YES THEY CAN

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THE GREAT ESCAPE
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HATE THAT I LOVE YOU
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YOUR LOVE KEEPS LIFTING ME
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HOW FAR WE'VE COME
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Pookie Stuff

I DON'T WANNA BE IN LOVE (DANCE FLOOR ANTHEM)
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IN LOVE WITH A GIRL
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G. DeGraw Music, Inc.
Songs of Universal, Inc.

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Songs of Universal, Inc.

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Taylor Swift

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James Culpepper
Jared Harriman
Pat Seals
Lacey Sturm
BDK Music
C. L. Culpepper Music
Coved Up Werewolf Music
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Universal Music-Z Songs
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ON THE COVER: The Black Eyed Peas photograph
by Daniel DeSocio; funda.com; Getty Images

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‘AMERICAN IDOL’
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360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD
By Ben Turner

Around 2002, dance music was unofficially renamed "electronic music" to avoid the negative connotations of a genre that imploded at the start of the decade. The scene grew so big that it could only fall down. In the United Kingdom, it became a target of media ridicule, as the Guardian ran a string of stories that joyfully punted nails into its coffin. The scene that tried to take over mainstream music had seemingly failed.

Now, however, as the industry gathers in Ibiza for the second International Music Summit (IMS)—an event already dubbed the "God of music conferences"—the genre is once again in favor. Tiësto and Richie Hawtin worked with the Olympics, urban artists sample Daft Punk, and Jacques Lu Cont producers arrive from the Killers to Madonna. Leon Paul has become a global hub for music buyers—yes, they pay for music. There is a disconnect between audience and artists in electronic music culture, which allows the genre to lead the way with technological innovations. After all, the music is made with computers.

Even with this success, the genre needs representation to ensure it maintains its position within the music industry and protect the interests of its many labels and fans.

Electronic music sits where it was always most comfortable—blurry but belonging on the mainstream, playfully poking the ribs of popular music. The professionals attending the IMS agree the genre is best positioned here, a bit away from the spotlight, where executives might want to exploit it by changing what it stands for. It’s the genre’s innocence that makes it special, the camaraderie of people dancing barefoot to their own soundtrack. But they also need unity.

Every industry needs a focus, as well as representatives to protect its roots. The U.K. trade organization AIM just announced a "dance committee" to represent genre labels. This is a welcome move. This week IMS will also lose the "IMS Vote," where questions put to the delegates will help shape the future of electronic music.
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Front Line's Dale Morris Deal Highlights Draw Of Country Artists

There was an almost audible gap on Music Row when Ticketmaster Entertainment revealed that its Front Line management division had acquired Morris Management Group of Nashville.

Long known as a fiercely independent industry maverick, Dale Morris has managed top country touring artist Kenny Chesney since the beginning of his career and worked with Alabama until the band's retirement in 2004. The firm also represents other stars like Big & Rich and Gretchen Wilson.

The Ticketmaster acquisition gives Morris access to a big toy box filled with powerful alliances and sophisticated marketing tools, while it expands Ticketmaster CEO Irving Azoff's footprint in Nashville. Since Front Line began rolling up management companies in 2005, it has acquired financial stakes in Vector Management (Kid Rock, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Trace Adkins), Spalding Entertainment (Brooks & Dunn) and RPM (former home of Tim McGraw). McGraw recently departed RPM and left longtime manager Scott Simon for Coran Capshaw's Red Light Management (Dave Matthews Band, Phish), a move that also surprised many.

But losing McGraw came as a blow, adding Chesney has grossed some $400 million and sold 7 million tickets, according to Billboard Boxscore. While Chesney's in the second year of a five-year touring deal with TMG/AEG Live, his drawing power and stature among fans is at a peak and shows no sign of waning.

Morris' Clint Higham, who has overseen Chesney's day-to-day management since 1993, says aligning with Front Line and AEG will extend Morris' reach.

" Irving is the face of the music business, and with our new strategic partnership it gives us a further reach for our clients," Higham says. "We have had the great fortune of being able to go to the moon and back with our clients, and this will ensure us that we continue to do so."

Representatives for Front Line didn't respond to requests for comment.

It's easy to see why Nashville has attracted the attention of companies like Front Line and Red Light. The pool of arena-level country headliners is relatively small but growing. And country is a genre where ticket sales align with radio play and record selling, something that can't be said for many other major touring acts. Moreover, country artists stay on the road, which is attractive in an industry that is increasingly relying on touring revenue.

"The thing about country music is it still excels tour every year," says Doug Nichols, co-manager of Rascal Flatts at independent management firm Turner-Nichols. "They don't make an album, go out and tour, and then take off for three years. The revenue from touring is very consistent income that attracts people from outside." Nichols' company has remained independent, but not because they haven't had the opportunity to join a larger organization. "We've been approached by several people," Nichols says. "And it's not just with Front Line. There are a lot of people that are looking at the new horizon of what the music industry is going to be and they want to start music companies, but they want the anchor to be an artist like a Toby Keith or Rascal Flatts or Brad Paisley or Keith Urban."

Keith, Paisley and Urban— triple-threat artists at retail, radio and on the road—are like Rascal Flatts, all represented by independent management companies. TSD Artist Management, Fitzgerald-Hartley and Borman Entertainment, respectively.

While it may feel like all managers are joining forces with larger companies, there are still plenty of independents out there with major acts across all genres, including Dave Holmes (Coldplay), Paul McGuinness (U2), Jim Landau (Bruce Springsteen).
from >>p?

Guerinot (No Doubt, Nine Inch Nails), QPrime (Metallica, Red Hot Chili Peppers), Jeff Kramer (Bob Dylan), John Silva (Beck, Beastie Boys), Allen Kovac (Motley Crue, Buckcherry), Bob McVey (Fall Out Boy) and Johnny Wright (Justin Timberlake).

While it’s safe to assume that most successful managers have at least been offered a chance to join up with a larger firm, controlling one’s own destiny retains its allure, even with Azo’s assurances that Front Line-affiliated companies retain complete autonomy. “Truth is, I have never been offered a situation that was better than what I have,” says Guerinot, who founded Rebel Waltz.

Crush’s McVey confirms that larger companies have courted his business. “The money seems nice, but the loss of freedom is daunting,” he says.

While McVey acknowledges the attraction of having the “safety net” of a larger partner in today’s environment, “we’re excited about the new frontier out there,” he says. “As the business changes, we like to remain as mobile as possible. That said, if the right strategic partner approached us, and we felt it could really help our artists to be aligned with that partner, then we would possibly consider.”

Similarly, TKO president T.K. Kimbrell says he’s turned down opportunities to sell his company. “To sell out, receive a huge lump sum of money upfront and be associated with a large, broad-based management company can be very enticing,” he says. “I certainly understand the reasoning behind accepting these lucrative propositions.”

But in the end, he decided it made sense to chart his own course with TKO. “One of the acts I manage, Toby Keith, has continually fought to become more independent, with his own publishing, record label, merchandising.” Kimbrell says. “So even though there were great opportunities, keeping my management company’s independence has seemed like the right way for me to go.”

More artists will look to affiliations as current record contracts run their course, Nichols predicts. “Nobody knows what the model is, but they just know that if they have management and artists that are selling records and concert tickets, that’s a good place to build a company around,” he says. “I think it’s good that people are doing different things, and that it’s good for our business for everyone not to be locked in with each other.”

Right now, Turner Nichols also remains happily independent. “We’re not at the point where we’re just wanting someone to just give us a check,” Nichols says. “We still feel that Rascal Flatts has a lot of room to grow, and we still have a lot of things to accomplish. As long as everybody still has that attitude I think we have a great support staff here to get that done.”

The concert series will be open to fans who win tickets through promotions held by sponsoring brands and partners. Sponsors will be able to host clients and colleagues at a VIP reception and viewing area available at each show. Although venues have yet to be determined, Sotomayor says they will likely accommodate an average of 1,200-2,000 fans.

The artists who perform in the concert series will mostly be selected from the finalists for the 2010 Billboard Latin Music Awards, with about two acts performing per show. Finalists for this year’s awards included Luis Fonsi, Aventura, Wisin & Yandel, Flex and Mana. Telemundo broadcasts the awards live in the United States and distributes the show to 34 countries in Latin America and Europe.

“The Billboard Latin Music Concert Series is a perfect opportunity to expand our footprint in the Latin music market,” Billboard sponsorship manager Cebalezares says.
An acquaintance forwarded to me a copy of an open letter that the Cuban artist Manolín addressed to the Latin music industry.

In his missive, Manolín railed the Miami music establishment, devoting much of his rant to the difficulties of getting radio play. Although Manolín points out how hard it is to fill venues without airplay, he asserts that’s less viable in Miami.

Putting aside the contradictions in Manolín’s arguments, he raises a key question: How important is airplay to the success of an artist? In the last year, many in the industry have argued that as the Internet grows in strength and reach, radio is decreasingly important to the overall success of an artist, from sales to tours. That’s true for genre-defying acts like El Divo, which relies on TV exposure, or artists whose fan base isn’t interested in the latest pop trends, such as hip-hop group Kinto Sol, which relies on underground buzz.

But radio continues to be the hand that rocks the cradle. In fact, at a time when performance royalties and synch licensing have become more important sources of income for Latin artists than mechanical royalties, publishers look at airplay more than sales when determining what advancements to do. “It’s very difficult to recoup writers’ advances if there’s no airplay,” Arpa Music VP Alex Garza says. “I have to really think what recoupment I’ll get if there are no songs on the radio.”

For record labels, “radio continues to be very important, but it’s not the only thing,” Universal Music Latino GM Luis Estrada says. “That is true, more than ever, today. Music is in too many places where it wasn’t before, and young people listen to the radio less and less. We can’t be blind to that.”

Luana Pagani, who owns and operates the independent marketing company 4670 Communications in Miami, notes that certain acts, like regional Mexican band Los Pikadores de Caborca, rose not through radio but through the Internet, thanks to heavy play of its video “Cumbia del Rio” on YouTube Billboard’s Latin Chart Section, Feb. 7.

At the other end of the spectrum, Estrada says, is pop singer Cristian Castro. He has sold nearly 94,000 copies of his 2007 ranchero album, “El indomable” (Universal Music Latino), despite very limited airplay and the fact that his previous pop album sold poorly. However, one programmer says, “It really comes down to exposure, and I still think radio is the main means of exposure.”

And airplay chart position also provides artists with leverage in other parts of their career, like touring. That’s particularly true today, when labels and artists increasingly look to sponsors to help launch and promote projects. Sponsors consider radio chart barometers of success.

But instead of simply agonizing over the lack of radio support, artists must also find alternative promotional avenues to generate interest. Easier said than done, of course. But so is getting airplay.

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**THE BILLBOARD IQ&A**

Still going strong after 50 years in the business, the Spanish singer Raphael is displaying his operatic chops on a world tour and his duets album “50 Años Despues.”

The album, which Sony Latin released March 31 in the United States, peaked at No. 10 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart and has sold 10,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It’s an even bigger hit in Mexico, where it has gone gold for sales exceeding 40,000 copies, according to the labels organization Amprofon.

“50 Años Despues” includes duets with top Latin music artists, many of whom Raphael had never recorded with, such as Juanes and Vicente Fernandez. Raphael spoke with Billboard after a run of concerts in Argentina.

Many duets are recorded separately and then put together in postproduction, but you recorded yours in person.

All except the one with Rocio Durcal, naturally, since she’s no longer in this world. All were recorded with me in Madrid except for Vicente Fernandez. I flew to Mexico to record with him because he was on tour at that time and couldn’t come. It’s much better that way when you can see each other’s faces. Everything comes out more natural. With Rocio, we were very good friends and we had sung together many times, so it was very easy, as if she was there.

Do you get a different audience reaction depending on what country you visit?

Not especially. The public, wherever their nationalities, react similarly to certain songs and moments in the concert. What I have noticed is a lot of young people. I attribute this to the fact that they’ve heard a lot about me from their parents. So young people are curious to attend the concerts, to see me and hear me. They know my songs from memory—they sing along with me.

How do you take care of your voice?

It’s not that I take care of it a lot; I just don’t neglect it. I drink a lot of water. I’m very used to doing concerts, so my throat is used to putting up with a lot. . . . The less you talk, the better you will be singing. The five or six hours before, if you don’t talk, your voice is perfect.

What advice would you give to an artist who would like to have a 50-year career?

Don’t try to be like anyone else. Try to defend your own stamp and your own personality. Don’t let anyone convince you to sing like another. It’s the only way to get ahead in this profession.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

EN ESPAÑOL: All the great Latin music coverage you’ve come to expect from Billboard—in Spanish! Billboardenespanol.com.
Express Yourself

Monetize Streaming Music By Selling A Unique Experience, Not A Static Good

Here's where YouTube blew it. The company would probably have had a much easier time monetizing its service if it had built a system that enabled users to purchase enhancements for their videos, like soundtracks or special effects, before adding them to the site.

But YouTube wasn't built with that in mind. And it's probably too late to put the free genie back in the bottle. But the notion that free, ad-supported music streaming sites should augment their struggling bottoms lines by selling music, ringtones and other digital products is rapidly becoming mainstream.

By now it's clear that advertising alone simply isn't working. There are two reasons for that, and one of them is that record labels and publishers have such high per-song streaming rates. The other is that these services have failed to develop sustainable business models.

There's ample evidence that those who use free music services are also interested in buying tracks. A recent Forrester Research report says that fans of such services are "much more likely to spend on various forms of music, such as CDs, DVDs and live performance, than other consumers"—in some cases by as much as 50%. Echoing that finding is Pandora chief technology officer Tom Conrad, who says users are buying as many as 1 million songs per month using the links to iTunes and Amazon provided in each stream.

These services have added features that make it easier to buy, Pandora, for example, added a "bulk buying" feature to the iPhone version of the service, which lets users tag songs they hear on the iPhone automatically buy them from iTunes when the device is synched with the user's computer. Conrad says 10% of those buying music from Pandora do so through this feature.

Similarly, imeem has a "download playlist" feature that lets users buy every song in a given playlist with the push of a button. The number of songs that the average imeem user purchased through iTunes subsequently doubled in less than two months.

But these sales still don't contribute meaningful revenue. iTunes, the leading source of affiliate sales, shares only 5% of its 10% cut for each 99-cent track it sells. Even if streaming sites were to build their own music stores and keep the full 30%—assuming they'd get the same deal as Apple—for most it wouldn't be enough to recoup the cost of setting up the store in the first place.

"In the grand scheme of Pandora's financials, it's an insignificant number," Conrad says. "It's not a great business in and of itself."

According to Forrester analyst Mark Mulligan, one of the problems is that more impulsive sales are coming from streaming services than planned sales, which by definition represent a lower volume.

"Most people are focused on just listening and discovering," he says. "[That doesn't mean] that there aren't music buyers in the user base, nor that they're not discovering new music that they'd be willing to buy, but that they simply aren't in the mind-set."

According to Norwest Ventures principal Tim Chang, the solution is instead of focusing on selling more than just a song here or a ringtone there, music should be sold as part of a personalized experience that can't be pirated.

"Nobody perceives any value in just static content anymore," Chang says. "It has to be wrapped with some kind of experience. It has to be about self-expression."

That's what made ringtones such a success while full-track downloads on mobile phones sputtered. The ringtone is an application used to personalize the phone, not a song that can be acquired anywhere. The same goes for the downloadable tracks in the "Rock Band" videogame. Other possibilities include selling a song as an "avatar-tone" in virtual worlds like Gaia Online and Second Life that will act as a personal soundtrack that plays whenever the user's avatar walks into a given space.

Which brings us back to the example of YouTube selling the ability to add music to videos. To get a sense of the potential to charge for music as an experiential add-on rather than giving it away, consider the videogame industry. A report from Pacific Crest Securities found content transactions accounted for $100 million in sales last year alone, and more than 66% of videogame industry executives responding to a March VentureBeat survey said they expected in-game transactions to have the highest impact on industry revenue, compared with advertising revenue, which came in next to last at 21%.

"There's no reason the music industry can't enjoy similar results if digital services would only try to do the same. That's exactly where they need to go, because they aren't making money on the ads," Chang says. "Without newer types of business models like this, I can definitively say the music industry will never be the same size it once was."

