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A New Era Of Unity

BY MITCH BAINWOL, DAVID ISRAELITE AND NEIL PORTNOW

The creation of music is rarely a solitary experience. It requires tremendous collaboration to bring a song from a writer’s pen to a listener’s ears.

The same is true for the music business. Without harmony among the various members of our community, we’ve been vulnerable to discord that can hold back our mutual aspirations. Fortunately, the long fragmented industry has found ways to work together in recent years, jointing hands in unprecedented fashion and achieving results.

Each of us represents a different constituency within the music community: labels, music publishers and recording artists. Together with the heads of other trade groups representing nearly every sector of the industry, we’ve all been working together in ways that were once unthinkable. Consider:

■ The U.S. Copyright Office recently published mechanical rates for interactive streaming and limited downloads. Unresolved for more than seven years, the establishment of the new rates was the result of a landmark agreement party developed at a summit of the trade group CEOs. Subsequent negotiations led to a solution that will allow new business models to flourish while providing fair compensation to all parties.

■ The recording and music publishing industries agreed to resolve a decades-long division over a terrestrial radio performance right, with publishing interests agreeing not to oppose legislation currently before Congress that would establish that right.

■ Label representatives agreed not to gress we would hear a consistent refrain from policymakers: “Don’t expect us to solve your problems; agree as an industry on solutions and we will implement them.” We took those words to heart and the significant accomplishments listed above are a testament to our collective resolve. As our community works together to continue the transition to a digital marketplace, cooperation is more important than ever. This new era of unity among the following organizations will produce great results for music creators and music fans:


Mitch Bainwol is chairman/CEO of the RIAA. David Israelite is president/CEO of the National Music Publishers’ Assn. Neil Portnow is president/CEO of the Recording Academy.

For The Record

■ Dutch pension fund ABP manages about €200 billion ($263 billion) in assets. A May 2 story was incorrect on this point.

The producers of Fox's "American Idol" have always been willing to tinker with the show's format to keep it fresh. But as the show's eighth season, which featured the arrival of fourth judge Kara DioGuardi, gears up for its May 20 finale, they're making changes behind the scenes as well.

At the center of all the activity is "Idol" creator and 19 Entertainment founder/CEO Simon Fuller, who wants to extend the reach of the brand and find ways to integrate the show's various international versions. He also hasn't ruled out trying to take 19 private again after selling the company in 2005 to the publicly traded entertainment content company CKX. Whatever happens, "Idol" remains firmly anchored at Fox. The four-year contract signed in 2005 is up after this season, but the show will be automatically renewed for two more years under an option Fox has based on the show's ratings.

Fuller is working to expand the "Idol" footprint beyond just TV and recorded music. Recent licensing deals include Electronic Arts for mobile and iPhone games, Konami for a karaoke videogame, Sulake: Habbo Hotel for virtual "Idol" products and Upper Deck, which is about to launch a line of trading cards. An "Idol"-themed attraction opened in February at Florida's Walt Disney World and quickly became the most popular at the park.

"It's been a greater response than we ever expected," says Michael Jung, VP of creative entertainment for Walt Disney Imagineering. "Idol" is a perfect marriage for Disney because it is an aspirational show. Fuller also sees opportunities to capitalize on the international versions of "Idol" by adopting a more integrated approach to the global franchise.

"For example, where we're having a live situation in America, that could be shared around the world in different ways to enhance the local versions," he says. "Simon [Cowell] is a megastar in Britain and in America, but he's not on any of the other shows. And the world's a big place. There is still immense opportunity for growth."

Doing so could also help "Idol" hold on to Cowell, who says he hasn't decided whether to stay with the show after his current contract expires at the end of next season (Billboard, May 9).

"I don't think he's going to be going anytime soon," Fuller says. "I do think he wants to evolve and there are many ways for him to evolve with "Idol.""

The "Idol" format has been sold in 42 territories and now reaches more than 100 countries. In most, as in the United States, it's a top 10 ratings juggernaut. The result has been huge profits for Fox Broadcasting, Fuller, 19 Entertainment, global distributor Fremantle (a division of the Euro broadcaster RTL, which is 90%-owned by Germany's Bertelsmann AG) and other broadcasters worldwide.

According to a CXX filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, 19's 2008 revenue from "Idol," including international format sales, syndication, merchandise and touring, was $95 million, up from $83.1 million in 2007. License fees and sponsorships added $15 million and sales of recorded music $43.3 million. After deducting costs, "Idol" worldwide produced a profit of $74 million for 19.

Fremantle, which splits "Idol" profits with 19, made a similar amount. News Corp.'s Fox pays a reported $40 million license fee to air "Idol" each year and a performance premium that this year will reach $30 million.

Fox executive VP of sales Jean Ross won't say how much the network charges for advertising, but 30-second spots for the final two shows in May (which last year reportedly cost more than $1.3 million each) were nearly sold out two months in advance of the air-dates. Reports peg a 30-second spot during a regular-season broadcast as costing $750,000, the highest of any show on TV.

Fox aired 52.5 hours of "Idol" last season and also has lucrative sponsorship deals.

"We're one of the few entertainment companies whose profits have grown remarkably year to year," Fuller says. "If you look at 'American Idol,' it makes about 90% of the profits."

Fuller says he'd still like to lead a buyout to take 19 private again. Fuller and CKX chairman Robert F.X. Sillerman attempted to buyout CKX in 2007 but the deal collapsed last year when the banking crunch hit.

"That simply was not the right time to buy the company back," Fuller says. "We felt we should wait and let things settle before we make any decisions. Personally, I'd love to take it private. But for the time being we're still a public company."

Fuller waves off concerns that the show's ratings for "Idol" were down a bit from last year, noting that broadcast ratings in general are eroding. The show still commands by far the largest U.S. prime-time audience, averaging 25 million viewers per episode, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Besides, says Fuller, "Idol" has positioned itself to capture fans — and advertisers — wherever they are.

"Maybe they're going out more and that's great because they may be going to see the 'American Idol' concert or listening to 'American Idol' music online or visiting American Idol.com," Fuller says. "We're everywhere anyway, so as people migrate from one form of entertainment to another, chances are 'American Idol' is still in their life."
Havana Dreaming

Obama Raises Hopes For Revived U.S. Interest In Cuban Music

As the annual Cuban music trade fair Cubadisco kicks off May 16 in Havana, promoters in the United States are hoping that a thaw in relations with Cuba could revive interest in the island's music.

Encouraged by President Barack Obama's remarks in April that he's seeking a "new day" in relations with Cuba, U.S. promoters have quietly begun planning state-side concerts for early as late as June, pending their ability to secure permission from the U.S. Department of State to perform in this country. Washington, D.C., hasn't authorized such visits since 2003.

The a cappella group Vocal Sampling, an international festival favorite, and the Grammy Award-nominated traditional son ensemble Septeto Nacional have applied for U.S. visas. Los Van Van, the pioneering Castro-era dance group often referred to as the island's Rolling Stones, hopes to launch an extensive summer tour in the States. International Music Network, the Gloucester, Mass., booking agency that handled the Buena Vista Social Club's U.S. tour in the late '90s, is exploring the possibility of booking fall tour dates for some of the group's surviving members.

Fuego Entertainment president Hugo Cano, a Cuban-American promoter/label owner who presented some 80 concerts by various Cuban artists in the late '90s and early '00s, is awaiting a decision on the security clearances for Vocal Sampling's summer tour, which he plans to promote.

"I don't know if people here have forgotten about Cuban music," Cano says. "And I also don't know if this economy will put together the 17- or 18-gig tours the way we did before. I do know that the Cubans are continuing to make some of the best music in the world and that this is a natural market for those artists.

The Obama administration hasn't yet made drastic shifts in U.S. policy toward Cuba, lifting restrictions on the ability of Cuban-Americans to travel and send money to Cuba but keeping in place the decades-old U.S. trade embargo. Still, the conciliatory tone emanating from Washington has raised hopes of a further thaw.

"We hope that a 'new day' Obama talked about will be here soon," says San Francisco-based immigration attorney Bill Martinez, who is working to secure travel visas on behalf of iconic singer/songwriter/producer Silvio Rodriguez and other Cuban artists. Rodriguez had hoped to perform with Pete Seeger at his 90th-birthday celebration May 3 at New York's Madison Square Garden, but he didn't obtain a visa in time for the show. Tao Rodriguez-Seeger, Seeger's grandson (and no relation to Silvio Rodriguez), says he still hopes the Cuban singer will be able to perform at the Clearwater Festival June 20-21 in Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., an annual event benefiting Seeger's non-profit environmental organization Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. "It would be a shame to waste this opportunity," Rodriguez-Seeger says.

Cuban music enjoyed a boom in popularity in the United States after Washington exempted Cuban recordings and other "informational material" from the trade embargo in 1998 and later allowed Cuban artists to perform state-side, although under the condition that they receive no more than per diem payments. By 2000, hundreds of musicians from the island had performed in the States, most prominently the Buena Vista Social Club, whose 1997 CD-Cooher-produced album on Nonesuch went on to sell more than 1.8 million U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The George W. Bush administration subsequently reduced the number of Cuban artists allowed to perform state-side and stopped issuing visas altogether after 2003. Still, promoters say politics wasn't the only reason for Cuban music's failure to live up to its commercial promise in the U.S. market.

"The unfortunate side of Buena Vista Social Club and all of its spinoffs was that they saturated the market so heavily it got to a point that nobody wanted Cuban at all," IMG Artists managing director Elizabeth Sobol-Gonzalez says.

Meanwhile, younger artists who perform the fast-paced dance rhythms of timba and other contemporary Cuban styles have had difficulty translating their popularity among Cuban emigres and committed Cubans into broader commercial success. Even Los Van Van, Cuba's most popular band of the last four decades, has failed to gain more than a cult following in the States. Its latest album, "Arrasando" (Sony International), has sold only 1,000 U.S. copies since its release in January, according to SoundScan.

"Contemporary Cuban music is very virtuosic and interesting, but not well-known by the non-Cuban public," says Juan de Marcos González, the Cuban producer who brought the Buena Vista Social Club artists together in the studio for the sessions with Cooder.

"In general, for a lot of people the music is unintelligible and too explosive," Ramón Castán, who manages the Caribbean catalog at the Orchard, says the digital distributor has seen growing international demand for Cuban music during the last few years. If Cuban groups can resume state-side touring in support of new albums, Castán says, "it would boost sales 100%."...

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FIT FOR ROYALTY

Muzak Secures Strategic Partnership With RightsFlow

The royalty processing and licensing company RightsFlow has formed a strategic partnership with Muzak to help manage the latter's licensing and accounting.

RightsFlow, a New York-based company that launched in October 2007, will supplement the efforts of Muzak's in-house licensing staff. The deal comes three months after the Fort Mill, S.C.-based Muzak, which provides music to 400,000 retail stores, filed Feb. 10 for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

"During this important time in Muzak's history, we are continuing to invest in partnerships and ventures that enhance the productivity of our business," Muzak CEO Stephen Smith said in a statement.

RightsFlow says it will help streamline the licensing, accounting and payment of publishing royalties by Muzak's U.S. music distribution operations.

Published by ED CHRISTMAN

Publishing by BillBoard exclusive

www.americanradiohistory.com
We have unexpectedly lost a close friend, an exceptional human being and a passionate lover of music. We mourn the passing of the co-founder of Ariola.

Egmont Monti Lüftner
- November 12, 1931 † May 7, 2009

His commitment to artists, to our company and to the whole music industry will not be forgotten.

Sony Music Entertainment, New York and Munich
Senior Management,
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and Staff
As streaming music services struggle to generate enough advertising revenue to cover their licensing costs, the standard bearer for that model is looking for a new deal. Rather than seeking lower per-stream rates on all songs as other services have tried, industry sources say imeem is pursuing a different approach: offsetting the cost of streaming music with credits for any full-track downloads and ringtones it sells. The arrangement, they say, would lower licensing costs on the songs that users pay to buy.

According to sources familiar with the imeem negotiations, Universal Music Group is the only label to agree to the new terms. Sources say Warner Music Group (WMG) is the company’s next target.

Specific terms may vary from deal to deal, and no one is commenting publicly on the matter just yet. But one thing is certain—labels would earn less money under this arrangement, at least in the short term.

But that may be better than the alternative of having yet another ad-supported music service fail. The demise earlier this year of SpiralFrog and Ruckus and the struggles of Internet radio companies like Pandora to cope with higher performance royalty rates have illustrated the difficulty that streaming music services have in covering their licensing costs through advertising revenue alone.

More evidence: WMG revealed May 7 in its first-quarter earnings report that it recorded a $16 million charge to write off its investment in imeem and another $4 million charge to write off royalty payments that imeem owes it.

Imeem recently secured additional financing but, like other ad-supported services hit hard by slumping advertising spending, is still struggling to create a viable business model.

Using sales to offset music licensing costs has limitations, according to one move. Most ad-supported sites like imeem already include links to buy songs via iTunes or Amazon, but currently treat them as a user convenience rather than a potentially meaningful source of revenue. That’s because the affiliate fees they receive for linking buyers to other service are low—5% for iTunes and 20% for Amazon.

Still, an internal revenue analysis at imeem recently found that while ad revenue has been falling short of projections, purchases of full-track downloads and ringtones through outside partners were exceeding expectations. Track downloads are doing better in the United States, while ringtones are improving internationally.

But to capitalize on these sales, companies like imeem will have to shift the focus of their business from one where ad-supported streaming is the primary service to one where streaming drives music purchases. To offset licensing fees with music sales, as imeem is trying to do, streaming services need to know which songs are generating download sales. Such information is hard to come by. For example, iTunes—which handles the largest volume of click-through sales for these services—provides affiliates with virtually no data on song purchases.

The best way for these services to maximize their returns on music streams and downloads may be to bypass outside partners and sell downloads directly to customers. Most ad-supported services don’t have the technology to do this. Imeem does, thanks to its April 2008 acquisition of the digital music service and MySpace partner Sound. Sources say they expect imeem to launch its own download service by the summer, although it will keep its iTunes and Amazon links for the foreseeable future.

Direct download sales come with their own challenges. Streaming services would have to negotiate download licenses and face the daunting prospect of competing against much larger competitors, including iTunes. But if streaming sites can cut new deals with labels that lower licensing fees on streams in exchange for download sales, it would give imeem and its rivals an incentive to bulk up their sales efforts. And that could help grow the broader music download market, in addition to boosting ad-supported services.
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Music videos generate the most traffic on YouTube. Why are they difficult to monetize? There's a common misperception that music monetizes differently than other types of content on YouTube. I don't think it's any more difficult to monetize than anything else. In fact, we're seeing great strides in terms of monetization and in terms of attracting partners to the site.

But there are people in the music industry who feel they should be getting more money from YouTube based on the popularity of their videos. The industry is making this shift from selling in a physical world on a per-unit basis to looking at it on a per-user basis. It's also making that shift to an ad-supported model, where the advertiser ultimately dictates what something is worth. We wouldn't be in this business if we didn't think it was a good one. We obviously think it's a great model. But it's a different mind-set. The reality is, a lot of people do get it now. We have successful partnerships with most of the major record labels and thousands of independent record labels because I think they understand that. But you're never going to make enough money to make everybody happy.

Is YouTube under more pressure to deliver revenue? From the day the company launched in December 2005, we were under pressure to make money and that hasn't changed. The only thing that's changed is that the site is much bigger and much more visible. But we've never lost sight of the fact that this is a business and we're in it to be here long term, and in order to do that we need to make money.

Do you think high content-licensing fees or deal demands for large upfront payments hurt innovation in the digital music space? I do. Not to cast stones at any of my friends in the label business—that has been the case, but it's changing fast. It did stifle a lot of companies out there if you didn't have the capital and the connections to cut these deals. At YouTube, it took months of hard negotiation effort to get these deals signed. A lot of companies either didn't try from the start, gave up halfway through or ran out of money because the model didn't make sense. Now when I talk to people on record labels and I see how we're doing business with them, I think they finally get it. It needs to be a sustainable business and in an ad-supported world, we need to delight the advertiser and the user. If we do those two things, there's a lot of money in it for everybody.

How does Vevo address that? What's innovative in that model is that there's a financial structure that we think will work long term for everybody. You don't have one party walking away saying, "That didn't work for me." You're also seeing the label getting much more involved with how that content is getting monetized. It's no longer about having a really smart deal team and a bunch of good lawyers cutting a deal that's the most favorable for Universal and seeing if you can do it again in two years. It's about if they want to chart their own course as a label, they need to get a deeper understanding of what the consumers want and deeper relationships with advertisers. What [UMG chairman/CEO] Doug Morris put together recognizes that.

