is priced at $21.98 (manufacturer's suggested retail price), costly for younger Green Day fans. "Kids won't buy it if it's too pricey," she says, noting that the high-grade of the vinyl drives up the price. "Maybe audiophiles care, but is a punker an audiophile?"

Other retailers disagree. "There's got to be a little bit of an understanding that the Green Day audience is not 17," says Jim Pinfold, a buyer at Bull Moose, which has 10 stores in Maine and New Hampshire. "The Green Day audience is slightly older and they have a little bit more money."

—MP

**WAXING NOSTALGIC**

**Green Day Catalog To Get Vinyl Rerelease**

Green Day spent the early '90s cutting its teeth in the gritty punk clubs of Gilman Street in Berkeley, Calif. Nearly 20 years later, both just down the street and a world away, the band's "American Idiot" will be staged as a musical at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

"American Idiot" will be brought to life onstage by director Michael Mayer, known for Broadway's "Spring Awakening," which won eight Tony Awards in 2007, including best director and best musical. The musical will run Sept. 4-Oct. 11 at the Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre, which holds about 400 people.

Members of Green Day aren't "guys who go to the theater or anything," the band's bassist Mike Dirnt says. But the trio thought "American Idiot" could have a life beyond a plastic disc. "We kind of wrote the album with that sort of ambition," drummer Tre Cool says.

Mayer and frontman Billie Joe Armstrong collaborated on the script for "American Idiot," which follows the album's working-class heroes—including Jesus of Suburbia, St. Jimmy and a female protagonist called Whatsername—as they respond to the politics of the world around them. Steven Hoggett will choreograph the 19-member company of musicians, singers and dancers.

A longtime Green Day fan, Mayer remembers discovering "American Idiot" after hearing "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" on the radio. "I listened to it over and over again, because to me it seemed like an opera," he says. "I usually listen to Green Day songs and all I hear is Billie Joe singing. But with these songs I heard other voices as well, and I got really excited by the potential of fleshing this out and putting it onstage and making it a theatrical event."

After staging several workshops last summer in New York, Mayer invited Green Day to see his vision of the musical firsthand. "I didn't know what to expect," Armstrong says. "And then when we saw the workshop, there wasn't a dry eye in the house."

The musical will feature all of the album's songs, plus two B-sides and three tracks from "21st Century Breakdown"—"Know Your Enemy," "Before the Lobotomy" and "21 Guns."

The production will open the Berkeley Rep's 2009-10 season. Tickets for early performances went on sale starting at $32 after the musical was announced in late March. "We sold more than 2,200 tickets in little more than a week, enjoying two days that now rank among the highest-grossing dates at the box office in our history," says Terrence Keane, the theater's director of public relations. "It's an interesting and unusual indicator to sell this many seats for a theatrical project six months in advance, especially without spending a nickel on marketing."

The musical's future beyond the Berkeley Rep hasn't yet been decided, Mayer says. "I don't know how it's going to go, or if it's going to hit Broadway, or if they're going to tour it in tiny rock clubs, but it's amazing and a dream come true," Armstrong says. "If it goes beyond that, it's like your wildest dream come true."

—MP

**SUNSET BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS?**

‘American Idiot’ Gets Reinvented As A Musical

Green Day performed in Oakland, Calif.
The Beat Goes On

Despite The Shuttering Of Zavvi And Woolworths Stores, British Retail Remains Optimistic

By Mark Sutherland

Illustration By Michael Cho

At first glance, it looks like any other clothing store among the dozens on London's Oxford Street. There are mannequins in the window, racks of asymmetrical tops in clashing colors and shop assistants who look down their noses at shoppers for wearing the wrong asymmetrical top in the wrong clashing colors.
"HMV seems to have attracted the customer who previously purchased product at Zavvi and Woolworths."

—BRIAN ROSE, UNIVERSAL MUSIC U.K.

Talking shop: HMV's outlet in Westfield, England; inset: the store's social hubs in its Liverpool location.
But the most striking change came in January, when it announced a joint venture with MAMA Group to operate 11 U.K. venues—believed to be the first time a retailer has taken a stake in the touring business. Fox expects the venture to make EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) of £5 million ($7.3 million) for the year to October, 2009. But it’s more excited about the move’s strategic worth.

“We’ve been looking at the value chain in music for some time and it’s clear that there’s been a decline in revenue from recorded music, while artists are looking to live as a key income stream," he says. “Venue ownership and ticketing seem to cross over best with what we understand at HMV—we bring this fantastic customer base, plus our label relationships. It has the power to be really quite transformational.”

HMV already rolled out ticketing kiosks at 20 of its stores and will soon install HMV shops in some of the venues. But it’s clear this is just the start.

“If there’s a new artist, they’ve got a choice of venues,” Fox says. “But if they choose an HMV venue, they get the support of our 260 stores and our 1 million dot-com visitors a week. We can promote what’s going on in our venues across stores and Web site in a way that, clearly, no other venue can.

But if the market leader in music retailing is looking for opportunities outside the sector, what message does that send about physical retail’s long-term viability?

“I don’t see it as a move away from our core business,” Fox says, noting that the chain’s slogan is “Get closer.” “The ultimate way of getting closer is a live venue.”

Independent retailers can only dream of such deals. Despite calamitous declines in that sector—according to ERA, 103 stores closed in 2008, leaving just 305, less than half the 2005 total—there may finally be some light at the end of the tunnel.

“If [the decline] carries on at this rate, there actually wouldn’t be a single record shop in the country in three years,” says Graham Jones, sales manager at Proper Music Distribution and the author of the new book “Last Shop Standing,” which details the decline of the Great British Record Shop in painstaking—and occasionally heartbreaking—detail. “But talk to most independent shops and they’re up on what they were doing this stage last year, largely due to the Woolworths factor.

“What I’m hoping is that the record companies recognize there’s an opportunity here to actually support record shops. They’ve lost those Woolworths and Zavvi outlets but it’s the independents that give local bands a foot on the ladder.”

Ultimately, survival of the physical retail sector may boil down to whether the boom from Zavvi and Woolworths customers proves to be a short-term lull or something that can be built on. As the transition to digital picks up pace in the United Kingdom—digital album sales were up 64% year on year in the first quarter, according to the OCC—and sites like Play and Amazon take an increasing slice of the physical market, will there really be any record shops on the High Street in five or 10 years’ time? Or will that distressing Oxford Street spectacle play out in town centers everywhere?

“It is very sad to see music stores close,” Fox says. “But the High Street will regenerate. More of the market every year will move online, but will there still be HMV stores on the High Street in 10 years’ time? Without any doubt.”

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**Germany:**

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**Euro Vision**

European Markets Face Retail Upheaval As Specialist Music Stores Battle With Mass Merchants

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**Germány**

Label sources estimate that 2,800 German stores sell music as a key product line, down from 4,000 five years ago. The consumer electronics chains like MediaMarkt (238 shops) and Saturn (129) dominate Germany’s music market, where labels organization BVMI reports market share in terms of specific retail sector where music is sold. The electronics sector increased its share from 29.7% in 2007 to 30.2% in 2008, although overall retail values fell 4.7% to €1.6 billion ($2.2 billion).

In second place came health and beauty/drug stores, up from 7.9% to 8%, followed by mass merchants (down from 8.2% to 7.6%) and department stores (7.3%–6.1%). Actual music specialists account for only 3.6% of sales, down slightly from 3.7% in 2007.

At the Hamburg-based retailer association AMM, managing director Jürgen Hottas remains optimistic, saying his members specialize in niche genres. “Our retailers have been able to assert themselves well in the market,” Hottas says, “thanks to the quality of their service and the credibility of their recommenders to consumers.”

—Wolfgang Spahr

**France**

Entertainment specialists are grabbing a bigger slice of the pie in France—but the pie is getting smaller, shrinking 15% at wholesale sales to €606 million ($795 million) in 2008, according to the labels organization SNBP, while physical sales slumped 19.9% to €530 million ($695 million). Still, the industry group Observatoire de la Musique reports entertainment specialists’ market share in value terms climbed from 47.5% to 50.4% during 2008. Simultaneously, mass merchants’ share dropped from 41.8% to 37.7%, attributed by SNBP to a reduction in supermarket shelf space for music.

The French retail market is dominated by the entertainment specialist Fnac, which has a 23% share, according to the research firm IFOP, followed by mass merchants Carrefour (13%) and Auchan (9.4%). Virgin Megastores is the second-highest-ranked specialist, with 7.2%. There have been casualties, however—most recently with the closure of France’s best-known independent retailer Rennes Musique and the bankruptcy of the indie distributor Nocturne.

Laurent Fiscalet, president of the retailers’ trade group SDLG, reports that the 2009 market is dropping at the same pace as 2008. “There are no signs that the market will slow the slight improving curve seen in December," he says. —Aymeric Pichavin

**Spain**

A familiar picture emerges in Spain, with independent stores losing ground to nonspecialist retailers. Luis Linacer, director of the retail/distribution trade group Anedi, says many small outlets have closed in the past three years. “All shops where record sales are the most important things are destined to close sooner or later,” he says. “We’re pessimistic, without a doubt.”

The high-profile casualty was Barcelona’s six-store record chain Discos Castelló, which declared a trading loss of €827,500 ($1.3 million) for 2007–2008 figures haven’t yet been published—and closed two of its stores in February.

The market-leading music merchant is the 95-outlet department store chain El Corte Inglés, which accounts for 25%–30% of all sales, according to Ifigo Palao, business unit director at the research company GIK Spain. It’s followed by the 18-store French-owned Fnac at 20% and German-owned Mediaworld at 15%. Mass merchants take 20%, with independent music specialists accounting for 5%–10%.

Promusicea president Antonio Guisassola says first-quarter 2009 “closed with very, very important falls [in sales] compared to the same period last year.”

—Howell Llewellyn

**The Netherlands**

The music market leader Free Record Shop is revamping its 258 outlets in the Netherlands and Belgium to give more floor space to computer games at the expense of CDs and music DVDs. FSR’s upstream sister chain VanLeest is converting 30 of its 57 outlets into games outlets.

Leading independents like Get Records, Bullit and Boudisque fell by the wayside in recent months. But while Martin de Wilde, chairman of the Dutch entertainment retailers organization NVER, laments the closure of some quality shops, he says the future lies with more stores selling household goods alongside entertainment product.

Universal Music head of sales Bart Engel adds an optimistic note: “We will lose some shop floor space, but sales per square meter can still increase. [The] shakeout of independent stores will ultimately prove to be healthy, as the strong survive.”

—TJ Hammons

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**sources:** Germany: HMV, IFOP, SNBP, IFOP, SNBP; France: SNEP; Italy: FIMI; Spain: NVER, The Netherlands, VanLeest.
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BILLY JOEL

A 60th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF THE GLOBALLY ACCLAIMED MUSICIAN—AS HE RETURNS TO THE ROAD

BY RAY WADDELL
IT'S APRIL IN Manhattan but winter is lingering, a fact Billy Joel notices as he looks out the window of his West Village townhouse. Joel is mildly surprised. "Oh, my God, it's snowing, look at this." Yet not much surprises Joel as he approaches his 60th birthday, taking a break from the massively successful Face 2 Face tour with Elton John. He has sold millions of records, owns multiple box-office records, has endured personal and professional highs and lows, and has firmly secured his place in rock'n'roll history. Those who know him best say Joel's in a good place now, although that may not always have been the case. "It's a different Billy I'm seeing on this tour, a very happy and contented one," John says. "He's always been funny, always been razor-sharp, but this is a very happy and contented Billy, and I'm very happy that he's found that space to be in." Joel turns 60 May 9, a milestone he plans on marking with "a nice, big dinner, eat really good food and enjoy each other's company. There's not going to be any wing-ding masquerade ball, no over-the-top rock'n'roll affair, just a big family dinner." Joel seems, in a word, comfortable. He's generous with his time, warm and witty in his recollections and seemingly at peace. And he still doesn't take any shit from anybody.

Do you do any kind of assessment at this point of your life and career?
I'm not a looking-back kind of person. What I've realized about turning 60 is I'm not just one age, I'm every age I've ever been. Sometimes I'm 11, sometimes 16, sometimes I'm 25, sometimes I'm 38, sometimes I'm 42, sometimes I'm in my 50s. I'm all over the place. And it comes in handy, especially in this line of work.

Growing up in Hicksville, N.Y., was being a professional musician a dream of yours?
Oh, yeah. I knew when I was a little boy I was going to have some kind of career with music, because I've loved music as long as I can remember. I just didn't know what form it would take. Hicksville is just a blue-collar area, working-class people. Most people after high school went into the service, some went on to college. Being a musician wasn't really a viable option for people from that neck of the woods.

But, we were right next to New York City, so we get all that music coming out of New York. There were always great bands coming through, great music on the radio, always something exciting in New York City. I knew when I played my first gig in 1964, the same year the Beatles came out. I hooked up with a band [the Echos] and played at a church dance. I just had such a blast doing it. We were making this great noise, this girl I had a crush on actually looked at me. And then at the end of the night the priest gave us each $15. I guess in 1964 that was like $15,000 to a kid that age. So I said, "That's it. That's what I'm doing." And there was never any question about it after that.

What kind of music did you love growing up?
I liked all music. All my life I've loved rock'n'roll. I've loved jazz, I've loved classical. I loved Broadway shows, blues, country, every kind of music I ever heard. And the Beatles kind of synthesized it for me when I saw these guys on "The Ed Sullivan Show." You have to remember, the Beatles hit in America right after [President John F. Kennedy] was assassinated. JFK was killed in November of 1963, the Beatles came here in February of '64, and this country had the blues. Especially young people. They took the young guy away from us and it was back to the old-boy network.

And when the Beatles came, we all went nuts, because they were the alternative. I saw these four guys, working-class guys, from a town called Liverpool. What a name; that's worse than Hicksville. They weren't made in Hollywood, they weren't pretty boys. I mean, girls thought they were cute, but they weren't the typical Fabian types. They wrote their own songs; they played their own instruments, they were kind of like a little gang. And I said, "This is possible, this can be done."

Was there a healthy music scene on Long Island at the time?
There were a lot of garage bands. There were a lot of music clubs on Long Island, so there was a pretty healthy music scene, very competitive. There were bars...
Dear Billy,

The model for me has always been to do my job as well as you do yours.

Happy Birthday!

Love Dennis
I guys. they kept me in was I've heard some good-looking him had and then the Hassles "Wipeout," &B-gers &R had the band like God; well, John Dizek; they called &B was more influenced, more like the Rolling Stones, Kinks, Zombies, Sam the Sham & the Pharaohs, Roy Orbison, &R &B music—all that was popular, we'd play it in the Hassles. The Hassles became the Lost Souls about '65-'66. Then I joined the Hassles in '67, in the Summer of Love.

Were the Hassles any good?
Uh, no. We weren't bad. The Echoes were pretty much a cover band; we would do jukebox songs. We did all kinds of stuff, instruments by the Ventures—"Apache," "Wipeout," "Let's Go." Then we would do Beatles songs, Dave Clark Five, Rolling Stones, &R &B music—all that was popular, we'd play it in the Hassles. The Hassles became the Lost Souls about '65-'66. Then I joined the Hassles in '67, in the Summer of Love.

Were you the lead vocalist for the Echoes and the Hassles?
I was the lead vocalist for the Hassles and the Lost Souls, and then the Hassles actually had a frontman—his name was John Dizek; they called him "Little John." Really good-looking guy, he had a tall Mick Jagger moves—he was jumping around, bang- ing the tambourine. I eventually became the lead vocalist because Little John, he was a great frontman but he wasn't a great singer. But he was a lot better-looking than I was, so they kept me in the background and I did a lot of vocals.