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ROCK THE HOUSE

Mostly known for its cordless phones, VTech Communications is now getting into the Wi-Fi radio market. Its new wireless music hub, which sports the sexy moniker IS918i, is being positioned as a full-house music system. The device streams more than 11,000 Internet radio stations, as well as any track stored on any computer on the same network. It supports MP3, WMA, WAV and RealNetworks music files. It also sports a 10-watt subwoofer, stereo speakers and a Class D amp and a remote control. To spread the word about its foray into the music gadget market, VTech is sponsoring various music festivals, including the Playboy Jazz Festival in Los Angeles and the Montreal Jazz Music Experience in New Orleans. The music hub is available from VTech's online store for $200.

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BITS & BRIEFS

MORE MUSIC GAMES FOR iPHONE

Melodeo has introduced two new iPhone music games called "Name That Guitar Riff" and "Kids Song Kwiz." "Guitar Riff" features streaming guitar clips from iconic songs, along with trivia questions about each and their associated artist and album information. It comes in both a free Lite and 99-cent premium version. The "Kids" game is a "name that tune" style quiz featuring 100 famous kids songs that players have to match against a cartoon image depicting the song's title.

TUNECORE, MUSICNOTES OFFER SHEET MUSIC DOWNLOADS

TuneCore and MusicNotes have teamed to offer digital sheet music downloads. Any TuneCore act selling more than 25,000 songs in three months will have at least one of its songs transcribed to sheet music and placed for sale as a paid download on the MusicNotes Web site. The average price for downloadable sheet music is $5. Participating acts include 3oh!3, Josh Kelley, Ziggy Marley, Boxer Rebellion, MGM and Kim Taylor. MusicNotes has a catalog of about 100,000 digital sheet music titles and has existing deals with EMI Music Publishing, Sony/ATV and Universal Music Publishing, among others.

STUDY MEASURES MOBILE CONTENT USE

A study by research firm Frank N. Magid Associates finds that 51% of mobile phone users access some form of content on their devices every week. The study also says users spend about the same amount of time accessing content (39 minutes) as they do texting or talking (38 and 44 minutes, respectively). Among the types of content accessed, the group finds entertainment is accessed for longer periods than more "utilitarian" types of content, like news or weather.

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HOT RINGMASTERS

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www.americanradiohistory.com
Deal Or No Deal?
Discounted Streaming Rates Present Risks For Labels

Billboard's annual Music & Monev Symposium is making news two months after the fact.
His organization's May 7 newsletter, American Assn. of Independent Music president Rich Bengloff expressed his irritation about hearing a Music & Money panelist from a startup company explain one of the ways he keeps costs down: by striking direct licencing deals with indie labels to pay less than the statutory rate on streaming music.

Bengloff cautioned AAIM members against accepting such deals in exchange for promotion. "Remember that the next time someone asks you a label or artists to waive or take a reduced royalty rate," he wrote. "These type of services want to grow their business models off your repertoire. Very nice!"

Bengloff raises a sensitive issue. Being paid less certainly beats being paid nothing. But if some indie labels agree to reduced compensation, it would undercut the ability of other labels to secure more lucrative deals. On the other hand, online music startups have a tougher time without getting breaks on the fees they pay for music.

"It is only rational to give discounts on rates at the start, because for these services to get off the ground, they have to maximize their profit and decrease their expenses," says Gary Greenstein, an attorney who previously served as the general counsel at SoundExchange and now represents technology companies. "I've seen indie labels agree to deals where they take a lower rate and the station streams their music much more frequently, and they end up making the same amount despite the lower rate."

Greenstein says indie labels face a dilemma in that they "want to get treated like majors and achieve price parity, yet also keep the small webcasters in business, and that's a tricky proposition."

Even label executives acknowledge that this issue is murky. "There is a constant tension between the value of promotion and getting paid," says Frank Woodworth, GM of Eleven Seven Music.

But many indies are realizing that promotion in a crowded online space doesn't always add up to much. "We signed a lot of deals in the beginning because these sites sold us on being the wave of the future, and made it clear that we'd be missing out if we didn't cut a deal," says Nate Nelson, director of licensing and new media at Stone's Throw. "We contributed content and made all these nifty pages, and when we stepped back and evaluated, we were putting in a lot more than we were getting out."

Nelson says Stone's Throw is now cutting deals tied to a site's ability to meet certain benchmarks, an idea that seems to have broad support among many in the indie community.

Tiered agreements provide a way for labels and startups to meet each other halfway. Labels supply their music at a reduced rate until a site generates a certain amount of revenue, and then receive a higher rate as the site becomes more profitable. If the site is sold or makes it big, labels could even try to work out an agreement where they're paid better rates retroactively.

"It'd be more likely to sign a deal with a tiered system and retroactive payments," says Jeremy Peters, director of licensing and publishing at Ghostly International. "But we also have to hold the line to a certain extent, because it's a slippery slope once we start cutting."

Peters adds that "there are always labels starting out and trying to just get their content out there, and they'll give it away for nothing."

New labels are thinking "in the short term, not the long term," when they agree to these deals, Nelson says. "Everyone gets to make their own decisions, which is part of what's great about capitalism, but indies aren't rallying together as a community around this. There will always be people willing to undercut other labels, and that ends up hurting us all."

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. The Submission Period for this Contest begins on May 20, 2009 and ends on July 1, 2009 at 11:59 a.m. ET. Open only to legal residents of the fifty (50) United States and Washington D.C. who are at least eighteen (18) years of age or the age of legal majority in their state of primary residence at time of entry. See Official Rules, by which all entrants are bound, at myspace.com/contestmusic for additional eligibility restrictions. No participants advance through the Contest, prize descriptions/reservations, ARVs, and complete details, sold where prohibited. This Contest is sponsored by MySpace, Inc. and MySpace Records, Inc.
Brothers Of The Road
Widespread Panic embraces rare co-headlining status with Allmans

Between flipping burgers at the Nashville offices of Progressive Global Agency (PGA) on a recent Hamburger Friday, Buck Williams, agent/co-manager of Widespread Panic, took time out to rave about the band's upcoming co-headlining tour with the Allman Brothers Band, which begins Aug. 21 in Camden, N.J.

"It's going to be a once-in-a-lifetime deal," Williams says. "You will never ever have the opportunity to see this again."

The two bands had discussed booking up the road for years. Talks resurfaced when both bands were in New York in November for the Billboard Touring Awards, where Panic and the Allmans were honored as Road Warriors and Legend of Live, respectively.

"We have been discussing a tour with Buck for years, and we used the [touring conference] as aexus to try and reignite the personal connection between band members," Allmans manager Bert Holman says. "It was in discussion prior to Billboard, but being together in New York certainly fanned the fire.

Panic frontman John Bell and lead guitarist Jimmy Herring were among the surprise guests this year at the Allmans' sold-out run at New York's Beacon Theatre, which sold 41,831 tickets and grossed $4.2 million from 15 shows March 9-28.

"We expect that there will be a lot of this cross-pollination at the shows we play together this year," Holman says.

While the two bands have played festivals like Bonnaroo the same year, they've never shared a bill. Part of the issue is that while the two groups are of equal stature in many markets, one band is decidedly bigger than the other in other markets.

Panic has shared a bill for an entire tour only once, on the H.O.R.D.E. Festival in 1992. It was more than willing to make an exception to help the Allmans celebrate their 40th anniversary. "They just flew the ego out and said, 'We've been around for 40 years, they're celebrating their 40th anniversary, they've got a lot of good people going out with them, and if they want to do it, let's do it," Williams says.

Of course, they had to pick and choose which 20 markets they would play in August and October. "They wanted to do the South. I said, 'I can't go up all your Southern markets, but I can try to keep you some Northeast for Southern," Williams says. "So now we're doing the Northeast and Southeast with them, and we're crossing some and they're closing some."

Dates are already on sale, and the shows are "doing pretty damn well," Williams says. "I did a lot of talking with our fans, and even the youngest fans said they'd love to see the package.

Both bands are known for marathon shows, but given the 11 p.m. curfew imposed at many sheds, sets will be limited to about two hours each. "Then we'll see what we can do at the end," Williams says. "If they're getting along pretty good and want to play together, that's what we're all hoping. But we don't know. That's up to the musicians."

Ticket prices are on average $10-$20 more than a normal Panic show, depending on the market, but still priced in the $35 ($9,509) to $75 (premium) range.

Also working on planning the tour was Hunter Williams at PGA and longtime Allmans' agent Jonny Podell and agent C.J. Strock at Podell Talent. "They wanted some markets, we wanted some. We didn't 100% disagree, but we all did agree that we wanted to do what was best for both bands," Williams says. "We're very happy with what we have."

Widespread Panic will play two nights at the Forecastle Festival in Louisville, Ky., in July, followed by two days each at Mile High in Denver and the 10,000 Lakes Festival in Michigan. It will launch its own tour around Halloween and plans to start full-fledged recording efforts for a new studio album in January.

For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see billboard.biz/touring.
Lee Solters
1919-2009

Show Business PR Giant Influenced Generations

"Heaven needed a great PR guy," said a May 17 e-mail from Larry Solters announcing that his father, Lee Solters, died in his sleep the previous day at the age of 89. Born Nathan "Nussy" Cohen in Brooklyn, Solters wrote about high school basketball for the New York Times, graduated from New York University with a journalism degree and then embarked on a career in public relations that spanned 70 years.

In 1972, when I was 22. I became the token rock 'n' roll guy at his company—then called Solters, Sabinson & Roskin, which represented half of Broadway's musicals; several Hollywood films; stars like Barbra Streisand, Frank Sinatra and Alan King; and other clients like the Four Seasons restaurant in New York, Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas and the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

At the time, I was part of an insular clique of New York rock writers but Solters disabused me of the notion that PR was about getting favors. Our job was to create stories. The key words in his lexicon were "angles" that could shape a lead paragraph and "items" with news or jokes that could be serviced to newspaper gossip columns, then still written by the likes of Earl Wilson.

In his earlier days Solters had represented Cary Grant and Mae West. With thick glasses, boxy suits and a pugnacious New York accent, he seemed to have sprung out of a '40s movie. At first I was intimidated by his gruff exterior. But I soon discovered that Solters was always the least cynical person in the room, a happy warrior whose frenzied energy to get exposure for his clients was rooted in an almost childlike enthusiasm. To Lee, publicity was an end itself. A good PR scam had a poetic validity that was independent of any particular client...

My first assignment was saxophonist Stan Getz, who had a gig at the Rainbow Grill. At the time Getz was long out of fashion with music critics and had no new recording to talk about. At Solters' morning staff meetings, he impatiently asked me a series of questions, then finally unearthed the fact that Getz had a birthday coming up. "So do a birthday party!" he shouted as though I had overlooked the most obvious opportunity in the world.

Guided by more experienced colleagues, I stammered my way through a conversation with Getz and fashioned a party at the nightclub attended by Dizzy Gillespie. Zoot Sims and Louis Armstrong's widow, Louise. It wasn't a real party, but a photo-op scheduled in the morning for the convenience of local TV crews—two of which, to my amazement, dutifully recorded Getz blowing out his birthday candles.

As I was leaving the office that night, Solters yelled out to me: 'Didn't I want to stay and watch the TV coverage in my office? As he switched between the two channels he beamed with satisfaction: 'The stunt had worked. Once I saw that gleam in his eye, my life was never the same. He taught me not only the craft of PR... but also the art of enjoying every moment.

When Led Zeppelin became a client of his firm, I worked with the band on a day-to-day basis. When the group was robbed at the end of its American tour and a New York Daily News front-page headline said, "Led Zep Robbed of $3000," he patted me on the shoulder approvingly and said, "See, if we hadn't done our work these last few months they would have said, 'Rock Band Robbed.'"

Solters kept working almost to the end of his life, having outlasted most of his partners—James O'Rourke, Harvey Sabinson, Sheldon Roskin and Morroe Friedman. In the last few years he worked with Jerry Diney. Occasionally I would run into Solters at big events where he would complaints about photographers who tried to shoot Streisand from the wrong angle or recount the latest Michael Jackson drama. In addition to his son Larry—a great PR man in his own right—Solters is survived by his daughters, Susan Reynolds, his grandchildren, Jonah Reynolds and Maxie Solters, and his great-grandson, Elijah Reynolds.

Danny Goldberg is the president of Gold Village Entertainment and the author of the memoir "Bumping Into Geniuses." He started as a writer for Billboard and reviewed the Woodstock festival for the magazine.

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GLOBAL BY LARS BRANDLE

Australia’s ‘Idol’ Threat

REALITY SHOW ALUMNI TEST OVERSEAS MARKETS

BRISBANE, Australia—Sony Music Australia is backing three platinum-selling “Australian Idol” graduates to follow in the footsteps of Leona Lewis and achieve international success. After Australian acts ranging from AC/DC to Gabriella Cilmi scored internationally throughout 2008, company chairman/CEO Denis Handlin thinks the time is right to export singers Jessica Mauboy, Shannon Noll and Guy Sebastian.

However, Sony isn’t overemphasizing their TV roots. “‘Idol’ has been a great launching pad,” Handlin says, “but we’ve really moved [the artists] on. They all have quality. They’re really developing as artists in their own right.”

The label has resisted the temptation to rush out a record to cash in on the singers’ TV fame because Sony believes “all artists have gestation periods—and they need time to breathe,” says Jayde Springbett, the label’s senior director of A&R. “It’s an approach that mirrors the handling of Lewis’ debut album, which appeared 11 months after her U.K. ‘X-Factor’ win.

Sony has global options on all artists who emerge from “Australian Idol” and Springbett says Sony Australia executives have personally presented Mauboy, Noll and Sebastian to international colleagues at playbacks and showcases. But the major shops around when appropriate—for example, it licensed Mauboy’s September 2008 debut album, “Been Waiting,” to the dance specialist Ministry of Sound Recordings for its fourth-quarter U.K. release. Almost two years after finishing second in the 2006 “Idol” final, Mauboy topped the Australian Recording Industry Assn.’s singles chart in December 2008 with “Burn” from the platinum-certified (70,000 copies) “Been Waiting.”

“We had no idea about her ‘Idol’ background,” Ministry of Sound head of international Scott Simons says. “When we first heard her tracks, we thought they were great pop R&B that could work in the U.K.”

Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) released “Been Waiting” April 22. The album track “Running Back”—a collaboration with U.S. artist Rida—has sold 26,000 master ringtones in Japan, while selling 17,000 single-track downloads, according to Sony.

Manager David Champion says Mauboy will visit the United Kingdom and Japan in September in addition to domestic commitments for her October feature film debut, “Bran Nue Dae.” “She’s an extraordinary vocalist,” he says. “When she hits [Japan] and does some TV, they’ll absolutely get the power of the girl’s lungs.”

Noll, runner-up to Sebastian in 2003’s “Idol,” has scored five domestic No. 1 singles, selling more than 1.2 million copies across his four albums, according to Sony. His overseas introduction was an industry showcase March 3 in London, organized by the PR firm LD Communications. LD’s radio/TV promo push will increase in June and July, coinciding with Noll’s appearance on a 20-date European arena tour of the “War of the Worlds” stage show.

Mauboy’s third album, Noll’s May 4 U.K. debut album, “What Matters the Most” (RCA), recently scored synch deals for sports programming on terrestrial channel Five and pay-TV outlet Sky Sports.

Meanwhile, Sebastian is targeting the United States, his Sydney-based manager Titus Day says, after four successive domestic platinum albums. John Mayer contributes guitar and backing vocals to Sebastian’s first U.S. album, “Like It Like That” (due in July or August through Victor/Sony).

Now based in New York, Sebastian tested the live waters with a Monday-night residency at the East Village club DROM (April 20-May 11), but TV synchs will be used to establish a U.S. presence. Already, the album’s title track has been picked for NBC’S summer promotional campaign and was featured on the May 10 “Celebrity Apprentice” finale.

Day says he sees “a certain level of ‘Idol’ skepticism in Australia” but adds that “in the U.S., it doesn’t carry the same stigma—they see it as finding emerging talent, rather than creating some ‘advocated’ pop.”

GLOBAL BY JULIANA KORANTENG and VLADIMIR KOZLOV

FROM RUSSIA WITH CASH

PRIVATE GIGS HOLD UP DESPITE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

LONDON—The party might be over for business magazines in Russia and the United Kingdom, but insiders say private gigs for super-rich individuals remain big business in Moscow and London.

Once the preserve of veterans acts no longer able to draw audiences on the regular touring circuit, in recent years the prospect of mega rouble paydays has lured even current superstars to perform at corporate and private parties, with the sector’s growth largely fueled by money from Russia’s new breed of oligarchs.