With Vevo and the new Shows channel, it appears you're trying to separate premium from user-generated content. We try to look at it as how users are trying to find content. In some of these cases, all we're trying to do is improve the discovery mechanism, because there is so much content. Fifteen hours of content is uploaded to the site every minute. So we're constantly experimenting with ways to make it easy for people to find. In the case of Vevo, what we're saying is that Vevo and Universal will be able to deliver a different kind of experience, a different choice for the user which is a deeper, richer experience when it comes to learning more about the artist and their tour dates and all that.

But isn't there a monetization benefit to separating premium content for advertisers? Certainly. Advertisers are used to buying in particular ways. When you're able to package a particular grouping of content or deliver a particular type of viewer, advertisers find that appealing. So that's the balance here. We always think of things first from the consumer's perspective because if we don't, then we won't have a service. But we also recognize you do need to listen to other very important constituencies, which are the partners that are providing the content and also the advertisers.

Is it still harder to monetize user-generated content than premium content? People often see that in black and white. It's either user-generated content or it's professionally produced content. But there are countless examples of content that is produced by an individual that is far superior than the content that we would get delivered by a large media company. I think advertisers understand that too. Maybe three years ago there was a perception that user-generated content was not a place where advertisers wanted to advertise. But if you look today, something like 70 of Ad Age's top 100 marketers ran campaigns on YouTube in 2008, and those generally spanned everything from the professionally produced to the user-generated and content campaigns.

What's your favorite music video? You're going to think this is such a cop-out, but I still love that OK Go treadmill video [for “Here It Goes Again”]. But the other one is [Weezer's] “Pork and Beans.” The guys at Universal sent me the video before it was even on YouTube and I was just like, "Wow." It was a stroke of genius. So that's my favorite example of best practices for how to market as a band.
the summer preview

Warm weather has always brought a heat wave of music—into record stores, out of car radios and at live venues everywhere. This season has plenty of potential hits (page 30), a resilient concert business (page 12) and a band that's using its tour to give away music (page 26). Here's our guide to hot fun in the summertime.
Despite Fears About The Economy, The Concert Business Isn’t Sweating—And It Might Not Need To

By Ray Waddell

In an episode of “The Sopranos,” Steve Van Zandt’s character Silvio Dante memorably reassures Tony Soprano that two businesses continue to thrive during a recession: “Entertainment, and our thing.”

The two ventures have something else in common: Everyone watches what everyone else is doing. “This is the music business, so there’s always rampant paranoia,” says Charlie Walker, partner in the Austin-based promoter C3 Presents. “The day you’re not paranoid is the day you start making serious mistakes. But it doesn’t seem like there’s a big panic out there or the sky is falling as far as the live business goes.”

Silvio might have been on to something. So far it appears the touring business will do just fine this summer. In the middle of the worst recession since concerts took place in opera houses and dance halls, this isn’t a summer when sellouts are dead but a summer when the Dead is selling out.

History is also on Silvio’s side, at least when it comes to live entertainment. In the last recession, in the summer of 2002, the concert business generated what were then all-time highs in dollars and attendance, according to Billboard Boxscore. In 1991, during the recession before that, the total concert gross did fall by nearly 12% but attendance was virtually flat, seemingly driven by more conservative pricing that brought fans to venues. Grosses leaped nearly 20% by 1992, hardly a booming economic year, and attendance jumped by almost 13%.
The summer of 2009 is shaping up as a busy one, to judge by early indicators. "So far the festival numbers are up, concert numbers look great, there are some real nice surprises on the upside of tours, and we're not seeing a lot of huge weakness," says Marc Geiger, head of contemporary music at the William Morris Agency.

Geiger says this should surprise no one. Movie industry trackers say Hollywood is heading toward its first $10 billion box-office year. "Everyone forgets entertainment does well in a recession," Geiger says. "I don't know if it's a record year, but I'll tell you one thing: I think some of these companies, ours included, will be having it if not their best year, their second-best year ever. You can't be calling that gloom and doom."

There are some signs of softness in the market. Star tickets that usually go for triple face value on secondary sites are now being spotted below that price in some markets, there have been scattered event cancellations, and there's talk that some sure things won't be the blowouts they would've been in years past.

There's also some contraction. The world's two largest promoters, Live Nation and AEG Live, reported fewer shows, by double-digit percentages, to Billboard Boxscore for first-quarter 2009, and executives at both companies admit they're evaluating tours with caution. A decade ago, Live Nation predecessor SFX was buying anything that moved; today, Live Nation and AEG are taking a more deliberate approach to buying talent.

Comparing year-to-year numbers this early in the calendar can be misleading because of last year's reporting, but they still paint a picture—though not one as dire as the 28% decrease in the number of shows reported so far would suggest. AEG Live has reported 23% fewer shows for the first-quarter to Boxscore, but still has Britney Spears, American Idols Live, Miley Cyrus and other big tours on the slate for 2009, as well as Michael Jackson's residency at the O2 Arena in London. "We're being more cautious," AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips says. "We didn't sit down and say, 'We've got to cut 25% of what we do.' There was no decision internally to do that. If that happened, there's either a lack of sufficient buy-in, or a combination of that and our buyers being more cautious with their spending."

Jason Garner, CEO of global music for Live Nation, says he expects his company to promote fewer shows in 2009, but he hopes to continue a trend of making each show more profitable by trimming dead weight and maximizing ancillaries. "We've spent a lot of time over the last couple of years working on the methodology we use to buy, and evidence will show we're buying better," he says. "We're focused on paring back that bottom rung of shows that hasn't been making us money, whether it's in the clubs, the theaters or the amphitheaters. So we may see a slightly reduced show count, and that's because we're 100% focused on how do we make every show as appealing to fans and as profitable for us as possible?"

Still, hardly anyone is talking about a collapse at the box office. "Things may appear bleak from a global perspective, but as people evaluate how to spend their discretionary dollars, live entertainment is something that they still value," says John Pagk, CEO of Philadelphia-based venue management firm Global Spectrum.

It could be that discretion is the better part of valor when it came to rolling out tours for 2009. "The sectors that might have had weakness may have been scared away, or the industry might have been smart enough to either lower prices or package up, or take an extra beat before going out into the marketplace," Geiger says.

The concert business is at the mercy of its headliners in any economic climate, and this summer's schedule boasts a wealth of proven movemakers. This is clearly not a time for experimentation. Dozens of tours are offering pricing, and a look at the tours that are laid out for 2009 shows lots of synergetic packaging. Where there was once one headliner, there are now two or even three. Among the stars heavy tours are Bob Dylan (John Melencamp/Willie Nelson, Aerosmith/ZZ Top, Eric Clapton/Steve Winwood and Elton John/Billy Joel, as well as multi-artist packages like Crue Fes, Van's Warped, Mayhem and Rock the Bells.

As always, fans will make choices, and history is riddled with the bodies of tours that misjudged the public in the past, like the derailed Diana Ross & the Supremes "reunion" of 2000 or the ill-fated Lollapalooza tour of 2004. The acts that should be worried are those that tour annually, overestimate their drawing power or play the wrong venues. "There are a few acts, but I don't think the acts are related to anything other than still records, overbooking and overthinking, and that's why we're getting a little advice," Geiger says.

No one is bulletproof. But U2, to cite one example, is doing what U2 should be doing: playing stadiums, selling out and heading for a place on the list of the biggest tours ever. Madonna's European continuation of last year's Sticky & Sweet tour, also produced by Live Nation, is selling out again; it has already grossed $1 million tickets in 120 shows in total, according to tour producer Arthur Fogel at Live Nation. Both tours point to the fact that "people are looking to buy tickets to great shows, and the great shows are being more responsible with their dates."

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There's also some contraction. The world's two largest promoters, Live Nation and AEG Live, reported fewer shows, by double-digit percentages, to Billboard Boxscore for first-quarter 2009, and executives at both companies admit they're evaluating tours with caution. A decade ago, Live Nation predecessor SFX was buying anything that moved; today, Live Nation and AEG are taking a more deliberate approach to buying talent.

Comparing year-to-year numbers this early in the calendar can be misleading because of last year's reporting, but they still paint a picture—though not one as dire as the 28% decrease in the number of shows reported so far would suggest. AEG Live has reported 23% fewer shows for the first-quarter to Boxscore, but still has Britney Spears, American Idols Live, Miley Cyrus and other big tours on the slate for 2009, as well as Michael Jackson's residency at the O2 Arena in London. "We're being more cautious," AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips says. "We didn't sit down and say, 'We've got to cut 25% of what we do.' There was no decision internally to do that. If that happened, there's either a lack of sufficient buy-in, or a combination of that and our buyers being more cautious with their spending."

Jason Garner, CEO of global music for Live Nation, says he expects his company to promote fewer shows in 2009, but he hopes to continue a trend of making each show more profitable by trimming dead weight and maximizing ancillaries. "We've spent a lot of time over the last couple of years working on the methodology we use to buy, and evidence will show we're buying better," he says. "We're focused on paring back that bottom rung of shows that hasn't been making us money, whether it's in the clubs, the theaters or the amphitheaters. So we may see a slightly reduced show count, and that's because we're 100% focused on how do we make every show as appealing to fans and as profitable for us as possible?"

Still, hardly anyone is talking about a collapse at the box office. "Things may appear bleak from a global perspective, but as people evaluate how to spend their discretionary dollars, live entertainment is something that they still value," says John Pagk, CEO of Philadelphia-based venue management firm Global Spectrum.

It could be that discretion is the better part of valor when it came to rolling out tours for 2009. "The sectors that might have had weakness may have been scared away, or the industry might have been smart enough to either lower prices or package up, or take an extra beat before going out into the marketplace," Geiger says.

The concert business is at the mercy of its headliners in any economic climate, and this summer's schedule boasts a wealth of proven movemakers. This is clearly not a time for experimentation. Dozens of tours are offering pricing, and a look at the tours that are laid out for 2009 shows lots of synergetic packaging. Where there was once one headliner, there are now two or even three. Among the stars heavy tours are Bob Dylan (John Melencamp/Willie Nelson, Aerosmith/ZZ Top, Eric Clapton/Steve Winwood and Elton John/Billy Joel, as well as multi-artist packages like Crue Fes, Van's Warped, Mayhem and Rock the Bells.

As always, fans will make choices, and history is riddled with the bodies of tours that misjudged the public in the past, like the derailed Diana Ross & the Supremes "reunion" of 2000 or the ill-fated Lollapalooza tour of 2004. The acts that should be worried are those that tour annually, overestimate their drawing power or play the wrong venues. "There are a few acts, but I don't think the acts are related to anything other than still records, overbooking and overthinking, and that's why we're getting a little advice," Geiger says.

No one is bulletproof. But U2, to cite one example, is doing what U2 should be doing: playing stadiums, selling out and heading for a place on the list of the biggest tours ever. Madonna's European continuation of last year's Sticky & Sweet tour, also produced by Live Nation, is selling out again; it has already grossed $1 million tickets in 120 shows in total, according to tour producer Arthur Fogel at Live Nation. Both tours point to the fact that "people are looking to buy tickets to great shows, and the great shows are being more responsible with their dates."
for the great live performers who deliver exciting production values," Fogel says.  

No one knows whether a rising tide will lift all boats or if fans will forgo Green Day for U2. But feelings like Couchella, Stagecoach and New Orleans' "Jazz & Heritage Festival" posted improved numbers in their 2009 runs, and forthcoming events like Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza and the Austin City Limits Festival are selling on par if not ahead of last year. "Bonnaroo is actually trending significantly stronger than last year as we get closer to the actual festival," says co-producer Ashley Capps, president of A.C. Entertainment. "Our daily counts are up significantly over last year, and we are now outpacing last year's sales."  

If the concert business isn't slumping, it's partly because the industry is trying to keep fans coming back by providing value. While that includes smart packaging and bang-for-buck superstar power, it begins with keeping ticket prices in line. And since those prices are driven mostly by talent costs, it seems clear concessions are being made to control them. "We're totally price-conscious, and we implore any of the agents and managers we're dealing with to be the same," Phillips says. "Give the consumer as much value and make it as cost-effective and easy to go to the show as possible."  

Therefore, the industry isn't pushing the envelope. "There's a lot of fix pricing going on, and there's a creativity factor from the promoters, the producers and even the venues in offering ideas on how to make a buck and get the business through volume," Page says. "We're looking for creative ways to offer fan club opportunities or packaging concepts. Value is selling."  

Garner says Live Nation is approaching pricing very cautiously and will offer 3.3 million summer amphitheater tickets that cost less than $30. "If you look at LiveNation.com you'll see that nearly every concert this year has some kind of promotion on it in our amphitheaters," Garner says. Price promotions and $10 lawn tickets abound on the low end, and value-adds like No Doubt offering its entire catalog of music with a reserved ticket add value to the high end (see story, page 26). Live Nation greatly expanded its four-for-the-price-of-three ticket promotion to almost all of its shed shows and even added a six-for-four option. Dave Matthews Band and Toby Keith are among the strong-selling acts that are still offering value pricing—and making sure people know about it.  

The industry had already been moving toward offering a wide range of price points, but scaling is more evident this year. Most prominently, U2 is offering at least 10,000 tickets per show for about $30. Any downward movement on pricing begins with an act that is willing to be flexible in its guarantees, as well as buy-in every step of the way along the value chain. Venue rental fees, splits on merchandise revenue, add-on fees by venues and ticketing companies, sponsors participation, concessions packages and other deals points cannot be carved in stone if the pie is sliced to allow tickets to be sold for less.  

Page says most venues are being flexible about cutting deals with promoters that allow both sides to make money, even if the gross potential has to be lowered. "That's where we're fortunate to work with the Live Nations and the AEGs of the world to really look at the creative concepts and see how we can work together to bring those shows not only to the major markets but also to the secondaries and territories," he says.  

Even so, the various players are still guarding their respective agendas. "The agents have a job to do, and their job is to get their bands the most money and the best slot they can get, and they try to do it," CZ's Walker says. "Everybody realizes it's a little bit more sensitive now than it was a year ago, but I don't think there's a fire sale out there. There are still a lot of festivals, a lot of demand for bands, especially the big bands, and we really still doing our jobs. We're all a little bit more sensitive, but nothing drastic."  

So far, though, concert business executives feel pretty good that Silvio's theory is playing out. And Geiger says industry players aren't just whistling past the graveyard. "We're all experts in reading numbers, we're not idiots," he says. "I can tell you between the advances and the walkups that this industry is in healthy shape right now. Operating under a little fear is good."  

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**memory bank**

**Nostalgia Boosts Reunion Tours, But Do Enough Fans Still Love the '90s?**

Yes, there's a recession. But never underestimate the power of going to see the band that you most loved in high school.  

"What's more valuable than 'I thought I was never going to see my favorite band again' and then they get back together to come and play?" asks Jason Garner, CEO of global music at Live Nation. Right now original members of such bands as Jane's Addiction, No Doubt, Creed, Phish, Blink-182 and Blur are preparing to perform for fans who have waited years to see them. But there are risks involved—from the lack of market following that a news release to a busy schedule of shows aimed at '90s music fans.  

Creed's four original members are in the studio working on a new album but won't have anything to release in support of their upcoming tour of arenas and amphitheaters. Creed booking agent Ken Fermiglisch points out that the rock act "didn't go out on a low note" after its last tour in 2002, when it sold between 12,000 and 15,000 tickets per market.  

Fermiglisch says the decision to book the band into large venues stems from the belief that there's still pent-up demand for the live show. "It's a little bit of a question because we haven't worked in seven years," he says. "But the question from a lot of people is that there's excitement for it."  

William Morris Agency contemporary music head Marc Geiger, who served as the booking agent for the Jane's Addiction/Nine Inch Nails co-headlining summer amphitheater tour, says that the biggest consideration is "best of" tour before releasing new material, because fans are mostly interested in hearing their favorite songs. But Geiger would advise bands that have a new album finished to give it away.  

"I would actually give the record away for free to everyone who came to the show and say, 'Tell me what you think,' and not play anything from it," he says. "Give them the show they want and say, 'I want you to remember our show this way, but we still are very creative.'"  

Other reunited bands are beefing up their summer bills with strong support. One leg of Blink-182's forthcoming North American arena/amphitheater tour—its first since 2004, when it grossed $34.4 million from 42 concerts, according to Billboard Boxscore—will feature Weezer and Taking Back Sunday, while the other will include Fall Out Boy and the All-American Rejects. "My goal was to have name-brand acts all the way," Blink-182 manager Rick Devoe says.  

Festival producers have also noticed the benefit of booking reunited bands early in their tour. The annual Sasquatch Music Festival, to be held May 23-25 at the Gorge in Quincy, Wash., secured Jane's Addiction, whose original members are gearing up for their first tour in nearly 18 years, as one of its headliners. Sasquatch founder/producer Adam Zacks says a reunion booking "ratchets up the excitement level and distinguishes a festival as being special amongst a sea of others."  

Reunions can be a powerful draw at amphitheaters for the same reason. "It's a great value, it's something you thought you'd never see, and probably never will see again, and then you can still buy a ticket on the lawn for an average of $50," Geiger says.  

