GUESS WHO'S GONE INDEPENDENT?

PHISH Brings 'Joy' To The World—On Its Own Label

THE INDIES ISSUE
Surround Yourself with Music

Yahoo! Music introduces the new open artist network. Everything the web knows about an artist all in one place.
Taylor Swift has been singing all her life, motivated by her grandmother, who was a professional opera singer. She began performing locally around her town and county at the age of ten, and at age 11 sang the national anthem before a Philadelphia...
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**ON THE COVER**: Phish photographs by Danny Clinch.

**MOVIE/TV MUSIC**

This conference offers the opportunity to learn from, network and share music with the best in the business. The 2008 event sold out, so don’t miss this year’s: Oct. 29-30 at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. Details: billboardevents.com.

**TOURING**

Set for Nov. 4-5 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, this premier industry event gathers promoters, agents, managers, venue operators, merch companies and production professionals. For more, go to billboardevents.com.

**ONLINE PHISH**

After you finish this week’s cover story with Phish, visit billboard.com/phish to read in-depth Q&As with band members, plus watch the group play Bonnaroo and check out our Phish photo gallery.

**HOME FRONT**

360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD

**Events**

**MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT LIVE**

At this conference, set for Oct. 6 at the Omni Hotel San Diego and presented by Logic Wireless, industry innovators will reveal how they’re navigating this exciting landscape. More at billboardevents.com.

**FILM & TV MUSIC**

This conference offers the opportunity to learn from, network and share music with the best in the business. The 2008 event sold out, so don’t miss this year’s: Oct. 29-30 at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. Details: billboardevents.com.

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ASCAP congratulates all our rhythm & soul award honorees.

**Publisher of the Year**
EMI MUSIC PUBLISHING

**Songwriters of the Year**
MIKKEL ERIKSEN
TOR HERMANSEN

**Heritage Award**
SMOKEY ROBINSON

**Golden Note Award**
ALICIA KEYS

**Songwriters of the Year**
TERIUS "THE DREAM" NASH
CHRISTOPHER "TRICKY" STEWART

**TOP R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS**

*"Like You Never Sleeped Again"*

*"Ooh Na Na"*

*"One In A Million"*

*"Can't Help But Wait"*
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*"I Kissed a Girl"*

*"I Want It All"*

*"If You're Not the One"*
Writer: Danja. EMI Music Publishing

*"I Wish I Knew You Better"*
Writer: Sanya "Sanya" Royer. Sony/ATV Music Publishing

**AWARD WINNING R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS**

*"A Milli"*

*"Billy Brown"*
Writer: Andrew "Dre" Carter. EMI Music Publishing

*"Blurred Lines"*
Writer: Terry Lewis, Charles "Chucky" Thomas. EMI Music Publishing

**TOP RAP SONGS**

*"Birthday"*

*"Ft"*

*"Get Rich"*

*"My Boo"*

**AWARD WINNING RAP SONGS**

*"Birthday"*

*"Ft"*

*"Get Rich"*

*"My Boo"*

**TOP GOSPEL SONG**

*"I Believe"*
Writer: Mandela "Nelle" Davis. Chesser Music Publishing

**AWARD WINNING GOSPEL SONGS**

*"Declaration (This Is It)"*

*"God Is Good"*

*"Good Money"*
Writer: Juicy Jay. Copper Nickels Music, Sony/ATV Music Publishing

*"Great Money"*
Writer: Lonnie McNeal. EMI Music Publishing

*"I Live"*
Writer: Leonard McGee. Label Shop Music

www.americanradiohistory.com
Labels Are Here To Stay

Acts Need The Support That Record Companies Can Give

BY BRUCE IGLAUER

"Labels are obsolete." We've read this line a hundred times, and heard this "wisdom" from bloggers, columnists and even artists whose successful careers have been bankrolled by well-established record labels. With the decline in recording costs, the rise of social networking sites for promotion and the "level playing field" created by retail downloaders, the DIY approach has become the mantra of many aspiring recording artists.

Don't believe the hype.

It's true that musicians can now cheaply access the technology to record and attempt to market their own albums. According to Nielsen SoundScan, there were 105,000 new album releases last year in the United States, including digital-only titles. But let's be clear: The ability to make an album isn't the same as the ability to market and sell it.

A few artists have made their own recordings, putting videos on YouTube, creating MySpace pages and went on to sell a significant amount of music. But not many. Of those 105,000 albums from 2008, only 6,000 sold more than 1,000 copies in their first year of release. So, where's the disconnect?

The media image of record labels— which many DIY-ers believe is of gigantic, money-driven corporations committed to turning pretty boys and girls into plastic "stars" with short-but lucrative (for the labels) careers. Perhaps this description has become too true of the major labels. Their huge overhead expenses require them to generate equally huge cash flow (though cash flow and profit aren't the same thing). And with the physical marketplace dominated by big box retailers that won't gamble on developing artists, the only way to generate that kind of money is with pop hits that will be stocked by the Wal-Marts of the world. But the majors are struggling because, as the bloggers and columnists and radio people say, their best opportunities won't come from working on their own or from the ever-shrinking world of the majors. Instead, they're increasingly turning to entreprenuring and entering innovative indie labels as partners.

In this tough new music business, many smart artists continue to realize that their best opportunities won't come from working on their own.

Bruce Iglauer is founder/president of Alligator Records, a 18-year-old independent label, and a member of AAM’s board of directors (a2im.org).

FOR THE RECORD

Billboard’s European digital retail partner is 7Digital. A June 27 column was incorrect on this point.

A June 20 story should have stated that in the film “This Is Spinal Tap,” Christopher Guest played the role of guitarist Nigel Tufnel and Harry Shearer played bassist Derek Smalls.

In this tough new music business, many smart artists continue to realize that their best opportunities won't come from working on their own.

Bruce Iglauer is founder/president of Alligator Records, a 18-year-old independent label, and a member of AAM’s board of directors (a2im.org).

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The King Of Pop Also Changed R&B—And The Music Business

The death of Michael Jackson brings to a sudden end the life of a performer who captivated pop audiences with the Jackson 5 and matured into a performer of electric charisma and unprecedented crossover appeal, before living out his final years as a virtual recluse.

Jackson died June 25 after reportedly being found unconscious in his Bel Air, Calif., home. Paramedics rushed the 50-year-old icon to UCLA Medical Center, where he was declared dead. Jackson was in Los Angeles rehearsing for a 50-date run of concerts at London's O2 Arena that was to begin July 13 (see story, page 8).

Born Aug. 29, 1958, in Gary, Ind., Jackson was the seventh of nine children born to Katherine and Joseph Jackson. Along with older siblings Jackie, Tito, Jermaine and Marlon, Jackson first rose to fame as the pint-sized lead singer of the Jackson 5. Formed in 1964 and signed to Motown in 1968, the group quickly scored four back-to-back No. 1 pop and R&B hits, beginning with its 1969 debut single, “I Want You Back.”

That was followed by “ABC,” “The Love You Save” and “I’ll Be There.”

Jackson’s distinctive voice, electric dancing and natural charisma soon made him the group’s popular focal point, so much so that he began moonlighting as a solo artist early in the group’s tenure at Motown. He recorded four solo albums for the label, scoring his first top five pop/R&B hit with “Got to Be There” in 1971. One measure of Jackson’s unique talent was his ability to turn a song about a rat, “Ben,” into another top five smash.

In 1976, the Jackson 5 left Motown in a quest for more artistic freedom, signing with Epic Records and rechristening themselves the Jacksons. The group remained with that label until 1989, scoring seven top 40 hits during that time, including “Shake Your Body (Down to the Ground)” and “State of Shock.”

It was during this time that Jackson began to come into his own as a creative force. He released five solo albums on Motown before teaming with legendary producer Quincy Jones to release his first solo album for Epic, “Off the Wall,” in 1979. It was a pivotal step in Jackson’s evolution into “the King of Pop.”

But it was on his second solo album, the 1983 mega-hit “Thriller,” when Jackson left his contemporaries in the dust. The album earned the singer a record-breaking eight Grammy Awards in 1984. His 1983 performance of “Billie Jean” on the “Motown 25” TV special became an iconic moment when he introduced his James Brown-inspired moonwalk to a national audience.

Beyond music, Jackson showed his humanitarian side on the 1985 benefit song “We Are the World,” which he wrote with Lionel Richie. Proceeds from the song were donated to the charity USA for Africa.

Although Jackson never again approached the sales stratosphere of “Thriller,” the follow-up albums “Bad” and “Dangerous” reached No. 1 on the pop chart in 1987 and 1991, respectively. So did the 1995 compilation of hits and new material, “History: Past, Present and Future—Book 1.”

In the years since, Jackson’s star lost some of its luster in the wake of child molestation charges (he was exonerated in a trial), two divorces and financial problems. Even so, there’s no denying Jackson’s enduring influence. He set a new standard for video aesthetics and stage productions, and his music continues to be sampled by hip-hop artists.

At the time of Jackson’s death, he was reported to be working on a new album with contemporary songwriter/producers like Akon, RedOne and others anxious to work with the legendary talent.

Jackson reportedly had numerous health woes, including severe back problems, which plagued him during his 2005 trial. His weight dropped to about 105 pounds in 2005, according to some sources.

In late 2008, Jackson biographer Ian Halperin claimed the pop star suffers from a genetic illness, as well as emblyema and gastrointestinal bleeding. Halperin also told various sources that Jackson could barely speak and was 95% blind in his left eye. Jackson and his representatives at the time vigorously denied these claims.

In the run-up to his planned 2009 series of concerts in London, rumors surfaced that Jackson was suffering from skin cancer, a claim denied by the concert promoter AEG Live. “He’s as healthy as he can be—no health problems whatsoever,” AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips told CNN.

Phillips also said that Jackson had passed a stringent physical exam before signing a deal to perform the concerts.

1958-2009

MICHAEL JACKSON

OBITUARY BY GAIL MITCHELL AND CORTNEY HARDING
TOURING BY RAY WADDELL

Suddenly, Offstage

What Happens For AEG Now That The Show Won’t Go On

Michael Jackson’s planned 50-show run at the O2 Arena in London would have been the highest grossing single concert engagement. Now it’s a major problem for the promoter: AEG Live.

More than $85 million worth of tickets have already been sold for the series of performances, which have the new sadly ironic title “This Is It.” As much as $30 million has already been spent on production, according to sources close to the situation. So what’s at stake for AEG, the world’s second-largest concert promoter, can’t be overstated. Concert business executives have estimated that AEG at Jackson’s advance of as much as $10 million. That, plus the production costs, would mean AEG stands to lose as much as $40 million if no appearance insurance isn’t substantial enough to cover this contingency. For AEG, “it’s either horrible or really horrible,” a concert business executive says.

The shows, which were to begin July 13, would have been Jackson’s first solo shows in 12 years. AEG Live, which was producing and promoting them, footed the bill for what the company said was a $30 million production. Other sources say that the costs before opening night were closer to $30 million.

The gross totals from primary ticket sales would’ve been about $90 million. Premium and VIP packages and secondary-market sales would have boosted the gross to more than $100 million. Merchandise sales could have brought in another $15 million.

AEG’s yearly financial results may now depend on Jackson’s cause of death. One entertainment insurance industry insider says that if Jackson died from a drug overdose or a pre-existing condition, the producer could be on the hook for any loss—which would include any money already sunk into the production, as well as the considerable cost of refunding consumers for the 750,000 tickets already purchased. If Jackson signed a contract saying he would return his advance in the event he didn’t perform, the company could end up in court with a long line of other Jackson creditors.

AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips told billboard.biz May 12 that his company was well-insured. “We have our policy in place and we’re negotiating for an even larger binder,” said Phillips, who couldn’t immediately be reached for comment regarding Jackson’s death. “We have insured the production costs. In order to get the first part of the insurance in place, [Jackson] had to have a physical, and he passed it with flying colors.” AEG CEO Tim Leisweke made similar comments in March at the Billboard Music & Money Symposium.

KING OF THE POP CHARTS

Thirteen No. 1 Solo Hits, Best-Selling Studio Album

Michael Jackson’s impact on pop music history is impossible to overstate. “Thriller,” the singer’s career-defining album, has gone platinum 28 times, according to the RIAA, making it the top-selling studio album of all time in the United States. (Only the Eagles’ “Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975” has sold more copies.) It also topped the Billboard 200 for 37 weeks, the second-longest run at No. 1 of any album in history.

During his solo career, Jackson had 47 tracks on the Billboard Hot 100, 13 of which went to No. 1. That’s the most chart-toppers of the ’70s and ’80s combined, behind only the Beatles and Mariah Carey for the most No. 1s in the rock era. Jackson was also the first artist to debut atop the Hot 100 with “You Are Not Alone” on the Sept. 2, 1995, chart.

Though sales of Jackson’s later albums were slow (his last studio project, 2001’s “Invincible,” sold 2 million copies), his catalog continues to sell strongly. “Thriller” was reissued in February 2008 and sold 774,000 U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album re-entered Billboard’s Top Pop Catalog chart at No. 1 with 166,000 first-week copies. According to the IFPI, it was the 32nd-biggest-selling album in the world last year and the ninth bestselling record for Sony Music.

—Monica Herrera

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield and Gary Trust

TOP 10 BILLBOARD 200 ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Rean Position</th>
<th>Date Released</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Diana Ross Presents the Jackson 5&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Jan. 14, 1971</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;ABC&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 12, 1977</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Third Album&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 25, 1977</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Looking Through the Windows&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>June 5, 1972</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ben&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Aug. 29, 1972</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Off the Wall&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 1, 1979</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Thriller&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Oct. 22, 1982</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Victory&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 25, 1984</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bad&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 1987</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Dangerous&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Dec. 14, 1991</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;History: Past, Present and Future — Book I&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 22, 2001</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"THE JACKSON 5" "THE JACKSONS"

TOP 10 BILLBOARD HOT 100 SINGLES

<table>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Date Released</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Want You Back&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
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<td>Motown</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;ABC&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Dec. 9, 1977</td>
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<td>&quot;The Love You Save&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Mar. 30, 1979</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I’ll Be There&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Oct. 10, 1978</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Mama’s Pearl&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 1979</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Never Can Say Goodbye&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Apr. 11, 1979</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Got To Be There&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Dec. 15, 1979</td>
<td>Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sugar Daddy&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Feb. 14, 1981</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Ben&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Aug. 14, 1972</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Dancing Machine&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>March 26, 1974</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;You’ve Never Seen Me Like This&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 1, 1976</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Off the Wall&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Feb. 14, 1980</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;She’s Out of My Life&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Apr. 30, 1980</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;The Girl Is Mine&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 14, 1982</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;Billie Jean&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 1983</td>
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<td>&quot;Beat It&quot;</td>
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<td>Feb. 20, 1983</td>
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<td>&quot;Wanna Be Startin’ Somethin’&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>May 23, 1983</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;Human Nature&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>July 23, 1983</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;PYT (Pretty Young Thing)&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Oct. 8, 1983</td>
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<td>&quot;Say Say Say&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Dec. 11, 1983</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>&quot;Thriller&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 1984</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;State of Shock&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>June 16, 1984</td>
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<td>&quot;I Just Can’t Stop Loving You&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Aug. 12, 1985</td>
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<td>&quot;Blind&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 1985</td>
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<td>&quot;The Way You Make Me Feel&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 1987</td>
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<td>&quot;Man in the Mirror&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Feb. 1, 1988</td>
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<td>&quot;Dirty Diana&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>May 15, 1988</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;Smooth Criminal&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Aug. 6, 1988</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 1995</td>
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<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 1995</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;Will You Be There&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>July 29, 1995</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;Scream/Childhood&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>June 15, 1996</td>
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<td>&quot;You Are Not Alone&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>Sept. 29, 1996</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>&quot;Rock My World&quot;</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
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But a source familiar with the situation says a traditional nonappearance policy was never written. Billboard couldn’t confirm that at press time.

Even if AEG had a policy, that doesn’t mean Jackson’s death, and the losses incurred, would be covered. “If it was a pre-existing condition or drug- or alcohol-related, a normal cancellation policy would not cover that, even if he had passed a medical exam,” the source says. AEG could be on the hook if “death was from something that’s excluded in the policy.”

Whatever happens, the $85 million taken in from ticket sales will need to be refunded to the public. It will be messy, as well as expensive, and it will need to happen quickly by law. Phillips told Billboard in March that more than 90% of the tickets have been purchased by U.K. residents, but “the rest is France, Germany, Poland, everywhere in the world.”

People bought tickets from Botswana.” Ultimately, AEG may have to file a claim against Jackson’s estate. And since Jackson has hundreds of millions of dollars of debt, and a couple of multimillion-dollar lawsuits pending, the worth of that estate is very much in doubt.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Green Light
John Legend, Cherry Lane Form Publishing Joint Venture

John Legend has entered a joint venture with Cherry Lane Music Publishing, part of a deal that will keep the R&B hitmaker with the indie publisher for another three years.

Legend, who has been with Cherry Lane since 2004, is joining forces with the company to form HomeSchool Music, through which the two sides will sign emerging songwriters.

“We’ve had a really good working relationship,” Legend says. “They are competing with the majors when it comes to what they’re willing to put on the table.”

Legend’s partnership with Cherry Lane isn’t his first business venture. In 2007 he launched his Atlantic Records imprint HomeSchool Records, scoring an international hit last year with Estelle’s album, “Shine.” That album has sold 214,000 U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Cherry Lane CEO Peter Primont says the company has been pursuing a publishing joint venture with Legend for the last two years. “Each year we talked about it and this year he felt comfortable enough,” Primont says. “His record company . . . is taking off and now it’s time to get into publishing.”

HomeSchool Music hasn’t yet signed any writers. “We’re not looking to sign 10 songwriters this year; it has to make sense,” Primont says. “John is going to work with and tutor songwriters. He’ll become a magnet for certain writers.”

HomeSchool Music is the latest in a series of joint ventures that Cherry Lane has launched with partners ranging from NASCAR and the Black Eyed Peas and most recently, former Capitol Music Group chairman/CEO Jason Flom (Billboard, May 16).

While Cherry Lane is open to forming joint ventures with other songwriters, Primont says the company would do so sparingly and only with writers who are already on its roster.

“We really want to limit ourselves in terms of the number of these deals,” he says. “We don’t want to spread ourselves too thin. We want to make sure we maintain the quality.”

The partnership “seemed like the right thing to do,” Legend adds, saying that “I’ve always had an interest in working with new writers and artists.”

Legend says he expects that most of HomeSchool Music’s signings will be writers with whom he collaborates. “Like people who are smart, with a lot of artistic integrity and a commercial sensibility,” he says. “It’s good to have a combination of both.”

Why the name “HomeSchool?”
“I was home-schooled as a child for a few years,” Legend says. “It’s also to convey the idea that we’re not just a factory. We like to take our time and make things right—like some good home cooking.”

When asked in April about the fate of the Virgin Mobile Festival, promoter Seth Hurwitz responded cryptically that “we’re working on something very exciting stuff.”

Turns out he wasn’t kidding. For 2009, the festival is rebranding itself as the Virgin Mobile FreeFest, which will give away 35,000 tickets for a concert lineup that will include headliners Weezer and Blink 182, as well as Franz Ferdinand, the Hold Steady, Public Enemy and other acts. The FreeFest will be held Aug. 30 at the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Md.

Converting an existing festival brand into a free event is an unusual move, one that recalls Ozzyfest’s temporary conversion to a free concert in 2007. But unlike Ozszer’s ‘07, where only some of the more popular artists on the tour were said to be financially compensated, acts performing at FreeFest “are pretty much getting their going rate,” says Hurwitz, chairman of I.M.P. Productions, which operates the Merriweather.

Hurwitz notes that some booking agents had inquired about higher-than-normal guarantees. “We had one act that actually said that if it were free, they’d want more money,” he says. “Classic music biz mentality.”

Last year’s third annual Virgin Mobile Festival, held Aug. 9-10 at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, attracted about 60,000 fans, featuring headliners Foo Fighters, Jack Johnson, Kanye West, Nine Inch Nails and Stone Temple Pilots, among other acts. For this year’s FreeFest, the Merriweather’s usual capacity of 19,000 is being expanded to 35,000 by including parking lot stages and other space configurations not traditionally used at the venue.

Hurwitz says:

The concept of hosting a free festival came from executives at Virgin Mobile USA. “This seemed like a good thing to do in a down economy and Virgin was willing to fit the bill,” Hurwitz says.

Iron Faris, senior director of brand marketing and innovation for Virgin Mobile USA, declined to reveal specific details of the company’s financial commitment to FreeFest, although Billboard estimates that the talent budget is about $750,000. Kyocera Communications is another major sponsor of the event, with additional sponsors to be announced in the coming weeks.

“We definitely didn’t make any sacrifices in the lineup that we wanted to book,” Faris says. “We wanted to book something as great as what people have come to expect from a Virgin Mobile Festival, except this year it’s free.”

Virgin Mobile customers and previous ticket buyers to Virgin Mobile Festivals got first crack at the FreeFest tickets June 25-26 through e-mail alerts. The remaining tickets were to be made available to the general public June 27 through Ticketmaster.com.

Ticketmaster has agreed to waive its conveniences fees for concertgoers who pick up their tickets at the Merriweather or the I.M.P.-owned 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C. Fans will also have the option to pay Ticketmaster to deliver the tickets. In light of recent controversies surrounding ticketing fees, “I’m pretty excited about seeing how many people really prefer to pay Ticketmaster to deliver their ticket,” Hurwitz says. FreeFest will benefit the sponsoring brands as well as fans, according to Marcie Allen, president of MAC Presents in Nashville, a tour sponsorship facilitator and a presenter of free music events in the past.

If the event is publicly touted as a success by sponsors, Allen believes other branded entertainment events on this scale could follow. “With all the clutter that is out there with advertising and social networking,” she says, “the brand is saying, ‘Here’s something I’m going to give you that has true value to you.’”

