iPhone Lifts Japan's Online Music Sales

30 Seconds To Mars Explores Conflict On 'This Is War'

Terra Firma Pushes EMI Debt Deal

How 'Idol' Stars KRIS ALLEN and ADAM LAMBERT Will Turn TV Viewers Into Music Buyers
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Join members of the music industry together in Las Vegas to explore challenges and key opportunities shaping the future of the music business. More: billboardmusicandmoney.com.

LATIN MUSIC
The Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards will take place April 26-29 in Puerto Rico at the Conrad San Juan, Condado Plaza. Don't miss the most important Latin music industry event. More: billboardlatinconference.com.

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ON THE COVER: Kris Allen and Adam Lambert photographed by Robert Sebree
Under The Influence

Online Access To Music Can Help Fuel Creativity And Innovation

BY STEVE PURDUM

For years, the debate over the Internet’s impact on the music industry has centered on piracy, which has put a sizable dent in the wallets of artists and labels alike. But Duran Duran bassist John Taylor recently shifted the discussion to a new area, arguing that the Web is hurting artistic creativity.

Taylor delivered a talk at UCLA in October, Taylor asserted that online platforms like YouTube and Twitter were ruining music, suggesting that the unprecedented access to musical influences stretching back decades is having a negative impact on the creativity of modern-day artists.

By being influenced by music from the past, Taylor seemed to argue, aspiring musicians will dilute innovation. He also maintained that consumers, able to hear the music of their heroes at any opportunity, would quickly tire of it—negatively affecting the longevity of music.

All of this is punitively untrue and quite the opposite to what we are trying to achieve at wired, a streaming music service that provides consumers with legal access to millions of tracks.

Modern-day music is a patchwork of influences from previous genres. Such tracks as Procol Harum’s “Whiter Shade of Pale” demonstrate this explicitly. The track had an organ line influenced by Johann Sebastian Bach. Far from undermining the power of the piece, the Bach-influenced organ line made the song one of the enduring musical classics of the ’60s. Similarly, the Last Shadow Puppets, a side project of Arctic Monkeys frontman Alex Turner, released a debut album last year that referenced the music of ’60s stars Scott Walker and David Bowie and was met with critical acclaim.

The online era is a viral stepppingstone for any artist interested in influencing an audience. Scottish singer/songwriter Sandi Thom famously drew thousands of online fans to concerts from her kitchen, which led to a record deal with RCA and an international No. 1 hit, “I Wish I Was a Punk Rocker (With Flowers in My Hair).” Similarly, Lily Allen started with an MySpace profile and an audience of tens of thousands before she signed with EMI imprint Regal Records and produced two hit albums and a slew of top-ranking singles. Without the channels now afforded to unsigned artists, would these two have made it? Possibly, but it’s far from being a likehood.

Innovation isn’t stifled by access. If anything, great new music now emerges from the ashes of previous musical movements. punk was a direct reaction to the music that preceded it, in the same way that Brit pop paid homage to the songs of the ’60s and ’70s. The suggestion that consumers become tired of their favorite artists through overexposure can easily be challenged by looking at the recent U.K. download and web streaming charts, where long-established acts like Fleetwood Mac, Journey and Shirley Bassey all made an appearance.

In terms of the dose owed to online music by established artists, there’s now an argument that the reason there are such premiums for tour tickets, long after an act’s records have gone out of production and the original fans have developed families and expanding waistlines, is because their music remains relevant and accessible through online channels. U.K. music festivals are now awash with versions of the ’60s and ’70s, because music fans in their teens and 20s are not only aware of Neil Young, Bruce Springsteen and Tom Jones but have downloaded their music and know the words too. It’s a situation that was unthinkable a decade ago.

A key factor in the latter-day relevance of new acts in the ability to find, discover and share music online. When a fan discovers the original recording of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah,” it’s a personal revelation. When that fan can share it across social networks and on his or her blog, it can be the catalyst for a revolution. Streaming is increasingly used as a means to preview tracks, letting consumers sample and explore a wide variety of music—which can only be possible for all artists, especially those not promoted through mainstream channels.

Ultimately, music couldn’t evolve without artists having access to new influences and audiences. Our aim is to provide sustainable access to every great track demanded by consumers.

Steve Purdum is the founder/CEO of U.K. music streaming service wired.

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EMI's Fate Hangs In The Balance As Owner Terra Firma Tries To Address Debt

Terra Firma's recent offer to inject £1 billion ($1.7 billion) into EMI Group was a bold move by the U.K. private-equity firm to shore up its investment in the struggling major label. But the outcome of this latest maneuver could be the firm's shares ownership of EMI with creditor Citigroup or is forced out altogether. And that, in turn, could have implications for a prospective and long-suspected tie-up with Warner Music Group (WMG).

Neither Terra Firma nor Citigroup would confirm media reports that the former's offer was made in hopes that Citigroup would forgive a considerable portion of Terra Firma's £7.7 billion ($11.5 billion) loan to EMI. Of course, Citigroup isn't about to forgive any debt, because the Terra Firma cash injection wouldn't give it any more upside than it has now. Right now, it's out £2.7 billion, and even if an equity injection by Terra Firma could eliminate EMI's worries, all it would do for Citigroup is push off some worries until 2015. That's when EMI's balance sheet payments come due on Terra Firma's two term loans: £1.5 billion ($2.2 billion) for the bridge loan since converted into a term loan against EMI's healthy music publishing business and £1 billion ($1.3 billion) for the term loan against recorded music and music publishing, according to Terra Firma's financial report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2008.

So what was Terra Firma chairman Guy Hands thinking? Hands may be banking on the fact that Citigroup has almost certainly already written down the value of the EMI loan and that it was a recipient of the U.S. government's Troubled Asset Relief Program bailout money.

The only way Citigroup is likely to forgive any of Terra Firma's debt is if it gets equity in EMI. In fact, Citigroup did such a deal earlier this year, with Source Interlink, the parent of music wholesaler Alliance Entertainment. After Source Interlink filed for a prepackaged Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July, its equity owners were forced out and replaced by a bankruptcy consortium led by Citigroup and J.P. Morgan, which agreed to convert nearly $1 billion in debt into equity, leaving the wholesaler with a much cleaner balance sheet and much lower interest payments.

Could the same scenario play out between Terra Firma and Citigroup? If the two sides were to hold talks on a debt-for-equity swap, Terra Firma would try to keep as much equity as possible, while Citigroup would likely push for a Source Interlink-like conclusion. Since the debt is divided almost equally between recorded music and publishing assets, the talks also could center on whether Citigroup gets control of one of the assets in exchange for a debt-for-equity swap.

An alternative scenario is that the two sides begin playing a waiting game. Citigroup might simply sit back to see if Terra Firma defaults on its loans, while Terra Firma banks on revived revenue growth at EMI and an improved global economy with more abundant credit that would allow for a more favorable environment for restructuring debt.

But if it is a waiting game, Citigroup may have to make itself comfortable. EMI officials are privately saying that the company's performance is improving. EMI Group's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization grew to more than £100 million ($333.3 million) during the fiscal year ended March 31, up from EBITDA of £63.3 million ($271.6 million) in the previous fiscal year.

Moreover, while Terra Firma has had to periodically inject equity into EMI to remain compliant with its covenant-light loans, sources suggest EMI's recently improved performance thanks to cost cutting and recorded music sales buoyed by the label's release of the Beatles catalog has negated the need for additional equity in this quarter or the next.

What does all of this mean for a potential merger between EMI and WMG? Until WMG pays off its nearly $2 billion in debt or unless EMI's debt issues are resolved, the deal won't happen. WMG recently issued nearly $1.1 billion in notes, due June 15, 2016, to replace bank debt, which gives the major more flexibility with less revenue or financial covenants on its loans. But it still leaves the company with the same amount of debt.

Nonetheless, if EMI's debt is eliminated through a Citigroup takeover, the label could remain independent or consider a merger with WMG. Warner would have the inside track on any pairing with EMI because the two larger majors, Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment, would face tough anti-trust questions if they tried to acquire EMI. WMG, which says it declines to comment on rumors or speculation, would also have an advantage over other potential non-major-label EMI bidders because it could gain the most economies of scale by doing the deal.
TOP media executives and decision-makers gathered to share their thoughts on the challenges facing the industry at the third annual Media and Money Conference presented by Nimetto Plaza and Dow Jones, which was held Nov. 12-15 at New York’s Roosevelt Hotel. (See Backbeat, page 58.)

WHAT’S NEXT FOR ONLINE CONTENT

The first wave of Internet development focused on music platforms ranging from Napster to iTunes, observed AOL chairman/CEO Tim Armstrong. The Web’s next focus, he said, will concern content.

Web video and social media will be key elements of those efforts, Armstrong said, noting that “we see social as a great way to distribute content.”

Asked about advertising sales struggles surrounding content, he said AOL likes bundling audience segments together across various Web sites. “Building niche properties is valuable,” he said.

Online video content needs to be more engaging and offer less of a passive viewing experience, said Rio Carreira, president/CEO of Vevo, the YouTube-powered online music video joint venture between Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment.

“What we’re trying to do is improve the quality of the experience, create more engagement and more interactive features in and around music videos, and build a new distribution model,” Carreira said.

GETTING CONSUMERS TO PAY FOR CONTENT

“We can’t survive as a media industry if everything gets down to free,” warned Herb Scannell, executive chairman/co-founder of Next Networks.

Among those trying to create paid-content models is Steve Brill, co-founder of Journalism Online, which is assisting publishers in devising ways to charge readers for online content.

Once more consumers start paying, advertisers will follow. Brill predicted, reasoning that advertisers are willing to pay more for paying users than free users.

Time Inc. Digital president Kirk McDonald said that charging will become easier as “consumers realize you need a certain amount of authority to create that lack-leak content.”

MORE MEDIA M&A COME?

As cable giant Comcast nears a deal to acquire NBC Universal, News Corp. president/COO Chase Carey said he doesn’t think it will spur “a hot period” of mergers and acquisitions in the media industry.

Carey said that after media companies endured “a challenging time,” there has been “a little bit of pent-up activity.” But he said he viewed other recent media deals, such as Disney’s purchase of Marvel, as transactions “driven by unique events,” not the beginning of new media M&A boom.

The most troubled companies at the moment?

“The activities related to the event are expected to generate 12,000 hotel nights to create a direct impact of $8.6 million, plus there will be a multiplying effect that they will have in sales and other activities,” Lopez says.

Billboard has been increasingly expanding into other territories. In October, BPP Promocoes e Publicacoes LTDA began publishing Billboard Brazil, a monthly Promocoes e Publicacoes magazine covering Latin America’s largest music market.

“The move to Puerto Rico is a very exciting opportunity for Billboard, as it extends the increasing international presence of the brand and allows us to expand the Billboard Latin Music Conference audience,” Billboard publisher Howard Appelbaum says.

“The move to Puerto Rico is also a homecoming of sorts for the show’s longtime executive producer, Tony Moreno,” a native of the island, and for Telemundo, which was founded in Spanish in 1971.

“It’s a win-win-win situation,” Telemundo president Don Brown says. “The Billboard Latin Music Awards are our premier event and we’re coming home to Puerto Rico.”

The Latin Music Awards, which are broadcast in more than 35 countries, are the culmination of the long-running Latin Music Conference, which will feature keynote and interviews with top Latin artists and is expected to draw more than 1,000 attendees.
MELODIES
IN YOUR HEART

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Ask any label executive what new technology excites them most and many of them will have the same, ready answer: augmented reality.

Simply put, augmented reality is the process of overlaying graphics, animation or other computer-generated images over a real-life video. A simple, early example of the technology is the first-down marker that sports broadcasters add to their live shots of football games.

In the music industry, it’s taken the form of interactive music videos. Participating artists ask fans to visit their Web site, where they can download and print out an image needed to launch the augmented reality application. Once held to the fan’s webcam, the image launches a video player on the artist’s site that will stream whatever footage the artist has recorded into the scene captured by the webcam.

For example, John Mayer used the technology for the online video of the song “Heartbreak Warfare,” from his new album “Battle Studies.” Fans who download the “Battle Studies” logo and hold it to their webcam launch an Adobe Flash player that plays the music video with the fan’s image added to the background as an extra.

Sean Kingston did something similar, allowing fans to film themselves dancing and singing his single “Fire Burning,” while an animated Lil’ Sean character performed alongside them. Aussie rockers Lost Valentinos assigned each band member a different logo so fans could choose which one they wanted to see in their music video and perform next to. And David Guetta used the technology to let fans discover an exclusive track from his “One Love” album during a daylong series of online events as part of a One Day Online With David Guetta promotion.