Others in the industry are concerned that the reunions could hit a saturation point. "I wish they all toured in January," Devoe says. "They obviously didn't get the memo that January is much better for shed tours."  

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**Additional reporting by Ray Waddell.**
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staying the course
Touring Pays Dividends Even In Tough Economic Times

With the recession in full swing and competition for concert dollars stiff, many indie bands that didn’t score slots on high-profile festivals or as part of big package tours might be tempted to stay off the road this summer. But they can still have productive, profitable tours.

For baby bands, the focus should be on getting in front of as many people as possible and maintaining the interest out of a live show. “Touring can be productive without being profitable if it is the first or second time on the road,” says John Nutcher, director of tour marketing at Fontana Distribution. “Truly indie or DIY bands that have no outside support should make friends at shows, make friends with local bands and promoters, reciprocate hospitality and floor space to crash.”

During these lean times, it’s especially important to embrace a no-frills approach. Nutcher says, “Aggregate backlines, make your tour manager sell merch and do sound, drink bad gas station coffee, and BYOB to avoid high bar tabs.”

While many fans are strapped for cash, Nutcher advises against giving away merch for free because doing so can potentially damage a band’s relationship with its merch company. Whether a band is on its maiden voyage or has a number of tours under its belt, careful routing is key to making it all worthwhile. Many festivals prohibit bands on their bills playing within a certain distance of the festival 90 days before or after the event, which means plenty of open nights in primary and secondary markets.

“Some bands are choosing to focus on visiting and revisiting big markets a few times during the summer, while others are investing $500,000 in playing smaller markets,” Windish Agency president Tom Windish says. “It really depends on where your base is and whether you can grow in bigger markets.”

Johnny Beach, a talent buyer with Bowery Presents, notes that many bands skip New York in the summer because of the competition from free events. “On the other hand, some of these bands are more likely to be able to fill a room in New York,” he says. “I’ve seen bands tour through college towns in the summer and be surprised when no one comes, forgetting that people go home on those nights.”

“Touring with similar bands can also provide strength in numbers,” Windish says. “I know bands that are putting together their own packages with friends.”

Windish agrees. “We’ve had less success with smaller festivals and unique events,” he says. “Central Park Summerstage, the Prospect Park summer concert series, the jellyNYC shows in Brooklyn, the Capitol Hill Block Party in Seattle—all these are excellent.”

Beach cautions that smaller festivals might feel the sting of the recession this summer. “I’ve seen a big influx of festivals in the last several years, and it finally feels like we’ve hit a stopping point with their growth,” he says. “Many of them have lost sponsor money and some have been free and sponsor-supported, they’ve had to cut back. Historically, bands were able to make a lot of money playing these events, but it remains to be seen if that will be the case.”

Despite this, Windish says he hasn’t seen a huge impact from the recession. “People are still going out and tours are still going well,” he says. “Bands have to be careful not to oversaturate markets but overall, business is still going strong. Live music has exploded in recent years and I’m not seeing signs of a slowdown. Last summer, everyone said high gas prices would kill us, and we survived just fine.”
Nearly 300 Tours And Festivals Will Be Rocking Venues Large And Small This Summer /// By Mitchell Peters

With some of the world's top-grossing touring acts performing across the globe through September, the 2009 summer concert season is poised to be a scorcher for the international live entertainment business. In addition to superstar stadium acts like Madonna and U2, the summer months will see a number of reunited bands like No Doubt, Phish and Creed (see pages 14 and 26) draw thousands of nostalgic fans to festivals, arenas and amphitheaters. Following is a sampling of this summer's most anticipated tours and festivals.

STADIUMS
OASIS
Support: Kasabian, the Enemy // May-Aug. // Also playing: festivals (Europe)

The U.K. market is awash in huge summer shows from U2, Coldplay and Michael Jackson—but Oasis has once again emerged as the daddy of the stadium scene with its biggest British tour to date. The band will play 11 stadium shows in June and July in the United Kingdom and Ireland, to a total audience of 800,000 people, according to Oasis manager Marcus Russell of Ignition Management. "We knew it was going to be a very competitive summer," he says. "So we kept a very sensible ticket price, put a strong support bill together and went on sale as early as we could." Booked around a busy European festival schedule—including slots at V Festival in Benicassim and Roskilde—the stadium shows, promoted by SJM/Metropolis, feature support from rising U.K. rock bands Kasabian and the Enemy. The world tour is due to wrap Aug. 30, but Russell says the band could extend it. "The demand is always there," he says. "But we'll have been out for 14 months by then—you have to draw the line somewhere."

ARENAS
TAYLOR SWIFT
Support: Kellie Pickler, Gloriana // May-Sept. // Also playing: festivals

As one of the youngest arena headliners in the concert business, 19-year-old country singer Taylor Swift will continue supporting her latest album, "Fearless"—which is so far the top seller of 2009 with 1 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan—with an ongoing sold-out U.S. arena tour through mid-October. Following its debut last November at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, "Fearless" spent 11 weeks on the chart and sold 2.4 million copies. "I told her, 'In a crazy way, you're the Bruce Springsteen of your generation, because you're talking to your generation as he talked to his generation," TMG/AEG Live president Louis Messina says. With the momentum she's gained from "Fearless," Swift could have played multiple-night runs at venues like the Staples Center in Los Angeles and Madison Square Garden in New York, according to Messina, but the singer "wanted to underplay it. She wants to go up there and show people she's a real artist, which she is." Ticket prices in most markets range from $20 to $49.50 because "she wanted her fans to have the opportunity to see her and not have to spend their last dollar," Messina says. "She's doing $17 (per head) in merchandise."

PINK
May-Sept. // (Europe, Australia, North America)

It's winter in Australia, but Pink's record-busting Funhouse tour will heat up the chillier months. Beginning May 22 at the Perth Burswood Dome, the tour has now grown to 50 arena dates and a potential audience of 600,000. That bests Pink's 2007 tour, then the biggest Australian run by a female artist, with more than 307,000 tickets sold across 35 dates. The 2009 tour includes a record 13 shows at the 15,000-capacity Melbourne Park Rod Laver Arena. "They are extraordinary numbers," says Meg Walker, Sydney's Park's arena contracting and ticketing manager. Pink's 10 dates at the 12,500-capacity Sydney Entertainment Centre and nine at the 13,500-capacity Brisbane Entertainment Centre also set new records. "In recent years, nobody has touched that sort of a run with a straight music concert," says Rod Pilbeam, executive director of AEG Ogden, which manages the BEC. The tour is promoted by the Melbourne-based Michael Coppell Presents and sponsored by the telecom Optus, whose TV ad campaign features the singer. "Achieving that level of ticket sales in a recession environment confirms that Australians value great entertainment above pretty much anything else that they could spend their disposable income on," Michael Coppell says. Dennis Handlin, chairman/CEO of Sony Music Australia & New Zealand, expects "Funhouse" to build on its already seven-times platinum (490,000 album) sales. The artist will play U.S. arenas through early October before heading to play similarly sized venues in Europe.

BLUR
June-July // Also playing: festivals (Europe)

Britpop giant Blur never officially split—but after a lengthy hiatus, the band's return to performing with its original lineup is effectively the biggest British reunion of 2009. The centerpiece will be two 50,000-capacity shows at London's Hyde Park (July 2-3). "The anticipation of seeing them will be incredibly high," says Steve Homer, VP of music at Live Nation U.K., which co-promotes the Hyde Park shows with Metropolis. The July 3 date was the first announced and sold out online within a few minutes, and the July 2 concert was headed toward a sellout at press time, he says. Because of Blur's lack of recent activity, Live Nation combined fan data from EM1 with its own customer database—along with data from the Wireless festival and Academy venues—to target people who had seen similar bands or such associated acts as Gorillaz, a band created by Blur frontman Damon Albarn. "We realized very early on that the response had been huge, so we agreed with management to set up a further show," Homer says. Blur will also headline the U.K. festivals V, Glastonbury and T in the Park as well as O2 arena in Ireland. The band is also scheduled to play Manchester MEN Arena (June 26) and perform five intimate warm-up shows, beginning with the 150-capacity East Anglian Railway Museum.

RICARDO ARJONA
July-Sept. // Also playing: theaters

The Guatemala-born singer/songwriter Ricardo Arjona has steadily ups the ante on his stateside tours, and he does so again this summer with 23 arena and theater shows in the United States and Canada. The trek, in support of his 2008 Warner release, "So Piso," is the biggest Latin tour promoted by AEG Live. Arjona's last tour, which ran 2006-07, grossed $8.2 million and drew more than 134,000, according to Billboard Boxscore. In addition to revisiting cities that were emerging Latin markets on his last outing (such as Boston, Atlanta and Orlando, Fla.), Arjona is playing Seattle and Toronto.

AMPHITHEATERS
CREED
Support: TBD // Aug.-Sept. // Also playing: arenas

Creed hasn't sold a concert ticket since its last performance on Dec. 31, 2002. But the recently reunited rock act's looking agent believes there's still enough excitement around its four original members to fill amphitheaters and arenas this summer.
CLUBS & THEATERS

ANTHONY HAMILTON/MUSIQ SOULCHILD

Support: Christelle Michele // May-July

Representatives for R&B artists Anthony Hamilton and Musiq Soulchild kept two things in mind when booking the pair’s summer co-headlining tour: the economy and competition from similar artists.

With the help of AEG Live urban promoter Jeff Sharp, the trek was primarily booked in markets that weren’t hosting touring acts in July & August. The tour will also take shape in the last quarter/early fourth quarter, Vermagli says. International tour dates and another U.S. run would likely follow a new album.

BLINK-182

Support: Weezer, Taking Back Sunday, Fall Out Boy, the All-American Rejects // July-Sept. // Also playing: arenas

Blink-182 said, “We’ve got the idea for the sound of our next album, but we’re not sure how it’s going to sound.” The group also said they would release the first single from the album on June 30. (For more on Blink-182, see p. 6.)

NINE INCH NAILS/JANE’S ADDICTION

Support: Street Sweeper Social Club // May-July // Also playing: arenas (North America, Europe)

Nin Inch Nails and the original lineup of Jane’s Addiction share the same bill for the first time since 1991. The groups were “stole every one of the shows” that year, according to William Morris Agency contemporary music head Marc Geiger, who books both bands. Jane’s broke up for the first time shortly thereafter, only to reunite minus original bassist Eric Avery in 1997 and again in 2001. Earlier this year, Reznor had been in the studio with Jane’s, which at the time was playing a handful of intimate Los Angeles club shows with Avery. That’s when Geiger conceived the idea of pairing the bands for a summer trek. “[I was e-mailing [NIN frontman Trent Reznor] from the show and said, ‘We’ve got to do something.’]” Geiger says. “When he came off the road we set up a dinner for them, they hadn’t really been in touch for a long time.” The upcoming co-headlining tour could be the last time NIN fans see the band live in the foreseeable future. In a February blog post, Reznor said the summer dates would be the band’s final shows for some time. He noted that the performances will be “much more raw, spontaneous and less scripted” compared to last year’s Lights in the Sky tour. “It’s time to make NIN disappear for a while,” he wrote.

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PASSION PIT: May - July / Play: Also playing: America, Europe, Asia, Australia
PEACHES: May-Aug. / Also playing: festivals, theaters, North America, Europe, Japan
PAUL POTT'S: June-Aug. (North America, Europe, Asia)
STRESS: June -July (select dates) / UK

CENT: THEIR BUDDY: THERMALS: dates) / UK

PAUL POTTS: June-Aug. Also playing: festivals, amphitheaters, arenas, festivals

PAUL POTTS: June-Aug. Also playing: festivals, North America, Europe, Japan

PERFORMING: May - Aug. Also playing: ballrooms, fairs, North America, Europe, Japan

WHITE STRIPES: Also playing: festivals, theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

JOHN CONNOR: Also playing: festivals, theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

JERRY REYNOLDS: June-Aug. Also playing: theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

WAVES: Also playing: festivals / M. WARD: May-Aug. / Also playing: theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

WANDS: June-Aug. Also playing: festivals North America, Europe, Asia

WALTHERS: June-Aug. / Also playing: ballrooms, theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

WIGGLES: June-Aug. Also playing: ballrooms, theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

WONDERWALL: Also playing: festivals, theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

WYNONNA: June-Aug. Also playing: festivals, theaters, North America, Europe, Asia, Australia

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As Album Sales Fall, Stars Are Selling Everything From Foam Fingers To Boombox Bags. A Look At Some Of The Season's Souvenirs

BEYONCÉ BOOMBOX HANDBAG, $75
Don't touch that dial—it won't work. But it will let Beyoncé fans work a look. (Bravado)

CONOR OBERST KOOZIE, $5
He's played in Bright Eyes, Desaparecidos and the Mystic Valley Band, but Oberst doesn't want his beer to get warm while he records his next song. Appropriate blue-collar beverage sold separately. (Ink Tank)

LEONARD COHEN GUITAR PICKS, PRICES VARY
It's hard to sing about the pain of love, life and loss without the right accoutrements. Poetry not included. (BandMerch)

LEAD GAGA SUNGLASSES, $10
Her future's so bright she has to wear shades—with her name on them. Anyone who rarely wears pants has to go into accessories. (Bravado)

ESCAPE THE FATE FOAM FINGER, PRICES VARY
In true emo fashion, it's hard to tell if this says "We're No. 1" or a less polite message. But, in true emo fashion, does it really matter? (BandMerch)
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LONDON—Currency volatility spurred by the global financial crisis is helping build Eastern Europe's music festival circuit.

While the euro's weakness against the dollar devalues fees paid in the European currency, payments are still mainly being made in dollars outside Western Europe's "eurozone." And that's making Eastern Europe's growing festival circuit more attractive than ever.

During the past decade, Eastern Europe has seen "a whole bunch of new festivals cropping up, where there were only a few regular, steady ones 10 years ago," says Ido MacSween, co-manager of International Talent Booking (ITB) in London.

Festivals have emerged in Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Russia, Croatia, Poland, Estonia and Hungary. And this year more major names than ever are hitting that circuit on the heels of a substantial decline in the euro's value versus the dollar. A fee of €100,000 that was worth about $154,000 this time last year now pays $134,000.

"Last summer, I did most of my deals in euros because it was the most stable currency," MacSween says. "This summer it would've been better to do deals in dollars." Eastern European promoters, he acknowledges, would prefer to do deals in local currency, but MacSween notes that "U.S. acts expect deals to be done in U.S. currency."

Ian Huffman, partner at the U.K. booking agent X-ray Touring, handles Moby, who will play Serbia's Exit and Romania's B'Estfest this summer. Huffman attributes the sector's recent growth to "a fresher, more dynamic approach, based fundamentally on [creating] the most culturally interesting programming."

As Eastern Europe's festivals have been marketed heavily in the United Kingdom in recent months, as the pound's continuing slide against the euro means U.K. music fans seeking an overseas festival experience face expensive entertainment if they choose events in the eurozone. At press time, the British currency was worth about €1.13, compared with €1.27 last May and €1.47 two years ago.

Festivals vary in scale and stature, but MacSween singles out Exit—where his client Korn plays this year—as "very solid and stable."

Held annually since 2000 in Serbia's Novi Sad fortress, Exit offers four-day tickets for €86.50 ($115.60) and has a capacity of 50,000. This year's bill also includes Lily Allen, Arctic Monkeys and Kraftwerk.

MacSween also exults about the weeklong Sziget festival in Budapest, where ITB client Placebo plays this August. Launched in 1993, it regularly attracts more than 300,000 attendees.

Sziget managing director Gabor Takacs says he pays acts a "comparably safe" to Western European festivals, while keeping ticket prices low thanks to Eastern Europe's lower infrastructure costs. A ticket for the 80,000-capacity event (Aug. 10-17) costs £180 ($239.45). Performers include Allen, Snow Patrol and the Offspring.

Of more recent vintage is July's B'Estfest, where a three-day ticket costing 270 lei ($88) offers a bill including Franz Ferdinand, Santana and the Ting Tings. The event, now in its third year, attracted 60,000 people in 2008.

Finnish, GM of B' est fest promoter Emagic, suggests that Eastern Europe's festivals let talent bookers test the waters before committing to headlining tours.

"We offer a virgin market that was not previously exposed to them," he says.

William Morris Agency senior VP Kiri Sommer is using the event to introduce the Killers to Romanian fans. He notes that Eastern Europe's festival fees can also exceed the earning potential of a headline show.

"At a festival," he says, "there are immediate advantages, such as a much greater advertising budget than a band's individual show."

Long term, MacSween doubts the Eastern European festival scene will rival its counterpart in the eurozone. But Sommer suggests some of these live markets will fill the void created by falling ticket sales elsewhere.

"As other revenue streams are declining," he says, "this is going to become more and more relevant."
BEIJING—For the second consecutive year, Chinese government pressure will prevent top-tier international acts from performing this summer in the country’s biggest cities.