London’s status as a financial center—and a base for many Russians—makes it a key location as well, while business was also growing in the United Arab Emirates before the credit crunch.

Carol Meehan, director at the Glasgow, Scotland-based corporate entertainment broker Star Management, which has organized private shows for such pop acts as Girls Aloud and Ronan Keating, says the recession has cut demand from companies. “But individuals who are wealthy will ask for private entertainment anytime,” Meehan says. “For certain people, once they get past certain income, they don’t think about costs.”

Secrecy shrouds the details of most such shows, but such A-list stars as Jennifer Lopez, Mariah Carey and Christina Aguilera have been widely reported as performing private gigs for Russians in the last couple of years. Many more have taken place under the media radar.

Among the most well-documented cases, Lopez reportedly earned $2 million including expenses in 2007 to perform in Ascot, England, at the birthday of the wife of Russian banking/minerals magnate Alexander Mikhaychik. Amy Winehouse earned a reported £1 million ($1.5 million) to play the opening of the Garage Gallery, owned by London-based oligarch Roman Abramovich’s girlfriend Darya Zhukova, in Moscow in 2008.

Hugh Philimore, a producer with the London-based events production company Sound Advice, which has used Gabriella Cilmi and Duffy for private corporate shows, says he has previously fielded offers as high as £5 million ($7.6 million). Demand from corporate clients is now “virtually nonexistent,” Philimore says. But when asked how the recession is affecting concerts for private individuals, he replies, “Not much.”

Colin Lester, manager of the U.K. R&B star Craig David and founder/CEO of CML Entertainment, says $250,000 is a more typical payday for a name artist, plus expenses—and the occasional tip. Lester notes that Craig recently performed a show in Kazakhstan for an entrepreneur who gave him a brand new Ferrari.

“Despite the economic climate, it is still a big, buoyant industry,” he says. “If anything, the private-gigs business during the first half of this year is going to be better for me compared with the same period last year.”

U.K. pop star Lily Allen maintained that, prior to the release of her second album, “It’s Not Me, It’s You” (Regal/Parlophone), she had made more money from private shows than from record sales.

“Someone will ask me to do a Christmas gig and I’ll ask them for 200 grand,” she says. “That’s where I make my money. Artistically, these gigs are absolutely horrendous. You feel like a complete and utter [fool], but that’s the way the world is now.”

Still, that world is changing, and the international economic downturn hit Russia particularly hard. Between Sept. 1, 2008, and May 16, 2009, the Russian rouble’s exchange rate against the U.S. dollar fell by 30%, from 24.57 roubles per dollar to 32.08 roubles per dollar, while the RTS stock market dropped 70% during 2008. Meanwhile, the number of dollar billionaires in Russia dropped from 101 in early 2008 to 49 in early 2009, according to a survey by the Russian business magazine Finans. The bottom dropped out of the Russian corporate entertainment market at its traditional New Year Eve’s peak—when insiders reported the number of corporate parties dropped by 60% to 70% year on year—and has yet to recover.

Since then, “it has been a slow process,” says Vlad Feldman, general director of the Moscow-based promoter Art Event Group, which regularly puts on private shows. “On the one hand, it is due to the overall economic situation; on the other, the months following the New Year holidays are always a quiet period.”

But gigs for wealthy individuals are likely to hold up, according to Alexander Tkhorov, a music business analyst with the InterMedia agency in Moscow. “Among Russian oligarchs, there will always be those ready to pay up,” he says.

Lester agrees. “The level of wealth they’re talking about is so vast,” he says, “even if they lost 10% of their value in the money markets, they’ll still have more money than you and me.”

Additional reporting by Mark Sutherland in London and Ilya Zinin in Moscow.
TOKYO—Music festivals starring Western artists are drawing more fans than ever in Japan, even as their music sales continue to slide.

This summer, Oasis, Franz Ferdinand and Weezer headlined Fuji Rock Festival at Naeba (July 24-26), while My Chemical Romance, Linkin Park and Beyoncé headline Summer Sonic at twin sites outside Tokyo and in Osaka (Aug. 7-9). After a decade's growth, the events are set to attract their largest combined attendances yet in 2009.

Both are "very valid festivals and draw huge crowds," says U.K.-based artist manager Stephen Taverner, whose clients the Ting Tings play Summer Sonic this year, having debuted there in 2008. "In terms of domestic exposure for any artists playing, they're hugely important. You get TV coverage, radio coverage, press coverage."

The festivals' popularity contrasts with international repertoire's steadily declining share of music sales (Billboard, April 4). However, Universal Music Japan senior manager of corporate planning Kazutoyo Yamana claims that reflects a cultural difference from Western festivals.

Japanese festivalgoers, Yamana says, are mostly not "core international music fans who always listen to international repertoire in their daily lives." Rather, he says, they "pay for one-of-a-kind atmosphere and experiences they can only have at the summer festivals."

BMG Japan executive VP of international labels Hiro Tanaka agrees. "Generally speaking," he says, "some of them may not necessarily be that committed to any particular artist—or even be a consumer of music products."

Japan's first major pop-rock festival Fuji Rock launched in 1997, attracting 30,000 people. It cracked the 100,000 barrier in 2003 and expects this year's 200-act bill to draw 125,000. Three-day ticket costs range from ¥39,800 yen ($410). Summer Sonic started in 2000, drawing 68,000 people and gradually expanded until 2008's two-day bill attracted 190,000 attendees. This year's slate features 120 acts, with three-day ticket prices set at ¥39,500 yen ($406). Promoter Creative Man says the extra day means attendance should total 300,000.

Fuji Rock and Sound Sonic have been "consistent with strong content, hence their growth," says Rod MacSween, director of International Talent Booking in London. "Japan traditionally has been able to charge quite high ticket prices," says MacSween, whose client Placebo will play Summer Sonic this year. "[And] with sponsorship, [they can] bring in strong income so as to offer good fees and attract the biggest names."

The promoters for Summer Sonic and Fuji Rock say they have a friendly rivalry but also insist they target different audiences. "Fuji Rock appeals to a much wider range of people than the average CD-buying consumer," says Masahiko Hidaka, president of Fuji Rock promoter Smash Corp. "We provide family-oriented areas with kids' activities and a huge range of stages. We've been able to grow consistently by offering international acts for many different tastes."

Summer Sonic, Creative Man president/CEO Naoki Shimizu says, targets a slightly younger crowd, selecting many acts using information from Japan's biggest rock magazine, Rock'in, which claims a monthly circulation of 300,000. "They send out a questionnaire to their readers on what acts they'd like to see," Shimizu says, "and I sit down with the editor and analyze the data."

Summer Sonic 2008 - Music, Art, Culture and Society

**Overseas Acts Are Drawing Big Crowds On Japan's Festival Circuit**

Hot fun in the summertime: Summer Sonic 2008 (top); Creative Man's NAOKI SHIMIZU (left) and Smash's MASAI ORO HIDAKA

Fuji Rock's initial success prompted the launch of approximately 40 other festivals targeting fans of Japanese music, the largest being the three-day Hitach City-based Rock in Japan in 2000. It attracted 150,000 attendees in 2008 and this year (July 31-Aug. 2) features 78 local acts including Polysics, Puffy and Halcalf.

However, Fuji Rock and Summer Sonic remain flagship summer music festivals in Japan. In addition to financial and promotional benefits, U.K. manager Taverner notes that acts can find the Japanese festival experience refreshing. "When the band plays, they go crazy," he says. "But between songs they're very respectful and there's silence—which is quite different to England's Reading festival, where you're getting bottles of piss thrown at you."

Additional reporting by Tom Ferguson and Jen Wilson in London. **MAY 30, 2009 | www.billboard.biz | 15**
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See You On The Other Side

Muzak Looks Poised To Survive Chapter 11

Circuit City was forced to turn its Chapter 11 filing into an outright liquidation. In this tough environment, how is Muzak's walk through the U.S. bankruptcy process proceeding?

Muzak—which tailors playlists for retailers and other clients that need music to play in their stores and uses customer service calls on hold—to structure its balance sheet and hopes to emerge as a stand-alone business. An examination of its financials suggests that its chances look good.

During the last five years, Muzak's annual sales have been stagnant, due in part to increased competition from the likes of PlayNetworks, In Store Broadcasting Network, Trusonic, DMX Music, Premier Retail Networks and other rival service providers.

Although Muzak stopped submitting 10-K filings to the Securities and Exchange Commission in 2007, the company's more limited financial reports since then indicate that it remains profitable on an operating basis. In its final 10-K, Muzak reported 2006 revenue of $248.6 million and $60 million in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA), although it posted a net loss of $175 million due to depreciation, amortization and interest payments. For the following year, the company reported revenue of $250.2 million and EBITDA of $69.7 million, while in 2008 it generated $248.9 million in revenue and $65 million in EBITDA.

But the company's approximately $50 million in annual debt service wiped out its annual profits, and the bulk of its debt came due Feb. 15. The interest payments and maturing debt forced Muzak to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Feb. 10.

While the company listed $437 million in total liabilities, the Chapter 11 affidavit of Muzak CFO/treasurer R. Dodd Hayes describes more than $237 million in total debt. From 1998 to 2003, prior Muzak management financed an acquisition spree through three separate bond and note issues that raised $570 million. Besides the money owed to bond and note holders, a senior secured term loan from Bank of America, a loan from Bear Stearns—a presumably now in the JP Morgan Chase portfolio following its acquisition of Bear last year—was drawn down $101 million as of the Feb. 10 filing date. Vendors, labels, publishers and other music suppliers appear to be owed less than $5 million.

While Muzak doesn't have debtor-in-possession financing, its secured lender didn't object when the company petitioned the Delaware District Court to access what's known as cash collateral, also known as cash on hand. According to court documents, cash on hand totaled about $35 million in mid-April, funds the company says is enough to operate the business going forward.

What happens now? In the current environment, Chapter 11 companies are more likely to be either sold or liquidated piece-meal than come through a bankruptcy reorganization intact. But Muzak has already been down that path, when it proposed merging with DMX in 2007 and then bought a proposal from the proposed combined entity. The companies received several bids last September before the economic downturn killed that effort.

Meanwhile, an outright liquidation appears unlikely in that the company's $392 million in assets includes tangible assets of only $82 million in the form of the hardware it installs in retail stores and uses to manage its 2.5 million-song database. The rest is mostly composed of $266 million in goodwill and intangible assets.

That's why it looks like Muzak could emerge as a stand-alone company, with the secured lender likely to get most of the equity and bondholders perhaps also getting a stake. Current shareholders, such as ABRY Partners (with 64%), which also has an equity stake in Music Reports, and Clear Channel unit AMFM (20%), will probably be wiped out. Down the line, though, the new owners may look to merge or sell the company to cash out.

Although music publishers, songwriters and labels combined could lose $2 million or so in the short term due to the Muzak Chapter 11, this appears to be a case where the music industry will benefit in the long run and should throw its support behind Muzak's reorganization effort. Muzak generates about $16 million annually in royalties paid to about 1,000 music companies, including music publishers, rights organizations and labels, with ASCAP and BMI receiving the bulk of that. According to its last 10-K filing, Muzak paid ASCAP and BMI about $12.8 million in royalties in 2006. Muzak director of music industry relations Jason McCormick makes a pretty good case for industry support:

"We are all about using music content in the right way and making sure rights holders get paid," he says. "We have been writing checks to them for 75 years."
The influential music supervisor talks about his involvement in the unusually music-intensive Fox comedy ‘Glee.’

How did you join ‘Glee’? [Show creator] Ryan Murphy and I have worked together for about seven years now on ‘Nip/Tuck’ and ‘Running With Scissors,’ and he has many of the crew members on ‘Glee.’ Ryan’s spent a lot of time developing a quality team to support his creative visions on all his projects. I’m happy to say, he’s stayed loyal—an increasingly unique quality in our industry.

How do you decide what songs to use? The creative music decisions start in Ryan’s head. He either has a very specific song idea or a definitive tonal concept he wants to target. Oftentimes, the songs lyrically speak to the episode’s plot points and are almost always a seminal classic or new hit.

At what point in the process do you see the script—or do you suggest songs before the script is written? We must front-load the creative, business and production elements of our soundtrack well in advance of our shoot days. Our music team is in loop much earlier than traditional television shows where 90% of the music needs are addressed in post-production. On ‘Glee,’ we have concept meetings, receive acts and scripts as they’ve been written and even work from Ryan’s stream of consciousness. The latter keeps us all on our toes, but it’s a creative process we’ve come to appreciate and why it’s so critical we work as a team.

The pilot has synched one after the other. Will that continue for the rest of the series? ‘Glee’ is an incredibly jam-packed music experience and one that’s unparalleled by episodic standards. Producing the pilot was a bear—and we had months to do that. We’re now creating equally dense episodes for the body of the series on a week-to-week basis. It’s a huge undertaking and pushing us all to our limits. But the audience will see the effort for a first episode on television. We can promise that.

Is a soundtrack in the works? Columbia Records will be releasing the ‘Glee’ soundtrack. We had exceptional offers from all the major record labels. But Rob Stringer and Glen Brumman campaigned heavily for this project and we couldn’t have a better soundtrack partner.

Will the show incorporate chyrons or online elements for people to find out which songs were used on the show? Fox is putting their entire marketing weight and expertise behind this project. The studio’s success with music-driven shows like ‘American Idol’ has redefined the way television is promoted and branded. And now that we’re partnered with a powerhouse like Sony on the soundtrack side, it’s safe to say, if there’s a music angle to be exploited, whether it be through terrestrial or online media or yet-to-be-defined methods, Fox and Sony will capitalize on it.

Are there any particular publishers that are easier to work with? The entire music industry has been incredibly supportive of our efforts. However, no company has been more influential on our soundtrack to date than Universal Music Publishing Group. Being the biggest in the business, their catalog clearly provides the broadest range of material from which to choose.

Have you ever wanted a song and couldn’t get it cleared? Ever had a Hall Mary song request come through? Modern-day song clearance is a never-ending struggle, and the clearance of big songs only creates bigger problems. There is rarely a day that goes by on ‘Glee’ where we’re not fighting tooth and nail to get the music we want.

That said, we’ve worked incredibly hard to get Ryan his druthers and we’re proud to say we achieved about a 95% success rate. Of course, there’s always holdouts and nonbelievers. But if I had to guess, by this time next year we’d only not have our pick of the song litter, we’ll be solicited by writers and artists who traditionally don’t participate in music licensing.

As for Hall Marys, we’re producing an hourlong musical every week. It all feels like a Hall Mary.

What can bands do to have their songs included on the show? At this point, we’re using little or no emerging or independent music. The songs in ‘Glee’ to date, are all instantly recognizable hits. That’s the soundtrack footprint of the show. I’m enthusiastic we can use ‘Glee’ as a platform for new and even original music, but for now this is our path.

How does budgeting work? Do you have to weigh one big, famous artist track versus several songs from up-and-comers? Budgeting for ‘Glee’ has been an intensive, complicated process. Most television shows only deal in traditional music licensing and even that is an afterthought often addressed in postproduction. On this show, in addition to the common clearance and licensing issues, we deal with prerecords, studio sessions, on-camera song production, musician and vocalist contracting, choreography, [Screen Actors Guild] and [American Federation of Musicians] union interaction, auditions, demo-ing and a variety of other financial issues that come up on a daily basis. In order to budget appropriately, we spent many hours with the Fox team during the development of this show to plot exactly how we were going to execute this series.

Granted, we are spending an unprecedented amount of money on music for a scripted network drama. But we still need to be very mindful of every dollar spent. There are not a lot of scripted dramas that truly take the time to craft an exceptional soundtrack where the music is a memorable character on the show. There are simply too many factors that interfere with true art and prevent risk taking—ratings, ad dollars, meddling executives and a general insecurity about the product. On ‘Glee,’ we’ve thrown any traditional template out the window and are creating a soundtrack never seen nor heard before.
The Black Eyed Peas Get Their First No. 1 And Take Aim At Target
By Gail Mitchell
As individuals, we’re misfits,” says Fergie, the sultry female singer of the Black Eyed Peas. “Together, we’re like one big misfit. People are always questioning who the hell we are.”

It’s the day after the group’s futuristic May 6 performance on ABC’s “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” Chilling out in a small, sparsely furnished room at Center Stage in Burbank, Calif., she and fellow members of the multiracial group—Will.i.am, Taboo and apl.de.ap—resemble a live version of a United Colors of Benetton ad.