The Hassles got a record deal, didn't they?
The Hassles got in with United Artists. We made records with the Lost Souls, too. We were signed to Mercury, we made a few singles; nothing happened with them. When I went to the Hassles, we signed with United Artists. We did two horrible albums with UA, and nothing happened with that, thank God. And then when the Hassles disintegrated it became just two guys, me and the drummer [Jon Small], and we became a heavy metal duo called Attila.

I've heard some Attila. It has its appeal.
Oh, God; well, maybe. There's probably somebody out there who liked it. We were trying to be Led Zeppelin with two guys. When I was in the Hassles I was writing stuff that was more &R-influenced, more like soul music, like Sam & Dave songs, stuff like what the Rascals were doing, that was a big influence on me. I wrote all the stuff for Attila, then I got the rock-'n'-roll star stuff out of me. I just wanted to be a songwriter and have other people do my stuff.

So I compiled a demo of all these songs I had written, which eventually ended up becoming the "Cold Spring Harbor" album in [1971]. It was really not meant for me to be the singer or the recording artist. I just compiled these songs with hopes some other singer would do them. But the advice I got from the music industry was, "Make your own album." This is the beginning of the era of the singer-songwriter.

So unwittingly I kind of got swept up in the whole singer-songwriter thing and became a recording artist and a singer. I was touring to promote this album I had done, which was supposed to be a demo tapes of songs. Kind of a backward way of becoming a pop star.

Even as you went solo and pursued the singer-songwriter thing, you always seemed to have a band mentality.
I always thought of myself as part of a band. Knowing I was going to go out and play these songs to promote the album, I recognized that I didn't want to be this stand-up crooner kind of guy. I wanted to be in a band, like I always had been. I think people have this mistaken story about me playing in piano bars all my life. I only did that for six months while I was trying to get out of a bad contract that I had signed. All of my life prior to that I'd been in rock 'n' roll bands, so for me it was quite natural to be in an ensemble. There are other singer-songwriters that have that same mentality [Bruce Spring- steen, for example]. He's a songwriter but he's part of a band. We both came from kind of the same place—New Jersey, Long Island, very similar kind of music scene going on.

When you're trying to find your first success, do you kind of take direction from how the record label sees you?
No, not really. I never really got directed by a record label to go in any particular direction. Of course, they were always looking for hit singles. If you had a hit single like "Piano Man," I'm sure they would have liked to have had "Piano Man II" or "The Piano Kid." "Son of Piano Man," but I didn't go in that direction, I just went wherever I was going to go.

The only pressure I remember getting from the record company was about scheduling: "We need new stuff, next album, next, next, next." I think whenever there has been a mistake in my career it's when I put out an album that I wasn't ready to put out, but I got pressured to put it out. And I can hear it to this day—it's a weak album. The same with "The Bridge" [in 1986]. There's a live album, the Russian album [1967's "Robredek"], that never should have come out. That was a deal that was cooked up between my ex-manager and the record company. They figured out they could get an advance and do a little money sharing among themselves if we get Billy to put out this live Russian album, which is horrible.

When was your first national tour?

Any memorable stories from that tour?
We didn't make any money, nobody got paid. We were touring around in one of these little camper trailer things, eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. And there were these two groupies that were following us around. We really weren't sure who they were. This was when I was signed to Artie Ripp's label [Family Productions]. And as it turned out, these girls, their job was to follow the band around and bang the DJs so they'd play our records. They were two hookers. We thought they were groupies. But no, it was kind of a payola thing. It was quite a wake-up call to find out that's what's going on. That's when I thought, "I've got to get out of this deal. This is really corrupt stuff."

You signed with Columbia Records and had that red label on your albums.
Was that significant for you?
Oh, hell yeah. I had to get off a terrible record label! I was on the time—Fam- ily Records, a Gulf & Western distribution deal. The two labels I wanted to be on at that time were Atlantic Records, which was the hip, hard rock label, and Columbia Records, which was the label that had Bob Dylan. I met with both companies. Jerry Wexler and Ahmet Erte- gun at Atlantic and Clive Davis at Columbia, and we decided we were going to go with Columbia because Columbia just seemed like more of a career-oriented company. If you think about it, I put out "Cold Spring Harbor," then I put out "Piano Man," then "Streetlife Serenade," then "Turnstiles." "The Stranger" was the fifth album I'd recorded and I still hadn't been bumped by my record label. And I hadn't n't had a hit album this day and age I don't think that could happen anymore. I don't think there's any patience. I don't think there's any budget. I don't think radio support is there. I don't think the A&R talent is there, I don't even know if the a- udience there is anymore. This was the baby boomer generation. There's a lot of kids listening to the radio. For an artist to be able to have four bomb albums before he has a hit and still be on a label like Columbia Records, that's a testament to Columbia Records.

How did having a hit in "Piano Man" change your life?
"Piano Man" didn't really propel us to any kind of new level. It wasn't until "The Stranger" album that we really noticed the huge shift in where we were going. "Piano Man" got us some attention. Captain [ask] got us some attention, "The Entertainer" grew it a little bit, [as well as] "New York State of Mind" and "Say Goodbye to Hollywood." It was small, small incre- ments and career shifts. But "The Stranger" was a jump into a whole other stratosphere.

What's your take on the record business?
I've had a very good relationship with Columbia Records. There are always some key people. Clive Davis was the guy who originally signed me. Goddard Lieberbom, who took over after Clive, was a very musical man. I had a lot of respect for him. When Walter Yetnikoff came in, he made a very big dif- ference in my career as well. Walter was personally interested in my career and directed the company to help us with our budget for touring. We weren't necessarily having hit records all the time, and Walter thought I was going to be an impor- tant artist for the label and gave us a lot of tour support. We knew all the local promotion guys, a lot of the radio guys. We had a lot of good relationships with local radio, depending on where we were playing. And we knew all the local record company people. Record companies were big, big organiza- tions in those days. There were a lot of people working at record companies. A&R people, radio and record people, promotion guys, record companies, record department people. And we knew them all. They had a job just like we did, and everybody got along pretty well. We were making it up as we were going along in those days.
Not another can of beans!

Happy Birthday

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Did you generally have a positive experience with concert promoters? It was sort of like we were all in the same boat. If business wasn’t good for you, it wasn’t good for the promoters. These were the days of independent promoters, and sometimes they took a bath. But if they stayed with you, you tried to develop a loyalty for them, because they took a chance on you, and if you came through, you went back to the same promoter again. It wasn’t all about dollars and cents. A lot of it was about building careers.

It’s been a while since you went into the studio. Are you writing or planning on recording? I never stopped writing music. I’m just writing a different kind of music now. I’m writing instrumental music and thematic music. To what end, I really don’t know. It may end up being a movie score, sone of it could be symphonic, it could end up being songs. I’m writing themes. I’m just not writing songs like I used to. I stopped writing songs back in the early ‘90s. I’m not really interested in songwriting these days. I’m interested in music writing. I’m much more comfortable with a more abstract form of writing. I like the idea of music speaking for itself. I kind of rediscovered classical music. Back in the early ’90s I was listening to the Beethoven symphonies and that had such incredible impact on me, recognizing that this music is just so evocative and so well-written and well-composed, so emotional and moving. I wanted to try and do that. Not that I could ever be Beethoven. But I was going to try and give it a shot.

What do you take the most pride in: singer, songwriting, performer, musician? The hardest part of the job is to write. That’s what it all comes down to as far as taking the most pride in, the composing of the music. And then the next thing would be as a piano player. I think being a good musician is very important. As a singer, I’ve never thought much of my own voice. I’m always trying to mess with my voice and sound different than I actually do because I don’t like my voice. I think a lot of singers are like that. Everybody wants to sound like Ray Charles.

And as a performer I take a great amount of professional pride in delivering a good performance. I still can’t believe I’m 60 years old this year and I’m still able to do this crazy-ass job. That’s a real honor. I thought there was a mandatory retirement: When you’re 40, get out.

Do you care what critics say about you? You want to get a good review. When I got criticized for something that wasn’t correct, a misperception, that kind of bugged me. If somebody doesn’t like my music, that’s fair enough—everybody’s entitled to like or not like whatever they want. It was just when I was accused for doing things for monetary interests or to have a hit single, as if it was all this calculated machine. I never got that. I don’t work like that. If you’re going to not like what I do, don’t like it for the right reasons. Don’t dislike it because of a misperception you have. At least do your homework.

But I made more out of bad reviews than I probably should have. Most of the reviews actually were good. If there was one bad one, I’d go up onstage and go off on him—“Did you see what this guy wrote?” Of course, everybody started paying attention to that when I made a big deal about it. You don’t make any friends like that. What’s the old expression? “You don’t get into a pissing war with people who order urine by the barrel.” A lot of it was self-manufactured, but that’s my neighborhood, that’s where I come from. Somebody smacks, you smack them right back. We don’t turn the other cheek in New York.

Dating back to the ‘70s you always ended shows saying, “Don’t take any shit from anybody.” What does that say about you? I don’t know, maybe I got a chip on my shoulder or something. That may be a Long Island thing, too, because people in the city always tend to look down on Long Island. We’re the country bumpkins. So you sort of have a defensive attitude. And sometimes that’s OK, it’s a motivator. It kind of keeps you going, keeps you edgy. “Don’t take any shit from anybody.” I still believe that.

Is there anyone you’d like to acknowledge now? Everybody I’ve ever worked with. The promoters, the record company people, the musicians, the roadies. Everybody. And the people that stayed with us. The people that kept coming to the shows, the people that bought all those records. They’re all part of the family, too.

Do you see a time when you’ll quit? I don’t think there will ever be a time when I stop being a musician. Possibly not being a performer, possibly not recording anymore, but I will always be a musician.

—Ray Waddell

An extended version of this Q&A is available exclusively on billboard.com/billyjoel.
Billy Joel

60

Musician
Songwriter
Vocalist
Humanitarian
Birthday Boy

Happy 60th Birthday! Many, Many Happy Returns.

Best Wishes from your friends at

www.americanradiohistory.com
Billy Joel is still the pride of Hicksville, N.Y., still the Piano Man and maybe still Billy the Kid. But he’s no longer an “Angry Young Man” as he celebrates his 60th birthday May 9.

"A true master of American popular music, Billy Joel has created a catalog of songs that stand among the finest ever written," says Steve Barnett, chairman of Columbia Records, which has been Joel's record company home for more than 35 years. "In addition," Barnett says, "Billy is one of the most dynamic and charismatic live performers on the road today. Quite simply, Billy Joel is an American treasure, and Columbia Records is proud to be home to the man and his music."

The journey that took William Martin Joel to superstar Billy Joel began in New York's Long Island suburb, spurred on, as was the case for so many rockers, by the Beatles' 1964 appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

At 14, Joel joined a band called the Echoes that played anywhere and everywhere there was a gig. The Echoes became the Lost Souls and even scored an ultimately unsuccessful record deal. But by the late '60s, Joel was well on his rock’n’roll way in a band called the Hassles, which released two records on United Artists.

Dennis Arfa, Joel's booking agent since 1976, first met Joel when a band Arfa was managing, the Salvation Navy, opened for the Hassles at a club called the Eye in Long Island's Hamptons.

"In those days Billy was one of the hot guys in the Long Island music scene," Arfa says. "There was Vagants, the Illusion and this guy Billy Joel who played with the Hassles."

Following a brief sidetrack as the hard rock duo Attila with drummer Jon Small, Joel decided to focus on his songwriting skills, recording a demo that eventually became his first solo album, "Cold Spring Harbor," in 1971. That debut contained such chestnuts as "She's Got a Way" and "Everybody Loves You Now," songs that never got their proper due until they appeared on the live album "Songs From the Attic" a decade later.

National touring began for Joel in support of "Cold Spring Harbor," as did the hard lessons of the music industry. Unhappy with his first record contract at Arne Ripp's Family Productions imprint, Joel waited it out as the piano player Bill Martin at the Executive Room in Hollywood, a time period Joel says has been exaggerated by legend. But the experience led him to write "Piano Man," for his Columbia Records debut released in 1973. The single was Joel's first hit on the Billboard Hot 100, entering the top 40 on the chart dated April 6, 1974, and peaking at No. 25.

Joel still feels his 1974 follow-up album, "Streetlife Serenade," was too rushed by his label to achieve its potential. But the album did include such concert staples as "The Entertainer" and "Root Beer Rag."

By 1976, Joel had moved back to New York and released "Turnstiles," another less-than-hit album that nevertheless boasted the now-classic "New York State of Mind," one of his best-loved songs.

By then, as a live performer, Joel was a headliner. "We didn't want to be an opening act anymore around the mid-'70s," Joel says. "Our best way of showing what we could do was to headline smaller places. It was longer, harder slog to do it that way, but we thought that was the best way to do it."

Headlining in smaller venues made for some memorable shows, like at the legendary Exit/In in Nashville.

"I remember the Exit/In in Nashville had a good PA system," Joel recalls. "They had a good piano there, they have a good sound system, they've got good acoustics, they've got a good music audience. So places like that were really key for us. They were watershed gigs."

Slowly Joel and his
HAPPY BIRTHDAY BILLY
FROM ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND FANS AT COLUMBIA RECORDS AND LEGACY RECORDINGS.

WE'RE HONORED TO HAVE BEEN PART OF YOUR MUSICAL JOURNEY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
Elton John, Joel's first release for Columbia Records reached the top 20 on the Billboard 200 — Joel's touring was strategic.

When we did a show it was never just a booking; it was, 'What is the purpose of this? What are we doing next?' Arfa says. 'It was about playing the right room at the right time and knowing how to keep a perception of heat in play.'

The relentless touring and modest airplay set the stage for "The Stranger" in 1977. Produced by Phil Ramone, the album made full use of Joel's crack touring band, translating the live energy into a mix of stirring ballads and jubilant anthems.

With such classics as "Just the Way You Are," "Moving Out (Anthony's Song)," "Only the Good Die Young" and "Scenes From an Italian Restaurant," suddenly the switch was flipped.

'I remember we were opening for the Doobie Brothers in 1977 in Pittsburgh. The name of the venue was the Syria Mosque, I'll never forget it," Joel says. We had been opening for the Doobies, and it was, 'Get off the stage! The audience didn't want to hear 'Piano Man;" they wanted boogie. And we got about halfway through the set and played 'Just the Way You Are' and the crowd went crazy.

'We looked at each other like, 'What the hell was that all about? We didn't realize how much airplay that song was getting. We didn't even like doing the song, we thought it was like a chick song. It was just a new song to do so we did it. And, boom, the audience just goes nuts. Obviously something was going on, and after that it all changed.'

"The Stranger" was a landmark pop album of the late '70s, spending six weeks at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and eventually earning certification for sales of more than 10 million from the RIAA. The single "Just the Way You Are" won Joel his first two Grammy Awards, for song and record of the year. At the time of Joel's breakthrough, other popular artists noticed. "I've always been a fan of Billy, from the word go," says Elton John. Joel's co-headliner on their Face 2 Face tour. "I happened a little bit before Billy, and Billy was always referred to in the beginning as the American Elton John." To be honest with you, I never saw that. I thought he was so American and not British at all in the way he wrote songs.

'I just loved the way he wrote songs," John continues. "He was different. He was American, and I love people who sound American. We became friends quite early on and we've always been friends ever since."

Hit albums followed: "52nd Street" (1978, his first No. 1 release); "Glass Houses" (1980), with his first No. 1 single, "It's Still Rock and Roll to Me;" "Songs in the Attic" (1981); "The Nylon Curtain" (1982); and "An Innocent Man" (1983).