Last year, an official crackdown on live events preceded the Summer Olympics in August (Billboard, Aug. 9, 2008). This year, the government is eager to avoid potential protest flash points as it marks the 20th anniversary of the suppression of the Tiananmen Square democracy movement June 4 and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China Oct. 1.

China’s Ministry of Culture canceled April shows by Oasis in Beijing and Shanghai, and the leading rock festival MID1, which was held in early May, had to leave Beijing for a site in eastern China away from international media scrutiny. John Lennon’s April 20th concert in Shanghai and Kyle Minogue’s Dec. 1 concert in Beijing were the last shows by major Western pop/rock artists in those respective cities.

The upcoming political anniversaries are so sensitive that many live-entertainment executives based in China were unwilling to comment on the situation. One live-industry source who asked to remain anonymous says, “We were told to keep it down,” as his company considered acts to book for this summer.

Even still, Oasis was blindsided when the Ministry of Culture revoked performance licenses issued to its Chinese promoter Emma Entertainment/Ticketmaster for April shows in Beijing and Shanghai (Billboard.biz, March 2). Oasis claims the ministry canceled the shows after officials realized the band’s guitarist Noel Gallagher had played a 1997 “Free Tibet” benefit in New York. The ministry, which rarely comments on which acts aren’t welcome in China, issued a statement claiming the concert was pulled for unspecified commercial reasons.

“The shows were going to sell out,” says Oasis manager Marcus Russell of Ignition Management in London. “We were 60% sold out with a month to go, so it left us high and dry.” He adds, “They take their anniversaries very seriously over there.”

Meanwhile, the 2009 MID1 Music Festival relocated to Zhenjiang in eastern China when it didn’t receive approval for its traditional site in Beijing’s Haidian Park. “We had felt Beijing would be difficult this year because of the [60th anniversary],” event organizer Zhang Fan says. “We would like to return to Beijing next year.”

Zhang insists the May 1-3 event was a success, even though it attracted only 25,000 fans, down sharply from previous years when the event drew 80,000 in Beijing.

Beijing’s and Shanghai’s lack of major pop/ rock names is a blow after the Rolling Stones, Avril Lavigne and Linkin Park played large venues in 2006 and 2007. The biggest shows confirmed for both cities this summer are two mid-June dates by Ghostface Killah, booked by Beijing-based Split Works. Split Works operations director Nathaniel Davis says he has had no official word “that anything is specifically off limits this summer.”

In the meantime, other more sedate events are going forward, including a June 4 Italian production of Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly” and a May 23 orchestral show by film composer Ennio Morricone, both in venues on Tiananmen Square. In tradition, leading overseas Chinese artists will perform arena and stadium tours this summer, according to Ticketmaster China CEO president (Australian) Kan. Kane.

“There are still a lot of major Chinese artists performing in China,” Kane says, declining to comment on this year’s absence of top Western pop/rock acts.

Russell says Oasis will eventually play China and remains optimistic about its future as a touring act. “It’s got to be one of the biggest markets in the world for live music in the next decade,” he says. “It’s going to develop there. It’s just going to go in fits and starts.”

Additional reporting by Mark Sutherland in London.

LATIN NOTAS // BY LEILA COBO

mercury rising

Latin Music Sales Look For Spark From Wisin & Yandel, Aventura And Paulina Rubio So far, it’s been a long, dry 2009 for Latin music, without a single blockbuster release since Marco Antonio Solis’ “No Molestes” (Fonovisa) last October.

Now as summer approaches, a trio of major releases should breathe some life into the relatively listless Latin retail landscape. Even with these titles, retailers aren’t counting victory just yet. With sales in a serious slump, the mood is one of cautious optimism.


These are all top acts with strong sales histories. Wisin & Yandel’s last studio album, 2007’s “Los Extranjeros,” sold 434,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Aventura hasn’t released a new studio album since 2005’s “God’s Project,” which sold 316,000 in the United States, while two subsequent live albums have sold more than 600,000 combined, according to SoundScan.

“We have a lot of faith in what’s coming out,” says Juan Carlos Acosta, a buyer for the Puerto Rico retailer/distributor Distribuidora Nacional. “Wisin & Yandel and Aventura are two key products for us,” he adds.

However, hopes were high for “IDON,” the new Don Omar album, which sold close to 15,000 copies its first week, the best debut-week sales for a Latin album so far this year, according to SoundScan. Still, sources say early sales of “IDON” have been short of expectations.

“I buy new releases conservatively and with a lot of hope,” one buyer says. “But it’s not pleasant to see actual sales be half of what I predicted.”

All the executives Billboard spoke with agrees the economy is crushing sales, while economic and physical piracy remain major problems, particularly for youth-driven genres like reggaetón. The challenge is getting buyers into stores in this atmosphere. The summer season is a perfect time to do so, says Isabelle Salazar, Latin world music buyer for Trans World Entertainment.

In addition to the aforementioned releases, there are several more “summery” albums in the pipeline, including the debut album by former Kumbia Kings singer Pee Wee, due July 23 on EMi Televico, and Los Super Reyes’ “Kumbia Con Soul,” which targets bilingual youth and is due June 30 on Warner. However, Salazar recommends, as she’s often done before, taking a grass-roots approach that many major acts no longer tackle.

While many big artists are happy to play private radio shows for as few as 100 people, live promotional efforts often don’t extend to retail. Retailers always want more in-store and artist appearances to drive store traffic and sales. But many artists and labels trying to maximize promotional efforts have to balance the value of an in-store for, say, 40 people, versus a radio promotion that will reach thousands.

In this tough economy, Salazar says artists should make an extra effort to drive retail sales, “I believe artists have to remember how they started: working the streets, touching the people who buy the product,” she says. “Even if it’s a developing act and you get 15 or 20 people at an in-store, well, that’s a start.”

Such efforts will vary depending on the kind of product in question. Label executives say regional Mexican, in particular, sells most strongly at Walmart, where many promotions and promotional efforts are concentrated. This summer bodes well for the genre, with Fonovisa releases coming from K-Paz de la Sierra (June 23), Graciela Beltrán (June 16), Alicia Villarreal and Riereros del Norte (both June 23) and Pedro Fernández in July.

The indie distributor Select-O-Hits also has Diana Reyes and Patrulla 61 slated for summer. These bigger acts, Select-O-Hits VP Johnny Phillips says, “basically sell themselves with a little help from programs at Wal-Mart.”

Phillips says his company works closely with each label and Wal-Mart music supplier Anderson Merchandisers on marketing their respective releases.

“We’re also helping coordinate in-store appearances for many of our labels,” he says. “It’s hard work but we’re willing to do everything possible to help promote our new product. Of course, we need each label to provide us with touring info, TV appearances and radio play. If they do their job and we do ours, good releases will sell.”
between bites of a Cobb salad at New York’s Tribeca Grand Hotel, Gwen Stefani is explaining why No Doubt is going on tour for the first time in five years without a new album to promote. “Honestly, it’s procrastination,” she says with a sigh. “My plan was to get pregnant and write a record, but instead of writing, I just ate all the time.”

Stefani laughs as she pops a tomato in her mouth. “Writing is always really hard for me—I hate it and hate it and then I do it, and I’m happy it’s done,” she says. “I was blocked and I needed to get inspired, and I thought playing live would get the creative juices flowing again.”

Which isn’t to say Stefani and her No Doubt bandmates haven’t been busy since the 2001 release of their last album, “Rock Steady.” Stefani, who has two sons ages 8 months and 3 years old, released two solo albums, “Love. Angel. Music. Baby.” which sold 4 million copies, and “The Sweet Escape,” which sold 1.7 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Bassist Tony Kanal did production work on Stefani’s albums and write songs with artists like Pink. Guitarist Tom Dumont produced two records, scored a documentary and was a stay-at-home dad. Drummer Adrian Young did session work and played golf.

Now they’ll be together for a tour that starts May 16 in Las Vegas and ends Aug. 1 in Irvine, Calif.

While hitting the road without new material after years of relative silence might seem like a risk, the band’s manager, Jim Guerinot, was delighted when the group approached him with...
No Doubt wants to make it clear that it’s not another ’90s band looking to hit the road and cash in on the band’s greatest hits. “I don’t see us as being part of that ’90s revival,” Kanal says. “We were always a band, even when we weren’t playing together.”

The group also wants to make sure its audience doesn’t consist of twenty- and thirtysomethings who loved “Just a Girl.” So it will give away digital copies of its three studio albums to anyone who buys tickets in the top two price tiers.

“I had the idea to give the albums away electronically for free with the ticket purchase,” Guerrini says. “A lot of people like Gwen’s solo work but might not be as familiar with No Doubt. There are people who might not have listened to the records in a while.”

DuMont says that giving away the catalog seemed like an obvious value-add. “Lots of bands give away their new CDs, but we didn’t have one of those,” he says. “I’ve always thought you should be able to go and buy an entire catalog in one click, so you could get a broad representation of a band’s work.” In this mind, giving the music to fans in a continuation of No Doubt’s time-tested strategy. “When we first started out, we had mailing lists and parties where we’d sit and lick stamps for hours. This is a more modern version of that, and we won’t get high off of licking stamp backing, either.”

It was more complicated than sending out envelopes. “There were literally 40 hurdles we had to clear in terms of getting permissions from rights holders. Even though no one else has as high a share as the band, there were lots of people to clear it with,” Guerrini says. “I spent hours sitting down with people, explaining why this was so important and what the band was willing to give to make this happen. Some of the people at Interscope got it right away, which was refreshing.”

In the end, the band licensed its catalog for a period of time ranging from the first on-sale date to 30 days after the last show. “People have raised the question of whether the band is losing money on this, and I don’t think they are losing the opportunity to sell a certain amount of songs by doing this,” Guerrini says. Sales of No Doubt’s catalog have risen slightly since the band announced it return, but the act rarely sells more than 1,000 albums per week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. And while the catalog is available at the usual online outlets, the closing of Tower, Virgin and other CD-centric stores that stock catalog make it difficult to find new copies of the band’s work.

Not all ticket buyers are getting the catalog, however. Seats for No Doubt’s run of summer dates range from $10 for lawn

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**My plan was to get pregnant and write a record, but instead of writing, I just ate all the time.**

—GWEN STEFANI

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**SUMMER 2009 PREVIEW**

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**buy one, get one free**

**No Doubt Is The Latest Band To Bundle Music With Tickets**

No Doubt’s offer to give its back catalog to those buying the high-tier seats for the band’s upcoming tour is certainly unusual, but it’s not the first time artists have tied ticket sales to recorded-music incentives. Ticketmaster has used this model for more than five years, and not just with digital music. Its first offering involved the Cure in 2004, when fans who bought tickets to the band’s tour online could also purchase its self-titled CD. But the logistics of storing and shipping physical albums made it a limited effort, says Ticketmaster VP of music services Vito Iaia.

Once digital distribution became of age, everything changed. In 2005, Ticketmaster began offering fans who pre-ordered a participating act’s album on iTunes a presale code for tickets to the act’s upcoming tour. The initiative began with Depeche Mode, Bob Dylan and Red Hot Chili Peppers and has since expanded to more than 20 other acts.

“That really does move incremental units on the recording-music side and incremental units for us on the ticketing side,” Iaia says. “We’re getting the marketing power of iTunes behind the tour. The promoter loves it because they’re getting increased marketing, the band loves it because they’re selling more records, and iTunes loves it because they get some share there.”

That’s led to the more recent trend of bundling music downloads. Ticketmaster first offered buyers a sampler playlist of other bands on tour, then expanded bundling to such acts as Metallica and Dave Matthews Band.

“That’s the model that’s going to start breaking through more and more this year,” Iaia says. “The artists are viewing it as a business holistic and saying to themselves, ‘We have a consumer engaged when we put the tickets on sale. If we have recorded product, or a fan club subscription or we have a T-shirt, let’s engage this fan base that’s coming in to buy tickets.’”

Instead of offering ticket buyers new material, No Doubt is providing downloads of its back catalog as a way to re-engage old fans and snare new ones who are familiar with Gwen Stefani as a solo artist. Iaia believes that tying music to tickets could reduce piracy. “We hope this program gets even a fraction of those units that would have been sold before the age of piracy into an environment where they get counted toward the charts.”

—ANTONY BRUNO

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seats to $80 for the best seats, with $59.50 and $24.50 price points in between. Live Nation's Vlautin says only the top two price levels have the ability to download the catalog for free; Guerinot's office fulfills the orders. The promise of free music could help appeal casual listeners, those who only know Stefani's solo work or fans of opening bands Paramore or The Sounds (see story, below).

No Doubt's albums seem to be ubiquitous in many CD collections; the self-titled 1992 debut sold 328,000, its 1999 breakout, "Tragic Kingdom," sold 8.1 million copies. Follow-up "Return of Saturn" sold 1.6 million, while 2001's "Rock Steady" sold 2.8 million. The largest-hits collection "Singles 1992-2003," which was released in 2003, sold 2.4 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Vlautin points out that "any avid fan of the band will be coming to this tour, and they'll try to buy the top-tier tickets. People lose their music as they grow up and move around, and this is a good way for them to reconnect with themselves with the tracks."

'TODAY' AND TOMORROW
If the band is worried about fans forgetting the hits, it shouldn't be. At recent performances on NBC's "Today" and at the Bamboozle Festival in New Jersey, the audience sang along as the band ripped through a set of its greatest hits, including "Spiderwebs," "Don't Speak" and its cover of Talk Talk's "It's My Life." The audience at both events leaned slightly older, and at Bamboozle, when Stefani asked those in the crowd to raise their hands if it was their first No Doubt show, many did. Still, they proceeded to sing along to most of the songs. (Live Nation also produced Bamboozle, but the band's catalog wasn't given away with festival tickets.)

After the joys of parenthood and channeling their inner Tiger Woods, the band members will do their best to maintain a semblance of normalcy on the road. All aim to being fitness fanatics, and they're indulging their need to jog while touring. "We travel with two personal trainers," Kanal says. "We make hotels keep their gyms open late so we can work out. We're getting older, and we can't party like we used to."

But Kanal says being older has plenty of perks. "We got to live through the record industry in its heyday. When we started, we were in a van and looking for change under the seats so we could buy food. We went from that to having a hit and getting to do things like make music videos with million-dollar budgets."

Stefani says she and the rest of the band aren't interested in "gratuitous fame," but she still finds herself in the spotlight. "I have to wear makeup to the gym because I get some dude doing sit-ups next to me and surreptitiously taking pictures," she says.

And although Stefani cheerfully shows off pictures of her sons Kingston and Zuma, she'd rather talk about her ventures as a businesswoman, albeit in a self-effacing manner. Her clothing line, LAMB, is in its seventh year, and she also has her own perfume. Still, Stefani is slow to take credit for it all.

"I'm a good collaborator," she says. "I'm always open to other opinions, and I can do things like have meetings at my house and juggle it all. I'm actually heading to a five-hour meeting about the new line of handbags after this, and I'm pretty excited. I started it seven years ago and never thought it would last, but here we are.""}

During the "Today" performance, Stefani and her cohorts were self-assured, despite worries the day before that they might forget part of the set. "There was a problem during the intro of the track "Don't Speak" where a slight tension rose among the members, but quickly dissipated as DuMont hit every chord and Stefani's voice kicked in. Backstage, the visibly relaxed band conducted an interview with a local morning news anchor, who had attended some of the act's mailing list parties the preceding week in Orange County.

No Doubt seeks to connect with fans in other ways, too. When the group announced the tour dates, it introduced a widget that could be embedded on users' Facebook and MySpace pages called "Seven Days of No Doubt." Every day for a week, the band members posted a new video of themselves talking about their shows, rehearsals and history. Live Nation ran a contest where the fan that got the most people to install the widget won a chance to see the band in a city of his or her choice. The widget generated 2.6 million views in the week prior to the on-sale date of the first round of tickets, according to Live Nation.

The band also performed on "American Idol" and covered Adam & the Ants' "Stabbing in the Dark" on the May 11 episode of "Gossip Girl." "All the TV and online stuff—Twitter, Facebook, all that—those just seem like bases that need to be covered," Guerinot says. "We do get lots of licensing requests, and we've always felt that the right ones can benefit the band."

"We're from Anaheim," Stefani says with a laugh as she considers her opportunities. "This is cliche to say, but we never thought this would happen to us. We built a studio in the garage, and now we're driving around on tour with a bus that has a studio in it. We survived it all and we're still friends, and that's great."

"Additional reporting by Keir Bristol and Piaenna Patterson.
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An Early Look At The Season’s Hottest Albums

JUNE

MOS DEF

“The Ecstatic” (Downtown Records, June 9)

A decade after the release of his solo debut, “Black on Both Sides,” Brooklyn-born MC Mos Def proves he hasn’t lost a beat. For “The Ecstatic,” he looked to producers Kinsey West, Madlib and Def’s own Al Be Back. Tracks include the uptempo “Quiet Dog,” on which Mos instructs listeners to “simmer down, simmer down, simmer down”; “Supermagic,” which finds him rhyming, “Brooklyn we keep them open” over an Indian-influenced beat and guitar riffs; the epic-sounding “Life in Marvelous Times”; and “Twirling Speedball,” on which he raps, “Life is a game. I heard a homie say. But I came to win so I’m not going to play.”