Fergie is dressed in black-and-white Capri-length leggings set off by a hot pink shirt and a sharp pair of black ankle-strapped heels from her self-titled shoe line. Sitting next to her on the sofa is apl.de.ap in a Lemon V-neck T-shirt, white-framed shades and his signature Mohawk. Opting instead for blue-green glasses, Taboo sports a black leather vest; an eye-catching cross on a silver chain and several impressionist arm tattoos.

With his close-cropped hair hidden under a red plaid cap, Will.i.am sits astride a black chair in a striped shirt and gray jeans tucked into black combat boots. He’s pondering the question Fergie just answered: Who are the Black Eyed Peas?

“When something is different, authentically unique, it’s always going to be questioned,” the Peas’ modern mind says. “By default, people aren’t going to understand us because there aren’t that many like us.”

Their sound is unique—one that’s taken them across genres—and yet retains such a broad appeal that mass retailers like Target and Walmart are rushing to partner with them. “They started as a substantive hip-hop group that could play live and do a lot of original music. But they didn’t have a lot of radio play,” says manager David Sonenberg, president of DAS Communications. “When Fergie came in, the landscape changed dramatically. As they got bigger and bigger, people began saying they’d lost their urban hip-hop credibility. That really troubled all of them, particularly Will. But with this record, it’s very gratifying to feel love from the hip-hop, rhythmic and mainstream.

Following the multiplatinum pop success of 2003’s “Elephunk” and then 2005’s “Monkey Business,” the Black Eyed Peas stood accused by fans of selling out: blunting its cutting-edge, live band hip-hop in favor of lightweight pop crossover fare. As the June 9 release date for their fifth studio album, “The E.N.D.,” (will.i.am music/Interscope), approaches, some of the same criticism has cropped up. But what’s not in question is the exploding popularity of “Boom Boom Pow”—the first No. 1 for this band of creative misfits.

Rooted in club beats and the 808 old-school kick sound, the energetic track is a runaway top 40 hit; the song has been No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for seven weeks. Available for digital download since March 30, “Boom” has since sold 1.9 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Not all of that can be attributed solely to top 40 and rhythmic radio, however. The song is also airing on urban stations, many of which have shied away from playing the post-Fergie Peas. The song’s crossover appeal has landed it at No. 60 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

Among the urban mainstream stations playing the song is WEDR Miami. “I got some funny looks when I said I was adding ‘Boom,’ ” says PD Derrick Baker, whose station staples lean more toward Kanye West and Keyshia Cole. “But this record is so Miami; an uptempo track set off by Fergie’s flow. Because the Peas did it, everyone was saying it’s pop. But the record had broad appeal. Everybody here from mainstream to the hood is jamming it.”

The concept for “The E.N.D.,” an acronym for “The Energy Never Dies,” actually doesn’t stray far from what has been the Peas’ basic formula. Will.i.am says. “We’ve always had a smorgasbord of sounds including dance,” he notes, pointing to songs like “Be Free” from “Behind the Front,” “Weekends” (on “Bridging the Gap”) and “My Humps” (“Monkey Business”). This time around, Will.i.am became inspired while in Australia filming his first major movie role, the mutant John Wraith in “X-Men Origins: Wolverine.” During downtime away from the set, he soaked up the electro dance and house club vibes in Sydney.

“The youth in those clubs are pumping a whole different thing,” Will.i.am says as he relishes the memory. “It felt like hip-hop 1989, 1990, 1992. But they’re not rapping. It’s all beats. I came back just buzzing.”

With Taboo, apl.de.ap and several band members in tow, Will.i.am flew to London where Fergie was filming her first major movie role in “Nine.” Setting up shop at the same studio where they recorded “Monkey Business,” the Peas began working on “The E.N.D.”

Give peas a chance: The Black Eyed Peas performing on “Jimmy Kimmel Live”

Peas on the Side

A whirlwind four years have elapsed since the Black Eyed Peas released their latest studio album, “Monkey Business,” during which they toured stateside and globally, plus worked on their Peapod Foundation. The Peas also individually pursued a number of projects close to their hearts. What was on their to-do lists?

APL.DE.AP

In the wake of a 2004 TV special about his life—as well as co-creating the Filipino Songwriters and Artist Group—apl.de.ap moonlights as the ambassador of entertainment for his native Philippines. In that role, the artist has filmed a video to help entice new business and boost tourism. apl.de.ap is working on a solo album (“You Can Dream”) and has built a Web site with a search engine dedicated to finding fellow Filipino acts and introducing them to the United States. His first movie, a role in “Subject: I Love You,” is due in September. Noting he’s “blessed to have accomplished what he has coming from a third-world country,” he’s also involved in another labor of love: petitioning for his mother and siblings to move stateside for residency.

FERGIE

After marrying actor Josh Duhamel earlier this year ("All the girls hate me," she says), Fergie has launched two show lines: the higher-end Fergie line (Nordstrom) and the younger, less expensive FergieLicious (Kohl’s). In November, she’ll appear in director Rob Marshall’s (“Chicago”) film adaptation of the Broadway production “Nine” alongside Daniel Day-Lewis, Penelope Cruz, Nicole Kidman and Sophia Loren. Fergie is also in her second year as spokesperson for MAC Viva Glam. As for the follow-up to “The Dutchess,” “I’m engulmed in the Peas right now,” Fergie says.

TABOO

The group’s second newlywed (last July) will become a dad again this year (16-year-old son Josh is a DJ). As the Peas ramp up, he’s put his solo album on hold but plans to release an album that will be “more directed to the Latino market,” Taboo displayed his martial arts prowess in “Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li,” released Feb. 27, and watched another dream come true May 22: the launch of his STEMA (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program. STEMA, Taboo says, “is dedicated to building awareness of these important subjects among disadvantaged kids in East L.A.”

WILL.I.AM

Whether as himself or a hologram, Will.i.am was ubiquitous during the 2008 election year, thanks to his viral video for President Barack Obama’s campaign, “Yes We Can.” Squeezed between the campaigning: acting in his first big-screen role for “X-Men Origins: Wolverine.” Prior to that, the songwriter/producer released his first solo album, “Songs About Girls,” in 2007. Ruling out running for public office, Will.i.am wants to eventually write and direct films. “Coming up with concepts and ideas are my strengths. But it will always be about music and a cause for me.”

—GM

www.americanradiohistory.com
“There’s always a sense of Andy Warhol whenever we make a Black Eyed Peas album,” Fergie says. “It’s an artistic factory with several rooms going at the same time. We don’t just sit down. We jump from room to room, all of us adding ideas to the recipe. If you get burnt out on one idea or your ears get tired, you walk to another room and step into a whole fresh creative zone for more ideas.”

The first three releases of soft beats were MSTRKRFT, David Guetta, Boys Noize, Keith Harris and Paper Boy. The result is a nonstop party album fusing rock, soul, hip-hop, reggae and dub with thumping beats, tempo twists and turns framed against memorable hooks. Beyond “Boom Boom Pow,” there’s the upcoming second single, “I Gotta Feeling,” which apl.de.ap describes as a “college anthem for people looking forward to escaping life’s pressures by going out and having a ball.”

Picking up on the same escape theme is “Out of My Head.” Channeling R&B veteran Millie Jackson, a slurring Fergie opens with three little words, “I’m so tipsy” — which literally was while recording the song. “This song reminds me of the fun character of my ‘Humps.’ I told Will we have to get some wine if I’m going to do this correctly. I’m not going to front on this song. So we all got a little tipsy.”

“Now Generation,” another notable track in the 16-song set, is a nod to the young generation who helped move President Barack Obama into the White House—gallvanized by Will.i.am’s viral “Yes We Can” video. Powered by a guitar and bass intro that morphs into fist-pumping rock ‘n’ roll, the song captures the emotion of what it feels like to be part of that generation. “This is the first time in history where we have a powerful new youth generation connected by technology, not by religion or government. So they want things now,” Will.i.am says.

The “E.N.D.” goal, he adds, is to make people move and escape. “If you had to pick one genre that’s migrating at the highest frequency, it would be the dance world,” Will.i.am says. “That’s where music as a culture really lives. It’s a generating music for the sake of music.”

POW-ERFUL PROMOTION
Building on the strong lead-in provided by “Boom Boom Pow,” the Black Eyed Peas have jumped right back into performing live. The quartet kicked off a series of shows at top 40 radio stations May 8 in San Diego at KHTS, followed by stops in Los Angeles (KIIS’ Wango Tango), Philadelphia (WIOQ), New York (WHT2) and Boston (WZKS). After it returned to Los Angeles to appear on the May 20 eighth-season finale of “American Idol,” the group will finish the summer doing more radio shows and festivals.

Cocking with the album’s June 9 release, a nationwide TV campaign for Target will feature the Peas performing “I Gotta Feeling.” The store also will sell a deluxe edition of The E.N.D.; the prominently displayed custom package for the retailer comprises four additional songs, six new versions of hits including “Let’s Get It Started” and “Don’t Phunk With My Heart” and special video content all exclusive to Target’s 1,609 stores and web site, according to the chain’s senior VP of merchandising Mark Schindele.

The group also taped a segment for Wal-Mart's “Sounds of the Future” for the season series that takes music fans behind the scenes with some of their favorite artists. The segments run in-store and online. Previously featured “Sound-check” acts include Ne-Yo, Rihanna, Miley Cyrus and the All-American Rejects.

For iTunes’ Countdown program, Interscope issued six remixes of “Boom” as a megamix EP called “Invasion of Boom Boom Pow.” Sporting various remixes by Boys Noize, David Guetta and Will.i.am, with guest cameos by 50 Cent, Gucci Mane and Kid Cudi, the format is something Will.i.am intends to repeat for “I Gotta Feeling” and the album’s subsequent singles.

“The concept of the album doesn’t exist anymore,” he says, “with people downloading individual songs. So this will be like a never-ending record; it will just keep going like the title says. It’s still important to be successful in the remaining business we do have, but you also want to position yourself so you’re not playing catch-up or riding someone else’s bandwagon.”

Complementing the multimedia push is DipDive.com, a site Will.i.am launched last year that covers everything from music and the arts to social causes and fashion. It’s where he uploaded the “Yes We Can” viral video as well as other election-related clips like “It’s a New Day” and “America’s Song.” Posted on the site now is a cover of the new Peas album plus the “Boom” EP. Noting he has plans to further build the site, Will.i.am says the Black Eyed Peas will still maintain their separate Web site.

Come fall, the Grammy Award-winning group will start its first official worldwide arena tour in Asia and Japan. One of the stops along that route is a recently announced (Billboard.com, May 13) Sept. 24 performance as part of Guinness’ worldwide celebration of its 250th anniversary. Then it’s off to Australia before returning to the United States to do five shows on U2’s stadium tour. After a break, the Peas will launch the North American leg of its tour, then visit the United Kingdom and Europe.

“In a perfect world, we’ll do South America, Southeast Asia and finish up in South Africa for the World Cup next June,” says William Derella, Sonenberg’s DAS partner who oversees the Peas’ day-to-day activities. “Our grand plan is to maybe create a music-and-environmental-oriented outdoor fest in 2010—our version of Lolapalooza, curated by the Black Eyed Peas.”

Sonenberg is also negotiating branding opportunities that build on the Peas’ already successful base. “It’s not about coming out endorsing a product for just the sake of having a tour sponsorship,” he says. “It’s about meaningful tie-ins and affiliations that take into account the Peas’ artistic and social values.” The act has previously partnered with such brands as iPod ("Hey Mama"), Motorola, Pepsi and the NBA playoffs campaign (“Let’s Get It Started”).

IN THE BEGINNING
The Black Eyed Peas initially got started when best friends Will.i.am (“the only black dude in a Mexican neighborhood”) and apl.de.ap—a non-English-speaking adoptee from the Philippines—began break dancing and freestyling together. In 1991 the teens signed to Eazy E’s Ruthless Records as part of the band Atban Klann. But their vision of hip-hop and dance didn’t mesh with that of the gangsta label. So the pair left and formed the Peas after meeting Chichano Taboo (whose “musical heroes were A Tribe Called Quest and De La Soul”) while battling at a local club.

After signing with Interscope, the trio released its critically acclaimed debut album, “Behind the Front,” in 1998. Two years later came “Bridging the Gap” and the Macy Gray-assisted single “Request Line.” Also featured on the album was the group’s female singer Kim Hill, who left the group in 2000.

Three years later the Peas notched their first major breakthrough in 2003 with third album “Elephunk” and the anthem “Where Is the Love?” featuring Justin Timberlake. Providing backup accompaniment on the album was the band’s non-English-speaking adoptee from the Philippines—Kim Hill, who later became the fourth Black Eyed Pea. The foursome scored its biggest single at the time—the No. 3 Hot 100 hit “Don’t Phunk With My Heart”—when fourth album “Monkey Business” was released in 2005.

Touring almost nonstop stateside and overseas between 2004 and 2007, the group spun off another hit (“My Humps”) and picked up two Grammys for best rap performance by a duo or group (“Let’s Get It Started” and “Don’t Phunk With My Heart”). In between, Fergie released her 2006 multiplatinum solo debut, “The Dutchess,” and got married. In addition to producing Fergie’s debut, Will.i.am collaborated on projects by Sean Kingston, Nelly Furtado and others as releasing his solo album. During that time, Taboo and apl.de.ap began recording their own solo albums, among other projects (see story, page 20).

But now everyone is back in the pod and ready to keep going for as long as they can. Playfully ribbing Fergie about how long she’ll be performing “Boom Boom Pow,” Taboo hobbles around the room and jokes, “We’ll be touring on the moon while she’s singing, ‘I’m so 2000 and 80 . . . all my kids come on.’”

As the room erupts in laughter, Will.i.am has a final word for the naysayers: “What we’ve gone through to get here has been a great journey—some unique-ass shit. We haven’t changed conceptually from what the Peas were and wanted to be: mass appeal not segregation. And we’ve stayed true to that.”

* * *
HOW TWITTER IS CHANGING MUSIC

Yellow balloons indicate artists that are currently on the Billboard Hot 100

Tweet Child O’ Mine

“i should be performing on ellen today im pretty sure it airs today - lady gaga love you all for folloing an being fans please follow me”

Twitter can be silly, even vapid. But for musicians, it represents a direct connection with their fans, unimpeded by label politics or publicity machines. Here are 10 ACTS that found followings on Twitter—and the stories of how they used the service to boost their careers—140 characters at a time.
ZOË KEATING

FOLLOWERS: 412,916

When indie cellist Zoe Keating posted these short bursts to Twitter late one night in February, she didn’t have a viral marketing campaign in mind. Like thousands of independent, obscure artists, Keating was just expressing her frustration with the constant fight for exposure necessary to make a living in the music business.

Ironically, Keating’s tweets led to some of that very recognition. Sympathetic celebrity Twitterers like actor Wil Wheaton and author Neil Gaiman publicized her plight on their own blogs and Twitter feeds; Keating, a regular user of the microblogging site, earned a spot on the Suggested Users list that Twitter’s staff compiles to help members find interesting people to follow. By Feb. 26, she had 3,000 followers of her feed at twitter.com/zoeccello, and NPR had added her to the credits on its “All Things” site.

At press time, she had more than 412,000 followers—an astonishing number when just last month, actor Ashton Kutcher was racing CNN to attract 1 million followers.

Keating says that the long-term effects of this rapid ascent in the Twitter-verse are yet to be determined. “Around the time that I went on the Suggested Users list, my CD [“One Cello x 16: Natoma”] went to No. 1 on the iTunes classical chart, and it’s stayed in the top 20 ever since,” she says. “I’ve also gotten a lot more sales from my Web site, and I get lots of fan mail that says, ‘I found out about you from Twitter.’”

A former member of the cello-rock trio Rasputina, who has played with acts including the Dresden Dolls, Imogen Heap and DJ Shadow, Keating uses a cello and a Mac laptop to create technologically complex compositions.

For an artist with a niche audience and total sales of 16,000 for her 2005 solo album and a 2004 EP, according to Nielsen SoundScan, Keating’s high profile on Twitter may be an important step in expanding her mainstream exposure.

Early direct sales results are modest—in the week ending Feb. 22, Keating’s “One Cello x 16” EP gained 282% in sales while “One Cello x 16: Natoma” gained 304% from the previous week. Combined, both albums sold less than 1,000 copies. In total, she’s sold about 2,500 albums since she exploded on Twitter.