A two-disc "Greatest Hits" package released in 1985 has been certified by the RIAA for sales of more than 20 million copies.


"River of Dreams" (1993) is Joel's most recent album of original pop songs. In 1994, he received the Billboard Century Award, the magazine's highest honor for creative achievement. "Greatest Hits Vol. III" (1997) was followed by the live set "2000: The Millennium Concert" and his classical compositions on "Fantasies and Delusions" (2001). The "12 Gardens Live" album (2006) documented his record-setting dozen shows at New York's Madison Square Garden.

"Billy is a music icon. He defines timeless songwriting, showmanship, and his work continues to have a lasting effect across generations. He holds the record for most sell-outs at Madison Square Garden and yet he manages not to take himself too seriously," says Lee Leipzner, Columbia senior VP of pop promotion.

While Joel has focused on live touring in recent years, no one disputes his songwriting legacy. "Just the Way You Are" is a fucking amazing song. It's a standard people will be singing long after Billy and I are dead and buried," John says. "He's a proper songwriter in the old tradition of songwriting. And he writes about issues that are very close to his heart, like 'AllenTown,' and that's why I really admire him. If he believes in something, he'll write about it."

Critical opinion of Joel ebbs and flows, but the ultimate judgment comes from the court of public opinion, which Joel rules by way of the box office.

"What matters is your own opinion and the opinion of people that you respect that you work with," Joel says. "That's always been a constant in my life. If I don't do a good show, I know I didn't do a good show, and the guys I work with know, and I let them down. That's really what's more important, your own opinion of yourself."

And Joel feels an obligation as a performer: "Never lose sight of the fact that it's the audience who's paying your bills. You are the entertainer, that's what you're there for," he says. "I don't think you're onstage to make political speeches or dump a whole bunch of new material on an audience when they want to hear stuff they know. There's a balance you have to strike, and there's also an obligation to the people who work with you and the people who pay to see you." — Ray Waddell

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MEETING ‘THE STRANGER’ AND TURNING DOWN GEORGE MARTIN—HOW A BLOCKBUSTER CAME TO BE

BY THE MID-’70S, Billy Joel had already written a classic in “Piano Man” and had also achieved moderate FM radio exposure with such songs as “The Entertainer” and “Captain Jack.” But when Columbia Records released Joel’s fifth album, “The Stranger,” in 1977, life as Joel knew it was about to change.

“[Producer] Phil Ramone loved the band and we were having a good time in the studio,” Joel recalls. “I think it shows on the album. We were just having fun, which is really what rock’n’roll and pop music should be about.”

Previous albums with studio musicians were more like work, Joel says. “I had to explain everything. I had to try to pass along the chemistry of what I was looking for. With my own band, they got it, they had the mileage on them. Phil encouraged that, and they blossomed in the studio.”

“The Stranger” could have been something completely different. “I was going to do ‘The Stranger’ album originally with George Martin, the Beatles’ producer,” Joel says. “Remember, this is a big guy. But he didn’t want to work with my band, he wanted to work with session players. He says, ‘I love your material, I’d love to produce you, but I want to be able to work with other musicians.’ I passed.”

Joel can only imagine the reaction of executives at Columbia Records upon hearing this. “You got to imagine a little red pencil going through my name,” he says with a laugh. “I was kind of a borderline, about-to-be-dropped artist.”

“The Stranger” produced the Grammy-winning hit “Just the Way You Are,” along with the hit singles “She’s Always a Woman,” “Movin’ Out (Anthony’s Song)” and “Only the Good Die Young.” The album sold more than 10 million copies in the United States, according to its RIAA certification.

“I can’t tell you at this point that I thought this was going to be a hit album, but we thought it was a good album, which was what we were going for at any time we’ve ever gone in the studio,” Joel says. “I’m aware that the record company wants to have a hit single, but I don’t say, ‘OK, now it’s time for me to sit down and write a hit single.’ I like I could do that. ‘I wouldn’t know a hit single if it hit me in the ass. I’m an album artist—I write a whole album, hand it in to the record company and say, ‘Here, now it’s your turkey, you figure it out.’ And they do their study and focus groups and demographics and radio testing, blah blah blah, and they figure out what the singles are.

“And, to be fair, Columbia Records has a terrific track record of putting out the right singles. I always prefer the album tracks. The songs I like better are the ones that aren’t the hits, so that shows you what I know.”

The most noticeable way that life changed for Joel in the wake of “The Stranger” and subsequent success was his tours that visited bigger venues with more production.

“But I don’t remember thinking to myself, ‘Now I’m a big rock star, watch my dust.’ It was one of those 10-year overnight sensations,” he says. “There was a wider recognition factor and more people asking for autographs, and we were headlining bigger venues.”

Joel continues. “But I really wasn’t keeping track of how much money I was making. That really wasn’t what it was about. In hindsight, now I realize I should have kept an eye on the books because I got taken to the cleaners a few times since then.”

— Ray Waddell

BILLY’S BEST
A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO 10 OF JOEL’S FINEST ALBUMS

‘PIANO MAN’ (1973)
Billy Joel’s first album for Columbia Records deserves inclusion for the title track alone, which remains his signature song. Other top tunes include the lovely “You’re My Home” and the sweeping “Captain Jack,” an early-’70s FM staple.

‘TURNSTILES’ (1976)
Track for track, an underrated classic. Joel comes into his own on this, his fourth solo album, which celebrates his return to New York after a stint in Los Angeles. “Prelude/Angry Young Man” celebrates Joel’s most ferocious piano-pounding; “Summer, Highland Falls” remains one of his most poignant tracks, and “New York State of Mind” rivals “New York, New York” as the Empire State’s theme song.

‘THE STRANGER’ (1977)
Joel’s first collaboration with Phil Ramone is his top studio album seller and most loved collection. “Just the Way You Are” won Grammy Awards for song and record of the year. While the set spawned three other hits, it was equally known for its album tracks, including the dramatic seven-minute “Scenes From An Italian Restaurant,” which became a centerpiece of Joel’s live show.

‘52nd STREET’ (1978)
This follow-up to “The Stranger” scored Joel a Grammy for album of the year, as well as one for best male pop vocal performance. It was also his first album to go to No. 1. “52nd Street” finds Joel at his biting best on such songs as “Big Shot,” “My Life” and “Stiletto” but also at his most tender and romantic with “Honesty” and “Until the Night.”

‘GLASS HOUSES’ (1980)
Joel goes new wave. His most rock-oriented album up to this point (and second No. 1) includes his first No. 1 single, “It’s Still Rock N Roll To Me.” While there are some ballads, “Houses” is largely an uptempo collection of pulsing rockers, such as “You May Be Right,” the syncopated “Sometimes A Fantasy” and the gently swaying “Don’t Ask Me Why.”

‘SONGS IN THE ATTIC’ (1981)
The best way to experience Joel has always been live. This set, recorded during two months on tour, focuses on his pre-“Stranger” material, including “Say Goodbye to Hollywood” and “She’s Got a Way,” both released as singles. Joel’s touring band is in the zone here, playing with tightness and verve.

‘THE NYLON CURTAIN’ (1982)
This album isn’t consistent, but it earns high marks for the tightly wound “Pressure,” the chugging salute to an economically devastated “Allentown” and the ambitious “Goodnight Saigon.”

‘AN INNOCENT MAN’ (1983)
With such tunes as “Uptown Girl,” “The Longest Time,” “Tell Her About It” and the title track, Joel paid homage to his love of doo-wop and the classic pop melodies of the ’50s and ’60s. The album was a barnburner at radio, generating six top-40 singles.

‘STORM FRONT’ (1989)
Joel returned to rock mode with Foreigner’s Mick Jones as producer. “We Didn’t Start the Fire,” one of his few guitar-based hits, shot straight to No. 1. "1 Go to Extremes" is a manic-depressed companion to “Summer, Highland Falls.” “Shameless” provided Joel with a No. 1 on the country charts when Garth Brooks covered it a few years later.

‘RIVER OF DREAMS’ (1993)
The lovely “River of Dreams” is noteworthy simply for the fact that it’s Joel’s last pop album (so far). The title track spent a then-record-setting 12 weeks at No. 1 on the Hot Adult Contemporary Song chart.
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR REMARKABLE CAREER, 60TH BIRTHDAY AND 46 MEMORABLE NIGHTS!

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BEYOND ALBUMS, AWARDS AND HITS, JOEL THRIVES ONSTAGE

He has played for bar mitzvahs and Mafia types, in hotel lounges and stadiums, at clubs and at the Colosseum in Rome. He supported an array of acts on the way up and shared the stage with a Beatle once he made it to the top. Along the way, he has rocked the house every single time. Simply put, Billy Joel is among the biggest and best touring acts on the road. "It's been a very, very consistent touring career," says Dennis Arfa, the president of Artists Group International and Joel's longtime agent. "Touring is something he respects and understands and something he's never abused. He's always respected and appreciated what he has and taken care of it well. He's never overplayed or screwed his public."

continued on >>p40

Keeping score: A banner marking BILLY JOEL'S 46th sellout at Philadelphia's Wachovia Complex (including the Wachovia Center and Spectrum) was raised high in March 2006 by, from left, Global Spectrum COO John Page, AGI president Dennis Arfa, Joel, Global Spectrum chairman Peter Luukko and concert promoter Electric Factory's Larry Magid.

We're all in the mood for a melody and you've got us feeling alright
CONGRATULATIONS

BILLY JOEL

www.americanradiohistory.com
Although Joel has sold millions of records and is a radio staple, his touring career was built independently of recording or hits, which serves the artist well indeed today. Sixteen years since he released his last new studio material, Joel is selling more tickets than ever. "Never depend on the record. 'That was our philosophy," Arfa says. "We could always count on a good show, count on getting more people the next time."

Dating back to 1971 and his first national tour, Joel opened for virtually all the big acts of the era, including Olivia Newton-John, the J. Geils Band, the Doobie Brothers, the Beach Boys. Yes, the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt and Hall & Oates. "We got thrown off more tours than you can shake a stick at," Joel quips.

The experience was invaluable, Joel now believes. "It taught us how to get good. People don't go to see the opening act, they don't want you on that stage, so you better get damn good if you're going to get any attention," he says. "And we learned how to steal shows, which is why we got thrown off a lot of tours. We ended up being better than the main act sometimes."

By the time Arfa came onboard in 1976, Joel's days as a supporting act were over. "When I started with Billy we took the philosophy, 'We weren't going to open for anybody anymore,'" Arfa says. "We were trying to show he had a national base of fans, which was true. We played colleges and small theaters around the country and we were the headliner."

Arfa says Joel played 107 dates in 1976, culminating with three nights at Carnegie Hall in New York. "For most people it was, 'Who is this guy that can sell out three nights at Carnegie Hall?' But the base was built up, so when 'The Stranger' finally did happen [in 1977], the fact that this guy exploded from a theater act to an arena act was because the base was already there," Arfa says. "It took the fan base plus those who were newly discovering Billy."

The base was built on thrilling, high-energy performances. "Billy could go play somewhere and then come back, we'll make history," Arfa says. "It was bigger than just us. And everywhere we went, we'd sell more tickets than the act we were supporting."

Along the way, Joel made a lot of promoters happy and stayed loyal to the ones who took the risk early. Today, promoters are quick to sing Joel's praises. "Having promoted many Billy Joel and Elton John/Billy dates in my career, one of my fondest experiences was getting Billy to headline New Orleans' Jazz Fest in 2008," AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips says. "The greatest and most turbulent storm in the history of the [AEG Live-produced]

Happy Birthday Billy!!

Thanks for sharing your first 60 years of song. Looking forward to more high notes...

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festival occurred just before the Piano Man was about to take the stage. Our insurance had not kicked in and the crowd did not diminish at all."

Phillips says many superstars wouldn’t have braved the elements and electrical danger. “In spite of that, Billy went out and did one of the best sets ever performed at Jazz Fest,” he says. “I would like to think he did the show to save me from this act of God.” However, those who have worked with this great artist in the past know he did it for his fans. That is who Billy Joel really is.

Joel is a sellout artist coast to coast and around the world, but certain markets and arenas are remarkably potent even for him. One of the latter is Madison Square Garden in New York, where Joel’s record-setting 12 sellouts in 2006 grossed a staggering $19.2 million. "We weren’t sure how many shows we were going to be able to do. We put tickets on sale and there was demand for more tickets," Joel says. "We put more tickets on sale and it ended up being 12 nights."

Joel first sold out the Garden with a triple-night stand in 1978 on "The Stranger" tour and he has sold out the venue dozens of times since, with a total of 48 plays. A performance of "New York State of Mind" at the Garden is akin to "Born to Run" from Bruce Springsteen in New Jersey in generating fan fervor. MSG Entertainment president Jay Marciano says, "Billy Joel is like the Garden’s resident son. We are honored that he has made the World’s Most Famous Arena his home throughout his nearly 40-year career. Through his prolific songwriting, dedication to his fans and unparalleled showmanship, he is truly a musical ambassador for New York."

Joel digs the Garden, its acoustics and New York audiences, plus another trait of the building: "There are shock absorbers underneath the Garden to be able to handle the train traffic from Pennsylvania Station," Joel says. "The building will rock up and down if the audience stamps their feet in unison. When we’re onstage at the Garden you can feel the stage literally rocking up and down. It’s really rocking the house. Nothing feels like that, having 22,000 people, this screaming New York audience, making the whole venue go up and down while you’re playing. That’s literally a physical transformation of the music."

In another of Joel’s most memorable Big Apple bookings, he played the final two concerts at Shea Stadium July 16 and 18, 2008, welcoming Paul McCartney on the second night to encore where the Beatles played four decades earlier.

Joel holds the record for most individual performances by an artist at the 13-year-old Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, at 18. His six consecutive sellouts with Elton John at Wachovia Center in 2002 were the most performances by the pianoplaying duo since they first toured together in 1994 and grossed $13 million. Joel is one of only two artists to have commemorative banners hanging from the Wachovia Center rafters recognizing the record number of performances. (Springsteen is the other.)

"We used to play a lot at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. That was a special place for us," Joel says. "The new one, the Wachovia Center, is a really good room as well." Joel’s '46" banner at Wachovia commemorates shows at the Spectrum, Veterans Stadium and Wachovia Center. He also performed a seven-night run between 1997 and 1998 at Wachovia Center.

"Billy Joel continues to be one of the most-requested entertainers in Philadelphia," says Peter Luukko, president of Comcast-Spectacor, which operates the Wachovia Center. "He has a tremendous appeal to audiences of all ages here in Philadelphia. We love having Billy play in Philadelphia. It's usually six shows at a time. I have the utmost respect for Billy, as well as his agent, Dennis Arfa, whom I call one of my closest friends."

Live Nation Northeast chairman Jimmy Koplak says, "In the markets I promote in, New York and Connecticut, he is the king of concerts. He holds every attendance record in these markets and they will never be broken. Billy has sold out every show I have promoted with him since 1972, so he also holds the longevity record. He is Babe Ruth and Joe DiMaggio combined."

They are also feeling the Billy love in Boston. "Billy Joel is one of the most charismatic performers to have ever crossed the stage," says John Wentzell, president of Delaware North Cos. /Boston and the TD Banknorth Garden. "Billy’s presence and his great sense of humor are as powerful on the stage as off, making him one of our favorite performers to host."

