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Pos Pol

As Congress Positions From Summer Recess, Artists Must Recommit To Raising Their Voices In Washington

BY SHEILA E. AND ALICE PEACOCK

We come from different backgrounds, different parts of the country and different musical styles. Yet something more striking than geography or genre unites us to each other—and to hundreds of artists around the country. We both have raised our voices in the halls of Congress urging policymakers to advance the rights of creative makers. In fact, the creator’s voice in recent years has become stronger, clearer and more influential. And as more of our colleagues join the chorus, we can amplify our voices even more in the coming year.

As elected leaders of the Recording Academy, we’ve often been told by the academy’s Washington, D.C., representatives, “The best lobbyists for artists, songwriters and studio professionals are the music creators themselves.” We’ve taken these words to heart as we each have testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and attended countless meetings with policymakers about performance royalties.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Music professionals from all walks of life have come to Washington to address far-reaching issues from copyright to the use of the wireless spectrum to arts funding. And the results speak for themselves. For the recent 110th and 111th Congress brought the advance of important music policy, often after lobbying by music makers themselves. Bills that would have allowed interference to wireless microphones were defeated after artists and recording engineers explained the threat to live concerts. Arts practitioners successfully lobbied to have $50 million of the stimulus bill allocated to the arts industry. And the prioritizing of resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act enhanced copyright enforcement and created a cabinet-level “copyright czar” position.

But perhaps most impressive is the momentum of the Performance Rights Act, for which we both testified on Capitol Hill. As part of the music First Coalition, the academy and nearly a dozen other music organizations have assembled hearings, events and meetings to advocate for this important legislation. The bill now has bipartisan support, is co-sponsored by eight House committee chairmen, has been approved by the House Judiciary Committee and will soon be approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Artists have wanted a performance right for 80 years and because we’re standing up, standing strong and standing together, we have achieved more in the past two years than previous efforts have in the past eight decades. However, there’s more work to be done. More songwriters, producers and engineers need to become effective lobbyists in order to move the performance rights legislation over the finish line. Additionally, we’ll be facing tax issues, health policy and other copyright matters that affect all of our lives and livelihoods. So what can each of us do?

Follow the issues: Become educated about music policy. Such publications as Billboard and the academy’s Capitol Tracks (grammy.com/advocacy) offer news on how decisions in Washington affect the music community nationwide. Read music blogs, attend music town halls and join the Grammys on the Hill Facebook group. There are numerous ways to stay informed.

Make Capitol Hill a stop on your tour: Many of us route our tours through the Washington market. If you can spare an hour, visit with your local representative. Representatives or their staff will want to meet you and hear your perspective. Remember, you’re their boss.

Attend Grammys on the Hill in Washington: If you’re an academy member, consider joining Washington’s largest annual music community advocacy day. In April, hundreds of music professionals will descend on Capitol Hill to advance music policy. Be part of this historic movement to advance the rights of music creators.

Testifying before the Senate was an experience neither of us will ever forget. As the senators sat high on the dais, with the echoes of countless cameras documenting every move, we couldn’t help but feel part of history. We also realized the important power that has been seized by recording professionals in recent years. Our opinions matter, our roles are appreciated, our views shape policy, and policymakers are listening.

Now is the time for all artists, songwriters, producers and engineers—from the up-and-coming to veterans and established professionals—to take advantage of our collective power. As we make our voices louder and stronger, we can affect a policy that will benefit our community for years to come.

SHEILA E. is a Grammy Award-winning entertainer/musician/composer and a member of the board for the Recording Academy’s Los Angeles Chapter. Alice Peacock is a singer/songwriter from Chicago who serves as a national trustee of the Recording Academy.

FOR THE RECORD
Care Bears on Fire didn’t perform with the Jonas Brothers when CBOF appeared July 23 at the Theatre of the Living Arts in Philadelphia to open for Honor Society. A photo caption in the Aug. 15 issue was unclear on this point.

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THE SOUNDS OF SCIENCE

Major Labels Expand Experimentation With CD Pricing

Major labels are beginning to show signs of giving in to pressure to cut wholesale prices on recorded music. And while it’s difficult to tell where the latest round of price reductions will ultimately lead, a period of greater CD pricing experimentation is clearly at hand.

In September, Sony Music Entertainment will roll out the next phase of its Accel program, which already has cut wholesale prices on catalog titles and will now lower prices on new releases. Sources say EMI Music is also preparing its own repricing program, with both Sony and EMI following in the footsteps of Universal Music Group, which launched its JumpStart repricing program in 2003.

Meanwhile, Trans World Entertainment, one of the largest music retailers in the United States, is nudging the majors further down this path by enlisting the participation of UMG, Sony and EMI in a pricing experiment at $4 of its stores, which are selling every single CD they carry for $4.99.

Sony’s Accel program, which the major introduced in June at the annual NARM convention in San Diego, will unveil a second phase of price reductions beginning Sept. 1. Since June 30, Sony has repriced nearly 4,000 catalog titles at $5.40 wholesale and more than 1,700 titles at $6.40. The company is now adding even lower wholesale price points of $3.05 on more 300 titles and $1.90 on 200-plus titles, while also adding Latin and classical releases to the list of repriced catalog titles. For catalog double-albums, Sony’s main wholesale price point is $12, with nearly 700 titles at that level.

In addition, Sony is taking a scalpel to prices on front-line new releases, with superstar albums like Whitney Houston’s new Arista set, “I Look to You,” to be priced at $10.30 wholesale (down from $11.86), with a suggested retail price of $13.98. New releases by other established acts will be priced at $9.10 wholesale/$11.98 suggested retail, while new titles by developing artists will be priced at $7 wholesale/$9.98 suggested retail. So far, sources say, 35 titles have been priced at $10.50, nearly $80 at $9.10 and about 60 at $7.

Accel closely mirrors JumpStart, which UMG launched in September 2003 and revamped in 2004, retailers say. Under JumpStart, star product is $10.35 wholesale, established artists are $9.10 and developing artists are $6.06. So far, Warner Music Group has opted out of the repricing game for new frontline releases.

Meanwhile, while leading music retailers like Wal-Mart, Best Buy and Borders have experienced varying levels of success in trying to persuade the majors to offer better wholesale pricing, Trans World is taking an unusually bold approach by attempting to gauge how consumers would respond to across-the-board CD pricing of $9.99. In July, the parent of F.Y.E., Coconuts and other retail brands began testing $9.99 pricing in six of its stores and subsequently expanded the pricing experiment to 54 stores.

In order to run the test, Trans World, which declined to comment, asked labels for $6.30 wholesale pricing. Indie labels had a hard time accepting that figure, particularly for new releases, but many of them ultimately played ball with the merchant, sources say.

The majors pushed back and secured a price of $7.50 wholesale, which sources say was high enough to induce UMG, EMI and Sony to participate. Sources also note that labels have some experience with that price point with Wal-Mart under its $7.92 retail pricing program for certain releases.

A sales executive at one of the majors estimates his company needs about a 55% increase in sales from Trans World in order to justify the lower wholesale price. In the initial six-store phase of Trans World’s experiment, sales surged about 116%, sources say, adding that sales jumped 90%-100% once the test was expanded to 54 locations.

Because the Trans World pricing initiative is a test, suppliers are allowed under law to provide special discounts to that account. But if Trans World were to roll out $7.50 wholesale/$9.99 retail pricing chainwide, the labels would be forced to offer $7.50 wholesale pricing to the rest of their retail accounts or risk being in violation of federal antitrust laws.

Can the anticipated increase in sales from lower CD prices be sustainable in the long term? It’s a crucial question facing label executives, because once they enable $9.99 retail pricing for all retailers, there will be no turning back.

Attention shoppers: Sony Music is cutting wholesale prices on new releases, including albums by (from left) Whitney Houston, Mariah and Barbra Streisand.

See the Retail Track column on page 6 for more on CD pricing.
KNOCK YOU DOWN
Labels Finally Show Flexibility On CD Pricing

Record labels have demonstrated a willingness to make wholesale changes to digital music services with innovative pricing arrangements. But despite years of pleading from traditional brick-and-mortar retailers for lower pricing, the majors have been big stick with long-entrenched wholesale pricing formulas at physical retail. And by golly, that was that, no matter how badly sales kept plunging. Until now.

With Sony Music Entertainment’s announcement to roll out the second phase of its Accel program, which includes EMI launching a similar program, the majors are starting to address a hot topic among retailers.

While Universal Music Group and Sony have priced superstars’ releases at around $10.99-$10.50 wholesale, retailers say that a $9.99 retail price point is the only thing that will slow the decline of physical sales. As part of its test, Trans World asked labels to provide $6.50 wholesale pricing, but the three majors that sources say are participating in the test—UMG, Sony and EMI—insisted on the more digestible $7.50 wholesale price point.

Moreover, the test didn’t get off the ground without a lot of griping, complaining and a tantrum or two.

When Trans World chairman/CEO Bob Higgins received the Presidential Award at the annual NARM convention in June, he warned attendees in a speech that the future viability of the album was in jeopardy. He said the industry could save the format if it invested more heavily in artist development and ensured that physical albums were priced properly to maximize sales.

Higgins identified $9.99 as the magic retail price point that could help drive greater CD sales. He said that in order to achieve that figure, labels and artists would have to come to the table just as they had done previously with Apple’s iTunes Music Store to create a simple value proposition.

Higgins’ call for lower pricing angered many label distribution executives. But Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese says he agrees with the Trans World chief’s line of thinking, up to a point. “A retailer trying to prove something on pricing doesn’t mean anything unless it’s done in concert with managers and artists,” Dreese says. “A new pricing model will require that paradigm shift, and that has nothing to do with technology.”

Look at the deals that Walmart is cutting nowadays with band management, he says, pointing out that the retail giant is getting bands like Kiss, Journey and Foreigner to create triple-disc anthologies that sell for about $12.

Dreese says it’s ridiculous that Verizon Wireless can cut new deals with labels, artists, management and music publishers at the same time that those constituencies won’t give brick-and-mortar stores the same consideration.

“The problem is that some have nothing to gain and others have plenty to lose,” Dreese says. “No one is concerned about the overall health of the industry, only about their own parochial interests.”

So why are some of the majors suddenly willing to consider lower CD pricing? Is it because CD sales in the United States are down by about 20% so far this year from the same period last year, according to Nielsen SoundScan? Or is it because digital sales have yet to fulfill their promise, leaving labels still in need of the CD format, even though they’d rather live in a virtual world without warehouses or returns?

“If we think that the digital download is going to save our industry, we are kidding ourselves,” Higgins said during his speech at NARM. “Don’t get me wrong: The digital revolution has been a great vehicle for reviving the singles business. But I don’t think you can call the digital to succeed based on one company’s accomplishments.”

Yet, as recently as last summer, the majors were willing to dismiss a talk show calling the entire physical music industry dead. In the debut week of “The Caroll Crier” (908,000) million in digital albums (100,000), according to SoundScan. It wasn’t until this year, when Michael Jackson’s death generated U.S. album sales of 4.3 million— including 3.7 million in the CD format, according to SoundScan—that the continued importance of physical music sales finally broke through the digital clutter.

No doubt, some label executives will use Jackson’s post-mortem sales as an excuse to cling to high CD pricing, reasoning that when there’s demand, it doesn’t matter what the pricing is.

But bar any extraordinary event like Jackson’s tragic and untimely death, it’s hard to think of a scenario under which demand would render pricing a moot issue, especially given all the other forms of entertainment vying for a consumer’s attention.

So while it looks like lower CD pricing is on its way, the nagging question that remains is: Are the pricing concessions now being offered by the majors too little, too late?
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Sony Music Strikes Worldwide Licensing Pact On Jimi Hendrix Masters

The Jimi Hendrix catalog is moving over and letting another major take over. Experience Hendrix has struck an eight-year, worldwide licensing deal with Sony Music Entertainment for the master recordings of the legendary late guitarist. Sony plans to launch an ambitious reissue campaign in 2010 that will include deluxe editions of the three original albums by the Jimi Hendrix Experience, posthumous releases, the official Dagger Records bootleg line and previously unreleased archival recordings and filmed concerts.

The deal also includes licensing rights outside the United States for the 1970 live set "Band of Gypsys," which EMI Music will continue to distribute worldwide. Universal Music Group had previously held the master licenses for the rest of the Hendrix catalog since 1997. Sony's licensing deal will take effect Jan. 1.

The master licensing deal comes after Seattle-based Experience Hendrix moved administration of the Hendrix music publishing catalog from Sony/ATV to Universal Music Publishing Group in March. At the time, Experience Hendrix president/CEO Janie Hendrix, the guitarist's sister, said she was planning a late-2009 release for a Dagger bootleg trade and CD and DVD releases of live performances at London's Royal Albert Hall in February 1969, which would include behind-the-scenes footage as well. Those releases are now planned for 2010.

Sony's reissue campaign of the core catalog— including "Are You Experienced," "Axis: Bold As Love" and "Electric Ladyland"—will be treated to deluxe editions with extra material and/or enhanced packaging. But because plans are being worked out, Sony and Experience Hendrix can't yet share what bonus material will be included in the deluxe versions.

"There is an obligation that we have to fans that when we reissue material, you have to offer a substantial greater value in the content, whether it be audio, visual or packaging," says Sony Music Entertainment Legacy Recordings senior VP/GM Adam Block. "That is a core fundamental strategy here. I do know that in this case there is an enormous amount of material that Hendrix fans are going to be thrilled to have. And on that side of the equation as music fans, we couldn't be more excited to share that material with them moving forward."

Although the artist's catalog has been repackaged extensively through the years, Hendrix points out one notable omission to date.

"We have never (released) the core catalog as a boxed set," she says. "That will be one of the next projects to come out under the Sony project."

To help promote the reissue campaign, Experience Hendrix will organize a concert tour next year. The company has previously sponsored tours featuring such contemporary artists as Carlos Santana, Paul Rodgers and Robert Randolph performing Hendrix's music.

The Hendrix catalog sells about 500,000 albums annually in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Billboard estimates worldwide sales average about 1.2 million per year. In 2009, the catalog has sold about 261,000 copies, according to SoundScan.

"The beauty in an artist like Hendrix is that year after year, kids come of age and Jimi is a rite of passage," he says. "It is our role and responsibility to make sure that when they wake up on that morning that they have a chance to taste and hear the genius of that guy."

At a time when many people in the music industry are cautious about starting new ventures, veteran Christian music booking agent Charles Dorris is launching his own agency, Charles Dorris & Associates, and CDA Consulting, a firm specializing in live events, tour sponsorships, branding and artist development in the faith-based market.

In an interview, the former senior VP/head of Christian music at William Morris Endeavor Entertainment talks about what he has planned for his new businesses.

1. Why is this a good time to launch two new companies? There is literally opportunity everywhere you look in the music business. It is like the Wild West. If you have "a gun and a horse," you can ride over the next hill and settle wherever you want. The reason for two companies stems from the fact that these are two separate yet related areas. The consulting business utilizes relationships built over 28 years of working with promoters, artists, production companies, venues, managers, marketing entities, ticketing firms, record labels, bus companies and tour sponsors. The deals that we are making on the consulting side of the business can be one-time or long-term deals.

2. What direction will you take with the booking agency? We are focused on niche touring. We are representing special events, project-oriented touring and focused market-segment touring along with representing a few acts across the board. We are not focused on building a roster of artists that all need to work 150 dates per year to meet their goals. In some cases, as with Ronnie Milsap, we are coming alongside of his existing agency, Buddy Lee Attractions, to focus specifically on the Christian marketplace.

3. What opportunities do you see in the Christian touring market? There was a time in the past where there was not a receptiveness by fans, parks and city festivals to present Christian artists. Thankful that has changed as talent buyers came to realize that though it was "Christian" it was not preachy or overtly evangelistic. Moreover, these buyers came to realize that many Christian artists could attract excellent crowds while at the same time giving their event more of a family-friendly image in the marketplace. At the same time, there has been growth in the event marketplace within the Christian space. There has been a literal explosion of youth events, college events, denominational events, women's events and men's events, in addition to the strong market among churches who desire to bring in artists.

4. How much has the economy affected live opportunities for Christian acts? Many churches have been impacted by lower income due to the economy. A natural pull-back of concert activity has occurred with a corporation endorsing anything Christian. This argument falls flat when you consider that over 80% of Americans profess to be Christians and over 140 million people attend church in the U.S. every Sunday. It should be pointed out that there is a vibrant sponsorship market in the Christian touring space with consumer companies whose products and services are targeted to the Christian market and with humanitarian organizations such as World Vision.

5. Christian artists have long struggled to attract touring sponsorships from leading consumer brands. Do you see any signs of progress on that front? Two things have worked against large sponsorships. One is that there are virtually no arena-level touring artists. With the exception of multi-artist events such as Bill Gaither's Homecoming tours, most Christian market headliners play large auditoriums, theaters and smaller-scale arena configurations. The corporate sponsorship would be attuned to artists and tours that consistently sell out arenas.