Other acts have become involved through the augmented reality campaigns of consumer product brands. Earlier this summer, customers who bought a bag of Doritos with a special logo printed on it could hold it to their webcam while visiting the Doritos Web site to launch a video performance by Big Boi or Blink-182 that “popped” out of the bag. Users could also purchase a bag around in front of the webcam to change the position of the performance and add their own background to the scene. According to Mck Management marketing director Kristin Zovich, whose agency ran the John Mayer augmented reality video campaign, fans are beginning to respond. “We found a really positive reaction to it,” she says. “It’s just a different way to deliver content to fans so it’s not just ‘click here and go to YouTube.’ It’s a little bit more creative.” However, it will likely be some time before augmented reality videos become mainstream. For starters, it’s a clunky technology to use. Users need to give permission for the artist’s Web site to access their webcam, but even when they do, pop-up blockers and other security technology can interfere with the connection. In addition, lighting issues and low webcam resolution often results in unrecognizable images.

But the largest barrier is simply the relative lack of webcams among potential users. According to Parks Associates, only 18% of U.S. households have broadband and Internet access owned a webcam as of April. Analyst firm Research and Markets expects that figure will increase, forecasting the global market for webcams to increase from $1.8 billion in 2008 to $3.2 billion by 2015. ABI Research, meanwhile, points to the rapidly growing smart-phone market as having great potential for augmented reality applications, driving the global augmented reality-related revenue from $6 million in 2007 to more than $350 million by 2014.

“If I see it much more mobile-based, just because of the utility of the ability to just aim and get information,” ABI analyst Larry Fisher says. “It’s just easier to use.” Fisher points to such uses as aiming a phone’s camera at buildings, businesses or points of interest to launch an app that will provide various types of actionable information about that location on the phone’s screen. Many new mobile phones now have advanced video cameras, high-definition display screens and wireless broadband Internet access needed to make augmented reality a viable option. That could have a number of valuable applications for the music industry, such as getting information about concert venues or retail stores.

But no matter whether the augmented reality future is on desktop computers or mobile phones, those in the music industry already dabbling in the technology foresee a long future ahead.

“There is some longevity to this technology,” Zovich says. “I don’t think by any means this is going to be a flash in the pan. This will be something that will become more commonplace.”

—AB

**HOT MASTER RINGTONES**

**TITLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Empire State of Mind</td>
<td>JAY Z &amp; ALEX KORE</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>3:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discover</td>
<td>ONE Direction</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>2:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Need You Now</td>
<td>LADY ANTELLION</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>3:06</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fireflies</td>
<td>OK GO</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>3:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Money to Blow</td>
<td>BRUNO MARS</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>3:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Party in the U.S.A.</td>
<td>JUDE</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>3:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Replay</td>
<td>KATY PERRY</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>2:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What She Says</td>
<td>DAVE MATTHEWS BAND</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>3:53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>JAY DEAN &amp; LUKE WYLE</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>3:53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE RING TONES FOR THE NO. 1 COUNTRY SONG ON LAST WEEK’s CHART, “COWBOY CASANOVA,” MOVES UP TO NO. 15 IN ITS SIXTH CHART WEEK. IT NOW TIES THE HIGHEST PEAKING OF ANY OF CARRIE UNDERWOOD’S FOUR CHARTED TONES: “BEFORE HE CHEATS” REACHED AS HIGH AS NO. 16 IN JANUARY 2007.**

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**SALES OF STAND-ALONE WEB RADIOS EXPECTED TO SURGE**

Internet radio will be the driving force behind growing sales of devices that stream online audio to stereos and other listening devices, according to analyst John Marks of FutureSource Consulting. The company predicts that the stand-alone Internet radio market will grow from less than $500,000 units sold last year to $50 million by 2013. But that market will be augmented by networked audio systems that stream music to home stereos. The company expects Internet connectivity to be standard on all home audio devices by 2015.
LEGAL MATTERS

COURT RULES LABELS' LITIGATION CAMPAIGN NOT A 'SHAM'

by BEN SHEFFNER

Was the recording industry’s litigation campaign against individual file sharers a legitimate use of the federal courts to seek redress for the devastating effects of Internet-based copyright infringement? Or was it all a big "sham," an extortion racket in which large corporations indiscriminately sued helpless defendants based on weak and unreliable evidence, hoping to force quick settlements?

Industry proponents and critics will be debating those questions for years. But for now, and much to the labels’ relief, a federal court ruled recently that the labels didn’t act improperly in filing more than 7,000 lawsuits against accused infringers, largely vindicating their controversial litigation tactics.

The case in question started out routinely. As with all of their lawsuits, the labels first had to identify the proper target. They began only with an IP address and the Kazaa user ID "goteckito," detected by their Internet-trolling forensic investigators at MediaSentry, who spied this user "sharing" 1,288 song files. The labels then used the "Doe" assigned to that IP address and issued a subpoena to Verizon, the subscriber’s Internet service provider (ISP). Verizon provided the subscriber’s name, Tanya Andersen, and the labels filed a new lawsuit against her in her home state of Oregon.

Unlike most defendants, Andersen didn’t settle. The labels took depositions and examined her computer, but they couldn’t tie her to the illegal downloading, so they dropped the case. The judge, obviously miffed that the labels had put Andersen through the wringer but couldn’t prove their claims, awarded her $103,175 in attorneys’ fees—one of only two cases in which the labels have had to make such payments.

But Andersen wouldn’t drop the matter. She sued the labels, the RIAA and MediaSentry, alleging a massive conspiracy to abuse the federal courts by suing innocent individuals with no probable cause. In a move that considerably upped the ante by potentially subjecting the labels to millions of dollars in damages, she sought class action status, purporting to represent all of those "who were sued . . . or were threatened with suit by [the major labels], for copyright infringement . . . who have not engaged in violation of copyright laws." Andersen’s theory was that an IP address coupled with a folder "sharing" songs is insufficient evidence even to file a complaint, let alone prevail.

In a major victory for the labels, U.S. District Court Judge Anna Brown ruled Nov. 12 that even though they ultimately lost the case against Andersen, they had enough evidence at the outset to bring it. The evidence gathered by the labels and MediaSentry "was strong enough to support a chance that the defendants had correctly identified an individual engaged in wrongful activity," she wrote. And more broadly, Brown observed in her 27-page order, "The court . . . concludes on this record that plaintiff has not established defendants filed a series of lawsuits based on a policy of initiating legal proceedings without regard to the merits."

Andersen’s case isn’t entirely over. The court hasn’t yet ruled on her claims that the labels of continuing to litigate her case even after the evidence demonstrated that they should have dropped it. And Andersen’s motion to certify the case as a class action remains pending, though last week’s order, which rejected the theory that filing a lawsuit based on IP addresses is improper, makes it considerably less likely that a court could identify the common legal issues that are a prerequisite for a class action.

"Judge Brown’s ruling certainly vindicates our evidence-gathering process, finding it gave us the right to bring a case against Ms. Andersen," RIAA senior VP of litigation and legal affairs Jennifer Parise says. "Since the only thing Ms. Andersen had in common with other defendants accused of copyright infringement was the evidence-collection process, it makes sense that the class claims also should be dismissed."

Andersen’s attorney, Tony Lybeck, disagrees, saying that the labels’ "monumental abuse of the federal judiciary" is still susceptible to a class action, citing survey evidence that he says indicates more than one-third of downloaders were too young even to have their own ISP account. Lybeck says he is "looking at all options," including seeking other plaintiffs who were allegedly wrongfully accused and could act as class representatives.

With fewer than 100 remaining pending lawsuits, only a few of which are being actively litigated, the labels’ campaign against individual infringers is winding down. But countersuits like Andersen’s remain a danger. Luckily for the labels, Brown’s ruling confirms what several other courts have already held: Whether or not one agrees with the labels’ legal strategy, copyright owners have every right to bring lawsuits in good faith based on the available forensic evidence, without facing massive liability should they happen, on rare occasion, to lose a case.

Whether or not one agrees with the labels’ legal strategy, copyright owners have every right to bring lawsuits in good faith based on the available forensic evidence.

Ben Sheffner is a copyright attorney who has represented movie studios, TV networks and record labels. Sheffner currently works as an attorney in the NBC Universal Television Group, which is 20% owned by Vivendi, the parent of Universal Music Group. He is the author of the Copyrights & Campaigns blog (copyrightsandcampaigns.blogspot.com).

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### December 2009 - January 2010 Show Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location 1</th>
<th>Location 2</th>
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<td>All-4-One</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.16-17</td>
<td>Marques Houston</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.18-19</td>
<td>Kirk Franklin</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.26-27</td>
<td>Oz Noy featuring James Genus / Dave Weckl</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
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<td>Nov.20-22</td>
<td>Brian Culbertson</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
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<td>Nov.21-22</td>
<td>Marcus Miller</td>
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<td>Nov.27-28</td>
<td>The Blues Brothers Band</td>
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<td>Music Soulchild</td>
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<td>Dec.06-10</td>
<td>B.T. Express</td>
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HOW TO:
CREATE A GREAT ARTIST WEB SITE
by LAURA O'CONNELL, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, GUPTA MEDIA

It's easy for bands to simply rely on MySpace and Facebook for their online presence. But a well-designed Web site offers almost limitless opportunities for fan interaction, communication, and monetization that social networks can't do. Laura O'Connell, creative director at Web design firm Gupta Media—which has created Web sites and online content for Pink, Fall Out Boy and the Bonnaroo Music Festival—offers her advice on how to put together the right mix of style and substance to get the most out of your site.

1. FANS WANT MEANING, NOT MARKETING
When creating a Web site you may have a certain goal in mind (selling CDs or showcasing a new video), but you have to keep the artist and their persona in the forefront. Whether it's through specialized font treatments, poignant imagery or bare-bones acoustic videos, the site should embody the artist and their style. Diehard fans will get the CD or watch the video eventually. Your Web site is a chance to make a connection in a meaningful way with potential new fans, so don't scare them off with an obvious sales pitch.

2. SHOWCASE YOUR CONTENT
You've accomplished the hard task of getting someone to your site. Don't lose them by burying your content under a confusing interface. If there is something you want your audience to know or see, put it out in the open. The top end of a Web page is the "money area" and that's where your best content should be. Having to click on a rocket that flies past the screen or even to a different page for a song sample is not good. There are a lot of sites out there with fantastic content that never go viral because the right people never see it.

3. HAVE AN INCENTIVE
If you want people to blog, tweet and otherwise talk about your site, they need to feel that it's worth sharing. Offer users something that's free or exclusive, but don't make them jump through hoops to get it. Asking for their e-mail is fine, but not the e-mails of five friends. There has to be a balance between what you give versus what you're asking for in return. The purpose of the incentive is to start the conversation, not end it. Getting a free song or seeing the first cut of a video gets people talking, and more importantly, sharing.

4. STAY RELEVANT
Most people use and experience the digital world as something that is timely, useful and personable. They're checking on what's happening within their community on their local news site, what's happening within their industry and interests on blogs and media sites and what's happening with their friends on Twitter and Facebook. Keep this in mind when you are creating your site. There's no point in revisiting a site that is static, so stay relevant for your audience by posting new content and information at least once a week, if not daily for more emerging acts. Let them know what's going on, and more importantly show them that they can come back for new and useful information. Additionally, give them the tools to update the site themselves. Embrace user-generated content. Make Twitter available on your site so your fans can Twitter for you. If a user missed a concert, let them see how fans from their area enjoyed it by letting fans upload photos to your site. Engage them by using the formats they use.

5. MAKE THE MOST OF FREE ASSETS
Unless you're a wizard at search engine optimization, the odds are fans searching the Internet for information about you are landing on MySpace, Facebook or Wikipedia first. Make sure that these sites mimic what you are trying to do with your site. That means maintaining a consistent tone in your online presence in both design and message. When you post content to one, make sure it's available on all, or at least make it known on all that new content is available. The idea is to have all these online outlets working together rather than independently. Fans will learn about artists in the most random of ways, so the more you can control that experience and make it consistent, the faster people will understand what you're trying to convey.

—Interview by Antony Bruno
Apple Of Their Eye

Labels Say the iPhone Is Helping Boost Online Music Sales in Japan

Tokyo—The iPhone effect is ringing in changes in Japan's digital music market.

Apple's new 3G iPhone has been doing blockbuster business since its launch in June, following a major iPhone marketing campaign that coincided with a rise in online music sales.

Universal International Japan managing director Kimihiko Kato is convinced there is "a correlation between the iPhone boom this year and the rise in online music sales...I think we'll continue to see that."

Meanwhile, Warner Music Japan's sales at iTunes have "definitely been increasing over the past few months," label spokesman Tetsuya Iida says. "This is simultaneous with the iPhone boom in Japan."

Apple declines to provide sales figures, but market research firm GfK identified the 32GB 3G iPhone as Japan's top-selling mobile handset during September. While GfK wouldn't divulge unit sales figures, Nobi Hayashi, author of the 2007 book, "Phone Shock," and widely acknowledged as one of Japan's foremost Apple experts, estimates the model moved about 300,000 units in September.