But Keating believes that Twitter’s real value to artists is its functionality within the growing universe of middleman-free communication tools. “I enjoy being able to quickly and directly interact with my fans—there’s nobody in between,” she says. “It’s been going that way for a long time, but with Twitter I feel like we’ve finally arrived.”

While the same has been said about e-mail, blogs, MySpace and Facebook, Keating finds Twitter’s character-limited, running-feed platform to be the most fun and effective for sharing information. Keating says that since she started Twittering, she has stopped blogging for the most part. “It takes the pressure off—I used to save things up to put them in a blog and had to invest more time in writing, but with Twittering you can just do it at random times.” She adds that time spent responding to fan e-mail is now spent replying to their tweets.

Keating continues to earn about 5,000 followers per day and has tried not to let it change the content of her tweets, which range from the status of a musical project to tour updates to descriptions of her mood or morning pancake recipe.

“It’s really important to me to always be myself and to never be contrived, because as soon as I start using something just to sell records, then it starts feeling wrong to me,” she says.

Keating also realized soon after joining the network in 2008 that Twittering was good for accountability. “If I said, ‘I’m going to mix this song,’ eventually someone would reply and say, ‘Where is that song you said you were going to mix?’” —Evie Nagy

RICHIE HAWTIN

FOLLOWERS: 3,743

Followers of DJ Richie Hawtin don’t get updates on his last meal or his thoughts on politics. They get tweets about what he’s playing during his DJ sets.

Hawtin came up with a way to make sure he’s not glued to his BlackBerry during his sets: an application known as Twitter DJ that sends updates to designated Twitter accounts, track by track, in real time.

While this is a great way to provide further insight on how a DJ builds a set from start to finish, it also gives instant credit to the lesser-known artists played during these sets. “The Twitter DJ application would not only drag the likes of collecting societies GEMA, PRS and SOCAN kicking and screaming into the 21st century,” Hawtin says, “but make sure the real artists get paid instead of performance payments simply being carved up between the Madonnas and U2s of the world.” —Mariel Concepcion
JOHN MAYER
FOLLOWERS: 1,097,651
On Jan. 29, John Mayer posted an entry to his blog at johnmayer.com titled “Twitter. Maybe.” He gave a link to his new feed at twitter.com/johnmcmayer and said simply, “Still not convinced, but let’s give the technology a go and see if/how we can make it organic… Heads up, I may drop it.”

Less than four months later, Mayer’s name has become synonymous with celebrity Twittering. He has more than 1 million followers and has posted almost 1,000 updates. He’s so active on Twitter that when his relationship with actress Jennifer Aniston ended in March, rumors swirled that his addiction to the site was partly to blame.

Despite calling Twitter “inherently dumb” and telling E! Online that the application is “one step away from sending pictures of your poop,” Mayer posts 140-character witticisms several times a day, sometimes minutes apart, interacting frequently with friends and followers with the site’s reply function. Although Mayer’s tweets support his image as a clever extrovert with a sly sense of humor, it’s hard to imagine that his Twitter usage is part of a calculated multipharam platform marketing strategy—he rarely posts anything that explicitly promotes his music, and the uncensored comments show no sign of handler oversight.

While Mayer’s latest album, 2006’s “Continuum,” jumped from sales of 3,000 the week before he started Tweeting to 6,000 two weeks later, according to Nielsen SoundScan, they’ve leveled to a weekly average of 2,000-3,000, and there’s no indication that Twitter has had any effect. But after career sales of 11.4 million albums, perhaps Mayer is after a different kind of attention—the kind that makes him excited to type, as he did on May 7, “At 1 million followers I shall unleash the MEGA TWEET. A tweet so large the first 140 characters will be spent on asterisks.”

—Eve Nagy

MIKE SKINNER/ THE STREETS
FOLLOWERS: 29,868
“I am going to Tweet three new songs this week,” tweeted U.K. rapper Mike Skinner, aka the Streets. “I can’t be bothered with all this trying to sell you music. It wastes valuable time.”

During the next two weeks, Skinner tweeted links to nine free downloads, which he called “works in progress,” from the file-hosting service zShare. The response was immediate. The most popular of the first three, “I Love My Phone,” has been downloaded 40,900 times, according to zShare.

That’s sparked the interest of observers like London-based Dave Haynes, GM of digital audio platform SoundCloud U.K., which enables musicians to securely share and collaborate on songs online. “Because Twitter is very hyped, he’s getting a lot of media attention out of it,” Haynes says. “It’s also serving to increase his fan base and what he means to them with that direct relationship.”

Two more tracks, the timely “He’s Behind You, He’s Got Swine Flu” and “Where My Heart Has Been,” were launched through Twitter May 8 and 9.

—Richard Smirke

FLO RIDA
@Official_flo

“RT @4MILL RT @BLAQSHEEPCEO CATCH ME TONIGHT AT AUTOMATIC SLIMS ON LAS OLAS WITH @4MILL @official_flo @DJKRONIK @dpprez”

“you there”

SOULJA BOY
@SouljaBoy18

LILY ALLEN
FOLLOWERS: 383,256
For the cheeky British singer Lily Allen, what started as a fun game on April Fool’s Day turned into a competition that lasted through her entire spring U.S. tour. Starting with her kickoff show in San Diego, Allen hid two pairs of concert tickets and used Twitter to give fans rhyming clues to find them. In just the first 10 days, Allen’s Twitter following jumped from 50,000 to 150,000, says Capitol Records VP of marketing Meg Harkins. (Allen now has more than 380,000 followers.)

“Twitter is a perfect interface for her because she loves interacting with her fans and she’s so witty,” Harkins says. When Harkins was on call to watch the tickets in New York, she saw fans go running for them. In most cases, she says, fans were already waiting in locations where they guessed Allen would hide them.

A week after the Feb. 9 release of her sophomore album, “It’s Not Me, It’s You,” Allen also got attention from her much-publicized bout with celebrity blogger Perez Hilton. Hilton taunted (er, tweeted), “Congrats on your album doing well in America, though. It’s REALLY HARD to sell copies when u discount it to $3.99. Desperate?” Allen’s response: “It’s also number one everywhere else in the world douchesbag. Go away you little parasite.” The singer’s Twitter page has become high-profile enough that it was one of several accounts—along with those of President Barack Obama and Britney Spears—broken into by a French hacker.

—Laura Leebe
TRENT REZNOR
FOLLOWERS: 533,150
When Nine Inch Nails mastermind Trent Reznor announced the band’s summer tour, he posted the news to his blog. Ever since, he’s been announcing new dates and festival stops with Twitter. He also uses Twitter to alert fans when new information about each tour stop is made available on his blog, such as the set times for each show, details on the concert’s camera policy and chances to win free tickets. This works because Reznor is a prolific Twitterer: He’s dissed Chris Cornell’s track “Scream” (“You know that feeling you get when somebody embarrasses themselves so badly YOU feel uncomfortable?”), cracked jokes (“Here at NIN labs we’re actually working on a device that lets you punch people through the internet”) and posted links to eight-bit videogame soundtracks of his music.

Reznor is such a fan of the application that he built Twitter-like functionality into his much-hailed iPhone app. Using Twinkle, a version of Twitter made for the iPhone, the app lets NIN fans post comments, photos and links for each other to read in a mobile Twitter built just for Nine Inch Nails fans. It also gives users the option to tag their posts with their location data—pulled from the iPhone’s GPS chip—so fans in the same area can meet in person. At press time, it was the 29th-most-popular free music app in the iPhone App Store. —Anthony Bruno

MANDI PERKINS
FOLLOWERS: 234
Twitter is the “main way I connect with fans when I’m on the road,” says singer/songwriter Mandi Perkins, who is currently playing U.S. clubs in support of her 2008 album “Alice in No Man’s Land.” As a developing touring artist who doesn’t always have access to the Internet, she uses a mobile phone with almost unlimited reception. “Twitter works differently from social networking sites, because you can write from anywhere at any time, which is what makes it such a valuable communication tool when you’re on the road,” she says.

She also likes Twitter’s ability to quickly send time-sensitive information to a large group of fans. “If a show is going to be delayed, or I know something very cool is about to happen,” she says, “I can grab a phone and tell a bunch of different people at once.”

In addition to allowing fans to send song requests before a concert, Perkins says Twitter also opens communication among artists on the road. “Bands can now get instantaneous advice on what routes to take, the best places to eat and safe areas to sleep,” she says. Perkins plans to use Twitter to help reschedule any shows that get canceled by reaching out to fans in the market and tweeting, “Can you guys please let me know if there’s some kind of venue in your area that’s open in two weeks?” —Mitchell Peters

IMOGEN HEAP
FOLLOWERS: 360,408
Imogen Heap is lauded for her atmospheric pop music and her technologically savvy, so it’s no surprise that the U.K. singer is taking Twitter beyond the simple status update.

When the time came to write a new biography to promote her third album, “Ellipse” (out Aug. 4 on RCA), the artist asked her nearly 325,000 followers for help, pulling together a fascinating, fan-centric document from more than 2,000 submissions to her secondary Twitter account—she currently has three.

“I’ve been lucky to have a lovely fan base,” Heap says. “They give me encouragement, and they’re a really creative bunch.”

To return the favor, Heap posts snippets of in-progress songs from her new record through the Twitter-friendly video streaming site 12seconds.tv. “There may be people who don’t really like my music, but they’re just interested in the process of how I record,” she says.

Additionally, a song from “Ellipse” titled “Half Life” will incorporate sounds of crowd chatter that Imogen recorded at the February Twestival, and she’s planning a Twitter-assisted improvisational performance for the July TED conference in Oxford, England, at which fans will watch her live set at ustream.tv and send their real-time feedback. “They’ll tweet me things like ‘Go faster’ or ‘Switch to A minor,’ and I’ll follow people’s ideas about where the music should go,” she says. —Monica Herrera
JONAS BROTHERS
FOLLOWERS: 178,731
What’s a hotter topic than swine flu? According to Twitter, the Jonas Brothers. On May 6, the band sent a single tweet asking its 170,000-plus followers to submit questions for a live webcast on Facebook. The message included a link that directed fans to a search-optimized template for their submission, which led to the hashtag #jonaslive dethroning the panic-inducing virus as the No. 1 Twitter trend and remaining in the top 10 for three days.

According to Brian Ressler, director of online marketing for Hollywood Records, more than 800,000 fans participated in the May 7 Facebook webcast—an partnership with ustream.tv and one of three that the Jonas Brothers are doing to promote their June 14 release, “Lines, Vines and Try ing Times.” He attributes much of that success to Facebook’s rival. “Twitter was a big part of people tuning in,” Ressler says. He also points out that since the Jonas Brothers launched their Twitter account in April, they frequently post links to their official pages on MySpace, YouTube and Facebook, where the label maintains a larger presence. “You can use Twitter to drive traffic to a social networking site, and the Jonas Brothers have done that really well,” he says. “It all works together.”

For an act with as many fans as the Jonas Brothers, who already have more than 1 million followers on both Facebook and MySpace and the most subscribers of any musician on YouTube, Ressler says Twitter is just another piece of the expanding puzzle. “It’s all about having one big community, he says. “And Twitter is just another extension of that.” —Monica Herrera

J.U.S.T.I.C.E. LEAGUE
FOLLOWERS: 4,420
An off-the-cuff comment turned into a Twitter/ustream.tv ritual for the production team J.U.S.T.I.C.E. League. Unbeknownst to the trio —members Rook, Colonne and Kenny “Barto” Bartolomei—their co-manager Chuck Greene created a ustream.tv account after watching other event streams. “During a studio session later that week,” Greene recalls, “Colonne mentioned that if people could also watch them live as they worked, they would laugh their asses off. I proceeded to stream and thus began our ritual.”

In April, when the trio began collaborating on a Young Jeezy project, the act decided it would be fun to Twitter with fans during its session. “Between 1,500 and 2,000 people chatted with us live,” Rook says of the all-night affair. When Greene added the ustream.tv component, the League began tweeting fans the location of the site so they could also view the live proceedings. (Linking Twitter with ustream.tv allows tweets to run as scrolling messages on the screen.) Since then, the League incorporated both technologies during a second session with Jeezy and another with DJ Da Juiceman.

Having recently staged Twitter/ustream.tv session with Piles, the League plans to continue the ritual with any artist who agrees to participate. “We love the interaction with fans and the creative process,” Greene says. “They get to see that these guys are regular people who can make you laugh as well as make amazing music before your eyes.” —Gail Mitchell

CO-FOUNDER BIZ STONE OFFERS FIVE TIPS ON HOW ARTISTS CAN ROCK TWITTER

1 MAKE YOUR @USERNAME YOUR CALLING CARD
Attracting followers is an important part of maintaining a high-profile on Twitter. One of its biggest advantages is the simplicity of its username system and the ease of following and communicating with a user once you know how he or she identifies himself or herself. So promoting your @username in an e-mail signature, in fan correspondence and anywhere you’d normally mention a Web presence is helpful. (Sean Combs walks around wearing a black T-shirt with white text that says “@iamdiddy.”) Also, interacting with fans through Replies (where you reply directly to the tweets of fans and followers) displays a certain level of engagement that can be attractive to folks considering following your account.

2 TWITTER SPONTANEOUSLY
Unlike an artist’s blog or other online presence, where it makes sense to share only the most important news or entertaining posts, on Twitter waiting for something really important isn’t necessary—if folks are following you, then they want to know anything and everything. Twitter is an easy, lightweight way for artists to get involved with their fans.

3 FIND MUSIC’S TWEET SPOT
There are ways that musicians can use Twitter that no other kind of user could take advantage of. Releasing exclusive tracks through Twitter is interesting. Twitter really shines during shared experiences like concerts because people are communicating in real time among a group. If an artist becomes similarly involved, that would be awesome. We’ve seen a few artists experiment with displaying live tweets from fans during a show, which is very cool because it makes the audience part of the show.

4 ESTABLISH YOUR RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
While direct back-and-forth contact with fans is easy with Twitter, the simple nature of it allows artists to invent their own boundaries. Although Replies are possible on Twitter, they’re not expected. This means artists can be as engaged as they want—some are very engaged and others are more reserved. Artists can connect with their fans on a personal, meaningful level but they can also use Twitter to promote a spontaneous concert or share a new track.

5 USE THE PLATFORM COMMITMENT-FREE
Fans don’t need to have a Twitter account to start following a band right away through mobile texting—Twitter can create new accounts over SMS on the fly. For example, anyone can text “follow biz” to 40404 in the United States and start receiving your updates. This means that a fan who wants to get an artist’s updates through text but isn’t using the service regularly can easily do so. Bands and musicians can simply tell their folks during a concert or an interview.

—Interview by Evie Nagy

“@EmilyOsment stumps her feet up the stairs. Me: "OMG THATS EXACTLY WHAT THE EARTHQUAKE FELT LIKE" (serious) Ems: "what r u trying to say?"”

MILEY CYRUS
@MileyCyrus
World Beaters

Kasabian's Aggressive Touring Is Aided By Global Synchs

Sergio Pizzorno is feeling groggy: the aftereffects of “sleep lag,” since he just rose from 14 hours in bed.

“I haven’t had a day off in about three months,” Kasabian’s guitarist/songwriter says. Not that he’s complaining: If this gang of unashamedly old-fashioned road dogs doesn’t work hard, it can’t rock hard.

In the run-up to the release of its third album—“The West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum,” out June 8 on Columbia in the United Kingdom and a day later on RCA/RED in the United States—Kasabian has been busy.

Pizzorno and singer Tom Meighan have been on a whirlwind three-day promo trip to Japan—by Pizzorno’s estimation they undertook “40 interviews, 24 photo shoots and one visit to a shot bar.” And the new song “Vlad the Impaler” was posted March 31 as a free download on the band’s Web site, while an accompanying murky video—starring the cult British comedian Noel Fielding—has been released on YouTube, where it’s been viewed more than 156,000 times.

“To me it’s the antithesis of bands that need a high-gloss treatment,” says Dave Shack, VP of international at Sony Music Entertainment U.K. of the rough-around-the-edges clip. “We’re not afraid that somebody’s going to say, ‘Oh, that’s a bit lo-fi, that’s not really a single, that’s not an anthem!’ I like that they’re prepared to do that.”

The band, which toured extensively in support of its 2004 self-titled album (864,000 U.K. sales, according to the Official Charts Co.) and 2006’s “Empire” (623,000), played May 9 at the top 40 network BBC Radio 1’s Big Weekend Festival and pulled double-duty April 25 at the Camden Crawl, London’s take on the South by Southwest conference. It performed a headlining gig for MTV U.K. and filmed the video for another new song, “Underdog.”