The other has been an unfounded concern that some consumers might be turned off if a corporation endorses anything Christian. This argument falls flat when you consider that over 80% of Americans profess to be Christians and over 140 million people attend church in the U.S. every Sunday. It should be pointed out that there is a vibrant sponsorship market in the Christian touring marketplace.

6. What are the biggest challenges facing agents today? Among the new challenges would be the loss of record company marketing money. Many labels tell their artists' agents that "the tour is our marketing plan." For a new artist this is particularly problematic, as the label ideally needs 40-60 cities on a tour in order to help push airplay and a media profile yet cannot offer much in the way of marketing to help expose the artist.

Most agents and labels are primarily interested in artists that have developed a growing fan base through social media, local and regional touring and their own Web sites. The upside of the new digital delivery systems is that we have more people listening to music than ever before. The downside is that we have more artists touring than ever before and more labels needing to have lots of tour dates in a very crowded tour marketplace.
In Their Own Write

Indiana Court Case Spotlights Joint Authorship Issues

A federal appeals court’s recent ruling in a case involving a song created by a little-known Indiana doo-wop group has highlighted the potential complications that arise when a songwriter gets a little help from a friend.

In Cheryl Janky v. Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau, a fight erupted over ownership of a song called “Lake County, Indiana,” which was recorded by the doo-wop group Stormy Weather. The case illustrates that if a songwriter isn’t careful, including even minor contributions from an outsider can result in the loss of the exclusive right to issue licenses for use of the song.

In response to the bureau’s interest in finding a song to promote Lake County, Stormy Weather member Cheryl Janky composed and registered the copyright in the song, listing herself as sole author. After fellow group member Henry Farag suggested changes to the lyrics, Janky revised the song and obtained a new copyright in December 1999, listing Farag as co-author and calling the song a “joint work.” She also filed a document with ASCAP stating that Farag had a 10% ownership stake in the song.

Farag subsequently issued a nonexclusive license for the song to the visitors bureau, which began using it in marketing campaigns. But in 2003, Janky took Farag off the copyright registration and sued the bureau to stop it from using the song in advertisements.

A district court agreed that Janky was the sole author and that the bureau’s use of the song constituted copyright infringement. But on Aug. 3, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit reversed the decision, holding Farag to be a “joint author” who had the right to license the song to the bureau. The decision is now under further appeal.

The issue of joint authorship is a sticky one that frequently comes up in the music industry. Earlier this month, Kamihua Greer, aka “Thug Queen,” filed a $20 million copyright infringement lawsuit claiming joint ownership in several songs produced by her and others.

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Some people follow labels the same way they follow artists — I buy almost every record that Mutador puts out. I’ve been doing my best to get back to everyone who contacts us with a question or a tip about a band, because for every 10 replies I send, one will write back and say, “It’s amazing you got back to me.” And that person is much more likely to be a part of the story that your label is building, because suddenly they’re invited in. We’ve developed a loyal group of 1,000 people who whenever we put something up on our site, they buy it, and that’s the key to our survival.

—Interview by Evie Nagy
YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR HAT ON

Despite Uncertain Times, Kenny Chesney Nears Seventh Straight Year Of 1 Million Ticket Sales

By the time he wraps his Sun City Carnival tour Sept. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, country star Kenny Chesney is projected to gross about $75 million for the year. That would be down about 13% from his 2008 career-best tally of $86 million. But in all likelihood, he’ll still notch his seventh consecutive year of moving 1 million tickets.

In short, the masses are still coming out to see Chesney in 2009, and he says they’re still having a good time when times are hard. “It’s almost as if they’re more appreciative that you’re there,” Chesney says. “They don’t want to watch CNN, they don’t want to hear about health care. They want to play, have fun.”

Chesney is the biggest ticket seller in country music and has established himself among the elite touring artists in the world. Since 2002, he has grossed close to $500 million and sold 7 million tickets, according to Billboard Boxscore. Despite a down economy and what’s surely not the most well-heeled audience in the touring market, Chesney’s drawing power is at a peak and shows no sign of waning.

So how does he weather fluctuating markets and fickle fan tastes? The mantra is to show fans a great time, but that means spending more on promotion and less on keeping ticket prices conservative.

“The music has to be there first, but they do have a great time,” Chesney says. “I know there is an element of them being able to have some sort of relief in their life. Why this year arguably has been bigger than other years in these economic times, I can’t put a finger on that. But we haven’t seen that much of a lack of passion because of it.”

Even so, coming into 2009 all bets were off, both for Chesney and the industry at large. “I was nervous, as any prudent manager would be, about going out there with the economy the way it is,” says Clint Higham, Chesney’s manager since 1993 with Dale Morris & Associates and now affiliated with Ticketmaster’s Front Line Management subsidiary. “Everyone says people spend the entertainment dollar, but the reality is people are picking and choosing a lot more carefully about where they’re going. I’m just glad they’re choosing us.”

Veteran promoter Louis Messina, president of TMG/AEG Live and promoter of Chesney’s tours, says Chesney is in rarefied air. “You see a lot of people get hit, they have their moment, then they back off,” Messina says. “But Kenny just keeps on doing what he does and the fans keep coming.”

Chesney’s ticket prices were adjusted this year to account for the recession, particularly at the low end where tickets cost as little as $20. Prices topped out in the $69-$72 range in amphitheaters and arenas, and around $110-$115 at the 13 stadiums on the route.

“Great part of our audience lives paycheck to paycheck,” Higham says, “and we don’t want any of our fans to stay home for a financial reason.” At the same time, Chesney continues to invest in bigger, more expensive production and strong support acts, including Lady Antebellum and Miranda Lambert this year. “The bean counters, we all meet every year and try to have that conversation with Kenny: ‘Let’s see where art meets commerce,’” Higham says. “But Kenny knows what he needs to do, and that extra passion he has keeps the creativity of the show up. The fans know when you did it in and when you’re giving it that extra effort.”

A unique promotional strategy didn’t come into play to account for the economy. Marketing efforts still focus primarily on country radio, along with digital marketing and some TV and print.

Messina says merch sales for the overall 2009 tour remained consistent, averaging more than $10 per head.

The recession seems to have affected ticket buying patterns, with sales starting off slower on individual dates, particularly early in the year as fans apparently put off purchasing decisions. “It used to be you could gauge a pretty good formula by how you came out of the box,” Higham says. “Well, that formula has gone out the window. Walkups the last week of the show, that part of our business was way up this year.”

Chesney’s teams try to avoid over-touring markets, generally waiting two or three years before returning, particularly in secondary markets. But Chesney still manages to go back into the big stadiums like Detroit and Foxborough, Mass., year after year. “We let the people decide, and so far they tell us they want to see us,” Higham says. “We were up 9,000 tickets this year over last year’s count in Detroit. I was nervous about going back in there, and they’re trying to get us back next year.”

As for playing fewer shows each year, Chesney says that’s by design. “I don’t know if that will continue, but we’ve come up with a pretty good formula down to where we play quote a lot but still where I can still feel like I can give everything I’ve got every single night,” he says. “We could definitely do more nights and make a little more money, but for me to be in the zone every night that I get to be in, I think I’ve got it where I want it with the number of shows and how we’re doing it.”

Higham stresses that the team isn’t on autopilot though. “We’re the last people to take anything for granted; we’re too paranoid,” we know the realities of our business. We don’t ever want to give people a reason to get tired of us. Kenny never wants to be the guy that just dials it in, shows up onstage to pick up the check. He judges it by the audience, not the box office.”

Each tour takes on its own personality. Asked what his takeaway from Sun City Carnival is, Chesney stuck a contemplative tone.

“The other night in Detroit, right before I walked offstage, I told the fans, ‘I want you to know that I know what it took for you guys to come here tonight and appreciate it.’” Chesney recalls. “I have an appreciation for what the fans have gone through this year to see us play. Something I’ve thought about a lot on tour this year is I know it didn’t have to be this good, and it was. Again.”

I GO BACK

Kenny Chesney has prospered by staying on the road and playing fewer shows but more stadiums.

**BOXSCORE**

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**BOXSCORE**

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**UPFRONT**

TOURING BY RAY WADDELL
Ellie Greenwich, 68

Ellie Greenwich, who co-wrote some of the celebrated pop hits of the '60s including "Be My Baby" and "Leader of the Pack," died Aug. 26 of a heart attack in New York. She was 68.

A native of Brooklyn, Greenwich moved to Levittown, N.Y., when she was 11 and began writing songs by the time she was 13. While in high school, she and her friends formed a girl group called the Jivettes, which performed original songs at local events.

When she was an English major at Hofstra University, Greenwich met Jeff Barry, who eventually became her husband and songwriting collaborator. In the early '60s, Greenwich joined Barry as a staff songwriter in the offices of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller in New York's legendary Brill Building.

"The two of them were a terrific team," Leiber recalls in the recently published "Hound Dog: The Leiber and Stoller Autobiography" (Simon & Shuster). "They wrote with an elegant simplicity and lack of self-consciousness. Ellie was a good singer who made demos of her songs that rivaled the released versions. We loved her talent as well as her extraordinary beehive hairdo."

Greenwich and Barry went on to work with producer Phil Spector, writing some of the signature hits of the era, including "Be My Baby" by the Ronettes, "Da Doo Ron Ron" and "Then He Kissed Me" by the Crystals and "River Deep, Mountain High" by Ike & Tina Turner. Among their many other hits, the couple wrote "Chapel of Love" for the Dixie Cups and, with Shadow Morton, "Leader of the Pack" by the Shangri-Las, both of which topped the Billboard Hot 100 in 1964.

Cover versions of Greenwich-Barry songs sometimes fared better on the charts than their initial incarnations. "Hanky Panky," originally recorded by Greenwich and Barry themselves as the Raindrops, had been a little-noticed B-side of their modest 1963 hit "That Boy John. But in the summer of 1966, Tommy James & the Shondells launched their career by spending two weeks atop the Hot 100 with their version of the song.

Similarly, "Do Wah Diddy" only managed to scrap the lower rungs of the chart when the Exciters first recorded it in 1964 before becoming a breakout, chart-topping hit for曼fred Mann later that year.

Greenwich and Barry continued to collaborate after their divorce in 1965. In addition to her songwriting, Greenwich was a highly sought vocal arranger and session singer who worked with such artists as Dusty Springfield, Lesley Gore, Bobby Darin, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra. She also played a key role in the early career of Neil Diamond, co-producing hits like "Cherry, Cherry" and "Kentucky Woman."

A 1991 Songwriters Hall of Fame inductee, Greenwich is survived by her sister, Laura, brother-in-law Robert, niece Jessica and nephew Richard, all of Long Island.

— Louis Hau
HAMBURG—Classical CD sales in Germany are booming, boosted by aggressive marketing and the popularity of classical live shows.

The German labels organization BVMI says classical music album sales totaled 3.8 million units in the first half of 2009, up 23% from the same period last year, with retail value up 7% to €45 million ($64.5 million)—and 99% of those sales were physical. First-half sales included albums by soprano Anna Netrebko and Roland Villazón, which each sold more than 300,000 copies, according to their label, Deutsche Grammophon. Pianist Lang Lang and violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter also scored gold albums (100,000 copies shipped) during the period. "Stars such as Anna Netrebko and (violinist) David Garrett have removed the public's inhibitions toward classical music," BVMI managing director Stefan Michalk says. "Big names, media presence and more concert exposure” have been crucial to the increase, says Cologne-based EMI Classics Europe VP Markus Peters.

Amazon is Germany’s leading music seller and some 40% of first-half 2009 classical sales were through online/mail order outlets. However, growth is also being reported at classical concerts and bookstores. Label and retailer sources say 1,600 German stores stock such music. Bookellers, market research company Glz, says, accounted for 13% of classical music sales in the first half of 2009—the same as music specialists. Label estimates put bookellers’ calendar 2008 market share at 8%. Bookellers seem to offer further potential: German Federal Book Retailing Assn. says only 10% of Germany’s 7,000-plus bookellers stock classical CDs. During the past year, major labels have regularly rolled out bookeller campaigns, contributing to a situation where “sales for classical CDs in bookstores are steadily increasing—albeit in small steps,” says Bernd Hocke, GM at the Hamburg-based leading independent label Eitel. Labels also expect album sales at concerts to rise substantially from the estimated 4% of the market they accounted for in 2008, helped by what Berlin-based concert promoter DEAG CEO Peter Schwenkow says has been more than a 75% increase in the number of classical concerts in Germany in each of the last three years. CD sales represent 25% of DEAG’s classical merchandising income. Schwenkow says, but he expects that to increase to 30% in 2009. The increase of classical concerts is resulting in sales increases for us,” says Relaimo Universal Classics & Jazz managing director Christian Kellermann.

Siesta For Fiesta Shows

Local Governments In Spain Slash Concert Funding

MADRID—Spanish touring acts are the latest victims of the global financial crisis, which has forced a sharp decline in public funding for live shows. For 25% of local government subsidies, five financial thousands of free concerts during annual weeklong patron saint “fiestas” held from May through October in virtually every sizable village, town or city neighborhood.

Now, with municipalities feeling the pinch, promoters are scaling back or canceling shows, casting doubts on the circuit’s future. "There’s no money anymore,” veteran promoter Gay Mercader says. In the commuter towns around Madrid, funding cuts range from 20% in Fuenlabrada (to €800,000 ($1.2 million)) to 40% in Leganés (to €260,000 ($748,000)).

While the 1,000 annual fiesta shows only feature domestic acts, Jorge Cambronero, international booking manager at the promoter Planet Events, suggests that fears about the cutbacks’ indirect effect on Spain’s touring market—such as driving down artists’ fees—is deterring some overseas Latin acts. Cambronero says potential 2009 dates by his clients Maná, Shakira and Juanes were scratched due to a lack of confidence in the Spanish market, with those acts unlikely to return until “the market is more normalized.”

Sure no festivals offer fans outside Spain’s major cities rare sightings of major artists, while giving labels’ developing talent regional exposure. But the “public funding model is worn out,” says EMI Music Spain GM Simone Bosé.

"we need more, but (in the current market) I’m not sure they’ll appear."

Although agents declined to reveal their clients’ fees, Billboard understands the steepest reductions have affected mid-level acts. Manuel Notario, manager of regular headliner Amaral, dismissed press reports that his act was forced to lower its fiesta fees this year to €500,000 ($77,000).

With many of this year’s fiesta shows featuring up-and-coming acts as headliners, rather than than previous years’ big names, Notario says the music industry should “fight to maintain public funding of fiesta concerts for the smaller groups.”

The trade organization ARTE, which represents artist managers, promoters and booking agents, said earlier this year that local municipalities owed 67% of its 400 members €17.2 million ($24.5 million), including performance fees and production costs. That brought about a hastily scheduled April meeting of ARTE, municipal/provincial government federation FEMP and artists trade group ROAIM. However, ARTE director Socio Collado says local governments still haven’t paid ARTE members what they’re owed. FEMP representatives were unavailable for comment.

Collado says she wants the music industry and local and national government officials to discuss the circuit’s future during a 2010 “music congress,” which ARTE wants to organize in order to identify “correctives which must be introduced to push the music business forward.”

Meanwhile, Notario insists public funding remains important. “Town halls have kept much of the industry and groups afloat—I see nothing wrong with that,” he says. “The future will be more mixed, with private promoters and more indoor winter gigs, but there will always be a need for public subsidies. And free summer concerts.”

Global music business leaders have agreed to a short-term solution to the current crisis—providing other businesses with a discount telephone service to those who need it. Meanwhile, Time Warner announced that it would join a broader effort to provide broadband access to low-income families. The effort includes Time Warner’s participation in a public-private partnership with Comcast, BellSouth and other major cable operators. The partnership will provide $2 billion in funding over the next five years to help low-income families and others gain access to the Internet. In addition, the partners will work with schools, libraries, community centers and other organizations to ensure that those who do not have access to broadband will have the opportunity to acquire it. The effort is part of a broader national initiative to promote broadband adoption and ensure that all Americans have access to the Internet.”
Mercury Rises

U.K. Music Prize Expands Branding Reach

LONDON—The 12-strong shortlist for the 2009 Barclaycard Mercury Prize divided opinions nationwide, but the British recording industry is united about the benefits of the award's recent expansion.

The (£20,000) ($33,100) prize was open to U.K. and Irish albums released between July 2008 and July 2009. This year, media attention focused on the number of notable omissions from the judging panel's shortlist, particularly U.K. pop artist Lily Allen's critically acclaimed second album, "It's Not Me, It's You" (Parlophone/EMI). That sparked a Twitter response from Allen that "the judges hate me, but the people...love me."

Ironically, the perceived snub "did increase (media) attention—arguably more than if she had been nominated," says Parlophone VP of promotion and press Kevin McCabe.

Acclaimed albums from pop artist Little Boots and alt-rock band Doves were also missing from a list that has been increasingly focusing on alternative acts. Bookmaker William Hill made Florence & the Machine's debut album, "Lungs" (Island), and Bat for Lashes' second set, "Two Suns" (Parlophone), joint favourites to win the award.