The rollout of iTunes and the iPhone has coincided with an increase in online music sales in Japan, according to sales data from the IFPI, which classifies iTunes music sales as online sales rather than mobile.

In 2004, the year before iTunes arrived, online sales accounted for 4% of Japan's mobile-dominated digital music market, with 507 million yen ($4.9 million at 2004 rates). By 2007, one year before the iPhone's arrival, that figure had risen to 8% of digital sales, or 5.4 billion yen ($45.8 million at 2007 rates). In 2008, the first full year of iPhone 3G, the online share rose to 10% of sales, or 8.5 billion yen ($82.1 million).

The market-share gains for online music sales came despite continued growth in mobile music sales during the same period. But sales during the first six months of 2009 suggest a shift in market dynamics, with mobile sales declining 2% from the same period a year earlier to 19.1 billion yen ($430 million), while online sales rose 13% to 4.6 billion yen ($50.8 million), according to the Recording Industry Assn. of Japan.

"We're open to all genuinely independent labels and have recently opened up conversations with management companies," GM Ruth Clarke says.

Riaj's Ishizaka Honored

The Japanese government has awarded the Medal of Honor with Blue Ribbon to Recording Industry Assn. of Japan chairman/CEO Kei Ishizaka in recognition of his contribution to the development of the music industry and Japanese music culture. Since Ishizaka began his music industry career in 1968, he has worked at Toshiba-EMI and PolyGram and was chairman/CEO of Universal Music Japan until Nov. 1, when he became its nonexecutive chairman.

GET IN LINE: APPLE IN JAPAN

2001: Apple's launch of the iPod raises the company's profile in Japan to new levels. The hard-drive music player successfully cuts into sales of Sony's Minidisc and Discman players, which had long dominated Japan's portable audio market.

2003: Japan's first Apple Store opens in Tokyo's Ginza district. Some 5,000 enthusiasts line the street outside waiting for the opening.

2005: The iTunes Music Store Japan launches. Apple claims sales of 1 million tracks in the site's first four days.

2008: Apple rolls out the iPhone in July. Prospective customers begin lining up outside the Omote-Sando SoftBank store in Tokyo five days before the phone goes on sale.

2009: The mobile operator SoftBank launches its "iPhone for Everybody" campaign in February, making the 8GB model essentially free to subscribers. In September, the new 32GB 3G model becomes the month's best-selling handset in Japan, according to the market research firm GfK.

—Tom Ferguson and Rob Schwartz

Headlines: Japanese consumers awaiting the iPhone's arrival in 2008 spent days standing in line so they could be among the first to own the handset.

($30.54-40) for a full-track download from a mobile carrier. "Because prices differ greatly, we might have to consider a new price strategy," which could include lowering prices on mobile tracks, says Nao-hiro Fukao, GM of sales, marketing and digital at Universal Music Japan.

Still, the iPhone and iTunes sales face growth challenges, for example, the iPhone isn't compatible with leading Japanese digital music stores like Mora.jp, Morawan.jp and Music.jp. Also, Apple's technical specifications mean iPhone users can only access iTunes through a Wi-Fi network, which is problematic in a country where free Wi-Fi access is much rarer than in the United States or Europe.

If the iPhone "could access iTunes through 3G, it would certainly have a great impact," Fukao says. Meanwhile, competition in the smartphone market is expected to increase with the pending arrival of such new models as Motorola's Droid (available through DoCoMo). Along with the iPhone, "they will increase the number of music consumers and help increase downloads overall," predicts Nobuhiro Sato, president of Sony-owned mobile online digital music retailer Label Gate, which operates the Mora and Morawan sites. Despite the populaity of the iPhone hasn't hurt the sites' sales.

Label sources estimate that iTunes accounts for more than 50% of Japan's online music sales, with the Mora sites jointly accounting for up to 25% and smaller sites making up the remainder.

The competitive position of the iPhone and iTunes is likely to strengthen in the coming months, amid speculation that Sony Music is nearing a deal with iTunes that will finally see its repertoire made available at the online retailer. (Sony did not comment.)

Others are already tailoring their digital marketing to reflect iTunes' strength. For example, it has introduced a range of exclusive offerings ranging from bonus tracks, videos or photos for iTunes-only compilations to bulk-buy discounting.

Increased iPhone-driven iTunes sales could also give independent repertoire a much-needed boost in Japan, where it has been fading in recent years (Billboard, April 4). According to Warner's Heida, iTunes "definitely moves more international repertoire compared to mobile music stores—and Warner's sales of international music have been increasing since this iPhone/iTunes boom has taken hold."
CEASE FIRE
Italian Collecting Society Stays United—For Now

Italian Collecting Society Stays United—For Now

general Gaetano Blandini, elected by SIAE’s nine-member governing council Oct. 26, must now put the society’s financial affairs in order.

"Like any business, SIAE must increase its revenue and reduce its costs," says delegate Filippo Sugar, president of publishing group FEM and chairman/CEO of Milan-based Sugar Music, a leading indie label with a large publishing catalog. "We will offer our full cooperation in endeavoring to solve the society’s problems."

SIAE says it collected €671 million ($996.4 million) in 2008, with music accounting for €475 million ($705.3 million) of that figure. But, while total collections were up 5.7% from 2007 (music rose by 4.6%), the society still reported a pretax loss of €12.4 million ($18.4 million), although SIAE’s accounts attribute this to the loss of €35.2 million ($52.3 million) stemming from the collapse of Lehman Brothers. SIAE was placed under government control for four years in 1999 after reporting a loss of $5 billion (€33 million at 1999 exchange rates).

Members were also alarmed by a decline in collections from digital licensing to €5.1 million ($7.6 million) from €7.2 million ($10.7 million) in 2007.

"Most collecting societies redistribute royalties rapidly," says delegate Toni Verona, GM of Modena-based indie publisher/label Alabianca. "But SIAE often keeps the money for as long as 16 months. The interest the money gathers by sitting in the bank is used to finance the society’s considerable running costs."

Verona also claims "at least a third" of SIAE’s 85,000 members earn such minimal royalties that "the money spent on administering their membership is greater than the amount they generate for the society."

The Italian government must still confirm Assumma and Blandini’s appointments. In the meantime, both have declined to talk to the media.

Members of SIAE’s other main faction, "La SIAE di Tutti" (SIAE for Everyone), which largely comprises smaller publishers and less-well-known writers/composers, insist the new management is well-qualified to address the problems.

"Assumma is an excellent 'super partes' [impartial] president with a good relationship with the political world," says delegate Leopoldo Lombardi, president of independent publishers’ group AFI. "We are confident Blandini will prove a capable manager."

Lombardi and Verona both agree that one positive aspect of the dispute has been an increase in dialogue between the factions.

"We now have a relationship," Verona says. "They, like us, now understand that if SIAE continues like this, it will eventually become unmanageable. Between now and the next SIAE elections in 2011, we must all work together to change things."
The Miracle Workers
Latin Indie Publicists Are Now Expected To Work Magic In Many Different Areas

Once upon a time, a publicist’s job definition was simple—send out press releases and coordinate interviews. But now, in addition to getting ink, the role of the indie music publicist has grown and evolved to include strategy, marketing and sponsorship coordination.

This is particularly true of the Latin music world, where print outlets have shuttered left and right, opportunities are limited to begin with, and there are only a handful of national media outlets with vast reach.

“The publicist is now such a bigger part of the pie,” says Ximena Acosta, who calls herself an entertainment-marketing consultant. “It’s like the marketing director and the publicist have merged into one.”

Acosta is one of many indie publicists or marketing consultants who have opened their own businesses in recent years after working in a label. What they’ve all found is a marketplace ripe with artists—signed and unsigned, major and indie—that are willing to pay for services but not content with a flack merely sending out a press release or getting a write-up.

A few years ago, indie publicists were largely the realm of Latin artists who wanted to cross over into mainstream media. Today, with shrinking label staffs, having an indie publicist to complement label efforts is increasingly common, especially as priority shifts from merely selling albums to creating and exploiting an artist’s brand, a task that requires steady, long-term attention.

“She would reach out and my role was to provide an added value, such as a review in the Atlanta Morning News,” says Mayna Navarrete of Navarrete Communications. “Today, I have more responsibility. First, the artist hires me. And by the time the album comes out, we’re part of the team and of the marketing strategy. Sometimes we even help put the team together.”

Because most artists pay her directly, Navarrete specifically looks for promotional platforms that not only don’t cost the label upfront but also generate a sponsorship fee, like Daddy Yankee’s recent deal with Coors Light (Billboard, Nov. 14).

In Puerto Rico, Nanette Lamboy, owner of marketing, events and PR company Artists Solutions, brought Argentinian alternative band La Mosca on a six-stop promotional tour with support from Medalla Beer, which thought the group’s image and sound fit the brand. “The role of the publicist is constantly changing,” she adds. “Our role was to not only blast a press release, but putting the information up on Facebook, on Twitter, informing fans and keeping us plugged into the pulse of the territory to keep the artist relevant.”

And while developing a press plan for, say, Alícia Keys is a publicist’s dream, the real challenge lies in generating opportunities for developing acts.

While many artists especially big names—still have separate publicists to work mainstream and Latin media, connecting the dots is an additional challenge for Latin artists. For example, take Cucu Diamantes, an indie artist who received glowing reviews in mainstream media but wasn’t recognized by Latin press. Acosta opted to initially introduce her through circles of intimate get-togethers with Latin tastemakers in different cities.

At the recent Latin Grammy Person of the Year dinner, Monica Escobar of the 3 Collective sought to put prominent artists together with executives for Hennessy, her client. “Our role was more of that of a connector,” she says. “When we started, our objective was to be a PR company, but we’ve had to become more resourceful and proactive.”

DEAD AIR
Labels Locked In Royalty Feud With Costa Rican Broadcasters

A fight over performance royalties has come to a head in Costa Rica, where the government has sided with the country’s broadcasters and is not enforcing a performance rights law for artists in the country.

According to a declaration it made to the World Intellectual Property Organization, Costa Rica’s government said that as of Nov. 14, it would apply a performers’ and producers’ (meaning, labels) royalty only to broadcasters for “commercial purposes,” and not to “traditional free, noninterceptive over-the-air broadcasting.” Songwriters aren’t affected by exemption.

The move has sparked an outcry from the local recording industry and the IFPI, which have been pushing for the ability of Costa Rican labels’ group Fonotica to collect 1% of broadcasters’ advertising revenue for artists and labels. Artists’ advocates say Fonotica has been a party to international treaties governing such a right for almost 30 years.

“They’re hurting their own artists, international artists, local producers, international producers,” says Raúl Vázquez, Latin America regional director for the IFPI. They’re going against the tide of expanding rights for creators all over the world. All of Latin America recognizes this right.”

With the implosion of recorded-music sales in Latin America, the IFPI has stepped up its efforts in recent years on behalf of local collecting societies in the region to recoup what they’ve owed from broadcasters. In a legal dispute between Brazilian society ECAD and media company Bandeirantes, a local court recently sided with ECAD in the society’s calculation of a royalty rate for public performances.

(According to the IFPI, ECAD is seeking $35 million from Bandeirantes for what it says are 10 years’ worth of unauthorized uses.) Efforts by Costa Rica’s recording industry to obtain legal court orders that would halt radio stations’ use of the recordings have not succeeded in keeping the music off the airwaves. Meanwhile, radio association Canara’s attempt to revoke Fonotica’s authority to collect was recently met with a court defeat. According to a missive on Canara’s Web site, the labels’ group represents a “monopoly” of multinationals representing themselves as one entity in Costa Rica trying “to charge what we transmit for free to all Costa Ricans ... after they’ve already obtained massive economic advantages because of that communications and free promotion.”

Efforts to interview a Canara representative were unsuccessful at press time. The IFPI is asking collecting societies to write letters protesting the Costa Rican government’s decision.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda and Leila Cobó

LATAMAD UPPEP AT TELMENDO
Pilar Lamadrid has been named president of the Latin American Music Awards. Lamadrid will oversee the annual Billboard Latin Music Awards.

Lamadrid will continue to oversee production of the Billboard Latin Music Awards’ red carpet preshow, as well as promotion logistics and staffing for the show. She was most recently director for specials at Telemundo, a position she had held since 2001.

Telemundo director of production Christian Riehl; the executive in charge of the awards show, will continue to report to Bond, with Tony Mijena as the show’s executive producer.

—Leila Cobó

ANOTHER TOP BOW FOR SANTA ROSA
On Billboard’s Top Tropical Albums chart, Gilberto Santa Rosa’s “Lo Mejor de Gilberto en la Navidad” has debuted at No. 1 on the chart. This is the singer’s second Christmas No. 1 in the last five years.

Santa Rosa’s “Lo Mejor de Gilberto en la Navidad” debut last week at No. 3 on the chart. This is the singer’s second Christmas No. 1 in the last five years.

—Rauly Ramirez
The head of the New York Songwriters Circle talks about the organization’s growing slate of artist services.