While “Fire,” set for a June 9 release, is the official U.K. single, the “Underdog” clip is being used internationally to augment the song’s use on the current advertising campaign for Sony Bravia TVs. Sony is sponsor of Europe’s Champions League soccer competition and U.K. broadcaster ITV’s coverage of England’s World Cup 2010 qualifying matches. As a result, the commercial is airing during matches in most European territories as well as in Australia and New Zealand.

Agreeing to the deal wasn’t difficult, according to Pizzorno. “We’re not a radio band,” he says—and the new album’s enthusiasm for “psychadelic late-‘60s rock” won’t change that. “And...
Wooden Soldiers
The Oak Ridge Boys Get Back To Basics

Taking a creative detour reminiscent of Johnny Cash’s groundbreaking collaboration with Rick Rubin, the Oak Ridge Boys recruited Los Angeles-based producer David Cobb for their new album, “The Boys Are Back,” which was released May 19 on Spring Hill Music Group, features a surprising first single: a cover of the White Stripes’ “Seven Nation Army.” This is nothing new for the band; the Oak Ridge Boys have been reinventing themselves for decades. The original Oaks started as a gospel group in 1945. The current lineup began to take shape when William Lee Golden joined in 1965. He was followed by Duane Allen in 1966, Richard Sterban in 1972 and Joe Bonsall in 1973.

Looking to expand its audience, the band moved from gospel to country music in 1977 with “You Are My Sunshine.” This sparked a successful career with such hits as “Elvira” and “Bobbie Sue” crossing onto the pop charts as well. Since 1977, they’ve recorded nearly 40 albums. In 2001 the Oaks signed with Spring Hill and returned to their roots, recording gospel albums in addition to country projects. Last month the label released a CD and DVD of “The Best of the Oak Ridge Boys: A Gospel Journey,” which debuted at No. 2 on Billboard’s Top Music Video chart.

Allen says the goal for “The Boys Are Back” was to record an edgier, more organic album. “We just literally re-created ourselves without all the bells and whistles,” he says. “I think we probably captured more of our soul in an honest way.” They also impressed their producer with their willingness to experiment. Cobb says he suggested the White Stripes cover. “I’m a huge fan of Jack White and I thought it would be a really cool thing. Nobody would expect them to do that song,” says Cobb, whose production credits include Waylon Jennings, Brooke White, the Strays and Rock-n-Roll Soldiers.

“They never had any objections,” he says. “They were always open to everything. That’s why they’ve been around as long as they have—they’re professionals, and they’re willing to go anywhere.”

To expose their music to a younger audience, the Oaks performed at this year’s South by Southwest and started communicating with fans through Twitter, MySpace and Facebook. The single was sent to 350 college stations and is being offered as a ringtone through the band’s MySpace page.

But don’t think they’ve forgotten their old-school country and gospel fans. They’ve also scheduled a visit to former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee’s Fox show...

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3. You were on Island for a long time with Pulp, and now you’ve done both solo records on Rough Trade. How has the record business changed in the past decade?
I feel fortunate to be on an independent label now, because the business model is changing, and the major labels have to really grapple with that. Obviously independent labels have to sell records to stay alive, but I don’t think of it as being an industry—more as providing people with something that they like. I don’t think that will ever go away. But everybody’s out to adapt—like when you buy a vinyl record, usually you’ll get one of these cards so you can get the digital version. Things that acknowledge people have their music in different places and use it in different ways.

4. You are on your plans for promoting “Further Complications”? We’re doing a lot of traveling (in Europe), playing festivals, a few shows in the U.S. in July. And then I think we’ll probably come back in the autumn for more of a proper tour. I’m putting more stuff on [jarviscocker.net]—films that I made when I was in college, a couple of radio shows that I’ve done recently.

5. What are you looking into licensing opportunities?
Well, we’re not looking into licensing opportunities, but I think it’s important for bands to be able to work with Apple, and have it go (sings) “Apple Applications” or “iPhone Applications.” That could work really great, couldn’t it?

6. 2009 seems like a ’90s revival, with a bunch of major reunions including Blur’s in July. Are you feeling pressure to reunite Pulp?
I don’t play Pulp stuff in my shows, not so awkward and horrible to people, but we all learned how to play together from a young age, and we weren’t the greatest musicians in the world, but we did have a sound. If my current band played Pulp songs, they just wouldn’t sound right. There are no plans to revive Pulp.

If someone comes up with a giant suitcase of stuff, maybe I would have to come around. Maybe this is the place I can encourage someone to do that. Come on, whoever’s still got money left, offer it all to me.
EMINEM

Relapse
Producer: Dr. Dre
Release Date: May 19

It’s no surprise that Eminem’s first new disc in five years would stick to the outline he and Dr. Dre wrote in 1997. Eminem dutifully hits all his marks here: “3 a.m.” for bloody tortured-porn, “My Mom” for profane family laundry-airing, “Beautiful” for carpe-diem slogans and “We Made You” for name-dropping celeb-blogging, marketed ostentatiously to the wannabes hanging up with the Jennifer Aniston/John Mayer relationship. But it’s hard not to be as dulled by this stuff as Em repeatedly claims the drugs have made him. “Bagpipes for Baghdad” threatens by its title to be a deadly detour like “Mosh” but ends up being mostly about Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon, and the “Paul” skit has a Christopher Reeve joke again. There is a flash of inspiration: the brutal, brittle “Deja Vu” makes an emotional impact. It’s good to hear Dr. Dre practicing his medicine again (no producer can better match Em’s croons-terror horror), the disc is packed with satisfying hooks (“Must Be the Ganja,” “Old Time’s Sake”) and Eminem’s ridiculously fabulous flow. Now in his 30s, he doesn’t surf the beat so much as box with it, with both brutality and no small degree of grace. That a rapper of this much verbal gymnastic ability is still making Perez Hilton cracks is too bad, but the bigger problem is that Eminem’s recipe of gore and gay jokes sounds like the past.—JV

JAZZ

STANLEY CLARKE TRIO
Jazz in the Garden
Producers: Stanley Clarke, Dave Love
Heads Up
Release Date: May 12

Given bassist Stanley Clarke’s prowess in ensembles with Chick Corea (Return to Forever) and George Duke (Duke/Project), it’s surprising that he had never recorded an all-acoustic album in his nearly four-decade career. He makes up for that on his captivating sophomore Heads Up album, “Jazz in the Garden.” On his label debut, the 2007 “The Toys of Men,” Clarke delivered foot-tapping solo acoustic bass interludes, presaging this trio set with longtime collaborator drummer Lenny White and newfound friend Hrmon, a simpatico pianist. What’s particularly impressive is how lyrical, funky, bluesy and swinging Clarke plays on originals, standards and improvised pieces, taking liberty to spotlight his instrument as the lead voice, whether soloing, crafting rhythmic grooves or building melody lines. Highlights: the impromptu Hromi duet (“Global Tweak”), the bouncing take up Duke Ellington’s “Take the Contraite” and Clarke’s spirited/reflective “Paradigm Shift (Election Day 2008).”—DO

ROCK

JARVIS COCKER Further Complications
Producer: Steve Albini
Rough Trade
Release Date: May 19

Steve Albini’s famed raw, real-time production is hardly the in- tuitive choice for the likes of Jarvis Cocker, the former Pulp frontman whose shy, endearing wit nearly begs for studio trick- ery. But this second solo album is so strong that a listening moves from why to why-not territory rather curiously. Cocker plays with different styles on each track, from the back-alley blues rock of “Homewrecker” to the garage pop of the first single “Angela,” to the late-night funk of “You’re in My Eyes.” Dis- co-song,” Horn-drenched word-play “I Never Said I Was Deep” finds the pseudo-apologetic crooner as a sort of all-universe Randy Newman, while Cocker’s proclamation in “Leftovers” that “I wanna be your lover” is such a persuasive middle come on that even Borscht-Belt lyrics like “I met her at the museum of paleontology, and I make no bones about it” and uphold his cause. The album’s heavy themes of sex and regret (and more sex) gain extra poignancy in the context of Cocker’s April divorce announcement, but they need not be so loaded—tricks or no tricks, there’s still reason to hang on to every word.—EN

WHITE RABBITS
It’s Frightening
Producer: Britten Daniel
TBRD Records
Release Date: May 19

This Brooklyn-based indie-rock sextet makes no attempt to dis- guise its similarities with Spoon on its sophomore full-length; in fact, White Rabbits recruited Spoon frontman Brit Daniel to produce “It’s Frightening,” an appealingly audacious move that reveals just how tightly these guys define their sound. That self-awareness is appar- ent in the band’s music as well—notting seems out of place in these tidily arranged soul- punk tunes, most of which re- volve around piano and bass rather than guitar. Singer Stephen Patterson isn’t as distinct (or as sexy) a vocalist as Daniel, which rarely does Pat- terson’s melodies any favors. But when he and his band mates hit upon a juicy groove like the ones in “Midnight and” or “Percussion Gun,” the latter of which shares as much with recent Radiohead as with Spoon, they know exactly what to do with it.—MW

THE NEW YORK DOLLS
’Cause I Sez So
Producer: Todd Rundgren
Alto
Release Date: May 5

The unlikely resurrection of the New York Dolls is solidified by this second recent album, an output that now matches in quantity and mirrors in quality the band’s early-70s spurt. Singer David Johansen and guitarist Sylvain Sylvain (pre-viously Sylvain Sylvain) have seamlessly integrated newer members Steve Conte (guitar), Sam Yaffa (bass) and Brian De- laney (drums); Todd Rundgren returns as producer, reprising that role 36 years after delivering the Dolls’ legendary debut. This is the work of rock’n’roll survivors, funky if not chic, and more rewarding for its moments of candid sadness. Johansen’s verbalized street strut—equal parts Mick Jagger’s twisting tongue and Rufus Thomas’ guttural growl—is never so pleasing as it is bent toward polystyrene rhymes in- volving a “bloody mess” and “permanent apocalypse” on “Muddy Bones,” the “exacer- bations, excruci-ations” on “Making Rain.” The original mu- sical influences are broadly re- flected in the ’66 Stones sound of “Better Than You,” the Ras- cal’s homage “Lonely So Long,” the “Phil hip soul Chicago-style” of “Nobody Got No Business” and the revival of the Dolls’ own “Trash.” Maturity doesn’t hurt, and the poignancy remains: “I tried to burn everybody but no- body smokes no more,” as Johansen sings, are the words of one bemused by a changed world in which he’ll always have a place, if not the one youthful dreams imagined.—WR

JEFFREY LEWIS & THE JUNKYARD
’Em Are I
Producers: Jeffrey Lewis, Mark Oppenheim
Rough Trade
Release Date: May 19

Like the medical procedure punned in the album’s title, Jef- frey Lewis’ fifth Rough Trade-
leash is an insightful collection on which the artist takes stock of his place in the world, sorting through life’s random moments of love, loss and adventure. His sound knock up the ear with alienation and clever wordplay—as found in the memorable meter of nursery rhymes—and are rife with sharp observation and emotional introspection. (Equally appealing is the fantastic album art, also by Lewis’s own hand.) The up-tempo tracks (“Sigoons, “The Upside-Down Cross”) are invigorating with their harder guitars and drums, and Lewis’ human-abounds (“Good Old Pig, Gone to Avalon”) is a paean to a swell swine, but his slower, softer, acoustic songs are the standouts. “Birds & Flowers” is a pensive walk with thoughts on the afterlife: “To Be Objectified” ebb and flows with longing: and in the existential “If Life Exists,” Lewis offers a simple solution to the titular inquiry: “It’s hard to get too bored when you pick the right two chords.” —GW

GREAT NORTHERN
Remind Me Where the Light Is
Producers: Michael Patterson, NC, Jordan
Eenie Meenie Records
Release Date: April 28
If the Cranberries and the Smiths got together and had a love child, it would be Great Northern. With songs featured in TV commercials and popular videogames, the act isn’t new to the scene. “Remind Me Where the Light Is,” the band’s sophomore release, is a portrait, personal record whose only named influences are the light and the darkness. Both Solon Bixler, formerly of 30 Seconds to Mars, and Rachel Stolte let their emotions flow freely while creating the record. On “Houses,”

CRITICS’ CHOICE: ★ ★ ★ ★

LEGENDBREDITS

EDITED BY WAYNE ROBINS
Contributors: Rob Kumpf, Curt Shoultz, Michael Menahan, Fred Mills, Eve Nagy, Wes Ostrak, Dan Ouellette, Deborah Evans Price, Wayne Robins, Gary Trust, Jeff Wabe, Chris West, Michael Goff, Christian E. Velden, Chris W. Woods

PICTURE: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send review copies to Wayne Robins at 710 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, NY 10003 or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

DAUGHTRY
No Surprise (4:09)
Producer: Howard Benson
Writers: C. Daughtry, C. Kroeber, P. Waters, N. Eberle
Publishers: various

19 Recordings/RCA Music Group

Crowded Billboard’s 2008Adult Top 40 artist of the year, Daughtry became the first act to produce three No. 1s at format from a debut album. Buoyed by that momentum, the group has exploded on the Adult Top 40 chart with the lead single from its sophomore set, “Leave This Town,” due July 14. Not that it needed the extra star power, but Daughtry enlisted Chad Kroeber as a co-writer; considering Nickelback owns a format record No. 1s, a chart-topping success seems a solid bet. The song follows the formula of each band’s biggest hits: a slowly building verse that explodes into an anthemic chorus, a la Daughtry’s “Over You” and Nickelback’s current “If Today Was Your Last Day.” By the time the new album is released, mainstream top 40 and AC will have likely joined in to help make “No Surprise” a summer radio smash.—GT

EMILY WEST
That Kind of Happy (3:30)
Producer: Mark Bright
Writers: S. Austin, M. Hope, W. Rambeaux
Publishers: various
Capital Records Nashville

If Patsy Cline, Bette Midler and Faith Hill were melded into one person, the bubbly result would be Emily West. This Waterloo, Iowa, native possesses one of those warm, vibrant voices that commands attention and a sense of fun that makes a song an event. Will Rambeaux, Sherrie Austin and Mallory Hope have crafted a clever, upbeat tune about the perils of love, and West dives into the lyric with a sense of playfulness that’s infectious. West’s debut single, “Rocks in Your Shoes,” cracked the top 40 on Billboard’s country chart and drew attention to an introductory EP. Since then her buoyant personality, solid work ethic and impressive musicianship have generated an increasing buzz that should help garner this terrific single the attention it deserves.—DEP

MAXWELL
Pretty Wings
Producers: Hod David, Musze
Writers: H. David, Musze
Publishers: various
Columbia

After an eight-year hiatus, the neo-soul sensation Maxwell makes a triumphant return to the R&B fold with the beautiful “Pretty Wings,” the first single off his highly anticipated fourth album, “BLACKsummersnight.” He proclaims the set is the first part of a trilogy with which he plans to usher in the second decade of the 21st century. Over delicate xylophone plinks and warm, soulful horn arrangements that sound as though they were directly lifted from an old Hi Records 45, the Brooklyn-born singer croons a heartbreaking ode to letting go of a relationship. It’s an absolutely gorgeous ballad that should leave listeners in a long-overdue welcome return to one of R&B’s most talented and original artists.—RH

THE BILLBOARD REVIEW
Shall We Dance?

Kelly Rowland And DJ David Guetta Pair On 'Love'

Kelly Rowland discovered David Guetta at one of his exhilarating techno shows last summer in Cannes. When she later met up with Guetta and asked him to play her a new track, the French DJ unveiled a pop number built around a lush piano loop and throbbing percussion. The track, which would become the groundwork for "When Love Takes Over," moved Rowland to tears.

"I felt so much emotion from the track; something happened the first time I heard it, and it was just beautiful," Rowland says. The former Destiny’s Child member took the track to London to write and record the song’s vocals.

The finished product was unveiled at a show-stopping joint performance in March at Miami’s Ultra Music Festival. Last month, "When Love Takes Over" was officially released as the first single to Guetta’s upcoming album, “One Love,” and debuted at No. 2 on the Hot Dance Airplay chart.

A sugary, synthy-laden ode to the excitement of the unknown, the single marks a sea change in style for both artists. After R&B powerhouse Destiny’s Child disbanded in 2005, Rowland released her second solo album, “Ms. Kelly,” on Columbia Records in 2007, and the disc debuted at No. 6 on the Billboard 200. While “Kelly” offered accessible, uptempo R&B, none of the tracks was as unabashedly club-oriented as "When Love Takes Over."