But this year, new acts that aren't nominated—and even international artists—can get some of the Mercury buzz as organizers try to make it a year-round music discovery brand, following a new four-year sponsorship deal with Barclaycard. As part of these efforts, a concert series called the Barclaycard Mercury Prize Sessions launched in May at London's 250-capacity Hospital Club with pop act Ladyhawke and alternative duo Blood Red Shoes, followed by Kanye West collaborator Mr. Hudson plus Florence & the Machine in July. Tickets were free for fans and competition winners. The Mercury Prize MySpace page and Website (MercuryPrize.com) posted video clips of the performances, while modern rock station Xfm aired excerpts.

"It's something we've been looking at for quite some time, the idea of expanding the prize's promotion into new areas," says Dan Ford, marketing director of the Mercury Prize. That expansion also includes a new Mercury-curated microsite with news and tips on new tracks and videos, including links to external video and audio content.

Rudy Osorio, U.K. & Ireland head of music at market-leading music merchant HMV, welcomes the "halo effect" of the prize's expansion spreading to "a much wider range of artists and releases."

The annual award is established as "a key event in our trading calendar," he adds, with many of the albums nominated not mainstream enough for mass merchants to stock.

The benefits of being nominated are obvious: HMV's total sales of the 12 albums increased 107% in the two weeks following nominations compared with the two weeks prior. That included 2008 releases, like self-titled debuts by Columbia Records Scottish alt-rock band Glasvegas (up 1,103%) and indie/electronic act Friendly Fires (up 662%), which is signed to XL Recordings.

Last year, alt-rock act Elbow had the best sales bounce for a winner since the prize launched in 1992—a 634.9% increase from the previous year, with sales of 20,100 on the Sept. 14 Official Charts Co. list.

Terrestrial TV channel BBC 2 will broadcast the ceremony live Sept. 8 and will air a 70-minute program Sept. 11 featuring interviews and taped performances from the ceremony, providing further exposure. For the first time, all nominees will perform at the gala. The BBC reported last year's live show had an average audience of 570,000. Osorio says the telecast triggers a "huge spike" in sales every year.

Some 17 years after launching under the auspices of the BPI and the British Assn. of Record Dealers (now the Entertainment Retailers' Assn.), the event is a fixture on the U.K. awards scene and has become a "significant TV promo platform," Parlophone's McCabe says.

In the meantime, he's hopeful of a victory for Bat for Lashes, which he says could be "the key to opening a few mainstream avenues at media."
Embracing New Roles

Majors Move Into Latin Artist Management And Tour Promotion

In the summer of 2007, Camila and Reik—two fledgling pop groups signed to Sony Music Latin—played an eight-date U.S. tour presented and promoted by Day 1, Sony’s Latin artist development company.

Today, with Camila established as one of the top-selling pop groups in the country and Reik wrapping up a 15-city tour (also booked and promoted by Day 1), the two acts are examples of what can go right when labels decide to become managers and tour promoters.

“It’s in everybody’s interest to work together to develop acts … so our efforts are not as fragmented,” says Rebeca León, VP of Latin talent for AEG Live/Goldenvoice, who worked with Day 1 on the tours.

Booking, promoting and even managing artists have been longstanding practices among Latin indie labels. But as recorded-music revenue continues to dwindle, major labels have also ventured into this part of the business. Such arrangements can work extremely well for some artists. The trick seems to be finding the right combination of artists and team to pull it off.

Sony Day 1 was originally an artist development arm; the company now books and promotes tours, often partnering with outside promoters, and even working with non-Sony acts. Universal Music Latin America has delved into artist management with its Global Talent Services division, which doesn’t book or promote tours but provides management and development support to select acts. GTS recently began managing David Bisbal and Fanny Lu.

“We identify artists we think have touring potential, we present a plan to management, and together we work in a particular territory or all territories the manager needs,” GTS managing director Jorge Ferreras says. Like Day 1, GTS has offices in the United States and throughout Latin America. Most recently, the company has helped develop the U.S. Latin tours of Gloria Trevi and Luis Fonsi, who both have outside management.

When it first launched, Day 1 drew criticism from some promoters who said the label should stick to what it knew best. Today, the division has expanded and now includes a staff with promotion and tour experience. Late last year, Yamil Fernández, who previously worked with Irving Azoff and the Firm, was named North America director for Day 1 and Westwood, the management company that Sony acquired a majority stake in last year.

Fernández says the company is selective in choosing tours and works closely with the label in artist development. “Obviously, with us being managers we have an overall vision of what the artist needs five years or 10 years from now,” he says.

For promoters, having labels move into the business hasn’t had the negative impact some initially feared. Arie Kaduri, president of NYK Productions, works with GTS and praises the company for its touring experience and its support of local promoters. As for labels acting as managers, “what it means now is you may have to buy the artist out of the label,” says Carlos Orjuela, president of Orjuela Music Agency. “And that’s not a bad thing, as long as the person in the record label knows exactly what he’s selling.”

Back To The Future

Venezuelan Tween Musical Novela Gets ’50s Makeover

The Venezuelan tween musical novela “Somos Tu Y Yo” launched its third season Aug. 17 with a new look and new music designed to give the series broader international appeal.

The show’s producer, Venezion, is poised to reap the benefits of the overhaul. The media company airs “Somos Tu Y Yo” in Venezuela on its broadcast network, sells it to other networks worldwide, produces concerts featuring cast members and markets the show’s soundtrack, ringtones and other merchandise.

“Somos Tu Y Yo: Un Nuevo Dia,” which chronicles the lives of students at a performing arts academy, now takes place in a “Grease”-style ’50s setting. The soundtrack, written by series creator Vladimir Perez and the show’s musical director Daniel Espinoza, consists of rock’n’roll, mambo and cha-cha-cha.

The era recalls “musical rhythms that resonate with kids,” says Perez, a veteran producer of musical and variety shows for kids. The soundtrack was released Aug. 25 in Venezuela.

Venezuela, a concert is planned for the Dominican Republic’s Palacio De Los Deportes in November.

The concerts are produced by Venezion’s concert arm, VenezShows, in keeping with Venezion’s model of creating and distributing its content through its own channels. Links to new Twitter and Facebook pages drive more than 3 million views to the show’s revamped Web site following the season premiere, says Venezion’s new media VP Rafael Garcia.

“We want to attract advertisers to our online business,” Garcia says. “Advertisers are now starting to call us back, saying, ‘We want to be part of this.’ (But) you need the audience to bring in the advertising dollars.”

To reach mobile customers, Venezion has posted “Somos Tu Y Yo” wallpapers on its entertainment portal. Novu.com, and has sold ringtones through regional carriers America Movil and Movistar.

For the new season, Garcia says a major carrier in Venezuela will roll out ringtones, ringbacks, voicetones and videoclips in the next 30 days.

—Avala Ben-Yehuda

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Real Player

‘Beaterator’ Looks Beyond Gaming To Music Creation

One of the common complaints about music games like “Rock Band” and “Guitar Hero” is that they only mimic the experience of making music and teach nothing about how to create the real thing.

Regardless of whether you agree with that criticism, it raises a fair point. In addition to being fun diversions, videogames have the potential to be effective educational tools. And with all the interest surrounding music-based videogames these days, why not find a way to marry the enjoyment of music with a learning experience in a way that’s still fun?

That’s the goal of a new application called “Beaterator” that Rockstar Games has created in conjunction with producer Timbaland. The title is due Sept. 29 for the Sony PSP.

Other games like “Guitar Hero World Tour” and the upcoming “Scratch: The Ultimate DJ” have music creation modes, but only as secondary features. By contrast, the primary aim of “Beaterator” is to make, mix and play with music.

By its very nature, “Beaterator” is destined to appeal to a smaller group of users than those who’d rather pretend to play a song by Bon Jovi or Metallica. But it also illustrates a different approach to fashioning entertainment options from music.

Despite the fact that “Beaterator” was developed by a company best-known for videogames like the “Grand Theft Auto” franchise and “Bully,” don’t call it a game. “It’s not a videogame in any sense,” says Rockstar Games music supervisor Ivan Pavlovich. “We’ve been proactive about putting in as much music as we can in all our games. This is an extension of that. We want people to create their own music.”

“Beaterator” is a full featured music creation and editing tool designed to introduce songwriting to music fans using a familiar gaming interface. At $40, “Beaterator” isn’t only more affordable than professional music-creation programs, it also applies the accessibility of videogames to the often intimidating process of creating music.

Videogame developers take great pains to make their products easy to use. They usually begin with a short tutorial to walk gamers through the controls, and then gradually add more difficult missions paced in such a way that gamers aren’t really aware of their progress, leaving them challenged but not overwhelmed.

“Beaterator” applies the same approach to making music rather than blowing stuff up. Novices start out with Live Play mode, which features a recording of Timbaland guiding users through the process of experimenting with prearranged tempos of his beats, loops and sounds. Once those basics are absorbed, users can advance to the Studio, where they’ll practice adding, deleting and swapping loops. They can also add vocals, by either incorporating those that are shipped with the game or recording their own using an attached mic. And finally there’s the Song Crafter level where users can create their own beats and sounds to apply to all three modes.

The company is already talking with schools to position “Beaterator” as a learning tool and is pitching the application to producers as a portable music sketchbook.

“Beaterator” originated in far simpler form as a free, Flash-based application at the Rockstar Web site. It wasn’t until Timbaland contacted Rockstar a couple of years ago to explore working together that the title evolved from a free online diversion to a PSP app, Pavlovich says.

The key to Timbaland’s interest was that “Beaterator” focused on music creation, rather than imitation. “I wanted people to feel like they can also make a beat too—like everybody could do it,” Timbaland says.

Of the more than 3,000 beats, loops, sounds, loops and other audio assets included, about half were provided by Timbaland. He also lent his voice and his image for the tutorial and other game-play elements, and he’s heavily involved in promoting the app.

Additional music comes from Rockstar’s studio and from other artists creating original scores for their other games. Rockstar will roll out more downloadable beats and sounds over time from other artists and producers. Users can import music on their own as well. And finally, the company created a section of its online community where users can post the songs they’ve created for feedback and rating by other members, although it will retain the rights to all music made.

Rockstar is well-known for pushing the musical boundaries of videogames. Each entry in the “Grand Theft Auto” franchise has set the bar for the most music included in a game soundtrack, and the music contained in each entry is painstakingly curated to set the mood for the different settings, such as “Vice City” or “San Andreas.”

“It would be a great story,” Pavlovich says, “if a couple of years from now somebody who started with ‘Beaterator’ actually ends up having a song in one of our games.”

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SCRATCH THAT ITCH

The folks at DJ-Tech have created a mouse controller made specifically for digital music DJ applications. Appropriately called DJ Mouse, the device is powered by DJ software Deckadance and is designed to enable DJs to manipulate and mix music on the fly. Shaking the mouse on the special mouse-pad affects the traditional “scratching” sound. The left-click button controls functions like playing loops and samples, and the right-click button controls cue points and toggle loops. A jog wheel controls fades and crossfades, and a vertical wheel enables returning and fast-forwarding.

Compatible with PCs and Macs, the DJ Mouse is currently available for $80. —AB

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Music startups used to get more attention from investors. But the graveyard of failed companies has become crowded, persuading would-be partners to shy away from putting money in new music ventures due to what they see as modest payoffs, high licensing costs and a recording industry that isn’t embracing new ideas fast enough.

In recent months, companies like Pandora, Spotify, OurStage and Thumbplay have reportedly secured venture capital funding. But the overall investment climate clearly hasn’t been as friendly for music startups.

David Pakman has had a bird’s-eye view of the role of new companies in the developing digital music market. Before joining the venture capital firm Venrock as a partner in 2008, Pakman was CEO of the independent digital music retailer eMusic. Prior to eMusic, he co-founded MyPlay, which introduced the digital music “locker,” and was VP for N2K Entertainment, an early developer of online music services.

Pakman faults the recording industry for being “very litigious, very restrictive” and not being more supportive of startup companies. “It should know that its DNA was built by a bunch of entrepreneurs,” he says, referring to the indie acts and labels that he says were the primary innovators in the music business. “Why then wouldn’t its digital future also be built by a bunch of entrepreneurs?”

In his interview with Billboard, Pakman sounds off on the challenges facing entrepreneurial music ventures.

**What do you think of some of the business models that are coming out that put more rights in the hands of the artists?**

I’m very excited about those new models. I think the outcome of all of this disruption in the core industry is that bands become more in control of their own destiny. They don’t put their career in the hands of a record label. Who’s going to help me distribute my music digitally? Who’s going to help me market myself online? Who’s going to help me promote and organize tours? Who’s going to help me with my merch? Those relationships are no longer about handing over your rights in perpetuity for exchange for a big advance.

**Will these services be effective in reaching audiences? Or is there a ceiling to what you can do without requiring some traditional media attention?**

It’s very different from how it’s been the last 50 years when we had a limited number of choices and those choices were presented to us by a big company. It doesn’t happen anymore. Now we have immediate access to anything we want. People are competing for our attention. As a result of that, the market challenges to cut through that are harder. But at the same time the costs to do it are less. As the total industry gets smaller in dollars, the number of bands that can reach consumers is magnified by 10 and consumers are atomized. And now in and again these mega-celebrities pop up and that’s where the majors play. That’s a challenging future but it’s a bright one, because the barriers to playing in it are very small.

The future is probably a smaller market than the current one is today in terms of total dollars. But if you don’t go there as the incumbent, there definitely will be a startup who will.
The band sells opportunities to hear "Armistice" on the bus from its Web site as part of a larger VIP package, which includes tickets to a show on the upcoming tour, a copy of the album, a T-shirt, a collection of B-sides and a poster. Though the $59 price tag seems steep for a band with a 20-something fan base, Kookogey says sales have been brisk.

"We've sold over 100 in some of the bigger markets, and maybe around 20 in some smaller markets," he says. "It's not cheap to drive a bus around the country, sure. But we are saving money in other places. For instance, MuteMath aren't a radio band, so we see no value in spending money on radio promo."

Fans who climb aboard the bus will be greeted by one of the band's four members, each of whom has been touring with the bus for a week at a time. At the New York session, Meany sat out during the listening phase but came back afterward to thank fans for coming and inviting them to ask him questions. While most of the women initially seemed nervous, conversation soon started to flow, with questions about putting together the live show, the making of the album and set lists for upcoming dates. Meany cheerfully answered them all, seeming genuinely thrilled that fans would trek all the way to All Points West in the rain to see him and hear his album.

Before the tour started, Meany expressed anxiety about being in front of fans immediately after they'd heard the album for the first time. "Our guitarist [Greg Hill] is our right now talking to fans and he seems to be having fun," he says. "But these are pretty uncharted waters we're stepping into. I just hope I don't get back on the bus after they play the record and see a bunch of unhappy faces."

Meany says that connecting with his core base was especially important because of the three-year gap between releases. "We recorded an album and it turned out nothing like we thought it would," he says. "We didn't like the songs and we ended up changing producers. The last thing I wanted was to make an album that sounded like a collection of B-sides from our first album. I was really happy when we turned in 'Armistice' and no one had the same favorite song—that said to me that it was strong from start to end."

Kookogey says making sure fans were able to hear the album from start to finish was a high priority. "We also wanted to make sure they had the ability to give us any feedback about the album, so we distribute surveys and anonymous comment sheets at the end," he says. The surveys ask for basics like the fan's name and personal info, as well as how they first heard of MuteMath, whether they prefer to consume..."
music digitally or physically and what they love about the band (live performance, production, etc.). The comments—at least the positive ones—are then posted on the band's Web site a few days after each listening session.

“This is the perfect way to not only connect with the fans MuteMath has, but to recruit new fans,” says Perry Watts-Russell, senior VP of A&R at Warner Bros. A friend sending an MP3 with a note might prompt another friend to listen or download a track, but a friend talking about the great conversation he or she had with a band member on its tour bus after hearing an album could go a lot further in convincing someone to buy a CD or download a song.

Warner Bros. marketing director Brant Weil says the band will pursue other marketing and promotional opportunities aside from the listening sessions. “They had a song on the 'Twilight' soundtrack, which provided a good opportunity to get going again,” he says. “We made a video and started getting them on some summer festivals and stepped up our online outreach to fans. MuteMath fans have never really come from one place; some come from seeing them live, some from seeing their videos. So we have to reach out in multiple ways.”

The band is known for distinctive videos, and Weil says it will continue to make them. “Their videos are really idea-driven, but not ridiculously flashy,” for example, the video for “Typical” featured MuteMath playing the song backward. It was nominated for a Grammy Award for best short form music video in 2007.

“Even though MTV isn’t the force it once was, the videos are still important,” Weil says. “In a way, it’s even harder to break through now. Instead of competing with a handful of other bands, you’re competing with dancing wedding parties and keyboard cats.”

The band will also tour all fall, revisiting the cities where it held listening parties. And even when the listening tour has wrapped up, MuteMath will still try to encourage core fans to keep in touch and spread the word. “We’re thinking about sending a list of everyone’s info around to all the people that came to each listening city in a city,” Kookogey says. He hopes that fans will then use the list to arrange rides to shows and share strategies for telling their friends about the band.