JONAS BROTHERS

“Lines, Vines and Trying Times” (Hollywood, June 16)

Fresh off their Grammy Award win for best new artist, the Jonas Brothers will release their third studio album on Hollywood—and get back to their roots. “They respect different kinds of musicians, and the different kinds of music they grew up with,” Hollywood Records VP of A&R Jon Lind says. “To that end, they enlisted such Nashville stalwarts as steel pedal guitarist Bruce Bouto and Stuart Duncan, who played fiddle on Robert Plant & Alison Krauss’ “Raising Sand,” and harmonica player Frédéric Yonnet, best-known for his collaborations with Prince. But don’t think the band has gone country just yet; the first single, “Paranoid,” is pure Euro-pop. “A significant number of people are not Jonas Brothers experts are going to hear it and say, ‘Who the hell is that?’” Lind says.

HOLLY WILLIAMS

“Here With Me” (Mercury Nashville, June 16)

The granddaughter of Hank Williams and daughter of Hank Williams Jr., Holly Williams wrote eight of 11 tracks on her Mercury debut, although she didn’t pen the first single, “Keep the Change.” The song “Three Days in Bed,” about a tryst with a stranger, was “inspired by truth and fantasy.” While Williams follows her own musical path, she never forgets her family. “Without Jesus Here With Me,” which name-checks her grandfather, was inspired by a March 2006 auto accident in which she and sister Hilary almost lost their lives. The second single, “Mama,” deals with her parents’ divorce.

LIL WAYNE

“The Rebirth” (Young Money/Cash Money/Universal, June 23)

Lil Wayne is always reinventing himself. That’s why it comes as no surprise that the New Orleans-born rapper, who taught himself how to play guitar months ago, will release his first rock album this summer. The self-proclaimed best rapper alive recruited Miami producers Infamous and Dre Correa, Cool & Dre, Develop and Drew Mone. “There were rumors Wayne was working on a rock album, but I assumed it was just 808 drums with guitars on it,” says Infamous, who along with his partner worked on the first single, “Prom Queen.” “Drew started to add organs, and Wayne said no. That’s when I realized it was actually going to be a real rock album.”

DINOSAUR JR.

“Farm” (Jagjaguwar, June 23)

Dinosaur Jr. principals J. Mascis, Lou Barlow and Emmett “Patrick” Murphy are known for having communication issues, but in 2007 the alt-rock pioneers reunited and signed with Fat Possum to release “Beyond,” the band’s first album with the original lineup since 1988’s “Bug.” The set debuted at No. 69 on the Billboard 200 and sold 51,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The band’s new 12-track set, recorded at vocalist/guitarist Mascis’ home studio in Amherst, Mass., maintains its classic rock sensibilities and masterfully loud hardcore sound.

PAULINA RUBIO

“Gran City Pop” (Universal Music Latino, June 23)

After two consecutive No. 1 debuts on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums Chart, Mexican “golden girl” Paulina Rubio is hoping to repeat the feat with “Gran City Pop.” Already No. 1 on iTunes’ Latino chart based on pre-orders alone, the album features 14 tracks penned by some of Latin music’s top writers, including Mario Domm (the singer for the Mexican pop trio Camila), who wrote the first single, “Causa y Efecto.” The top-selling Latin female artist after Shakira, Rubio has an English-language album (2002’s “Border Girl”) and a new fragrance to her name, which will expand interest in her release beyond her Latin base. The singer is also a top seller in such countries as Mexico and Spain, which translates to a heavy international push from Universal.

ALICIA VILLARREAL

“La Jefa” ( Fonovisa, June 23)

The Latin Grammy Award winner is back with her first album in three years, produced by her husband—cumbia artist Cruz Martinez. Highlights include the uptempo, raucous “Sí Crees Que Pienso” and the first single, “Caso Perdido,” by the hitmaking pop songwriters Claudia Britán and Noel Schajris; it’s an accordion-driven, nocturno in Villarreal’s signature pur. Villarreal wrote five of the songs, with others written by Armando Manzanero (the ballad “Soy Lo Peor”) and José Alfredo Jiménez (‘Cuando Nadie te Quiera’).

LEVON HELM

“Electric Dirt” (Dirt Farmer/Vanguard, June 30)

After nabbing a Grammy Award for his rustic

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Levon Helm, the legendary drummer/vocalist, has returned with a new album, "Electric Dirt," recorded at the Barn, his studio in Woodstock, N.Y. The album, "Electric Dirt," is a mix of traditional and experimental sounds that reflects Helm's diverse musical career. The album features a variety of instruments and styles, including electric guitar, harmonica, and piano. The title track, "Electric Dirt," is a powerful and emotive piece that showcases Helm's vocal abilities. Overall, "Electric Dirt" is a must-listen for fans of Helm and those interested in exploring new musical sounds. 

David Nail, who recently released his new album, "About to Come Alive," is currently on tour promoting the album. The album features a mix of country and rock sounds, with songs that range from upbeat party anthems to more reflective, intimate numbers. One of the standout tracks on the album is "You Can Go Home," which features a powerful vocal performance from Nail. The album is available on all major digital platforms and is a must-listen for fans of country music. 

DAUGHTER's new album, "The North," is a powerful and emotive piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album features a mix of acoustic and电子 sounds, with lyrics that are both personal and universal. One of the standout tracks on the album is "Youth," which features a powerful vocal performance from frontwoman Elena Tonra. The album is available on all major digital platforms and is a must-listen for fans of alternative and electronic music. 

SUMMER PREVIEW

June 2

DAVID NAIL

"I'm About to Come Alive" (MCA Nashville, July 14)

David Nail's new album is a testament to his versatility as an artist. The album features a mix of country, rock, and pop sounds, with songs that range fromoptimistic party anthems to more reflective, emotional numbers. One of the standout tracks on the album is "Let Me Be Your Rock," which features a powerful vocal performance from Nail. The album is available on all major digital platforms and is a must-listen for fans of country music.

LA FACTORIA

"Demphra" (Panama Music/Universal, July 14)

With two female singers领导班子ing behind a featured male singer, LA FACTORIA's new album is a fresh and exciting piece of Latin music. The album features a mix of traditional and contemporary sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. One of the standout tracks on the album is "Muy Emocionante," which features a powerful vocal performance from lead singer Ana Ivette. The album is available on all major digital platforms and is a must-listen for fans of Latin music.

SUGAR RAY

"Music for Cougars" (Pulse/Universal/Fontana, July 21)

Sugar Ray's new album is a throwback to the '90s sound, with songs that are both catchy and danceable. The album features a mix of rock, pop, and dance sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. One of the standout tracks on the album is "Why Can't You Love Me," which features a powerful vocal performance from lead singer Mark McGrath. The album is available on all major digital platforms and is a must-listen for fans of rock and pop music.

SUMMER PREVIEW

Best of the rest

June 2

The album "Electric Dirt," legendary drummer/vocalist Levon Helm, returns with "Electric Dirt." As with "Dirt Farmer," Helm recorded the 11-song set at the Barn, in Woodstock, N.Y., and reteamed with multi-instrumentalist Larry Campbell for production duties. "Dirt Farmer" (which sold 129,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan) saw Helm emerge after a 25-year absence from solo work, exploring the rich, traditional roots of classic American and folk music. "Electric Dirt" continues in that tradition but takes off into other parts of the American musical canon.

WILCO

"Wilco (The Album)" (Nonesuch, June 30)

On Wilco's almost but not-quite self-titled album, the band revisits the unpredictable leanings of its more experimental side while delivering several songs that stand back to its roots. "Summerteeth" was the nearly 20-minute "Bluk Blak Nova," which is built on a pulsating rhythm and layered with clattering piano and unihedged, interlocking guitar work. The best exemplifies producer Jim Scott's approach of taking "a little bit more leeway in terms of sculpting the sound and using the studio as another instrument," as frontman Jeff Tweedy explains. But fans of Wilco's more straightforward side will revel in "You and I," a gorgeous duet between Tweedy and Feist about the simple pleasures of love. Also in this vein is the lush, large-lyric "Solitaire," and the stately, harmonically rich "Country Disappeared." Rounding out the album is "You Never Know," a back to the band's bul-letin rock of 1999, while "Sonny Feeling" is a slide guitar-laden jam.

MOBY

"Wait for Me" (Mute, June 30)

Moby's 2008 album, "Last Night," was a decidedly dance-oriented party album, influenced by the artist's frequent DJ work. But Moby says his ninth studio album, "Wait for Me," is "diamentically opposed to that. If you were having a party and someone put this on, I imagine people would either leave or lie down." The quieter, more orchestral album was recorded in Moby's New York apartment on analog equipment, some of it purchased broken on eBay, with several little-known guest vocalists. Moby also designed the album artwork himself with a Sharpie on white paper.

DAUGHTER

"Leave This Town" (19 Recordings/RCA, July 14)

Chris Daughtry hit it big out of the gate, being boosted from "American Idol" but then selling 4.4 million copies of his namesake band's debut album, according to Nielsen SoundScan. His new effort was produced by Howard Benson, who also worked on Daughtry's debut. "Leave This Town" finds the "Idol" album and his bandmates singing more glossy, guitar-driven power ballads like "No Surprise," which RCA senior VP of marketing Aaron Burns says is already being enthusiastically received at radio and by fans. "Chris is Twittering all over the place and getting all this great feedback online. To see it happen instantaneously has been very exciting."

LA FACTORIA

"Demphra" (Panama Music/Universal, July 14)

With two female singers behind a featured male singer, LA FACTORIA's album is an international megahit last year with the single "Perdo-name." Since the departure of Joycee, vocalist Demphra (aka Marlene Romo) has taken the LA Factoria name and is exploring fast, danceable soca rhythms while still employing her harp-singing technique. Representing the new sound are "Futile Mala Conmigo," an up-tempo pop-topical track, and "La Vecina," a duet with labelmates Mach & Daddy. The first single is "Hay Oto En Mi Vida," a poppy regueton track with flute and guitar touches (and a generous sprinkling of AutoTune) in the catchy, trendy Panamanian romantic style.

SUGAR RAY

"Music for Cougars" (Pulse/Universal/Fontana, July 21)

Honesty, self-deprecation and a juvenile sense of humor have long served Sugar Ray frontman Mark McGrath well. So when the singer says things like "I know my voice is very limited" and "I know people aren't sitting on the edge of their seats waiting for a Sugar Ray record," he may just be trying to set the bar so low that any success seems significant. It could happen, since the band doesn't earn from the center lane it carved out for itself with the ubiquitous '90s radio staple "Fly." The band wrote the new songs in the studio during the past six months, and tracks like the breezy pop-ditty "Walkdown" and the midtempo ode to summer romance "Love Is the Answer" hew to the same path.

AUGUST COBRA STARSHIP

"Hot Mess" (Decaydance/Fueled by Ramen, Aug. 11)

Full of synth-pop hooks and throbbing guitars, Cobra Starship's third full-length album, "Hot Mess," should give fans plenty of reason to start a dance party. The first single, "I Love You," is a modern retelling of the classic love story, with the band's distinctive upper harmonies and an infectious beat. The album features a mix of dance, pop, and rock sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. One of the standout tracks on the album is "You Can Go Home," which features a powerful vocal performance from lead singer Alex Band. The album is available on all major digital platforms and is a must-listen for fans of dance-pop music.

JUNE 9

Anti-Flag, "The People or the Gun" (SideOneDummy) Offer their take on the political现状 with a mix of punk and hardcore sounds. The album is a must-listen for fans of punk and political music.

Joan of Arc, "Flowers" (Polyvinyl) A departure from Joan of Arc's usual indie rock sound, "Flowers" is a more experimental and avant-garde piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album is a must-listen for fans of experimental and indie rock music.

John Anderson, "Bigger Hands" (Country Crossing/Streaduvarious) Offers a fresh take on traditional country sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. The album is a must-listen for fans of traditional country music.

Kasabian, "West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum" (RCA) A departure from their usual dance-pop and rock sounds, "West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum" is a more experimental and avant-garde piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album is a must-listen for fans of experimental and indie rock music.

Moby, "Wait for Me" (Mute) Offers a mix of dance and electronic sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. The album is a must-listen for fans of dance-pop and electronic music.

Placebo, "Battle for the Sun" (Vagrant) Offers a fresh take on traditional country sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. The album is a must-listen for fans of traditional country music.

Quincy Jones, "Rainwater/Four (Volcano /Jive) Offers a mix of dance and electronic sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. The album is a must-listen for fans of dance-pop and electronic music.

Rainwater, "Cassette" (Rhino /Concord) A departure from their usual dance-pop and rock sounds, "Cassette" is a more experimental and avant-garde piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album is a must-listen for fans of experimental and indie rock music.

Rashad, "The Great Unknown" (Sixteen/Atlantic) Offers a fresh take on traditional country sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. The album is a must-listen for fans of traditional country music.

Rhett Miller, "Rhett Miller" (Superangling) A departure from their usual dance-pop and rock sounds, "Rhett Miller" is a more experimental and avant-garde piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album is a must-listen for fans of experimental and indie rock music.

Scott Bradlee, "Swing, Baby!" (Cobra/Atlantic) Offers a mix of dance and electronic sounds, with lyrics that explore themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery. The album is a must-listen for fans of dance-pop and electronic music.

The Muscle Shoals, "Summer of '69" (Rhino /Concord) A departure from their usual dance-pop and rock sounds, "Summer of '69" is a more experimental and avant-garde piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album is a must-listen for fans of experimental and indie rock music.

The Psychedelic Furs, "The Power of Love" (Rhino /Concord) A departure from their usual dance-pop and rock sounds, "The Power of Love" is a more experimental and avant-garde piece that explores themes of love and loss. The album is a must-listen for fans of experimental and indie rock music.
COBRA STARSHIP
party. The band brought awareness of the new set—the follow-up to 2007’s “Viva la Cobra!”, which debuted at No. 89 on the Billboard 200 and sold 114,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan—to fans by supporting Fall Out Boy on tour dates, and Cobra Starship repay their favor by paying homage to Fall Out Boy bassist Pete Wentz on the crowd-nover: “Pete Wentz is the Only Reason We Are Famous.” They also collaborated with “Gossip Girl” actress Leighton Meester on the track “I Made Good Girls Go Bad.”

REBA McENTIRE
“Keep On Loving You” (Valory Music/Starstruck Records, Aug. 18)

REBA McEntire’s “Keep On Loving You” is her first for Valory Music and reunites her with CED Scott Borchetta, with whom she previously worked at MCA Nashville. The set is co-produced by longtime collaborator Tony Brown and Mark Bright (Rascal Flatts). McEntire’s first solo project in six years includes a rarity: a song that she co-wrote. “She’s Turning Fifty Today,” which McEntire wrote via e-mail with Liz Hengler and Tommy Lee James, tells the story of a wife whose husband left her for a younger woman. McEntire, who has recorded “not many,” under 10” of her own songs through the years, credits her tour with Kelly Clijsters and Neil Thrush for a tongue-in-cheek rocker about lamenting (or perhaps not) a spurned love.

SEAN PAUL
“Imperial Blaze” (VP/Atlantic Records, Aug. 18)

It’s been four years since dancehall star Sean Paul released a new studio project. But with the April 25 unveiling of the lead single “So Fine,” the Grammy Award-winning artist is gearing up for the release of his fourth album, “Imperial Blaze,” the an-

RETAIL TRACK

BY ED CHRISTMAN

Crazy from the heat
Beleaguered Retailers Hope For Relief From Big Summer Releases

The coming of summer used to mean a batch of big music releases at retail because labels were eager to catch all the kids out of school. But teens today don’t buy music like they once did, preferring instead to play videogames or download music illegally.

The “ways you promote, mark and reach kids are so instant nowadays,” Disney Records executive VP Jim Weatherson says. “All the models have changed.”

Still, retailers are hoping for some big album releases in the summer, if only because sales have been so weak this year. But merchants chart that the release schedule seems more uncertain than ever, with big releases harder to come by. So far this year, only Taylor’s Swift’s “Fearless” (Big Machine) has sold more than 1 million copies in the United States, while U2’s “No Line on the Horizon” (Interscope) has sold $57,000 after nine weeks in stores, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Despite retail’s recent challenges, Epic Records remains bullish on the warm weather months. “Summer is a big season for us,” Epic head of sales Jon Strickland says. “Summer is punk. We have a bunch of bands playing in front of a lot of people with the (Van’s) Warped tour and the Rise Against tour.”