And on Long Island! Forget about it. "Nassau Coliseum [in Uniondale, N.Y.] is proud to have hosted Billy for 19 performances, including a record-breaking nine sold-out shows in 1998," says Chris Wright, VP for SMG Sports & Entertainment and GM of the venue. "Long Island is honored to be part of the Billy Joel experience and proud that he calls Long Island his home."

The feeling is pretty much mutual in all these locations and more, as Joel can quickly name several favorite places to play: "We like the Palace at Auburn Hills in Detroit. I love a Detroit crowd—they’re real rock ‘n’ roll fanatic manic crazies," Joel says. "Boston is always a good town for us. Hartford [Conn.] was great. We did a great run at the Mohegan Sun [in Uncasville, Conn.] that was a lot of fun. I got to commute to work by boat—I loved that. Nassau [Coliseum], the whole summer we held that place down."

Wherever the building, the crowd is part of the event. "To me the audience is a good 50% of the success of the show," Joel says. "I don’t know if they’re aware of it or not. But if you have a dead crowd, if you’re playing to an oil painting, you don’t really do a good show. You need the exchange of energy, you need a crowd that’s happy to be there and rooting for you. It’s like making love: If somebody’s not making any noise, you’re not doing it right." —Ray Waddell

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'We could always count on a good show and count on getting more people the next time.'

—DENNIS ARFA, ARTISTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

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"Happy Birthday, Billy Joel!" From all at Robertson Taylor
CONGRATULATIONS BILLY!

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A ‘GRACIOUSLY LOYAL’ ARTIST
IS BACKED UP BY LONGTIME COLLEAGUES

And it’s not like these guys couldn’t get other gigs. “These are the best guys in the business,” Joel says. “Bobby Thrasher, our production manager, used to do everybody—Bruce [Springsteen], Fleetwood Mac—and all these guys will go out with me at the drop of a hat if I’m going out.”

Such consistency brings a comfort level when it’s time to round up the troops and hit the road again. “There’s hundreds of years of experience with all these people, and it helps me to do my job if all I have to concentrate on is what I’m supposed to do,” Joel says. “It makes for a better show.”

Joel’s road crew is known for its professionalism and problem-free load-ins and load-outs. “You’re only as good as the people you surround yourself with, and everybody on this crew is able to come in and out when we need them,” Lubiere says. “They’re seasoned veterans, so you don’t have to worry as much. You know the job is covered.”

Wayne Williams has a big responsibility on the crew. He’s the guy who takes care of the piano. “Yeah, I think taking care of Billy’s piano is pretty high priority,” Lubiere understatedly says. “Wayne just takes care of all Billy’s needs onstage. You’ll see Billy throwing the microphone every night when he’s done doing ‘Only the Good Die Young’ or something like that, and Wayne is the one who has to catch it.”

By all accounts, Joel is a pretty good boss. “I’m not a guy who rubs people’s necks and throws in a lot of hyperbole telling them how great they are, hyping them all,” he says. “On the other hand, I’m not a boss where I crash out orders and I treat people like employees. I always look at it as we’re working with each other. Nobody’s working for me—they work with me.”

—Ray Waddell

THE BANDLEADER
IGNITING ENERGY ONSTAGE

Billy Joel always was part of a band in his formative years, and he still is today. He has learned what he likes in creating that onstage alchemy.

“No. 1 is musicianship,” he says. “I like good players. I’ve worked with musicians that weren’t all that good musically, and they tend to drag it down. If you’ve got to pull somebody along, it’s taking away from what you should be doing.”

They don’t have to be flashy or the most technically proficient people, Joel says. “I just want them to be able to play the right thing. I’ve always tried to insist on having people in the band who are musically proficient but who are also song-oriented.”

“Sometimes, especially when you’re working with a songwriter, it’s not what you play—it’s what you don’t play.” That said, he loves it when his guys shine.

“I don’t want anybody to be up there as if they’re an accompanist. I want it to feel like a band.” Joel says. “I don’t want it to look like Tom Jones and his backing orchestra. I want everybody to step up to the plate and be able to take over. Sometimes one of the guys steps up and does a solo and the spotlight is on them, and I’m perfectly happy. ‘Take it away, man.’ Sometimes a reviewer will say, ‘Mr. Joel was willing to share the spotlight.’ ‘Will Ing? Are you kidding me? I’m happy. I get a little break.’”

The current lineup for Joel’s touring band includes drummer Chuck Burgi, musical director Tommy Byrnes, bassist Andy Cichon, guitarist Dennis Delgadudio, horn player Carl Fischer, keyboardist Dave Rosenthal, saxophonist Mark Rivera and percussionist Crystal Taliefero. —Ray Waddell
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SOLD-OUT SHEA STADIUM SHOWS RECALL DAYS OF BEATLEMANIA

IN A PERFORMING CAREER full of highlights, Billy Joel's Last (Double) Play at Shea last summer is among the most memorable.

In addition to Joel and his versatile band, the finale concerts at New York's Shea Stadium July 16 and 18 featured star turns by Tony Bennett, John Mayer, Don Henley, John Mellencamp, Garth Brooks, Roger Daltrey, Steven Tyler and Paul McCartney.

"Oh, yeah, that was a lifetime experience," Joel says. "We [originally] called it 'the Last Play at Shea,' but we ended up doing two nights because so many tickets got scalped for the first night." (The two nights at Shea, promoted by Live Nation and Mitch Slater, grossed $12.8 million and moved 177,742 tickets.)

The crowning glory of the gigs was the appearance of McCartney, who had played the first concert at Shea with the Beatles in 1965. "That came together at the last minute," Joel's tour director Max Lubiere says. "We got a call about five that afternoon that Paul was coming over on a plane from London. It was scheduled to land at about 10:45 [p.m.] and that's when our crew came together. Everybody pooled their connections, and we were very successful in helping facilitate Paul landing in a timely fashion."

Easier said than done. Those "connections" included air traffic control, federal air marshals, the City of New York and the U.S. Customs service, with a police escort that put McCartney onstage for the encore. The rock gods were smiling. And so was Joel. "That was like St. Paul on the Road to Tar-sus," he recalls. "He walks onstage with his Hofner bass he played with the Beatles at Shea back in '65, he just looks at us and says, 'What do you want to do?' We all looked at each other and said, 'Do you believe this?' " Joel suggested "I Saw Her Standing There" and McCartney lit right into it.

"Then he says, 'What do you want to do now?' I said, "How about 'She Loves You'?" Paul says, 'I don't know that one.' I think what he was really saying was 'I don't want to do that one.'"

McCartney suggested "Let It Be" with himself on piano. "It was the experience of a lifetime, watching Paul McCartney the Beatle, play 'Let It Be' on my piano while I sat right next to him," Joel says. "I was just one of the people in the crowd watching this happen. I think we were all in a state of shock for two weeks after that happened." — Ray Waddell

The Piano Man is King of the Road

Congratulations Billy Joel on your 60th
"thanks for letting us be part of the ride"
Carol Green & Barry Liben

With a little help from his friend: At Shea Stadium, Joel performed an encore with Paul McCartney (inset).
DEAR BILLY,

YOU DEFINITELY STARTED AN ARTISTIC FIRE THAT HAS BEEN A BEACON OF CREATIVITY AND INSPIRATION EVER SINCE. IT IS JUST THE WAY YOU ARE, YOUR HONESTY AND GOING TO EXTREMES, WHICH DEFINES YOU AS A MUSICIAN AND MENSCH! I HAVE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE TO SHARE YOUR JOURNEY IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA FROM THE FIRST CLUB SHOWS TO PACKED ARENAS. I'M ALSO GRATEFUL FOR OUR ALOHA ADVENTURE.

EVEN IF THERE ARE STORM FRONTS AND LOTS OF ANGRY YOUNG MEN OUT THERE, WE ARE KEEPING OUR FAITH IN A BRIGHT FUTURE TOGETHER WITH YOU.

MAZAL TOV AND TILL 120,

MAREK
AND ALL AT MLK
JOEL AND JOHN CO-HEADLINE 'FRIENDLY COMPETITION'

BILLY JOEL AND Elton John have toured sporadically together since the mid-'90s, always with remarkable success. That remains the case in 2009 as the duo sells out arenas and stadiums in what will likely turn into an international jaunt that stretches well into next year.

"This is the right place, the right time to welcome the Billy and Elton game back again," says Joel's longtime agent Dennis Arfa, the president of Artists Group International. (John is booked by Howard Rose of the Howard Rose Agency.) "We've basically sold every seat that's on sale, whether it's Jacksonville [Fla.], San Antonio, Charlotte [N.C.], Madison [Wis.]; we've sold out a lot of secondary markets.

In addition to arenas in markets large and not so large, the Face 2 Face tour has booked two nights at Wrigley Field in Chicago, two at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, a Gillette Stadium gig near Boston continued on >>p50

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From the Bronx to Broadway and many more roads to come...

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Dynamic duc: Co-headlining a tour with Elton John is a welcome change of pace, Joel says.

**'FANTASTIC' HITS TO COME**

**JOEL WILL RETURN TO POP SONGWRITING, PREDICTS ELTON JOHN**

Billy Joel released his last studio album of original songs in 1993, although in 2001 he released "Fantasies & Delusions," a classical album composed by Joel and performed by Richard Joo. Today, Joel is ambivalent about writing new pop or rock songs, saying he’s more interested in composition and theme.

“I sometimes wish he’d write a little bit more,” says his co-headlining touring partner, Elton John. “I’ve always said that, [but] Joel! says, “Well, I’m not really that interested in writing anymore, blah blah blah,” and I don’t really believe that for a second.

“Within Billy there’s so much more to come out. He’s only 60 years of age, for Christ’s sake—he could be writing for the next 20 years. And I honestly think he will, eventually. And I think when it comes out, it will come out in a really fantastic way.”

—Ray Waddell

from >>p48

...that sold out in 35 minutes and the first concert at Nationals Stadium in Washington, D.C.

There’s a reason fans eat it up.

“Three hours, 20 minutes of nonstop music—there’s not a gap in the show at all,” John says. “We could go on for another three hours with the amount of catalog we both have. It’s great fun.”

Touring with another artist is a welcome change of pace, Joel says, particularly for a solo artist who hasn’t gone through a band breakup. “If you start out as a solo artist, you can’t break up with yourself, unless you’re schizophrenic,” he says. “The only other thing you can do is join something.

“Getting together with Elton is a lot of fun because I get to play his material, he plays my material. I get to work with his band, he gets to work with my band, we get to have both bands play together.

It’s very, very fun. You get to step out of just being the guy by himself.”

Joel admits a “friendly competition” with John pushes him to play better.

“He is a great piano player,” he says. “Sometimes we’ll be dueling on piano solos and he’ll come up with this piano part and I’ve got to answer it. I’m thinking, ‘Oh, my God, that was really good.’ I’ve got to dig it way down deep to respond.”

John says he loves playing Joel’s songs along with his own.

“We start with ‘Your Song’ and ‘Just the Way You Are,’ and it’s just so much fun. We do ‘My Life,’ which I love, and ‘You May Be Right,’ which I love, ‘Uptown Girl’ which I love, and ‘Piano Man,’ which is just so great—you couldn’t finish a show with a better song than that if you’re a piano player,” John says.

“It’s a very, very happy spirit on the road,” adds John. He’s got a great band, he’s got a great bunch of people around him, and we have fun. I can’t say enough about him. I’m glad he’s catching up with me in age now. That’s really thrilling.”

—Ray Waddell

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Congratulations Billy

Quality Shows

Thank you Billy, Steve & Boomer. We are proud to be a part of the BJ family. Sincerely, Michael, Winky & Adam
Thank you for sharing a spectacular history and future with Sprint Center and Kansas City!

Brenda Tinnen & Sprint Center staff

Sprint Center
LONDON—Billy Joel has had an endearing career all around the world as a recording artist and a live performer. Even before he topped the U.K. singles chart in 1983 with “Uptown Girl,” Joel had built a formidable live following, thanks to a dedicated touring schedule that reached far beyond the United States beginning in the ‘70s.

The people behind his international sales achievements and live shows unite in their respect and admiration for Joel.

Denis Handlin, chairman/CEO of Sony Music Entertainment Australia and New Zealand, has had a close bond with the star since Australia became the first territory outside the United States to break his song “Piano Man.”

“I love him like a brother,” Handlin says. “We go back such a long time, since he first came here in the mid-‘70s."

During that first visit, a fresh-faced Handlin took Joel to the Lone Pine animal sanctuary in Brisbane where, like most guests, the American singer posed for a photograph with a koala.

“Billy lined up like everyone else. He’s a great bloke and a very real character,” Handlin says. Taking “Piano Man” to radio and “being the first country in the world to turn it into a big smash” remains one of Handlin’s career highlights. In turn, Joel has “shown great loyalty to Australia too, coming back so many times,” he says. Joel, too, has fond memories of Down Under.

“In Australia we get great audiences,” he says. “We were actually well-known in Australia before ‘The Stranger’ album ever came out in the States.”

Michael Gudinski, chairman of the Mushroom Group of Cos., has promoted Joel’s tours since his first Australian shows in 1978. He also recalls Joel’s “amazing stamina.”

“Billy has always been renowned as a live performer and it’s traveled through his career,” he says. “I remember one night he was playing the Melbourne Festival Hall in April 1978, which also hosted boxing and wrestling. There was a leak, and there was rain coming through the roof. But instead of throwing a fit, he got one of his crew to get an umbrella and he put it on his head. With Billy, the show must go on.”

Marek Lieberberg, who has promoted all of Joel’s tours in Germany since the late ‘70s, recounts his own memorable experience during the artist’s early shows.

“I recall one event in the Stuttgart Trades Union Building, which initially looked like it would have to be canceled because we couldn’t get the grand piano onto the first floor,” he says of the gig, attended by just 300 people. “Only at great effort and by combining all our strength did we manage this at the very last minute.”

In Joel’s early days of touring Germany, Lieberberg remembers how the singer used to play the hotel bar piano after shows. “We had great times together and turned nighttime into day,” Lieberberg says.

Joel describes his German audience as “phenomenal.” His first show in Amsterdam—March 5, 1978, at the 600-capacity converted Sonesta Koepelzaal church—also drew just 300 fans.

“It would be another couple of months before ‘She’s Always a Woman to Me’ would become a top 10 hit, so sales were rather slow,” says Leon Ramakers, former CEO of MOJO Concerts. “Undaunted, Billy put on a very energetic, great show that laid the foundation for much bigger things to come in the near future.”

Thomas Johansson, now chairman of international music at Live Nation Europe, began promoting Joel’s shows in the late ‘70s while head of Sweden’s EMA Telstar, which has since been absorbed into Live Nation. He also rates his first concert with Joel as the most memorable. Held in spring 1979 at the Concert House in Stockholm, the 1,600-capacity crowd showed Johansson that Joel “was going to become one of the most important singer/songwriters and performers of our time.”

“As an artist, it’s been fantastic dealing with him and his people over the years,” he continues. “It’s continued on >>p54
Happy 60th Birthday Billy

We Didn't Start the Fire...Your Birthday Candles Did.
But Don't Worry, Cleveland Loves You Just The Way You Are!

Your Friends at Quicken Loans Arena

Cleveland, Ohio
Hey, Big Shot...
We love you just the way you are!

— Shelley Lazar and all the SLO Family

from >>p52 been a fun ride.

For Joel, it's the historic, watershed shows that "really made a difference."

"The series of concerts we did in the Soviet Union is one of the highlights of my life," he says. In July and August 1987, Joel played three shows at the Olympic Stadium in Moscow, followed by three shows at the Lenin Sports Complex in Leningrad. "Just being there at that particular time—such a transitional time in the history of Russia—was very, very exciting," he recalls, "where we played in Berlin the night of the [1990] reunification of East and West Germany. We also played a free show in front of the Colosseum in Rome about two years ago."