Kookogey thinks the personal attention will reap major rewards. “You can’t capture the sensation of seeing someone in person on the Web,” he says. “Sure, the band could use social networks, and they do—but so do millions and millions of other bands. This sets them apart from everyone else.”

Additional reporting by Emily Ahrens.
By Ann Donahue

It's the critical night for the heroine of your comedic-noir-World War II film, the evening when she unspools her plan to burn the leaders of the Third Reich to a crisp during a premiere at her Parisian movie theater. As the director, the question is, "What song do you play as she glams herself up for the night?" For Quentin Tarantino, the answer was obvious, and it elicited gasps and laughter from filmgoers at a recent screening: the era-inappropriate but lyrically astute "Cat People (Putting Out the Fire)" by David Bowie.

Tarantino's latest film, "Inglourious Basterds," debuted Aug. 21, three days after its accompanying soundtrack arrived on Warner Bros. Records. Following the pattern established with his previous movies, including "Pulp Fiction" and "Kill Bill: Vol. 1," Tarantino uses an off-kilter mix of Ennio Morricone, Ray Charles and Elmer Bernstein, among others, as musical genres and era variations to underscore the mayhem onscreen.
You have some wild music in "Inglourious Basterds." How did you put it all together? Part of my process when making a movie is to just dive into my record collection. What I'm looking for is the rhythm of the movie or the beat of the movie. In the case of, say, "Jackie Brown," that's '70s soul. I'm finding pieces, and that keeps inspiring me to make the movie, actually.

Do you write scenes specifically for particular pieces of music? I am always looking for some cool song that I could use as a big set piece. I'll finish work and I'll go into my record room and I'll put on some song, and literally, I can see it on the screen. I can project myself into a movie theater and I'm watching the scene onscreen and I'm hearing the music and I'm imagining an audience; either an audience of people I know who are digging it or an audience of people I don't know who are digging it—they're always digging it [laughs]. And it keeps reminding me that I'm making a movie.

Talk a little more about your record room. My record room is set aside pretty much for vinyl. I have CDs, but they're lying around. Any CD I like, I have to buy it three times because I have no place to put it. It's like a sock; it just gets eaten up by the laundry.

In the house that I bought, connected to the bedroom was a little nursery room—like if you had a newborn and you had them there close to you. I don't have that, so I literally turned it into what looks like a record store. I created bins that are in there, and there are a couple artists I have there by themselves—but nobody else is broken down by decades, and then all the subgenres that would happen inside those decades.

That's really anal-retentive. It's like a record store [laughs]. In the '60s, there's like a psychedelic section, and then British Invasion, and stuff like that. The '70s would have soul as well, and this or that or the other.

But the biggest section, since I've been collecting them since I was a kid, is my soundtrack section. And in the soundtrack section, I go from normal films from A to Z, but then I have certain subgenres that are particularly unique in their music: spaghetti westerns, a blaxploitation section, a spy movie section and then a motorcycle movie section.

Is it easy for you to get the rights for these songs? It's actually quite easy to get the rights now, because I'll use music that some people haven't heard that much before. Then after my movie comes out, it seems like every commercial in the world buys it. They can double or triple and quadruple their income just by the exposure the movie gets it. That 5.6.7.8's song, "Woo Hoo" [from "Kill Bill: Vol. 1"], seemed like it was on every commercial for a long time.

Talk about some of the specifics from "Inglourious Basterds." What was behind the Bowie song? I've always loved that song and I was always disappointed at how [director] Paul Schrader used it in "Cat People," because he didn't use it—he just threw it in the closing credits. And I remember picking up the LP and it's "Cat People" came out, going, 'Man, if I had that song, I'd build a 20-minute scene around it. I wouldn't throw it away in the closing credits.' So I did [laughs].

It would be easy enough for me to hire somebody to write "The Ballad of Shosanna" [the heroine of "Inglourious Basterds"] if I wanted to, but I don't want my choices to hit the nail on the head. I want them to be glancing blows. The second-generation quality about it makes it more resonant. You're watching that scene and you're hearing the lyrics and you're actually surprised at how apropos they are to her story. In its own way, I think that makes it play even more like interior monologue.

I [played] it on set when we [filmed] it. That's always really cool to do—you can't do it all the time, because you're probably recording sound at least half the time—but what's really fun when you do it, is not only do the actors respond to it, the whole crew responds to it. It's like they're watching the movie as we're making it. When you actually play the soundtrack and you can synch something up, the crew gets a glimpse of what the movie is going to be like, and it just thrills them.

And you used actual music from some German propaganda films of the era. In particular, there's a song in there—the English title of the German song is "I Wish I Were a Chicken" ["Ich Wollt Ich Waer Ein Huhn"]). That's the third one on the soundtrack, with Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch, that's from a German propaganda film—it's actually a screwball comedy, but it was made under [German propaganda minister Joseph] Goebbels—that was called "Lucky Kids." And then the German song before that ["Davon Geht Die Welt Nicht Unter"] was performed by Zarah Leander, who was a huge, huge star in Nazi Germany. The thing that's very interesting about her is the way Bridget von Hammersmark [Diane Kruger's character] is in the movie—where she's this big German movie star, but she's actually working for England—there's rumors that Zarah Leander was doing the same thing, except for the Soviet Union.

He Shoots, He Scores

Quentin Tarantino has always been known for his deep placements of music, from using Stealers Wheel's "Stuck in the Middle With You" as an ear being sliced off in "Reservoir Dogs" to playing "Battle Without Honor or Humanity" by Tomoyasu Hotei to set up a martial arts showdown in "Kill Bill: Vol. 1." And his choices have resulted in consistently strong sales. —AD

"Reservoir Dogs" (1992) 863,000
"Pulp Fiction" (1994) 3.5 million
"Jackie Brown" (1997) 321,000
"Kill Bill: Vol. 1" (2003) 502,000
"Kill Bill: Vol. 2" (2004) 196,000
"Death Proof" (2007) 103,000

SOURCE: Nielsen SoundScan

On a roll: QUENTIN TARANTINO on the set of "Inglourious Basterds" (top); ELI ROTH (left) as Sgt. Donny Donowitz and BRAD PITT as Lt. Aldo Raine in the film (bottom).

What do Ennio Morricone and Lalo Schifrin—who are both on the soundtrack—mean to you?

When you talk about the maestro [Morricone], you're talking about the greatest film composer that ever lived. Lalo Schifrin—the first time I knew who he was was when I heard [his soundtrack for] "Enter the Dragon," which was so dynamic, and I always thought of him as the action guy. Now this is an adventure story, and I realized if I'm really going to do this genre justice, I have to blow up the guns of the Navarone [laughs]. And being able to use "Tiger Tank" from "Kelly's Heroes"—that really turned it into an adventure movie. No art film meditation, but literally an adventure film at that point.

How did you decide which of all the songs in the film go on the soundtrack album?

Making the soundtrack album itself is like another version of the movie, and it's not about using everything that you used—it's about using everything the way that you saw it in the movie. My ultimate thing is, "Can you play it without hitting skip?" If you put it on in your car, which is where most people listen to stuff nowadays, can you just let it play? And I still think of it in terms of side A and side B [laughs]. I'm happy to say that vinyl's making a comeback. I always made a big, big deal that the record companies that come out with my movies have to print vinyl—and wherever they sell it, we're going to be there. And Warner Bros. has always accepted that commitment to me that they will always make records for my movies.

You're obviously a music movie fan, but you've shown your love on TV as well. Are you going to go back as a judge on "American Idol" anytime soon? They have to ask me. [laughs] We'll see what happens. I really had a great time when I was the judge on it, because I was watching the show and I was judging them at home [laughs]. And I wasn't the nice guy judge, all right? All the celebrity judges were always really kissy-assy and I was like, "That ain't going to be me. I'm going to be like, 'You suck.'"

www.americanradiohistory.com
In Shakira’s hometown of Barranquilla, Colombia, there’s a 15-foot metal statue of her, wearing bell-bottoms and strumming a guitar. It was donated by a German sculptor in 2006, in the midst of the singer’s wildly successful Oral Fixation world tour, which featured her jaw-dropping belly-dancing and a finale of “Hips Don’t Lie” with Wyclef Jean. Shakira occasionally strummed a glittery guitar during the show, but by the time the statue was put up, she was far from the acoustic pop-rocker she’d been on her 1996 breakthrough album, “Pies Descalzos.” And if the statue already was playing catch-up with her image in 2006, it barely captures her now. A preview of Shakira’s third English album, “She Wolf,” due Oct. 13 on Epic, reveals what may be some of her most club-oriented music to date: electronic pop with strong basslines and prominent world music textures, combined with a dose of in-your-face sex appeal. “I felt very curious and intrigued about the electro-pop world and everything it has to offer,” Shakira tells Billboard by phone from her home in the Bahamas. “I wanted to make sure that this album was very bassy and that the kicks hit really hard, and I wanted to concentrate on the beat. But my music, to a certain extent, is very complex—because I always try to experiment with sounds from other parts of the world.” Shakira produced and wrote the album, teaming with Pharrell Williams on production; other collaborators include Jean; John Hill, who’s worked with Santigold; the Bravery’s Sam Endicott; and Academy Award winner Jorge Drexler. Keyboardist Albert Menendez also co-wrote a song. It’s one thing to cross over into the non-Latin market, as Shakira did nearly a decade ago. But it’s quite another to maintain that crossover, particularly to the degree that Shakira has. She’ll follow up her simultaneous worldwide release with a tour promoted by Live Nation, with whom she has a multimillion deal (although Epic is releasing the album) that’s intended to build her business as a whole. For an artist in this day and age, and for an artist who is still early in their career, the challenge is: How do you conquer the world in a new way?” manager Ceci Kurzman asks. “How do you make sure that, now that the barriers have been dropped because of electronic media, how do you make sure that more people than ever can hear your music? There was a time you measured your success by the number of albums sold. And now you have such a broader scope.”

**WORLD RECORDS**

Shakira’s march to mainstream pop divadom began with “Laundry Service,” her 2001 English-language album, which has sold more than 3.7 million U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “La Tortura,” the first single from her 2005 album “Fijación Oral, Vol. 1,” became the first Spanish-language video to air on MTV without an English-language version. Shakira cemented her crossover with “Hips Don’t Lie,” a belated addition to her English-language Oral Fixation, Vol. 2” album that went to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and in at least 10 other countries tracked by Nielsen Music Control. All in all, Shakira has sold 50 million albums worldwide, according to her label.

What tends to happen with Latin stars is that they have to have one big English-language record or two or then they revert back to making Spanish records,” says Rob Stringer, chairman of Columbia/Epic Label Group. “She does a very good job of managing to synergize those two careers. Shakira is competing against iconic female artists and completely standing on her own, but she also has a career in Spanish as well, so she’s completely unique in that respect.”

What’s always set Shakira apart from her peers, whether in the Latin or the mainstream world, have been clever lyrics peppered with ingenious fusions—from tango to bossa nova to Andean flutes to reggaetón. As did she on the remarkable “Ojos Asi,” a Middle Eastern romp with electric guitars from her 1998 album “Dónde Estan Los Ladrones.” She looks east once again on “She Wolf.” In addition to the disco-influenced title track, there’s “Good Stuff,” a synthed-out snare-charmer punctuated by dulcimer and staccato beats; “Long Time,” a percussive midtempo groove with a Roma-like clarinet bridge; and “Why Wait,” a dancefloor scorcher by way of Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir.” (Shakira worked on the arrangement with Hoseam Ramey, who had worked on “Kashmir” with Jimmy Page and Robert Plant.) It’s an electronic album generally speaking, but it does have different organic instruments, that combined with the synthesizers, create a different sort of ambience,” says the two-time Grammy and seven-time Latin Grammy Award winner. “You’ve got to put together a nice meal and make sure the spices don’t take over the main ingredient. And at the end of the day, it gives a nice flavor in your mouth.”

**Hits Don’t Lie**

All of Shakira’s top 10s on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart also reached the top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100—except one: “Underneath Your Clothes” only charted on the Hot 100.

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**SONG** | **HOT LATIN SONGS PEAK** | **DEBUT DATE**
--- | --- | ---
"Esoy Aquí" | 2 | March 16, 1996
"Dónde Estas Corazón" | 5 | June 1, 1996
"Se Quiere Se Mata" | 8 | March 22, 1997
"Ciegas, Sordomuda" | (three weeks) | Oct. 24, 1998
"Tu" | 1 | Jan. 9, 1999
"Inevitable" | 3 | April 5, 1999
"No Creo" | 9 | March 1, 2000
"Suerte (Whenever, Wherever)" | (seven weeks) | Sept. 22, 2001
"Underneath Your Clothes" | 9* | March 16, 2002
"Que Me Quedes Tu" | 1 | Nov. 30, 2002
"La Tortura" (featuring Alejandro Sanz) | (25 weeks) | April 30, 2005
"Hips Don’t Lie" (featuring Wyclef Jean) | (eight weeks) | April 2, 2006
"Te Lo Agredecio, Pero No" (Alejandro Sanz featuring Shakira) | 1 | Feb. 10, 2007
"Beautiful Liar" (Beyoncé & Shakira) | 1 | March 5, 2007
"Loba (She Wolf)" | (two weeks) | July 18, 2009

* Never position on the Billboard Hot 100

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"I THINK PEOPLE ARE CRAVING FANTASY"

Audiences worldwide will get a much bigger taste of Shakira as Epic prepares to release “She Wolf.” Already, the title track is No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart in its Spanish-language version, “Loba.” The song’s combined downloads and airplay in both languages have vaulted it to No. 12 on the Hot 100 this week. And “She Wolf” is No. 6 on Billboard’s European Airplay chart.

A debut and one-day download giveaway of the “She Wolf” single at the ABC Music Lounge raised awareness of the track and kicked off a promotional partnership with the network for Shakira that will continue for months. Similar to the new single debut and ABC show appearances by another Epic priority, the Fray, Shakira’s activities will include her “She Wolf” video cut together in a promo campaign for the season’s new show “Desperate Housewives,” as well as appearances on “Good Morning America” and “Dancing With the Stars.”

Shakira visited ABC’s “The View” to promote the one-day free download, which Epic executive VP of marketing Lee Stimmel estimates resulted in hundreds of thousands of takeups. The song should get even more exposure when the fall TV season starts, as Epic pitched “She Wolf” synchs to a slew of networks, not just ABC.

In addition, Stimmel points out that Epic will make more use of iTunes as a marketing partner for this album than it did on Shakira’s 2005 release, with a pre-order with exclusive content set to launch next month.

Even with vampires and werewolves being all the rage these days, Shakira says she didn’t hear of “Twilight” until she showed “She Wolf” to Epic president Amanda Ghost—who in turn made her watch “Twilight.” “I loved it! but I also found that it was, coincidentally, very appropriate,” the “Harry Potter” fan says. “I think people are craving fantasy.”

Shakira delivers that and then some in the “She Wolf” video, which also has a version in Spanish. In both videos, she bares her teeth, wearing a flesh-colored leotard and stilettos. Belly-dancing aside, this is a more unabashed sex-up presentation. (It also was YouTube users’ third-most-favorite music video in August.) On the single and elsewhere on the album, there’s a bluntness to her urges only hinted at in her previous work.

Shakira says the “she wolf” represents her being “a little more in touch with my desires and a little more empowered or encouraged to satisfy those desires and set them free. It’s something that just comes with time. I probably would not have written a song like this when I was 20, but I do it now because it’s the way I feel today . . . I find that this time around,
**Sweet Charity**

Shakira’s efforts to improve the education and health of Latin America’s poorest children have practically made her a nongovernmental organization unto herself.

In November, she’ll help present a regional early-childhood education proposal to heads of state at the Ibero-American summit in Portugal. “We have high expectations to get something really concrete for the kids,” she says. This comes on the heels of her Pios Descalzos (Barefoot) Foundation, which Shakira founded in Colombia when she was 18, opening its fifth school in February (using proceeds from her touring) to serve the country’s most impoverished children.

And last year, ALAS—the advocacy group founded by Shakira and other Latin artists in 2006 to get governments and private donors to commit to early-childhood development programs on the continent—held massive televised concerts with performances from two dozen top Latin artists to rally public support for the cause. Shortly before the concerts, ALAS secured a $200 million commitment from Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim Helú and philanthropist Howard Buffett.

“Shakira is not committed to supporting the private sector to invest more and more money in child development programs,” says Shakira, a Billboard Spirit of Hope Award honoree. “With her reputation as someone who walks the walk, it’s no surprise that a brand that wants to align with Shakira ‘has to commit to supporting not necessarily her foundation, but [be] supportive of the platform,’ manager Ceci Kurzman says. ‘It goes well beyond fund-raising and financial contributions. It has to be a company that has a solid track record and a real commitment to the issues.’” —ABY

With Live Nation promoting Shakira’s tours and handling her merchandise, and with two studio albums left in her current Epic contract, “we have two strong, strategic partners for the years to come . . . even though one comes from the record side and one comes primarily from the touring side. They are able to lend their resources from both sides, and she’s been the beneficiary of that.”