Epic will release Rancid’s first album in six years, June 2, Strickland says. He also sees the Offspring’s summer tour as a huge catalog opportunity for his label, which released the band’s early albums before it jumped to Columbia in the mid-’90s.

Meanwhile, label executives are divided on the impact that a scheduling change in the Grammy Awards could have on summer releases. The 2010 Grammys will be held Jan. 31, a week earlier than this year’s show, and the cutover date for eligibility has been moved up a month to Aug. 30.

“We have an artist that we had to get out by the Sept. 30 date,” says the head of sales at a major label. “But they just moved the deadline up 30 days and we don’t know whether we will be able to get the album out by then.”

But the head of sales at another major label downplays the effect that the scheduling shift will have on the release schedule. “We can’t force an album into the market just to make the Grammy deadline,” the executive says. “The release date depends on getting the music right and the creative right before setting the release date. The change in the Grammy deadline won’t cause us to change anything.”

Anticipation building: GREEN DAY

JUNE 16
Angel Taylor, “Love Travels” (Atlantic/Antilles, Warner) / In My Head (Verve Forecast) / Major Lazer, “Gun’s Don’t Kill People...Lasers Do” (Downtown) / Tiny Masters of Today, “Skeletons” (Huge) / Twinsisti, “Catagory FS” (EMI) / The Builders & the Butchers, “Salvation Is a Deep, Dark Well” (Gigantic Music)

JUNE 23
Deastrom, “Moon Daggers” (Ghostly International) / Foreign Born, “Person to Person” (Secretly Canadian) / The Lemonheads, “Varshons” (The End) / Sunset Rubdown, “Dragonfly” (Jagajuguwar) / Tom Brosseau, “Posthumous Success” (FatCat) / Tortoise, “Beacons of Ancestors” (Thrill Jockey) / We Were Promised Jetsacks, “These Four Walls” (FatCat) / Zs, “Magic of the Modern White” (The Social Registry) / Third Eye Blind, “Ursa Major” (Sony) / Pete Yorn, “Back and Fourth” (Columbia) / Dean Prez, “Pulse of the People” (Invasion Music Group/Boss Up/The Orchard) / Dream Theater, “Black Clouds & Silver Linings” (Roadrunner) / Au Revoir Simone, “Au Revoir Simone Live” (TVT Records)

JUNE 30
Cage, “Depart From Me” (Definitive Jux) / Rob Thomas, “Cradlestom” (Atlantic) / Brad Paisley, “American Saturday Night” (Arista) / Leslie Mendelson, “Swan Feathers” (Rykodisc) / Meese, “Broadcast” (Atlantic)

JULY 7
Those Darlins, TBA (Thirty Tigers) / Stillastar, “Civilized” (Blotted Wire) / Rodrigo y Gabriela, TBA (ATO) / Son Volt, “American Central Dust” (Rounder) / Corey Chisel, TBA (RCA) / Fritz Helder & the Phonetics, “Greatest Hits” (House of Helder/Nielson) / We Were Promised Jetsacks, “These Four Walls” (Fat Cat) / Tiny Vipers, “Life on Earth” (Sub Pop)

JULY 14
Spinal Tap, “This Is Spinal Tap” (MGM) / Dave Garza, TBA (Cosmic) / Ledisi, TBA (Verte Forecast) / Hard Montana, TBA / TBA BAK / Gin Blossoms, TBA (Savoy) / Amanda Blank, “I Love You” (Downtown) / Chica
SEAN KINGSTON

"Tomorrow" (Epic Records, Aug 25)
Making a name for himself with the hit single "Beautiful Girls," Sean Kingston returns with his sophomore set "Tomorrow." The 19-year-old Jamaican singer/songwriter describes the forthcoming album as a "reflection of his growth as a young man and evolution as an artist." The former is referenced in such tracks as the title cut, "Face Drop" and "Magical," which address personal acceptance, while the latter is evidenced by Kingston's expanded circle of collaborators. In addition to J. R. Rotem—a guiding light on Kingston's 2007 self-titled debut album—production collaborators include Wyclef Jean, Bruno Mars, Detail and RedOne (Lady GaGa's "Just Dance"), who produced Kingston's recently released lead single, "Fire Burning."

COLBY CAILLAT

"The Breakthrough" (Universal Republic, Aug 25)
What happens after an artist's first single garners millions of MySpace views, a major-label deal and a well-received album? That's the question Colby Caillat faces as she finishes recording "The Breakthrough," her follow-up to "Coco." "There's that sense of worry where you hope it does as good," the 23-year-old singer says. "You want to make sure everything's perfect. And while doing that, you don't want to lose sight of who you are and how the music should sound." To achieve that balance, Caillat set up a "writing camp" in February with songwriters Kara DioGuardi and Rick Nowels, producer John Shanks and Caillat's father Ken, who produced half the album. Though "Falling for You," the album's first single that premiered in June, is spiritual in feel, Caillat says many of the other songs emerged as a "different, definitely more pop and up-tempo."

CHRISTINA MILIAN

"Elope" (Interscope/Radio Killa/MySpace Records, August TBA)
Three years after her well-documented split with Def Jam, Christina Milian is ready to mount a comeback with her fourth album, "Elope," planned for a late-August release. "I do feel like I'm starting from scratch," she says. "It's been a record since I've been out." But if Milian is ruffled by the pressure, she's not showing it. Having recruited songwriting/prodution duo The Dream and C. Trick Stewart to produce the album, Milian promises female anthems in the form of "Zipper," a come-hither club track that has "Yours Better Not Play Me," one of two duets with the Dream; and "Version of Love," which she describes as "if you took "Purple Rain," set it in 2010 and put a female voice on it." As for her new, three-label family, Milian says she's never felt more at home. "Even if you are established and you go to a major label, sometimes you get lost in the mix. For me it's about being a big fish in a small pond...I feel the definite support and also the concern with being the best." SEAN PAUL

TREY SONGZ

"Ready" (Songbook Entertainment/Atlantic, August TBA)
The third time's a charm—at least, that's what Trey Songz is hoping. With the release of his third album this summer, Songz is ready to be the R&B crooner of the moment. For "Ready," Songz worked with producers Eric Hudson, Sean Garrett, Bryan-Michael Cox, Soul Keys, Jermaine Dupri, SnoopDa Stargate ("Can't Help but Wait") and RedOne ("My Favorite Game"). On the album include the lead single "I Need a Girl," which reached No. 39 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart; "Brand New," about a one-night stand, "One Love," which he describes as a male version of Mary J. Blige's "Be Without You" and finds him belting "Take my hand (We will stand) /This was made to last forever" over drums and guitar riffs and the guitar-heavy "Black Roses." JESSICA HARP

"A Woman Needs" (Warners Bros. Nashville, TBA)
Keith Urban's fingerprint are all over Jessica Harp's major-label solo debut. Longtime Urban bassist Jerry Hudson produced it, and Urban plays guitar on the first single, "A Boy Like Me." The album finds Harp, who co-wrote most of the tracks, telling relatable stories about her life, loves and heartbreaks on tracks like the playful "A Boy Like Me," "A Woman Needs" and "Homemade Love," which features guest vocals from Vince Gill. "I like to tell stories with my songs," Harp says. "This is the album I've dreamed of making since I was 8 years old and singing along to my mom's jukebox and Reba McEntire records."

THE FLAMING LIPS

Title TBA (Warner Bros., TBA)
Feeling a renewed sense of ambition, the Flaming Lips are recording their first double album as the follow-up to 2006's "At War With the Mystics." "Somehow along the way it occurred to me that we should do a double album," frontman Wayne Coyne says. "Just that idea that you can kind of weave a couple of themes in there and you can sort of sprawl a little bit. Our past couple of records, we've always had this little dilemma, like, 'How many songs do you put on? How many instruments do you put on? What's the focus?' So far the hand has written 13 tracks, with eight or nine to go before the release is completed. Coyne says the new material's vibe is different from previous studio-polished albums. Among the new songs currently in the mix are the Joy Division-meets-Miles Davis Group "Connected of the Hex" and the John Lennon-penned "I Don't Understand Karma," which Coyne describes as his response to "Instant Karma." ... Written by Michael Ayes, Ayala Ben-Yehuda, Leisa Cohen, Mariel Conception, Ann Donahue, Monica Herrera, Gail Mitchell, Elee Nugay, Michael Interes, David J. Prince, Ken Tucker and Mikael Wood.

Tuborg, "Addiction" (Kedar) /// Yo!, "Signature" (Kedar) /// Trick Daddy, "Finally Famous" (Dunk Ryder) /// Uha Lika, "Love N Life" (Miss Appear) /// Jordin Sparks, TBA /// Jive /// Suffocation, "Blood Oath" (Nuclear Illust)

JULY 21
Matthew Sweet and Susanna Hoffs, "Under the Covers Vol. 2" (Shout Factory) /// Anita O'Day, "The Life of a Jazz Singer" (Red Distribution) /// Our Lady Peace, "Burn Burn Out" (Independent Label Group) /// Sean Bones, TBA (Frenchkiss Records) /// Assemble (Hey Dust LLC) /// "Assembly of Dust LLC"

JULY 28
Revive, "The Journey" (Worldwide) /// Between the Trees, "Spain" (Bonded) /// Hurricane Chris, "Unleashed" (Polo Grounds Music/RCA)

AUG. 4
Collective Soul, TBA (Loud & Proud/Roadrunner) /// Thrice, The Statue, TBA (Secretly Canadian)

AUG. 11
A Fine Frenzy, "Bomb in a Birdcage" (Virgin) /// Avett Brothers, "I and Love and You" (Columbia)

AUG. 18
Ole, "Smash the Control Machine!" (Victory) /// Madness, "The Pop Life" (Frisbee) /// "Tough Norton Folgate, "Jet, Shaka Rock" (Atlantic)
LATIN

TIEMPO LIBRE
Bach in Havana
Producers: Steve Epstein, Jorge Gomez
Sire/Warnerworks
Release Date: May 5
The compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach and turbocharged Latin jazz may not seem like an intuitive blend, but the conservatory-trained Cuban group Tiempo Libre finds an engaging balance. Piano provides the narrative backbone, whether it’s a Sonata in D Minor that segues into a jazz improvisation of brass and congas, or the famous Minuet in G Cut up with clave and sax. Santeria religious references abound, with a delicate C Major Prelude accompanied by Afro-Cuban bata drums used to call upon deities. Guest Paquito D’Rivera on clarinet brings a distinctive funkiness to the familiar classical melodies, as does “Timbach,” a passionate Latin ode to the bewigged German composer.—ABY

CHRISTETE MICHELE
Epiphany
Producers: various
Def Jam

GREEN DAY
21st Century Breakdown
Producer: Butch Vig
Reprise Records
Release Date: May 15
Five years after “American Idiot” restored Green Day as a modern-rock powerhouse, the trio returns with an even riskier album. “21st Century Breakdown” mixes the pop-punk charge of the band’s “Dookie” days with the political awareness of “Idiot,” resulting in an arena-ready record with a sense of purpose. Much of “Breakdown” is as sprawling as its 69-minute length would suggest: Ballads like “21 Guns” build into fiery singalongs, while “American Eulogy” uses a song-suite structure to voice social dissatisfaction. Billie Joe Armstrong’s lyrics, as rich as they are layered with images of bleeding hearts, falling towers, endless wars and atom bombs. While “Breakdown” offers a harsh reality, an underlying sense of hope runs throughout, with Armstrong singing, “I just want to see the light/I need to know what’s worth the fight.” The album is a call to arms for the digital age, and 20 years into its career, Green Day’s ambition continues to dazzle.—JL

CONOR OBERT & THE MYSTIC VALLEY BAND
Outer South
Producers: Conor Oberst, the Mystic Valley Band
Merge
Release Date: May 5
Conor Oberst has been a man of many hats—literally and figuratively. On this sprawling second disc with his suddenly prolific caravan the Mystic Valley Band, he tries on the one Wilco was rocking in the late ‘90s. It’s a comfortable fit, if not a particularly formidable one. “Outer South” is a decently served platter of rambling, soul-enjoying folk-country, but one that finds the freewheeling Oberst and band in need of a little focus. Now 30, Oberst has put aside cutting open here; this album is full of more generalized, dusty declarations like, “It feels scary to be ordinary in a world that don’t know your name,” dealt out over turnbrownsocapes that stretched throughout 16 long tracks, definitely meaner. But there are some dead-on hits, especially the banger opening “Slowly Oh So Slowly,” the “fresh-faced riot song” called “Roosevelt Room” and the easy standout “Nikorette,” all slide riffs and fierce, vulnerable vocals.—JL

KATIE MELUA
Pictures
Producer: Mike Batt
Dramatic
Release Date: May 5
It’s indicative of the rarified level of intelligence Katie Melua’s music reaches that her worst contemporaries with the UK press took place in 2005, when a cosmologist wrote an op-ed piece accusing her of an inaccurate estimate of the age of the universe in her hit “Nine Million Bicycles.” Melua’s new album, “Pictures,” arrived May 5 in the United States, 18 months after it appeared in the United Kingdom. This part of the universe may have finally found a place for Melua’s classy pop romanticism. The opener, “Mary Pickford,” works on multiple levels: as a lovely art song about the early days of Hollywood and a metaphor for indie musicians taking control of their careers. Like many of the best tunes here, including the should-be-classic “If You Were a Sailboat,” it was written by her mentor, producer/arranger Mike Batt. “If the Lights Go Out” sounds like an undiscovered Elton John gem; her own tune, “Spellbound,” and many collaborations show her potential, while the close, Leonard Cohen’s “In My Secret Life,” displays the thoughtful, solid musical judgment in ample supply on “Pictures.”—WR

STEVE EARLE
Townes
Producer: Steve Earle
New West
Release Date: May 12
The mark of a classic songwriter is less the physical artifacts left behind than the psychic ones: who was influenced, how the legacy is carried forward and, certainly, the enduring nature of the songs. For the late Townes Van Zandt—check, check and check. And for Steve Earle, who knew Van Zandt from the early ‘70s, cutting an album of Van Zandt compositions was a no-brainer. Every one of these 15 tunes is a living, breathing creature, from the haunting, modal-tinged blues-waltz (with cello) of “Rake” to the jaunty fingerpicking and mouthy dialogue of “Mr. Mudd and Mr. Gold” (a duet featuring son Justin Townes Earle) to the eternally elegant Tex-Mex anthem “Pancho and Lefty.” Additional guests include Tom Morello, Tim O’Brien, Darrel Scott and Earle’s wife, Allison Moorer. Throughout, Earle’s shape-shifting voice inhabits the songs just like Van Zandt’s own colorful characters inhabit them, and fans who desire an even more up-close-and-personal experience can do so for a ten-disco release.$19.99.

EDITEED BY WAYNE ROBBINS

CRITICS’ CHOICE

A new release, regardless of chart potential, Highly recommended for musical merit.

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

ALL ALBUMS
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INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

"Hail, the listener, hail! Let us meet and part in the bower of a year, as the midnight of the world approaches, and the sun sets beneath the wing of the heron. When we meet in the bower, let us speak alone with nature, and in the midst of the bower let us hear the voice of the holy spirit, and let us not forget the holy spirit in the bower!"

STEVE EARLE

Townes

Producer: Steve Earle

New West

Release Date: May 12

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AMY GRANT PARTNERS WITH SKIN CARE LINE FOR NEW BENEFIT EP

A Spirited Philosophy
Amy Grant Partners With Skin Care Line For New Benefit EP

In what would seem to be a match made in heaven, Amy Grant has partnered with philosophy skin care to issue "She Colors My Day." Released May 5 exclusively through iTunes, the EP benefits the Entertainment Industry Foundation's (EIF) Women's Cancer Research Fund.

The pop project also heralds the first new non-Christmas music that the Christian/pop artist has released in five years. The two new songs— "Unafraid" and the title track—join Grant's "Baby Baby" and "Oh, How the Years Go By." The two new songs combined have sold 2,000 downloads, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"We sought out Amy Grant because she has been inspiring women of all ages for over two decades through her music," says Karolyn Stayer, director of marketing and communications at philosophy. "She is also a wife and mother working hard to achieve balance between family and career. We felt Amy was someone the philosophy customer would relate to.

The poignant ballad "Unafraid" is one of the first new songs that Grant has written and cut. "The song covers every aspect of motherhood—partner, mother and caregiver of an aging mother," says the singer/songwriter, a Nashville-based mother of four. "It's a very specific song: quiet and very emotional. When I've played it live, people have come up to me and said, 'I need this song right now.' It felt like Mother's Day was a good time to get it out." The title track was written by philosophy founder Cristina Carlino and Stuart Matrisciani. Grant and the songwriters are also donating all artist and publishing royalties to the EIF fund.

"I love the spirit of that song," Grant says. "We made a video for it. And everyone from the people in front of the camera to the people behind the camera had been touched by cancer, either personally or through a loved one."