Joel recalls the impact that a broadcast of the concert had. "They televised the show, half a million people came, and the next day I was like Frank Sinatra."

Seiuro Udo, CEO of Japan's Udo Artists, notes that Joel has been a huge draw in Japan.

"My most memorable Billy Joel tours have to be his first ever and his most recent," he says. "We first presented Billy in April 1978. The [Nakano Sun Plaza] show sold out immediately, and it was clear to me that I was witnessing an incredible talent whose career was about to explode in Japan. He ended up selling out two [14,000-capacity] Budokan shows only one year later."

Udo adds, "He most recently came in November 2008 to play one show at the [43,000-capacity] Tokyo Dome, which he completely sold out. His performance was as powerful as ever and the crowd ate up every second of his show."

Joel hasn't released any new material for more than 10 years, yet catalog sales remain strong. His most recent international greatest-hits collection, "Piano Man: The Very Best Of" (Columbia/Sony), was an initiative that started in the Sony International office in London. Released worldwide, except the United States, in November 2004, the collection peaked at No. 34 on Billboard's European Top 100 chart.

In the United Kingdom, the album went top 10, while in Australia it reached No. 14. A TV advertising campaign for "Piano Man" surrounding Joel's 2006 tour and a CD/DVD re-release helped reignite sales. "Piano Man" is now certified triple-platinum in Ireland (45,000 copies), double-platinum in Australia (140,000) and platinum in the United Kingdom (200,000) and South Africa (50,000), with sales totaling 1.5 million globally, according to Sony.

Joel's classic 1977 breakthrough album, "The Stranger," was repromoted last year in the United Kingdom in various formats, including an exclusive iTunes package, to tie in with the airing of a special edition of ITV's "The South Bank Show," featuring interviews with and performances by Joel. Overall, in the United Kingdom, Joel's catalog sells since 1994 total 1.6 million copies, according to the Official Charts Co.

Meanwhile, Australia led the global market last year with the exclusive release of the three-CD set "The Essential 3.0" to coincide with Joel's 2008 tour. It peaked at No. 50 on the Australian Recording Industry Assn. albums chart. Handlin says that through consistent marketing of his back catalog, particularly on TV, in conjunction with his tours, "Joel continues to sell well in Australia both in a recorded and live sense." Handlin estimates that Joel's total recorded sales in Australia have now exceeded 5 million copies.

Joel is currently on the second Face 2 Face tour in the United States with Elton John, with whom he first toured U.S. stadiums in 1994. Gudinski in 1997 booked them together to open the Crown Casino in Melbourne.

The shows were memorable with "Billy Joel and Elton John onstage together, with pianos facing each other," he recalls. "The greatest piano-playing songwriter from America with the American flag versus the great English songwriter with the English flag. It's still one of the hottest shows on the road, where one and one equals three."

Additional reporting by Jann Arden in Brisbane, Australia; TJ Lammers in Amsterdam, Rob Schwartz in Tokyo; Wolfgang Spuler in Hamburg; and Ray Walden in Nashville.

As the pop music writer from 1975 to 1994 for Billy Joel's hometown newspaper—Long Island, N.Y.'s Newsday—it was important for me to occasionally go on the road to stay on top of the news on the region's biggest musical star. So when Joel scheduled a series of six shows in Russia in the summer of 1987, I was there—and I suspect it was a career highlight for both of us.

Ronald Reagan was still president of the United States, the man who had stamped the Soviet Union as "the evil empire." But Russia under Mikhail Gorbachev was changing. It was still a communist dictatorship, of course, but his policies of "glasnost" and "perestroika" made people less tense about talking to foreigners, so it was possible to enjoy meeting Russian journalists, musicians and ordinary citizens. On the days and nights when Joel wasn't performing, we in the press corps went to see local bands, some of whom had government approval—there was a big heavy-metal concert one night in Gorky Park—and others still officially considered "parasites," who played word-of-mouth showcases at secret locations.

On an off-night, my Russian-speaking guide took me to meet some Russian friends at their apartment. Trading cassette tapes was the main way Russians circulated Western music. I left behind my tape of the Beastie Boys "Licensed to Ill" for my host's teenage son. Two years later the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Berlin Wall fell. I like to hope that, along with Joel's Soviet tour, my giving a Russian teenager ("You Gotta Fight for Your Right [To Party]!") something to do with that.

Wayne Robins is Billboard senior copy editor, features.
60... small potatoes

Happy Birthday
Love, Steve
These exclusive recaps of Billy Joel's success on the Billboard charts include his best-selling albums and singles from the '70s, '80s and '90s, as well as multiple-night live performance bookings that have only grown in scale and stature since Joel released his most recent collection of new pop songs, "River of Dreams," in 1993.

**BILLY JOEL'S TOP ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Debut Date</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;52nd Street&quot;</td>
<td>(eight weeks)</td>
<td>Oct. 28, 1978</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;Glass Houses&quot;</td>
<td>(six)</td>
<td>March 22, 1980</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;River of Dreams&quot;</td>
<td>(three)</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1993</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Storm Front&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nov. 4, 1989</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;The Stranger&quot;</td>
<td>(six)</td>
<td>Oct. 8, 1977</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;An Innocent Man&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aug. 20, 1983</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;Greatest Hits&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>July 20, 1985</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Volume I &amp; Volume II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;The Bridge&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aug. 16, 1986</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;The Nylon Curtain&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 16, 1982</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
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**AND TOP SONGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Debut Date</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;It's Still Rock and Roll to Me&quot;</td>
<td>(two weeks)</td>
<td>May 24, 1980</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;We Didn't Start the Fire&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>July 30, 1984</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Tell Her About It&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>July 30, 1984</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Uptown Girl&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 1984</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;My Life&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov. 4, 1978</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Just the Way You Are&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov. 12, 1977</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;River of Dreams&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>July 31, 1993</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;I Go to Extremes&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jan. 13, 1990</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;You May Be Right&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 15, 1980</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>&quot;You're Only Human&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>July 15, 1985</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>&quot;A Matter of Trust&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aug. 9, 1986</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>&quot;Modern Woman&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>June 7, 1986</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>&quot;The Longest Time&quot;</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>March 24, 1984</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>&quot;Big Shot&quot;</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Feb. 30, 1979</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;Allentown&quot;</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Nov. 27, 1982</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;She's Always a Woman&quot;</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Aug. 12, 1978</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>&quot;Movin' Out (Anthony's Song)&quot;</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>March 18, 1978</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>&quot;This Is the Time&quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nov. 15, 1986</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>&quot;Keeping the Faith&quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Jan. 26, 1985</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>&quot;Don't Ask Me Why&quot;</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Aug. 2, 1980</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>&quot;Pressure&quot;</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sept. 25, 1982</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>&quot;She's Got a Way&quot;</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Nov. 21, 1981</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>&quot;Honesty&quot;</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>April 21, 1979</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>&quot;Only the Good Die Young&quot;</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>May 15, 1978</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>&quot;Piano Man&quot;</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Feb. 23, 1974</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;Leave a Tender Moment Alone&quot;</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>July 7, 1984</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;All About Soul&quot;</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Nov. 6, 1993</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;The Entertainer&quot;</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Nov. 30, 1974</td>
<td>Columbia/Sony Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: On these charts are indicated by date position by the number of weeks spent at the peak. The Billboard chart covers the period from Dec. 13-19, 1978. These tables are updated weekly. The charts and data in this report are from the May 9, 2009, edition of Billboard Magazine.
SPITFIRE PICTURES AND MARITIME PICTURES
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LAST PLAY AT SHEA

CONGRATULATE BILLY JOEL ON 60 YEARS OF HITTING IT OUT OF THE PARK

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FOR DELIVERY • FALL 2009
Billy,

One of the bona fide good guys......

Heartfelt congratulations on the much deserved recognition for all you have done!

Thank you for the many years of creativity, inspiration, laughter, music, memories ... and for letting us be your ride for the last 20 years!

Happy Birthday!

With love,
Glenn & Lisa McNamara

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Phoenix Rising
French Indie Pop Conquers The States

The French rock band Phoenix signed with Glassnote Records in February with a couple of lofty goals: to play at a major festival and to perform on “Saturday Night Live.”

Not long after booking slots at the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival in June and the Austin City Limits Music Festival in October, Glassnote founder/CEO Daniel Glass got a call from someone at “SNL” asking about the band’s schedule. By some miracle, all of the members’ visas were cleared and the group made it to the U.S. within two weeks’ time (“You try getting into the United States with eight guys. It’s not that easy,” Glass says) to perform April 4 on the late-night NBC show. Missions accomplished, and its new album isn’t even in stores yet.

After a stint on Astral works that included three studio albums and a live set, Phoenix is gearing up to release its fifth LP, “Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix,” May 26 through Glassnote and the band’s own imprint, Loyaute. The “SNL” performance gave the band an opportunity to preview the “Wolfgang” tracks “1901” and “Le Populaire,” which fans could purchase on iTunes as an EP with two other new songs within hours of the show’s airing. “The ‘Saturday Night Live’ performance has really accelerated the whole marketing process,” says Alan Becker, senior VP of product development at RED, which distributes Glassnote. “We had to react to that in an interesting way.

Fans can use iTunes’ Complete My Albums feature when the full album comes out, but the "Wolfgang" EP reached No. 7 on Billboard’s Top Heatseekers chart by selling 3,000 first-week copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It has sold 7,000 to date. “It would be a sin to do ‘SNL’ and fans not be able to buy the music,” Glass says. “The beauty of the digital world is instant gratification, and it’s been great.”

Aside from the ‘SNL’ and festival slots, 2009 marks a couple of other firsts for Phoenix: its first time on an indie label and first time using an outside producer. After three releases on a major, manager Simon White says the band needed a label with a smaller, more focused team and a high level of enthusiasm. Phoenix’s hipster-approved pop might seem like an odd match for Glassnote, home to pop-rock act Secondhand Serenade and the twee-friendly Justin Nozuka, but everyone involved says it’s all about the chemistry and the label’s past successes. “The kids who were working at Glassnote were already Phoenix fans,” White says. “A label’s roster is not an indication of the people.”

Frontman Thomas Mars says even though Phoenix spent years on a major, he and his bandmates have maintained an indie mentality. “We’ve always done our own cover and controlled everything from the music videos to the press pictures,” he says. “We always thought that if we do everything ourselves, it has more character and charm than something done professionally.”

After 2006’s “It’s Never Been Like That,” Mars says without a label, the band was ready to spend as much time as necessary to make a solid album. “To do that, Phoenix recruited Philippe Zdar of the French house duo Cassius to produce ‘Wolfgang.’ He’s so opinionated and it’s really helpful for us,” Mars says. When it came to releasing the album, he says the goal was to be able to hand the final product to someone who understood it and was dedicated to the group. “Glassnote agreed with us on everything,” Mars says.

Along with the physical CD release, Glass says “Wolfgang” will be released on vinyl with download cards and bonus tracks, and the band will tour in June, September and December. He says the team also is hoping for a few TV performances, including the mtvU Woodie Awards and MTV2’s “Subterranean,” and there are talks under way with Yahoo, AOL and Clear Channel for other performance opportunities.

Though the album already leaked online, no one is concerned. If anything, it’s been just another way to get people talking. “Maybe they’ll come to the show, maybe they’ll buy a T-shirt, maybe if they like the album enough they’ll decide to buy the vinyl version,” White says. “Our biggest concern is growing it as an entity—not just record sales.”
Grin And Bear It

Can Grizzly Bear Claw Its Way To Success?

Last year the Brooklyn-based quartet Grizzly Bear went on the road for a two-week East Coast tour as the opening act for Radiohead. This time around, the indie rock band is aiming just as high—hoping to arrange a collaboration with none other than rapper Snoop Dogg.

Grizzly Bear singer/songwriter Ed Droste “has actually been using Twitter to stalk Snoop,” says Daniel Rossen, the group’s singer/songwriter/guitarist. “We’re both going to be at Bonnaroo, and although there will be a bunch of people there and the chances of us actually seeing Snoop are slim, we’re hoping we will bump into him. If there’s a fun way to collaborate with Snoop, we’d absolutely love to.”

While the group looks forward to working with Snoop, its current focus is the act’s new album, “Veckatimest.” Named after a small island off Cape Cod, Mass.—an area the group was inspired by while recording at Droste’s grandmother’s house—the album is slated for a May 26 release on Warp Records.

For the set, which Rossen describes as “a lot more clear and focused than our earlier records,” Grizzly Bear recruited composer Nico Muhly, Beach House’s Victoria Legrand, who is featured on the lead single, “Two Weeks,” and the Brooklyn Girsl Choir.

To promote the album, Warp label manager Priya Dewan says there’s been a strong, hands-on viral campaign that includes group members posting on Facebook, MySpace and Twitter.

Grizzly Bear's self-titled debut from 2006 included their hit single "Saying," which peaked at No. 4 on the Hot Digital Songs chart and hit No. 28 on Billboard’s Hot 100 chart.

Warp Records, the label behind their 2007 album, “Wish You Were Here” (which sold 17,000 copies in its first week), is behind their major label debut. Their sophomore album, "Veckatimest," was released on May 26 and is expected to be a critical and commercial success.

Have a heart: NOISETTES

www.americanradiohistory.com
Six years after his last solo album and two years after the Stooges' comeback "The Weirdness" (Virgin), Iggy Pop will release "Preliminaires" on EMI. The album will be out May 25 internationally and June 2 in the United States on Astralwerks. The punk-rock legend is incorporating jazz into his work, as well as French literature. The set was inspired by Michel Houellebecq's novel "The Possibility of an Island," and the album's title means "foreplay." "Preliminaires" is a "crooner album with overtones of jazz," EMI France product manager Vincent Florant says. It features a cover of the popular '40s song "Les Feuilles Mortes" (Autumn Leaves) in its original French. EMI's campaign began with a dedicated English Web site (iggypoppreliminaires.com).

In France, the national broadcaster Canal+ screened a special edition of the TV show "La Musique" April 27 featuring Pop performing with guests including Keren Ann and Peaches. Florant expects "Preliminaires" to sell more than Pop's rock albums because "his fans will follow him anyway and this album should reach other people." The initial shipment in France will be 20,000 copies, he adds.

Bug Music publishes Pop's compositions. His manager is Henry McGroggan of the Warwase-based Central European Organization. John Goddatt at Solo in London is his worldwide agent, except for North America, where he is booked by New York-based Marsha Vlastic at ICM. —Aymenich Pechivin

***

Singer/songwriter/producer John Forte was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1997 for his work on the Fugues's multiplatinum album "The Score." But he's now best-known for the November 2008 commutation by President George W. Bush after serving seven-and-a-half years of a 14-year sentence in federal prison for drug trafficking.

Since his release, Forte has been busy. He is laying down the framework for 24 new songs at a downtown Manhattan studio and hitting the stage for the first time in eight years in New York with the Roots, Talib Kweli, Chrisette Michele and Pharoahe Monch. In addition to signing a book deal with Simon & Schuster to publish his memoirs, he's blogging for the online news site the Daily Beast and working with in Arms Reach, a program committed to promoting a positive environment for children of incarcerated parents and at-risk youth.

1. The new tracks have a melancholy, lonely quality. Is that how you felt when you wrote them?

These songs were written while I was away but they're not necessarily about being away. The songs are like haiku in that they are concise. There is a tinge of solitude in them but it's a reflective, centered solitude. Not that I'd resigned myself to my fate of 168 months or 14 years in prison. I resigned myself to the present.