As far as what the Live Nation deal will offer two album cycles down the road, it’s about growing all of the artist’s businesses “holistically, instead of just putting them in the category of your record, your tour, your merch, your brands,” Kurzman says. On the recording side, that Shakira eventually means artists embrace a flexible alternative to the biennial format of a 10-song album and take advantage of new formats and distribution outlets to put music into the marketplace, she says.

On the touring side, “it’s less about the number of dates and more about how strategic we are. She’s already an artist who does upward of 100 shows a year. She also realized that the mobile phone is more important than ever. And we found that a big drop-off is a space to fill,” Kurzman says.

In terms of broadening her reach, she cites eastern Europe, southeast Asia and the Middle East as territories with touring growth potential. With two-thirds of Shakira’s record sales coming from outside the United States, according to Kurzman, it’s not surprising that marketing efforts for “She Wolf” involve partners worldwide, particularly in the mobile space.

Many details are still being worked out, but in the States, Shakira’s relationship with Verizon—which sponsored her last North American tour—will continue in the near term with a mobile app to facilitate access to content and fan interaction with the artist.

In Latin America, handsomemaker Sony Ericsson and dominant regional wireless carrier América Móvil are onboard. Sony Ericsson will sell a phone bundled with exclusive content, which could include videos, wallpapers and possibly a combination of songs from “She Wolf” and other exclusive Shakira tracks. América Móvil has run promotions across the continent in which fans can download the song and video to “Loba” over the air by texting special codes.

As far as signature product lines or endorsements, Kurzman says Shakira is unlikely to simply license her name to something she wasn’t committed to for the long haul. “She feels there has to be an enormous quality-control criteria so she doesn’t disappoint her fans, who have been so loyal and expect a certain level of quality,” Kurzman says.

**LETTING MUSIC GUIDE ME**

Higher up on the to-do list are putting the finishing touches on the album and releasing TV performances in the United States, Europe and Australia. A renowned perfectionist, Shakira spent a month trying out different mixes of the first single until she was happy with it. When she spoke to Billboard, she was still tweaking mixes on the album at the legendary Compass Point Studios in the Bahamas. The studio, where Bob Marley, U2 and the Cure have recorded, drew Shakira to the Bahamas to record and eventually to live.

It was that obsession with production details that made her and Williams a good match. “We work in different ways—he is very fast and very proactive,” Shakira says. “When it comes to production, I think through a little more and travel different roads before I make a decision or commit to something. I have commitment issues.”

One thing she has no trouble committing to is activism on behalf of children living in poverty (see story, this page). Though she’s not a protest singer, Shakira hasn’t refrained from social commentary, including on her last album a song called “Timor.” Will her international efforts to rally support and donations for early childhood development programs be reflected musically on “She Wolf”? “My biggest motivation was to make an album that people could just have fun with and forget about their troubles,” she says. “I think I’ve found other outlets that have been very proactive. And I guess when that happens, the music, the songs, the music, and the fans create for the purpose it’s created for—to amuse and entertain people and also express other feelings, but things that are more personal. I’m letting music guide me.”

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**LIVE NATION BUILDING**

Another key aspect to promotion this time around will be Shakira’s multifacets deals with Live Nation, whose involvement in fan clubs, touring and merch opens several cross-marketing doors not available on her last album, Stummel says. “It’s in everyone’s best interest to make sure that this record is successful. So they’ve been wonderful in terms of helping market to people who have bought tickets in the past,” Stummel says. They have a massive database of Shakira fans and people we want to make sure know the album is out.”

Live Nation also sells merch through retailers that don’t necessarily sell music—but could now, with Shakira. Conversations are under way about bundling merch with a CD or a download card at a department, specialty and big-box store. “This might be something you see more during Christmas time and into the first quarter, and certainly something you’ll see during the tour,” Stummel says.

Another retail strategy is getting buyers more involved in Shakira’s other business endeavors: the first shipment of albums will come with a fan club membership, upgradeable to a premium level.

Shakira’s tour is a ways off, but her label and promoter are discussing how to offer the album to ticket buyers. Shakira’s Oral Fixation 2006-07 world tour grossed more than $42 million across 46 dates in North America and Latin America, as reported in Billboard Boxscore, so she tried grossed more than $100 million worldwide, according to Kurzman. And nearly a decade after the “Latin explosion” of the early 2000s, Shakira’s global audience—and her brand—are still ripe for growth.

It’s the changing reality of the music business that led Shakira to sign a multifacets deal with Live Nation, Kurzman says. But given that all of Shakira’s albums to date—as well as “She Wolf” and a Spanish-language album likely to be released during her next tour—are with Sony, “we’ll be working with them for as long as I can imagine,” Kurzman says.

The concerts were mainly to call the attention of an entire population, to commit governments and to commit the private sector to invest more and more money in child development programs,” says Shakira, a Billboard Spirit of Hope Award honoree. “With her reputation as someone who walks the walk, it’s no surprise that a brand that wants to align with Shakira “has to commit to supporting not necessarily her foundation, but [be] supportive of the platform,” manager Ceci Kurzman says. “It goes well beyond fund-raising and financial contributions. It has to be a company that has a solid track record and a real commitment to the issues.”
Clockwise from top: the interior of Coliseo de Puerto Rico in San Juan; ELTON JOHN performs at the venue in April 2007; RICKY MARTIN'S Blanco Y Negro tour stopped at the coliseum in August 2007.

A WORLD-CLASS COLISEUM

COLISEO DE PUERTO RICO CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AS A MAJOR REGIONAL VENUE

BY LEILA COBO
COLISEO'S IMPACT SEEN ON TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In just five years, the largest concert venue in Puerto Rico—formally known as Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot—has emerged as a premiere destination for Latin and international touring acts. The Rolling Stones, Ricky Martin, Celine Dion, Luis Fonsi, Andrea Bocelli, the Jonas Brothers and Wisin & Yandel are just some of the top performers who have played the building. Upcoming concerts include Ana Gabriel (Sept. 5), Gloria Estefan (Oct. 10) and Kenny G (Nov. 7). Last December, the urban bachata group Aventura did five dates at the coliseum. With total attendance of 76,034 and gross ticket sales of $4.5 million, the group's five-night stand ranks as the fourth-highest Latin boxscore of the chart year, according to Billboard Boxscore.

The multipurpose building officially opened Sept. 4, 2004, with a capacity ranging from 2,000 seats for intimate performances to 15,495 for arena shows or 18,163 for boxing events. It's the largest and most modern venue in the region and a major incentive for tourism within and to the island, government officials say.

The coliseum has grossed $12.5 million in ticket sales, with an attendance of 2.9 million, the venue reports.

The numbers are even more impressive when considering that the coliseum doesn't have an affiliation with a major sports team. And unlike most arenas in the United States, the venue wasn't specifically built to house a sports franchise (although it is built to NBA and NHL specifications).

Instead, the proposal for a state-of-the-art facility in Puerto Rico emerged when the island was bidding to become the site of the 2004 Olympic Games and an analysis of the existing facilities highlighted the need for a more modern, high-capacity venue. “It was seen as an important urban revitalization project that would not only address the demand for a venue but would also impact tourism, retail and residential activity,” says Jaime Lopez Villa, executive director of Puerto Rican Tourism and the Puerto Rican Convention Center District Authority, which owns the coliseum.

However, skepticism and controversy marked the coliseum's planning and construction. Critics noted that Puerto Rico already had an arena—the Roberto Clemente Coliseum (named after the late Pittsburgh Pirates baseball hero who died in a 1972 plane crash en route to help earthquake victims in Nicaragua). Lopez Villa recalls that the coliseum was initially viewed as "another white elephant because it was a government facility and a sports facility" and potentially a money-losing project.

Indeed, after it was known that the 2004 Summer Olympics would go to Athens, political infighting delayed construction that began in July 1998. The building eventually was completed at a cost of $248 million, totally financed by a branch of the government’s development bank.

Initially, the coliseum was to be called El Coliseo de Puerto Rico, but the same year of its completion, it was renamed in honor of the beloved comedian José Miguel Agrelot, who had died earlier that year. Today, locals often refer to the venue as “El Choliseo” in honor of one of Agrelot’s characters, although executives say they’re open to the idea of a naming sponsor.

Once the coliseum opened in 2004, it took off, even without a sports team to guarantee attendance, and has remained self-sufficient, deriving its revenue...
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Best event: Mansion to Million: Rolling Stones Tour (17,717)

Attendance: 2.9 million
Number of events: 508
Gross ticket sales: $125 million
Maximum single-event capacity: 18,163
Highest-grossing single event: The Rolling Stones ($5.2 million)
Highest-grossing multiple event: Aventura ($4.5 million)
Best event attendance: WWE Smackdown-Survivor Series tour (17,717)

Food/beverage record event:
The Rolling Stones, 24,729 beers and 13,093 mixed drinks were sold in three hours.

Act with most shows played:
Wisin & Yandel and Ricky Martin, with eight shows each

Amenities: 26 corporate suites, 1,000 club seats, two party suites, one VIP sky-box, three sponsored lounges, one VIP lounge, 26 food concessions and bars, two meeting rooms, one press room

About the venue's recycling program includes items ranging from paper and plastic to cooking oil. Plates, napkins and non-metal cutlery used in corporate suites are recyclable, as is all office paper. Many items are reused, from office supplies to silverware and drinking glasses. The coliseum has also eliminated the use of paper cups.

Cullen says, "reduce the cost of office supplies and have also created awareness among our employees." Indeed, coliseum staff have planted trees in the back of the property as part of a reforestation venture.

Cullen says other green initiatives are under way, including the installation of electric valves to reduce water and energy expenditures and more efficient lighting in parking areas. —LC
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DONNA SUMMER
DRACO
DREAM THEATER
DURAN DURAN
ELTON JOHN
FRANCO DE VITA
GLORIA ESTEFAN
GUNS N' ROSES
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GWEN STEFANI
HECTOR THE FATHER
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Latin Touring Industry Gets Creative In Uncertain Times

BY AYALA BEN-YEHUDA

It wasn't so long ago that Latin music fans seemed happy to fork over top dollar to see their favorite acts. They still are, but in a recessionary economy, value has become the name of the game—and fans are getting pickier about what they'll pay for. That's as close as one will get to a general statement about the Latin touring world, with acts as diverse as Luis Miguel, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Jenni Rivera and Wisin & Yandel catering to vastly different audiences, as well as shows north and south of the border.

continued on >>p35
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With fewer acts competing for the Latin ticket dollar, and with artists having to offset their expenses with fewer shows, prices have historically been higher for a Latin concert ticket in the U.S. than they are for a comparable mainstream act. But the market "is very price-sensitive right now," says promoter John Frias of Frias Entertainment. Fans are still willing to pay to see a veteran artist like Vicente Fernandez, Raphael, Armando Manzanero or Jose Luis Perales. But even so, "If I want to see these five shows, instead I’ll see three, or two, or one," says Arie Kaduri, president of NYK Productions, adding that it’s more difficult these days for an act to play multiple dates in one market.

Industry observers are looking forward to 2010, when a slew of major Latin artists are expected to go on tour, including Juanes and Alejandro Sanz—and possibly Shakira and Ricky Martin, who will both have new albums out. "The smartest thing all of us can do is be mindful of ticket prices," says William Morris Endeavor Entertainment VP/head of Latin music Michel Vega. "In the Latin market for years, the cheapest seats were the hardest ones to sell. "But when the economy tanked, "we saw a pattern emerge wherein the highest-price tickets were still selling, and the cheap seats were selling, but the middle-priced seats weren’t moving as much."

AEG Live/GoldenVoice VP of Latin talent Rebeca Leon says that while she’s generally still selling front to back—that is, with the higher-priced seats selling first—"there’s a limit. You can't go crazy on the ticket prices."

There’s evidence that the Latin concert industry may be adapting and getting creative with pricing. High-priced VIP packages, already popular in the general market, are finally landing in the Latin world. Wisin & Yandel’s Oct. 10 show at Los Angeles’ Staples Center, for example, offers two such packages—one with an "excellent reserved seating location," a gift bag, tour laminate, luncheon and souvenir tour ticket for $259 and a floor-seat version that also includes a meet-and-greet and a separate VIP check-in and entrance for $489.

Leon says the more expensive VIP package sold out completely during its presale, while the cheaper VIPs are 70% sold.

Vega (who doesn’t represent Wisin & Yandel) is already working on putting together a variety of VIP packages for a Latin pop act next year. Elements could include a meet-and-greet, digital content from the show, a deluxe CD and preferred parking. "That allows us to be able to offer some of the other tickets at a more reasonable price for other fans," Vega says.

The average ticket price on Wisin & Yandel’s tour is $45, says Leon. At the Staples show, regular tickets are offered at five price tiers, from $36 to $101.

Closer to showtime, a willingness by artists to heavily promote in each market has made the difference in selling out shows by Juanes and Mana. (The latter even pumped gas with Univision Radio morning host Piolin.) "Those days leading up to Juanes’ and Mana’s shows, we sold 20%-30% of the tickets," Leon says.

United Talent Agency’s John Pantie cites La Quinta Esacion and Camila as two touring acts he’s betting on for later this year, in addition to a rare combination of marquee names on one bill—Pepe Aguilar and Marco Antonio Solís. While some in the industry grumble that Latin superstars don’t set aside their egos often enough to share billing with other artists, Aguilar and Solís are a package on 11 dates of their respective tours this fall.

Crucial to keeping prices within reach are sponsors, which Frias says haven’t deserted the Latin market en masse despite the recession. "Corporate America didn’t get out of the game, but I did see them pull back," says Frias, whose clients have included Corona, Pepsi, Verizon, Toyota, Sauza and Anheuser-Busch. "They had strict guidelines or requests to cut some programs. Maybe it was a lesser investment or a shorter length, but I didn’t see anyone just pull out."

In his negotiations with sponsors for next year and in conversations with his colleagues, "there’s an impression that they may come back even stronger to make up for what was lost."

NYK’s Kaduri paints a darker picture on sponsorships, which he says brands have cut by about 75%. Nor does he think big acts have gotten the message yet about lowering their fees. But on the brighter side, Latin acts are selling out arenas in places like Turkey and Israel, where Perales and Julio Iglesias are doing shows. While America’s recession has affected the global economy, consumers abroad are less likely to react by cutting entertainment, Kaduri says. "I think in America we get panicked from every small thing," he says.

Edgar Baldi, who promoted 14 sold-out Daddy Yankee shows in Latin America on the reggaeton star’s Talento de Barrio tour this year, agrees. A former advertising man, Baldi says he concentrated his efforts to maintain media coverage of the artist well before his visit helped maintain interest in the tour. And while some sponsors “have gotten scared,” growth industries in the region like telecom and cable companies did get involved, as did casinos, banks, car rental companies, department stores, and at least one airline.

Latin America has provided many more opportunities for reggaeton acts to tour than the United States, with radio programmers more open to playing the genre, Baldi says.

"Even though the countries have been affected by the recession, we haven’t been affected," Baldi says, noting that average ticket prices ranged from $25 to $150. "People go to concerts. I don’t know where they get the money."
Emerging Alternative Acts Become A Growing Niche In Latin Touring

BY AYALA BEN-YEHUDA

The Flying M Coffee Garage in Nampa, Idaho, isn't the first place one would think to route a Latin tour. But on a Sunday afternoon last August, bilingual rock band Monte Negro played to a capacity crowd of less than 100 people on the MTV Tr3s-sponsored Circo Rocktastico tour (with the May Fire and Astra Heights).

"They sold out of food," the band's then-manager Gil Gastelum recalls. "I thought it was fantastic. But that is what you have to do sometimes to connect the dots on a Latin alternative tour—play wherever you can."

Developing Latin acts are a niche within a niche in the United States, and unlike the dozen or so veteran Latin arena artists, booking them is a tougher sell. That's particularly true in Latin alternative, Gastelum says, which some talent buyers don't understand is far from traditional Latin music—and which Latin clubs think of as rock.

Also for relatively unknown acts, "a lot of promoters don't know them and don't want to book them to bigger venues or open for other acts because it'll add to their expenses," says Elena Rodrigo, who now books Monte Negro. The Los Angeles-based band is on a 20-date U.S. tour of clubs and bars until Sept. 4.

"We know we'll end up with practically no money," Rodrigo says. "The main purpose of this is to create the fan base and create the circuit."

While Live Nation and AEG Live have smaller venues (like the House of Blues and Club Nokia) that regularly host smaller Latin acts, packaging developing artists together and building their eventual ability to tour on their own is also key. Rebecca Leon, VP of Latin talent for AEG Live/Golden Voice, put Sony acts Reik and Camila together on a U.S. tour a couple of years ago and has since taken each of them solo. "We don't want to be in a business that only has five or six headliners," Leon says. "People think they can tour here because they are getting airplay and they're visible... (but) if you want to have success with the immigrants here and the kids, the generations after the immigrants, you've got to hit home first."