The video premiered May 14 exclusively on Amazon, and it'll be promoted heavily on hearfirst.com. Grant will tour the project with a May 21 appearance on NBC's "Today" and such programs as Premiere Radio Networks' syndicated "Delilah" show. Sparrow Records has been sending e-mail blasts promoting the release.

Stayer says the EP will also be promoted through the digital photo sharing/storage site snaphash.com, philosophy.com, shecolorssmyday.com and the Facebook pages for those brands. Philosophy created a special She Colors My Day bubble bath that tints water either pink or green. It retails for $20 with 100% of the net proceeds going to the EIF fund.

Grant herself is a free agent exploring her next career move. After 10 years with Word Records, she signed a deal with EMI Christian Music Group in 2007 and brought along her extensive catalog. EMI CMG released "Greatest Hits" in 2007 and "The Christmas Collection" in 2008. While she is fielding label offers, she's considering digitally releasing two new songs every four weeks through her Web site, iTunes and other portals. "I'll do that over the next 10 months, we might take the songs that get the strongest response, add a couple of unheard songs and do a hard copy," she says. "But we don't have a game plan yet."

Because the philosophy partnership enabled her to release "Unafraid," Grant would like to continue sharing new music with the immediacy possible in the digital realm. "When I'm working on a record, my close circle of friends will say, 'Do you have any rough mixes?'" she says. "Releasing digital singles as you approach the release of a record is not like you're pushing them to radio ... it's how you'd treat a friend. It seems like a better idea to me than waiting till everything is finished. My job right now is just to make the music."

A HELPING HAND

Red Hot founder John Carlin describes his benefit-album model as "benign capitalism" rather than charity. His latest release, "Dark Was the Night" (4AD), marks the series' 20th year. Carlin runs Red Hot as a labor of love, holding down a full-time job and keeping costs low by not hiring employees. As a result, he funnels all the albums' sale proceeds (plus those of a recent benefit concert at New York's Radio City Music Hall) to AIDS awareness organizations once the companies producing the albums—which have an average cost of $14.98 at retail—have recouped their costs. Labels that have aligned with Red Hot include Capitol, MCA, Verve/Antilles, H.O.L.A. Recordings and Columbia. Though he declines to reveal the dollar amount that the series has raised, Carlin says he tries to fund organizations that might not receive government support. His first beneficiaries were AMFAR and the controversial ACT UP. He's currently focused on supporting "artist-driven" benefit projects and needle-exchange programs.

—Courtney Harding

LENDING AID

The Red Hot albums have attracted a wide range of talent. Such popular early-'90s acts as Soundgarden and Nirvana lent tracks to "No Alternative" (Arista) while the latest album in the series, "Dark Was the Night" (4AD), features Bon Iver and the National. Lending a hand has become a hallmark of the Red Hot projects.
Parachute Juggles College While Recording Mercury Debut

As college students in Charlottesville, Va., the members of Parachute hoped its local fan base would help generate label buzz and earn them a ticket out of school. When Mercury/Island Def Jam signed the group in spring 2007, however, the label made an unexpected request: finish college.

“They knew it would be a grind over our heads and saw finishing school as important, whether we knew it or not,” lead singer Will Anderson says. Along with his fellow band members—Kit French, Alex Hayrace, Johnny Stinulefield and Nate McFarland—Anderson flew back and forth to Los Angeles to sporadically work on their first album, “Losing Sleep,” until they graduated a year later.

That extra time may have been a blessing in disguise. “Losing Sleep,” set for release May 19, displays a deep sense of maturity for a debut album. Songs like “Under Control” and “The New Year” are punchy pop rock gems, while Anderson’s lyrics blend equal parts style and smarts.

From a marketing standpoint, Parachute’s greatest asset may be its mainstream crossover potential, which Mercury hopes the band will achieve through various licensing opportunities. The first single, “She Is Love,” was recently added to VH1’s rotation after appearing in the May 4 episode of “One Tree Hill.” Another song, “Back Again,” is confirmed for the May 19 season finale of “90210.”

“We’re Tale to approach such a wide audience; obviously both male and female but also the 16-35 demographic,” Mercury Records president David Massey says. “We see them as a comedic rock band like the Fray. I think we’re going to see a long-term impact.”

A shrewd marketing deal with the body care brand Nivea also helped the whimsical vocals and romantic chorus of “She Is Love” reach the public and build chart momentum. After prominently featuring in TV spots for Nivea’s Body Smooth Sensations in April, the song—also iTunes’ free Single of the Week the week of May 11—is bulleted at No. 27 on the adult top 40 chart.

Anderson says the band didn’t hesitate to get onboard with Nivea’s female-oriented commercials. “We see a great opportunity,” he says of the band, which began running ads featuring “Under Control” in early May. “We’re a young band, and they are really passionate about our music,” Anderson says. “After working with Nivea, we knew we could be paired up with the brand for a long time.”

Having wrapped a string of shows with O.A.R., Parachute is slated to perform May 30 on CBS’ “Early Show.” While plans for a summer tour aren’t yet concrete, Anderson and Massey confirm the band will be on the road all season, including a few July dates with Secondhand Serenade.

“We’re a road band,” Anderson says. “Touring all summer is going to be awesome.”

BUBBLING UP

One of the prominent R&B family acts of the ’80s was Motown’s DeBarge. Now Kristinia DeBarge, daughter of founding member/keyboardsist James, is taking the group’s musical legacy to new heights.

The 19-year-old recently entered the Billboard Hot 100 with her first single, “Goodbye.” Sampling Steam’s 1969 pop No. 1 hit “Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye,” the song is No. 30 on the tally and also appears in the latest Nivea ad campaign.

DeBarge is signed to Sodapop Music, a new label co-founded by Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds and industry veteran Jeff Burroughs. Her as-yet-untitled album is scheduled for a summer release through Island Def Jam.

DeBarge says she separates herself from other artists by embracing her vulnerability instead of looking on it as a bad thing. “It allows me to be who I am, to be compassionate and sing beautiful songs,” she says. Other album tracks include “Cry Me a River,” about a girl ready to move on from a painful breakup; “Sabotage,” about the struggles of peer pressure; and the ballad “It’s Gotta Be Love.” DeBarge describes the album as “empowering and inspirational, aiming to give women strength and help young girls feel like they’re not alone. It’s the kind of album that will make you feel like everything is OK.”

Edmonds co-produced “Goodbye” with the Pentagon. Additional songwriting and production collaborators include Preach, Jordan Omley and OneRepublic’s Ryan Tedder. So far the album doesn’t have any guest features.

To promote the release, DeBarge will connect with fans through Facebook, MySpace and her recently launched Twitter page. Offline, she will begin a stateside promotional tour June 4 in Rochester, N.Y., followed by a full concert tour after the album’s release.

DeBarge launched her career when she participated in “American Juniors,” an “American Idol” spinoff, in 2003. Although she didn’t win, she reached the top 20. Once filming ended, she joined her father on tour.

It was during one of those shows that the 14-year-old DeBarge met Edmonds. He took her under his wing and has been working with her for the past five years. Their efforts paid off on the eve of her 19th birthday in April, when DeBarge met with Island Def Jam chairman Antonio “L.A.” Reid and signed her first label contract.

Now she’s ready to further develop her birthing. “Being a DeBarge has done nothing but bring good things my way,” she says. “I’ve worked hard for everything that’s come my way. But I also know my last name has been in my corner.” —Mariel Conception

LATIN’S YOUTUBE MAESTRO

When Larry Hernandez headlined a packed regional Mexican show April 11 at Los Angeles’ Gibson Amphitheatre, his latest album “16 Narco Corridos” (Fonovisa/Universal)—and his first to hit Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart—had been out for less than a week. But the audience had no trouble singing along to his narcocorridos, narrative songs about the drug trade.

Regional Mexican stations in California’s Central Valley as well as the concert’s media sponsor, KBUE Los Angeles, have been playing the lead single “El Baleado” plus another album track, “El Guerendon y Cachetoso.” Both songs combined, Hernandez says, total “only seven minutes. But I was onstage for 45 minutes with everyone singing my songs. That’s the power of the Internet and the street.”

“El Baleado” is No. 29 this week on Billboard’s Regional Mexican Airplay chart, while “16 Narco Corridos” holds No. 23 on Regional Mexican Albums and No. 49 on Top Latin Albums.

Hernandez, an L.A. native, hails from a family of musicians whose roots lie in Mexico’s musical hotbed: Sinaloa. He became a drummer in a band that had accompanied his musical hero, corrido icon Chalino Sanchez, before striking out on his own in 2002. Solo gigs, however, were hard to come by.

Enter Edmundo Mendeta, the manager of several popular regional Mexican groups. Hernandez showed Mendeta his material and from that point on “he believed in me,” the artist says.

A first major-label release through Fonovisa in 2008 got lost amid the label’s takeover by Universal. By then, however, Hernandez realized his biggest fan base was online by way of his MySpace page and YouTube channel. Now he totes his camera everywhere. Homemade videos have captured him cutting up with friends or acting in his own shoot-em-up story inspired by Mexican movie star Mario Almada.

Mendeta calls Hernandez “a YouTube freak. There’s no developing act that has used MySpace and YouTube in the regional [Mexican] market the way Larry has.”

And that groundswell of popularity bodes well for Hernandez.

“Larry is a huge priority for us,” says Gustavo Lopez, president of Fonovisa and Disc Records. “The groundwork is set. He’s young, he’s held up his end of the kids want.” —Ayala Ben-Yehuda

www.americanradiohistory.com
**Chrisette Michele, Mother’s Day Cap Weird Week**

Chrisette Michele notch her first No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 as her sophomore set “Epiphany” debuts with 83,000 copies sold. She edges out the seventh-week sales of the “Hannah Montana: The Movie” soundtrack (No. 2 with 82,000) and the arrival of Ciara’s third album “Fantasy Ride” (No. 3 with slightly less than 81,000).

Here’s the bad news: Michele’s opening frame is the lowest sum for a No. 1-debuting album in Nielsen SoundScan’s 18-year history. Previously, the record was held by Johnny Cash’s “American V: A Hundred Highways” in 2006, after it started with 88,000.

Only one other set has begun at No. 1 with less than 100,000. The Notorious B.I.G.’s “Greatest Hits” managed 99,000 in its first and only week at No. 1 in March 2007.

Of the 10 smallest sales debuts at No. 1 in the Nielsen SoundScan era, seven of them have occurred since 2005.

I suppose none of this should come as a great surprise, considering how few sales it takes to earn a No. 1 album—either by debuting there or eventually rising to the top.

The year-to-date average sales figure for the No. 1 album, through the 19th week of 2009, stands at 153,344. That’s off quite a bit from the year-to-date average of 2008, which was 179,160.

Want to wallow in some more depressing numbers? Going back to 2007, 2006 and 2005, the year-to-date average total at No. 1 was 168,320, 253,901 and 343,231, respectively.

Why are the averages so low? To state the obvious: Albums just aren’t selling.

Of the 19 weeks in 2009, nine of them housed No. 1 that sold less than 100,000. In 2008, only four weeks in the comparable time frame racked up 100,000+ sales.

Since the Billboard 200 began using SoundScan data in 1991, there have been only three weeks where the No. 1 album sold less than 100,000 and all but five have happened since 2004.

All signs point to a much bigger number at the top of next week’s chart, with the arrival of Green Day’s “21st Century Breakdown.” The Reprise/Warners Bros. set had an off-cycle release on Friday, May 15. Even though it will have only three days of sales on next week’s Billboard 200, it’s likely the album will debut at No. 1. Sources say the set shipped more than 650,000 to retailers—though it’s not expected to blow through that quantity in just three days. The album will perhaps sell what its last set, 2004’s “American Idiot,” did when it arrived atop the list with a career-best opening of 267,000. Of course, “Idiot” did that in a regular debut week, as opposed to the new set’s abbreviated start.

**LOVE, MOM:** Thank goodness for Mother’s Day.

In the week that ended with the holiday, 6.5 million albums were sold. That’s an increase of 5.4% over the previous week (6.2 million). Yet, we’re down 19.8% compared with Mother’s Day week of 2008, when 8.1 million albums were sold.

Last year’s holiday week included a No. 1 debut from Neil Diamond, with the perfectly timed romantic album “Home Before Dark” (146,000) and Toby Keith’s No. 2 debuting “35 Biggest Hits” (103,000). The top 200-albums that week moved 2.7 million—accounting for 33% of that week’s overall album sales. This week, the top 200 sold 2.1 million—or 31.7% of overall album sales.

Somewhat conversely, the top 200 sellers on this week’s SoundScan catalog chart move a combined 563,000 copies—7.7% of total album sales. That percentage is up compared with Mother’s Day’s frame of 2008, when the top 200 catalog albums sold 569,000, accounting for 7% of overall album sales.

We’re not sure if there was a strong slate of catalog titles on the market that were appealing as gifts for Moms, or if it was a matter of retailers aggressively sale-pricing key catalog product this year that caused the surge in share of the market.

This week on Top Pop Catalog, 16 of the top 50 titles that either debut or re-enter do so with a gain of at least 20%.

On the Billboard 200, only 66 titles see a decrease in sales this week. The majority of albums sporting gains are those that are conventionally female-friendly, like Yanni’s “Yanni Voices” (up 47%), Chris Botti’s “In Boston” (No. 62 up 34%), the soundtracks to “Mamma Mia!” (No. 69, up 60%) and “Divo’s ‘The Promise” (No. 105, up 48%).

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**Market Watch**

**Weekly National Music Sales Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year-To-Date</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL UNIT SALES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albums</td>
<td>149,941,000</td>
<td>132,592,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital tracks</td>
<td>395,886,000</td>
<td>460,765,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Store Singles</td>
<td>577,000</td>
<td>579,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>549,704,000</td>
<td>592,092,000</td>
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</table>

**Albums w/ER**

189,859,600 176,768,500 -6.9%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIGITAL TRACKS SALES</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital tracks</td>
<td>199.2 million</td>
<td>461.8 million</td>
<td>122.6 million</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>126,506,000</td>
<td>102,056,000</td>
<td>-19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Froth</td>
<td>22,805,000</td>
<td>27,617,000</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>775%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>592,000</td>
<td>902,000</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
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</tbody>
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**CHART BEAT**

**Looking Good**

Metal band the Devil Wears Prada marks its first appearance on Top Christian Albums at No. 1 (releasable at billboard biz charts). Its third album, “With Roots Above and Branches Below,” starts with 31,000 and a career-high peak at No. 11 of the Billboard 200.

**OLD FRIEND**

“Just a Friend” Biz Markie’s 1992 Billboard Hot 100 top 10, setters Hot Digital Songs at No. 62 (24,000) with sales spurred by its inclusion in Heineken’s latest TV spot. Of the track’s 216,000 total sales, 25% have occurred since the ad’s late-April premiere.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adele</td>
<td>Chasing Pavements</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Fearless</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coldplay</td>
<td>Viva La Vida</td>
<td>Indie rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Devil Wears Prada</td>
<td>With Roots Above and Branches Below</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>R&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliott Yamin</td>
<td>Fight For Love</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Lennox</td>
<td>In The Hands Of God</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul = Soul</td>
<td>Love On The Inside</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>américain Jules</td>
<td>Learn To Live</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince</td>
<td>Quiet Nights</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Potts</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jadakiss</td>
<td>The Last Kiss</td>
<td>Hip hop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of a Deadman</td>
<td>Scars &amp; Souvenirs</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Pac</td>
<td>No Line On The Horizon</td>
<td>Rap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Antebellum</td>
<td>Lady Antebellum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depeche Mode</td>
<td>Sounds Of The Universe</td>
<td>Synthpop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shinedown</td>
<td>The Sound of Madness</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conquer Overt &amp; The Mystic Valley Band</td>
<td>Out Of Time (album)</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadrunner</td>
<td>Road</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asher Roth</td>
<td>Aisleep in The Bread Aisle</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Forever In A Day</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fray</td>
<td>The Fray</td>
<td>Rock</td>
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<tr>
<td>KoRn</td>
<td>Love &amp; Money</td>
<td>Nu metal</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLO Rida</td>
<td>R.O.Q.T.S. (Route Of Overcoming The Struggle)</td>
<td>Rap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Cook</td>
<td>David Cook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOFX</td>
<td>Star Trek</td>
<td>Punk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid Rock</td>
<td>Rock N Roll Jesus</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The All-American Rejects</td>
<td>When The World Comes Down</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The album beams onto the list as the highest-charting soundtrack in the film franchise, beating out the No. 50 peak of the first "Star Trek" movie soundtrack in 1989.