"I had spent nights dancing in the south of France from 12:45 a.m. to 8 in the morning," Rowland says, "but I had never thought about recording a dance track myself. Hearing David’s song made me consider taking on this whole new style."

Meanwhile, Guetta is banking on the single to garner a stronger stateside following. The 41-year-old DJ has been a staple in French house music for more than a decade, but his fourth album, slated for a late August release, finds Guetta dabbling with a techno/hop hybrid he refers to as "electro-hop."

So far, splicing genres has helped raise Guetta’s profile. He recently produced "I Gotta Feeling," the second single off the Black Eyed Pea’s upcoming album "The E.N.D.", "The track with Kelly has made me experiment with a more American urban influence," Guetta says. "Musically, it’s opened a new world for me. It’s pure pop with a lot of detail, and Kelly had this Whitney Houston vibe and nailed it."

The success of "When Love Takes Over" comes at an intriguing time in Rowland’s career. An amicable split with Columbia in March led the singer to explore other media, and she landed on Bravo’s "The Fashion Show" as a co-host with style guru Isaac Mizrahi. The reality show, which Rowland describes as "a lot of fun and extremely clever," premiered May 7 and attracted more than 900,000 viewers, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Rowland also is readying a new charity called I Heart My Girlfriend, which will serve as an interactive support system for teenage girls. The program follows Rowland’s long line of philanthropic work, including a bone marrow drive she spearheaded in March.

While Rowland is keeping busy with non-music projects, she knows that "When Love Takes Over" has the potential to receive heavy radio airplay this summer. A music video for the track, directed by Jonas Åkerlund, will be released in the coming weeks. Guetta and Rowland also plan to perform the track at various points on Guetta’s continent-crossing DJ tour during the summer.

Although Rowland is still between labels and doesn’t have concrete plans for another solo album, she hints that her next effort may return the favor for Guetta and focus more on the clubs. "This has definitely inspired me to put more of a dance sound on an album of my own," she says. "I want to try out that world without straying too far from my urban roots."

IT’S EASY

In 2003 the Easy Star All Stars released “Dub Side of the Moon,” a reggae version of Pink Floyd’s “Dark Side of the Moon.” Then in 2006 they put out a reggae adaptation of Radiohead’s “OK Computer” titled “Radiohead.”

In April, the New York-based Easy Star reggae music label and the in-house band—made up of new and veteran reggae musicians from New York and Jamaica—released “Easy Star’s Lonely Hearts Dub Band,” a reggaeified remake of the Beatles’ classic “Sgt. Pepper.”

“We took this one in a somewhat of a different direction,” says Michael Goldwasser, Easy Star co-founder and the album’s producer/engineer. “It crafted a more upbeat reggae album than the first two but still kept it true to its reggae roots.”

What will the label cover next? Although co-founder/CEO Eric Smith won’t reveal its next project, he does acknowledge that “there aren’t many albums that lend themselves to what we do, so, although we don’t have one specific album in mind, we are working with a very short list.”

In the meantime, Easy Star will release a remix of “Dub Side of the Moon,” scheduled for the third quarter. —Mariel Concepcion

IT'S EASY

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<td><strong>TOP REGGAE ALBUMS PEAK</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Dub Side of the Moon&quot; 2003</td>
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<td>&quot;Radiodread&quot; 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1 (2 weeks)</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Easy Star’s Lonely Hearts Dub Band&quot; 2009</td>
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MAY 30, 2009 | www.americanradiohistory.com
Alexander Rybak Looks To Build On Eurovision Win

Norwegian singer/violinist Alexander Rybak’s Eurovision Song Contest victory may have introduced him to an estimated European TV audience of more than 100 million people, but his team says no one’s taking his future success for granted.

“Eurovision was an important window and a good opportunity to show him to the world,” says Katherine Synnes, Rybak’s manager at Oslo-based Bop Management. “But a lot of hard work lies ahead.”

Rybak won the May 16 Moscow contest with the self-penned, violin-infused Celtic love song “Fairytale,” scoring 387 points—a record tally for the competition—but there seems little danger that success will go to his head.

“I’m far from the best singer in this year’s competition,” he said at the press conference immediately after the contest. “I just had a story I wanted to tell.”

Born in Belarus to classical musician parents, Rybak moved to Norway when he was 4. He’s a well-known figure there, having reached the semi-finals of the 2005 edition of “Idol: Jutland pa en Superjente,” the Norwegian version of “American Idol,” and winning another TV talent competition, “Kjempejenten” in 2006.

“Fairytale” hit No. 1 in Norway in February and has made a substantial impact at European radio even before the Eurovision win, picking up more than 3,500 plays May 10-18, according to Nielsen Music Control.

The single also hit No. 1 in Greece, top 10 in Sweden and, at press time, was heading for a top 10 placing in the United Kingdom, according to unofficial midweek sales data. The single is No. 52 on Billboard’s Euro- pean Hot 100 chart.

Rybak already has a second single out, “Funny Little World,” which entered this week at No. 2 behind “Fairytale” on the Norwegian singles charts.

EMI Music has a distribution and marketing deal for Rybak in Norway and a licensing deal in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the United Kingdom. Universal releases his material in Sweden, Greece and Russia, he’s released on V2 in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Rybak’s debut album, “Fairytale,” rolls out across Europe in late May and early June, supported by live dates starting June 6, with executives anticipating success for Rybak—who can speak and sing fluently in Russian—across the former Soviet republics.

“We believe in this artist,” says Universal Music Russia general director Dmitry Konnos. “Today, he’s at the most popular media personality here.”

According to Konnos, Universal Music Russia will initially release the international version of “Fairytale” but plans to put out another, Russian-language record by Rybak later in the year.

With a few honorable exceptions—notably ABBA—a Eurovision win has rarely proved to be a launch pad for an international career. But EMI Music Nordic VP of marketing Bjorn Rogstad predicts Rybak will go global. “He has amazing potential for a long-lasting career beyond the Eurovision song contest,” he says.

Additional reporting by Tom Ferguson in London.

MANUELLE GETS PERSONAL

When salsa star Victor Manuelle started his own indie label last June—after 14 successful years with Sony Latin—even he regarded the move as a gamble.

Now, after his third successful album on his Ku day! Records, it’s clear the risk paid off, with a prospering business model that lets Manuelle reap the benefits of creative and commercial control.

Manuelle’s “Muy Personal,” released May 5, debuted at No. 2 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums and No. 1 on the Pop Latin Albums chart. The album, like Kuday!’s two previous releases, is distributed by Sony, with which Manuelle maintains a good relationship.

Indeed, Manuelle arguably left Sony at the height of his career, and his chart position isn’t unprecedented. He’d had two previous No. 1s on Top Latin Albums: 2001’s “Instinto Y Deseo” and 2004’s “Travesía.”

But “Muy Personal” was risky not just because it was an indie but because of its genre. Although Manuelle has recorded albums that included ballads, this is his first full-fledged pop/ballad album. But that is precisely what made it stand out and, in Manuelle’s mind, made it sell so well.

“Muy Personal” was conceived as a concept album, made up of old and new songs that Manuelle had written through the years, many of which had intensely private connotations. Many of the tracks are preceded by a spoken introduction that explains their precedence and meaning; one can only imagine what a traditional music label would have thought of spoken intros on a Latin pop ballad album.

“I never conceived it as a commercial album,” Manuelle says. “In fact, it’s the first album I release where my photograph isn’t on the cover. I made it like a diary. It was simply something I had to do.”

The hook to the album, so to speak, was unintentional at first, then, fortuitous. Manuelle had written a song for his mother, “Amor de Madre,” and that song led his team to the simple to radio in April and May, timed to the album’s release in time for Mother’s Day. “When you’re on a big label, there’s so much protocol that losing even one week of planning is crucial,” he says. “Here, we were able to release the album exactly when we wanted to.”

It wasn’t the only factor. Aside from “Amor de Madre,” a second single, “Yo Confin en Ti,” also was pushed to radio—and the album was further promoted by Manuelle’s current tour with fellow Puerto Rican and salsa star Gilberto Santa Rosa, which stopped May 16 at New York’s Madison Square Garden.

Plus, publicist Blanca LaSalle says, having a pop album also allowed Manuelle to promote his music in outlets he hadn’t been able to reach before. For example, he taped an AOL “Sessions” acoustic concert with guitar and piano, a format he wouldn’t have been able to use with tropical music.

“This all shows that the company is more solid,” Manuelle says. “This isn’t just about this album but about a lot of teamwork that is finally yielding results.”

—Leila Cobo

GOOD NEWS DAY

Newsboys’ chart-topping new album, “In the Hands of God,” marks the end of an era as the Australian frontman Peter Furler exits and dCTalk veteran Michael Tait replaces him.

“In the Hands of God,” the Newsboys’ 14th studio album, was released May 5 and debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Christian Albums chart, Nielsen SoundScan’s Christian Digital chart, iTunes’ Christian/Gospel Top Albums chart and at No. 28 on the Billboard 200, giving Inpop Records its biggest week in the label’s 10-year history.

“I’ve always had a thing in the back of my mind to go out on top and to know when it’s time to close the book,” says Furler, who will continue to write songs and executive-produce the band’s projects.

Furler, who founded Inpop, made the decision to pass the baton during recording of the new album. He sold his interest in the label last year and plans to spend more time with his family.

He and fellow Newsboys Jeff Franklin, Duncan Phillips and Jody Davis felt Tait would be the perfect addition to the band. “He loves doing shows, loves being out there,” Furler says of Tait, who’s already on board this spring’s Join the Tribe tour.

The label enlisted street teams dubbed the “inpopparazzi” to promote the album and held online listening parties; the band used Twitter to ask fans what kind of prize they’d like to win when it ran a contest.

“We just narrowed it down to three—going to a movie and dinner, doing a flyaway trip to a concert or doing a backyard barbecue with the band in Nashville, and it was by far the winner,” says Inpop director of marketing Shara Katerberg-Hsu.

Katerberg-Hsu says fans have embraced Tait and the transition has been smooth.

“The marketing and the brand of the Newsboys has been very focused on Peter—he’s been the face of the Newsboys,” she says. “But less than a week after making the announcement about Peter leaving, fans were embracing Michael with open arms. They both have that commanding presence onstage. They’ve been friends for ages. They both rose to popularity at the same time and fans know them so it just made sense. It really does work.”

—Deborah Evans Price

www.americanradiohistory.com
Green Day Arrives At No. 1; Vital Vinyl Vamping

As expected, Green Day's "21st Century Breakdown" arrives at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, giving the rock trio its second topper, following 2004's "American Idiot." The new set begins with 215,000 copies after just three days of sales, as it launched with an off-cycle release on Friday, May 15, in order to more closely align its worldwide street dates. (Nielson SoundScan's tracking week ends at the close of business on Sunday.)

As it turns out, the band's start is its second-best opening frame, runner-up only to the 266,000 first-week sales of "Idiot." Of course, that album's number was bigger because the set had a normal-length week's worth of sales, as it was released on a Tuesday, so it's hard to compare one bow with another.

Both albums were hampered by not being stocked in Wal-Mart stores, as the big-box giant declines to carry albums that bear parental advisory stickers. (Neither album was available in an edited version.)

On next week's chart, the sales decline for "Breakdown" probably won't be so sharp, since it will have its first full week under its belt.

Last September, Green Day labelmate Metallica did the off-cycle thing too, releasing its "Death Magnetic" on Friday, Sept. 12. The album debuted at No. 1 with 490,000, and then held for a second week in the penthouse with 337,000 (down only 31%). However, unless something completely unexpected happens, Eminem's early "Relapse" will push "21st Century Breakdown" out of the top slot next week. Industry prognosticators suggest the rapper's album could sell around 600,000-650,000 copies in its first week.

MUSICAL NOTES: "21st Century Breakdown" will be released on vinyl June 16, as Green Day's 1995 album "Nimrod" gets the vinyl reissue treatment. The band is just one of many acts taking advantage of the resurgence of vinyl, which has gained tremendously this year.

Throughout the week ending May 10, vinyl album sales stood at 961,000—up a mighty 51% compared with the sales at this point last year (618,000). Those figures may be tiny, but they're a bright spot in an otherwise troubling album market.

Of the top 10 best-selling vinyl albums of 2009 (through May 10), all are from alternative or rock acts. At No. 1 is Animal Collective's "Merriweather Post Pavilion" with more than 9,000 sold. The Beatles' "Abbey Road" is in the runner-up slot (8,000), while Fleet Foxes' self-titled set is in third place (6,000). U2's latest, "No Line on the Horizon," is No. 4 with a bit more than 6,000.

The rest of the top 10 is filled out by Guns N' Roses' "Appetite for Destruction" (6,000), Bruce Springsteen's "Working on a Dream" (5,000), Radiohead's "In Rainbows," Bon Iver's "For Emma, Forever Ago," Neutral Milk Hotel's 1998 set "In the Aeroplane Over the Sea" and Bob Dylan's "Together Through Life" (all with fewer than 5,000 copies sold). At this point a year ago, the top seller was "In Rainbows," with 15,000 copies. So far in 2009, the No. 2 seller all one distance their 2008 counterparts.

This year's top 10 have collective sales 60,000 copies, while the top 10 a year ago totaled 54,000.

It would seem, just by glancing at the types of vinyl albums that are available and selling well, the format is connecting with older fans—who want to replace their old vinyl with new records—and younger buyers who are enamored with the packaging and dig the retro vibe.

There are also the hardcore collectors, who are tickled that they can hold a big piece of packaged musical art in their hands. And conversations with folks in the know suggest that the vinyl market is mostly a guy thing.

But there are only so many albums a label can reissue on vinyl—and a limited number of new releases that demand the configuration—so there may soon come a point where the stream of vinyl again slows down to a trickle. ...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<td>The Fame</td>
<td>[27] EPIC</td>
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<td>[22] RASSEL FLATTS</td>
<td>Unstoppable</td>
<td>[27] BNA</td>
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<td>[18] CHRISTIE MICHELE</td>
<td>Epiphany</td>
<td>[18] LAUNCH</td>
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<td>[16] CIARA</td>
<td>Fantasy Ride</td>
<td>[16] EPIE</td>
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<td>[10] KERI HILSON</td>
<td>In A Perfect World...</td>
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<td>[34] THEORY OF A DEADMAN</td>
<td>Scars &amp; Souvenirs</td>
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<td>[26] SEAL</td>
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<td>[26] EPIE</td>
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<td>[29] SHINEDOWN</td>
<td>The Sound Of Madness</td>
<td>[29] EPIE</td>
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<td>[31] JASON MRAZ</td>
<td>We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.</td>
<td>[31] EPIE</td>
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<td>[33] DARRIUS RUCKER</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>[33] EPIE</td>
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<td>[34] CARRIE UNDERWOOD</td>
<td>Carnival Ride</td>
<td>[34] EPIE</td>
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<td>[35] LADY ANTEBELLUM</td>
<td>The Last Kiss</td>
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<td>[37] FLO RIDA</td>
<td>R.O.O.T.S. (Route Of Overcoming The Struggle)</td>
<td>[37] EPIE</td>
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<td>[38] DIANA KRALL</td>
<td>Quiet Nights</td>
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<td>[40] BEN HARPER &amp; RELENTLESS?</td>
<td>White Lies For Dark Times</td>
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<td>[42] THE AFRICAN TONE</td>
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<td>[47] TAYLOR SWIFT</td>
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<td>[52] JAMEY JOHNSON</td>
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<td>[53] JOHNSON</td>
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- [19] EPIE
- [18] LADY A
- [18] EPIE
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**Artists and Titles**