A developing act that was particularly successful this year was Colombian artist Fonseca. By keeping ticket prices low, playing the right size venues, and with Western Union as a co-title sponsor, Fonseca scored nine sellouts on his 14-show North American tour. The trek grossed about $400,000 and laid the groundwork for future U.S. shows.

Having a smaller act opening for a name artist "is not practiced as much in the Latin world as much as it is in the general market," says William Morris Endeavor Entertainment VP/Head of Latin touring Michel Vega. "As an industry I don't think we're supporting tomorrow's megastars yet."

In a twist on the opener concept, Mexican singer/songwriter Ximena Sarinana, who did her first U.S. tour earlier this year, opened for Jason Mraz in Spain in July. Sarinana recorded Spanish vocals and a video for Mraz's song "Lucky," originally an English-language duet with Colbie Caillat; Sarinana's version is being promoted to radio in Spain and Mexico, where Mraz is seeking a fan base. "You've got to make sure that opening doesn't make you look smaller," Sarinana's manager Amir Agai says, adding that a label sticking with an act through various singles is just as important.

Still, Agai acknowledges that putting developing acts on tour is nearly always a loss, since big sponsors usually won't get behind them. "It's an investment, but you have to get them touring."
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Rage against the duet Wisin & Yandel is breaking new markets, driven by savvy booking and an imaging effort spearheaded by manager Edgar Andino and agent Juan Toro, partner in the New York-based Relentless Agency. Andino says: "The duo has been doing this for many years. I have a lot of contacts, and I put them together with the right promoters, and that's key." Toro says: "We look for guys that are established, guys that have vision, guys that will invest in the artists' careers. And what ended up happening in six months' time was we went from $10 per ticket to maybe $10 or $50."
DADDY YANKEE

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  - Songwriter

- **Javier San Roman**
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MUSE

GRAY ALBUM
David Gray makes a fresh start

BRAND ON THE RUN
The many platforms of Kany Garcia

NORTHWEST-SIDE
Grych steals Seattle hip-hop’s heart

SUITE MUSIC
Top producers remix Jackson’s catalog

MUSICAL DEBATE
Terence Blanchard sets life’s “Choices” to music

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE
Muse Plans Global Takeover

A lead single about a proletarian revolt against the global banking crisis, a teaser campaign involving a worldwide musical treasure hunt, and an album that ends with a three-part, fully orchestrated symphony about an alternative theory of the creation of mankind is Muse the only young, stadium-filling rock band that could get away with this?

“I think ‘get away with’ is the key,” singer/guitarist Matt Bellamy says with a laugh, regarding the band’s new album, “The Resistance.” The set will be released internationally Sept. 14 and a day later in the United States by Warner Bros. Records.

“The Resistance” is Muse’s fifth album, but the first for which the band took charge of production duties. It’s also the first that Bellamy, drummer Dom James and bassist Chris Wolstenholme recorded in one place—a warren of converted cellars on the edge of Lake Como in northern Italy, where Bellamy now lives.

The first single, “Uprising,” released digitally Aug. 4 in the United States, is an anthemic, shuffle-beat stomp with lines postulating approvingly about how “the fat cats had a heart attack.” It debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 81 and on Billboard’s Rock Songs chart at No. 15.

Prior to “Uprising” the band had unveiled another track, “United States of Eurasia,” as part of an international treasure hunt in which the band hid USB sticks containing portions of the song in seven cities. On its Web site, Muse.mu, it supplied fans with clues to the sticks’ locations in Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Tokyo, Hong Kong, New York and Dubai. Once all had been discovered and their contents uploaded to the site, the song was posted together and made available for streaming.

“We wanted to make sure that we superserved the fans,” says Matthew Laurier-Prevost, senior VP of international marketing at Warner Music International, adding that before the label did any “deals with specific platforms, we were servicing the Web site because we really want the fans to be there first.”

Fans who pre-order the album from the official site are signed up to the Join the Resistance club, which entitles them to seven weeks of exclusive free video and audio downloads. Songwriting for the album began in early 2008, with recording originally scheduled for that summer. Instead, the band accepted offers to tour South America, South Africa and the Middle East, a trip that proved influential for Bellamy.

“I remember listening to music I’d never heard before in Dubai—stuff that certainly had an effect on songs like ‘Eurasia,’” he says. “And going to tango bars in Brazil... that gave us musical ideas that wouldn’t have happened if we didn’t do that tour.”

The creation of the album’s climactic, fully orchestrated “Exogenesis: Symphony Parts I–III” meanwhile, doubles as part of the writing period around the band’s third album, “Absolution” (2003), and was further catalyzed by Bellamy’s contribution to the soundtrack for Clive Owen’s 2008 thriller “The International.”

“I hope it’ll surprise people with the sublimity of the orchestration,” Bellamy says. “I don’t think ‘Exogenesis’ is deliberately flamboyant in any way. Although if someone was to read the song title, they’d probably expect some really ’70s prog-rock, Rush-style symphony.”

Live, Muse is “warming up” with three weeks supporting U2 in the United States starting Sept. 24, while the American promo campaign kicks off with a Sept. 13 appearance at the MTV Video Music Awards. The band will also play two hometown shows Sept. 4-5 in Teignmouth in Devon, England, before a European arena run in late October.

The stage sets at those gigs will feature “Escher-esque towers with lots of stairs” and “elements you’d associate more with either circus or ballet,” according to Bellamy, all of which should go some way to maintaining the band’s rep as one of the world’s greatest live acts.

The band’s last studio album, 2006’s “Black Holes and Revelations,” sold 590,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and $10.4 million in the United Kingdom, according to the Official Charts Co.—but Laurier-Prevost is confident even bigger things await.

“Muse is ready to explode and go to the next step everywhere in the world,” he says, adding that the label and Muse’s North American management firm Q-Prime have “serious plans to break America big.”

If Muse can play a 50,000-seat stadium in Paris, why not play football stadiums in many other countries?” he asks. “With the new music I am confident there is no limit.”
**Rock**

**All Change**

A New Dawn For David Gray

Artists with longtime fan bases and comfortable lifestyles rarely venture for complete makeovers, but British singer/songwriter David Gray has opted for an overhaul of his professional life for his seventh album.

For “Draw the Line,” due Sept. 14 internationally and Sept. 22 in the United States, Gray has a new and fresh label deals for North America and the rest of the world.

Previously with ATO for North America and Warner Music—first on East West and then Atlantic—Gray funded the recording of “Draw the Line” himself through 13th Records, the label/product company he co-owns with manager Rob Holden. The album has now been licensed to Fontana-distributed Downtown’s new Mercer Street imprint in North America and Polydor/Universal elsewhere.

“Since back to before [my 2005 studio set] ‘Life in Slow Motion,’ ” Gray says. “There were some huge deals on the table, around the world, to extend for a few records. We were staring at a check that would have sorted us out for the rest of our lives, but it just didn’t feel right. ‘You could kill yourself when the money landed in your bank that you were still doing everything you’d ever wanted to do,’ he adds. ‘But somehow the game would be over. We chose the risky route of funding this record ourselves, to see what was going to happen (in the industry) on the other side.’

Meanwhile, Gray reconnected with former guitarist Niall McColl and replaced longtime drummer Craig ‘Clown’ McClune with Keith Hyde. The end result of all this change is a confident album, with Gray writing more observantly and less introspectively than of late. Standouts include the lead single, “Fugitive,” with its distinctive piano and guitar motifs and stirring duets with Annie Lennox (“Full Steam Ahead”) and Jolie Holland (“Kathleen”).

“It’s been 10 years since his fourth album, “White Ladder,” slow-burned its way to multimillion sales worldwide, including 2.4 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and 2.9 million in the United Kingdom, according to the Official Charts Co. Follow-ups “A New Day at Midnight” (2002) and “Life in Slow Motion” have sold 604,000 and 414,000, respectively, stateside and 1.2 million and 700,000 in the United Kingdom.

Now Downtown CEO Josh Deutsch says he is eager to bring him back to “White Ladder”-style prominence by “reconnecting him to his fan base and introducing him to a new generation of David Gray fans.”

Gray made a couple of early U.S. visits, playing on shows at Downtown’s New York studio over three nights for select media, notably music supervision and licensingheads. American TV appearances include “Late Show With David Letterman” and “Live With Regis and Kelly,” according to Deutsch.


“We’re very excited to have David on Polydor,” says the label’s U.K. senior marketing manager Emma Powell. “You can tell he ex- cepted it; he really comes across on the record.”

Gray agrees. “This album was phenomenally exciting to make,” he says. “I would die for every centimeter of it.”

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**Latin**

**Be Kany**

A Latin Singer/Songwriter Brands Herself

With the face of an ingenue and the lyrical bite of a social commentator, Kany García debuted in 2007 as part of a new crop of Latin female singer/songwriters. She struck a nerve, selling 57,000 copies of her debut, “Cual- quier Dia,” in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and winning the 2008 Latin Grammy Award for best new artist.

Beyond the artistic success, she has become something of a poster child for a new business model—García is the first artist signed to a management deal by Day 1, Sony Latin’s artist development company.

Now, as she readsies the Sept. 22 release of her second album, “Boleto De Entrada,” García and her managers are looking to solidify her as a musical brand.

“Boleto De Entrada” is receiving traditional radio promotion but is also backed by a series of innovative marketing and awareness campaigns by brands that include Dove, Ford, Coors and Centennial, a Puerto Rican wireless carrier. All campaigns play on García’s identity as a multifaceted songwriter, as exemplified by the album itself.

“This album defines me to a fault,” García says. “I’m a different person at home, on the stage and as a composer. And I wanted my album to have different faces.”

“Boleto De Entrada,” which was produced by Colombian Andrés Castro, veers from a reggae-tinged, danceable first single to acoustic, pared-down ballads. The arrangements for many of the tracks were created in the studio, after multiple takes of each verse.

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**Global Pulse**

Edited by Tom Ferguson

**Sweet William**


“Twice Born Men” debuted in the United Kingdom March 16 on former Jam frontman/solo artist David Sylvian’s indie label Sakahamon. It received a nationwide release Aug. 3 through a sales/distribution/promotion deal with EMI. Prior to the Mercury nomination “Twice Born Men” had sold 400 copies, according to the band’s London-based manager Adrian Molloy. But a further 2,000 copies were shipped to U.K. retailers the week after the nomination, EMI Label Services VP of Europe Mike Roe says. A North America digital release on EMI is imminent. Alternative Distribution Alliance will handle physical distribution, but a release date isn’t yet confirmed. The album will have an Octo- ber Japanese release on the indie P-Vine.

“It is a real mixture of electronics and really beautiful soundscapes building into, and amalgamating with, glorious choruses and melodies,” Roe says. He adds that a U.K. media campaign has been rolled out in advance of the Sept. 8 Mercury Prize ceremony in London. The band, booked by London-based William
A hip-hop track about a 23-year-old Volvo sounds like a joke, but Seattle artist Grynhc is totally sincere when he raps, "I've laughed in that car/I've cried in that car/Knock on wood, man/I probably die in that car." The emerging rapper, who's been getting heavy airplay on Seattle's tastemaking radio station KEXP, has released an album and an EP, and has been featured on several mixtapes. His next album, "Chemistry 1.5," which includes tracks from his "Chemistry" EP and several new songs, will be released Oct. 6.

1. You grew up in Seattle and went to Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash.—not exactly a typical hip-hop background. How did you get interested in rap?

I grew up listening to the radio and a lot of West Coast hip-hop—Snoop and Dr. Dre and Warren G, all those guys. I was really into gangsta rap, even though I'm the least gangsta person ever. I started writing rhymes as a kid and just kept working at it. Seattle also has a great hip-hop scene, and when I was in college, I spent a lot of time going back and forth between Seattle and Tacoma, which doesn't have such a hot scene [laughs].

2. For a city known mostly for grunge and indie rock, why do you think Seattle has a strong hip-hop scene right now?

The hip-hop scene is Seattle is incredibly diverse—you've got people from all walks of life coming out, and it's really welcoming. Groups like Blue Scholars are blowing up, and they're willing to help others out and pull them up, too. It's happening slowly but surely. KEXP is also instrumental. The commercial hip-hop station is OK—they have a Sunday-night show for local music, but that's about it. But KEXP has shown huge love to the local alt-rap scene. They take risks with their programming and mix stuff up.

3. Everything you've released so far has been on your own. Are you looking for a label, or do you want to keep doing it yourself?

I'm on my own new album right now, and I'd love to work with the right label. I'm doing lots of research and trying to find a good fit. For example, I love Rhymsayers. I think I've done well on my own so far. I've gotten a lot of great shows and blog love and connected with people through social networks, but I feel like I'm hitting my capacity.

4. You play at clubs normally associated with indie rock, such as Chop Suey and Showbox. Is it hard to convince more rock-centric bookers to put you on bills?

Honestly, people are chill for the most part. More clubs in Seattle are booking hip-hop. For a while it was hard, but now bookers have realized there is an audience they need to get. I've played shows with all types of bands, and I've been fortunate enough to open some great shows. I opened for Nas at Showbox, and I'm opening for the Clipse later this year.

5. Your lyrics are honest and self-deprecating; your best-known track, "My Volvo," is a love letter to your '86 Volvo. Why stay honest and not spin yarns about babes and sports cars?

Man, I'm from middle-class Seattle neighborhood. Ballard. There is nothingbling or gangsta about someone from Ballard, and I just can't front like that. It doesn't make sense to me to lie about who I am or what I love. I rap about my car and the fact that Ballard is gentrifying and Denny's is now a condo building because that's what I know. Don't get me wrong. I listen to Jay-Z and I love hearing him talk big, but at least he really lives it. A lot of guys, it's all borrowed for the photo shoot.

6. What are your plans for the rest of the year? Will you be touring?

I'm doing a West Coast tour in November and playing some shows in Seattle. I know I need to get out of Seattle more, though—I'm going to be in New York for CMJ, and I need some shows, so if anyone wants to book me, hit me up [laughs].
With a Tori Amos mane of tomato-red hair, a gauzy voice made to deliver her bookish lyrics and more than 1 million followers on Twitter, A Fine Frenzy leader Alison Sudol is ready for her close-up. The band’s second album, “Bomb in a Birdcage,” builds on the more ethereal qualities of its 2007 buzz-heavy debut, “One Cell in the Sea,” by focusing as much on drums as on Sudol’s percussive piano playing. The added energy suits her melodies well. Such tracks as “What I Wouldn’t Do,” “Electric Twist” and the first single, “Blow Away,” chime like giddy summer romances, nailing the delicate balance of charming and smart. Track 11, featuring vocals by guest Strunz & Farah, is another winning showcase of exotic instrumentals and a British stamp (see the Sundays, Ludh, Sudol can still deliver an acoustic.blob where the album closer, “Beacon,” but “Bomb in a Birdcage” shows there’s much more up her sleeve elsewhere.

**ALBUMS**

**POP**

**A Fine Frenzy**

**Bomb in a Birdcage**

Producer: Lukas Burton

Virgin Records

Release Date: Sept. 8

With a Tori Amos mane of tomato-red hair, a gauzy voice made to deliver her bookish lyrics and more than 1 million followers on Twitter, A Fine Frenzy leader Alison Sudol is ready for her close-up. The band’s second album, “Bomb in a Birdcage,” builds on the more ethereal qualities of its 2007 buzz-heavy debut, “One Cell in the Sea,” by focusing as much on drums as on Sudol’s percussive piano playing. The added energy suits her melodies well. Such tracks as “What I Wouldn’t Do,” “Electric Twist” and the first single, “Blow Away,” chime like giddy summer romances, nailing the delicate balance of charming and smart. Track 11, featuring vocals by guest Strunz & Farah, is another winning showcase of exotic instrumentals and a British stamp (see the Sundays, Ludh, Sudol can still deliver an acoustic.

**PHISH**

**Joy**

Producer: Steve Lillywhite

JEMP Records

Release Date: Sept. 8

“Got a blank space where my mind should be/’Got a Cliff Bar and some cold green tea,” Phish frontman Trey Anastasio sings on “Stealing Time From the Faulty Plan,” the second track on the band’s ebullient new album, “Joy.” Phish masterfully marries freedom and form on its first studio release since 2004’s “Undermind,” combining the best elements of its jazz-inspired outings with an acute attention to song structure. The result is a collection that succeeds on multiple fronts, and one sure to please both the avid fan and casual listener. With strong production by studio titan Steve Lillywhite, the band effortlessly switches between jangle (the sentimental, Allman Brothers-esque “Backwards Down the Number Line”) and jam (the midnight indulgence “Early Sunday Morning” and the indelibly Latin “Time Turns Elastic”). And on the title track, Anastasio pays moving tribute to a sister lost too soon. “Joy” is a journey not to be missed.