How would you describe the fundamental purpose of the Songwriters Circle?
I always believe what goes around comes around and that’s one of the reasons why I believe the circle works. It’s kind of a farmland to nourish and discover new talent. It’s where all these people come to us and we try to find the right connections for them. We are much more interested in partnering and servicing than we are in owning and taking.

Can the Songwriters Circle format be applied to any genre of music, these independent organizations acting like mini A&R companies?
I think that [scenario] is the future. I have a really small listening team with people I really respect and love, and that is the innermost heart of our company because it’s really my ears and our decisions. And I’m sure that could go across the board for any type of music.

When I was a little girl growing up in the ’70s, so much of music was produced and managed by people that were musicians. I’m a musician, and I’m a writer and an artist, and I get what it is to be that, so I feel like I have this edge when I listen to people’s art.

The business got so thrown off the track—they took it out of the hands of the artists and musicians and put it into business hands, and we were just like a Campbell’s soup can. It wasn’t about the music.

What’s coming back is understanding what great content is. Absolutely. You take some of the top producers—the Arif Mardins, the Russ Titimans—all these people really knew music. That kind of went by the wayside for many years and that’s coming back, and I couldn’t be happier.

It’s called the Songwriters Circle, but many writers who have come out of there have gone on to artist careers themselves. Do you focus on developing talent with the potential of becoming both writers and artists?
There are two tiers in the company. One tier is that every song that comes into the circle, I flag with my team if I love that song. It may not make the top 12 for a contest or it may not be the next Kate Voegele, but if the song is amazing, I will give it to our music supervisor and say, “Hey, can you try this at ‘One Tree Hill’ or whatever?”

What sort of stake does your organization have in the artists?
We get a fee that an agent would receive if we get a song placed in a film or TV show or an ad, just like anybody else. We’re partnering—we’re not taking publishing, we’re not doing any of the old-school things. And then the second thing is, for the songwriting contest winner, we have an 18-month period to try to find them a proper home, either a publishing deal and/or a record deal—and that’s it. So basically, we’re asking them to trust us for a year-and-a-half to try and find them great homes.

Singer-songwriter music seems to be more difficult to spread virally than other genres. Does the Internet facilitate the success of certain types more than others?
I wish I had a crystal ball. I can only say that I have found that if great content gets a chance to be heard, if it gets to be on a TV program, then I think that your chances are huge, that people will love you and will want to spread the word. I think being a singer-songwriter is probably more of an intellectual, cerebral-based genre.

But look what happened to Norah Jones. I remember her talking to me at the Bitter End. I was like, “What are your fears? What are your fantasies? You just moved to New York.” She’s like, “I just want to own a VW Bug and sell 10,000 records and just do my jazz act.” And I’m like, oh, my God, she got that times 500 trillion. So who knows?

What kind of response have you had in other cities?
It’s been great in every city, but different. [In] Boston, we’re partnered with Berklee [College of Music], and it’s all songwriters from the college, so that’s been explosive, it’s always sold out. Chicago is at Schubu’s, the best club for that genre in Chicago. And the kids have nowhere to go, so they’re excited. We’re trying to give a home to a genre that hasn’t had a home. The only one that’s really different is L.A.—what they want to see are established hit writers, and maybe bring along one up-and-comer, so it’s a little bit different balance than what I originally had.

In Milan, we’re opening in February, and that’s going to be established acts because the stars have never done anything like this. They’re going to have circles with their established talent. So it’s going to be a little bit flavored according to the state or the country.

Why did you pick Italy for the international start?
Well, it kind of picked me. This guy named Dado kept Facebooking me and sending me stuff and talking about how much he loved what we did, and I said, “Well, hey, dude, you want to start a Facebook group there for us? And maybe we could get some talent to our contest.” And then the next conversation was—he had a great manager—“Well, what about us doing a circle here? Everybody would go crazy.” They’re over the moon about having a Songwriters Circle there.

I remember [Norah Jones] talking to me at the Bitter End. I was like, “What are your fears? What are your fantasies? You just moved to New York?” She’s like, “I just want to own a VW Bug and sell 10,000 records and just do my jazz act.”
LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER THE 'AMERICAN IDOL' WILD CHILD BURST ONTO THE SCENE IN AN EXPLOSION OF GLITTER AND LEATHER, ADAM LAMBERT READIES HIS FIRST ALBUM

BY ANN DONAHUE | PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT SEBREE

Adam Lambert—the man with the outsize personality who delivered an audacious octave-and-a-half sitar-tinged purr of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" on the most-watched TV show in the country, dodged sex toys thrown at him onstage during the "American Idol" tour and did it all without smearing his eyeliner—is currently curled in the fetal position. Ballled up in a patio chair on the 10th-story balcony at 19 Entertainment in Los Angeles, Lambert is the portrait of the goth as a young man—black clothes and combat boots; dyed black hair and nail polish; Egyptian-themed jewelry matching the Eye of Horus tattoo on his wrist.
He grabs his knees and constricts himself even tighter as he reveals why he's so emo right now: He's attending the premiere of the film "12" in a few hours. And his song, "Time for Miracles," plays over the closing credits.

"I'm going to be like this, in my seat, hiding in my popcorn bucket," he says. "It's going to be really weird."

Lambert laughs, unfurts his legs and straightens up in the chair. His worry is, of course, all jake, an act, a performance. Because true to his album title, Lambert is here for our entertainment.

When "American Idol" launched in 2002, creator Simon Fuller must have dreamed of a contestant like the 27-year-old Lambert—one that mixes style and substance, one that can sing anything and gives a damn about cultivating his public image. In a year, Lambert's gone from being one of a herd of auditioners at the San Francisco tryouts to landing the covers of Entertainment Weekly and Rolling Stone before his album was even released.

For 19 Entertainment, the eighth season of "American Idol" was something of an embarrassment of riches—the eventual winner, Kris Allen (see story, page 20) has sold 1.1 million digital downloads of his "I'dol" songs, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and contestant Allison Iraheta, with her prettily growling vocals andartful red and blue hair (see story, page 19) is prepared to court the Hayley Williams/Anti-Lavigne demographic.

But in a year when Lady Gaga’s flagrant mix of commercialism and Black Eyed Peas are setting sales records, it’s Lambert’s slickly set of dance songs that are poised to steal the spotlight. "For Your Entertainment" will be released Nov. 23; the title track lead single sold 18,000 in its first week of release, according to SoundScan, while "Time for Miracles" has sold 68,000 in three weeks. This comes on top of the 997,000 digital tracks sold of Lambert’s songs from "I’dol."

"He's an artist with a true sense of who he is," RCA Music Group GM/executive VP Tom Corson says. "It's our job to work with him and present him with options to help steer the ship—but ultimately it's his call. He has a vision."

'ENTERTAINMENT' TONIGHT

The cover of "For Your Entertainment" shows Lambert as a three-dimensional version of Patrick Nagel’s artwork for Duran Duran’s "Rio": all glair makeup and sharp angles. It’s not subtle in any way—Lambert is gleeful as he points out that he wore all that makeup—but it’s true to his image as a showman that combines singing talent with a theatrical bent. It’s an image he flirted throughout "I’dol"—and was never more exemplified than in Lambert’s retort to judge Simon Cowell’s critique that one of his performances was too "Rocky Horror." ("I like Rocky Horror," Lambert patiently explained.)

But it’s rare that a persona crafted on "I’dol" doesn’t go through some sort of intensification as the performer transition from contestant to professional. Texas cutie Kelly Clarkson took on a pop sheen, Garrie Underwood’s country chops were honed on the show.

For Lambert, he was "Glamlambert" from the start.

"I think there’s a misconception—people think that ‘I’dol’ is like a Svengali puppeteer,” Lambert says. “I think that may be the perception because certain people that have gone through the system didn’t have a strong idea of what they wanted to do visually. I think the minute you do, they respond to that. And I’ve been very vocal and opined about what I want to create, and they’ve been nothing but supportive of that."

When Lambert moved to Los Angeles from San Diego eight years ago and began working in theater as a session singer, he quickly learned that business acumen was just as important as musical talent. At 27, he’s in the upper age range of "I’dol" contestants—the cutoff for the show is 28—and the simple fact of his added life experience could serve him well as he transitions away from the spotlight that’s built into the show.

"I do consider myself part artist, part businessman.“ Lambert says. “I find marketing interesting, I find publicity interesting, I find the whole process interesting. I think there’s some artists that are really focused on the music and the artistry, but I also think being a showman and being an entertainer is more than just being a musician. It’s everything—it’s something to look at and to listen to."

The songs on "For Your Entertainment” rely heavily on dance beats, but there are a number of ballads for contrast. “When I was picking my singles, I thought maybe I should do more of a rock thing because that’s what people expect. But if I did what people expect of me, I don’t think I would have gotten through ‘I’dol’ the way I did,” Lambert says. “It’s part of my shtick as an artist to keep surprising people."

One defining characteristic is the A-list writing and production credit throughout the album: “Soaked,” which Lambert says is about a one-night stand, was written by Muse’s Matthew Bellamy and produced by Rob Cavallo, who worked on four tracks on the album; “Strut” was written by Lambert. “I’dol” judge Kara DioGuardi and Greg Wells, who also produced, Ryan Tedder wrote and produced “Sleepwalker” alongside co-writers Aimee Mayo and Chris Lindsey.

“An artist has the skills and ambition to write songs, then we will actively encourage and pursue this. Often by pairing our artists with the world’s top songwriters, allowing them to learn and develop their writing skills.” 19 Entertainment founder/CEO Simon Fuller says.

The announcement of the pairing of Lambert and Lady Gaga on the track “Fever” was fodder for gossip blogs, but Gaga doesn’t actually perform on the track, Lambert says, explaining, “She was on the other side of the glass just egging me on.”

The title track—which was produced by Dr. Luke, who co-wrote it with Claude Kelly—is now being worked to top 40 and hot AC radio. “I wanted to release something that would be played in a club, that would make you dance on New Year’s,” Lambert says.

He means that literally—“Dick Clark’s Rockin’ New Year’s Eve With Ryan Seacrest” is one of the TV appearances lined up for Lambert in the coming months; the campaign starts Nov. 22 with his show-closing performance at the American Music Awards. Besides the typical rounds of morning and late-night talk shows, Lambert will be interviewed as one of the “Most Fascinating People” of 2009. “Adam is so telegenic. It’s going to be a visual launch,” Corson says. A video for “For Your Entertainment” is forthcoming. It’s directed by Ray Kay, who did the video for Lady Gaga’s “Poker Face.”

'AMERICAN IDOL' BY THE NUMBERS

It’s a reality show that doubles as a 360-deal: Thanks to 19 Entertainment, contestants with the chops and audience popularity get record deals, a tour—and plenty of media exposure. —AD

'AMERICAN IDOL' AVERAGE RATINGS

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The album is available for pre-order on iTunes and Amazon and was streamed on MySpace the week of Nov. 16. Lambert's Web site, AdamOfficial.com, is offering direct-to-consumer deluxe sets, including one for $24 that contains a 16-page picture book and two bonus tracks. One of them, "Whataya Want From Me" (written by Pink, Max Martin and Johan Shellback), will likely be the next single.

Internationally, Corson says the label intends to break Lambert first in the United Kingdom and Japan.

For his part, Lambert wants to tour in 2010—and tour big. "I want dancers, I want costumes, I want video screens," he says. "I want to put on a show that's really theatrical and fun and grand."

'IDOL' GIVES BACK

All of this is the end result of a heady year for Lambert. At this time in 2008, he was waiting for the Hollywood elimination rounds of "Idol" to start. In TV time, it takes six months for "Idol" to crown a winner, but the production process runs year-round.

Despite the artificiality of the show, it does drop-kick contestants into the media spotlight—a valuable lesson for any pop star. "They put you through it to see if you can hang," Lambert says.

The 2009 season of "Idol" attracted an average of 25.1 million viewers, according to Nielsen, the lowest average in several years, but it's still the most-watched show on TV as it has been since 2004 (see chart, page 18). The finale where Allen was proclaimed the winner over Lambert was watched by 28.8 million viewers—10 million more than the 2009 Grammy Awards.

"The finale of 'Idol' was pretty epic," Lambert says. "I got up there and was singing with Queen and Kiss—I got to put on a costume. I really feel the finale summed up what I'm trying to do, and what I'm going to do. I think that being onstage with legendary people like that reminds you of what showmanship is."

Weeks after the "Idol" season wrapped, the top 10 contestants embark on the Idol's Live tour—a valedictory sprint of 52 cities in three months that grossed $30 million this year, according to Billboard Boxscore (see chart, page 18).

While group numbers are a standard part of the show, each high-finishing "Idol" contestant gets his or her chance to shine in a solo. Lambert did a medley of David Bowie's "Life on Mars," "Fame" and "Let's Dance." He saw it as a chance to stage-test the sound he had in mind for his debut: "I always wanted to do Bowie songs, and I never did them on 'Idol' because it wasn't ever the right fit," he says. "We did a different, slightly modern production, which is basically what I'm doing on my album."