- SOUNDCLOUD: "Hawaii Montana: The Movie"
- EPIC: "Crimes Pays"
- LAUNCH: "The Fame"
- EPIE: "Unstoppable"
- EPIE: "Together Through Life"
- EPIE: "Fearless"
- EPIE: "Epiphany"
- EPIE: "Deeper Than Rap"
- EPIE: "Fantasy Ride"
- EPIE: "Twilight"
- EPIE: "NOW 30"
- EPIE: "Dark Horse"
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- EPIE: "Fast Life"
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- EPIE: "Townes"
- EPIE: "All I Ever Wanted"
- EPIE: "I Am. Sasha Fierce"
- EPIE: "Intimacy"
- EPIE: "Murder Was The Case"
- EPIE: "Love On The Inside"
- EPIE: "Defying Gravity"
- EPIE: "Scars & Souvenirs"
- EPIE: "Soul"
- EPIE: "The Sound Of Madness"
- EPIE: "Playing For Change: Songs Around The World"
- EPIE: "We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things."
- EPIE: "Learn To Live"
- EPIE: "Capitol"
- EPIE: "Carnival Ride"
- EPIE: "The Last Kiss"
- EPIE: "Antebellum"
- EPIE: "R.O.O.T.S. (Route Of Overcoming The Struggle)"
- EPIE: "Quiet Nights"
- EPIE: "Divided By Night"
- EPIE: "White Lies For Dark Times"
- EPIE: "Losing Me"
- EPIE: "The Fray"
- EPIE: "No Line On The Horizon"
- EPIE: "Speak Now"
- EPIE: "Asleep In The Bread Aisle"
- EPIE: "Rolled Up"
- EPIE: "You're Not Gonna Miss Me When"

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**Data for week of May 30, 2009**

Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete chart data.
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<td>Saving Ablер</td>
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<td>Ikon</td>
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<td>FRANCESCA BATTISTRULLI</td>
<td>My Paper Heart</td>
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<td>It's Not Me, It's You</td>
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<td>MUSIQ SOULCHILD</td>
<td>onmyradio</td>
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<td>Little Bit Of Everything</td>
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<td>Coaster</td>
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<td>We All Are One</td>
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<td>The Airborne Toxic Event</td>
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<td>We Started Nothing</td>
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<td>HABREED</td>
<td>For The Lions</td>
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<td>SLIGHT THRU</td>
<td>Boss Of All Bosses</td>
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<td>SMITH ST.</td>
<td>Don't Forget</td>
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<td>Actor</td>
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<td>IL DIVO</td>
<td>The Promise</td>
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<td>Told You So: The Ultimate Hits Of Randy Travis</td>
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<td>METRIC</td>
<td>Fantasies</td>
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<td>RAINBOW GOES BAND</td>
<td>(Singles 1993-1999)</td>
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## Top Independent Albums

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<td>1</td>
<td>Jason Aldean</td>
<td>Waking Up}</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Steven Earle</td>
<td>Compound</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Gucci Mane</td>
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## Top Digital\^1

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<td>2</td>
<td>Paramore</td>
<td>Last Hope</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Kings Of Leon</td>
<td>Use Somebody</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Daughtry</td>
<td>Only The Night</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>Twilight</td>
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<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix</td>
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<td>Steve Earle</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Star Trek</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
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## Top Contemporary Jazz\^2

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<td>3</td>
<td>Rebound</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Wynton Marsalis</td>
<td>Human Nature</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>John Pattitucci</td>
<td>The Search For The One</td>
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## Top Internet\^3

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<td>Playing It Change: Songs Around The World</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bob Dylan</td>
<td>Together Through Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Steve Earle</td>
<td>Townes</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Better Than Ezra</td>
<td>The Very Best Of Better Than Ezra</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yumi Zouma</td>
<td>Pan</td>
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\(1\) To find the complete chart, go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz/charts/chart). \(2\) To find the complete chart, go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz/charts/chart). \(3\) To find the complete chart, go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz/charts/chart).
HOT 100 AIRPLAY™

1. AIRSWING / PANTHER LABEL
   "WE RENEGADES"
   Airplay: 26
   Votes: 22
   13
   12
   11
   10
   9
   8
   7
   6
   5
   4
   3
   2
   1

HOT DIGITAL SONGS

1. AIRSWING / PANTHER LABEL
   "WE RENEGADES"
   Digital: 26
   Votes: 22
   13
   12
   11
   10
   9
   8
   7
   6
   5
   4
   3
   2
   1

ALBUM CHARTS

Showed the largest unit increase. Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.

1. Lady Gaga - "The Fame"
   Sales: 240,000
2. Blake Shelton - "Randy Houser"
   Sales: 160,000
3. Taylor Swift - "Fearless"
   Sales: 120,000
4. John Mayer - "Continuum"
   Sales: 100,000
5. Adele - "19"
   Sales: 80,000

SINGLES CHARTS

Radio Airplay Singles Charts

1. "Marry You" by Lady Gaga
2. "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz
3. "Poker Face" by Lady Gaga
4. "Paranoid" by Kanye West
5. "Firework" by Katy Perry

Digital Songs

1. "We R Renegades" by Airswing
2. "I'm On A Boat" by Weezer
3. "Happy" by Pharrell Williams
4. "We Are Young" by Fun.
5. "I'm Not The Only One" by Sam Smith

Hot Dance Club Play

Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

1. "Closer" by The Chainsmokers
2. "Lean On" by Major Lazer
3. "Crazy" by Zedd
4. "Hello" by Adele
5. "Lose You To Love Me" by Selena Gomez

Award Cert. Levels

Album certifications are based on sales shipped to retail. Records shipped may include sales from streaming, sales by mail or direct sales made through the label or distributor. Albums are eligible for certification if they have sold 500,000 copies.

Sales
digital
streaming
video
sales
digital
streaming
video
certification
level
$5
$10
$15
$20
$25
$30
$35
$40
$45
$50
500,000
1,000,000
1,500,000
2,000,000
2,500,000
3,000,000
3,500,000
4,000,000
4,500,000
5,000,000

Singles certifications are based on the sale of individual songs. Records shipped may include sales from streaming, sales by mail or direct sales made through the label or distributor. Songs are eligible for certification if they have sold 100,000 copies.

Sales
digital
streaming
video
sales
digital
streaming
video
certification
level
$5
$10
$15
$20
$25
$30
$35
$40
$45
$50
100,000
200,000
300,000
400,000
500,000
600,000
700,000
800,000
900,000
1,000,000

Hottest New Artists

1. Lady Gaga
2. Taylor Swift
3. Justin Bieber
4. Rihanna
5. Beyoncé

Hottest Video Artists

1. Lady Gaga
2. Taylor Swift
3. Justin Bieber
4. Rihanna
5. Beyoncé

Hottest Music Artists

1. Lady Gaga
2. Taylor Swift
3. Justin Bieber
4. Rihanna
5. Beyoncé

Hottest Artists

1. Lady Gaga
2. Taylor Swift
3. Justin Bieber
4. Rihanna
5. Beyoncé

Data for week of MAY 30, 2009 | For chart reprints call 646-654-4633
Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

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<th>Rank</th>
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<td>George Strait</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Power Of Love</td>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Power Of Love</td>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
<td>MCA / MCA-MEB V 1337</td>
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### TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

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<td>The Right Move</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Right Move</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
<td>MCA / MCA-MEB V 1337</td>
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<td>The Right Move</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
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### TOP BLUEGRASS ALBUMS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Devil Makes Three</td>
<td>Doyle Lawson &amp; QuickSilver</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Devil Makes Three</td>
<td>Doyle Lawson &amp; QuickSilver</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Devil Makes Three</td>
<td>Doyle Lawson &amp; QuickSilver</td>
<td>Capitol Nashville</td>
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### BETWEEN THE BULLETS

**EARLE'S BIG 'TOWNES'**

Country rock kingpin Steve Earle's fifth top 10 start is also his second straight on Top Country Albums, as "Towneys" opens with 18,000 copies at No. 19. On the Billboard 200, his tribute to late songwriter Townes Van Zandt follows Earle's No. 10 Country start with 2007's "Washington Square Serenade." His other top 10 country debuts include 2002's "Jewel" and "Sidetracks," and 2006's "Transcendental Blues." Earle's tribute includes Van Zandt's "Punching and Left," covered most notably by Emmylou Harris (1977) and Willie Nelson & Merle Haggard (1981).

---

Data for week of May 30, 2009. For chart reprints call 646 654 4633. Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data.
TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

1. INDIA ARIE - SOULBIRD/TYLERA MUSIC (No. 1) (18.98)
2. GORILLA ZODIAC - RECOMMENDED BY SONY MUSIC (No. 2) (14.98)
3. BLAME IT - KISS (18.98)
4. TURN MY SWAG ON - CAMERON (18.98)
5. ROCK YOU, HOUND - SADIE (15.98)

All eight of his albums, either as solo artist or co-writing, have now debuted in the top ten, with new hitting No. 1. The rapper also earns his third top three set on the Billboard 200 (No. 3, 45,000).

How to order releases after debuting with street-date variations last issue, the rapper's first album becomes his first top five.

Now his debut returns with 22,000 on the Billboard 200 (No. 13), not less than "Get Money" (Stay True), which debuted 93,000 to first week in 202.

INDIA ARIE
SOULBIRD/TYLERA MUSIC (No. 1) (18.98)

GORILLA ZODIAC
RECOMMENDED BY SONY MUSIC (No. 2) (14.98)

BLAME IT
KISS (18.98)

TURN MY SWAG ON
CAMERON (18.98)

ROCK YOU, HOUND
SADIE (15.98)
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<tr>
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<th>GERMANY</th>
<th>EUROPEAN HOT 100</th>
<th>EURO DIGITAL SONGS</th>
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**AMAZING FACTS**

- **New Entry**
  - Green Day's "21st Century Breakdown" is at #1 in the UK charts.

- **Moving Up**
  - "Stupid" by Alessandra Amoroso has moved from #10 to #8.

- **New Entry**
  - "Reisen" by Tatsuya Katoh is new at #2 in the German charts.

- **Moving Down**
  - "Goodbye" by Enrique Iglesias has dropped from #6 to #9.

- **New Entry**
  - "Green Day" by 21st Century Breakdown is new at #20 in the Euro Digital Songs.
Universal Music Latin Entertainment promotes Skander Gough to senior VP of digital. He was VP of strategic marketing and promotions. He was VP of strategic marketing and promotions for U.S. entertainment at Riptunes.

Island Records names Garrett Schafer VP of marketing. He was senior director of marketing at Columbia Records and an artist manager.

Glassnote Records names Gabriella D'Agostino head of promotion. She was manager of college and alternative specialty at EMI.

Universal Motown Records promotes Todd Glassman to senior VP of promotion. He was VP of top 40 promotion.

PUBLISHING: EMI Music Publishing promotes Melanie Johnson to VP of sales for the United Kingdom. She was head of sales and promotions.

RELATED FIELDS: WTW Associates names Ira Sallen partner. He was executive VP of human resources and a member of the executive committee at Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

_SINGER DONATES ALBUMS FOR ORPHANS, WIDOWS_

Last year, 16-year-old singer Robert Pereira teamed with Family Christian Stores to give away 100,000 copies of his sophomore album, “Identity,” prior to its April 2009 release on Thinkabout! Records. Along with giving fans a sneak preview of the material, the artist was also able to raise thousands of dollars for orphans and widows across the globe.

In exchange for a donation of $10 or more, store customers received a version of the album that contained three fewer songs than the official release. Those who donated also got a teddy bear that could be given to orphans or children in the community. From September to December 2008, the campaign helped raise more than $800,000 for the Chris’ James Fund, a nonprofit organization that aims to help orphans and widows worldwide.

“We would’ve given away 1 million CDs, but we couldn’t afford that,” Pereira says, noting that he has three cousins who are orphans. “They were adopted into our family from Romania. I remember when they first came to America and how excited our whole family was.”

Pereira, whose family has helped raise funds for orphans in Kenya, the Philippines and Romania, says the idea to give away his new album for charity purposes was always part of the initial rollout plan. “When the opportunity came up to work with the James Fund, it seemed like a perfect fit, because we wanted to get the message of finding your identity in Christ to kids,” he says.

Pereira is finishing his sophomore year of high school and plans to tour the United States next year. —Mitchell Peters

_SONY RADIO ACADEMY AWARDS_

The 27th annual Sony Radio Academy Awards—the United Kingdom’s most prestigious radio honors—were presented May 11 at a gala in London’s Grosvenor House Hotel. Photos courtesy of Michael Robjohns Features

ABOVE LEFT: Former UBAO vocalist Ali Campbell (left) presented the Specialist Music Programme Award to veteran reggae broadcaster David Rodigan of London-based urban station Kiss 100.

ABOVE RIGHT: Radio/TV producer Chris Evans hosted the awards, but the BBC Radio 2 presenter still found time to pick up two Sonya of his own—the music radio personality of the year honor and the Entertainment Award.

RIGHT: The Sony Radio Academy Award for music broadcaster of the year was bestowed upon BBC Radio 2 presenter Mark Radcliffe by the New York Dolls. The act was in town to play a May 13 launch show at London’s 100 Club for its new Atco Records album “Cause i Sez So.” From left: drummer Brian Delaney, guitarist Steve Conte and Sylvain Mizrachi. Radcliffe, vocalist David Johansen and bassist Sami Yaffa.

_KEY WEST SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL_

The 15th annual Key West Songwriters Festival, presented by Better Angels Music and benefiting the Make-A-Heart & Soul Foundation, launched another year of songs in the Florida sun with BMI’s April 29 kickoff party at the La Concha Hotel.

ABOVE: Key West Songwriters Festival performers mingled during the event. From left: Songwriter/producer Rodney Clawson, BMI VP of writer/publisher relations Jody Williams, songwriters Bobby Pinson, Luke Laird, Natalie Hemby, Bob DiPiero, Kim Carnes, Tim Nichols, Connie Harrington and Jon Mabry and BMI senior director of writer/publisher relations Mark Mason.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAN FIPON

LEFT: Even left: BMI publisher VP of writer/publisher relations Clay Bradley, songwriter Scotty Emerick, CSR partner Charlie Walker and songwriters Paul Overstreet and Robert Earl Keen. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALAN BAND ADVEN

MAY 30, 2009  www.billboard.biz  49
INSIDE TRACK

ZAC TO THE FUTURE

Zac Brown figures he and his band have another couple of singles left in the cycle of their major-label debut, “The Foundation.” But its successor is already on his mind.

Depending on how you count them, Brown says he has more than 120 songs in the works. “We’ve got 20 songs in the can,” he reports, a dozen of which are originals while eight are covers for future B-sides, including Zac Brown Band versions of tunes by Lucinda Williams, Bob Dylan, Dire Straits and even Rage Against the Machine. “We always want to keep people guessing and not be predictable,” says Brown, who also has 102 songs “that I’ve started and need a little bit of tweaking to finish them.”

There’s also a new track called “Colder Weather” that he recorded last week in Kid Rock’s suburban Detroit studio after the two jammed together at the city’s Downbelow Hoedown.

“We put out enough music to make two records a year, no problem,” Brown says. “We’ve just got to get on that pace and figure out how that’s going to work with radio promotion and everything. We’re just so proud to be out here and proud to set up camp and let everybody know we’ve got a lot of music coming to them, one way or another.”

ZAC BROWN BAND

Universal Music Publishing Group took the title of SESAC publisher of the year. From left: SESAC VP of writer/publisher relations Linda Lorence Critelli, SESAC president/COO Pat Collins; UMPG senior VP of creative affairs Jennifer Bokman; UMPG director of creative affairs James Cheney; UMPG executive VP of creative, East Coast Evan Lamberg; UMPG creative associate manager Parsi Hill; and SESAC VP of writer/publisher relations Trevor Gale.

2009 SESAC NEW YORK MUSIC AWARDS

The 13th annual SESAC New York Music Awards, honoring influential songwriters and music publishers, were held May 12 at Manhattan’s IAC Building. Songwriter/producer Greg Curtis took home top honors when he was named songwriter of the year. Songwriter Regie Hamm received the song of the year trophy for “The Time of My Life,” a No. 1 hit for last year’s “American Idol!” winner David Cook, and SESAC publisher of the year honors went to Universal Music Publishing Group. Another highlight was the presentation of the Ascension Award to newcomer Chrissette Michele. Photos: courtesy of Shawn Ehlers except where noted.
Making the Connection Between Brands & Bands!

KEYNOTE Q&As:

PHARRELL WILLIAMS

THE VERONICAS and RICHARD YAFFA
CEO, GroupM North America Entertainment, Sports & Partnerships

Featured

AGENCY MUSIC SPECIALISTS:

Mike Boris
SVP/Head of Music, McCann Erickson

Mike Byrne
CEO, Anomaly

Michael Freeman
Vice President of Music, McCann Erickson

David Keefe
Global Director, Media, Ogilvy & Mather

Christopher Moon
Head of Music, The W Hotel

Peter Nashel
Independent Music Writer, Full Circle

Umut Ozaydinli
Global Music Marketing Manager, Sony/ATV

Panos Panay
President & CEO, Sony/ATV

Mark Shedletsky
Founder, Bluehaze

Leah Siegel
President, Downtown Music Publishing

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