**ROCK**

**Rodrigo y Gabriela**

11:11

Producers: Rodrigo Y Gabriela, John Leckie

ATO Records

Release Date: Sept. 8

There was a slight novelty aspect to the way the Mexican guitar duo Rodrigo Y Gabriela dazzled listeners on their self-titled second album in 2006. The pair’s guitar chops were undeniable, but flashy versions of Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven” and Metallica’s “Orion” obscured the broader array of fleet-fingered virtues the duo brought to the table. Not so on “11:11,” which is more sophisticated, flowing and diverse. The 11-track set loosely pays tribute to other string players, obviously in some cases (the nod to Jimi Hendrix’s “Voodoo Chile” in “Buster Voodoo”), and more subtly in others, such as the Paco De Lucia echoes of “Master Magu,” with guest Strunz & Farah. Testament’s Alex Skolnick brings electric fire on “Altman,” an Arabic-flavored homage to the late guitarist Darrell “Dimebag” Abbott, and light hints of piano add to the textures of the John Leckie-produced title track. “11:11” is another winning showcase of exotic instrumentals and a British stamp (see the Sundays, Ludh, Sudol can still deliver an acoustic.

**BLK JKS**

**After Robots**

Producer: Brandon Curtis

Secretly Canadian

Release Date: Sept. 8

Johannesburg natives BLK JKS (pronounced “black jacks”) have been creating state-side buzz since performing at South by Southwest and appearing on the cover of the Fader magazine last year. Produced by Secret Machine’s Brandon Curtis, “After Robots” justifies the blegosphere hype by offering a wholly unique sound that veers among prog rock, funk and jazz. Songs like “Molotladi” and “Lakeside” rely on lifting vocal harmonies that recall tribal chants, while “Kwa Nqeqéqé” is an epic with slowly unraveling arrangements. At the heart of the album’s combination of genres is BLK JKS’ South African influence, manifested in the band’s use of polyrhythms and a driving horn section. Although the set’s complex instrumentation finds BLK JKS occasionally losing their footing, their confidence in their craft largely covers up any glaring errors. “After Robots” positions the act as an organic, impressive response to the African influence in American rock music.

**Latin**

**Os Mutantes**

Halh Or Amortecedor

Producer: Sergio Dias Antunes

Release Date: Sept. 8

Os Mutantes’ “Halh Or Amortecedor” may not be the Brazilian band’s comeback since its ’60s/’70s tropicalia heyday, but the set does mark its first studio recording in 35 years. (The past decade has seen a pair of profile-raising compilations, plus a critically hailed CD/DVD documenting a 2006 reunion concert.) Even with the hiatus, the effort is remarkable for its maverick spirit and pop unorthodoxy. Though sung in Spanish (Tom Zé contributed lyrics), the musical delights here are universal: “O Careca” displays the band’s sultry tropicalia sound, “Querida Querida” is a big-band sort-o-pah meets psychedelic garage cut, and the jangly “O Mensageiro” is almost Byrdsian pop as filtered through the Flaming Lips. Sole remaining founding member and frontman Sergio Dias has conceived a multicolored universe where anything seems possible.

**Bluegrass**

**Yonder Mountain String Band**

The Show

Producer: Tom Rotroock

Frog Pad Records

Release Date: Sept. 1

Yonder Mountain String Band retains its traditional bluegrass sound on “The Show,” but the Colorado-based quartet has widened its commercial appeal by incorporating elements of rock and punk. Straying from the usual string record of past albums, the band emphasizes its latest addition, drummer Pete Thomas (from Elvis Costello & The Imposters)—the song “Complicated” showcases a percussive-heavy sound previously unknown to Yonder fans.” Honesty” is another instrumentally commendable track,clocking in at more than eight minutes long. The blend of instruments and vocals will translate well into live performances, particularly

**Whitney Houston**

**I Look to You**

Producers: various

Arista/RICA Music Group

Release Date: Aug. 31

The imminent release of Whitney Houston’s “I Look to You” (her first studio album in seven years) keeps prompting the elephant-in-the-room question: How does she sound? Well, Houston turns in a solid performance on this 11-track set. And it underscores her still-considerable gift for delivering the emotion in a song, which is especially showcased on the title track/lead single. While Houston may not top her iconic performance of “I Will Always Love You,” she more than holds her own on this R. Kelly-penned ballad about finding strength in the face of adversity. She gets her party swerve going on the album’s standout cut about appreciating a significant other, “Million Dollar Bill,” produced by Alicia Keys and Swizz Beatz. Another keeper is the midtempo, relationship-themed “Like I Never Left” featuring Akon. Primarily comprising up- and midtempo selections—including an aamped-up cover of Leon Russell’s “A Song for You”—“Look to You” finds Houston channeling the self-assured singer she exhibited on 1998’s “My Love is Your Love.” The set is a nice welcome back and a new beginning for the singer.

**Pitbull**

**Rebolution**

Producers: various

Mr. S.O.S/Polo Grounds/ATICA

Release Date: Aug. 31

You either love or hate Pitbull’s music, and sometimes a little of both when listening to the same album. As with the Miami rapper’s past releases, his newest set, “Rebolution,” is a mix of infectious dance hooks and rapid-fire rhymes—some are clever and funny, others are just plain graphic. In addition to the hits “I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho),” “Hotel Room Service” and “Krazy,” the album’s most accessible songs are “Across the World” and “Can’t Stop Me Now.” Amid the frenetic dance beats and endless metaphors for orifices and organs, “Across the World” is a wide-eyed, gentle pop song about becoming an international star; “Can’t Stop Me Now” is an intriguing listen, with a strong guitar and soaring background chorus. But the head-scratcher is the closer “Daddy’s Little Girl,” an ode to the ones that have been raped, the ones that grew up fatherless, but still found a way to raise their kids to do the right thing.”

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**PHOTOS: ILLUSTRATIONS, LLC**
SINGLES

LADY ANTEBELLUM

Need You Now (3:57)
Producers: Paul Worley, Lady Antebellum
Writers: various
Publishers: various
Capital Music
Lady Antebellum—the trio of Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood—have lived up to its promise and then some. After a breakout debut album and touring slots with Kenny Chesney and Keith Urban, the group now faces the dreaded sophomore slump. But if the lead single, “Need You Now,” is any indication, Lady A’s career will continue on its upward trajectory. The song finds allo Scott trading lead vocals with a soulful Kelley, and it will connect with anyone who’s ever dumped a significant other and regretted it in the early morning hours (“It’s a quarter after one, I’m a little drunk and I need you now”). The passionate track begins and ends with sparse piano and packs a powerful punch in between.—KT

ROCK

JEREMIH

Imma Star (3:35)
Producer: Mick Schuizt
Writers: J. Fetlen, K. James, M. Schultz
Publishers: various
Mick Schuizt/Def Jam/IDMG
On the heels of Jeremih’s debut single-turned-summer anthem, “Birthday Sex,” “Imma Star” continues to peg the 21-year-old R&B singer/songwriter as a young talent to watch. The song bristles with confidence, as the Chicago native jokes about his quick rise to success (“You can catch me in the air, I’ll be ballin’.”) He sings playfully and insists that it’s no fluke: “Now that I got the torch, I’mma keep the flame.” The-Dream’s influence is even stronger here than on “Birthday Sex.” From the distended, hypnotic yelps to the dense synths and nerdy analogies—and occasionally, it veers too close to comfort. Still, few artists charge from the gate this convincingly, and Jeremih has the vocal chops to back up his boasts, proving that he’s no one-hit wonder.—MH

ALICE IN CHAINS

Check My Brain (3:58)
Producers: Nick Raskulineuz, Alice in Chains
Writer: J. Cantrell
Publisher: BMG Chappell
Virgin/Chappell
After more than a decade of studio silence following original frontman Layne Staley’s death, the iconic Seattle band Alice in Chains returns with a new singer and a refocused sense of focus. “Check My Brain”—the lead single from the group’s forthcoming Virgin Records debut, “Black Gives Way to Blue”—follows the summer buzz track “A Looking in View.” “Brain” is faithful to the grunge terrain Alice in Chains mapped out in 1995. Written by guitarist/chef songwriter Jerry Cantrell, who shares lead vocal duties with William DuVall, the song revolves around Cantrell’s disaffection for his relocation from rainy Seattle to sunny Los Angeles. The band’s classic, downturned stomp could easily pass for an unreleased track from the “Dirt” era and is sure to keep longtime fans feeling pleasantly dystopic.—RH

KANY GARCIA

Feliz (2:38)
Producers: Kany Garcia, Andres Castro
Writer: Kany Garcia
Publisher: Warner/Chappelli
Sony Music Latin
Leave it to Kany Garcia to write a dark song called “Feliz.” On the lead single from her second album—“Boleto De Entrada,” due Sept. 22—the Puerto Rican singer/songwriter’s sharply observant lyrics and nuanced, husky voice are a satisfying contrast to the bouncy acoustic pop behind it. Garcia does bitter-sweet very well, and she’s capable of conveying hurt feelings with subtlety in her vocals even while ostensibly giving someone the finger in verse. Unlike her Latin Grammy Award-winning first album, “Cualquier Dia”—a solid debut in which the quirkiest track (an ode to a vibrador) was buried—“Feliz” is a bold choice for a single and a catchy song with a rhythm that borders on reggae-lite. Here’s hoping the rest of Garcia’s new material is as interesting.—ABY

DANCE

SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

Temporary Pleasure
Producers: James Shaw: Jamies Ford
Wichita Recordings
Release Date: Sept. 15
Hot on the heels of its 2007 debut, “Attack Decay/Sustain Release,” the English production partnership of Simian Mobile Disco return with a collaboration-heavy set that begs for dancefloor play. “Temporary Pleasure” aims for the discos-driven electronics of Basement Jaxx and Hercules & Love Affair, with a more relaxed vibe among guest vocalists and animated beats once again proving exciting. The duo of James Shaw and James Ford build their rhythms with synthesizer stabbs and balanced percussion, keeping each of the 10 tracks immediate without being overpowering. Jamie Lidell’s soulful voice squeals under distortion in “Off The Moo,” and Hot Chip’s Alexis Taylor adds warmth to the story “Bad Blood.” The title track offers a heavy dose of fun to techno fans, and Simian Mobile Disco’s full-lengths should only improve from here.—JL

LEGEND/ACCLAIM

EDITED BY MITCHELL PETERS (ALBUMS) AND MONICA HERRERA (SINGLES)

CONTRIBUTORS: Ayala Ben-Yehuda, Gary Graff, Ronald Hart, Samantha Hayden, Monica Herrera, Jason Lipshutz, Jillian Mapes, Lara Marsman, Kerri Mason, Fred Mills, Gail Mitchell, Jon Regan, Ken Tucker

PICK ➤ A new release predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format.
CRITIC’S CHOICE ➤ A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

ALL albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Mitchell Peters at Billboard, 5055 Wilshire Blvd., Seventh Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036 and singles review copies to Monica Herrera at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003, or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

SEPTEMBER 5, 2009 | www.billboard.biz | 45

www.americanradiohistory.com
Never Can Say Goodbye

Top Producers Spin Unique Tributes On 'Michael Jackson: The Remix Suite'

As a tribute to Michael Jackson and his early work, Universal Motown Records has tapped an all-star group of producers to put a new spin on the late pop star's catalog. "Michael Jackson: The Remix Suite" features 25 remixes of Jackson's classic Motown material as a solo artist and with the Jackson 5, reinterpreted by such marquee producers as Chris "Tricky" Stewart, the Neptunes, Polow Da Don, Rodney Jerkins, Stargate and Paul Oakenfold.

The tracks will be gradually released in five-song digital bundles before the collection physically arrives Oct. 27. Each bundle, beginning with the Aug. 25 release of "The Remix Suite I," has been designed as an homage that emphasizes Jackson's influence on modern pop production. "The Remix Suite" is spearheaded by Universal Motown president Sylvia Rhone, who opened the label's archives and allowed each producer to remix a Jackson or Jackson 5 song that had inspired him. "We came up with a long list expecting people to be unavailable," Rhone says. "But there was literally not one 'no' answer. People dropped everything they were doing to help out with this.

The final producer list is a diverse group of beatmakers, from reggae specialist Salaam Remi to house music guru Frankie Knuckles. Blink-182's Mark Hoppus says he was shocked that Universal Motown asked him to contribute a track but adds, "Just to be included in a project like this is a huge honor."

The remixes add modern production techniques to Jackson's songs while highlighting the elements that originally made them classics. Dallas Austin, whose remix of "I Wanna Be Where You Are" integrates fresh bass guitar and funky synthesizers, slightly altered the instrumentation in order to "futureize" the song and "see what it would sound like today." His take appears on the first bundle along with remixes by the Neptunes, Stargate, Remi and Polow Da Don. Hoppus, meanwhile, wanted his version of "ABC" to capture the charm of Jackson's early career. "When we were working, there was such a reverence for the vocals," he recalls. "We tried to keep the spirit of that track, which is more youthful exuberance.

Other highlights include Stargate's electro-splited remix of "Skywriter," Steve Aoki's take on "Dancing Machine" (also covered by Polow Da Don) and Alphon's heartfelt reimagining of "Ben." Remi also contributes a reggae remix of "ABC." Universal Motown opted to digitally roll out the remixes in order to give consumers new material on a regular basis and avoid trying to fit every song on a single CD. The bulk of the "Suite" promotion has occurred online, with tracks like Austin's "I Wanna Be Where You Are" premiering exclusively on MySpace. As each new suite is released every two weeks, the label will monitor which songs receive the most fan response to determine the track list and sequencing of the physical version.

"The album is going to be a reaction to the specific bundles of songs," says Universal Motown GM Andrew Kronfeld, who will utilize online forums and comments on iTunes to gauge fan reaction. Kronfeld also says the physical CD will include special packaging and artwork. Although Jackson purists may question the validity of a remix album, the set dutifully respects Jackson's legacy by highlighting the original melodies on each track. "When you listen to the master tracks, it's a privilege just to hear them," Austin says. "[The remixes] just breathe new life into songs that you love."

The main motivation for the collection, however, is to celebrate Jackson's timeless and influential work. And that's reflected in the producers' dedication to the project. "Everyone brought their A-game, and we got this very broad, creative perspective," Rhone says. "We tried to make it a special tribute, and I think we far exceeded our expectations."
FACING LIFE'S 'CHOICES'

Trumpeter Terence Blanchard Sets The Human Challenge To Music

Out of pain and destruction can come hope and celebration. That's the genius behind jazz trumpeter/film composer Terence Blanchard's first solo release on Concord Jazz, "Choices." Featuring spoken-word segments by educator/activist Cornel West and vocals by soul singer Bilal, the Aug. 18 release debuts at No. 5 on Billboard's Top Jazz Albums chart.

Blanchard's latest follows his Grammy Award-winning Blue Note CD, "A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)." On that 2007 release, Blanchard and his band developed a passionate discourse on Hurricane Katrina's ravaging toll in New Orleans.

"Jazz is the language I speak," the New Orleans native says. "And there are so many things to say inside of that language. I wanted to continue the discussion about what's happening in New Orleans. A lot of positive things are happening here, but there's still a ways to go. Out of that, I wanted to create a debate about the choices we make as a society and as individuals."

Blanchard and band members Fabian Almazan (piano), Derrick Hodge (bass), Kenirick Scott (drums) and newcomer Walter Smith III (saxophone) wrote the majority of the music. Blanchard traveled to Princeton University to record conversations with West about topics ranging from love and respect to how to live a decent life. The Bilal connection stemmed from the singer's guest stint on a series of concerts with Blanchard showcasing music from Spike Lee films. Rounding out the guest list is guitarist/Blanchard protégé Lionel Loueke.

Recorded at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art—a Katrina survivor—the 15-track "Choices" is thought-provoking and soothing. Of special note are the title track, the inaugurating Bilal composition "When Will You Call" and the vibrant "New World (Created Inside the Walls of Imagination)."

A series of five webisodes chronicling the "Choices" evolution—dubbed "Terence TV"—were launched in advance of the album's release. Supplementing that effort were major print and online features, alerts sent by music and lifestyle marketing company Gunnt Sport and a special "Evening With Terence Blanchard" Aug. 27 at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles. An upcoming documentary is in the works as is a worldwide tour.

"Terence is in a class of his own," says Concord senior VP of marketing Mark Wedler. "Does he sell a million? No. That's not what he and his music are about. He's one of the great jazz players and composers of our time, creating heartfelt and poignant music. And 'Choices' is that."

Blanchard—who's written and scored music for Lee's "25th Hour" and "Miracle at St. Anna"—is currently scoring George Lucas' "Red Tails." He's also completed the score for Disney's fall release, "The Princess and the Frog." In his other guise as artistic director of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz in New Orleans, Blanchard contends jazz is far from dead.

"There's always been a look-to-the-past approach in promoting this music," he says. "But a lot of young artists out here are doing unconventional things that are unique. And we need to celebrate that, not deny it."
Nothing But Beauty Records is now looking for sponsors & distribution deal for its artist A.W. Irving's debut album "SEXSOLISIOUS" & featuring old school pioneer Kurtis Blow & any other new artist male & female or groups who are looking for record deal.