And much like the TV show, the "Idol" tour pits its participants against the wringer. "I've done theater for years and I've sung for a long time, but I've never done a solo set in concert night after night while traveling," Lambert says. "It was a good way to learn about how to take care of yourself and how to pace yourself while on the road."

With the fame comes accompanying challenges: Lambert has become a favorite subject of the tabloids and paparazzi. "Yeah, it's weird," he says. "You know, it's like, 'Hi, I'm just walking to my car—why do you care?'"

It's very likely that they care because of the wink-wink, nudge-nudge game that was played in the media about Lambert's sexuality during his "Idol" tenure. Lambert demurred on the questions about whether he was gay until the Rolling Stone article, since then he's unwittingly become Adam Lambert, icon for Gay Youth. It's not a mantle he shoulders easily.

"I don't want to be a spokesperson for anybody, no matter what they are," he says. "I'm not following this career path to be a role model or to be a poster child for anything except for music. If there's an indirect impact that my presence has on certain issues, then I think that's a good thing."

It's a mature point of view to take as Lambert's private life becomes increasingly linked to his public persona. It's an issue that has been raised again and again—as he loved the red carpet for "2012," for example, he was asked if he brought a date. His laughing response? "My date is my jacket, actually."

A few days after the premiere, Lambert is sitting in Fuller's office, swiveling back and forth in a white office chair as he prepares for another long day of media interviews. The movie, as it turned out, was a blast, and "Time for Miracles" was warmly received. "People stayed and listened," he says, honestly happy. Of course they did. That's entertainment. ...

Season Eight's Punk Princess ALLISON IRAHETA Wants To Parlay Her Big Voice Into Hefty Sales

It's a moment that Allison Iraheta isn't fond of recalling. After performing in one of the early rounds of "American Idol," host Ryan Seacrest approached her for the standard chat-'em-up interview. And by her own admission, Iraheta flushed it. She stammered, stumbled and looked like she was going to collapse into a fit of giggles—or tears.

"Yeah, that was an awesome first time with Ryan Seacrest," she says with a laugh. "Being on the show and the tour definitely helped prepare us all for what we're going to be doing now. I'm much more comfortable on the big stage."

To be fair, live TV can be intimidating—and Iraheta is only 17. But her youth and inexperience didn't stop her from attracting heavyweight producers like Max Martin and Howard Benson for her debut album, "Just Like You" (19 Recordings/live), which is due Dec. 1. The lead single, "Friday I'll Be Over U," has sold 10,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"It's a pop album with a rock edge over it," Iraheta says. "There's some hard stuff—like when you're at a concert, it makes you want to lift up that lighter . . . or iPhone.

Jive Label Group GM/executive VP Tom Carrabba says the label will focus on Iraheta's peers in the teen market with targeted radio, TV and online campaigns, but will also reach out to the Latin market. A Spanish-language version of "Friday I'll Be Over U" will be worked to radio. "She does speak Spanish, and it really works," Carrabba says. "It's not contrived." (In 2006, Iraheta won Telemundo's singing competition "Quinceañera: Mamma Queiro Ser: Artista.")

Iraheta says the "Idol" experience has given her more confidence not just as a performer, but as a songwriter. The album closes with "You Don't Know Me," a track co-written and co-produced by David Hodges. "I don't know if I'm shy when I'm sharing my ideas—because I don't know if they suck or not—but I get a little quiet, maybe," she says. "He just made it so comfortable. We were talking about things that sort of piss us off most, and for me, it's pre-judgment. And we wrote it about that."

With the recording of her first album behind her and as she heads into the promotional grind, Iraheta is keeping up her mix of sweet and sassy that won her fans on "Idol"—occasionally breaking into an imitation of Carman from "South Park" and offering this about her multicolored locks: "It probably last a good four to five weeks before the coloring starts coming out. It bleeds when I shower. It looks like a horror movie. She's become, in other words, a good interview." —AD
THE BILLBOARD Q&A: KRIS ALLEN

'American Idol' Season-Eight Champ Talks About His New Album, His Upcoming Tour—and What He Learned From Wikipedia

One year ago, Kris Allen was attending the University of Central Arkansas, playing gigs at local bars and adjusting to life as a newlywed. Now, thanks to “American Idol,” he’s enough of a brand name that his major-label debut is self-titled.

“Kris Allen” (19 Recordings/Jive) was released Nov. 17, and odds are good that Allen can build off his digital single sales success from “American Idol.” To date, Allen has sold 1.1 million copies of tracks he performed on the show, according to Nielsen SoundScan, lead by his version of the show’s coronation song “No Boundaries” with 112,000. Allen sold more total “Idol” tracks than runner-up Adam Lambert (997,000) or fourth-place finisher Allison Iraheta (79,000).

“The exposure an up-and-coming artist receives from ‘American Idol’ is nothing short of amazing,” RCA/Jive Label Group chairman/CEO Barry Weiss says. “Where else in today’s difficult music industry can one get five years of artist development, artist loyalty and public awareness achieved in a short five months?”

The first single from the album, “Live Like We’re Dying,” is being worked to top 40 and hot AC radio and has sold 98,000 copies, according to SoundScan. Jive Label Group GM/executive VP Tim Carrabia says Allen will have 13 TV appearances between now and New Year’s Eve.

“We have ‘Idol’ fans and young girls as big supporters, but I think we can also attract moms and guys who are going to respect his live performance,” he says.

Jive wants to key into the emotional subtext of the lead single as well. The label teamed with AOL to debut the video and to sponsor a contest in which fans who submit stories of living life to the fullest are eligible to attend the recording of Allen’s AOL Sessions in New York.

Much of Allen’s success on “Idol” derived from his ability to insert his skills on guitar and piano into his performances, creating affable interpretations of songs like OneRepublic’s “Apologize” and Bill Withers’ “Ain’t No Sunshine.” For his debut album, Allen takes a similar approach, relying on his musicality for a collection of guitar-driven pop.

It’s been a pretty intense time for you, going from winning “Idol” to the tour to the recording of the album. You co-wrote eight of the songs on the album, and you have a solo writing credit on one of them. How do you manage all that work on the road?

Your mind has to switch over from two different things. When you’re on tour, you’re trying to get the crowd involved and really sing and perform to them. When you’re going to write and be in the studio, it’s like, “Now I have to think about me.” That’s the mind-set you have to work with.

I keep a notebook, and maybe I’ll take something from that—but when I’m writing a song I’ll usually just be playing around on my guitar. More than anything, I just try to capture a moment.

You have a solo writing credit on “Red Guitar.” What was your inspiration?

I bought a red guitar for my wife for her birthday and she never played it [laughs], so we ended up sticking it on the wall in our house—it was a horrible guitar, just like a $50 guitar—but it was a good house decoration. And one day I picked it up and tuned it and started playing it, and this song just became kind of a metaphor for how I feel about my wife. It was nice to get that on the album because it was something from before the “Idol” stuff and I feel like it’s an amazing song. It shows who I am as a songwriter and as a musician.

On the album, you worked with everyone from Switchfoot’s Jon Foreman to producer Mike Elizondo. Is there anyone out there you’d like to collaborate with?

It would be fun to write with Adele, actually. She seems like a fun girl to write with. I’m still new in the music business—it was funny, they would be like, “You’re going to write and produce with this guy,” and I’d be like, “OK!” I didn’t know who it was, so I would look them up on Wikipedia. When I went to work with Mike Elizondo, I had no idea who he was. I went on the Internet and it was like—Dr. Dre, Eminem, Switchfoot, Maroon 5, Fiona Apple and a bunch of people, and I was like, “What’s he doing with me?” [laughs] I ended up going to his house many, many times and working on a lot of songs with him.

How did fans respond when you previewed a few of the songs off the album at a tailgate party for a Miami Dolphins game in October?

“Can’t Stay Away” is a really, really fun song to perform, really funky, really groovy. I think people can really get into it. It was kind of crazy, because the first time anybody heard that song it was in that crowd—and people started singing along to it. That’s a good thing. I had a huge smile on my face the whole time.

What was it like filming the video for the first single, “Live Like We’re Dying”?

It’s a song that has a really good message—that we only have so much time, let’s make the most of it. It’s definitely got one of the choruses where I can picture people rolling down the windows of their cars and singing along to it.

The video looks great. It was really fun shooting it—we shot it from 8 p.m. until 2 a.m., and it was an all-night thing with no breaks. [The shoot was] set up like a digital clock, but it’s huge, it’s this monstrous thing—like 25 feet tall and who knows how long. I get to hold a flare, which was pretty cool. I ended up throwing it at people on set [laughs].

On the show, you always made a point to complement your singing with playing an instrument, which is something the TV audience really responded to. Did you make that same connection on the album?

Most of the songs are very guitar- and piano-driven. I was really hard to make sure that had organic feel to it, which I also really wanted to have on the show. Obviously, you’ve got to amp it up a little bit—like Carson [McGraw or Jason] Mac would.

On “American Idol,” the spotlight was always on you and Adam Lambert. Simon Cowell kept trying to set you up at a rival, and now you have albums coming out within a week of each other.

That’s the thing—we’re going to go through at least the first part of our careers doing everything back to back. We were on the show throughout the whole time, then we were on the tour, and now we’re coming out with albums. I feel like we’re always going to have this time of our lives, we’re going to share it, and we’re going to be able to go through it together. We know exactly what the other is going through.

Did you watch “American Idol” while it was on the air? I actually did not watch myself. I just couldn’t. It’s too much. I’m a little bit hard on myself, so even if the judges were really nice I’d be like, “Dude, that was bad.”

What did you learn from the “American Idol” tour that you can apply to your own tour?

It’s a lot of work. You kind of have to prep yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, because it’s crazy. More than anything I think it will be the lesson of making the most of every moment. We’re only going to be in those cities once and those people only get to see one show—I think that you have to give it your all every night. I always loved when we were on tour and I came off the stage just drenched in sweat.

I’m going to do some Christmas shows for radio, and after that we’re going to start rehearsing through February. I don’t know exactly what we’re going to do yet on tour, we may do a college, small club kind of thing, which would be really fun. We may get on an arena tour as well; maybe a little combination of both. We’re going to tour until we can’t tour anymore.

Who inspires you?

I just watched “This Is It” last night. Michael Jackson was the biggest star the world has ever seen—he put so much into everything; a lot of attention to detail. I want to do that. I want to pay that kind of attention to detail in everything—in music, visually—all of that.

—AD
The Evolution Of Leona Lewis

Now, On 'Echo,' She's Taken Charge Of Her Image And Her Songwriting—And Is Ready For A World Tour

BY CRAIG McLEAN
VIOLENCE AND THEFT.

Not words one would normally associate with Leona Lewis, the squeaky clean winner of “The X Factor,” who went on to stunning worldwide success with her debut album, “Spirit.”

Nor, one imagines, exactly how Clive Davis, Simon Cowell and Sony Music Entertainment envisaged the comeback push for Billboard’s top new artist of 2008.

While the campaign for Lewis’ debut was hitch-free, the setup for its follow-up, “Echo”—released Nov. 16 in the United Kingdom on Cowell’s Syco Music and a day later in the United States on J—has been anything but smooth.

First, in mid-August, three songs from the album sessions leaked onto the Internet, reportedly after Syco’s IT system was hacked.

Then, more dramatically, Lewis was assaulted Oct. 14 during a London book signing for her autobiography, “Dreams.” The man accused of punching her in the head was committed under the United Kingdom’s Mental Health Act.

“It was a shock,” Lewis says of the attack, which left her bruised. “I was very sore. The main thing is that I’m still alive.”

By the time Billboard catches up with her, two weeks after the incident, she’s even able to smile about it, particularly the tabloid reports that Lou Al-Chama—“the childhood sweetheart with whom Lewis still lives in her working-class home neighborhood of Hackney in northeast London”—rushed in to tackle her assailant.

“He wasn’t even there,” she says. “That makes me laugh. I’m sure if he was there, he would have. My dad and my brothers weren’t there either. They’re usually at different things that I do. But I’m glad that they weren’t. Because, oh, my God . . . .”

In the immediate aftermath of the assault, Lewis canceled promotional trips to Germany and France, and pulled out of a high-profile U.K. TV appearance on BBC 1’s “The One Show.” She says she has no lasting concerns about making public appearances. The Internet leak was dealt with in similarly succinct fashion, as the IFPI’s anti-piracy unit teamed with law enforcement agencies on both sides of the Atlantic. A criminal investigation is ongoing, according to Syco head of media Ann-Marie Thomson.

Dave Shack, London-based VP of international for Sony Music U.K., says, “I don’t think it did us any real damage.”