**50**

After a performance on the "American Idol" results show (May 6), the album takes a 365% leap. The band also stars in a big debut on the Billboard Hot 100 (see page 42).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIM MCGRAW</strong></td>
<td>I Called Her Name</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>17,943</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RODNEY ATKINS</td>
<td>It's a Man's World</td>
<td>Curb</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LAURA BRIGGS</strong></td>
<td>Making This Town</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
<td>11,141</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BRENDAN FERRANDINO</strong></td>
<td>Brother and Sister</td>
<td>Highway</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BRENDAN FERRANDINO</strong></td>
<td>Sister and Brother</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TONY CURTIS</strong></td>
<td>Forgive Me</td>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>12,542</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TONY CURTIS</strong></td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>11,141</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LAURA BRIGGS</strong></td>
<td>Wide Open Spaces</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
<td>12,542</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAURA BRIGGS</strong></td>
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<td>Reprise</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BRENDAN FERRANDINO</strong></td>
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<td>Highway</td>
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<td>8.2%</td>
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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ROCKIN' THE CRADLE</td>
<td>HURT</td>
<td>CAROLINA RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
<td>THRIFT SHOPPING</td>
<td>REMOVE RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I TOOK YOU SO</td>
<td>YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME</td>
<td>RYTHM N' BLUES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IF I'D HAVE KNOWN</td>
<td>THEN</td>
<td>A&amp;M RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KISS ME THRU THE PHONE</td>
<td>BEVERLY HILLS</td>
<td>WEA RECORDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DEAR JOHN</td>
<td>BONNIE RAITT</td>
<td>CAPITOL RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bisquit's CHRISSIE TEIGE</td>
<td>DEAN MARTIN</td>
<td>MCA RECORDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I'M YOURS</td>
<td>KEITH HUDSON</td>
<td>KENT RECORDS</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>TURN MY SWAG ON</td>
<td>SWEET CAROLINE</td>
<td>MERCURY RECORDS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>KISS ME THRU THE PHONE</td>
<td>BEVERLY HILLS</td>
<td>WEA RECORDS</td>
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<td>I TOOK YOU SO</td>
<td>YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME</td>
<td>RYTHM N' BLUES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>IF I'D HAVE KNOWN</td>
<td>THEN</td>
<td>A&amp;M RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>KISS ME THRU THE PHONE</td>
<td>BEVERLY HILLS</td>
<td>WEA RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>DEAR JOHN</td>
<td>BONNIE RAITT</td>
<td>CAPITOL RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bisquit's CHRISSIE TEIGE</td>
<td>DEAN MARTIN</td>
<td>MCA RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I'M YOURS</td>
<td>KEITH HUDSON</td>
<td>KENT RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>TURN MY SWAG ON</td>
<td>SWEET CAROLINE</td>
<td>MERCURY RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>KISS ME THRU THE PHONE</td>
<td>BEVERLY HILLS</td>
<td>WEA RECORDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
<td>THRIFT SHOPPING</td>
<td>REMOVE RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I TOOK YOU SO</td>
<td>YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME</td>
<td>RYTHM N' BLUES</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>IF I'D HAVE KNOWN</td>
<td>THEN</td>
<td>A&amp;M RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>KISS ME THRU THE PHONE</td>
<td>BEVERLY HILLS</td>
<td>WEA RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>DEAR JOHN</td>
<td>BONNIE RAITT</td>
<td>CAPITOL RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Bisquit's CHRISSIE TEIGE</td>
<td>DEAN MARTIN</td>
<td>MCA RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I'M YOURS</td>
<td>KEITH HUDSON</td>
<td>KENT RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>TURN MY SWAG ON</td>
<td>SWEET CAROLINE</td>
<td>MERCURY RECORDS</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SINGLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LET ME HEAR YOU SING</td>
<td>CURTISE PRICE JR.</td>
<td>TIGHT RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DON'T TRUST ME</td>
<td>PUNISHER</td>
<td>GEORGE WASHINGTON RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>CHESS</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
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<td>CHESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>TRASH</td>
<td>CHESS</td>
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### RISING SINGLES

- **Hot 100 Airplay**
- **Hot Digital Songs**
- **Hot Dance Club Play**

### Charts

- **Albums**
- **Singles**
- **Hot 100**
- **Hot Airplay**
- **Hot Digital Songs**

### Notes

- Data for the week ending May 23, 2009.
- For chart reprints, call 646.654.4633.
- Visit www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### POP 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>BOOM BOOM POW</td>
<td>The Black Eyed Peas, Will.I.Am, Afrojack, RedOne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>RIGHT FACE</td>
<td>New Kids on the Block, Girl Power Music, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>HALO</td>
<td>Ellie Goulding, Interscope, RCA, Universal Motown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>SECOND CHANCE</td>
<td>Taylor Swift, Big Machine, Republic Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>DO YOU FEEL ME</td>
<td>Chris Brown, J. Cole, Def Jam, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>DO</td>
<td>Chris Brown, J. Cole, Def Jam, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>CRACK MAN</td>
<td>Maino, Madcon (Next Plateau), Logo Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>DRAMA</td>
<td>Daughtry, Capitol, Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>NOT ICY</td>
<td>Lady Gaga, Def Jam, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>BEST I EVER HAD</td>
<td>Kanye West, Roc Nation, Def Jam, Epic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MAINSTREAM TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>GIVES YOU HELL</td>
<td>The Isley Brothers, Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>YOU FOUND ME</td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson,经理音乐公司, Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>DO YOU FEEL ME</td>
<td>Chris Brown, J. Cole, Def Jam, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>CRACK MAN</td>
<td>Maino, Madcon (Next Plateau), Logo Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
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### ADULT TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>KNOW YOUR ENEMY</td>
<td>Daughtry, Capitol, Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>USE SOMEBODY</td>
<td>J.Cole, Def Jam, Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>HELLO</td>
<td>Adele, XL Recordings, Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>YOU</td>
<td>Whitney Houston, Arista, Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>OH YEAH</td>
<td>Outkast, Sony Music, RCA, Universal Motown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MODERN ROCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Artist</th>
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<tr>
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<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
<td>□□□□□□□□□□□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

On the Billboard charts, the new millennium marked a third week at No. 1 with "How Do You Sleep?". The song's sole hit at 46th week, it was the highest weekly tally in the chart's 15-year history.
### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Told You So</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood Featuring Randy Travis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MCA NASHVILLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She's Country</td>
<td>Jason Aldean</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiss A Girl</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out Last Night</td>
<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One In Every Crowd</td>
<td>Montgomery Gentry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here Comes Goodbye</td>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Are You Looking At</td>
<td>Rodney Atkins</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Run To You</td>
<td>Lady Antebellum</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Wish I Were Smarter (When I Was Younger)</td>
<td>Jason Michael Carroll</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving You Is The Easiest Thing</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
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### TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
<td>Unstoppable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Fearless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Aldean</td>
<td>Wide Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
<td>Doin' What I Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie Underwood</td>
<td>Carnival Ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamey Johnson</td>
<td>That Lonesome Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Volume 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
<td>Good Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Michael Carroll</td>
<td>The Guitar Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolly Parton</td>
<td>Blackwoods Barbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellie Pickler</td>
<td>Kelley Pickler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
<td>Feel That Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Strait</td>
<td>Troubadour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rich</td>
<td>Son Of A Preacher Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martina McBride</td>
<td>Shine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Travis</td>
<td>The Man Who Made Me A Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Currington</td>
<td>Little Bit Of Everything</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rodney Atkins</td>
<td>It's America</td>
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### TOP BLUEGRASS ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolly &amp; Vince</td>
<td>Bathers From Different Moons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Crow Medicine Show</td>
<td>Goldie Makes Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluegrass Rainbow</td>
<td>Troublesome Hollow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Devil Makes Three</td>
<td>Riding The Devil Back Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Ivey</td>
<td>Round Up For The Shootout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Ivey</td>
<td>The Devil Makes Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Ivey</td>
<td>25 Best Bluegrass Favorites</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### BETWEEN THE BULLETS

Up 12,000 copies, Taylor Swift's "Fearless" (No. 6) pulls the Greatest Gainer on Top Country Albums (41,000 copies sold), as her lead single "You Belong With Me" has claimed the chart's biggest gain in each of its four weeks, up to more than 3 million impressions this issue (18:17). An appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" (May 18) will elevate "Fearless" and Swift's self-titled debut set. — Wade Jason

For complete chart data, visit billboard.com. The numbers refer to the week of May 23, 2009.
### Hot Dance Club Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Halo</em></td>
<td><em>The Prodigy</em></td>
<td>RCA Records UK</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I Want You</em></td>
<td><em>Lady Gaga</em></td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Don't Forget About Us</em></td>
<td><em>Juno</em></td>
<td>Carisma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lights</em></td>
<td><em>The-Dream</em></td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Beautiful U R</em></td>
<td><em>Frank Ocean</em></td>
<td>Roc Nation Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Beautiful U R</em></td>
<td><em>Frank Ocean</em></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><em>Beautiful U R</em></td>
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<td>Roc Nation Records</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Title**

1. Halo
2. I Want You
3. Don't Forget About Us
4. Lights
5. Beautiful U R

**Artist**

1. The Prodigy
2. Lady Gaga
3. Juno
4. The-Dream
5. Frank Ocean

**Label**

1. RCA Records UK
2. Interscope Records
3. Carisma
4. Def Jam
5. Roc Nation Records
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: RCA Music Group promotes Peter Gray to senior VP of pop promotion. He was VP.

Last Gang Records appoints Lenny Levine president and Trevor Guy VP, Chris Taylor, formerly president of the label, will become chairman/CEO of Last Gang Entertainment. Levine was executive VP, and Guy was manager of digital.

Warner Music U.K. appoints Raoul Chatterjee to the newly created role of director of commercial innovation. He was managing director at Trinity Street Direct.

EMI Music appoints Ronn Werre and David Kassler COOs. Werre will continue in his current role as president of EMI Music Services, and Kassler was president of Europe at Terra Firma.

PUBLISHING: Universal Music Publishing Group promotes Pat Higdon to president. He was executive VP/GM at UMG Nashville.

TOURING: The Milan-based concert promoter F&P Group names Andrea Ross head of business development. He was an executive at Sony Music Entertainment Italy.

Nederland Concerts names Max McAndrew director of talent in San Jose, Calif. He was a talent buyer/event producer at the Las Vegas House of Blues.

DIGITAL: Interactive jukebox firm TouchTunes names Charles Goldstuck CEO. He was president/COO at BMG Label Group.

LEGAL: Stanley Schneider has opened his own law offices in New York. He was senior VP/general counsel at the Orchard.

RELATED FIELDS: The licensing consulting company Rights-Flow names Scott Sellwood VP of business affairs and human resources. He was a litigator/counselor at the San Francisco-based law firm Farella, Braun + Martel.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS
SEANY RECORDS HELPS KIDS FIGHT CANCER
At age 16, Sean Robbins was a baseball pitcher. But then one morning he couldn’t get out of bed. “We thought it was a herniated disk or a pulled muscle,” says Sean’s father, Mitchell Robbins, CEO of Seany Records. “It turned out that it was this horrible type of cancer called Ewing’s sarcoma.”

Sean died in 2006 after a seven-year battle with the rare form of cancer. Shortly after his death, Robbins launched the Seany Foundation, a charity dedicated to improving the lives of children with the disease. Since its launch, the organization has raised nearly $400,000 from donations and events.

Prior to his death, Sean tried to land an internship at EMI but couldn’t because of his health. The idea to start a label in his honor came from music industry veteran Harlan Lansky, a friend of Robbins who tried to arrange the internship.

“Harlan called me up and said, ‘I had this vision. It was Sean coming to me and saying we should start Seany Records,’ ” Robbins recalls. “And we should do it for the purpose of not only getting the name out there, but finding acts who really want to do something for a cause.”

Los Angeles-based Seany Records launched last year and has since signed the country rock group Don Tetto. SESAC Latina associate director Celeste Zendezas, exec VP/chair Nicolas Estrella, and former BMI exec Knighton VLP, currently VP/chair of SESAC, have also chipped in.

“Don wanted to work with SESAC Latina for the Latin community — for the kids who don’t have a platform to promote their music.”

2009 SESAC LATIN AWARDS
SESAC Latina celebrated its 2009 awards April 22 at the LIV nightclub within the Fontainebleau Hilton during the Billboard Latin Music Conference. The awards honored SESAC Latina’s most-performed songwriters and publishers. Songwriter of the year honors went to Claudia Brant for the third consecutive year. Brant co-wrote the hit “No Me Doy Por Vencido” with Luis Fonse. Other award-winning composers included Erika Ender, who wrote “Cinco Minutos” (recorded by Gloria Trevi), Guillermo “Meme” Ibarra for his duranguense hit “Dame Tu Amor” (Alacranes Musicales); Diesel, who wrote “Virtual Diva” (Don Omar), and the Brant team wrote “Yo No Sé Perdonar’ (Victor Manuelle), Fonseca for his song “Eres”, and Sebastian de Perecave for “Lola” (Chayanne). The publisher of the year awards went to Nana Malua Music (Brant’s publisher) and Sony/ATV Sounds.

INSIDE TRACK
RICHIE READY TO ‘GO’
His latest album, “Just Go,” comes out May 19, but Lionel Richie has already started on its successor—which may include a pair of tracks he plans to record with his de facto son-in-law, Good Charlotte frontman Joel Madden, and his brother, guitarist Benji Madden, in their guise as the production team Dead Executives.

“Joel and Benji brought me the greatest record ever,” Richie reports. Richie went to Paris at the end of his most recent European tour. “As soon as I got back home I’ve got two songs with them—brand spanking new.”

Richie is no stranger to contemporary producers. On “Just Go” he worked with Stargate, Akon, Christopher “Tricky” Stewart and the-Dream. He figures working with the Maddens—Joel and Richie’s daughter, Nicole Richie, have one child, 16-month-old Harlow, and another on the way—was inevitable but acknowledges they’ve been keeping a “respectful” distance from each other.

“We are two creative units; we just happen to be in the same family now. I was like, ‘I don’t want to impose anything on you,’ and they’re going, ‘Mr. Richie, we don’t want to impose something on you.’ But then you start to think, ‘Excuse me, if I can go with Akon and whoever... Why not come here and let me see what you have?’

“We were polite and respectful of each other for a minute,” Richie says, “but I think the intimidation factor is over now [and] you’ll hear a little more happening between us.”

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ASCAP FILM & TV AWARDS

ASCAP honored top film and TV music composers and songwriters at its 24th annual Film and Television Music Awards, held May 11 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. Composer Carter Burwell received the ASCAP Henry Mancini Award for Career Achievement. Burwell has scored more than 70 films, working with such directors as Todd Haynes ("Velvet Goldmine"), David Mamet ("The Spanish Prisoner"), Spike Jonze ("Being John Malkovich," "Adaptation"), John Lee Hancock ("The Alamo," "The Rookie") and Jeff Passanante ("Blood Simple") in 1984. Bill Condon ("Gods and Monsters") and Catherine Hardwicke ("Twilight") co-presented the award to Burwell along with ASCAP president/chairman Paul Williams and ASCAP CEO John LoFrandt. Burwell also received an award in the top box office films category for his score to Hardwicke's vampire romance "Twilight." Photos: courtesy of Lester Cohen/ASCAP.com

1. From left: ASCAP board member/composer Dan Foliart, honoree Rainald Holt ("They're Just Like Us," "Without a Trace"), and ASCAP senior director of film and TV music Sue Devine.
2. From left: ASCAP special consultant for film and TV music Nancy Knudsen and president/chairman Paul Williams. Carter Burwell, directors Catherine Hardwicke and Bill Condon and ASCAP CEO John LoFrandt.
3. From left: ASCAP senior VP Randy Grines, honoree Bear McCreary ("Eureka") and ASCAP director of film and TV music Mike Todd.
4. Carter Burwell signing the ASCAP Bill of Rights for Songwriters and Composers, an awareness-building initiative to support the role and rights of those who create music.
5. Composers/songwriters Adam Cohen ("PHOTO") and Jeanne Lurie ("Vantage Point" and "Best of Both Worlds Concert") in front of the ASCAP Bill of Rights.
6. ASCAP board member/composer Bruce Broughton (left), honoree Ali Orravison ("Vantage Point") and ASCAP special consultant for film and TV music Sue Devine.
7. From left: ASCAP board members/composers Bruce Broughton and Dan Foliart, honoree David Lawrence ("High School Musical: Senior Year"), David Carbonara ("Mad Men"), John Knase ("CSI") and Jeff Cardoni ("CSI: Miami") and ASCAP director of film and TV music Mike Todd.
8. From left: John E. Davis, composer of the original "Beverly Hills, 90210" theme, songwriters/composers Liz Phair and Doc Dauer ("KNOCK") and ASCAP senior director of film and TV music Sue Devine.
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- Rosanne Bernstein, SeniorBrandManager, Epic/Live
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## Billy Joel

**March 17**
- **BOK Center**, Tulsa, OK
  - Attendance: 17,335
  - Gross: $1,940,792.50

**March 19**
- **Toyota Center**, Houston, TX
  - Attendance: 16,612
  - Gross: $2,126,418.50

**March 21**
- **AT&T Center**, San Antonio, TX
  - Attendance: 17,203
  - Gross: $1,893,547.00

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