Virgin Mobile hasn’t decided whether it plans to launch another free festival in the future, Faris says. “When it comes time to think about what we’ll do after 2010, we’ll have that discussion then,” he says.

Free live events sometimes raise concerns among promoters and agents about the risk of devaluing talent and live entertainment in the eyes of fans. But Ozzfest returned in 2008 as a paid event with headliners Metallica and Ozzy Osbourne, albeit as a one-off, single-day concert. Hurwitz says he’s confident that the Virgin Festival could return as a paid event. “The whole point is to do something different and surprise people,” he says. “This is just this year’s model.”
Name That Tune

Music Recognition Technology Could Improve Accounting Of Broadcast Royalties

TV is already an important source of revenue for the music industry. And thanks to a number of new initiatives hitting the market this year, it’s about to become even more so.

ASCAP and BMI, the two largest performing rights societies in the United States, collect about $1.8 billion in performance royalties per year, of which about $600 million stems from music played on broadcast, cable and satellite TV.

In many cases, broadcasters pay the societies upfront for a blanket license on these tracks and submit cue sheets to detail what music was used and when so the societies can divvy up the payment to the appropriate rights holders. Now, TuneSat and BMI subsidiary Landmark Digital are using music recognition technology to automate that process.

Both companies have installed listening stations to monitor the audio feeds of more than 100 broadcast and cable channels to recognize and record music played on these channels. Their systems are so sensitive that they can pick up two-second snippets of a musical work and identify songs played under dialogue or static. They then compile a report of all such usage into a database for clients, complete with an audio recording of each use.

TuneSat and Landmark Digital have spent much of the year courting music publishers and performing rights societies with this new product, pitching it as a more effective system for tracking music performances. It can take up to eight months for broadcasters to provide societies and publishers with their cue sheets, while these new services can identify performances in real time.

What’s more, TuneSat estimates that the manual cue sheet method of measuring performances on TV results in up to 80% of the royalties paid being misallocated. "They’re not getting the proper reports," TuneSat executive VP Chris Woods says. "They’re either incomplete, inaccurate or never filed at all."

TuneSat is a New York startup founded by Woods and Scott Schreer, both of whom are composers and technology veterans. (Schreer wrote the theme song for the NFL on Fox.) They initially pitched TuneSat’s services to TV networks as a way to automate their cue-sheet submission process. To date, NBC and Fox have signed up. This spring, Woods and Schreer began reaching out to the music industry, signing up Sony/ATV Music Publishing and a number of independent publishers. Currently, the company only monitors U.S. TV, but it is planning to launch monitoring services in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Spain in July.

Landmark Digital, meanwhile, was created after BMI acquired the technology assets of the popular music identification service Shazam in 2005. Since then, BMI has only used the service to monitor radio performances, but now Landmark has added TV and Internet monitoring to its portfolio and is seeking additional clients. The company expects to announce several international customers this fall.

"We feel this can go in a lot of different directions and help other companies like BMI around the world," Schreer says. "We’re pursuing those very aggressively." VP of business development David Brodsky says. According to Sony/ATV executive VP of business and legal affairs Peter Brodsky, these services don’t so much address a problem in need of a solution as they do bring efficiency to a complicated system. "It’s not like we were sitting around going, ‘Man, there’s so many uses of our songs that we’re not getting credit for,'" Brodsky says. "But when you see technology that can give you real-time data and reports of when songs are being used, and use that to compare to what your performing rights statements say, you might be onto something. This is a real eye-opener."

Yet broadcasters pay upfront for music usage. While data from TuneSat or Landmark may help individual songwriters or publishers make a case for receiving more from that share of a pie, the data doesn’t increase the overall amount that performing rights societies gather.

"One would hope it would tighten the net up a bit," says one source close to the societies. "But it doesn’t mean everybody is going to get paid what they think they will. It doesn’t increase our fees. It just increases the amount of data we have to prove what was actually used."

But for publishers like Sony/ATV, anything that helps them get more money is a good thing. "It just spins up the pie in a more accurate way," Brodsky says. "It may not grow the entire pie. But if we’re not getting credit for all the uses, then we theoretically will increase our credit."
HOW TO:
GET ON A PUBLIC RADIO STATION PLAYLIST

by BRUCE WARREN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF "WORLD CAFE," WXPN PHILADELPHIA

While commercial radio may be inaccessible to many artists, there are scores of hip, noncommercial stations around the country that play a key role in exposing emerging acts.

One such outlet is the University of Pennsylvania's triple A station, WXPN, which produces "World Cafe," a daily music show hosted by David Dye. "World Cafe" boasts a loyal following in its home market and is carried nationwide by NPR.

Bruce Warren, executive producer of "World Cafe" and WXPN's assistant station manager for programming, says his job is not only to find exciting music for his listeners, but to "help musicians quit their day jobs" by exposing their music to the right audience.

Warren shares advice on how to get music on the air at a tastemaking independent station like WXPN.

1. SEND YOUR MUSIC TO A REAL PERSON

Whether you're a label, musician, manager, independent promoter, marketer, whoever, you have to know the radio station that you're trying to get your music played on. Usually there's a hierarchy of who should get music at a radio station, so find out what that hierarchy is. Call the station to find out what the policies are about music submissions and follow-up. For WXPN, because there's so much information about bands available on Web sites, we prefer not to get bombarded with press kits—just send your music and make sure we know your name.

2. NARROW YOUR FOCUS

When possible, target specific shows. There may be a blues show, a folk show, a jam-band show. On XPN we have a handful of specialty shows, and you should send music to the hosts of these shows, because that's another way in. For example, WXPN has an amazing blues show. We don't play a ton of blues on the regular XPN rotation, but the host of our show, Jonny Meister, is a genius in the blues. And I'll say to him every once in a while, "Jonny, what are the five records I absolutely must be listening to?" Same with local music; if there's a local music show, send music to them first.

3. REMEMBER THAT RADIO IS ABOUT RECORDS

My job is to play a record, not to sell tickets for live shows, so the strength or weakness of your live act is generally much less important than the music you send. For example, we were being worked really heavily on a major-label artist who shall remain nameless, and the record was OK. Of course, the promotion person was like, "Well, you've got to see this person live, it'll blow you away." And I said, "You know what? If they're not as good as Radiohead, or U2, or Justin Timberlake, no one's going to blow me away." There have been very few times where I was convinced to go see a band and I've come back and said, "These guys were amazing. We're adding this record."

4. REACH OUT TO OTHER TASTEMAKERS

Even if you don't have a team working your record, doing the grassroots thing has multiple parts, including radio, that feed off each other. I am obsessed with music blogs; there are probably a hundred blogs that I trust—they're tastemakers, they have their fans, they have their fingers on the pulse of what's happening. When I go into my music meeting every week, I don't even care what the priorities for labels are anymore. If I read about a record and hear a record online that I am interested in, I'm going to reach out to them and ask for a record to be sent to the station.

5. THINK MULTIPLATFORM

These days radio isn't just radio as a single platform. So if you do get some interest from a station, find out what other platforms they might have to build awareness. Every day we offer a free download from an artist. If a band wants to give us a free song for our listeners, we play it on the radio and make it available online. We're going to reach a lot of people. So find out what kinds of events, online programs or other platforms the station might have to build a creative promotion.

—Interview by Evie Nagy
Live From New York

Sony Vet Harvey Leeds Books Unsigned Bands At The Gramercy Theatre

Despite retiring from Sony Music in 2008 after 35 years at the company, industry veteran Harvey Leeds is still in the artist development game.

For nearly a year, he’s been booking new and unsigned artists for his Monday Night Music Club series at Manhattan’s Gramercy Theatre. He runs the series in conjunction with modern rock radio WXRK (103.9 FM) New York in his capacity as a consultant for booking and special events for Live Nation.

Leeds, who also owns his own management agency, says agents and labels visit regularly to check out—and occasionally showcase—undiscovered bands at the Gramercy.

“We’ve had artists from Tina Parol to Albert Hammond Jr. to Jesus H. Christ & The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.” Leeds says. Citing support from such companies as Primary Wave, InDeeGo! Management, Fox Home Video, Creative Artists Agency, Sony Music and Urban Groove.

As part of the series, VH1 Classic hosted the April U.S. premiere of “Anvil! The Story of Anvil” at the Gramercy.

“It is a testament to Harvey Leeds and Live Nation, who are making a commitment to artist development here in New York City,” Paradigm agent Jonathan Adelman says.

“Giving emerging artists an opportunity to showcase in a room where a major investment was made in the sound and lighting is truly vital. Paradigm hopes to see this commitment continue on a broad level in other markets to showcase unsigned and emerging talent.”

On a national level, Live Nation says it sinks millions into promoting club-level shows, often at a loss. For his part, Leeds says Mondays at the Gramercy aren’t completely limited to unsigned bands. “Occasionally we have charitable events on Monday nights as well,” he says. “We created a series called Battle of the Bands, which is a battle of the bands with: New York Fire Department bands and New York Police Department bands competing for the opportunity to open shows at Irving Plaza, Roseland Ballroom and the Hammerstein.”

The 600-capacity Gramercy also hosts an eclectic roster of other live events. Noncommercial WFUV (90.7 FM) Fordham University presents private concerts at the venue for station supporters and a series hosted by pioneering New York free-form jock Vin Scelsa. Relix magazine is starting a Jamb Band series at the Gramercy July 20 with a show featuring the Nate Wilson Group, the Bridge, Scott Metzger and Future.

The venue is also hosting three days of events during New York’s Gay Pride Week (June 20-28). And Leeds says the Gramercy is in discussions with a well-known daytime talk show host for a branded live music series.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PHISHEADS GONE?

Nowhere, apparently. When the band reconvened after some five years (see story, page 16), Phish’s fans resurfaced immediately and its tour quickly sold-out. During the band’s prolonged hiatus, there was speculation that Phishheads might swing over to another similarly improvisational band like Widespread Panic. String Cheese incident, Umphrey’s McGee or the scene’s inspiration, The Dead. Perhaps they did, but now they’re back.

“Maybe they did the same thing I did: They got on with their lives and had jobs and families and settled down.” Phish keyboardist Page McConnell says. “It does feel a little bit different out here now. There’s not so many random, transient people who lived on the road that maybe didn’t even care about the music or the shows, but just lived in the parking lot, it seemed like, going from show to show, kind of existing that way. There are a lot of people who grew up a bit, and also there are a lot of younger fans that never had a chance to see us before that are coming to shows now.”

Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio has a similar view. “It’s funny. I run into people on the streets in New York, and they kind of did the same thing we did—they got off the road, they got established, a lot of them got married and started families, and now they’re back out with their kids.”

Indirectly, Phish’s break from the road may have been as good for the fans as it apparently was for the band.

“I definitely think we did some of these people a favor,” McConnell quips. “And some of them said so.”

For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see billboard.biz/touring.
Bring The Noise
Loss Of A Stand-Alone Latin Urban Grammy Deserves More Than Silence

It is ironic that less than a week after the trustees of the Recording Academy voted to fold the Latin urban album category into the best Latin rock/alternative category, three of the top four albums on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart were urban.

This is not a good thing to put mildly. Having two such disparate styles competing against one another in a single category is a disservice to artists of both genres. Someone like Don Omar likely boasts that he bested Julieta Venegas in an awards competition?

And yet, the demise of the Latin urban category points to a much bigger problem: the lack of solidarity in the Latin music community in general.

The Latin urban category, which had previously existed in the same category as Latin rock and Latin alternative (as it does now), was broken out just two years ago in a tardy response to the reggaeton explosion. At the time of the split, the combined Latin rock/alternative/urban category was a mishmash with 78 entries, more than any other Latin category. Breaking it up was logical.

This year, however, the entries for Latin urban dropped to 24, just below the 25-entry threshold, and the category went for review before the Recording Academy’s Awards and Nominations Committee, which includes representatives from all genres.

“There’s a standing procedure that any time a category falls below a certain number of entries it’s discussed as far as viability goes,” says Bill Freimuth, VP of awards at the Recording Academy. “When there’s 25 or 20 entries, you have a one in four or one in five chance of getting a nomination, and we just don’t feel that’s appropriate for such an prestigious award, especially when you compare it to other categories that get 300 or 400 entries.”

Freimuth is right. It’s demoralizing to see nominations by default due to a lack of entries, as has been the case in the past with categories like tejano for the Grammy Awards and the best rock solo vocal album for the Latin Grammys.

Having said that, I would have preferred to see the committee study the category for one more year, giving it the opportunity to mobilize forces and increase the number of entries, which it has done in other cases. Instead, the final decision went before the Grammy board of trustees in May and they, too, agreed to fold urban back into the same category as rock and alternative.

“This is a sore point for me,” National Records president Tomás Cookman says. “There seems to still be a learning curve for them in regards to our space.”

Cookman, who contacted the academy to protest the decision, also questioned the makeup of the committees.

“I feel they should mix up who they have in those meetings,” he says, “and if a big decision was going to be made on a genre, then the least they can do is to have the key players of that genre present.”

However, Cookman’s voice has been one of the few raised to protest the decision publicly. It’s a replay of several months ago, when the lack of Latin performers at the Grammy Awards show was met with almost deafening silence.

According to Freimuth, categories have been reinstated when a genre has regained traction and the number of entries has increased. That means if artists, managers, executives and other interested parties in Latin urban, Latin rock and Latin alternative want their own separate categories, they need to rally and speak up.

Bebe’s Back
The Spanish Singer Returns With Her First Album Since 2004’s ‘Pafuera Telarañas’

Spanish singer Bebe returns June 30 with her second album, “Y” (EMI), ending a five-year silence that at times looked like a premature retirement.

“I’m bursting to get back,” she says. “I feel really fresh and content after taking a long time out, alone, away, thinking things out.”

Bebe sounds raring to go—but is she? The singer still seems somewhat wary of success after riding a wave of popularity generated by “Malo,” the anti-domestic violence first single from her 2004 debut album, “Pafuera Telarañas.” The song became a popular anthem when the Spanish government introduced unprecedented legislation aimed at curbing domestic violence.

“Pafuera Telarañas” sold more than 500,000 physical copies in Spain and went gold in Italy, Argentina and Colombia. In the United States, the album won her a Latin Grammy Award in 2005 for best new artist and has sold 92,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Does “Y” have a single as powerful as “Malo”? “Absolutely not at all,” Bebe says. “That wasn’t my idea in the slightest.”

She explains that her temporary retirement, which she announced in 2006, was an attempt to escape all the attention.

“I was traveling in my truck for a year, all around, living, far away, under the pine trees, alone, calm,” Bebe recalls. “I spent 40 days outside Spain so as not to find those looks of rebuke. I needed to be where absolutely nobody knew who I was.”

“Y” has a staggered release. The album is coming out June 30 in Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia and Chile; July 14 in the United States; and from July to late August in much of Europe.

Bebe will promote the album in the United States and Latin America in July, including a July 11 performance at the Latin Alternative Music Conference in New York. She is also planning showcases in Los Angeles, Mexico City and Buenos Aires.

Bebe will start a theater tour in Spain in September and a U.S./Latin American tour in early 2010, EM Latin product manager Juan Bauluz says.

“But it will be very selective,” he adds. “No way does she want to repeat the intensive, two-year non-stop gigging after ‘Pafuera’ was released.”

Bauluz says the marketing of “Y” will be in tune with Bebe’s music and personality and include in-store appearances at FNAC locations in Madrid and Barcelona with fan Q&A sessions.

“There will also be selected TV programs, where she will play live in front of studio audiences, and radio interviews,” he says. “This will happen both in Spain and abroad.”

Bebe’s last stateside gigs were in small bars in 2007. “It’s taken me five years to get these lyrics and this music together,” she says. “It’ll be good this time.”

—Howell Llewellyn

TAÑON GOES DIY
Olga Tañón is the latest Latin artist to launch her own label. The Puerto Rican singer, who was most recently signed to Universal Music Latino, has launched Mio Latin Music and has released two digital singles. The first single, which Tañón wrote herself, is titled “Amor Entre Tres.” It is the theme of the Venezuelan soap opera “La Vida Entera,” and she has recorded it in both salsa and ballad versions. The second single, “Pasión Morena,” co-written with José Luis Morín, will be the theme of a TV drama series that will air on Telemundo in Mexico.

—Leila Cobo

EX-RBD MEMBER SIGNS WITH UNIVERSAL
Former RBD member Dulce Maria has signed a solo recording deal with Universal Music Latin Entertainment. Her first album is slated for release in 2010. Dulce Maria, who signed her new deal June 16, most recently recorded a duet version of “Beautiful” with Akon, which was included on the Mexican edition of Akon’s album “Freedom.” Aside from singing and dancing with RBD, Dulce Maria has also written songs for the group.

—LC

‘LATIN ALTERNATIVE’ COMES TO RADIO
“The Latin Alternative,” an hourlong weekly radio show devoted to highlighting such acts as Manu Chao, Café Tacvba and Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, will debut July 4 on public radio station WEXT (97.7 FM) Albany, N.Y. Hosted by former National Records VP Josh Norek and journal- ist/author Ernesto Lecchner, the program will include rock, electronic and hip-hop acts on the Latin alternative scene and spotlight artists from abroad as well as U.S.-based Latin acts.

The show can be heard at 8 p.m. EST on terrestrial radio and live online at exit977.org. The “Latin Alternative” is also available for syndication. Interested parties can contact Norek at josh@nnmediaigroup.com.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda
GLOBAL
BY GAVIN J. BLAIR

NO. 1 RECORD
Japan Now The World's Top Physical Music Market By Value

TOKYO—Japan is the world’s second-largest economy, the second-largest movie market and the second-largest recorded-music market. But now it has finally hit No. 1 as the world’s most valuable physical music market, according to the IFPI.

More units are still sold in the United States. But in 2008, the trade value of Japan’s physical sales was $3.2 billion, versus a U.S. figure of $3.1 billion, despite the fact that Japan also has one of the most developed digital markets in the world, worth $821 million in 2008.

While the value of the U.S. physical music market has more than halved since 2005, when it was worth $6.4 billion, Japan’s has dropped only 12.7%, from $3.5 billion, based on the 2005 exchange rate.

Japan’s ascent to the top spot is “more reflective of how the market is declining in America,” says Max Hole, London-based executive VP of Universal Music Group International and president of Universal Music Asia Pacific. "In terms of Japan holding up, it’s a combination of price, lists, marketing and a healthy mobile business.”

According to the Recording Industry Assn. of Japan, 90% of digital sales last year were on mobile formats, mainly ringtones and full-track downloads.

"Most downloads to phones are single tracks, and then people who like them go on to buy the single or album on CD," RIAJ spokesman Masaki Suegama says. "So record company marketing is targeted at promoting that route."

While singles are usually released in mobile formats before the physical single, CD albums often hit stores long before the album is available for mobile download.

“When you have a monster hit single in Japan, you’re taking 6 million-8 million products being sold at a decent price,” Hole says, citing hit Universal acts like vocal group GReeeeN and J-pop star Thelma Aoyama. “But fans still want to buy the physical package because it’s very attractive.”

Yoshikazu Takahashi, senior VP at Sony Music Entertainment Japan, agrees, noting that mobile downloads “play an essential role in generating hit singles and setting up subsequent albums.”

“Physical and digital do not compete,” he adds. “They complement each other in the form of promotion.”

Executives also note that while mobile music hits are driven by teenage consumers and J-pop acts, CD sales are driven by Japan’s burgeoning older population. On the RIAJ’s list of 2008 top sellers, only GReeeeN and veteran rock act Mr. Children appear on both the top 10 singles and albums lists.

“Japan is very good at targeting the older demographic that still wants to buy a physical package,” Hole says. He says that Universal singer/songwriter Hideaki Tokunaga, who “doesn’t sell at all digitally,” can sell a million albums at a time of his “Vocalist” series.

Physical sales values are also protected by the Sailian Resale Price Maintenance system that sets prices for copyrighted material for up to two years. Seiun Michiko, a publicist in HMV Japan’s sales promotion division, says that while the rules aren’t strictly enforced, the result is still an agreement “between record companies and retailers not to discount prices for six months to a year.”

This lets labels maintain value when an album is most in demand. It has also helped ensure that retailers specializing in recorded music and other entertainment media continue to flourish, while their leading counterparts in the United States have all but vanished.

That in turn has buoyed demand for deluxe editions, as stores entice buyers with DVS and limited-edition artwork and booklets.

“When you’ve got the fan interested, there’s a good marketing strategy offering them deluxe physical products that they still want to buy,” Hole says, while Takahashi cites Sony’s recent success with the deluxe edition of “Ren’s Bar II” by veteran R&B artist Ken Hirai.

When labels release deluxe editions in Western markets, Hole says it’s “much more difficult” to sell such products without a specialist retail sector “interested in taking deluxe goods that aren’t all the same shape and size.”

Although a vibrant domestic music scene helped Japan’s total recorded-music sales grow by 0.9% in value during 2008, according to the IFPI, Hole warns there are “storm clouds on the horizon” in the form of increased mobile piracy and a drop in CD sales during the first half of 2009.

“Culturally, Japan is a lot more conservative, so change happens slower,” Hole says. “Inevitably the future of the business will be digital, but the physical retail sector will carry on for some time. But in the U.S., it has moved on already.”

Additional reporting by Mark Sutherland in London.