PROMOTIONAL PUSH

Shack’s comment must be a relief to all concerned with promoting one of the year’s most hotly anticipated albums. After all, “Spirit” sold 6.5 million copies worldwide (according to Sony), including 1.6 million in the United States (according to Nielsen SoundScan) and 2.8 million in the United Kingdom (according to the Official Charts Co., OCC). It also earned Lewis three nominations at the Grammy Awards and four at the BRITs.

The international breakout single, “Bleeding Love”—co-written by Jesse McCartney and OneRepublic’s Ryan Tedder—hit No. 1 in Austria, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as Billboard’s European Hot 100 Singles chart.

Such success had been a long time coming for Lewis, who attended the United Kingdom’s BRIT School for the Performing Arts and spent much of her teenage years writing and recording in search of that elusive break.

When it came, it catapulted her to unprecedented heights for a U.K. talent show winner, but Sony Music chief creative officer Clive Davis has no doubt she deserves every bit of her success.

“Leona has one of those very, very special voices that’s expressive and has an incredible range,” says Davis on why—of all the new artists who regularly cross his desk—he chose to back her so wholeheartedly. “But she also can feel the lyric very sensitively. You look for that in a singer. She’s also passionate about music—it really runs in her soul. That combination made me feel that she was a special new talent.”

All of which leaves a lot for Lewis’ second album to live up to. Scout Sweeney, New York-based senior VP of marketing and artist development for RCA Music Group, says the “Echo” campaign will have three long-reaching phases.

The “ignition point” was Lewis’ September appearance on “VH1 Divas” and the finale of “America’s Got Talent,” the same week that lead single “Happy”—a slow-burning, epic ballad co-written with Tedder and Evan Bogart—went to No. 40 and her AC formats. So far, however, “Happy” has only peaked at No. 50 on the Billboard Hot 100, selling 156,000 U.S. downloads, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “Bleeding Love,” in contrast, has moved 3.8 million, the 12th-biggest selling U.S. download of all time.

“Happy” was released digitally Nov. 8 in the United Kingdom; the song has been performing strongly at U.K. radio, so far peaking at No. 4 on the OCC’s radio airplay chart and debuting at No. 2 on the U.K. Singles chart Nov. 15.

“We all know ‘Happy’ is a fantastic song and a great calling card to come back with,” Shack says. “But the caveat is, it’s a song that takes work. We were always going to struggle to have ‘Bleeding Love’ part two.”

Nonetheless, all parties say “Echo” has much greater depth than Lewis’ debut. Phase two of the campaign encompasses the release of a second single, currently tipped to be either “Love Letter” or “I Got You,” in February. Phase three will kick-start with Lewis’ first tour in May.

“When an artist breaks in as many countries as Leona did, they have to go all over the world,” Davis says. “She really had to go and help introduce her [new] album in all those countries that were interested in her.”

WORLD MUSIC

As she meets Billboard in a central London broadcast studio on a sunny October morning, Lewis is doing a good job of keeping her own excitement in check. Little wonder, as she has to pace herself. During the next seven hours she’s conducting 25 back-to-back interviews with U.K. regional radio stations.

She points out that the release dates for “Spirit” were staggered internationally, but “Echo” is being released simultaneously worldwide, hence today’s compressed schedule.

Fortunately, the success of “Spirit” means she now has her pick of promotional platforms. After a Nov. 4 slot at Spain’s Premios Ondas awards gala, she performed at MTV’s European Music Awards ceremony in Berlin the following day—a significant step up from her role presenting an award at last year’s ceremony in Liverpool. Shack says, a crucial European campaign launch point.

“Her peers visually are Jay-Z and Beyoncé and all the people on the show this year,” he says. “Those are fantastic luminaries for her to be sharing stages with and proving that she’s a big European star as well.”

Then there was her Nov. 8 return to U.K. ratings champ “The

I wanted something that showed where I was as a person and as an artist now. And I think I did that quite well.”

—LEONA LEWIS
X Factor,” timed for maximum impact on single and album sales, before heading for the States and a run of high-profile TV engagements on “Today” (Nov. 16), “Dancing With the Stars” (Nov. 17), “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” (Nov. 19), “The Tonight Show With Conan O’Brien” (Nov. 19) and “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” (taped Nov. 20, with the airdate still to be determined).

In person, as on TV, the 24-year-old is glamorous but demure. As befitting her committed vegetarianism and stated intention never to undertake raunchy photo shoots, her knee-high boots are a man-made version of suede and accessorized with cozy tights.

And while, as Shack puts it, “18 months ago, she was that starlet that had won ‘The X Factor’ and this was her first foray into promotion, so she was a bit caught in the headlights,” she now exudes sleek, professional polish as she professes to not even know the meaning of “the sophomore slump.”

“I wanted something that showed my growth, that showed where I was as a person and as an artist now,” she says of “Echo,” mostly recorded in Hollywood’s Henson Recording Studios. “And I think I did that quite well.”

THE WRITE STUFF

In practice, this meant telling the titanic figures of Cowell and Davis—both credited as producers on “Echo”—that she wanted a greater hand in songwriting.

She has co-written on 10 of the U.K. version’s 14 tracks (including hidden track “Stone Hearts & Hand Grenades”) as compared with two on “Spirit,” although the U.K. version replaces the Tedder/Lewis composition “You Don’t Care” with a show-stopping cover version of Oasis’ “Stop Crying Your Heart Out.”

And, while Shack says that “Oasis have more resonance in Europe—a lot of middle America won’t know that track at all,” Lewis savvily points out that different international editions mean there is scope for repackaging the release with additional tracks further down the marketing line. The special edition of “Spirit” was responsible for 800,000 of its total U.K. sale, according to the OCC.

For “Echo,” Lewis wrote a wish list of “everyone I wanted to work with.” A fan of his 2008 hit “Let It Rock,” she sought out Kevin Rudolf to co-write the uptempo “Love Letter.” John Shanks, who has written for Bon Jovi and Kelly Clarkson, was recruited for “Broken,” co-written with A. Novell Stevenson.

“I wanted a song that was just massive,” Lewis says. “That one for me is the most vocally crazy.”

Overall, “Echo” throws less of what Lewis describes as the “conventional” R&B diva shapes. “Outta My Head,” co-written with Swedish pop powerhouse Max Martin, is a Euro-club banger that, with a couple of strategic remixes, could do healthy business on next’s summer dance charts. “Don’t Let Me Down,” co-written with Justin Timberlake and featuring him on backing vocals, is strings-drenched, midtempo, taut funk.

And then there’s Tedder. He and the rest of OneRepublic guest on “Lost Then Found,” while he and Lewis also wrote “You Don’t Care,” working on it in Tedder’s Denver studio and London’s Abbey Road—the latter location enabling Beatles enthusiast Tedder to channel the spirit of “Strawberry Fields Forever” in the opening bars.

“We’ve got a good chemistry together,” Lewis says. “He really gets me as a person.”

“Leona’s still learning as a writer but she has some definite God-given talent,” Tedder says. “To some degree she’s my muse. All that matters to us is putting really meaningful lyrics with really meaningful melodies. When she sings a song, you know you’re going to be hearing it 10, 15 years from now at weddings.”

Tedder first encountered Lewis at a songwriters conference organized by Davis at the Beverly Hills Hilton in early 2007. Lewis performed in front of a range of A-list hitmakers that also included Tedder. Stargate, Ne-Yo, Diane Warren and Desmond Child. By coincidence, it was the same week Tedder wrote “Bleeding Love.”

“Clive is very old-fashioned and still the best,” Tedder says. “That was probably the single smartest thing he did in the whole Leona album process. I think I just about every hit she had from ‘Spirit’ came from the people in that room.”

With “Echo,” Lewis was determined to be front and center of that creative process. Was Cowell, the man who effectively discovered her, supportive of that?

“Simon doesn’t really care whether I’ve written it or it’s by Max Martin or Ryan Tedder,” she says. “He just wants the best song. So when I sent him ‘Happy,’ I was like, ‘I hope he doesn’t actually see that I’ve written it.’ But then he was like, ‘Oh, this is amazing.’ Then he found out I co-wrote it, and he was just like, ‘Well done, I really rate you for that.’ ”

It’s this evolution of Lewis, Shack says, that is key to the “Echo” campaign. “It’s about movement, growth, her coming of age,” he says.

TOUR DE FORCE

As well as her development as a songwriter, Lewis is ramping up by wearing custom-tailored outfits designed by British fashion icon Vivienne Westwood, who will also be involved in Lewis’ move to the concert stage.

Lewis’ world tour—projected to run for nine months—will kick off with nine U.K. arena dates in May and June, booked by Creative Artists Agency. She starts May 28 at Sheffield Arena and will also include two shows at London’s O2 Arena. Harry Magee, Lewis’ co-manager at London-based Modest Management, expects that run to be extended, or that Lewis will return for further U.K. gigs as part of a European tour in the fall. “In America we’ll be touring in the summer,” he says, “either as part of a package or as special guests.” Dates in Australia and Japan will follow in late 2010 and early 2011.

Magee says production details are still in the early stages—contrary to some Internet rumors. Michael Jackson’s choreographer Travis Payne hasn’t been hired—but fans should expect something spectacular.

After all, despite the lack of headline concerts, Lewis is hardly a stranger to the stage, performing everywhere from the closing ceremony of the Beijing Olympics (with Led Zeppelin’s Jimmy Page) to Nelson Mandela’s 90th birthday party in London’s Hyde Park to the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards (with Lil Wayne and T-Pain). She sings “I See You (Theme From Avatar)” over the end credits of James Cameron’s anticipated sci-fi film “Avatar.”

And, a week after Billboard meets her, Lewis performs her first full live show. It’s a homecoming gig, at the 1,500-capacity Hackney Empire, a grand Victorian theater that was also the venue for Lewis’ first talent competition.

“I sang ‘I Will Go On’ by Celine Dion, which is a big song for a 13-year-old,” she says with a laugh. “And I won, which was cool. I’ve been back there since and sang, although it was covers. It’s so important for me to go back there and be able to do my own material.”

The nine-song, 50-minute set features Lewis backed by six Stabbin-style dancers, two backing vocalists, a six-piece band and inventive lighting and visuals (at one point she sings from between the giant projected image of her own legs), all overseen by creative director William Baker, who for many years performed the same role for Kylie Minogue.

Despite the occasional hint of tentativeness, it’s an impressive performance. Lewis’ rich, soaring voice effortlessly fills the venue. Her elegant, expansive covers of “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face,” featured on “Spirit,” demonstrates her skills as an interpreter of standards, while “Happy” and “I Got You” (another Martin co-write from “Echo”) already sound like stone-cold classics.

That “Evolution” campaign seems firmly on track, although no one will offer predictions just yet for how “Echo” might sell in comparison with “Spirit.”

“I never make predictions—I find that too intimidating,” Davis says with a chuckle. “All I know is, it’s worked hard to avoid any pitfalls with the sophomore album. We’ve got a great number of very strong songs that showcase the growth and maturing and development of Leona as an artist and as a creative person. The rest is up to fate.”

same week Tedder wrote “Bleeding Love.”
It’s a bleary, rain-soaked afternoon in late October, and huddled in a corner table at DuMont restaurant in Brooklyn, the Black Keys are talking vegetables.

“My mom said that when she was a kid in the winter, you couldn’t get any at the grocery store,” says drummer Patrick Carney, who’s picking at the last traces of his poached eggs and field greens.

Dan Auerbach, the Keys’ singer/guitarist, looks at his bandmate, perplexed. “Where’d she live, dog?”

“Todato,” Carney replies, citing the Ohio city west of Akron, where he and Auerbach grew up. “She said that all you could get was, like, iceberg lettuce.”

“Todato’s jacked up.”

The Keys’ aside has little to do with what they’ve been discussing thus far: “Blakroc,” their Damon Dash-orchestrated hip-hop collaboration set for release Nov. 27 - Black Friday. But it still hints at why the band’s latest project could seem unorthodox to many. Here are two Ohioans who make swampy garage-blues that, while marked by the virtuosic playing that’s made the Black Keys a can’t-miss live act, feels firmly planted in a blue-collar rock aesthetic.

The Black Keys, however, will be the first to say that as kids, they worshipped one hip-hop pioneer in particular. “RZA is my hero,” Auerbach says of the Wu-Tang Clan’s patriarch. “It was crazy and amazing to be in the studio with him.” Carney adds, “There were more people listening to hip-hop at our high school than rock’n’roll.

With their new material, the Black Keys want to shake things up. “Black Keys fans know that the band is not a one-trick pony,” manager John Peets says. A host of seasoned rappers, from RZA, Jim Jones and Ludacris to Q-Tip, Pharoahe Monch, Mos Def and even deceased Wu-Tang member Ol’ Dirty Bastard appear on “Blakroc,” dropping rhymes against a dense backdrop of Auerbach’s slinky guitar riffs and Carney’s stamping drums.