2. Did you listen to music while in prison?

I ended up listening to Philadelphia's triple-A station WXPN in the south New Jersey area where I was for at least the last four years of my sentence. I got turned on to so much: Jose Gonzalez, Regina Spektor, Sia, Rachael Yamagata, Cat Power. I actually used those guys as baronettes to my songwriting. The beauty of Cat Power is the divine imperfection in her voice. I don't listen to her expecting any perfect notes and pitches, but I believe her and that's what motivates me.

3. In some ways, you seemed to have evolved beyond hip-hop. How does that part of your past fit into your new material?

I take umbrage with the fact that when the press came out after my sentence was commuted that I was referred to in every periodical as "rapper John Forte." I'd like to think of myself as a musician who happens to rap. But whether hip-hop becomes more commercial or more thuggled-out or more about conspicuous consumption, it will always have that undertone of speaking truth to power, questioning the status quo. That's what always defines hip-hop, always has and always will.

4. You were released in December, and you're already busy. How did you make such a swift transition?

I have great people in my life. It's through the competence, the compassion and the love of the people around me that has made this transition as seamless as it appears. It's not lost on me—the blessings and the opportunities that have been put before me.

5. Did people keep in touch with you during your time in prison?

When the really hard days hit and I felt dependent, dejected and the social pariah that a federal number sets you up to be. I'd go to mail call and get one letter from a fan. I was at my nadir, and then out of the blue—of course it's never out of the blue, everything happens for a reason—I would hear from a fan or somebody who appreciated what I put out there. It was reaffirming that the music had its own course.

6. Why did George Bush decide to grant you a commutation?

I don't think I'm qualified to answer that. I know that we went through the process like everybody else. I had a lot of support, but it was my last ray of hope. I went through my appeals process. It was a tiny sliver that opened up to me being here now.

Freedom writer: JOHN FORTE

Grr: GRIZZLY BEAR

FORTUNE

MUSIC

6 QUESTIONS WITH JOHN FORTE

By DAVID J. PRINCE

Singer/songwriter/producer John Forte was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1997 for his work on the Fugues's multiplatinum album "The Score." But he's now best-known for the November 2008 commutation by President George W. Bush after serving seven-and-a-half years of a 14-year sentence in federal prison for drug trafficking.

Since his release, Forte has been busy. He is laying down the framework for 24 new songs at a downtown Manhattan studio and hitting the stage for the first time in eight years in New York with the Roots, Talib Kweli, Chrisette Michele and Pharoahe Monch. In addition to signing a book deal with Simon & Schuster to publish his memoirs, he's blogging for the online news site the Daily Beast and working with in Arms Reach, a program committed to promoting a positive environment for children of incarcerated parents and at-risk youth.

1. The new tracks have a melancholy, lonely quality. Is that how you felt when you wrote them?

These songs were written while I was away but they're not necessarily about being away. The songs are like haiku in that they are concise. There is a tinge of solitude in them but it's a reflective, centered solitude. Not that I'd resigned myself to my fate of 168 months or 14 years in prison. I resigned myself to the present.

2. Did you listen to music while in prison?

I ended up listening to Philadelphia's triple-A station WXPN in the south New Jersey area where I was for at least the last four years of my sentence. I got turned on to so much: Jose Gonzalez, Regina Spektor, Sia, Rachael Yamagata, Cat Power. I actually used those guys as baronettes to my songwriting. The beauty of Cat Power is the divine imperfection in her voice. I don't listen to her expecting any perfect notes and pitches, but I believe her and that's what motivates me.

3. In some ways, you seemed to have evolved beyond hip-hop. How does that part of your past fit into your new material?

I take umbrage with the fact that when the press came out after my sentence was commuted that I was referred to in every periodical as "rapper John Forte." I'd like to think of myself as a musician who happens to rap. But whether hip-hop becomes more commercial or more thuggled-out or more about conspicuous consumption, it will always have that undertone of speaking truth to power, questioning the status quo. That's what always defines hip-hop, always has and always will.

4. You were released in December, and you're already busy. How did you make such a swift transition?

I have great people in my life. It's through the competence, the compassion and the love of the people around me that has made this transition as seamless as it appears. It's not lost on me—the blessings and the opportunities that have been put before me.

5. Did people keep in touch with you during your time in prison?

When the really hard days hit and I felt dependent, dejected and the social pariah that a federal number sets you up to be. I'd go to mail call and get one letter from a fan. I was at my nadir, and then out of the blue—of course it's never out of the blue, everything happens for a reason—I would hear from a fan or somebody who appreciated what I put out there. It was reaffirming that the music had its own course.

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Sabbath faithful pumping their fists in the air—CAS

CHIMAIRA

The Infestation
Producer: Ben Schigel
Ferret Music
Release Date: April 21

Chimaira strides confidently toward a new direction on its fifth album, "The Infestation," propelling each song with unfailing determination. The Ohio band's most experimental set doesn't sacrifice any intensity, despite the streamlined production that renders every note and idea, even the first mellower ripples of "The Venom Inside." Guitar solos (save for "On Broken Glass") are traded for appropriate sound effects: clanking machinery fortifies "Come Alive," while the sound of gurgling water signifies the rage of "Secrets of the Dead." Vocalist Mark Hunter opts for traditional singing in the nightmare song "Impending Doom," then he sits out the nearly 15-minute instrumental treatise "The Heart of It All." The band's diligent work to spread "The Infestation" has already paid off with a No. 30 debut on the Billboard 200, signaling an equal appeal and marketing their (recent) ascension to the Billboard Hot 100. This silky dia- tribe about fooling around with a no-good lover while her man's away first appeared on the band's 2005 set "Never Take Friendship Personal" before resurfacing on its 2008 album, "New Surrender." The success of "Drag" in its latest incarnation shows that sometimes a song can get a deserved second chance to make a first impression. The new version pumps up an already powerful track into a full-on charge that's led by guitarists Joseph Milligan and Christian McAlhaney. It's also been remixed, making it cleaner and brisker than the multilayered original and lending each measure a harder punch. With Anberlin being a band on the verge for the last few years, "Drag" could finally pull it into breakout territory.—CLT

COMPANY FLOW

Flowcrusher Plus
Producers: E.P., Mr. Len Definitive Jux
Release Date: May 27

After Company Flow spent the majority of this decade in limbo with its former label Rawkus Records, the rights to the solo full-length from the highly influential New York trio have finally changed hands. In 1997, "Flowcrusher Plus" altered the course of underground rap with complex beats and clever Bomb Squad and Robert Fripp/Brian Eno with equal combust- tion, as well as cede-creeping rhymes interweaving street realism and Orwellian nightmare scenarios. Under the auspices of Co-Flow frontman E.P.'s Definitive Jux label, "Flowcrusher" is introduced to a new generation with a beautiful remastering job. Longtime fans will welcome the addition of such rarities as the pre-1995 tracks "Juvenile Techniques" and "Carrot 94," as well as the last trio of official Company Flow tracks, "Simple," "DPA" and "Simian Drugs." The return of this landmark work is a most welcome one.—GH

CHRISTIAN

KRISTIAN STANFILL

Attention
Producer: Matt Goldman Definitive Jux
Release Date: April 21

As the first new artist signed since sixteens records started in 2000, Kristian Stanfill has some Big Foot- steps to follow. After all, this is the indie-label home of Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Charlie Hall and the David Crowder Band. But this impressive collection proves he's a worthy addition to the roster. A seasoned worship leader with experience at his home church in Georgia and internationally with the 2008 Passion tour, Stanfill has a gift for writing compelling, uplifting lyrics and wrapping them in vibrant melodies. The opening track, "Alive and Running," is a prime example, with its joyful, anthemic sound punctuated by Stanfill's exuberant vocals. He's just as effective on such ballads as "I Need You" with its tender words. Combining worshipful lyrics with keen pop sensibilities, Stanfill's particularly engaging on such tracks as "Faithful," which demonstrate why he's such a promising new voice in the worship music community.—DEP

LEGENDARY CREDITS

EDITED BY WAYNE ROBINS

CONTRIBUTORS: Judy Cantor-Naylor, Gary Gfty, Ronald Hart, Monica Herrera, Michael Menendez, Dan Ouellette, Deborah Evans Price, Jon Regen, Wayne Robins, Carol-Anne Sear, Christine L. Tita, Gery Trust, Phil Van Vleck, Alex Vitos, Chris Williams

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

CRITICS' CHOICE > A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for music lovers.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send review copies to Wayne Robins at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003 or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

POD

MANDY MOORE

I Could Break Your Heart
Any Day of the Week (2:53)
Producer: Mike Viola
Writers: M. Moore, M. Viola
Publisher: not listed
Storefront Recordings
Mandy Moore has been a record- ing artist for 10 years and continues churning out material, yet again, with new songs. The tongue-in-cheek single "I Could Break Your Heart Any Day of the Week" is a feel-good pop song with restrained production, refreshing rap twist by Baqwa and Moore's alluring vocals. She recorded her sixth studio album, "Amenda Leigh," the title is the singer's birth name," with Boston producer Mike Viola, who tapped into a hand-clapped rhythm and funky clavinet sounds, resulting in a light and bubby sound for the season. Moore's new album floats into stores May 26.—MM

MADCON

Beggin' (3:38)
Producers: Elenemtz
Writer: B. Gaudio
EMI
Music Publishing
Next Plateau/Universal Republic
Unlikely Norwegian duo Madcon has a massive hit in Europe with "Beggin,'" a retro soul groove that hit No. 1 in Norway and the top 10 in the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Tshaw Baqwa and YoSeF Woldé-Marim of Madcon (or Mad Conspiracy No. 3), bravely took on Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons' hit "Beggin'" with a vibrant vocal by Baqwa and an energetic rap twist by Woldé-Mariam. The mag- netism that drew the music world to Gnarls Barkley's "Crazy" is present in "Beggin'," with the potential for mass appeal and a hook that should be on loop for months to come.—MM

ROCK

CHICKENFOOT

Oh Yeah (4:10)
Producers: Chickenfoot, Andy Johns
Writers: S. Hagar, J. Satrani
Redline
How much of Sammy Hagar's Cabo Wabo tequila was involved in the christening of the supergroup Chickenfoot is questionable, but Hagar, bassist Michael Anthony, drummer Chad Smith and guitarist Joe Satrani made up for the absurdity on the rau- cous "Oh Yeah." Having con- verged for the second time, the four vets get a little silly—"Hagar longs to be a gal's "hoochie coochie man"—as they throw down a jam in the vein of a new mil- lennium Journey. The cho- ruses are pure Hagar, yet when Satrani lets it rip he's restrained since he's playing as part of a band instead of a soloist. The group has already sold out its nine-date Road Test tour, so active rock radio should open the door wider when it hears Chickenfoot scratching at it.—CLT

ANBERLIN

Feel Good Drug (3:08)
Producer: Neal Aaron
Writer: Anberlin
Publisher: Primary Wave
EMI
Music
Universal Republic
Anberlin's "Feel Good Drug" has already triumphed by crowning Billboard's Modern Rock chart after a 29-week climb, now it's time to see if it can crack the mainstream party on the Bill- board Hot 100. This silky di- tribe about fooling around with a no-good lover while her man's away first appeared on the band's 2005 set "Never Take Friendship Personal" before resurfacing on its 2008 album, "New Surrender." The success of "Drag" in its latest incarna- tion shows that sometimes a song can get a deserved second chance to make a first impression. The new version pumps up an already powerful track into a full-on charge that's led by gui- tarists Joseph Milligan and Christian McAlhaney. It's also been remixed, making it cleaner and brisker than the multilayered original and lending each measure a harder punch. With Anber- lin being a band on the verge for the last few years, "Drag" could finally pull it into breakout territory.—CLT

COUNTRY

DARIUS RUCKER

Alright (3:45)
Producer: Frank Rogers
Writers: D. Rucker, F. Rogers
Publishers: Cadaa
Publishing/New Sea Gaye Music/EMI April Music, ASCAP
Capitol Records Nashville
In the past, some pop/rock- ers looking to establish themselves in the country format haven't always found an enthusiastic reception, but Darius Rucker's great voice, respect for the genre's roots and affable personality have rapidly endeared him to country programmers and audiences alike. His pre- vious two singles—"Don't Think I Don't Think About It" and "It Won't Be Like This for Long"—spent multiple weeks at the top of the charts, and "Alright" looks sure to do the same. Penned by Rucker and producer Frank Rogers, the song boasts a catchy, singa- long chorus and breezy melody that's perfect for summertime rock. Rucker's engaging delivery perfectly captures the sweet senti- ment in the lyrics and makes this the feel-good song of '09.—DEP

JIMMY BUFFETT

Summerzcool (3:37)
Producers: Michael Ullery, Mac McAnally
Writers: J. Buffett, M. McAnally
Publishers: Coral Reefer Music, BMI, EMI/Quatango Music, ASCAP
Mailboat Records
Ruminant of his 2003 country smash "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere" with Alan Jackson, this jolly splash of musical sunshine unquestionably deserves to become Jimmy Buffett's first Adult Contemporary chart entry since 1995. Lyrically, the first single from his new album, due this fall, finds the former Billboard staffer at his witty best: "What's up with this recess-/I refuse to participate/The answer is dancing on your tailgate." Country radio regularly sends feel-good songs like this to No. 1, there's no reason AC can't do the same with one of popular music's most revered icons.—GT
WE SING, WE CHART

Almost 14 months after it first appeared on the Triple A chart, Jason Mraz’s “I’m Yours” keeps flexing its multiformat muscle. The song leaps to a new peak on Smooth Jazz Songs, rising from No. 26 to No. 18. The ubiquitous hit—the first single from his third album, “We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.”—has already made history by topping the Triple A, Adult Top 40, Mainstream Top 40 and Adult Contemporary charts. No other single has reached No. 1 on all four lists. This issue “Yours” reigns for a 13th week at No. 1 on the AC chart.

Concurrently, “Lucy,” the second single from “We Sing,” bullets at No. 9 on the Adult Top 40 tally. All this radio action has helped power sales for “We Sing,” and it has become Mraz’s best-selling album, with 1.1 million copies. It surpasses his 2002 debut, “Waiting for My Rocket to Come,” which has shifted just slightly more than 1 million.

—Gary Trust and Keith Caulfield

**COUNTRY** BY KEN TUCKER

Positive Energy

Jason Michael Carroll Reconnects With Fans On Second Album

While recording his second album, the rising country star Jason Michael Carroll was determined to repay any negative energy.

“We could have focused on the sophomore curse,” Carroll says of his April 28 release “Growing Up Is Getting Old” (Arista Nashville). “But producer Don Gehman and I feel that if you focus on negative energy and you worry about things too much, then you recapture that negative energy. We did just what we did on the first record: put good songs on the album that mean something to me. We were also looking for that little something extra to show growth over the last three years.”

Carroll’s 2007 debut, “Waitin’ in the Country,” sold 395,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It also spawned two top 10 hits, the tearjerker “Alyssa Lies” and “Livin’ Our Love Songs.” Another single, “I Can Sleep When I’m Dead,” peaked at No. 21 on Hot Country Songs.

Carroll, who co-wrote all three of those singles, says he became a victim of one new-artist pitfall: He got too wrapped up in promotional appearances and touring. “I’m ashamed to say it,” he says, “but I hadn’t written anything new until the label asked, ‘What have you got for the second album?’ ”

It was a wake-up call. “I made a vow to write and make it a priority,” he adds. “I got carried away with everything else that was going on.”