GLOBAL NEWSLINE

>>> NO POP KOMM IN 2009
The annual German music trade fair/conference Popkomm has called off its 2009 event. The event, which launched in 1989, was to take place Sept. 16-18 in Berlin. Organizer Popkomm GmbH said in a statement that it decided to cancel this year’s conference due to “continuing difficulties within the industry and in agreement with [trade organizations] the Assn. of Independent Sound Media Cos. and the Assn. of the German Music Industry.” However, it emphasized that Popkomm will return in 2010. Last year the event attracted more than 14,000 trade visitors and 843 exhibitors from 52 countries. Popkomm GmbH says it hopes to receive federal government aid to stage the 2010 event. —Wolfgang Spahr

>>> SUNDAE MUSIC JAPAN NAMES MORITA CHAIRMAN
Masao Morita, the son of the late Sony co-founder Akio Morita, has been named chairman of Sony Music Entertainment Japan and representative director of Sony Pictures Entertainment Japan. Morita has been charged with helping SMEJ return to its longstanding position as Japan’s market-leading record company. According to SoundScan Japan, Sony lost its top market position in 2007. It had held the top spot since 1998, the year SoundScan Japan started releasing such market data. Morita, who is on the SMEJ board of directors, was previously CEO of SMEJ in 2003-04. Rob Schwartz

>>> NOKIA GOES WITH GEMA
The mobile handset manufacturer Nokia has signed a Pan-European licensing agreement with the German authors group GEMA in Munich for its Comes With Music service. The agreement grants Comes With Music the right to use the entire GEMA repertoire. “The agreement shows that GEMA can offer licensing partners good solutions for innovative new business models from which both sides can profit,” GEMA CEO Dr. Harald Heker said in a statement. Since launching Comes With Music in October in the United Kingdom, Nokia has begun offering the service in Australia, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, Italy, Singapore, Switzerland and Sweden. —WS

>>> MORE BITS FROM SPOTIFY
The international music streaming service Spotify has begun converting its catalog from a bit rate of 160 kilobits per second to 320 kbps, which it claims is “equivalent to CD quality and the highest streaming rate for any digital music service.” The new bit rate only applies to Spotify’s subscription service, which is available in such European countries as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Finland, France and Spain. Prices vary, but U.K. users pay £9.99 ($16.40) per month for the subscription service. Spotify’s most popular tracks are the first to be made available at the higher bit rate, with the remainder of its catalog following in the next few weeks. —André Painé

>>> NICKELBACK TAKES THREE MUCH MUSIC AWARDS
The Canadian rock band Nickelback took home three awards at the MuchMusic Video Awards, held June 21 in Toronto. The Canadian music channel’s 15-category ceremony was hosted by the Jonas Brothers, who won the international video of the year award for “Burnin’ Up” (Hollywood). Nickelback earned honors for best video, best rock video and best postproduction, all for “Gotta Be Somebody” (EMI Canada). The show included a performance by Lady GaGa, who won the best international video award, while Canadian alt-rock band the Midway State took home two trophies. —Robert Thompson
Immaculate Conception

Virgin Media To Launch New Music Service With Anti-P2P Measures

LONDON—The British recording industry is hailing Virgin Media's plans to embrace anti-piracy measures in conjunction with its launch of an unlimited music download subscription service.

Universal Music Group, home to U.K. hitmakers like Duffy and James Morrison, is the first major label to sign up for the service, which would provide users with MP3 downloads free of digital rights management (DRM) restrictions, as well as streaming music.

As part of its fourth-quarter launch of the music service, Virgin Media has agreed to track down on illegal peer-to-peer file sharing across its entire network. Steps would include the temporary suspension of Internet access if a customer fails to heed warning letters.

Virgin Media, which also provides telephone and cable TV services, has 4 million broadband subscribers in the United Kingdom and says its fiber optic service is accessible to 51% of U.K. households.

The recording industry is embracing the company's planned music subscription service with more enthusiasm than the U.K. government's recent "Digital Britain" report, which put the onus on educational warning letters and new services to deter piracy rather than on graduated response programs (billboard.biz, June 16).

Geoff Taylor, chief executive of trade organization the BPI, dismissed the government's proposals as "digital deterrence" but applauds the Virgin deal as proof "that graduated response is a workable way forward.''

Universal Music Group International senior VP of digital Rob Wells describes the deal as a strategic move with the only Internet service provider (ISP) that offers 50 MB-per-second download speeds.

"Virgin has the only fiber optic cable network in the U.K.," Wells says. "They are a haven for some large abusers of intellectual property."

Virgin Media broadband subscriber numbers, has agreed to offer unlimited music streams.

Rob Wells, president of recorded music for Universal, says the company is willing to sell music to single digital consumers.

"This is the first company that I've seen that is stating that they want to embrace online music," says Madeleine Milne, executive director of the Recording Industry Innovation Group. "I hope it's just the beginning."

Anecdotal evidence suggests poor U.K. sales for Nokia's Comes With Music service has raised questions about the viability of online music services.

"The only one that's been successful," she says. "It's been incredibly successful."

Nevertheless, the Internet Service Providers' Association says it hopes the Virgin deal "will encourage other similar agreements."

Virgin's TV/ISP rival Sky confirms it is still debating with labels on its own music service, which it first announced in July 2008 but has yet to launch.

Universal's Wells says he believes Virgin's anti-piracy measures will help its music service expand the overall legal music market.

"If it's truly unlimited," he says, "it's a good deal."

Virgin and Universal decline to discuss the revenue model in detail.

PRS for Music CEO Steve Porter says the collecting society is in talks with Virgin Media.

"We have been talking about the service for some time," he says. "It's an exciting development for the music industry."

"Otherwise," he adds, "the value of the music gets lost in the overall structure."

Virgin Media and Universal agree to launch the new service in 2009.
Phish's decision to go indie is another example of a veteran band taking charge of the business side of its music. But for Phish, the decision is particularly apropos: Today's online marketing opportunities are perfectly attuned to the band's long-held hear-and-share ethos. At a time when CD sales make up a smaller portion of a group's revenue, Phish still has a reputation as a top live act. And since its approach has always been off the beaten path, its choice to forge ahead on its own label seems to represent little risk—for the potential of a big reward.

"We're very, very excited to put this out on our own label," Anastasio says. "We're putting this album out with the same spirit that we did our big festivals and stuff. It's very home-grown, and that feels great for us."

The four members of Phish—Anastasio, keyboardist Page McConnell, drummer Jon Fishman and bassist Mike Gordon—began playing together in the early '80s in the musical hotbed of Burlington, Vt. They went on to leave an indelible mark on the musical landscape as one of the most successful touring bands ever, although their album sales grosses never reached the heights of their concert grosses.

Between 1989 and the group's 2004 breakup, Phish racked up $175,541,923 in concert grosses, with 5,842,798 tickets sold to 475 shows reported to Billboard Boxscore. Phish also sold 7 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, 2.2 million of them live sets. Its biggest seller is 1994's "Hoist," at 663,000 copies (see chart, page 18). Its last studio album, 2004's "Undermind," sold 139,000.

In 2004, the band finished its contract on Elektra with "Undermind," then broke up in August of that year. The move dismayed fans, who had come to feel part of a Phish family. That devotion was manifested in a remarkable touring fan base known as "Phishheads."

By the time Phish charged into a loose, swinging cover of AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" some two hours into its Friday night set in front of a rapturous crowd of 70,000 at Bonnaroo in Manchester, Tenn., it was clear that the band had its groove back. Phish's Bonnaroo-closing set two nights later on June 14 may have attracted more national attention, given that Bruce Springsteen sat in. But for Phish and its loyal fans, that opening show was a celebration and coronation all in one, in a setting the group had inspired with its own mega concert events, like Clifford Ball and the Great Went. Grinning widely, Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio seemed thrilled to be onstage, a sentiment he confirms a couple of days later. "We feel like we've been blessed with a very rare opportunity, if you look at music history," he says. "We've still got all four original members of this band playing together, and it's been 26, 27 years. It shows up in the recording, in the playing. There's a lot of acknowledgement of how lucky we are to still have the opportunity to play music for people." Perhaps the vibe is better described as "joy," which is also the title of the band's new album that will come out in late August or early September on its own label, JEMP Records, which the Phish camp created in 2005 to specialize in archival recordings of the band's concerts. It's Phish's first indie studio release. Some of its early recordings were rereleased on Elektra and some archival concerts were released on JEMP or directly by the band, often as downloads.
many of whom followed the band on tour, documented set lists and traded concert recordings with each other, interacting within a passionate community rivaled only by the Grateful Dead and Dave Matthews Band.

The split also rocked the band members. “We basically spent every breathing moment together for about 20 years,” McConnell says. “We really just needed to grow up a little bit and spend a little time and get to know ourselves as adults, which is something you really can’t do when you’re in a rock band for 20 years straight. I think we all really benefited from it.”

Though talk of reuniting began well more than a year ago, and rampant rumors frequently flowed through the Phish community, the band officially reunited at a three-night sold-out stand in March at one of its favorite haunts, the Hampton Coliseum. After the band’s summer tour rolled out and sold out, it began solidifying plans to record a new album. It decided to do so on JEMP Records, and with producer Steve Lillywhite.

Going with an indie label now—even if it’s their own—makes perfect sense for band members, who have an established track record. “Are there major labels anymore?” Gordon asks. “There are a few ways of looking at it. Now we’re with Conan Capshaw and working with Red Light Management [which also operates ATO Records]. We have a good team, not that we didn’t before. But they’re connected enough that we can have the distribution we want and the connections we want to get the album out there.”

Capshaw describes the “evolving” launch of the album—and its marketing—as “a hybrid strategy, a self-release with the services of an independent label [ATO]” (see story, page 19). Asked if it would even take songs to radio, he says, “In a way. ‘Here it is, if you’re into it’ fashion. ‘We’re not trying to force anything here.’” Capshaw says, “We just want to turn people on to what Phish is doing. They made a great record, we’re lucky to hear people talk about it, they’d love to share it with people.”

Gordon says he’s not even sure what a major label has to offer a veteran band like Phish at this point in terms of artist development, funding, finding a producer or breaking a hit. “For one thing, our fans are probably going to buy it anyway, so to try to use the arms of the industry to reach far away from our normal fan base . . .” he trails off.

“Elektra was a great label because they always let us do what we wanted creatively; they were great to work with. But there was always someone there who would say, ‘I’m going to be the one to break Phish and sell as many albums as they can sell concert tickets.’ Over time the catalog did well, but it never happened the way they imagined it could be, where they created this blockbuster hit. Not that we would have minded it, but that was not even our concern or direction.”

**ODE TO ‘JOY’**

So why pander to fickle consumer tastes in 2009 by releasing another album? Phish’s direction, then and now, is unique.

“The fact that the first thing we released was 13-and-a-half minutes long and has a thousand chords to it or something, and is also a very melodic at the same time, kind of represents that attitude we were trying to have,” Gordon says.

He’s talking about “Time Turns Elastic,” written by Anastasio as an orchestral arrangement and recorded by Phish for “Joy.” “That song was learned as they played it, and it took four days and I think 270-280 takes,” Lillywhite says. “It was recorded in separate pieces, chronologically. I think there are 15 different sections. They would learn one section, and I would get them to play it again and again and again until everyone in the band was really confident of what they were playing. We plodded our way through it for four days, and then we went back and redid some of it again.”

Despite that methodology, the song flows seamlessly as it meanders through various breaks in mood, tempo and melody. Put simply, it sounds like Phish at its most ambitious. But “Elastic” is just “one little side” of the album, Lillywhite says. “What I wanted to do on this album was at least have a song that was indicative of their progressive tunes, and they hadn’t written one, really, since the early ‘90s that was so complicated. The rest of the album has some jazz stuff, an almost reggae tune Mike sings, and Page does a sort of lounge song. It’s completely across the board.”

Like Phish itself, the album is hard to define. “What’s indicative of a Phish song?” Lillywhite asks. “They can play so many different things that I really felt we had the chance with this to make the best record they’ve ever made. Not many bands their age can say they’ve got a chance at making their best-ever album.”

It’s that shot at greatness that attracted Lillywhite, who produced the band’s 1996 album, “Billy Breathes.” “I would love records to sell, and they don’t, but all I can do in my career is to go through and try to do the best I can do,” he says. “I felt there was an opportunity here, and Trey agreed with me, that we could make their best-ever record. I wanted to be in the history books as having produced the two best Phish albums.”

Of Lillywhite, Anastasio says, “The one thing he did was he made us play; we always played together, all four of us. There’s not one single overdubbed guitar solo on this record. They’re all the original interplay between the band. I thought that was such a great production decision on his part.”

As far as the final result, “I’m not ever going to judge it as good or bad because that’s not up to me,” Anastasio says. “I suppose to make the music and that’s for other people to judge. But I can say what I hear sounds like Phish to me, a lot more than previous records. Just based on the fact that the drums and the piano are clearly interacting, for real.”

When it comes to bringing the new songs to the masses, today’s music landscape, with its lack of barriers between fans and artists, may be even better suited for Phish than the ‘90s ever were. “While we were making the album for two months, there were some very interesting conversations about the music business and how it’s changing and what we want to do with this album,” Gordon says. “There’s a lot of talk about wanting to make an album for our fans, not make an album that will somehow be acceptable for the masses and the people who never really cared about Phish in the first place. It’s almost an indie kind of vibe in terms of intention with the album.”

Although Phish hardly fits the indie-rock profile, McConnell points out that the group “did things our own way and wrote our own ticket.” The business model we set up 25 years ago seems to be just about the only business model that works these days to make some money. We may not fall into the category of what’s typically considered indie, but I challenge you to find another band that has done things their own way with as much success as we have.

That philosophy hasn’t changed, McConnell says. “We’re still outside the mainstream of the business and happy to be existing there,” he says. “And I hope we stay there. I don’t see any reason why we should do anything differently.”

**A PHISH CALLED WANDER**

Phish was always a dominant player in the live music scene. So when the band reunited after its August 2004 breakup, hitting the road was the obvious way to get back on the public radar. The response at Bonnaroo was ecstatic—the best Phish shows. Gordon says, are about flow and adventure, and the band fed off the crowd’s energy at its June 12 show. “That’s the set I really liked, though. I loved them both,” Gordon says. “Friday for me was really . . . ‘dialled in’ is probably a good description. I liked it because it was later and I had some alpha waves going, being closer to my sleep state, but a very high energy at the same time.”

It’s a marked contrast to the rush of emotions after Phish broke up in 2004. But without the split, Gordon says, the band may not have been reinvigorated. The breakup “was difficult for me at first, not only because Phish was so successful, but because my identity since the age of 18 had been wrapped up in being part of this thing, making decisions as a team for 21 years,” Gordon says. “As soon as a couple of months went by, I was really into the breakup. I thought it was a great thing, because it allowed me to think about some new musical directions I might not have otherwise.”

Gordon says a “combination of things” led to the breakup. “I think we just need to shake things up, people’s personal

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**SELLING SWIMMINGLY**

There’s a perception of Phish that’s taken as gospel: It sells more concert tickets than it does albums. In fact, Phish heads are perfectly willing to pony up for recordings. Of the band’s five best-selling titles, except for its trek in support of “Billy Breathes” in 1996, Phish’s album sales are higher than its concert ticket sales.

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**PAGE McCONNELL**
were some conversations would get back together. Anastasio now sees the break as "necessary" in retrospect. "We were kind of just rolling and rolling, and I think people needed to stop and re-establish healthy lives as individuals and then regroup," he says. "It feels fantastic right now. We're just having such a good time on this tour. I missed these guys."

After the split, the band's members remained prolific with solo projects, collaborations and live performances, but in retrospect a reunion seemed inevitable. "I guess I always hoped we would get back together. I never thought it was a permanent thing," McConnell says. "There were some conversations that just had to happen between us. to just say, 'Hey, you know, when this was going on that was kind of a problem for me and if we got back together, I wouldn't want it to be like that again.' The communication between the four of us is just so much better now than it ever was."

Given its longstanding live prowess, Phish surely could have reunited to tour without new material. But "it's always been important for us to work on new stuff and evolve and go in new directions," Gordon says. "If we got back together and just were rehashing what we had done before, then no one in the band would be happy." When recording began, the legendary Phish alchemy was still very much in place. "As soon as we picked up our instruments, we were kind of back where we started," McConnell says. "The chemistry really never went away."

The hiatus "gave us a lot of perspective, and we came back really appreciating a lot of the older material," Anastasio says. "A lot of the songs feel weightier to me. A lot happened during that time off, a lot of living, and I can hear it in the way people are playing."

For Capshaw, it was about reconnecting with a music community that seemed ready and waiting. First and foremost, it's with the music and with them delivering, which they're doing, are focused on and will continue to do: rehearsing, practicing, experimenting, trying different things but also digging deep in their repertoire, breaking out new songs, classic songs," says Capshaw, who managed Anastasio before Phish reunited. Chip Hooper, head of music at the Paradigm Agency and a key player in Phish's meteoric rise to the top of the touring world in the '90s, is clearly stoked to be back in the Phish business. "Obviously, when I got the word that the band was getting back together again I was thrilled," Hooper says. "And I'm not surprised by the response from their fans." They've got the most devoted fan base I've ever seen."

Phish spent 36 days practicing before the Hampton shows where the band re-emerged, and that gave the group time to perfect its sound. "Half of those were to work on older stuff that we would be playing, and the other half were to work on some potential songs for the new album," Gordon says. "So much time had gone by, and Trey is always prolific, but Page and I ended up doing some more writing than usual in that time period, so there were probably 30 songs that had been brought to the table for the album before we ended up weeding it down to 10."

The three Hampton shows helped Phish "get our feet back on the ground, and most importantly, reconnect with all of our friends," Anastasio says. "Phish has always been a community of people. There's us, and then there's a lot of people who have been interconnected with the band, our friends, our families. We wanted to just get together and play for a few days, which we did at Hampton, and that was fantastic, so great." Hooper also believes that performing has reinvigorated the band. "One of the most exciting things about them coming back together again is, in my almost 20 years of representing them, I've never seen them more inspired and more excited to make music," he says. "This is clearly the start of a whole new chapter of their career."

FALLING INTO PLACE

ATO Records' Upcoming Releases

According to Our (ATO) Records was founded in 1999 by Dave Matthews and Dave Matthews Band manager Coran Capshaw of Red Light Management. ATO's current GM is John Biondolillo. The label expanded into ATO Records Group in 2007, bringing TBD Records into the fold with its acts Radiohead, White Rabbit, Other Lives and Hatcham Social. (TBD was initially known as Side One Recordings, which released Radiohead's "In Rainbows." Among ATO's biggest releases are David Gray's "White Ladder," which sold 2.4 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan; Rodrigo y Gabriela's self-titled debut, with 300,000; Jim James' "Finally Won," with 332,000; and My Morning Jacket's "Z," with 243,000.

YIM YAMES, "TRIBUTE TO" (Aug. 4): My Morning Jacket's Jim James fetes George Harrison on a six-song EP.

BRENDAN BENSON, "MY OLD, FAMILIAR FRIEND" (Aug. 18): The singer/songwriter and member of the Reconteurs delivers a much-anticipated solo set, backed at times by the Features.

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA, "13/11" (Sept. 8): The third studio album from the Mexican guitar duo will be released by ATO/Rubyworks.

DAVES, "NORTH HILLS" (Sept. 8): The debut album by the young Southern California band, currently on the road with Deer Tick.

ALBERTA CROSS, "BROKEN SIDE OF TIME" (Sept. 22): The English/Swedish act by way of New York rock will release its debut album on ATO.

MIKE Doughty, "HAPPY MAN, SAD MAN" (Sept. 22): The former Soul Coughing frontman records his third solo album for ATO.

THE WHIGS, TBA (Oct. 13): This Athens, Ga., trio follows up its acclaimed debut; will support Kings of Leon in August.

THE MOTHER HIPS, TBA (Oct. 27): Longtime Bay Area cult favorites the Mother Hips return with the follow-up to 2007's critically acclaimed "Kiss the Crystal Flake." The band also has a production/distribution arrangement with ATO. —RV/
Tech N9ne started his rap career with a simple dream: to bring his music to the world without compromising his style or integrity. After 16 years—nearly half of it embroiled in false starts, unfulfilled promises and contractual entanglements—he's closing in on his goal. ¶ The fiery rapper and his business partner, Travis O'Guin—a self-made millionaire at 22—have built a budding music empire in an unlikely location: Kansas City, Mo. Naysayers may have dismissed the odd pair at first, but they don't now. Earning slightly more than $11 million in 2008 from CD and digital sales, touring and merchandise, according to O'Guin, the pair's Strange Music is being hailed by several in the music industry as the new independent business model. ¶ Strange Music is housed in an 18,000-square-foot facility whose front double doors grandly display the company's logo: a snake for the S and bat wings for the M. The company includes a label, as well as publishing, merchandising, booking and touring. In fact, Strange Music handles everything on its own except distribution.

"I've watched them build a true movement that's so lacking in our business," says Ron Spaulding, executive VP/GM of Strange Music's distributor, Universal Music Group Distribution's Fontana. "It's easy to want things very fast in this business. But real movements are built over time. And they've never wavered.

Chang Weisberg, owner/CEO of Guerrilla Union and producer of the annual hip-hop concert festivals Paid Dues and Rock the Bells, agrees. "They don't follow the normal music industry model," he says. "They don't need radio, video or a lot of middlemen. They approach their business as a true business. Every dollar invested needs to make two dollars."

Tech N9ne and O'Guin work with an 18-member full-time staff (including a booking agent) between their headquarters and a Los Angeles satellite office, which includes VP Dave Weiner, that doesn't include the company's touring staff.

"We're Wal-Mart," Tech N9ne says with a laugh during a layover in Boise, Idaho, one of the stops on his recently wrapped Sicولة 101 tour. "There's no Warner Bros, Def Jam or Sony in the Midwest, so we had to build our own."

EBONY AND IVORY
Tech N9ne's music and extensive touring (see story, page 21), paired with O'Guin's business acumen, laid the foundation for Strange Music. Both 37 years old, the two first met in late 1998. At that time, Tech N9ne (born Aaron Donchez Yates) was signed to Quincy Jones' Qwest label. But his situation there mirrored his stint five years earlier with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis' Perspective Records.

'[Both label] saw talent in one,' says Tech. N9ne, a self-described Doors fan. "But they didn't know what to do with me. Here's Perspective with contemporary gospel act Sounds of Blackness and RB group Mint Condition. Here I am, a weird rock alternative warlock with crazy hair, a painted face and rapping backwards. Where do you put that?"

Enter O'Guin. Also from Kansas City, he was a young entrepreneur who established his own furniture services company—overseeing crafters who repair scratched or damaged goods—to service such retailers as Sears, Macy's and Dillard's. By the time O'Guin was 22 he was operating out of 10 states, eventually expanding to 32 locations in 18 states.