Aside from their last album, 2008’s “Attack & Release,” little of the Black Keys’ hip-hop influence appears on their previous work. The duo recruited producer and Gnarls Barkley member Danger Mouse (Beck, Gorillaz, MF Doom) for that effort and made what is widely believed to be their strongest work to date, as well as their best-selling: “Attack & Release” sold 192,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, ahead of the Keys’ 2006 album “Magic Potion” ($166,000) and their 2004 tipping-point release “Rubber Factory” ($147,000).

“Fans know the band is open to evolving, and I think that record with Danger Mouse cracked open the door—we’re just walking through it,” Peets says.

Auerbach’s vocals rarely even appear on “Blakroc.” Dash’s former Roc-a-Fella Records artist Nicole Wray provides many of the hooks, the first of a few signs that “Blakroc” isn’t your average mash-up album.

“We weren’t trying to make a rap-rock record,” Auerbach says. “We were trying to make a good record. When my voice was appropriate we’d give it a slot, but we were totally comfortable playing the backing band, as long as what we were doing is effective.”

Auerbach is right. “Blakroc” works because at its core, it’s a hip-hop album with an exceptional backing band. And it’s part of a rising trend that favors live instrumentation over sampled beats.

What the Black Keys, Peets and Dash hope is that music fans will naturally gravitate toward a project that—at a time when labels are scrambling to manufacture a moneymaking hit—developed organically.

“It’s the same reason why two suburban white kids would get into Ol’ Dirty Bastard at the age of 13,” Carney says. “Why can’t someone who’s into ODIB get into the Black Keys?”

NATURAL SELECTION
Dash hadn’t heard of the Black Keys until this past April. Two of his assistants left the office one night to see the band in concert, piquing his curiosity. “I was like, ‘let me hear these Black Keys,’” says the Roc-a-Fella co-founder and former business partner of Jay-Z. Dash got a copy of “Attack & Release” and as he listened to it, “I got infected,” he says. “It was just enhancing the mood, and it started to become my theme music. It became an everyday, all-day thing—the Black Keys in heavy rotation.”

“He was like, ‘How does a band that I’ve never heard of sell 5,000 seats in NYC?’” Auerbach says. “’How is this band self-sustainable and doing all this business stuff, and I don’t know anything about them?’”

Pretty soon, Dash was hatching a plan for the band to collaborate with Jim Jones, the Harlem rapper whose career he shepherded. He tracked down Peets by phone and proposed a studio session in New York, with no strings attached.

“I knew that once we got there something was going to happen,” Dash says. “I just didn’t know what it was.”

In June, Peets had the Black Keys fly in for a recording session at Studio G in Brooklyn, where Dash would arrange for Jones to meet them. Though Auerbach and Carney were open to recording with hip-hop artists, they, in turn, admit that they weren’t wholly familiar with Dash’s work.

“As a kid I grew up listening to Wu-Tang and the Pharcyde, and Damon’s Roc-a-Fella stuff came after that,” Auerbach says. “And I didn’t know Jim Jones at all. I got on the Internet, and all I saw was that he had more friends on MySpace than anybody I’ve ever seen, and had more people signing up on his music than anybody I’ve ever seen. I didn’t know what to expect.”

One artist whose music Auerbach and Carney were familiar with was Mos Def, who co-incidently ran into Dash on the street the night before the Keys’ session with Jones. “Mos
that drums, but then it always comes out with some on it. I knew the "Stay Close" rapper city to feature Auerbach's vocals and the first track leaked to the public. "Jim was super nice and really seemed to dig the music," Auerbach says, "and the fact that Mos wanted to work with us was really cool. That's when I said, 'This is for real.'"

More happy accidents soon followed. When the keys told Dash they wanted to work with RZA, Dash contacted his old friend through their mutual barber in Los Angeles. "I was like, 'If you see RZA, tell him I'm looking for him,'" Dash says. RZA would soon record two tracks on "Blakroc" and was the only guest artist to also work with Auerbach and Carney on the music, playing electric guitar on "Tellin' Me Things" and keyboard on "Dollar & Sense," which also features Pharoah Monch.

"Damon just invited me to the studio to vibe out with some creative people," RZA says. "I've been playing guitar for three years now and I always wanted to record myself, so I took a shot at it and caught a cool riff." AS recording continued, the Keys' approach to creating "beats" evolved. "At first we were sticking to electric guitar, bass and drums, but then we started to come up with a repetitive riff and deconstruct it," Carney says. "It's a little more experimental than what we normally do."

Dash recruited another Wu-Tang Clan member, Raekwon, for the standout track "Stay Off the F**k#! Flowers." "It came over to the studio and I liked what I heard," Raekwon says. "It just seemed like part of the world that I need to be in. I have a bunch of white fans that care about me, so why not represent the rock side? We are all cousins inside the music business anyway."

Except for supporting Jones, Dash has mostly been working outside of the music industry since his Roc-a-Fella days, focusing instead on filmmaking and his ex-wife Rachel Roy's fashion line and opening an art gallery last month. On "Blakroc," however, the way Dash assembled an impressive lineup of veteran artists is a testament to his lasting credibility among his peers. "Hip-hop respects Damon Dash, no matter what the media thinks," RZA says. "Even though he and his man [Jay-Z] split the atom and went their separate ways, we know he was a combination for both of those men's work that built their strong empire."

**BY THE NUMBERS**

Inside the tight quarters of Studio G, Auerbach shuffles from side to side, shuts his eyes and nods his head smoothly—a perfectly receptive way for a respondent to an MC rhyming over his guitar kicks. Carney looks on as the veteran Brooklyn rapper O.C. takes the mic. "Guitar strides got me zonked/Drums kicks and snare got me in an altered state," he says, as a cameraman—one of two videographers that Dash has hired to film every second of the "Blakroc" recording sessions—zooms in on him. When O.C. exits the booth a few minutes later, he's clearly excited by the experience. "I like this room. It makes me sound professional," he says.

The Black Keys finished recording "Blakroc" in 11 days during the summer, but they're still making hip-hop music. Though they're not ready to publicly reveal any artist names, O.C. is just one of many rappers who've hit the studio with Auerbach and Carney in recent days. No one knows whether these new sessions will ever materialize into a second Blakroc album, but as with the first one, no one is letting logistics kill the creative flow, either. "We haven't stopped since we started," Auerbach says. "It's not even like we're making a second one—basically we just kept going.

Soon after O.C. leaves, Dash swoops in with three of his employees—one armed with a bottle of Veuve Clicquot—and gives a half-dezen pounds and bear hugs to Auerbach, Carney, Peets and nearly everyone else in the room, instantly changing its dynamic. It's striking to see Dash back in the studio, a second-verse hook that he's ready to re-embrace.

"I couldn't do any more hip-hop unless I did something different," he says. "Now we have all these artists like Mos and RZA on something different, something that's never been done. It's going to open new doors."

For Dash, it's already doing that. He's now working on two other collaborative albums, one between the rapper Current Fire and Mars Volta drummer Thomas Bridgen and another between Raekwon and the Disco Biscuits. The mogul also submitted edited documentary footage of "Blakroc" to the Sundance Film Festival, and he's timing the launch of his new TV venture, CreativeControl.tv, for Nov. 27 to coincide with the album release. In addition, Dash and Mos Def recently co-produced a documentary about the all-black Detroit punk band Death, and Dash plans to launch an online radio station.

On the subject of the album's sales potential, Dash is less committed. "I don't care," he says. "We made good music. Roc-a-Fella wasn't fun, it was work. Everyone that I helped ended up turning their back on me. The minute I put them in the place where they could make money, then they wanted to make beef. I'm not in that business anymore. Every single second of this has been fun."

As the de facto president of the Blakroc imprint, it's Peets' job to handle the business strategy for the project. The Keys' manager set off last week to make sure that if his group wanted to "hit the road" after the release, it would have the necessary support network in place.

"That's a bit like a graphic equalizer with the middle pulled out," Peets says of the business plan. "There's a lot of low-end organic stuff going on, and then there's a higher-end effort to create something lifestyle-oriented for the community of people coming together around this music.

"But will that community be big enough for "Blakroc" to turn a profit? "It would be nice to break even, and if it's more than that, fantastic," Peets says. "We've been economical with this, and accountability is something we need in the music business. It's too easy to lose money in the music business anyway. The goal is to make another record, so that if you manage everything properly and set reasonable expectations, then all of the sudden you're an artist—you're contributing."

After recording the "Blakroc" album, the Black Keys went to Alabama to finish their sixth studio album, which has a projected release date of April 2010. No hip-hop artists will appear on the set, but Auerbach and Carney were influenced by their side project in more subtle ways. "Mostly it was the positive momentum we had coming from such a good project," Auerbach says. "We kept that positive energy and jumped right into the studio."

It's Dash, though, who is coming away from "Blakroc" with the most excitement about what lies ahead. "I'm inspired again," he says. "When I left music, everybody was so worried about making money that they didn't make money anymore. In this environment, you can do whatever you want. You don't have to worry about singles, you don't have to kiss ass, and you don't have to answer dumb questions. You get to keep the spirit alive."
ON THE RISE

Australian Sales Edge Out Of The Red, With Digital Leading The Way

BY LARS BRANDLE

Business is looking up Down Under. While the world's most powerful markets struggled with the global financial crisis of 2009, Australia's economy enjoyed slight growth in the first half of this year, and its music industry played a similar tune. Led by a burgeoning digital market and respectable CD album sales, the value of Australia's recorded-music industry expanded by the thinnest of margins—just 0.4%—in the first half of 2009. For the first time, the pace of growth in digital sales outpaced the decline in physical product.

A host of factors contributed to the feel-good figures. The overall economy is buoyant; broadband penetration is rising, and the digital market has been refreshed with a slew of innovative new arrivals, including Nokia's Comes With Music and MySpace Music earlier this year and the launch of Vodafone's MusicStation subscription service in late 2008.

The upward trend offers a positive backdrop to this year's Australian Recording Industry ARIA Awards set for Nov. 26 in Sydney. Whether the gains reflect an early stage of recovery or just a false horizon, however, only time will tell.

"The half-year figures look encouraging," says Stephen Peach, CEO of the Australian labels association ARIA, which issues the official trade figures for the recorded-music market. "Whether we've reached that transition point where the growth in digital outweights the decline in physical, we'll see what the full-year figures look like."

During the six months that ended June 30, Australians spent more than $17 million Australian ($33 million) on downloads, ringtones and other digital music formats, up 43% from the same period in 2008. The bulk of legitimate online traffic came in the form of digital albums, a format that generated $18 million Australian ($16 million) in income, up 36.5%. Another bright point has been the digital albums format, which rose nearly 56.8% in first-half value to $9.1 million Australian ($8.4 million), and now represents 8% of overall album sales, up from 4.7% in the corresponding period of 2008.

"There is a positive feeling from consumer feedback that sales will continue strongly through the crucial Christmas period," says Sony Music Australia and New Zealand chairman/CEO Denis Handlin, whose company ended 2008 with the market's three top-selling albums by Kings of Leon, Pink and AC/DC. "Sony artist Jessica Mauboy also leads this year's ARIA nominations with seven nods. "Our new business continues to expand as well," Handlin says, citing Sony's new touring arm, Day 1 Entertainment, and its label-agnostic digital store, Bandin fm.

"Labels are engaging more directly with artists' fans. They've become more digital-savvy and they're marketing heavily via MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and blogs," says Paul Paolillo, COO of the Sydney-based mobile personalization, entertainment and technology provider Mercury Mobility.

Australia is emerging as a solid test market for digital services. Nokia's all-you-can-eat subscription offering arrived March 20 Down Under, just the third market to launch behind the United Kingdom and Singapore. Figures leaked to the press in early October suggest the service has made an impact. The Australian business reportedly had 23,003 active users in July, second only to the 32,728 Comes With Music users during the same period in the United Kingdom.

News Corp.'s MySpace Music arrived in October in Australia, just the second market behind the United States.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has proposed an ambitious national broadband network, described by Rudd as the "largest infrastructure decision in Australia's history." Both projects are progressing and should foster the country's nascent online music market. So in 2009 the battle lines were drawn in
Australia continues to maintain a vibrant domestic talent scene. Australian artists fared well on ARIA's top albums and singles charts in the first half, contributing 23 albums (21.3%) and 16 singles (13.8%). A handful of home-grown acts appeared on international charts during the year. Empire of the Sun, the Temper Trap, Daniel Merriweather, the Veronicas and Oanh all had breakthroughs overseas, while Missy Higgins finally got some traction in the United States with her second album, "On a Clear Night." (Eleven).

Indigenous singer Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu's stunning solo debut, "Gurrumul," sold nearly 200,000 copies, according to his label Skinnyfish Music, just shy of Australia's triple-platinum-certification threshold. The album also charted in Germany and the United Kingdom through a partnership between Skinnyfish Music and Mike Bar’s Dramatico Entertainment.