While he co-wrote three songs on the new album, he didn’t write the first single, “Where I’m From,” which is No. 16 on Hot Country Songs. “I’ve always said that if there’s another song I believe in more, then that’s the one I want as a single,” Carroll says. “I didn’t write ‘Where,’ but it’s my life. I relate to every line.”

Co-written by Patrick Davis and Joe Leathers, the Gehman-produced track tells the story of a man flying cross-country to collect his brother, who is dying of cancer, and bring him back home to their all-American small town. Chris Michaels, PD for KTTS Springfield, Mo., says the song hits home.

“I grew up in a small town in the South, so there was an instant personal connection,” Michaels says. The message is very simple and relatable. There was an immediate buzz and lots of positive feedback with this song. People want to be comforted during tough times.”

On his first album, Carroll chronicled his desire to see his children in North Carolina after spending days on the road. His burgeoning success has made it tough to fulfill that commitment. “They are a big part of my life and I see them every chance I get,” he says of the three children who live with his ex-wife and the son he has with his current spouse.

Of course, promoting a new album makes that contact tougher. “I’ve been out three straight weeks,” he says of the days leading up to the album’s launch.

It’s a fact of life that’s also addressed on the new album. “Tears,” written by Arlis Albright and Ron Davis, speaks to the heartfelt song of communication with a child who lives with an ex. “All I do is think of her. And wonder how I’m gonna make things work.”

Carroll, who commutes between Nashville and North Carolina, says he’ll be on the “corn dog and funnel cake tour” this summer, meaning fairs and festivals. “He hopes to land a spot on a major tour in the fall.”

Named Billboard’s top new country artist for 2007, Carroll also hopes to emulate the career of another country artist. “I want to be George Strait,” he says. “For the next 30 years, if people are still coming to my shows to hear my music, that’s all I can hope for. I’d be nice to have a No. 1 or sell a million records, but that’s just a perk to the end goal.”

**MR. MULTIFORMAT:**

**JASON MRAZ**

**2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>March 15:</th>
<th>April 12:</th>
<th>May 3:</th>
<th>May 20:</th>
<th>June 20:</th>
<th>Aug. 25:</th>
<th>Sept. 20:</th>
<th>Oct. 18:</th>
<th>Nov. 22:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triple A</td>
<td>Chart debut</td>
<td>Adult Top 40 debut</td>
<td>Billboard Hot 100 debut</td>
<td>Mraz’s third album “We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.” debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 with 19,000.</td>
<td>Adults 18-49 No. 1 on top 30</td>
<td>Adult Contemporary debut</td>
<td>Adult Contemporary debut</td>
<td>Mainstream Top 40 chart debut</td>
<td>Hits No. 1 on Adult Top 40</td>
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<tr>
<td>92.9 WBBX</td>
<td>94.9 WMAY</td>
<td>97.9 WBBX</td>
<td>95.3 WBBX</td>
<td>94.9 WMAY</td>
<td>Hits No. 1</td>
<td>Adults 18-49 No. 1 on top 30</td>
<td>Adults 18-49 No. 1 on top 30</td>
<td>Hits No. 1</td>
<td>Hits No. 1 on Mainstream Top 40</td>
</tr>
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**YOURS’ IN TIME**

In addition to topping four charts, Jason Mraz’s “I’m Yours” earned two Grammy Award nominations, including song of the year. The little single that could began its multi-chart journey in March 2008.

**2009**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>April 5:</th>
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<th>May 23:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hits No. 1 on Smooth Jazz chart</td>
<td>Adult Contemporary</td>
<td>Hits No. 1 on Smooth Jazz chart</td>
<td>Hits No. 1 on Adult Contemporary chart</td>
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**MAY 9, 2009 | www.billboard.biz | 65**
Molding Another Hit

Long known for exploring complex spiritual issues and social activism, Jars of Clay tackle different subject matter on "The Long Fall Back to Earth." Released April 21, the collection debuts at No. 1 this week on Billboard's Top Christian Albums chart and No. 29 on the Billboard 200 with sales of 15,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"A lot of what we talked about on [Jars of Clay's 2006 CD] 'Good Monsters' was the need to be in community with other people and care about what was happening in the world," lead vocalist Dan Haseltine says. "What we found inspiring for 'Earth' were the relationships around us." Haseltine drew inspiration from his experiences as a husband and parent. "Dealing with interpersonal relationships meant we couldn't write in the same kind of language we would normally use," he says. "The metaphors and the actual imagery had to be more specific. It was difficult finding a place where I actually felt I was writing honestly and poetically—but not so poetically that it became a barrier to understanding the song. What these songs are about is a bit more clearer than on any other Jars record."

"Earth" reunites Jars' Haseltine, Charlie Lowell, Stephen Mason and Matt Odmark with Provident Music Group. After 12 years on Essential Records, the band left in 2007 to start its own imprint, Gray Matters. "Going into this record we didn't have quite the team of people we needed to pull everything off and not kill people in the process," Haseltine says. "So we went back to Provident."

Provident will handle marketing and distribution as well as promotion of the single, "Two Hands," which is No. 13 on Billboard's Hot Christian Songs chart. In addition to visiting radio stations, the band has been active online with Twitter updates, MySpace posts and e-mail blasts.

"Through MySpace we premiered two songs a week leading up to the release date so fans got a taste of the whole record," says Provident Label Group senior VP of marketing and sales Ben Howard. Fans can also buy a limited-edition package that includes the 14-track CD, a double-vinyl LP, an autographed 12-page oversized booklet with handwritten lyrics, an exclusive EP with three bonus tracks and three remixes, a DVD with extended song-by-song footage, a special access tour laminate and a full-album MP3 download. —Deborah Evans Price
iTunes Pass Pops Onto Chart; Box Office Matters

Rick Ross debuts at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with "Deeper Than Rap" selling 158,000 copies in its first week. It's the third top for the artist. His last set, 2008's "Trilla," bowed at No. 1 with 198,000, while 2006's "Port of Miami" ruled the chart with 187,000.

Roses bumps the "Hannah Montana: The Movie" soundtrack from the top slot, as the Miley Cyrus set slips to No. 2 with 104,000 (down 22%). Meanwhile, on the Top Country Albums chart, the "Hannah" album is granted entrance to the tally (see Between the Bullets, page 75).

MUSIC FOR THE MASSES: Depeche Mode's "Sounds of the Universe" starts at No. 3 with 80,000, giving the veteran band its second-highest-charting album. Only "Songs of Faith and Devotion," which bowed at No. 1 in 1993, has gone higher. "Sounds" was the first album offered in the new iTunes Pass format, which launched Feb. 24. The Pass, priced at $19.99, gives consumers the full album on a street date, in addition to a wealth of content that was distributed in the weeks leading up the set's release.

Before street date, Pass purchasers received the album's first single, "Wrong," its music video, a short film, and six remixes. On the set's release day, its remaining 13 songs became available, along with another four remixes. Next, another seven tracks are scheduled to be disseminated in the Pass, before it expires June 16. All told, the "Sounds" Pass will have released 31 tracks and two videos. (A bargain for rabid fans, considering the $19.99 price.)

Apple doesn't have a minimum requirement on the number of tracks included in a Pass, and labels set the price. However, Apple does encourage labels to distribute an ample amount of content for a reasonable price throughout the duration of the Pass.

On April 21, Dave Matthews Band's "Big Whiskey and theGroogrux King" became the third title to launch as an iTunes Pass. The Pass spent its first week lodged in the iTunes Store's often-updated top 10-selling albums list since its debut. While the Pass' sales haven't been disclosed, one can make an educated guess that it had to have sold at least as much as the No. 10 seller on this week's Top Digital Albums chart—Pet Shop Boys' "Yes," which sold 6,000. That's a nice first week for a new configuration of an album that doesn't street until June 2.

Sales for digital artist/album passes, like the iTunes Pass, will be aggregated and held for street date by Nielsen SoundScan if the proposed purchase ultimately promises the consumer a multitrack album download at a designated release date. For sales to be aggregated and held, a "Pass" must be predefined, with the description submitted to SoundScan and Billboard at least two weeks before the initial sales date.

For the complete list of guidelines and conditions about the pass format, e-mail keaulife@billboard.com.

TUNE-UP: For the third weekend in a row, the No. 1 film at the U.S. and Canadian box office starred an actor/singer who had previously charted a No. 1 album on the Billboard 200.

The top grosser during the April 24-26 weekend was BEYONCE'S "Obsessed," with $29 million, bumping Zac Efron's "17 Again" out of the top slot. Miley Cyrus' "Hannah Montana: The Movie" started the trifecta during the April 10-12 weekend.

Beyoncé has natched three solo No. 1 albums and two others with Destiny's Child and was also a primary performer on the No. 1 "Dreamgirls" soundtrack. Efron has been part of two No. 1s—the first two soundtracks of the "High School Musical" film franchise. Cyrus has claimed two No. 1s under her own name and another as part of the first "Hannah Montana" TV soundtrack and the recent big-screen "Hannah" soundtrack.

Unlike Cyrus in "Hannah Montana: The Movie," neither Efron nor Beyoncé sing onscreen. Although in "17," Efron's popular basketball player dances a bit—a clear way to his star-making turn as the b-ball-playing Troy in "High School Musical."

The next No. 1 movie at the box office, presumably "X-Men Origins: Wolverine," will keep its peak alive. While its star, Hugh Jackman, won the 2004 Tony Award for best actor in a musical for "The Boy From Oz," he has yet to appear on a No. 1 Billboard 200 album.

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Market Watch

Weekly Unit Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>ALBUMS</th>
<th>DIGITAL ALBUMS</th>
<th>DIGITAL TRACKS</th>
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<td>Last Week</td>
<td>6,163,000</td>
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"Digital album units are sold counted within album sales ."

Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>134.3 million</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type

Buy the latest album from your favorite artist at your local music store.

ALBUM SALES

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<tr>
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<td>Cassette</td>
<td>38,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type

For the week ending April 25, 2009. Figures are calculated by tracking sales at retail stores by Nielsen SoundScan. Nielsen SoundScan is the largest and most authoritative source of sales data and music sales research conducted and compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.

Visit www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
| ARTIST NAME | SINGLE TITLE | WEEKS ON CHART | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK | WEEK |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Jason Mraz | The Girl I Used To Know | 12 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 | 104 |
| Martina McBride | A New Day's Dawning | 5 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 105 |
| Shania Twain | Up | 1 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 |
| Taylor Swift | Beautiful | 1 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| My Chemical Romance | The Black Parade | 1 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 | 111 |
| Taylor Swift | Paradise | 1 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 | 112 |
| The Black Eyed Peas | I Gotta Feeling | 1 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 |
| Adele | Chasing Pavements | 1 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 |
| Black Eyed Peas | Boom Boom Pow | 1 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 |
| The Black Eyed Peas | Boom Boom Pow | 1 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |
| The Game feat. Beyonce | Holla At Me | 1 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 |
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| The Game feat. Beyonce | Holla At Me | 1 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 |
| The Game feat. Beyonce | Holla At Me | 1 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 |

...and many more...
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### Exclusive Charts from Billboard.biz

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### Between The Bulletts

**THE BOYS ARE BACK**

They last appeared on the Billboard 200 on the May 18, 1985, tally—almost exactly 24 years ago. Now, the Oak Ridge Boys return to the chart with "A Gospel Journey" at No. 154, selling slightly more than 3,000 copies. The live set, part of the Gaither Gospel Series, also brings the iconic act onto Top Country Albums at No. 28 and Top Christian Albums at No. 14. It's the first time the quartet has charted on the latter list since "Colon" peaked at No. 37 in 2003.

The group has a new secular studio album coming, too. Due May 19, "The Boys Are Back" features tunes written by Janney Johnson, Shooter Jennings and Jack White.

—Keith Caulfield
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>Wiz Khalifa</td>
<td>Interscope, Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s Not Love</td>
<td>Keyshia Coley</td>
<td>Confident/Universal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ain’t That (Good)</td>
<td>Flo Rida, Jeezy</td>
<td>Interscope, Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gun</td>
<td>2 Chainz, The Game</td>
<td>Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn Me On</td>
<td>A-Trak, Official Dogg</td>
<td>Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where It's At</td>
<td>Macklemore &amp; Ryan Lewis</td>
<td>Interscope, Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Me Home</td>
<td>Iggy Azalea, T.I.</td>
<td>Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Stop/Better Off</td>
<td>Justin Bieber, Big Sean</td>
<td>Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give It to Me</td>
<td>Calvin Harris</td>
<td>Republic/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Way I Want To Be</td>
<td>Jhene Aiko</td>
<td>Terminator, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ain’t Talkin’ Bout Nothing</td>
<td>The Weeknd, Daft Punk</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love You Like That</td>
<td>Whigielan</td>
<td>Columbia/UMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>The Chainsmokers</td>
<td>Columbia/UMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy</td>
<td>The Weeknd, Daft Punk</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here Comes Goodbye</td>
<td>Anna Kendrick, A$AP Rocky</td>
<td>Columbia/Atlantic Records, Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock To the Music</td>
<td>Big Sean</td>
<td>Def Jam/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let It Rock</td>
<td>OneRepublic</td>
<td>RCA/WEA/Motown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help!</td>
<td>Demi Lovato</td>
<td>RCA/WEA/Motown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All The Time</td>
<td>Tove Lo</td>
<td>Republic/Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock N Roll (Funkin’ for You 'Til You Can Get Good)</td>
<td>The Chainsmokers, Halsey</td>
<td>Columbia/UMG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ALBUM CHARTS

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/hot soul charts is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national sample of core stores that specialize in those genres. Albums with the greatest sales gains this week are highlighted.

#### PRICING/CONFIGURATION/AVAILABILITY

CDs and DVDs are priced at suggested retail and are listed as available, unless they are listed as out of print or not available. Pricing and availability information is obtained from record labels.

#### ADJUSTED WEEKLY RANKINGS

All charts except the Hot 100, Hot Digital Albums, and Hit Predictor are based on a 52-week rolling period. Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart’s largest unit increase.

#### RECURRENT RULES

Singles are removed from the Billboard Hot 100 if they remain on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Singles are removed from the Pop 100 and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs charts, respectively, if they have been on for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Singles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks. Singles that rank below No. 10 in district sales and Hot Airplay are removed if the week they enter No. 10 and post a first tracking week drop from the prior week in both categories. Singles that are removed from Hot Latin Songs and Hot Latin Albums Charts after 20 weeks are removed from Adult Contemporary and Adult Top 40 if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 15. If they have been on the chart for more than 26 weeks and rank below No. 15, or if they have been on the chart for more than 32 weeks and rank below No. 50, they are removed from Adult Contemporary and Adult Top 40. If they have been on the chart for more than 40 weeks and rank below No. 50, they are removed from both Hot Country and Hot Country Albums charts. Singles are removed from Hot Christian AC Songs, Hot Gospel Songs and Smooth Jazz Songs charts if they have been on for more than 100 weeks and rank below No. 15 (No. 20 for Mainstream Top 40, Modern Rock, Mainstream B/W/Hip-Hop/Blues/Rhythms/POP/Rock, Mainstream B/W/Hip-Hop/Blues/Rhythms/POP/Rock, Mainstream B/W/Hip-Hop/Blues/Rhythms/POP/Rock, Mainstream B/W/Hip-Hop/Blues/Rhythms/POP/Rock). Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart’s largest unit increase.
### POP/ROCK
#### MAINSTREAM TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Promotion/Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Right Round</td>
<td>Flo Rida feat. Kesha</td>
<td>SONY BMG (Epic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boom Boom Boom</td>
<td>Black Eyed Peas feat. Fergie</td>
<td>LAKEFACE/JLG (Interscope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I Want Love</td>
<td>Katy Perry feat.LMFAO</td>
<td>PARADISE COVE (Atlantic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baby One More Time</td>
<td>Britney Spears</td>
<td>JIVE/JLG (Jive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shout It Out</td>
<td>The Scene feat. Max</td>
<td>CAPITOL (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### ADULT TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Promotion/Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You Found Me</td>
<td>Delta Goodrem</td>
<td>ELEPHANT (DSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If I Ever Hate Again</td>
<td>Daughtry</td>
<td>ELEPHANT (DSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jason's Girl</td>
<td>Jason Mraz</td>
<td>ELEPHANT (DSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My Life Would Suck Without You</td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson</td>
<td>ELEPHANT (DSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I Believe</td>
<td>LeAnn Rimes</td>
<td>ELEPHANT (DSP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### MODERN ROCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Promotion/Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Northern Sun</td>
<td>Friendly Fires</td>
<td>CAPITOL (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Twenty</td>
<td>Cold War Kids</td>
<td>CAPITOL (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Love You Save</td>
<td>The Drums</td>
<td>CAPITOL (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Last Romance</td>
<td>The Raveonettes</td>
<td>CAPITOL (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I Believe</td>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>CAPITOL (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete chart data.