Learning business skills at an early age from his dad, who operated a soda company, O'Guin began investing in other businesses including a real estate company, Gold Cup Properties, and a fashion line, Paradise Originals. Players from local sports teams the Royals and Chiefs were wearing the clothes. To help promote the line's urban apparel, hip-hop fan O'Guin approached Tech N9ne.

"He was the only one here with that kind of buzz," O'Guin says. "I'd always liked his message. He was crossing all different genres and making music for everyone—for the cats in the hood to the vatos to suburban rich kids."

Told by a mutual acquaintance that Tech N9ne was in a bad business predicament and could use some friendly advice, O'Guin planned to offer just that. "I had an ulterior motive. The bigger he got, he would help my clothes," he says.

But after digging deeper, he soon found the rapper was knee-deep in various label, management and publishing entanglements stretching back eight years. There was the deal with Qwest, a local label deal, one with publisher Windspeed and a management deal with Sway (Tech N9ne was featured on the 1999 track "The Anthem" with radio personalities Sway and King Tech). It was the biggest mess I've ever seen," he says. "It walked away and said, 'Good luck.'"

As he listened to his music, O'Guin says, something kept telling him to come back. "He was good but had sold only 16,185 records in the eight years of being entangled in those different deals—and this was when the music business was really strong," he says.

After sitting down together to determine what Tech N9ne truly wanted to accomplish, O'Guin agreed to partner with him, and he launched Strange in his 1,400-square-foot basement. "We've always called it a 50-50 deal," O'Guin says.

LEARNING CURVE
O'Guin estimates he spent slightly more than $800,000 on attorney fees extracting Tech N9ne from his earlier deals, the rapper's living expenses and a budget for recording a new album.

And the partnership soon found itself reading more murky waters. A 50-50 joint venture with Jcor Entertainment (through Interscope) led to the release of "Anhelic," which did well in Kansas City but nowhere else. The deal ended after Jcor's fallout with Interscope—with the former owing Strange $400,000, according to O'Guin. (Attempts to reach [for founder Jay Faires for comment went unanswered by press time.)

The situation led Tech N9ne and O'Guin to enter another joint venture with M.S.C. Entertainment. Headed by Mark Gerani, co-founder of the iconic hip-hop label Priority Records, the label released Tech N9ne's second Strange album, 2002's "Absolute Power," and reunited "Anhelic." Other projects, including the DVD title "TX: The Tech N9ne Experience," were also released between 2002 and 2004.

O'Guin remembers "chasing radio" like everyone else. But after nearly $1.6 million was spent on radio promotion, he decided enough was enough. "Half of every dollar being spent was mine and we still had to recoup," he says. "It wasn't making good business sense."

Taking it "back into our hands doing stuff I believed in"—viral marketing, street teams, posters and touring—O'Guin negotiated Strange out of its deal with M.S.C. Strange filed a lawsuit in 2008 against M.S.C. over accounting discrepancies. The parties are close to reaching an out-of-court settlement, according to O'Guin.

During the course of the failed joint ventures, however, O'Guin and Tech N9ne found they'd sold half a million records. Rather than an ending, it was a new beginning. Determined not to repeat history, the pair signed with Fontana and RBC (Robert Bram Consulting), which acts as a management and sales liaison between Fontana and Strange. Since then, Tech N9ne has released four more albums, including 2006's "Everready." For O'Guin, that album was the turning point for Strange.

"We had to prove to ourselves we could sink or swim," he says, "and that release told me we could do it. That's when we turned a profit—which would have happened sooner without those certain unpaid bills. But this company is now profitable across the board.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Dynamic duo: Rapper TECH N9NE (left) and business partner TRAVIS O'GUIN aim to build Strange Music into a multimillion-dollar entity. Below: One of the buses in the label's fleet.

Everything, the building and everything in it, is 100% paid for.

Tech N9ne’s relentless touring also plays a major role in the company’s profitability. Averaging more than 200 dates last year at an average ticket price of around $28.50, the rapper has built a rabid fan base that stays in touch with him through his MySpace site, which lists 14 million page views. While he plays shows to only seven people in the beginning, the rapper now sells out shows from Los Angeles to New York and points in between like Denver and Seattle.

“Using more of a rock model than a hip-hop model, Tech and Travis have built Strange one fan at a time,” Weisberg says. “Tech started with small audiences and through word-of-mouth; he’s created a loyal army of fans. Anytime you can do that on the road, it can translate into record sales.”

Indeed, Tech N9ne hit the 1 million sales milestone for his collective catalog with his eighth release, 2008’s “Killer,” according to Nielsen SoundScan. The rapper offers 599 VIP packages to his faithful concertgoers in each market. The package perks include CDs, T-shirts, a DVD and a satin pass that gives fans a chance to meet with him for an hour before the show.

The same fans also double as the rapper’s street teams in the markets he visits. There are 43 regional managers, each of whom oversees a team of five to eight people, O’Guin says. These teams blanket the markets with stamps, flyers and CD samples featuring one full song and two snippets. Last year, O’Guin says they handed out 350,000 samplers. In the international front, Ndgooves is handling distribution globally. O’Guin just signed with Steve Poppe/Poppe Management Corp., and the company will assist in finalizing negotiations for distribution in eight European territories, including the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Italy.

Merchandising is another revenue force for Strange Music. Among the 189 concert and high-end items for sale at the company’s online store are T-shirts, hats, necklace charms, bandanas, stickers, belts and lederhosen jackets. Prices range from $5 for clearance items to $100 for jerseys and $350 for leather jackets.

The store has even sold a couple of diamond-encrusted charms for $20,000 apiece. A new bobblehead line is planned as is the possible spring 2010 launch of additional high-end fashion lines targeting women and men. Among the possible partners discussed for the fashion venture: Affliction Clothing.

Calling O’Guin “a detail freak” and Tech N9ne “the 2 Pac of Kansas City,” Trans World director of urban music Violet Brown says the partnership works because they are all about their fans: “That’s the biggest asset for them and the key to their success. Everything is driven from the fans’ point of view.”

MOVING FORWARD

Tech N9ne’s last studio album was the two-disc “Killer” set. It will be followed in October by “K.O.D.” A contest will be staged later this year for fans to guess what the title means. In the meantime, fans are whetting their appetites with Tech N9ne’s second compilation album, “Sickology 101,” released April 28.

A “Presents” series introducing developing acts from the Strange roster launched in May (see story, right), featuring Kizz Kaliko, whose new solo album, “Genius,” arrives July 14. A second “Presents” introducing Big Scoob is due later this year. Other acts on the Strange roster include Kutt Calhoun, Propzoi and Grave Plot.

“Tech has a lot to say and we also want to test new talent,” O’Guin says. “But we don’t want to put out too many albums; oversaturation will benchmark your artists.”

With his music having been placed in such films as 2007’s “Alpha Dog,” the Fox TV show “Dark Angel” and the videogame “Madden NFL 2006,” Tech N9ne is preparing to embark on another mainstream breakthrough, leading out on the upcoming international Rock the Bells festival tour.

“We’ve been so focused on what we do that we weren’t looking around us,” O’Guin says. “We know what we do works pretty dang well but we’re starting to reach out more.

So where does Strange Music go from here? The company already has outgrown its space valued at $2 million since moving there in January. Currently under construction is a 12,000-square-foot addition that will include three large bays to hold the company’s fleet of 17 trucks and tour buses, one large rehearsal area and five isolation rooms featuring state-of-the-art recording equipment.

“I’ll never be satisfied,” O’Guin says, “and I don’t know if that’s a positive or negative thing. But my one goal is to create an indie music label that can generate in excess of $10 million a year. If we continue on the path we’re on, it can happen.”

Tech N9ne—whose moniker symbolizes him as “the complete technique of rhyme” (citing as examples a cat with nine lives or the nine-month cycle of pregnancy)—declares he’s not going to rest until he’s “tasted every piece of this globe. I cannot rest until the whole world knows my story.”

SALES 101

Strange Music co-principal Travis O’Guin has instituted a three-tiered Tech N9ne product line at the label: the Tech N9ne studio album; the Tech N9ne collaborations, pairing the rapper with various guests (the April 28 second release, “Sickology 101” features Chino XL, Crooked (and Krayzie Bone); and the “Presents” series in which Tech N9ne introduces developing artists on the Strange roster before they release their own albums.

O’Guin says his suggested list price on preorders of “Sickology 101” was $18.99; the Strange online store received 812 international orders and 3,000 preorders with $6 shipping and handling.

Traditional retail, as it turns out, is selling the set for between $9.99 and $12.99. “I have to price it high,” O’Guin says. “I don’t want retail coming back to me mad.” —QW

A ‘ROLLER COASTER RIDE’

He has recorded with 2Pac and Eminem, and his catalog has sold more than 1 million copies. Yet rapper Tech N9ne remains relatively invisible on the mainstream radar. That’s about to change.

For the first time, the Kansas City, Mo., native will play the main stage at this year’s Rock the Bells international music festival. Now in its sixth year, Rock the Bells kicks off June 27 in Chicago with such headliners as Nas, Damian Marley, Ice Cube, Big Boi and Busta Rhymes. The festival made its European debut last fall, playing such cities as Amsterdam, Prague, Stockholm, Helsinki, Paris and London.

The European visit arrived on the heels of Rock the Bells’ 10-date 2008 summer run of U.S. amphitheaters, featuring A Tribe Called Quest, Nas, Mos Def, De La Soul, Rakim, Pharcyde and Kid Sister, among others. Eight of the 10 shows grossed $4 million and drew more than 87,000 people, according to Billboard Boxscore.

“The challenge will be for Tech to step up to an audience who is less familiar with him against Busta and others on the lineup,” says Chang Weisberg, owner/CEO of Guerrilla Union, which organizes Rock the Bells and the annual independent hip-hop festival Paid Dues. “This year in March was also his first time at Paid Dues. There was a lot of hype around his set and he lived up to it, winning over a lot of new fans. His strength is his live performance.”

Tech N9ne, who just wrapped his own 52-date Sickology 101 tour, calls the Bells booking a “huge step. Paid Dues opened up other fans to my music, which is everything in one. It’s rock energy, gangster, sensitive, sad, happy. It’s a roller coaster ride about my life. I don’t care if people say ‘I’m weird as long as they say, ‘He can rap his butt off.’” —GM
LONDON—It turns out you can teach an old act new indie tricks—especially when it comes to attracting outside investment. ♦ Madness and the Prodigy, U.K. bands steeped in sales success, have been enjoying returns to chart heights in 2009 thanks to innovative deals that encompass financial planning that vastly differs from traditional major-label backing.

The chart fortunes of Madness, the fabled “Nutty Boys” who spent more time (268 weeks) on the U.K. singles charts than any other act in the ’80s, now have produced a deal with Power Amp Music, which invests in heritage acts. And electronic pioneer the Prodigy recently returned to the top of the Official Charts Co. (OCC) album listing with backing from indie mainstay Cooking Vinyl and a venture capitalist, Ingenious Media.

In both cases the investors helped raise the artists’ profile, as well as their bottom line. “Financially, Madness are in a stronger position too,” says band manager Garry Blackburn of Anglo Management. “They will make a profit on the album and retain the rights.”

Each band’s plan was carefully mapped. The Anglo Management team of Blackburn and Hugh Gaddson started managing Madness two years ago when Blackburn says they heard a “10-minute opus” that would form the framework of the album “The Liberty of Norton Folgate.”

Blackburn was realistic about the nostalgia that skewed the perception of the band in the media. “We knew that even if we were taking [80s hit like] ‘Baggy Trousers’ or ‘Embrassment’ into radio now, we’d be faced with breaking the Madness sound,” he says. “We needed to build support for the new album from the ground up, so the core idea was to treat the new album as if it were from a new band.”

The Prodigy’s “Investors Must Die” album, released in February on the band’s own TakeMeToHospital imprint, is 25% funded by Ingenious Media and 75% by Cooking Vinyl, according to the label’s managing director, Martin Goldschmidt.

“We worked through what they wanted and offered it to them,” he says. “They believed we could do the job and we believed in them. The main benefit was that if things had gone wrong, the last money out of the deal was theirs, so the company was never in danger of making a big loss. It’s like an insurance policy.”

Ingenious declined to comment on the Prodigio deal, but it has said that it gets profit-sharing on all label revenue connected with an album.

“Our contract with [the U.K. indie] XL Recordings came to an end, and XI is a great label,” Prodigy frontman Liam Howlett says. “We actually used some of the same people and set up our own label with Cooking Vinyl and a load of cash from [Ingenious].” He says the act never considered approaching a major label.

“One of the reasons we went with Cooking Vinyl,” Howlett adds, “was that they’re really ahead with new tech and the new ways that people get music.”

Cooking Vinyl “started working on the record a year before it was released,” Goldschmidt says, with massive attention to detail in 40 countries. There was a great digital plan, including worldwide priority with people like iTunes, Amazon, MySpace and unique digital promotions with partners like Xbox, Nokia, Tap Tap and so on.

Before Power Amp’s involvement, Madness had already formed its own Lucky 7 imprint, scoring top 40 U.K. singles with “Sorry” early in 2007 and “NWS” a year later.

“We liked doing it ourselves,” Blackburn says. “We had complete control, and we could work at our own pace to our own agenda. We took our time recording the album, because we needed all seven original members back in the loop. As the album approached completion, we started talking to record companies. We were in a strong position, because the band’s catalog rights came back to them in September 2008.”

None of those conversations bore fruit because, Blackburn says, potential partners were more excited about the Madness catalog and regarded the new album as mere “add-on.”

Enter Power Amp Music, which targets “established, heritage and superstar artists with quantifiable fan bases,” founder/CEO Tom Bywater says.

“Madness fitted our model perfectly,” Bywater says. “The band and their management team quickly understood [it] and found it compatible with their own aims.”

For his part, Blackburn says, “We particularly liked Bywater’s philosophy of convergence of interest between the parties. We quickly put together a deal that empowered us with the control we wanted and a healthy marketing budget.”

The management team set up a digital “Madspace” to build its online fan base and started to place the band in some unusual settings. Those ranged from the Glastonbury festival’s late-eight Lost Vagueness vaudeville/burlesque event in 2007 to the German snowboarding/music event Snowbombing and Spain’s Sonar dance festival in 2008. “The effect of Madness appearing in these circumstances was incredible,” Blackburn says. “The final element was that as a management company, we already had a label setup in place, with strong marketing and promotion experience.”

Critically hailed and bolstered by a typically amusing TV commercial devised by the band, “Folgate” was released May 18 in the United Kingdom and debuted on the OCC albums chart at No. 5, picking up a silver certification (80,000 copies shipped).

It was the sextet’s highest debut for a studio release since “Madness” in 1981.

The Prodigy album “Invaders Must Die” was an instant U.K. No. 1, selling 97,000 in its first week in late February, according to the OCC. The total bested the initial 79,000 copies sold for the act’s final XI release, the 2005 compilation “Their Law—The Singles 1990-2005.” The new set also opened at No. 1 in Switzerland, No. 3 in Germany, Holland and Ireland and No. 5 in Austria. Goldschmidt says U.K. sales are now 450,000, from a worldwide total of slightly less than 1 million.

Last December, Madness also landed itself a new catalog deal—again taking the indie route—with Union Square Music, distributed in the United Kingdom by Sony DADC. Blackburn says that label managing director Peter Stack “presented us with a real fan’s perspective, as well as commercial terms that the traditional options couldn’t imagine.”

Union Square’s initial marketing activity focuses on the 30th anniversary of Madness’ debut album, “One Step Beyond.” It also covers synch and sublicensing of the band’s repertoire, originally released on the indie label Stiff and Virgin/EMI.

“Madness are a national treasure,” Stack says. With a catalog that resonates strongly with a wide demographic, he says there are “great opportunities for synchronization in ads and films, and Madness have a packed itinerary of live dates. We’re thrilled to be representing the catalog.”

The deal went smoothly enough to be a case study, according to Bywater. “We believe the Madness deal proves that a well thought-out and executed third-party investment model can work extremely well in the contemporary industry.”

CAN YOU HEAR HER NOW?

INDIE ARTISTS ALIGN WITH BRANDS, MOBILE PROVIDERS IN BRAZIL

BY AYALA BEN-YEHUDA

Like many Brazilian 16-year-olds, Mallu Magalhães has made her mother cry. In the singer/songwriter's case, however, she moved her mom to tears as she serenaded her withJohnny Cash.

It's just one way that Magalhães, a social networking phenomenon in Brazil, does things differently. She recorded her self-titled folk-rock-jazz debut mostly in English and released it independently online and in 400,000 pre-loaded Motorola phones provided by the wireless carrier Vivo. The release was accompanied by a TV campaign that featured her music, and her manager Rafael Rossatto's company then sold 20,000 physical copies of the album.

Rossatto, who previously worked in advertising and artist management (and once had a well-known band of his own, Bide ou Balde), decided to combine his experiences in Agência de Música, which he founded in March 2007. "Sometimes when brands want to work with music, they think it's hard or expensive or impossible," Rossatto says. "People from the ad agencies see us as a music company, and music companies see us as a link with advertisers. We're right in the middle of both."

Though Magalhães is the only artist the firm directly manages, Agência has been behind several branded music campaigns already, serving as an A&R source for companies looking to align with indie acts.

Vivo's ad agency first used a song from Magalhães for a commercial advertising its prepaid cards. But as the buzz around her online following grew (Magalhães' 'MySpace has nearly 4 million views), Vivo and Rossatto came up with a bigger concept around the release of her debut album. "We have a big focus on youth and we see music as one of the most important tools to reach this target," says José Guilherme Novaes, Vivo executive VP of marketing and innovation.

According to an IFPI report, Brazil is Latin America's largest digital music market, with 10% of labels' income there derived from digital sales, the vast majority of it mobile. The number of mobile phone users has grown by 60% in the last three years, as carriers aggressively promote their services and look to differentiate their products.

So Vivo took the unusual step (for a new artist) of loading five different Motorola phones with the album, as well as two bonus tracks—one of which could only be downloaded from Vivo's digital music store. Vivo also built a rich multimedia site for Magalhães, with audio downloads. "The impact on publicity was just huge," says Novaes, whose company also sponsored shows by the artist.

Magalhães was also involved in another Agência-brokered project, Lev's Music. Now in its second year, Lev's pays for five bands to record a CD and film a music video. The clothing company also hosts profiles on a Lev's Music Web site and online radio station and brings the groups to perform at fashion shows and other events. "When you sponsor a well-known artist, I don't think it brings the same opportunity," Lev's brand manager Mauricio Busin says, adding that the company's research has shown improvements in brand awareness among Brazilian consumers since the campaign began. On top of that, "we use tools, including Facebook and Twitter, to expand this relationship between the bands, the brands and the customers."

So far, two bands that were involved in Lev's Music, Cine and Vanguard, have signed to Universal. A third, Goratas Suecas, is returning to the United States for its second stateside tour this fall.

Other brands that have supported indie acts with Agência's help include the chocolate drink maker Teddy, which sponsored "Produtores Teddy," a six-month online program in which indie bands submitted their videos and received consultation from accomplished music producers. The program also ran as a weekly segment on MTV Brazil.

As she tours Brazil, Magalhães remains open-minded about how she'll approach her follow-up album. "It was really good to join Vivo and Motorola in such a creative project because we got a lot of visibility and experimented with an almost unknown way of releasing albums here in Brazil," Magalhães wrote in an e-mail. "We still believe it's really important to offer new tools to our musicians and other artists."

...
**PLACEBO DISCOVERS A CURE FOR THE MAJOR-LABEL BLUES**

**BY RICHARD SMIRKE**

PLACEBO’S “Sun” is rising in the east—and continuing to rise in the west. ¶ The London-based alt-rock band opted to go out on its own when its Virgin/EMI deal ended last year after five albums. It sold nearly 12 million albums, according to its management company, Riverman Management. ¶ “We felt the corporate suits who took over EMI were not really our kindred spirits anymore,” the band’s lead singer Brian Molko says. “I would go to industry parties and would meet people who wouldn’t even know who I was—and this was the head of the record label. So it was just: ‘No, forget it. We’ve got to try something else this time.’ ¶ That something else seems to be working. The band’s debut on its own Dreambrother label, “Battle for the Sun,” simultaneously topped Billboard’s European Top 100 chart and dented last issue’s Billboard 200. It’s only the fifth indie release to top the European chart in the past 24 months. ¶ The key to this success has been a focus on finding international partners for exclusive license and distribution deals, according to Riverman Management. That was “a massive undertaking,” Riverman director Alex Weston says, but it is paying off.

The chart results have been immediate across Europe—where the three-piece had a huge following—and less predictably, in the United States.

Licensed to Vagrant Records, “Battle for the Sun” hit U.S. stores June 9, entering the Billboard 200 at No. 5. Placebo’s only previous showing was the 2006 set “Meds” (Astralwerks/EMI), which peaked at No. 180. Nielsen SoundScan puts the new album’s first-week U.S. sales at 10,000. Riverman says it has shipped 500,000 copies.

That breakthrough was aided by a prerelease radio campaign that took off when modern rock stations XETRA-FM San Diego and KROQ Los Angeles picked up the lead single, “For What It’s Worth,” according to Vagrant co-founder Jon Cohen. “That’s really inspired what’s shaping up to be a successful radio campaign here. We also had a massive promotion on iTunes—we’re really hammering the online side and word-of-mouth has really spread.”

Cohen adds that Vagrant is looking for “a lot of toeholds to keep moving this record into the eight-to-12-month marketing time zone.” Those include servicing a continuous feed of up-loads, videos and live footage online alongside the ongoing radio push. He cites “Ashtray Heart” as a potential big track for modern rock and specialist formats.

Vagrant’s campaign is “going to be focused—that’s what a lot of labels lose,” Cohen says. “A band of this stature is a major priority at a label like us.”