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(only the serious apply)
One-Name Wonders: Reba, Michael. ‘Tron’?

Country music dominates the Billboard 200 for a third week as Reba McEntire’s “Keep On Loving You” starts at No. 1 with 96,000 copies sold. She replaces fellow veteran George Strait, who slides to No. 2 in his second week with “Twang” (61,000; down 61%). Two weeks ago, Sugarland’s Wal-Mart-exclusive CD/DVD combo “Live on the Inside” bowed atop the tally with 76,000. It’s the first time three individual country acts have topped the chart back to back to back. Earlier this year, a similar three-in-a-row scenario took place when Keith Urban’s “Defying Gravity” was followed by Rascal Flatts’ “Unstoppable” and then the country-flavored multi-artist soundtrack to “Hannah Montana: The Movie.”

“Keep” is McEntire’s second No. 1 on the Billboard 200, following her star-studded 2007 “Duets” release. She also sets a historic record on Top Country Albums this week (see Between the Bullets, page 57). While “Duets” charted with an eye-popping 304,000 copies, that number was probably inflated by McEntire’s release-week stop on “The Oprah Winfrey Show.” McEntire appeared on the program alongside her “Duets” partners Kelly Clarkson and Justin Timberlake.

McEntire’s new set didn’t get the “Oprah” treatment, though she did perform on the Aug. 21 edition of ABC’s “Good Morning America.” The album was also streamed by her July 31 performance on QVC, during which viewers were offered a deluxe version of the set.

For a more appropriate comparison, consider how the 96,000-copy start of “Keep” stacks up against McEntire’s earlier studio albums. The 96,000 launch in her best sales bow with a regular studio set since 1995’s “Starting Over” sold 97,000 when it entered at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 and No. 1 on Top Country Albums.

McEntire released four studio sets between “Starting Over” and “Duets.” All of them opened with sales between 68,000 and 93,000.

“Keep” is McEntire’s first album for Valory records, after spending 25 years on MCA Nashville. As Valory is distributed through Universal Music Group Distribution, this is the fifth No. 1 album in a row on the Billboard 200 that is distributed by UMGD. It’s the first time a distribution company has managed the feat since UMGD did so a little more than a year ago with six straight No. 1s. That’s when Lil Wayne’s final week at No. 1 with “Tha Carter III” was followed by Nas’ “Unintended,” Miley Cyrus’ “Breakout,” Sugarland’s “Love on the Inside,” the “Mamma Mia!” soundtrack and Jonas Brothers’ “A Little Bit Longer.”

UMGD will likely make it six in a row next week, as Colbie Caillat’s Universal Republic set “Breakthrough” will probably top the list.

Also, Universal Music Group Nashville claimed first-time consecutive No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with last week’s Strait chart-topper.

JACKSON REIGNS: As Billboard has documented since June, Michael Jackson’s 2003 hits set “Number Ones” has been a tremendous seller, nothing six nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 on the Top Comprehensive Albums chart. (The tally blends catalog and current sets, unlike the currently only Billboard 200.) This week, it sells 68,000 copies (down 15%) and ranks at No. 2 on the tally (see top albums chart). In turn, the set’s 2009 total rises to 1.62 million—pulling it ahead of Taylor Swift’s “Fearless” (1.61 million) as the year’s top-selling album.

MOMENT OF GEEKDOM: The “Tron” movie soundtrack appears on a Billboard chart for the first time since 1982. It bows at No. 22 on Top Soundtracks (see at billboard.biz for complete chart data) with a digital download, as the CD has been out of print since 2003. In 2010, Walt Disney will release “Tron Legacy,” a 3-D sequel with music by Daft Punk.
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Note: The above list is a selection of songs that were number one on the Billboard 200 chart for the week of September 5, 2009.
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### Top Comedy Albums

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<td>5. Never Say Never</td>
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<td>6. The One</td>
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### Rock Songs

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### Active Rock

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<td>You're Going Down</td>
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### Heritage Rock

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>The Rolling Stones</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Eyed Girl</td>
<td>Rammed Earth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Haze</td>
<td>Jimi Hendrix</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Sides at Once</td>
<td>Tragically Hip</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back in Black</td>
<td>AC/DC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Notes:**
- The chart reflects the returns of newer and trendier tracks at Nos. 21 and 24, respectively. The former acts release their seventh studio album, "Highroad," Oct. 27. The released (Goo)"s new album, "Full Circle," comes out the same day.
**HOT COUNTRY SONGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Format &amp; Number / Promotion Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>#1</strong></td>
<td><strong>BIG GREEN TRACTOR</strong></td>
<td>All Access (140751)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUMMER RICHARDS</strong></td>
<td>Do (240180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>ARLINGTON</strong></td>
<td>(340020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>BOOTS OF DIRT</strong></td>
<td>(440080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>LIVING FOR THE NIGHT</strong></td>
<td>(540140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>YOU BELONG WITH ME</strong></td>
<td>(640200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>SMALL TOWN USA</strong></td>
<td>(740260)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>PEOPLE ARE CRAZY</strong></td>
<td>(840320)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>AMERICAN RIDE</strong></td>
<td>(940380)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>I'LL JUST HOLD ON</strong></td>
<td>(104044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>BAREFOOT AND CRAZY</strong></td>
<td>(114050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>ONLY YOU CAN LOVE ME THIS WAY</strong></td>
<td>(124056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>WELCOME TO THE FUTURE</strong></td>
<td>(134062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOVE YOUR LOVE THE MOST</strong></td>
<td>(144068)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>GETTING YOU HOME (THE BLACK DRESS SONG)</strong></td>
<td>(154074)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>WILD AT HEART</strong></td>
<td>(164080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOUNDS LIKE LIFE TO ME</strong></td>
<td>(174086)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GREATEST TOES**

- Zac Brown Band

---

**TOP BLUEGRASS ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>#1</strong></td>
<td><strong>MELodies of the Bluegrass Vol. 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>My Country's Calling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>gone to Texas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rattlesnake Alley</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Back Porch Bluegrass Vol. 2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

Reba McEntire claims her 11th chart-topper on Top Country Albums, breaking a tie with Loretta Lynn for the most No. 1s by a solo female act on the chart (see Over the Counters, page 48). Top Country Albums debuted in the Jan. 11, 1994, issue, and Lynn's "Loretta Lynn Sings" bowed in the following issue (Jan. 18, 1964). She topped the chart 10 times between 1966 and 1976. McEntire's first No. 1 was "Who's in New England?" in May 1986, and her most recent chart-topper was "Duets" in October 2007. Dolly Parton ranks third on the list with six No. 1s, between 1977 and 1991—Walt Jesen
LEDISI LANDS WITH FIRST NO. 1

LEDISI earns her first chart-topper on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with her second set, "Turn Me Loose." Her first album, "Lost & Found," started at no. 10 in 2007 and later earned a Grammy Award nomination for best R&B album. On the Billboard 200, "Loose" bows at no. 14 with 27,000 copies sold, outsizing her prior album's best week, when it debuted and peaked at no. 78 with 9,000.

Sean Paul scores a career-high debut on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums as "Imperial Blaze" bows at no. 3. His two previous albums, "Dusty Rock" (2003) and "The Trinity" (2005), entered at no. 4. On the Billboard 200, "Blaze" is no. 12 with 28,000 copies. Although Paul outsold Ledisi, the Billboard Hip-Hop Charts surveys a smaller number of retailers.

Ralph George
### HOT LATIN SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Support</th>
<th>Previous Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. La Bola</td>
<td>Los Almas del Norte</td>
<td>Disa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I Got a Feeling</td>
<td>Black Eyed Peas ft. Fergie &amp; apl.de.ap</td>
<td>Arista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ya es muy tarde</td>
<td>Los Señores del Son</td>
<td>Disa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hasta que salga el sol</td>
<td>Pitbull ft. Alejandro Sanz</td>
<td>Epic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### TOP LATIN ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Previous Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Amor</td>
<td>Jesus Alberto</td>
<td>Disa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No te des cuenta</td>
<td>Luis Miguel</td>
<td>Disa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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### REGIONAL MEXICAN AIRPLAY

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Support</th>
<th>Previous Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Aquí estoy yo</td>
<td>Los Tres</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No me dejes de amar</td>
<td>Lila Downs</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. En el cielo</td>
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### LATIN POP AIRPLAY

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<td>1. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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### LATIN RHYTHM AIRPLAY

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<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<td>5. En el cielo</td>
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### TROPICAL AIRPLAY

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<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<td>5. En el cielo</td>
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### LATIN TRADITIONAL AIRPLAY

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<td>1. En el cielo</td>
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<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<td>3. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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<td>5. En el cielo</td>
<td>Cristian Castro ft. son by thrax</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
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### BETWEEN THE BULLETS

Her ‘PLAN’ is working

Nelly: Nurture keeps making strides in the Latin market as she prepares to release her first full-length Spanish-language album, “Mi Plan,” Sept. 15. Her single “Manos Al Aire” notches two new No. 1s as it steps 2-1 on Latin Rhythm Airplay (1.1 million audience, up 15%) and jumps 6-1 on Latin Tropical Airplay (3.1 million, up 75%). Futuro is the first female to top the Tropical Airplay chart since Alicia Estefan’s “No Llores” did so on Sept. 29, 2007, last.

-Randy Ramirez
### HITS OF THE WORLD

#### JAPAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Albums</th>
<th>Issued</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#8</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>#10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(IMASAKASOUNDTRACK JAPAN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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#### UNITED KINGDOM

<table>
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<th>Issued</th>
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<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
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#### GERMANY

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#### EUROPEAN HOT 100

<table>
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<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
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<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
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#### EURO DIGITAL SONGS

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<th>Albums</th>
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<th>#2</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### CHARTS

**BELGIUM**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: MICK JAGGER
   - #2: JANE MASON
   - #3: ZAGAN
   - #4: THE SPOILERS
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**FRANCE**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**ITALY**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**SPAIN**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**MEXICO**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**SWITZERLAND**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**FINLAND**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**WALLONIA**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**POLAND**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

**EUROPEAN AIRPLAY**

1. **NEW**
   - #1: THE BEATLES
   - #2: THE BEATLES
   - #3: THE BEATLES
   - #4: THE BEATLES
   - #5: THE BEATLES
   - #6: THE BEATLES
   - #7: THE BEATLES
   - #8: THE BEATLES
   - #9: THE BEATLES
   - #10: THE BEATLES

Heavy metal ad J.R.O. (James R. Obrecht) achieves its third top 10 on the German Albums chart. In "It's All About Love," the show's theme song, J.R.O. performs a song that's been popular on radio stations for the past 20 years. The song has been a staple of the show's soundtrack, and its popularity has only grown since its initial release. J.R.O. is known for its catchy melodies and powerful guitar riffs, and this song is no exception. With its hard Edge and dynamic vocals, J.R.O. is sure to keep listeners on the edge of their seats with each performance. For more information on J.R.O. and their music, visit www.americanradiohistory.com. 

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: Sony Music Entertainment names Kevin Lawrie president of Europe and Afo Verde president of the Latin region, effective Sept. 1; Alan Newham executive VP of international; and Richard Story president of the Commercial Music Group. Lawrie is president of the Latin region, Verde is president of Sony Music SUR (Argentina, Chile), Newham was senior VP of strategy at Sony Music International, and Story was COO of continental Europe and Africa.

The Biz promotes Katherine Harold to director of artist and industry relations and of the organization’s gold and platinum awards program. She was director of artist and industry relations for the West Coast.

Nephilim Angel Records promotes Dahiana De La Cruz to VP. She was a freelance ear for the label, overseeing marketing promotion andadministration duties.

PUBLISHING: BMI promotes Darlene Rosado to senior director of corporate marketing. She was director of marketing for media licensing.

RELATED FIELDS: Madison Square Garden appoints Gavin Harvey executive VP/GM of music network Fuse. He was president of Comcast’s sports cable network Versus.

MTV Networks Latin America promotes Fernando Gastón to senior VP of creative, content and music at MTV/VHI Latin America. He was VP of content at MTV/VHI Argentina.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

BANANA LINKS WITH POLICE, FIREFIGHTER FUNDS

Nashville label Bleve Entertainment has formed a strategic alliance with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the International Assn. of Firefighters (IAFF) to promote its music. While the partnership might seem unlikely, it makes sense since the label’s main focus is to benefit North American police officers and firefighters—and Bleve president Mickey Milam is a retired Nashville police officer.

Milam explains that the term “bleve” refers to a dangerous rupture “that happens with train derailments, when the gas and liquid inside the tank expands and makes a massive explosion.”

Together, the FOP and IAFF represent about 625,000 firefighters and police officers. Milam says. The organizations’ funds are designed to assist workers in those fields who experience financial hardships as a result of natural or man-made disasters. The FOP and IAFF have aided police and firefighters following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, as well as hurricanes Ivan, Katrina and Rita.

Bleve Entertainment’s debut project is a compilation—due Nov. 1 and selling for $11.99—that will feature 12 songs from “some of the largest names in country music,” says Milam, who declined to reveal specific artists. “They’re the top names on the radio that you hear every day. We also have one of the largest labels talking to us about doing some distribution.” In addition, the compilation will be sold on BleveMusic.com.

The album’s first single, “My First Ride,” is a track by Ronnie Milsap and Trace Adkins that is due Sept. 1. 54 from each CD will go to the firefighters’ and police officers’ benefit fund.

Bleve Entertainment plans to release additional compilations, says Milam, who adds that Milsap has expressed interest in releasing an album on the label.

INSIDE TRACK

KEM GETS ‘INTIMATE’

R&B singer Kem continues to make progress on his third album—but he won’t predict when fans will finally hear it. “No,” he says with a laugh, “that would be a mistake.”

The Detroit-based artist says he’s “probably got about 15, 20 songs” written for “Album III: Intimacy” that he hopes will whittle down to 10. “We have a lot of orchestration on the new record,” he says. “A lot of acoustic piano, too. It’s taking longer than anyone would like. I’d love to just flesh this out and put it in the hands of the people we’re recording it right now. It’s just a matter of making sure what I’m doing is right. We’re trying to make a record that people will not soon forget.”

Kem says the “Intimacy” subtitle is indicative of the album’s lyrical theme, but he promises that it’s not just about sexual and romantic intimacy. “Intimacy is allowing yourself to really be yourself in front of another individual and allowing them to do the same without any judgment,” he says. “We’re talking about relationships between lovers, between friends, spiritual intimacy between ourselves and our creator.”

Kem is talking to Jill Scott about a possible collaboration for the album. Kem just passed away (Aug. 3). Kem says, “I want to do the song that I’m working on with him. I’m just glad we had the opportunity to work with him on this record. It was really an honor to have him shine his light on this project.”
Country music megastar Reba McEntire taped an episode for AOL Music Sessions at AOL's New York studios, where she performed selections from her album "Keep On Loving You," released Aug. 18. After the sound check, McEntire took time to meet with AOL chairman/CEO Tim Armstrong and clients from the MEC Agency. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MIERTER VAN HASPELII, MUSIC ADVOCATE PRODUCTIONS.

ASYM 17TH ANNUAL AWARDS EVENT

The American Society of Young Musicians held its 17th-anniversary event Aug. 22 at the Luxe Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. Awards were given to all-time favorite Brian Wilson, producer Russ Regan, indie band Tea Leaf Green, RB pioneer Bobby Womack and trustee Joey Sommerville. The event raised money for the nonprofit organization that provides music scholarships and mentorship programs to youth.

ABOVE: From left, Rhythm & Blues Award honoree Bobby Womack, ASYM founder/national president Jarvee Hutcherson, Musicians Advocate Award honoree Russ Regan, host and radio/TV personality Sam Phillips, All That Jazz Award honoree Joey Sommerville, Tea Leaf Green's Scott Rager, Favorite Grassroots Band Award honoree Josh Clark and ASYM chairman Dick Michaels. PHOTO: COURTESY OF jHUUDD.com

LEFT: From left: ASYM founder/national president Jarvee Hutcherson, Trailblazer Award honoree Brian Wilson and ASYM chairman Dick Michaels. PHOTO: COURTESY OF jHUUDD.com

Gene Simmons (left) with "Eras" director Mike Judge at Miramax Film's Green Ronnie premiere at the Greek Theatre, which was co-hosted by Three-O. Vodka Aug. 21 at Arclight Hollywood. PHOTO: COURTESY OF E-PRESS.COM

Taylor Swift and the Script's Danny O'Donoghue hang backstage at the V Festival, held Aug. 22 at Hylands Park in Chelmsford, England.

Flaming Lips' frontman Wayne Coyne before the band's Aug. 17 performance at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles. The circus characters kneeling in front are part of a troupe that entertained concertgoers in the plaza before and after the show. Standing, from left: Nederlander Concerts senior director of talent, Paola Palazzo, Greek Theatre GM Rene Wasserman, Coyne and Nederlander Concerts executive director of events Rob Owens and CDO Alex Hedges. PHOTO: COURTESY OF RANDALL MICHELLSON.
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