---

**Note:** The above chart data is a representation of the Billboard magazine's weekly chart for May 9, 2009. The charts are based on sales, airplay, and streaming data from the previous week. The charts are compiled and published weekly to reflect the popularity of songs and artists in the United States.
## Japan
- **Billboard Japan Hot 100**
  - [May 9, 2009]

## United Kingdom
- **Singles**
  - [April 25, 2009]

## Germany
- **Singles**
  - [April 25, 2009]

## European Hot 100
- **Singles**
  - [April 25, 2009]

## Euro Digital Songs Spotlight
- **Finland**
  - [May 9, 2009]

## Italy
- **Digital Songs**
  - [April 27, 2009]

## Spain
- **Singles**
  - [April 25, 2009]

## Greece
- **Albums**
  - [April 24, 2009]

## Austria
- **Singles**
  - [April 27, 2009]

## Norway
- **Singles**
  - [April 25, 2009]

## Denmark
- **Singles**
  - [April 24, 2009]

## Netherlands
- **Singles**
  - [April 24, 2009]

## Billboard Airplay
- **Singles**
  - [April 25, 2009]

---

### France

### Canada

### Australia

### New Zealand

### Hungary

### United Arab Emirates

### Russia

### Belgium

### Croatia

### Indonesia

### India

### South Korea

### China

### Japan

---

**Weekly Chart Activities**

- **Go to www.billboard.biz** for complete chart data.

---

**Charts Legend**

Data for week of May 9, 2009
| A | ALWAYS STRAPPED (Money Mack, BMVYoung Money) | 1. CHOCOLATE HIGH (Gold | 2. BEAUTIFUL (B.vef Productions) | 3. AMAZING | WBM Publishing, Mwamer- Tamerlane Publishing Corp. |
| B | | | | | |
| C | | | | | |
| D | | | | | |
| E | | | | | |
| F | | | | | |
| G | | | | | |
| H | | | | | |
| I | | | | | |
| J | | | | | |
| K | | | | | |
| L | | | | | |
| M | | | | | |
| N | | | | | |
| O | | | | | |
| P | | | | | |
| Q | | | | | |
| R | | | | | |
| S | | | | | |
| T | | | | | |
| U | | | | | |
| V | | | | | |
| W | | | | | |
| X | | | | | |
| Y | | | | | |

Data for week of MAY 9, 2009 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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Tracy Austin
Program Director
WRQX/Washington
HOT AC

Leo Baldwin
Program Director
WRIF/Detroit
URBAN/URBAN AC

Cliff Blake
Director, Northeast Promotion
Columbia/Sony Music Nashville
COUNTRY

Sonya Blakey
Program Director
WGRB-AM/Chicago
GOSPEL

Derrick Brown
Program Director
WVAZ/Detroit
URBAN/URBAN AC

Natalie Connor
Vice President / Market Manager
WRIF/WRIF/Philadelphia
COUNTRY

Carl Craft
Program Director
WVNU/Michigan-Ocean
ACTIVE ROCK

Mark Czarra
VP of Promotion
Universal
ALTERNATIVE

Keith Dakin
Program Director
WTKF/Boston
ALTERNATIVE

Craig Davis
VP of Urban Promotion
Capital
URBAN/URBAN AC

Mike DePippa
VP of Alternative & Rock Promotion
Capitol
ALTERNATIVE

Kerry Douglas
President/CEO
Worldwide Gospel
GOSPEL

Wendy Goodman
VP of Promotion, Adult Formats
RCA
AC/MAC

DJ Mister Cee
Mix Show Coordinator
WQX/WQX/Philadelphia
MIX SHOW

Kevin Harrington
VP of Promotions
Atlantic Special Ops
COUNTRY

D.A. Johnson
Exec. Dir., Gospel Division
Malaco
GOSPEL

Wendy Goodman
VP of Promotion, Adult Formats
RCA
AC/MAC

Chris Green
Sr. Dir. Mix Show & Lifestyle Promotion
Capitol
MIX SHOW

Tyson Haller
Sr. Director Promotion
LG
ACTIVE ROCK

Lee Leipsner
Sr. VP of Pop Promotion
Columbia
CHR/TOP 40

CeCe Mcghee
APD/MD
WPHI/Philadelphia
GOSPEL

Joel Klaibman
VP Promotion & Artist Development
Universal Republic
CHR/TOP 40

Chuck Knight
Program Director
WBEA/Chicago
AC

Sujit Kundu
VP of Rhythm Crossover
Universal Motown
RHYTHMIC

Benny Pough
Sr. VP of Urban Promotion
Def Jam
URBAN/URBAN AC

Willie Mae McIver
Program Director
Recipe! Musical Soulfood
GOSPEL

Bo Money
URBAN/URBAN AC

Patricia Morris
VP of Adult Formats
Capitol
AC/MAC

Brian Nolan
Mix Show & Rhythmic Promo.
Columbia
MIX SHOW

Gary Spangler
VP of Crossover
Universal Republic
RHYTHMIC

Azim Rashid
Sr. VP of Promotion
Atlantic Special Ops
URBAN/URBAN AC

Tawanda Shamley
VP of Radio Promotion
Empro Gospel
GOSPEL

Elroy Smith
Operations Manager
Radio One/Philadelphia
URBAN/URBAN AC

Dylan Sprague
Program Director
KALC/Denver
HOT AC

Dom Theodore
VP of CHR/Pop Programming
CBS Radio
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THE BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC CONFERENCE & AWARDS
PRESENTED BY STATE FARM IN ASSOCIATION WITH VERIZON LIVE FROM THE EDEN ROC RESORT & SPA IN MIAMI BEACH

The Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards, presented by State Farm in association with Verizon, celebrated two decades of Latin music with style, fun and plenty of business April 20-24 at Miami's Eden Roc Resort. Artistic and entrepreneurial conversations and numerous showcases featuring new and established acts dominated the Miami landscape.

Despite the recession, this year's conference brought out the industry in droves and into serious discussions of how to maximize profits and develop synergies with other industries, from TV and radio to brands and marketers. Select-O-Hits president Johnny Phillips said, "The networking opportunities were many and I feel we came out of this year's conference a much stronger and viable independent distribution option."

The conference ended with the Billboard Latin Music Awards, which aired live April 23 on Telemundo and was broadcast in 55 countries. Throughout the show, 5.5 million unique viewers ages 2-plus tuned in. The awards averaged a record-breaking 1.3 million viewers ages 18-49, growing 22% from last year and attracting 2.3 million total people. SOURCES: OMNITURE, SINGLEPOINT, RE/MARKET-AND NET PROGRAM RATINGS. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARNOLD TURNER/A TURNER ARCHIVES (except where noted)

BELOW: From digital album sales to personalized, commercial Web sites, the "Expanding Digital World" panel focused on new technologies to commercialize and promote music and artists. Music Ally (U.K.) head of research/business analyst Jean Paz (far left) moderated the session, which also featured (from left) Digi Cards CEO Gerardo Alfonz-Ortega, Musica executive director Felipe Llerena, SoundExchange Latin outreach director Lupe De La Cruz, MyContent.com co-founder/chief creative officer Pablo Jafet and Warner Music Latin America VP of business development Alfredo Perez Soto.

The marriage of big brands to big musical ventures and the viability of new music as a business was the topic of discussion at the "How to Create an International Music Brand" panel. From left: Latin Recording Academy president Gabriel Alarcon, State Farm advertising director Edward C. Gold, Billboard executive director of Latin content and programming Leila Cobo and Eventus Marketing CEO Nelson Albareda.

The defects and virtues of Arbitron's handheld ratings device, the Portable People Meter, as well as what listeners want to hear, were discussed at the "Radio Days" panel. From left: Valiente Entertainment CEO Jose "Pompi" Valiente, Sunbiree Integrated Solutions president Marilyn Santiago, Billboard Latin correspondent Ayala Ben-Yehuda who moderated, Spanish Broadcasting System (SB) morning show host Ali Fuentez, and SB's broadcasting exec Leticia del Monte.

Arpa Music VP Alejandro Garza (left) collected the publisher of the year award for his SB-affiliated company during the Billboard Bash. He is pictured with singer/songwriter Espinosa Paz, who won the songwriter of the year award and performed at the Bash.

The Miami-based trio 3 de la Habana, left, signed to Rafael Records, performed live at the Eden Roc Cocktails Reception, along with new acts (left) Rafael Records and Agina (Floyd Records).

Backstage at the BankUnited Center prior to the Billboard Latin Music Awards, from left: KPRC Business Media senior VP of media and entertainment Gerry Byrne, Billboard publisher/Nelson VP of licensing Howard Appelbaum and Telemundo Communications president Don Browne.

MTV TVS gathered key insights from its "Coupure" panel of young U.S. Hispanics during the conference's teen session. On stage are MTV TVS VP of research and consumer insights Nancy Tellet and Jesus Lara, senior VP of music and talent/art relations for MTV TVS and MTV/VH1 Latin America.

Touring models, sponsorship opportunities and ticket prices were the topics of discussion at the opening touring panel. From left: NYC Productions president Ari Kaduri, AEG Live VP of touring, strategic development and special projects Jason Greene, William Morris Agency VP/hed of Latin touring Michel Vega, CNN Events VP of event marketing and sponsorship Elena Solomayor, and Limeic's auditorio Nacional director Francisco Serrano, who moderated.

The Puerto Rican Latin Soul hit "Salsa Que Te Paga" by Lito Gelm was one of the hits at the "How to Create a Million Dollar Hit" panel. From left: Billboard executive editor Alfonso Perez Soto, BMI publisher Sidney Bader and BMI composer Danilo Del Rio.

MTV TVS gathered key insights from its "Womyn" panel of young U.S. Hispanics during the conference's teen session. On stage are MTN TVS VP of research and consumer insights Nancy Tellet and Jesus Lara, senior VP of music and talent/art relations for MTV TVS and MTV/VH1 Latin America.
Cuban singer Albita, fresh from the release of her new album, "Mi Tierra," performed at the TMX Music Showcase presented by EMI Music. Cuban singer O'Shea performed at the Billboard & Coca-Cola concert presented by Gibson, Here's a look at the show. Credit: MANNY HERNANDEZ /MHPIX.

The Urban Movement Past & Present session, a retrospective of urban music in the United States, kicked things off from last year. Billboard partnered with Creative Media Group for its first Urban Mixx day, featuring two all-star panels.

Complex deals require working with the artist and the record label at the same time. Billboard's director of digital content & marketing editor Bill Werde, editorial director Michele Jacangelo and Cobo,以及会员 Alexandra Jaramillo; ASCAP CEO senior group account director Carlos Munoz; Latin/2 Latin Marketing & Communications founder/president Mindy Figueroa, who moderated, and David Chavez, Latin/Points CEO and executive producer of the ALMA Awards, the sports awards show, and the Billboard Music National Convention.

The top winner of the Billboard Latin Music Awards was EMI/Televisa artist Flex, who also performed at the Billboard Bash and participated in the BMI songwriter panel honoring Flex's multiple wins. Latin music chairman Ben Feigenbaum (right) presented the artist with Locman's Latin Lover watch during the conference.

Coca-Cola and Burger King held a sweepstakes at the latter's Latin American booth with top luxe winners to the Billboard Latin Music Awards. Backstage at the awards, from right, are: Billboard managing editor for Latin America Marcia Olival; Oscar López, CFO of the Burger King account team and Latin/Points, and his guest, and Billboard publisher/Heidi Klum of "Scarsky - Howard Appelbaum.

Los Felinos de la Noche, the regional Mexican band created and sponsored by State Farm, performed at the Billboard Bash. Credit: COPYRIGHT OF MAGGIE ROBERTS.

Backstage from left: Billboard editorial director Bill Werde, executive director of conferences and special events Michele Jacangelo and Cobo, as well as ASCAP's senior VP/group account director Carlos Munoz; Latin/2 Latin Marketing & Communications founder/president Mindy Figueroa, who moderated, and David Chavez, Latin/Points CEO and executive producer of the ALMA Awards, the sports awards show, and the Billboard Music National Convention.

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Conference attendees were able to test our Gibson's newest guitars at the company's display stage in the main ballroom. Laemmle Award nominee Locos por Juana performed live at the Eden Roc during the three-day event. A giant Gibson guitar, part of the Miami Guitar Town exhibit, ranked the stage.

Backpage
The 23rd annual Billboard Latin Music Conference and Awards event in Miami Beach.

**BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC CONFERENCE & AWARDS**

- Organizing the pre-awards VIP reception, from left, are State Farm advertising director Edward C. Gold, marketing manager Karen Noel and creative director Tim Van Nort.
- The partnership of TV and music and the challenges of sync deals were discussed at the "Music and Television" panel. From left: Spanish Broadcasting System executive VP/chief creative officer Cynthia Hudson, MTV/VHI Latin America senior VP of creative, content and music Jose Tillan, who moderated; Telmundo Network Group VP of music affairs Margaret Guerra Rogers; and Billboard executive director of Latin content and programming Leila Cobo.

**BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC CONFERENCE & AWARDS**

Jorge and Hernán Hernández of Los Tigres del Norte announced their new partnership with Verizon at the conference. From left: Jesús López, president of Universal Music Latin Entertainment and chairman/CEO of Universal Music Latin America/Caribbean Peninsula; Jorge hernández, Verizon Wireless director of digital content and programming; Ed Ruth, Hernán Hernández, and Dina Fonovisa president Gustavo López.

**BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC CONFERENCE & AWARDS**

Victor Harvey, owner/president of V. Georgis Vodka, the official vodka of the conference, poses with models outside the awards afterparty at Bombay's night out.

**BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC CONFERENCE & AWARDS**

Liz Roberts, a two-time Billboard Latin Music Awards finalist for her song "Así—a duet with Jose Feliciano—performed at the Billboard Bash.

**BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC CONFERENCE & AWARDS**

It was a meeting of brains, beauty and talent at the women's panel, which brought together top artists and songwriters. Backstage at the speakers' green room, from left, are Sony Music artist Kany Garcia, Universal Music Latino artist Fanny Lu, Billboard executive director of Latin content and programming Leila Cobo, songwriter Claudia Brant and Universal Music Latino artist Janina.
Muchas Gracias
to all the speakers, performers, sponsors and participants!

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