“Battle for the Sun” had a June 8 Europe-wide release through Belgium-based PIAS Entertainment Group. It hit No. 1 in France, Germany, Wallonie, Flanders, Switzerland and Austria while showing strongly in the Netherlands (No. 5), Italy (No. 5), the United Kingdom (No. 8) and Sweden (No. 9). “Meds” had also been No. 1 on Billboard’s European chart and in six territories.

Inroads are now being made in Japan, where Weston claims Placebo historically received little label support. Licensed to Japanese indie NTVM, Placebo has landed major TV synch spots for “Ashtray Heart” and received widespread Japanese music press coverage ahead of the album’s June 5 release.

Until now, Molko says, “in total, I don’t think we’ve sold more than 5,000 albums in Japan. But within a month or two of our working relationship (with NTVM), they got us (synch on) two prime-time Japanese current affairs shows. They’re building a massive story for us in Japan.”

Elsewhere, “Battle for the Sun” debuted at No. 8 in Australia and No. 2 in Mexico.

Placebo and Riverman coordinated plans with their international label/distribution partners for an 18-month campaign well in advance of the album’s June debut. Weston says. The campaign budget is funded entirely by Placebo with approved costs from both local distributors, then deducted from sales.

Online, a campaign rolled out immediately after the PIAS deal was announced at MIDEM (billboard.biz, Jan. 18), with the revamped Web site PlaceboWorld.co.uk acting as the centerpiece. The band was able to re-engage with its existing fan base by offering exclusive album news and free downloads. PIAS’ site now has more than 150,000 unique members, up from the 20,000-name database that EMI handed over when the major deal ended.

Those were constantly worked prior to release, culminating in a May 29 invite-only online album playback, which PIAS says was generated 150,000 times during three days’ time.

The band also made its first single, “For What It’s Worth,” available for digital purchase moments after its April 20 world premiere on U.K. top-40 network BBC Radio 1, then repeated the strategy in other markets across Europe.

“From the beginning, we wanted to make sure we keep Placebo’s fans as the champions of the band, get everything out to them first, then build from there to a broader audience,” says PIAS’ Brussels-based international director Edwin Schroter. PIAS’ European network of offices and marketing teams gives it the ability to “localize the campaign,” another key element in a successful launch. A major mobile-based promotion is being finalized to drive the second single, due in September.

Weston adds that Placebo, which owns the copyright on “Battle for the Sun,” has negotiated deals promising far greater financial benefits than a major could have offered. Molko claims its per-album royalty will be more than twice what the band earned with Virgin/EMI.

Touring remains a cornerstone of Placebo’s business plan. This summer it will play some 25 international festivals, booked by London-based ITB. A September U.S. tour booked through New York-based Artist Group precedes U.K./European arena shows, and the band will remain on tour until fall 2010, with three further North American shows included in the routing.

“We’re going to commit to lots of touring there,” Weston says. “We’ll always go back and strive to have that (U.S.) breakthrough. We don’t need it, but of course we’d like it.”

Cohen is confident about Placebo’s U.S. prospects. “If they put the time in over here, given the tenacity and perseverance that they have, they can break out,” he says.

“We feel we can really do anything right now artistically and really push the limits of our sound and our identity,” Molko adds. “That’s the gas the tank for a band like us. We just have that sense of complete freedom, and it feels wonderful.”
Mac McCaughan and Laura Ballance have now spent half of their lives running Merge Records, the label they founded in 1989 as 20-year-old musicians in Chapel Hill, N.C. The label started as a vehicle for music from McCaughan and Ballance’s band, Superchunk, and their friends. Now, with top-selling critical favorites like Arcade Fire and Spoon, it has become an established force in the indie business, as well as the wider world of alternative rock.

Through all, McCaughan and Ballance remained resolutely DIY, despite entreaties from major labels during the great indie-rock gold rush of the ’90s. Distributed by the now-defunct Touch and Go until 2006, Merge recently moved to the Warner-owned Alternative Distribution Alliance. And while it lost plenty of bands to bigger labels—... And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead left for Interscope but ended up regretting the decision—McCaughan and Ballance kept plenty of others. Arcade Fire and Spoon were among the acts that stayed on Merge, and neither seemed to have suffered as a result: Arcade Fire’s second album, “Neon Bible,” entered the Billboard 200 at No. 2, with 409,000 copies sold (according to Nielsen SoundScan), and Spoon’s 2007 “Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga” has sold 305,000.

Merge seems to thrive on counterintuitive moves. Neither McCaughan nor Ballance are champion networkers. (In a forthcoming book about the label, Ballance is described as “not one for small talk.”) Merge never aligned with a major and remains headquartered in Chapel Hill. If anything, Merge’s longevity proves that by doing everything wrong, you can sometimes get everything right.

You’re about to celebrate your 20th anniversary. What’s the secret to your longevity?

McCaughan: Having a “secret” to your success is such a weird idea. I hate to say it, but the idea that there is an answer to that question is so dumb. It’s a mistake to go through life thinking, “Well, there has to be that one thing, and if I do it, it’s going to work out.” In most things there is no answer like that, and I don’t think the music industry is any different.

But are you known for being conservative financially, right?

Ballance: I guess that’s the business plan, but it doesn’t sound like that exciting a way to run a record company. Our staff isn’t that big; we have 12 people working for the label, along with the two of us.

McCaughan: But the business plan is also to put out music that you love, even if you aren’t throwing money around.

Merge has released commercially successful albums as well as some that never sold. How do you balance putting out releases you love with the ones that might bring in more money?

McCaughan: The worst thing you can do is have success with something and say, “Oh, let’s drop all this other stuff and put out these records that sell really well,” because there was no predicting those, either. It wouldn’t make sense for us to put out 10 Neutral Milk Hotel records every year. We don’t want to say, “The Magnetic Fields boxed set did really well, so let’s only put out boxed sets.”

You’ve never left Chapel Hill. How has your local scene affected the label?

McCaughan: I’m not really interested in putting out things just because they’re local. At a certain level, a “scene” in a city is kind of a construct, because the press tends to notice a lot of bands happen to be from a city and then write a story about it.

What’s the biggest change you’ve seen in the music industry since you started Merge?

Ballance: Digital and online sales, I guess. It’s pretty seismic.

McCaughan: The positive side is that it gives you a way to promote your bands and your music to a very wide audience. But the reason you have to do that using the Internet is because there are no magazines anymore. There are hardly any record stores. And the real downside is that there are so many bands and so much information out there that all of a sudden it’s like you are swimming against the tide in terms of just trying to get someone’s attention. Unless you’re talking about She & Him or Conor Oberst or Arcade Fire or Spoon—someone that has elevated themselves above the fray—it’s hard to keep people’s attention.

What does Spoon and Arcade Fire up to right now?

Ballance: Both of them are working on new records. We’re hoping for releases next year.

What does your late-summer and fall release schedule look like?

McCaughan: There is a Superchunk 7-inch coming out in July, along with an album from Wye Oak. Then we have a Destroyer 12-inch in August, and in September there is a new album by the Clean and a new album by Polvo, which is awesome. Those records are really great. And now Lou Barlow and the Clientele later in the fall.

You also have a festival coming up in July, right?

McCaughan: Yes. XX Merge, the 20th-anniversary festival, is occupying everyone’s time right now. And the other crazy thing about this year is that in addition to the regular release schedule, every two months we are putting out two CDs in the subscription-only boxed set for the 20th anniversary. So the prediction is double this year from a regular year, even though most of those boxed-set CDs aren’t in stores. There’s also the Merge covers compilation of other bands doing songs that came out on Merge that’s available at retail called “Score: The Covers.” It’s a crazier year than usual...
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Masters of Metal return to reignite landmark 'British Steel' album

By Gary Graff
THE POWER OF PRIEST
PIONEERING VETERANS OF METAL EMBRACE THEIR HISTORY ON SUMMER TOUR
BY GARY GRAFF

"DO YOU LIKEME METAL?!
Judas Priest frontman Rob Halford, resplendent in leather and chrome and steel studs, sings the rhetorical question to the headbanging throng at the DTE Energy Music Theatre outside Detroit, just before his bandmates tear into the pounding riffs of "Metal Gods" during the 2008 Metal Masters tour.

The song is a sci-fi opus about robot-like creatures that have come to take over the Earth. But since its bow on Priest's landmark 1980 album "British Steel" the song has become the band's de facto anthem—so much so that Halford has trademarked the phrase.

There's no denying Priest's place as a heavy metal deity either. Since forming in 1969 in Birmingham, England, and releasing its first single and album, both titled "Rocka Rolla," in 1974, Priest has sold some 30 million records worldwide, according to the band's management. That tally includes such albums as "British Steel," "Screaming for Vengeance," "Defenders of the Faith" and "Turbo," which have been certified platinum in the United States by the RIAA.

The band's catalog is dotted with such fist-in-the-air anthems as "Living After Midnight," "Breaking the Law," "Heading Out to the Highway" and "You've Got Another Thing Comin,'" and Priest's leather-and-studs look has become iconic, influencing not only metal garb but mainstream fashion styles.

Most important, any hard rock outfit pushing the volume knob to 11 pays homage to Priest and its pre- eminent position in what became known as the New Wave of British Heavy Metal.

"They went around the world again and again and again and built up a following in every city," says Rob Stringer, chairman of Columbia Epic Label Group, adding that it's "very difficult" to achieve the level of international popularity that Priest continues to maintain.

"You go see them in Prague and..."
TO HELL AND BACK - WHAT A RIDE!!!

LOVE BILL, JAYNE
AND ALL AT TRINIFOLD

www.americanradiohistory.com
from >>>p28

there's 9,000 people going mad," Stringer says. "You can see the same thing in America, Latin America, Eastern Europe, wherever it is. It's all to do with the fact they built up that aura, which is really hard to do.

Other metal veterans credit Priest for inspiration. "If there was no Judas Priest, there might not have been a Metallica," drummer Lars Ulrich says. "They're one of the main bands that inspired us with their music and just by being there. They're a major part of the foundation on which we built this band."

But Priest is hardly resting on its leather-clad laurels. In 2008 the quintet released "Nosstradamus," a sweeping rock opera inspired by the life of 16th-century prophet Michel de Nosstradame, and played a headlining run on the Metal Masters package in North America.

This month, Priest is re-releasing a new concert album, "A Touch of Evil—Live," and is touring again, with concerts that will launch the 30th-anniversary celebration for "British Steel" by playing the album in its entirety. The North American leg of the tour begins June 29 at the Murat Center in Indianapolis.

"We're definitely a unique band in the broad term of heavy metal," says Halford, who left the band in 1991 and returned in 2003. "You can't pin us down; we can be 'Painkiller' one moment and then 'Angel' from 'Angel of Retribution' the next. We can be 'Stained Class,' which is very complex, to something very operatic like 'Nosstradamus.'"

"That's one thing we've always been proud about. We've never set limits or walls around ourselves," he says. "I think you can sense that with the broad landscape of hundreds and hundreds of metal tunes we've written."

Jayne Andrews, one of Priest's managers at Trinifold Management in London, says that desire to grow and change is what has kept the band vital and working for four decades.

"Every album is different. They've always tried to progress," Andrews says. "They've never gone, 'This one works, let's keep the same formula.' When they did 'Turbo' it had synthesized guitars; they were criticized for it, but it ended up being one of their biggest sellers. You get bands who stick to the same formula and have great success with it, and that's great, but Priest just always likes to move forward."

But Sony BMG U.K.'s VP of international Dave Shack—a Priest fan and former journalist—says Priest still stays rooted in what fans want to hear.

"They are true metal people," he says. "They still do it properly. They care and converse about metal. They know about the new bands, the old bands. I've had great discussions with them about who they should take on tour. These guys are exactly what I bought into in 1980."

Manager Bill Curbishley says taking chances has generally worked to Priest's advantage. "In the end it's all about credibility," says Curbishley, who has worked with the Who, Marc Bolan, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Robert Plant and others, and signed Priest to Trinifold during the "British Steel" cycle. "I endorse completely those slight changes of direction they've made with 'Turbo' and 'Painkiller' and on from there. Those are the building blocks that keep a career together."

Guitarist Ken "K.K." Downing and bassist Ian Hill couldn't have envisioned this kind of durability when they began playing together in 1969, eventually plucking the name of a defunct local blues-rock band and even initially including its lead singer, Al Atkins, in the lineup. But Downing says that even then he wanted a group that was built to last and that would make music that was "more exciting and had more energy than what was going on, with a good dose of aggression and also try to be innovative."

"I was kind of greedy in the way I wanted the best of everything," recalls Downing, who writes Priest's material with Halford and fellow guitarist Glenn Tipton. "I wanted the best singer, the best bass player, the best guitar player... everything, really. I was aware it would probably take years to come to fruition and for the band to gel. And it did take quite a long time."

The early years of Priest's recording were spent building a devoted but cult-sized audience, though such albums as 1977's "Sin After Sin," and the 1978 pair of... continued on >>>p32
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“Stained Class” and “Killing Machine” eventually went gold in the United States, according to the RIAA.

It was 1979’s seminal live album “Unleashed in the East” that showcased Priest in the best possible light, however, and set expectations for “British Steel.”

Planning for “British Steel” took the group and producer Tom Allom to the studio at Tittenhurst Park, an estate first owned by the Beatles’ John Lennon and subsequently—while Priest was there—by his bandmate Ringo Starr.

“British Steel” marked a fortuitous shift in direction for Priest. Where previous albums were marked by lengthy songs and intricate arrangements, the group’s sixth studio set was punchier and more direct, still loud and proud but streamlined into a more fierce and deliberate attack.

“It’s very bare bones in terms of production,” Halford says. “It was one of those records we made pretty much on the fly, because we’d just wrapped up ‘Unleashed in the East’ and we were obliged to deliver another record on deadline. So it was literally write a song, record a song, mix a song, add it to the pile.”

So you had three minutes of “Breaking the Law,” three and a half minutes of “Living After Midnight.” It was different, but we figured, ‘Maybe that’s the best way to go about it. Don’t think about it too much.’ Going with your gut instinct is always a great thing to do with music.”

Sony BMG’s Shack recalls that “those songs still punch your lights out and had enough melody that radio programmers would play it.”

That was indeed the case with “British Steel.” U.S. radio stations latched onto “Living After Midnight,” while “United” won favor among football fans at home, and “Breaking the Law” and “Metal Gods” became enduring fan favorites.

The album logged then-career high positions of No. 4 on the U.K. albums chart and No. 34 on the Billboard 200, with a gold (and eventually platinum) certification from the RIAA.

“It was a fantastic album,” manager Curbishley says. “Not to say it was before its time, but certainly it was a defining album in terms of its sound.”

The band members, meanwhile, were somewhat thrown by having a hit on their hands.

“I really weird...”

A PRIESTLY LEGACY

While Judas Priest has released several studio albums in recent years—including “Angel of Retribution” in 2005 and the conceptual “Nostradamus” in 2008—an active catalog campaign has also helped the band’s visibility.

“They’re one of the top rock bands that we work with,” says John Jackson, senior director of content development for Legacy Recordings, which oversees Priest’s catalog releases.

“They’re fans of the most devoted you can have. They’ll always buy the T-shirt and the pin and the patch and the poster—everything. When we do something, they’re always onboard.”

Priest’s catalog albums sold 258,000 copies in 2008, according to Nielsen SoundScan, a 113% increase from 2007 thanks to a new album (“Nostradamus”) and the band’s touring. Legacy has overseen a number of archival projects, including the 2001 rollout of Priest’s catalog, the 2004 boxed set, “Metalogy,” which helped bring frontman Rob Halford back into the band after a 12-year absence and entries in the company’s Essentials and Playlist series.

The group’s top seller in the SoundScan era is “The Best of Judas Priest: Living After Midnight,” which has sold 564,000 copies since its 1998 release.

Next year Legacy plans a 30th-anniversary edition of “British Steel” that will pair the original album with audio and video recordings of Priest’s summer performances of the nine-song album. Legacy released a special edition of “British Steel” earlier this year in the United Kingdom, packaged with a poster and a patch.

“We’ve been fortunate enough to do campaigns with them at exactly the right time,” Jackson says.

“To do 10 or 12 album reissues and then a big boxed set is not something you could get the right amount of space at retail for anymore, so we’ve had a lot of really good timing with them. And, obviously, they’re amazing to work with and have a great history with this company.” —GG
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from >>p32 how we were more metal than ever, but we were really successful,” Downing recalls. “It was a very, very important point in the band’s career, obviously.”

The group is looking forward to revisiting “British Steel” too. “While it’s technically the 29th anniversary of the album’s release, it’s the 30th anniversary of its recording.”

Realizing that the “British Steel” anniversary was at hand, the idea grew from staging one show and filming it in the United Kingdom to the desire of the entire band to play the album in full for its North American tour.

“It’s just a special album for us,” says guitarist Tipton, whose nocturnal noodling inspired “Living After Midnight.”

“It’s great stuff to play onstage and the songs still sound very contemporary and relevant, which we’re proud of.”

Halford notes that he “listened to all of ‘British Steel’ for the first time recently when I was driving from Cardiff in Wales to the Wembley show in London on the U.K. tour. I thought, ‘Man, this is going to be so cool to play this stuff live.’ It’s a great opportunity to really go back in time and just have a wonderful experience of bringing all of that music in one go to the present.”

And to the future. While a special “British Steel” anniversary edition—in a gatefold, slipcase package with a poster and patch—came out this year in the United Kingdom, Legacy in the United States plans an expanded edition of the album in 2010. And the summer tour will be recorded and filmed for a possible release as well.

“British Steel” was a harbinger of good things to come for Priest, which reached a zenith in 1982 with the double-platinum “Screaming for Vengeance” and the MTV-driven success of the single “You’ve Got Another Thing Comin’.”

Halford’s departure from the band in 1993 was certainly cause for concern—“I was truly worried,” Currie says—but by carrying on with Tim “Ripper” Owens from an Ohio Priest tribute band called British Steel, the other members were able to maintain the group’s position and protect its brand in the rock pantheon.

“The ‘British Steel’ album is great stuff to play onstage and the songs still sound very contemporary.”

—GLENN TIPTON

The “British Steel” album is great stuff to play onstage and the songs still sound very contemporary.

—GLENN TIPTON

Priest on a mission: Performing on 1994’s Defenders of the Faith tour.

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FANS GET THE GOODS ONLINE

When it comes to the Internet, Judas Priest is all about, as the song says, "delivering the goods" to its fans.

"What we've been doing is just trying to keep a you-hear-it-first-from-the-band motto," says Chipsier Entertainment president/CEO Chip Ruggieri, who has been Priest's publicist since 2001. "Everything is kind of channeled with the Web site leading the charge in terms of communication."

Priest has an online presence in three locations, according to the group's webmaster, Murray Francis. The official site, JudasPriest.com, has seen "continual and steady growth," according to Francis, with 53,000 member subscribers and 100,000 unique visitors per month. Priest also has 122,000 devotees as fans on its Facebook page and 84,000 friends on MySpace. The latter two, Francis says, "have enabled us to access an even wider section of our fan base."

Spearheading the online effort for the group is Jason Leberg, manager of digital marketing for Epic Records. He says, "The important thing is to get as much information to the fans in as easily accessible a way as possible." But there's also a desire to use "lots of great tools and fun things" to ensure Priest's Web offerings pack the same wallop as the band's music.

Priest last year released the title track to its 2008 rock opera, "Nostradamus," as a widget. Leberg says it logged 200,000 impressions in the first 24 hours, and he had to cap downloads at 50,000 copies because they were going so quickly.

The group had similar success with a contest that employed Ispot Interactive technology to let fans make viral videos for the "Nostradamus" track " Alone."

During last year's Metal Masters tour, Leberg set up Priest frontman Rob Halford to file video blogs through Kym Lýsers.com (judaspriest). The singer sent video valentines to fans from hotel rooms, sound checks and even from a shark tank during a visit to the zoo.

"They're not a band that Tweets or gets online and blogs an exceptional amount," Leberg says. "I just try to empower them where they're comfortable." But, he adds, that seems to suit the needs of Priest's fan base, too.

"It's not an audience that hangs around quite as much (online) as some audiences do," Leberg says. "It's definitely an audience that goes to the Web site to look for information."

Therefore, Ruggieri says, it's important that the band's online portals be the first and most reliable sources for breaking news, which is then disseminated to mass audience outlets.

"The announcement for this summer's tour was very Web-driven," Ruggieri says. "We got the news out on the Web site, which got people wondering what the set list was going to be and how they were going to integrate the 'British Steel' celebration into the show. We let that sit for a while and then came back with a full-blown press release that announced the tour and laid out dates.

"We layered it in a way that just kept anticipation going and kept people coming back, which is the goal of any Web site."

THE DISCOVERY THAT Judas Priest was "a dynamite live band" led to Bill Curbishley's desire nearly 30 years ago to manage the group.

The veteran manager had already worked with the Who, Marc Bolan and Lynyrd Skynyrd when he was approached about Priest in 1980, just after the group had recorded its landmark "British Steel" album. He was in New York after finishing a Who tour and discovered the band was playing a show in Texas that week, so he flew down to check it out.

"The night I got there Eric Clapton was playing," Curbishley recalls. "He had, like, 7,000 or 8,000 tickets sold, and I went to the show and I felt it was a bit flat and a little bit boring. Then I went the next night to see Judas Priest and they had 11,000 sold and they took the roof off the place."

"I thought, 'Well, this is a fantastic live band. I can do something with this.' And they are, still... a great live band. That's why we're still here."

Judas Priest, in fact, thriving as one of the most in-demand rock acts on the road. During 2008 and into 2009 the group has played for nearly 900,000 fans with 74 shows in 32 countries, according to the band's management. That includes last summer's Metal Masters trek in North America and first-time visits to Korea and Colombia.

Priest returns to North America for a tour celebrating the 30th anniversary of "British Steel" during which the band will play the album in its entirety, opening the tour leg June 29 at the Murat Centre in Indianapolis.

Playing live, according to frontman Rob Halford, "is what we live for. Don't give me wrong; we love making records, too. But I think metal really exists on the stage, in front of people. That's the true nature of the music, where it works best. Traveling can be hard, but we never get tired of playing."

According to the group's booking agent, Troy Blakely of Agency for the Performing Arts, promoters aren't tired of the band either.

"They deliver every night when they get onstage," says Blakely, who's worked with Priest since the late '80s. "No matter what the circumstances are, no matter how big the crowd is or where they are, they deliver and play an amazing show. Whenever somebody sees them, they can't wait to see them again."

"The promoters know that. Every year they don't play, I still get a lot of calls about, 'Will they play?' I get offers from all areas. As Priest nears its 40th anniversary this year, Blakely says that it's also benefiting from the same kind of cross-generational phenomenon that works for such veteran road warriors as Rush and AC/DC.

"They have great songs, songs that go from generation to generation," says Blakely, who first saw Priest play some 30 years ago when it was opening for another of his clients. "They don't just apply to one generation; the next generation loves these songs, too. Those songs are there, and they're enduring." 

---

'WHAT WE LIVE FOR'

THE SHOW'S THE THING FOR JUDAS PRIEST

Onstage and off: Rocking during the Point of Entry tour in 1981 (above); more recently, Judas Priest gathered with supporters. From left: bassist Ian Hill, PAID marketing executive Erik Luftglass, guitarist Glenn Tipton, frontman Rob Halford, APA agent Troy Blakely, drummer Scott Travis and guitarist K.K. Downing.

JudasPriest.com is the band's official Web site.

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UNDER THE STARS

THE MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF MUSIC

BY BILL MILKOWSKI

In the three decades since the Montreal International Jazz Festival staged its first summer performance, the event has become a favorite of fans, critics and musicians. Noted for its eclectic programming, remarkable efficiency and a mellow ambiance at indoor and street concerts alike, the festival draws 2 million-plus music lovers each July.

More than 3,000 musicians from some 30 countries converge on the French-speaking city for the event, performing in some 600 concerts (including nearly 400 outdoor shows), taking the stage at 12 indoor venues and 10 outdoor sites, according to festival organizers.

And it all happens in the middle of downtown Montreal.

“It’s a great festival, great ambience and a wonderful city,” bassist/composer/bandleader Dave Holland says. “I’m a big fan.”

So is Blue Note Records president Bruce Lundvall. “It’s probably the best festival in North America,” says Lundvall, who will be honored at this year’s festival with the creation of an annual award in his name that recognizes the achievement of non-musician personality from the media or music business who has contributed to the advancement of jazz.

“It’s so well-organized and so extensive in terms of the number of venues they use and the way they pace the whole thing. And you see a lot of musicians at the Montreal festival that we don’t get to see in New York that often.”

To mark its 30th anniversary, the festival will unveil its new permanent public house, the Maison du Festival Rio Tinto Alcan (named for one of the festival’s co-sponsors, a global leader in the aluminum industry).

“The Maison du Festival is a grand dream we’ve cherished for a decade now,” festival president Alain Simard says. “I not only have the happiness of seeing this dream realized, but also the pleasure of seeing it bear the name of the festival’s most faithful partner, Rio Tinto Alcan.”

The multimillion-dollar renovation project is a seven-story facility that’s housed in the historic Blumenthal Building (which the government of Quebec gave to the festival) that is located in the heart of the downtown entertainment district, known as Quartier des Spectacles.

The new Festival House includes a permanent office for the festival organization; a new 350-seat cabaret-style venue (dubbed L’Astral), which expands to 600 for standing-room concerts; an audiovisual archive (containing 10,000 albums, 300,000 photographs and high-definition videos of past festival performances); a gallery-exhibition space; a jazz hall of fame; rehearsal rooms for musicians; warehouse space for festival souvenirs; and a ground-floor restaurant and adjoining terrace.

Jazz pianist and Montreal native Oliver Jones will inaugurate L’Astral June 30 while Stevie Wonder will kick off the party that evening with a free outdoor concert at the General Motors stage at the newly constructed Place des Festivals. Wonder’s inaugural festival appearance is expected to draw 150,000 people into the streets of downtown Montreal.

“We’re going to have giant screens on the stage and even behind the stage so that people on the other side of the stage will be able to see the concert,” Simard says. “Altogether a lot of people will be able to participate, even if they don’t see the stage directly.”

This latest expansion represents a dramatic leap in the continual growth the festival has experienced since its inception in 1980.

“The new space is really important for us,” festival artistic director André Ménard says. “The festival has been like a gypsy in its own city, moving from place to place. In the past, all the pre-festival operation was done in temporary spaces, in closed-down shops that we’d rent for a month. Now with our own house we centralize all of the activity. So the creation of the Maison du Festival and the Place des Festivals has been a major undertaking in Montreal. The government has actually changed the layout of the city because of us, which I think is the highest form of tribute.”

Concert promotion partners Ménard and Simard decided to mount a festival in their hometown in 1980. “To tell you the truth,” Ménard recalls, “we were out of work for the summer. And by doing the festival, it extended our activity. Otherwise, we have nothing to do the whole month of June, July and August. So we invented our summer job, in a way.”

The inaugural festival took place on an island in the St. Lawrence River facing downtown Montreal in the remains of what was the World’s Fair known as Expo ’67. That first festival drew 12,000 curious Montrealers.

“The second year we moved a bit toward the city because we continued to use some of the island and then we also used a downtown nightclub (the Alouette Theatre, later renamed the Spectrum) for some of the concerts,” Ménard says. “In year three we moved the whole operation to St. Denis Street and then everything fell into place. This is where the party really took off.”

continued on p.42
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Thousands of the world's greatest artists have since performed before the Festival's loyal fans, who now number in the millions. A true ode to diversity, the Festival has seen the best in jazz, to be sure, as well as offered a little something to satisfy all musical tastes, the sole criteria being the love of quality music.

For our 30th anniversary, a timely gift has finally comes to life: The Maison du Festival Rio Tinto Alcan. The Maison will at once serve as a permanent showcase for our jazz, blues and world music artists. This will also be a hall of fame and exhibition centre; an important resource for audiovisual documentation, conservation and protection of the Festival's musical heritage, accessible to the greater public; and a headquarter for the promotion of jazz and musicianship at the international level.

Over a span of three decades, a musical constellation has formed, one that will continue to shine brightly for decades to come.

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L'Astral, an intimate cabaret-style venue, will present the finest live-concerts all year round in the Maison. Along with offering state-of-the-art stage technology to artists from around the world, the venue should quickly become a favourite thanks to its user-friendly live TV webcasting facilities and configuration. L'Astral, as it has been named, fulfills a long time dream of the Festival since its very beginnings.
street, "and from strong identity In From for bled exclusive. But port from renewal it's very good for the sponsors," Ménard says. "So we are very happy that the govern-ment agreed to help us grow the festival."

Since relocating to its present downtown location in 1989, the festival has enjoyed unique and unprecedented cooperation from the City of Montreal, which closes off main streets for the duration of the event to create a traffic-free site where several stages can be set up, providing free music from noon until midnight. Holland says, "One of the reasons why this is truly one of the great festivals in the world is the wonderful free events that are happen-ring in the street, where the whole center of Montreal is taken over by the festival. You don't really see that kind of thing anywhere else."

Another aspect of the festival that has made it so highly re-garded by jazz journalists and musicians is the ambitious pro-gramming that is scheduled each year.

"The sign of a good festival, for me, is the great variety of music, the representation of all the different cultures and different ap-proaches to the music," Holland says. "It's not just looking at it from one or two perspectives but really trying to come at it from the whole range of what's going on out there. That's what a fes-tival should do. And the Montreal festival succeeds at that because it brings together the public and it gives the public a chance to re-ally see, all in one city, a huge variety of what's really going on in the world of the music."

Aside from booking a wide variety of musical styles—from jazz genres like straight-ahead, bebop, fusion, Dixieland, avant-garde, Latin and Gypsy to rock, blues, zydeco, New Orleans brass band, Afro-beat, reggae, Cuban son and French charango—Ménard ac-tively encourages artists to experiment with their own presenta-tions at the festival.

This is emphasized by the Invitation Series, a kind of artist-in-residence program where a chosen performer is invited to explore new and different musical settings during five consecutive nights. "Just putting on a series of concerts in a concert hall doesn't make it a festival in itself," Ménard says. "You need to create the event, you need to create these special aggregations of musicians who don't play together very often and things like that, which is why we introduced the Invitation Series back in the late '80s. And it's been a very pop-ular feature of the festival, for both artists and fans ever since."


A WORD FROM THEIR SPONSORS

The Montreal Jazz Festival Earns Loyal Support

The Montreal International Jazz Festival's organizers have wooed the essential financial backing of sponsors for their event, in part, by taking the music to the streets.

"If it was only for the indoor concerts, we would not get the same support from the sponsors," artistic director André Ménard says. "Because then it would be a very exclusive party. But the festival has also been very inclusive. We have a very democratic approach for the festival and it's very family-oriented as well."

Since its inception in 1980, the festival has had only four sponsors. The Canadian division of financially troubled General Motors, a longstanding partner, recently announced it will not renew its sponsorship for 2010.

"It was the last year on the contract," festival president Alain Simard says. "And now we're finalizing something with a new sponsor that we hope to be able to announce during the festival. So the future looks good."

The year's co-sponsor, international mining group Rio Tinto Alcan, is also ending its five-year contractual period after the 2009 festival but will consider renewing for another five-year period this fall.

"For us it's been a very good association from a cultural and business standpoint," Rio Tinto Alcan VP of communications Erik Ryan says.

Ryan says that when the company started contributing to the festival in 1987, it was a particularly tough year for the festival and Alcan decided to invest. "We stayed for five years, from '87 to '92, and we stopped at that point because typically when we do sponsorships, we do them for a finite number of years, we assess results, and then we do other sponsorships," he says.

"In this case we came back to the jazz festival in 2006, 14 years later. And it has proven to be really good for Rio Tinto Alcan because the festival had become bigger, broader, more diverse, and the association that we had in the past from '87 to '92 came back really quickly in the minds of the people."

Ryan notes that for Rio Tinto Alcan, it's been "a very good sponsorship, which is why we decided recently to also invest in the Festival," the event's newly developed headquarters and performance site. "It's great to have our name associated with such a magnificent project."—BM
Erik Truffaz and American tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman.

The festival is also unique for maintaining a balance between American and European sensibilities to reflect the growing appeal of jazz around the world.

"We’ve been trying to differentiate the festival in Montreal from those in Northeast by having a lot of European and Cuban musicians," Ménard says. "We do things that Americans won’t try to do normally because most of the festivals are pretty ethnocentric. And we care more to bring guys from Germany, Japan, France, Italy, the U.K., because for us jazz isolumin in Europe.

Ménard was the first to bring Argentine bandoneon master Astor Piazzolla to North America. "He had never done a concert here before 1994 when he played for us at the Spectrum, and it was a historical evening. I can remember every song that he played. You could’ve heard the drop of a pin at the Spectrum that night. It was so magical."

Other non-American artists who have showcased at the festival include the late violinist and founding Hot Club of France member Stephane Grappelli, Cuban singers Corinay Segundo and Ibrahim Ferrer of Buena Vista Social Club; Brazilian singer/composer Caetano Veloso; Egyptian singer Naracha Atlas; Spain’s flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia; Senegalese singer Youssou N’Dour; South Africa’s Johnny Clegg; French accordion virtuoso Richard Galliano; roeds virtuosos Michel Portal and bass clarinetist Louis Sclavis; Gypsy jazz guitarist Bireli Lagrene; Basque guitarist Sylvin Luc; Corsica’s Pietro Guedjucchi; Belgium’s Toots Thielemans; Venezuela’s Oscar D’Leon; and Cape Verde’s Cesaria Evora.

Ménard explains that the festival has had considerable economic impact on Montreal.

"It has been estimated that between $80 million and $100 million (Canadian) a year of economic windfall come directly from people that come to the festival . . . it does something good for the city. And when the real tourist impact started happening, then the city realized that through culture you can actually do economic development."

Simard adds, "The basic idea is the festival is mostly free and it brings a lot of tourists that spend at lot of money, so the governments of Montreal and Quebec are supporting us in a big way because of the economic impact that we bring."

"Canada’s federal government invested more money in the festival this year so that we can have a bigger impact. We wouldn’t have had the means to do [free] Stevie Wonder and Ben Harper outdoor concerts without that special grant from the government."

In retrospect, Ménard says that the festival has continued the momentum created by Expo ’67. "When I was 14, I went to Expo every single day and got to see Mahalia Jackson, Oscar Peterson, Louis Armstrong and so many other great artists, and it really changed my life. Expo changed the lives of everyone in Montreal. So the jazz festival, in a way, has picked up on that spirit and passion of Expo."

Ménard likes to event to "a natural resource that we have here that we only have to tap and to open every year. It’s something that we did very unconsciously, like most of what we did. There was no big plan but there was always an intention. But first and foremost, like I always say, it’s an event put on by music fans for music fans. That, I think, is the secret to our success."

Holland adds, "It’s a great event for the City of Montreal, it’s a great event for the music, and I certainly hope that it has many more years to come."
It's about the music.
Ashley Tisdale knows it sounds silly, but her new album has a lot to do with the color of her hair.

"For the last few years everyone has thought of me as Sharpay," the 23-year-old singer/actor says, referring to her blonde-and-bubbly character in Disney's smash "High School Musical" films. "So after I'd finished all the promotion for 'High School Musical 3' I dyed my hair back to its original color. I'd been a blonde for five years; Disney wanted us to be those characters. But the new songs I was working on felt edgy, sort of back to how I was before 'High School Musical.' I wanted to show people a side of me they haven't seen before."

Tisdale accomplishes that—well, sort of—on "Guilty Pleasure," due July 28 from Warner Bros. Like her 2007 debut, "Headstrong" (which, according to Nielsen SoundScan, has sold 471,000 copies in the United States), the new 14-track set offers plenty of catchy choruses and lyrics about boys. But with songwriting and production credits from Kara DioGuardi and Toby Gad, among others, "Guilty Pleasure" is a more mature, guitar-driven outting than the dance-pop "Headstrong." In the opener, "Acting Out," she promises to "break these chains" over driving bubble punk drums while the lead single, "It's Alright. It's OK," could be the younger sister of Pink's "So What."

"A lot of the songs on the album are about survival and staying strong," says Tisdale, who co-wrote four cuts. "I really wanted it to be a statement and a reflection of what I've been through over the past year and how I've grown up."

Warner Bros. senior VP of marketing David Grant sees the record as an opportunity for Tisdale to assert her independence, noting that "Guilty Pleasure" marks the beginning of her post-"High School Musical" career. (A fourth film featuring a next-generation cast will premiere next year on the Disney Channel.) Echoing the singer, Grant says that the first component of the label's album rollout was revealing Tisdale's new look with a relaunch of her Web site in March and the cover of Cosmopolitan's April issue.

"We wanted to create a conversation and then follow quickly with the music," he says. According to Grant, "High School Musical" fans have aged along with Tisdale, and they still constitute a significant portion of her audience. "But she's taken it beyond that, too," he says. For "Headstrong" the label targeted tweens; this time, "we're definitely looking to teenage girls."

Social-networking technology plays a central role in the label's plans to reach that demographic, according to Warner Bros. senior VP of new media Jeremy Welt. "What we discovered while working the last record was how good Ashley was at making a true connection with her fans in a way a lot of celebrities can't without being overly hype-y," Welt says. "When we pointed her to the tools, she figured it out."

Tisdale is an especially avid Twittterer, with more than 750,000 followers. "She's very protective of it in terms of it sounding authentic," Welt says. "There have been a couple of times where we've said to her, 'Hey, why don't you mention so-and-so?' and she's told us, 'I wouldn't say that.'" (What would she say? One recent Tweet read, "Happy fathers day!!! Goin to dinner with my family and the most amazing dad ever! I love you daddy!!!")

Facebook and MySpace also figure into Warner's new-media campaign, the latter particularly as an "important streaming partner," Welt says. MySpace is streaming two tracks from "Guilty Pleasure," and Grant expects the site to feature the entire album before release date.

Traditional media plans include upcoming appearances on "Today," "The View" and "Late Night With Jimmy Fallon," as well as a free concert June 27 at the Grove in Los Angeles and a release-week event in New York presented in partnership with Alloy.com and Teen.com.

In the realm of retail, Grant says that Target and Wal-Mart will sell exclusive editions of the album with bonus material, while a direct-to-consumer version will feature six posters and two extra songs.

Once "Guilty Pleasure" is out, Tisdale says she hopes to tour the United States and Europe (where the set was released earlier this month). "This album is so important to me," she says. "I really want to support it as much as I can. You put your heart and soul into something and it makes you a little bit vulnerable. It is who I am—hopefully people will like that."
LATEST BUZZ

SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE REUNITES

The pioneering Seattle rock band Sunny Day Real Estate will return to the road with its four original members this fall and reissue its first two Sub Pop albums, Sept. 15. These will be the band's first shows since November 2000 and the first with its classic lineup since 1998. Dates begin Sept. 17 in Vancouver and run through Oct. 16 in Seattle. The reissue of 1994's "Diary" and 1995's untitled follow-up (known as "LP2" or "The Pink Album") will include as-yet-unspecified bonus tracks and new liner notes.

HEART PREPS NEW ALBUM

Heart is working with producer Ben Mink to record the band's first set of new material since 2004's "Jupiter's Darling." While a time frame for release hasn't yet been set, guitarist Nancy Wilson says a new album is likely for the coming year. Heart is also planning for a fourth-quarter release of a storybook inspired by its 1975 album "Dog & Butterfly," which will come with a CD that includes new versions of the title song and "Dreamboat Annie." The band also has tour dates booked into September, including nine dates opening for Journey.

LIPS OFFER SNEAK PEEK OF 'EMBRYONIC'

The flaming Lips are offering a sneak peek of their forthcoming double-album, "Embryonic," for fans who digitally purchase concert tickets for their U.S. summer tour. Concertgoers will receive a digital EP with three new songs, as well as three B-side tracks that the band members will handpick from their vault of rare material. The flaming Lips will begin a brief statewide amphitheater trek in mid-August leading up to the release of "Embryonic" later this year on Warner Bros.

Cover Me

Susanna Hoffs And Matthew Sweet Revisit The Me Decade

Susanna Hoffs, the petite singer/guitarist whose band the Bangles remains one of the most enduring all-girl rock bands in history, has always had an ear for a good cover. "I taught myself music by listening to music," she says. "I would become obsessed with certain songs, and I taught myself how to sing by copying records." In 2006, she emerged from a semi-sabbatical by releasing an album of duets with power-pop master Matthew Sweet. "Under the Covers, Vol. 1," a collection of 60s songs, proved that she hadn't dulled her ability to harmonize. The album sold 32,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. When Hoffs and Sweet, sometimes known as Sid & Susie, reconvened last year in his Los Angeles studio for "Under the Covers, Vol. 2," they discovered why the diverse sounds of the 60s — power-pop, glam rock, classic rock and even prog — had made such an indelible impression on each of their musical progressions. "The records that we cover are records we love," Hoffs says. "There's out-of-tune singing, out-of-tune guitars, the drum tracks are speeding up and slowing down. These records are great because they're about the feel, they capture the emotion and they're not about perfection.

The resulting 16 tracks — plus an additional 10 songs that will be available as a bonus edition download — cover a range of styles, from hits like Rod Stewart's "Maggie May" to recorded favorites like Big Star's "Back of a Car." Hoffs and Sweet even scored guest spots from Mick Fleetwood, Dianne Harman and Wet Wet Wet's Steve Howe, who re-creates his Portuguese 12-string guitar part on "I've Seen All Good People." "We try to inhabit the originals," Sweet says. "Both of our voices are so distinct, anything we do is going to sound like us. Most of what we've done is add harmony things that weren't on the originals."

The album will be released July 21 by Shout Factory. That day, Hoffs and Sweet will take part in an on-air interview, audience Q&A and acoustic performance before an intimate audience of 200 at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles. September tour dates are already booked in Philadelphia, New York and Chicago with more to follow.

While Sweet and Hoffs were longtime acquaintances and mutual fans of each other's music, they were in the "Austin Powers" band Ming/Tea together), the process of making the "Under the Covers" albums has brought them even closer. The two plan to spend more time together soon: After the September tour the duo will return to the studio with Hoffs' Bangles bandmates the Peterson sisters to begin work on a new Bangles album.

The Bangles, who split up in 1989 before reuniting a few years later for regular tours and the 2001 album "Doll Revolution," just completed an East Coast tour with more dates planned in the fall. They're three songs into the new album, which they're co-producing with Sweet, who's down right giddy about the project. "It's going to be really goofy," he says. "I'm super excited about it because I get to play bass, and I get to foster an environment here where those guys really feel comfortable and relaxed and able to experiment."

ROCK BY JASON LIPSHUTZ

Smooth Sailing

YACHT Gets In Gear With A New Album, Label

Jona Bechtolt, half of the experimental electro duo YACHT, first watched the mysterious flashing lights of far west Texas in 2005. Expecting to see a roadside attraction, Bechtolt stood in the desert near Marfa, Texas, and witnessed hazy bursts that he describes as unexplained and magnetic. Three years later, Bechtolt and his musical and romantic partner, Claire L. Evans, returned to the desert to write and record YACHT's second full-length album, "See Mystery Lights."
Canada and Germany. The band's two previous albums, "Billy Talent I" and "Billy Talent II," sold 330,000 and 280,000 copies in Canada, respectively, according to Nielsen SoundScan. 

In Germany—where "III" will be released July 10—the band's first two albums have shipped 460,000 copies, according to Warner. 

Kane says the United Kingdom is a priority for the label, as part of an overall European strategy. There, sales stand at 48,000 for "I" and 61,000 for "II," according to the Official Charts Co. "III" will be released July 13. "We need to surpass a lot of markets in Europe, but we can't take Canada and Europe for granted," he says. "In the U.K. I think we've one radio song away from mainstream success."

The band, with its incendiary live shows, spent much of May setting up the album in Europe with dates in Germany, including the Rock am Ring festival June 7. The group will play U.K. dates in August, including the Reading and Leeds festivals. North American and European dates are all booked by the Agency Group. The band has had limited success in the United States despite significant touring commitments for its first two albums, which have sold 120,000 and 59,000 U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. 

The band's manager Pierre Tremblay, senior VP at Network Music Group, says Billy Talent's reputation as a top live act should help make inroads in the U.S. market, and then onward to Australia and New Zealand. "This will take some patience," Tremblay adds. "Billy Talent isn't just some pop act that you can throw a lot of money at and land on radio."

"We weren't listening to any other music while recording," Bechtolt says. "It was probably the most analog period of our lives. The only thing that influenced us was this paranormal experience," he says. "That music in the lights, they came to us in dreams and in visions."

The result of YACHT's mystical recording process is a sophomore set stuffed with dreamy pop tracks that sound like artifacts from another planet. "See Mystery Lights" thrives on unique song templates, from the gospel-inflected opener "Ring the Bell" to the gleeful strut of the single "Psycho City" (Voodoo City).

The album, due July 28 on DFA Records, has become the most anticipated release of Bechtolt's career. The Portland, Ore., native dropped out of high school to join a punk band in the late '90s before deciding to "become removed from all social activity" and create electronic music alone. After a brief stint with experimental pop outfit the Blow ended in 2007, Bechtolt focused on his solo career as YACHT and released its debut, "I Believe in You. Your Magic Is Real," in 2007. Evans became an official member in 2008 after lending vocals to "Magic." Following the quiet success of "Magic" on Marriage Records, "See Mystery Lights" is expected to receive more fanfare upon its release on DFA. After YACHT filled in as a last-minute replacement on LCD Soundsystem's 2007 tour, Bechtolt became good friends with LCD mastermind James Murphy and began an e-mail relationship with DFA founder Jonathan Galkin, who quickly signed the group. 

YACHT's association with the label may be its ticket to spiking sales and breaking out of the underground. "DFA is definitely a brand that brings an expectation of quality," the band's manager Molly Hawkins says. "This group is a little left of their dance audience, but people trust DFA, and that's valuable for YACHT."

While DFA's credibility could expand YACHT's audience, the promotion for "Lights" has relied on the band's mystique. Bechtolt and Evans construct their own Web sites, remix their own album tracks and create their own music videos, including a clip for the single "Summer Song." They will be working on B-sides and remixes of Chartlift and Noah & the Whale before the release of "Lights" and are also planning a world tour beginning in early fall. The pair also hands out pamphlets on its belief system: The duo spent this year's South by Southwest festival distributing literature on the Triangle, "human-kind's most sacred and ancient symbol."

For Galkin, YACHT's multimedia viral promotion enhances its allure as a band. "If I could, I'd have them running our marketing and design," he says. "They take every task—videos, Web sites—as a challenge and execute it. Even if some of the stuff they talk about goes over my head, everything's so thought-out that I trust them to convey their message."
### ROCK

**RANCID**

*Let the Dominos Fall*

**Producer:** Brett Gurewitz

**Release Date:** June 2

Seven albums in, not much has changed for Rancid, and that’s a good thing. Produced by Bad Religion co-founder/Epitaph head Brett Gurewitz, “Let the Dominos Fall” is another slab of anthemic, tuneful punk that conjures the band’s 1996 masterpiece piece ... And Out Come the Wolves” (one track even name-checks that disc). So immediate are songs like “Disconnected,” they feel as if they’ve already been in the band’s set list for a decade. Over hard-charging rock, swinging ska-punk or just acoustic guitars and mandolins, Tim Armstrong and Lars Frederiksen deliver another round of catchy choruses, tipping their hats to, among others, the Troops in Iraq (“the bravest kids I know”), the city of New Orleans and their Bay Area home. But they’re never as good as they’re touting their own horn on the disc’s best track, “Last One to Die,” during which Armstrong rightly boasts, “We knew from the very first show what it was all about.” —WO

### STREET SWEEPER SOCIAL CLUB

*Street Sweeper Social Club*

**Producer:** Tom Morello

**Release Date:** June 16

Angry, pitchforks-in-the-streets populism has few busier cheerleaders than Tom Morello and Boots Riley, who, with their respective groups Rage Against the Machine and agit-hip-hop act the Coup, have reigned as some of the left’s most visible, visceral voices. But though a floundering economy, bombed-out GOP and a season or two of corporate bailouts have provided them with a fat barrel of fish to shoot, this rap-rock hybrid simmers instead of steams, never quite mustering the blood-boiling rage of its principal’s previous material. Morello’s blue-steel guitar work is in fine form (when it is not?), and Riley pops off some nice shots on tracks like “The Squeeze” and “100 Little Curses,” where he wishes poverty, bad cocaine and aucky life on his aristocratic targets. And Galactic drummer Stanton Moore acquits himself nicely in the rap-rock universe. But too much of it is disappointing jingoism (“Fight! Smash! Win!”) that falls well short of the vicious punch these guys are capable of. Maybe it’s just harder to rage when the machine’s in such lousy shape already. —JV

### FREELAND

**Cope**

**Producer:** Adam Freeland

**Marine Parade Records**

**Release Date:** Age 9

When Adam Freeland surfaced in 1999, at the tail end of the drum’n’bass movement, he was a DJ/producer championing a funny little sub-genre called nu skool break. It was so small that he was one of its only artists. But since 2003, the U.K. native has reinvented himself as a rock/punk/electro fusion guy, a la his contemporaries Junkie XL and James Lavelle. On “Cope” he collaborates with an impressive set of bold-faced instrumentalists—Twigg Ramirez (Marilyn Manson), Joey Santiago (Pixies), Tommy Lee (Motley Crue)—on songs that flip between shoegaze fodder (the swirling, My Bloody Valentine-ish “Silent Speaking”), thundery dancefloor wallops (“Bring It”) and foot-stomping punk (“Under Control”). As on many vaant attempts by electronic artists to cross over, there’s too much going on. But “Cope” succeeds in creating an overall sense of unrest and some moments of electro-transcendence. —KM

### STREET SWEEPER SOCIAL CLUB

*Street Sweeper Social Club*

**Producer:** Tom Morello

**Independent Label Group**

**Release Date:** June 16

Last year’s “Good Thing Going” featured a laundry list of big-name country guests, but there aren’t any star turns on Rhonda Vincent’s “Destination Life.” This one is an introduction to the current version of the Rag, her touring band, and there’s plenty for bluegrass fans to appreciate. Producers Vincent and longtime Sage fiddler Hunter Berry mostly keep to the basics, with emphasis on short solo bursts amid subtle interplay among the fiddle, mandolin, guitar and bass. Vincent co-wrote three songs, and all shine, especially the inspirational hymn “I Heard My Savior Calling Me.” The choice of covers is spot-on, too, with a surprising rendition of Rusty Young’s “Crazy Love” and an inspired twist on the well-worn “Stop the World (And Let Me Off),” several songs—Pete Goble’s “I Can Make Him Whisper (I Love You)” is a good example—have strong country crossover potential, and the duets Vincent sings with band members, in particular with new guitarist Ben Heislen on “Crazy What a Lonely Heart Will Do,” are memorably.LR

### BLUEGRASS

**RHONDA VINCENT**

*Destination Life*

**Producers:** Rhonda Vincent, Hunter Berry

**Rounder Records**

**Release Date:** June 16

Veteran guitar ace Bobby Broom has worked with an illustrious list of jazz luminaries, from the late organist Charles Earland to the leg- endary saxophonist Sonny Rollins. On Broom’s latest release as a leader, he tackles the nearly sacrosanct works of renowned pianist/composer Theonian Monk with an artful mix of grit and grace. Backed by the sym- pathetic rhythm section of Dennis Carroll on bass and Kobie Watkins on drums, Broom bluesifies Monk’s “Ask Me Now,” infuses funk and drum and bass backbeats into “In Walked Bud” and grooves with reckless abandon on “Rhythm-A

### JAZZ

**BOBBY BROOM**

*Bobby Broom Plays for Monk*

**Producer:** Bobby Broom

**Origin Records**

**Release Date:** June 16

As a jazz critic, I typically do not review jazz albums, but this one is too good to pass up. Bobby Broom, one of the most respected jazz guitarists in the world, has recorded a tribute to his hero, the great Keith Jarrett. Although Broom has recorded with many other greats, this is the first time he has recorded an album of Jarrett’s music. The result is nothing short of extraordinary. Broom’s playing is brilliant, with a sound that is both warm and cutting. The arrangement of the music is also very well done, with Broom and his bandmates creating a sound that is both cohesive and individual. Overall, this is a superb album that I highly recommend to all fans of jazz.
Real World
Release Date: June 16
World music explorer Justin Adams and Gambian griot Juuldeh Camara have combined their considerable talents to devise an electrifying fusion of rock and West Africa. Camara sings and performs on riti (a one-stringed African fiddle) and kologo (a two-stringed African banjo), while Adams plays acoustic and electric guitars. Partnering with a small group of choice sidemen, Camara and Adams tracked 11 tunes that constitute what is sure to be noted as one of the most imaginative world music albums of '09. "Fulan Coochie Man" is a cleverly styled meeting of Gambia and Muddy Waters, while "Madam Manama" offers more of a purely West African rhythm feel. "Ganako" spins out at a more measured pace than most of the other tracks, and its elegance suggests Camara's griot sensibility.—PVV

**POD**

**TODD SNIDER**
The Excitement Plan
Producer: Don Was
Yep Roc
Release Date: June 9
This cult-fave roots-rock veteran has never sounded more like a down-home Randy Newman than he does on "The Excitement Plan." Todd Snider relates his hilariously heartbreakingly hard-luck tales with a deadpan single-spake delivery while super-producer Don Was gives the scrappy bar-band arrangement a glimmer of studio-pro warmth. (Drummer Jim Keltner and steel guitarist Greg Leisz both contribute.) Highlights abound, but particularly fine are "America's Favorite Pastime," about the 1970 no-hit Doctor Ellies of the Pittsburgh Pirates says he pitched while high on LSD, and "Tweek Me," a rollicking rockabilly duet with Loretta Lynn (who co-wrote the tune); and the pretty piano-based ballad "Greencastle Blues," in which Snider thoughtfully describes being arrested for marijuana possession last year in Indiana.—MW

**DVD**

**JEFF BUCKLEY**
Grace Around the World
Producer: Tony Faske
Columbia/Legacy
Release Date: June 2
Fearless, uninhibited and utterly free, Jeff Buckley was that rare performer able to cast a spell on a generation. As such, it's no surprise that the two DVDs of "Grace Around the World" are spellbinding themselves. It includes a remastered version of "Grace," the only studio album he released in his lifetime, but it's not the focus of this boxed set. The first DVD compiles live performances from around the world with an invaluable interview among other extras—but the second DVD is the main event, containing a touching, telling documentary that collects memories and testimonials from family, friends, peers and even painters, dancers and classical musicians inspired by Buckley's music. All three discs come together with fun, scrapbook-like packaging to pull off that rare reissue home run—when a boxed set functions as a perfect introduction for newcomers and a worthy addition to any devotee's collection.—WO

**POP**

**V FACTORY**
Love Struck (4:07)
Producer: TWIN
Writing: Love Struck/ Warner Bros.
The Roman numeral for five explains V Factory, Tommy Page's new boy band that recently released its debut, "Love Struck." The rhythmic dance track includes production elements similar to the latest New Kids on the Block album but with a melodic bridge that sounds like five Justin Timberlakes. The young pop-dance, sing and offer a lot of strategic stuttering and "yeahs," "I-I" and "oh-oh" throughout the contagious hit, which first aired on Radio Disney and has climbed the top 40 nationwide ever since. And what boy band would release its first single without a Swedish production team? In this case, TWIN—Niklas Molinder and Joacim Persson—fashioned "Love Struck" and also took part in the songwriting. The V Factory bandmates have backgrounds ranging from dance troupes to film credits to national commercials and Broadway, which means loads of talent in multiples of five.—MM

**TINA PAROL**
Who's Got Your Money? (2:38)
Producers: Shep Goodman, Tina Parol, Kyle Kelso
Tina Parol, Writers: T. Parol,
M. Shimshack, S. Goodman
Universal Motown Records
It's the question on every American's mind. Though a challenging song title for a debut single in these tough times, it may be advantageous to 21-year-old New Yorker Tina Parol. "Who's Got Your Money?" is a vengeful anthem with a carefree attitude, where Parol's alluring pop/rock vocals are well-matched to her lively image in a similar vein to Avril Lavigne's "Girlfriend" and Pink's "So What." She self-medicates by getting back at her cheating boyfriend by "spending all of your dough." Like Lavigne and Pink, Parol isn't just another pretty, packaged pop star, either. Her songwriting talent includes collaborations with producers Danja and S'AM and Stoggo, and she also wrote "Rock Boy," the international B-side to Britney Spears' "If U Want It." Parol's full-length album "Shrinking Violet" is due in the fall.—MM

**ROCK**

**CAGE THE ELEPHANT**
 Ain't No Rest for the Wicked (2:52)
Producer: Jay Joyce
Writer: Cage the Elephant
Publisher: AUSKASY Entertainment (ASCAP)
Relentless
Cage the Elephant has had an interesting start for an American act. Formed in Kentucky, the band moved to England and released its debut last June in the United Kingdom, where it scored a top 40 hit with "Ain't No Rest for the Wicked." The song is a pop narrative of how people wind up choosing the wrong road in life. Appropriately, it's a slice of greasy, slide-guitar rock, with a hook that manages to penetrate upon first listen. Lead singer Matt Shultz has the whiskey-soaked tone of many a great rock singer, but his unique phrasing and sharp way around a pop hook separate him from the pack. Already a smash at alternative radio, the song's crossover success is imminent.—CW

**LEGEND & CRITICS**

**EDANTED BY WAYNE ROBINS**

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Ronald Hart, Matthew Hranicka, Ken Mapon, Michael Menachen, Wes Ohrshick, Jon Rejen, Leland Rucker, Ken Tucker, Philip Van Vleek, Jeff Vidal, Chris Williams, Mikael Wood

**CRITICS' CHOICE #4: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.**

**PICK #1:** A new release predicted to hit the top of the chart in the corresponding format.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Mitchell Peters at Billboard, 5035 Wilshire Blvd., Seventh Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036 and singles to Robert H. Loven, BMI, 10000, or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

**MARIAH CAREY**
Obsessed (4:05)
Producers: Mariah Carey, Tenus "TheDream" Nash, Christopher "Tricky" Stewart
Writers: M. Carey, T. Nash, C.A. Stewart
Publishers: various
Island Def Jam
Jay-Z may have declared Auto-Tune dead, but Mariah Carey just revived it. On the debut single from her 12th studio album ("Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel," due Aug. 25 on Island Def Jam), the singer who needs no vocal manipulation uses the effect with starting success. The key is making it look easy. Along with the-Dream and C. "Tricky" Stewart, Carey has crafted a gem of a disc that reaches, even over its sputtering moans and synch jabs. One questionable Windy analogy aside, her lyrical boasts are biting and funny, and the syrupy lightness of her vocals is tailor-made for the ribbon she gives her mystery pursuant (reportedly Eminem). Though some lament Carey trading in her sky-high notes and ballads for a more constrained, R&B-friendly range, the singer has clearly found a new comfort zone that could very well produce her 19th No. 1 hit.—MH

**YO LA TENGIO**
Periodically Double or Triple (3:53)
Producer: Roger Mouneton
Writers: I. Kaplan, G. Hubley, J. McNew
Publishers: Rotashana Music, Excellent Classical Songs (BMI)
Matador
Yo La Tengo's new album, "Popular Songs," recorded in early 2009 in Hoboken, N.J., and Nashville with longtime producer Roger Mouneton, isn't out until Sept. 8. But just in time for its summer tour of minor league ballparks opening for Wilco, the New Jersey trio has made the album's first single available for download from Matador's Matablog (matadorrecords.com). "Periodically Double or Triple" might not break any new ground, but the band certainly seems to be having a grand old time. The group splices together the backbeat to "Taxman," colors the groove with some fuzzy hockey-rink organ that sounds like Booker T. sitting in with the late-period Turtles and creates its sunniest single to date.—RH
Country Star Tracy Lawrence Releases His First Christian Album

Crossing Over

Country singer Tracy Lawrence's life has had an interesting trajectory, from hero to hell-raiser to heaven-bound family man. The latest chapter is chronicled on "The Rock," his first Christian album. Released June 9 on Christian Distributors, the album is being marketed to Christian retail by New Day Christian Distributors. It debuted No. 4 on Billboard's Top Christian Albums chart and No. 20 on Top Country Albums. This week the set is Nos. 10 and 27 on those charts, respectively.

Even before Lawrence debuted in 1991 with the No. 1 hit "Sticks and Stones," he made headlines when gunmen tried to rob him and his girlfriend. He fought back—allowing the girl to escape—and was shot four times, delaying his Atlantic debut.

Lawrence became one of the most successful artists of the '90s, known for his hit "Alibis." "Paint Me a Birmingham" and "Time Marches On." But he also developed a rough-and-rowdy reputation. He made headlines again in 1997 when his wife filed charges for battery following a marital spat. They divorced, and he took time away from the spotlight to straighten out his life.

Lawrence says that he'd wanted to do a Christian record for several years, but "I haven't been in the right place spiritually. I didn't feel I could do the album justice."

Now remarried with two children, Lawrence has returned to the family values of his childhood. "Having kids brought me back around to that place," he says. "And my career is thriving again. It seemed like it was the right time."

Instead of recording a collection of classic hymns, Lawrence chose originals. "I wrote a few things for the album but only put one on there called 'Dear Lord,' " he says. "I did a three-month search for new material and was overwhelmed and inspired by the caliber of songs I found."

"The stores thought this was an amazing record," says Michael Turner, New Day director of special projects and marketing. "One of the things they loved is that this isn't your typical hymns project. These songs are perfect for today."

The lead single, "Up to Him," speaks to the struggles of America's working class. "When I recorded this music last year, I had no idea the country was going to be in the shape that it's in financially," Lawrence says. "In retrospect, it seems like I've never done a more appropriate album for the times."

Lawrence has been doing in-stores at Wal-Marts and Christian retailers as well as press, including an interview with the Gospel Music Channel that New Day sent to Christian radio and retail. "Oh yeah, the questions were asked," Turner says, noting that Christian gatekeepers questioned his rowdy past and current motivation.

"My wife and I joined a Methodist church five or six years ago," Lawrence says, "and it's been extremely healthy for me getting close to people within the organization and close to the pastor. It's brought a great peace to my life. It's just been a very healthy few years for me, a lot more so than the first 15 of my career."

THE BITCH IS BACK

Fresh off Elton John’s June 7 Tony Awards performance of "Electricity," from "Billy Elliot: The Musical," his studio recording of the song bows on the Adult Contemporary chart at No. 28. John wrote the music for the Broadway show, which took home 10 Tonys, including the one for best musical. ¶ The title character performs "Electricity" in the show, but John recorded a version of the song a few years ago as a bonus track for the original cast recording album. The latter version has found new life thanks to the show's Tony triumph, and Decca is promoting it to radio for the first time. ¶ "Electricity" becomes John's record-extending 68th entry on the AC chart. Barbra Streisand is in second place, with 64.


ELVIS PRESLEY (1961-2009) First Hit: "(Marie's the Name) His Latest Flame," Most Recent: "Blue Christmas"

Worth
The Wait

New York Rapper Maino Finally Releases Long-Awaited Debut

Maino could have easily ridden on the coattails of his hit "Hi Hater," which last summer reached No. 26 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, No. 16 on Hot R&B Tracks and No. 21 on the mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop tally. Instead, the Brooklyn rapper pushed back the release of his Hustle Hard/Atlantic debut album, "If Tomorrow Comes," from fall 2008 to June 30, 2009, and took the time to build his fan base.

I wanted to paint a bigger picture," says Maino, born Jermaine Coleman. "There are times when people like a certain record, but they don't connect with the artist. I didn't want that to be the case for me. People in New York have known me for years, but how about all the other places? I wanted to give people a reason to buy my album, not just my single."

To help introduce himself beyond his native New York, Maino tapped producers like Swizz Beatz and Just Blaze and enlisted guest features from T-Pain and Trey Songz, among others. Aside from "Hi Hater," the album includes the second single "All the Above," which peaked at No. 14 on Hot Rap Tracks; "Million Bucks," featuring Beatz, currently No. 12 on the Billboard Under chart; the upbeat "Floatin,'" which deals with the pain of losing loved ones to the streets; "Let's Make a Movie," a sensual piece about making a sex tape; and the anger-filled "Kill You."

To help promote the album, Maino recently released a DVD, "Unstoppable," through Best of the Block/Hustle Hard, which is available through MuxUnIt.com. It's a movie about his trials and tribulations during his transition from street hustler and ex-con (for a drug-related kidnapping) to mainstream rapper. "Doing a DVD about my life was about giving back to my core—the people who liked me from the get-go—and also getting new people to know me," he says. "Plus I want to show everyone that as a rapper, I bring a breath of fresh air. I am the new face of New York, but I also represent a new era. I'm real. I don't come with a lot of fillers, and I'm not Hollywood. I come to the people as the people and I keep it 100%. That is what separates me from other rappers."

To further promote the album, Maino is doing TV spots on BET and MTV during release week, and the latter broad-casts recently picked up webisodes that Maino released through his social networking pages. These will be updated daily over the next few weeks before the album's release date. Various contests staged at urban radio stations across the country and billboard ads appearing in Brooklyn are also part of the marketing plan.

Additionally, the song "Here Comes Trouble," produced by the U.S.T.I.C.E. League, will be featured in the independent film "Brooklyn's Finest," starring Richard Gere, Don Cheadle, Ethan Hawke and Wesley Snipes. The film is slated to open Dec. 11.

Maino hopes to expand the business side of his career as well. His Hustle Hard label recently released a book, "Gangsters Don't Die," written by Maino's brother, Mouse. Maino also wants to branch out into movies and TV.

For now, the rapper is busy preparing to officially introduce himself to the world by way of his album debut. "You're looking at a dude who spent his life in the streets and went to jail. Hip-hop has provided me with a way out of hell. I love hip-hop and music for that," he says. "Now all I can do is maintain, hold my head and keep making great music. And that's just what I plan to do."

MOORE COUNTRY

Justin Moore knows of what he speaks, sings and writes. The Poyen, Ark., native's current single, "Small Town USA," which extols the virtues of down-home living, rises to No. 18 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart. It's "pretty autobiographical," Moore says of the song, which waxes poetically about Saturday nights, Sunday mornings and dirt roads and name-checks Hank Williams Jr.

Moore's self-titled debut album is due Aug. 11 on Big Machine Records/Valory Music. Billboard can report exclusively, Moore, who wrote or co-wrote nine of the 10 tracks, describes his music as what would happen if one put "Alabama's lyrics with Lynyrd Skynyrd's melodies."

Moore grew up on southern rock and old-school country, last hit the road with heroes Williams and Skynyrd. "Not to be cliché," he says, "but it was a dream come true."

Although Moore has been singing since the age of 2, his move to Nashville wasn't preordained. As a teenager, he sang with his uncle's southern rock band, which he "really fell in love with." But he was also a better-than-average high school baseball player who was offered a scholarship to play in college. After attending college for two weeks, Moore went to Nashville. "I wanted to play music for a living," he says.

He eventually signed a publishing deal, even though he'd never written a song. "Writing is something I'd never thought about until I moved to town," he says. "I was looking for songs to cut and not finding anything. So I thought, 'I'll write them myself.'"

But writing for Big Machine Publishing wasn't paying the bills. "I was keeping all the songs for myself," Moore says. "I did some crappy jobs; even sold meat out of the back of my truck."

Moore then connected with producer Jeremy Stover, who worked with country singer Jack Ingram and introduced him to Big Machine/Valory Music founder Scott Borchetta. "Scott told me, 'If you're a country singer, we are pretty sure we can get you a record deal."

"I like the idea of having a record deal," Moore says. "Three or four years later, here we are." Moore's talent has impressed country WNCB Birmingham, Ala., PD Justin Case. "The guy writes, his live show is strong, and he has an inner drive that makes you believe he has what it takes to be successful," Case says. "You pull for guys like that." -Ken Tucker
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The Jonas Brothers’ Tween Dream Conundrum

The Jonas Brothers have entered the awkward phase. The trio’s fourth album (and third for Hollywood Records), “Lines, Vines and Tryin’ Times,” enters at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with a handsome 247,000 copies. However, that’s less than half as many copies as what their last studio set, “A Little Bit Longer,” sold when it debuted at No. 1 less than a year ago with 525,000.

I’d venture to guess that the number that “Little” registered at the height of Jonasmania was attributed to pent-up demand for any and all things Jonas-related.

And, because their fan base is primarily made up of young and tween girls whose tastes frequently change, perhaps some of their fans have moved on. Things that seem cool to kids rapidly turn uncool. (There is some speculation here, but you remember being a kid, don’t you?)

OK, so how have the Jonases entered an awkward phase again?

Let’s compare the Jonas Brothers to *N Sync. It’s not a completely apples-to-apples comparison, but *N Sync began as a young, female fan-driven act, much like the Jonas Brothers.

Girls discovered *N Sync thanks to its 1998 self-titled debut and found the five-some irresistibly dreamy and loved their catchy pop tunes, much like how fans reacted to the Jonas Brothers and their self-titled 2007 debut set for Hollywood Records.

After *N Sync’s career-establishing debut album and some success on the radio, it returned with its big follow-up: 2000’s “No Strings Attached.” It bowed at No. 1 with 2.4 million copies in its first week—by far the biggest sales week for any album since Nielsen SoundScan began tracking data in 1991. It spawned numerous radio hits, including “Bye Bye Bye” and “It’s Gonna Be Me.”

For the Jonases, the all-important follow-up was “A Little Bit Longer” and the 250,000 copies it rang up in its first week last year. It cemented the trio’s star status and spun off two mainstream Top 40 airplay hits, “Burnin’ Up” and “Lovebug.” A few months after the album’s release, the group secured its first Grammy Award nomination, for best new artist.

That brings us to the awkward third album for *N Sync—2001’s “Celebrity.” It started with a smashing 1.9 million copies in its first week—impressive, but still off compared to the opening week of “No Strings,” just as the first-week sales for “Lines” were off when compared to “Little.” So, sales-wise, there is a similarity in the math.

But, “Celebrity” also broadened *N Sync’s appeal by dabbling in electronic and R&B rhythms. Its lead single, “Pop,” was an aggressive dance number, while the subsequent singles “Gone” and “Girlfriend” were straightforward R&B-inspired numbers.

The last two singles also happen to be *N Sync’s only hits on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, giving the act exposure to a wider audience and some credibility with the hip-hop world.

With the new Jonas Brothers album, they’re taking chances by bringing in an unlikely collaborator in Common and striking a somewhat serious self-referential pose with its lead single, “Paranoid.” You know the Brothers are growing up when it sounds like they are taking part in hot shots at ex-girlfriends: “I never trust a word she says/I’m running all the background checks/And she’s freakin’ out.”

So, where do they go from here? With “Celebrity” for *N Sync, it was the perfect launch pad for the group’s Justin Timberlake and his solo debut album. That set, 2002’s “Justified,” came across as a Michael Jackson-esque, slickly soul production, especially with its lead single, “Like I Love You.”

None of this was extraordinarily surprising, since the groundwork had already been laid with “Celebrity.” Timberlake was able to be taken seriously both as a hip-hop artist and as a “grown-up” performer—not just a poppy singer with a pretty face that only little girls adored.

For the Jonas Brothers, I’m not sure if “Lines” is the prelude to a solo Jonas record. If it isn’t, the trick for the group is finding a way to lure in more fans that are—frankly—not girls, while gaining a wider reception at more radio formats.

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**Market Watch**

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

**Weekly Unit Sales**

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<th>Album</th>
<th>Digital Tracks</th>
<th>Weekly Unit Sales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonas Brothers</td>
<td>Lines, Vines and Tryin’ Times</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
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**Year-To-Date**

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<th>OVERALL UNIT SALES</th>
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<td>Sales by Store Type</td>
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**Digital Tracks Sales**

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<td>Physical</td>
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www.americanradiohistory.com
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Lines, Vines And Try It Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>The E.N.O.</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relapse</td>
<td>DAVE MATTHEWS BAND</td>
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<td>Monuments And Memories</td>
<td>EMINEM</td>
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<td>The Fame</td>
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<td>Chickenfoot</td>
<td>LADY GAGA</td>
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<td>Hannah Montana: The Movie</td>
<td>SOUNDTRACK</td>
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<td>21st Century Breakdown</td>
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<td>Fearless</td>
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<td>The Foundation</td>
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<td>Greatest Hits II</td>
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<td>The Last</td>
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<td>HANK WILLIAMS JR.</td>
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<td>Twilight</td>
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<td>Secret, Profane &amp; Sugarcanes</td>
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<td>In A Perfect World…</td>
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<td>Above And Beyond: Video Collection &amp; Dance Mixes (EP)</td>
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<td>The Fray</td>
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<td>Back &amp; Forth</td>
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<td>Little Bit Of Everything</td>
<td>BILLY CURRINGTON</td>
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<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>TAYLOR SWIFT</td>
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<td>Good Time</td>
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<td>Live From Madison Square Garden</td>
<td>ERIC CLAPTON &amp; STEVE WINWOOD</td>
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<td>La Revolution</td>
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<td>Isolated Incident</td>
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**THE BILLBOARD 200 CHART DATA**

**THE BILLBOARD 200**

**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**
**TOP ALBUMS**

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**TOP DIGITAL**

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**TOP ROCK**

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**TOP INTERNET**

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**ACTIVE ROCK SONGS**

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**EXCLUSIVE CHARTS FROM BILLBOARD.BIZ**

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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

**ALTERNATIVE KINGS**

Kings of Leon become the fifth act in the 20-year history of the Alternative chart to land three songs simultaneously in the chart's top 20. This week, "Notion" vaults 25-20, which it joins a pair of former No. 15-"Use Somebody" (No. 4) and "Sex on Fire" (No. 16)—within the chart's upper half.

The quarter is in good company. The other four acts to achieve this feat are Foo Fighters (May 10, 2008), Linkin Park (Nov 3, 2007), R.E.M. (Dec. 10, 1988) and U2. The last band is the only act to turn the hat trick with more than one set of songs. U2 pulled off the feat Dec. 10, 1988; Jan. 4, 1992, and Feb. 1, 1992.

—Anthony Colombo
## Hot 100 Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Artist Support/Production Label</th>
<th>Artist Support/Production Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knock You Down</td>
<td>P. Diddy Feat. Mary J. Blige</td>
<td>P. Diddy (Interscope/Thasnex)</td>
<td>P. Diddy (Interscope/Thasnex)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boom Boom Pow</td>
<td>Nelly Feat. Teddy Riley</td>
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<td>Nelly (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Willams</td>
<td>Willams (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Best I Ever Had</td>
<td>Justin Bieber</td>
<td>Justin Bieber (Mercury/PolyGram)</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Beyoncé</td>
<td>Beyoncé (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>Beyoncé (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Give You Hell</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Nelly (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>Nelly (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>The Climb</td>
<td>Maroon 5</td>
<td>Maroon 5 (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>If I Was Your Last Day</td>
<td>Joss Stone</td>
<td>Joss Stone (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>Swagger</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
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## Hot Digital Songs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I Gotta Feeling (The Real Eric Paslay)</td>
<td>Eric Paslay</td>
<td>Eric Paslay (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>Eric Paslay (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Please Don’t Leave Me</td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson</td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>How Do You Like That?</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Pink (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>Pink (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>All the Above</td>
<td>Ke$ha</td>
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<td>Ke$ha (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Turn My Swag on</td>
<td>J. Cole</td>
<td>J. Cole (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>J. Cole (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>That’s Not My Name</td>
<td>Joss Stone</td>
<td>Joss Stone (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>Her Diamonds</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Blame It</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>I Don’t Love You</td>
<td>Whitney Houston</td>
<td>Whitney Houston (Z107(Z107)/Columbia)</td>
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## Album Charts

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music retailers. Sales data for albums that Billboard has paid for or promoted are included in the total. Sales totals are in millions.

### Sales Certifications
- RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinum). RIAA certification for sales of 100,000 units or more. An RIAA certified Multi-Platinum or Diamond symbol indicates albums’ sales performance in the United States. For sales of 200,000 units or more, the RIAA Multiple Platinum symbol indicates albums’ sales performance in the United States. For sales of 400,000 units or more, the RIAA Diamond symbol indicates albums’ sales performance in the United States.

### Music Video Sales Charts
- RIAA certification for sales of 500,000 units or more. Each RIAA certification for sales of 500,000 units or more is based on a combination of sales, promotional copies, and video rental streams. For sales of 1 million units or more, the RIAA Million Dollar Video Certified symbol indicates video sales of $1 million or more at retail.

### Divided Sales Records
- RIAA certified for net sales of 250,000 units or more. Divided sales records are certified for grouped sales of 250,000 units or more, as well as for sales of 500,000 units or more to a single retailer. Divided sales records are based on a combination of sales, promotional copies, and video rental streams. For sales of 1 million units or more, the RIAA Million Dollar Video Certified symbol indicates sales of $1 million or more at retail.
### Hot Country Songs

**Title** | Artist | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---
"If I Was A Carpenter" | Justin Moore | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"Love" | Martina McBride | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"One In A Million" | Taylor Swift | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"I Love You" | George Strait | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"Country Girl (Shake It For Me)" | Alan Jackson | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" | Miranda Lambert | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"All My Ex's Live In Texas (And So Do I)" | George Strait | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"Better Than I Used To Be" | Blake Shelton | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"The Other Side" | Dierks Bentley | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
"Ten Rounds With An Angel" | Randy Travis | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1

### Top Country Albums

**Artist** | Title | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---
Taylor Swift | Fearless | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Kenny Chesney | Greatest Hits II | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Rascal Flatts | Unstoppable | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Jason Aldean | My Kinda Party | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Darius Rucker | Learn To Live | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Lady Antebellum | Lady Antebellum | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Sugarland | Love On The Inside | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Keith Urban | Defying Gravity | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Billy Currington | Little Bit Of Everything | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Taylor Swift | Taylor Swift | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Alan Jackson | Good Time | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Craig Morgan | That Lonesome Song | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Rodney Carrington | El Nino Loco | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Rascal Flatts | Greatest Hits Volume 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Dierks Bentley | Feel That Fire | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Eric Church | Carolina | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Montgomery Gentry | Outlaws And Gentlemen | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Toby Keith | For Our Heroes | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Kenny Chesney | Lucky Old Sun | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1

### Top Bluegrass Albums

**Artist** | Title | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---
Steve Martin | The Crow: New Songs For The Movie | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Ronda Vincent | Destination Life | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Sarah Jarosz | Song Up In Her Head | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver | Destination | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Old Crow Medicine Show | Tennessee Pusher | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Various Artists | Bluegrass Wednesday: 20 Songs To Ease Your Spirt | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1

### Between The Bullets

Scoring his first top 10 start with his first set of new songs in more than seven years and his biggest one-week sum in three years (22,000 copies), Hank Williams Jr. has the Hot Shot Debut at No. 7 on Top Country Albums with "20 Rose Avenue." It’s his biggest Nielsen SoundScan week since “The Essential Collection” opened with 39,000 copies in July 2006. His most recent top 10 start with a studio album was “Alabama Club” (No. 9) in Jan. 26, 2002, issue. The new album’s lead single, “Red, White, & Pink-Slip Blues,” spent four weeks on Hot Country Songs in April/May. —Wade Jessen

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 61
### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>WEEKS</th>
<th>PEAKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,263</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ALI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,264</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T.M.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ANDY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,266</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>WILL DOWNING</td>
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### Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Tracks

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<td>2</td>
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<td>SNOOP DOGG</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2PAC</td>
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<td>JAY-Z</td>
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### Rhythm & Sound

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SNOOP DOGG</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B.I.G.</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
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### Adult R&B

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<td>SNOOP DOGG</td>
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<td>B.I.G.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DMX</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS, IZIBOR MAKE WAVES**

The veteran crooner Will Downing earns his second consecutive top five on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, and his highest career debut on the Billboard 200, with his latest album, "Classique." At No. 3 on the former chart, his 14th album follows 2007's "After Tonight," which was his first No. 1. At No. 22 on the Billboard 200, "Classique" sells 20,000 copies. It nearly matches his best Nielsen SoundScan week, when "After Tonight" debuted at No. 37 with 21,000. Also in the top 10 of Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, Irish singer Laura Izibor makes a solid debut as "Let the Truth Be Told" enters at No. 6. The album bows at No. 27 on the Billboard 200 with 16,000 copies. It features "From My Heart to Yours," which rises 8-4 on the Adult R&B airplay chart and earns the tally's Greatest Gainer.

—Raphael George

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**HOT RAP SONGS**

<table>
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<th>WEEK</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>BOOM BOOM PUMP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE BAKE FEAT. T.C</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I WANT YOU</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>OUR BIZARRE</td>
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**DATA FOR WEEK OF JULY 4, 2009**

**CHARTS LEGEND**

- **R&B/HIP-HOP**
- **TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS**
- **MAINSTREAM R&B/HIP-HOP TRACKS**
- **RHYTHM & SOUND**
- **ADULT R&B**

**WEBSITE**

www.americanradiohistory.com

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

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www.americanradiohistory.com
**HOT LATIN SONGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Label(s)</th>
<th>Hot Latin Songs Chart Peak</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;El Trono de Mexico&quot;</td>
<td>Yandel</td>
<td>Universal Music Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;La Mente Maestra&quot;</td>
<td>Mark Angel</td>
<td>Universal Music Latino</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;El Trono de Mexico&quot;</td>
<td>Yandel</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;La Mente Maestra&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Por Siempre&quot;</td>
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<td>Universal Music Latino</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Yandel</td>
<td>Universal Music Latino</td>
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**TOP LATIN ALBUMS**

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<tr>
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**REGIONAL MEXICAN ALBUMS**

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**TROPICAL ALBUMS**

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**LATIN RHYTHM ALBUMS**

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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

**El Trono de Mexico's "Desde La Patria En Vivo" debuts at No. 6 on Top Latin Albums and at No. 2 on Top Regional Mexican Albums, selling more than 2,000 copies. Amazingly, this is the group's sixth release in just two years, and all six have debuted in the top five on Regional Mexican Albums. Since its first charting album, "Fuego Nuevo," in 2007, no other act has accumulated as many top five debuts on the chart.**

---Rayuela Ramirez
### Japan

**Singles**

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YELLOW BIRD COLORING BOOK TAKES WING

The nonprofit organization Yellow Bird Project has partnered with the U.K.-based artist Andy J. Miller to create a coloring book that features artwork inspired by such acts as Rilo Kiley, Devendra Banhart, the Shins, Bon Iver, Andrew Bird and MGMT.

YBP founders Matthew Stotland and Casey Cohen were inspired to create “The Indie Rock Coloring Book” after discovering that Miller had put together a similar project for some of his favorite bands. Miller, who designed each of the book’s 25-plus pages, was inspired by artists who’ve worked with the nonprofit.

“The coloring book is aimed toward indie rock fans, but it will also appeal to a wide range of ages, according to Stotland. “Indie rock fans can buy it for their kids, but it’s definitely geared toward people who have a certain understanding of these bands and know their music,” he says. “It’s also a fun thing to have in your dorm rooms that people could just color in.”

One of Stotland’s favorite pages is designed after folk artist Banhart’s beard. Hidden within the facial hair are birds, which the reader is instructed to color yellow. Another carnival-themed page designed after the rock act Clap Your Hands Say Yeah says to “put your hands together and color this crazy carnival! Yeah!”

Published by Chronicle Books, the book is scheduled for online release in early August through YellowBirdProject.com, Amazon and other online retailers. Shortly thereafter, a version of “Survive” will be available in select stores, according to Stotland.

“We want it to be sold in all sorts of specialty and record shops, where our fans would shop,” he says, noting that specific retailers are still being worked out.

All proceeds from the $9.95 coloring book will be distributed to charities that YBP supports. The nonprofit works with indie bands to sell T-shirts through its Web site, with money raised going to the charity of the act’s choice. —Caitlin Bowers
WORLD COPYRIGHT SUMMIT

The International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) held its second annual World Copyright Summit June 9-10 at the Ronald Reagan Conference Center in Washington, D.C. Its lineup featured more than 100 speakers including CISAC president Robin Gibbs of Bee Gees fame, songwriter/producer Lamont Dozier and musician/composer Armando Manzanero. The summit provided a forum to discuss the importance of copyright protection and the distribution of creative works in the digital era and attracted attendees from the entertainment and technology fields, including executives from the Motion Picture Assn. of America, the Consumer Electronics Assn., Microsoft and YouTube, as well as key government officials and legislators. But most of the summit's agenda was dedicated to the music publishing industry, which was represented by officials from international publishers and collecting societies. Photos: COURTESY OF MAX TAYLOR (except where noted)

INSIDE TRACK

A NEW BEAT

The English Beat's Dave Wakeling is keenly aware that it's been a while since he's put out a record. His last was General Public's third album, "Rub It Better" released in 1995. But with the 2 Tone movement that he helped pioneer turning 30 this year, he's hitting the studio with a "ton of songs" and a plan to bring something out under either his own name or the group moniker later this year.

"I don't know if it's an album; I'm leaning toward the idea of some kind of EP at the moment," says Wakeling, whose latest incarnation of the English Beat is touring with Reel Big Fish this summer. "It seems to me that now songs are being used in a more creative way. A lot of people are giving them away to the fans who keep showing up at their concerts.

"So rather than busting my brains over it, I figure I'll just record songs, start in June and finish in September when we come back from the tour and then look into some creative ideas for ways to bring them out."

Wakeling expects to be road-testing some of the new songs this summer, including "The Love You Give Lasts Forever," "I Said We Would Never Die," "How Can You Stand There," "I'll Be There for You Too," "The One and Only," "Redemption Time" and "Every Time You Told Me." He's also planning to record some of the shows for an English Beat live album that may also come out before year's end.

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During "ISPs/Telecos Part of the Problem or the Solution?" panels concentrated on the issues and future relationship between rights owners and Internet service providers. Standing, from left: DGA CEO Martin C. LaFerla, Chorus founder Jim Griffl; IPI executive VP of global legal policy Shira Piefumatm and PlayLoudier MSP co-founder/general manager Paul Sanders. Seated, from left: Cedar By-LRA CEO Yvonne Looby, Billboard editorial director Bill Werde, who moderated, and SAMRO CEO Nicholas Motsatsa.
Brandy at Billboard Live
TOKYO 2009.5.25-27 / OSAKA 2009.5.29-30

With her latest album "Human" released after four-year-hiatus, Brandy finally came back to Japan and entertained her fans for the first time in 10 years. Starting with the aggressive tune "Afrodisiac", an ideal number for the opening of the glamorous show, she performed 15 songs non-stop mixing her previous hits and new songs from "Human." From the start, the venue was filled with an air of excitement and many fans were jumping and dancing up and down enthusiastically. And under an intimate atmosphere with the small audience of 300, Brandy was undoubtedly enjoying the performance by communicating with the fans in Japanese like "Arigatou!" or asking them "How do you say 'I love you' in Japanese?" She definitely gave the best performance to Japanese fans who had been waiting for it almost 10 years, and each and everyone must have cherished the moment and felt, "I want to keep that voice in my ears forever..."
Hearing Jon Bon Jovi, Kenny Chesney, or Eric Clapton perform where they got their start

Thanks to Jon Bon Jovi, Kenny Chesney, and Eric Clapton for their participation in ROOTS OF ROCK

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