"It’s great for all of us when an Australian artist breaks through internationally," says EMI Music Australia chairman Mark Poston. "Right now, it feels like there’s real interest for Australian music again." Empire of the Sun and the Temper Trap are among the nominees at this year’s ARIA Awards. And the Temper Trap last month cracked Billboard's Heatseekers Albums chart with "Conditions," on Liberation/Glastonoe Records.

Other rising Australian acts have begun to gain international notice.

Tame Impala from Perth on Modular Recordings, whose self-titled EP reached No. 1 on the Australian Independent Record Labels chart, will share the bill with international stars at the Big Day Out Festival in Australia and New Zealand next year. Sarah Blasko, signed to Dew Process, will release her third album, "As Day Follows Night," across Europe next year through a licensing deal with Dramatico. The rock band Violent Soho has been signed to Thurston Moore’s Ecstatic Peace label through Universal. Lisa Mitchell, a 2006 contestant on "Australian Idol," and an ARIA Award nominee this year, had her debut album, "Wonder," released in the United Kingdom in October on RCA. And Kate Miller-Heidke reached No. 2 on the ARIA albums chart with her second Sony album, "Curiouser," and had a global viral hit on YouTube with "Are You F**king Kidding Me? (The Facebook Song)," which appeared on a five-song SIN/RED EP in October in the United States.

The business backdrop for this talent in action is encouraging. The economy has performed better than expected (1% growth in gross domestic product reported in the first half), thanks in part to the government’s stimulus packages. In April, the government handed out as much as $950 Australian ($861) to 13 million Australians as an incentive to spur growth at retail and stem job losses. The handout benefited the Australian entertainment and electronics retailer JB Hi-Fi. The music market-leading chain is in expansion mode and forecasting 20% sales growth to $2.8 billion Australian ($2.5 billion) in the financial year that will end June 30, 2010. "Unlike other countries, we haven’t had a big downturn here," JB CEO Richard Uchtritz says, "and Australians’ love affair with technology is insatiable." JB dominates its retail rivals with an estimated 40% share of the CD market.

The signs of recovery are good, but no one is celebrating just yet. "It’s a tough retail environment," says David Williams, chairman of the leading independent music group Shock Entertainment. "But we expect digital to continue expanding dramatically at the expense of physical retail."

Williams’ comments are reflected by Steve Pavlic, managing director of Modular Recordings, the Sydney-based label home to Wolfmother, Cut Copy, Ladyhawke and others. Some of our artists would have sold a lot more records with the same amount of attention five or 10 years ago," Pavlic says. "But there are some outstanding opportunities opening up for artists, there’s a lot of great music coming out of Australia. And we’re happy, the sun is shining."
## Boxscore Concert Grosses

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<tr>
<th>Gross</th>
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<th>Venue, Date</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<td>27,350</td>
<td>(18984 rec. 9950 gross) West/AEG Live</td>
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<td>Billet Dumbledore, Chicago, IL</td>
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<td>9,490</td>
<td>AEG Live</td>
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<td>$923,385</td>
<td>FLEETWOOD MAC</td>
<td>Classic Rock, New York, Oct. 11</td>
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<td>ELTON JOHN</td>
<td>Hordern Pavilion, Sydney, Nov. 12</td>
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<td>MUSE</td>
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<td>Live Nation International</td>
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<td>$882,162</td>
<td>GREEN DAY</td>
<td>Hordern Pavilion, Sydney, Nov. 12</td>
<td>13,394</td>
<td>Live Nation International</td>
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For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see billboard biz/touring

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## Frontier Man

For Mushroom's Michael Gudinski, Tour Promotion Remains His 'Fun Job'

As a pioneer of the Australian music business, Michael Gudinski was into 360 deals before they were called "360s." But rather than attempt to tap into different artist revenue streams because of a central revenue source was faltering, Gudinski's moves were more entrepreneurial in building a fledgling music business Down Under. Gudinski, founder/chairman of the Mushroom Group of Cos., will deliver a keynote at MIDEM. His involvement coincides with Australia's National Day, a national holiday.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Gudinski's company Frontier Touring, which among other accomplishments was among the first promoters to pair Billy Joel and Elton John as co-headliners and the first to tour Diego with Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers across Australia and New Zealand in 1986.

Gudinski formed Mushroom Records in 1972 but had begun booking artists in the region years earlier. In 1970, he established the Consolidated Rock agency, which evolved into the Premier Artist Harbour Agency Group and remains a powerful booking agency in the region. In partnership with others, including Frank Stivala, Philip Jacobsen and Ian James, Gudinski has diversified his portfolio to include festivals, venues, concert promoting, merchandising (ARM) and publishing (Mushroom Music Publishing).

Branching into other areas was instinctive for Gudinski. "Because it's a small country here, we didn't have any antitrust laws like in America back in the '70s, so I basically had set up what people would look at now as the original 360 type of operation," he says. "Now you have all these people thinking, 360, which I really don't like. I think unless you have someone actively doing something in an area, to take someone's rights is wrong."

But the live business has always been Gudinski's first love. "Touring has always been the exciting side of the business for me, and not just because of the obvious excitement of a show and the risk involved," he says. "It keeps me in touch. You're out on the road, you're talking to big deals, always say the record company was my day job and the touring company was my fun job."

Fun and still successful, as Frontier this year has brought such acts as Kings of Leon, the Black Eyed Peas, Leonard Cohen, MGMT, Raitt Against the Wind, Fall Out Boy to Australia and New Zealand. His Day on the Green music fest at Australian wineries have become hugely popular.

Frontier first started to gain traction by bringing in new music exploding out of England to Australia, including such bands as the Police and Squeeze.

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"We started working with bands that some of the established promoters weren't taking seriously or we went on to form in the late '70s with that music style," he says. "But today we're very diverse. It's very conscious of trying to put special bills together - we're very concerned with value for money. If the live music business doesn't protect the fans and the core of what this business is all about, they will end up doing exec..."
THE CIRCUS STARRING BRITNEY SPEARS
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Australian concertgoers have enjoyed a lot of choice for their buck lately. The likes of Coldplay, Andre Rieu, Green Day, the Black Eyed Peas, Nickelback and Britney Spears all embarked on Australian tours in 2009. None, however, could touch Pink’s extraordinary 58-date trek, which sold 658,000 tickets and grossed more than $80 million Australian ($74 million), a record for a touring female artist Down Under.

"Achieving that level of ticket sales in a recession environment confirms that Australians value great entertainment above pretty much anything else that they could spend their disposable income on," says Michael Coppel, whose Melbourne-based company Michael Coppel Presents promoted the tour.

"No question our market responds to hit international acts," says Paul Dainty, CEO/chairman of Dainty Consolidated Entertainment, which is promoting 14 shows by Spears this month on her first Australian tour. “The market has been very strong through 2009 despite the economic issues, which have been tame [here] compared to the rest of the world.”

However, the wildly fluctuating dollar rate has affected promoters. The U.S. value of the local dollar has swung from as low as 60 cents in October 2008 to as high as 92 cents a year later.

"The fluctuating dollar is a nightmare," says Ming Gan, co-founder of the Parklife festival tour, which sold out 130,000 tickets across five cities from Sept. 26 to Oct. 5. "This year I did all my contracts in Australian dollars, and the Aussie dollar has gone up, which meant I missed out on a windfall."

Australia’s live entertainment sector in 2008 generated $1.1 billion Australian ($978 million) in revenue and shifted 15.8 million tickets (of which 2 million continued on »p32
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BILLYBOARDSpecial Feature: Australia

Sunny days: The six-city Big Day Out Festival continues to dominate Australia's festival scene.

from p10 complimentary), according to the latest "Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey" of the trade group Live Performance Australia. Although the market was well down from its peaks of $1.3 billion Australian ($1.1 billion) and 20.8 million tickets in 2007, LPA CEO Evelyn Richardson is heartened by the health of the business and says the dip is part of a natural cycle in the industry. Admittedly, the LPA's survey doesn't yet capture much data from regional venues and self-ticketed events, and the festival business is still underreported.

"Business is going along quite well, but I wouldn't say business is booming," says Michael Harrison, tour coordinator for Frontier Touring, which promoted Kings of Leon, the Black Eyed Peas and Leonard Cohen in 2009. "There's renewed confidence in the market that the worst times are over. We're moving ahead."

That's not true, however, for veteran impresario Kevin Jacobsen, who blamed "the volatility of the entertainment market" when his company Arena Management ceased doing business in July with debts in the region of $10 million Australian ($9.2 million). Arena Management's prized asset, the 12,500-capacity Sydney Entertainment Centre, is now run by the team from the neighboring Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Meanwhile, Australian promoters are using some new tools to do business in the digital age. Michael Chugg Entertainment promoted its Australasian Pearl Jam tour (running through November) with a series of video ex-clusives streamed on the new PearlJam.tv site. And Michael Gudinski's Frontier Touring re-launched its Web presence incorporating interactive and social elements. "The Internet is the radio station for the 21st century," Michael Chugg says. "There's a whole new world of promotional opportunity out there for promoters."

The festival scene remains a thriving market, dominated by the six-city Australasian Big Day Out tour. The 2009 edition, which ran from Jan. 16 to Feb. 1, sold more than 263,000 tickets, down slightly from the 282,692 sold in 2008. For the first time all tickets to the five 2010 dates sold out within two weeks of going on sale. Other festival brands including Homelake, Falls Festival and Splendour in the Grass also sold out in 2009. However, some promoters warn that the festival market is at a saturation point. The shortfall in ticket sales for the Sept. 18 Blueprint Festival in regional Victoria, which has reportedly ac-credited debts of $500,000 Australian ($461,000), would suggest the market isn't a sure thing.

Overall, the live sector is enjoying good times. "Business has been very strong," says Don Elford, business development manager at Sydney's 21,000-capacity Acer Arena, operated by the leading venue group AEG Ogden. "The younger demographic seems to be stronger, but the older demographic seems to be more cautious with their money these days. Overall, I'd have to say the Australian music business is pretty strong."
Plenty of artists pay lip service to loving their fans, but usually limit their interaction to meet-and-greets, replying to tweets and shout-outs from the stage. But 30 Seconds to Mars, which is about to release its third album, "This Is War," Dec. 8 on Virgin, goes far beyond the usual platitudes and gestures. The band involved its fans, known as "the Echelon," on a number of aspects of the new album, including them in choruses and putting their pictures on the album cover.

Lead singer Jared Leto says the group spent two years writing and recording the album, working in the studio with producers Flood and Steve Lillywhite. "The album is a quantum leap forward," Leto says. "I describe it as a metamorphosis, nothing short of a complete rediscovery."

30 Seconds to Mars' previous album, "A Beautiful Lie," which was released in 2005, has sold 1.2 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. While "This Is War" certainly represents an artistic step forward for the band, it hasn't completely given up its melodic, hard rock leanings. "I don't even wonder about what people will think when we get in the studio," Leto says. "I have to follow my heart and my gut and not worry about outside influences."

"This Is War" contains plenty of battle metaphors, with such lyrics as "Tell me who you'd kill to save a life." The band also makes excellent use of strings, and varied song arrangements save the album from sounding too much like a didactic lecture. The group includes choruses on almost every track, and Leto explains that members of the choruses are fans from around the world.

"We were intent on turning the mic toward the audience," he says. "We started to hold events we called 'the Summit'; we did one in L.A. at the Avalon and the place was full. We wound up doing eight of them in different cities, and then we started getting requests from fans that couldn't make it to the summits to participate. We launched a digital version, and we used the material to create the choruses."

Fans also were able to submit photos of themselves online, and Leto says the pictures were used to design several album covers that fans can choose from. "We know that retail is shifting from physical to digital," he says. "We wanted to celebrate the transition and make the physical release really important."

EMI executive VP of promotion and marketing Greg Thompson says fans will participate in marketing "This Is War" as well. "This is a band that was built by passionate fans," he says. "They have been doing a lot of the viral marketing themselves, preaching the gospel to their friends and families." Thompson says the campaign to spread the word about the new album will also include many more traditional elements. "We introduced the first single, 'Kings and Queens,' to radio, and it's exploded at modern rock and active rock," he says. The song is No. 5 on Billboard's Alternative chart and No. 11 on the Rock tally.

The band is planning on playing a number of European shows in November before returning to the United States to play holiday radio shows. A full U.S. tour is planned for 2010. "We're also pursuing licensing opportunities more vigorously," Thompson says. "It's an epic album, and the sound certainly isn't right for everyone. But we have great success with videogames. For instance, with the game 'Dragon Age,' you get a free download with the purchase of the game. And tracks are also available in the 'Rock Band' online store."

While much has been made of Leto's acting career and the perception of him as a celebrity with the band as a side project, Thompson says "This Is War" should dispel any lingering notions that the singer is a dilettante. "It's a harder journey for someone who acts to break into music than the other way around," he says. "But Jared is totally committed to making it all about the band. At this point, fans see him as the lead singer who just happens to act."

Additional reporting by Kelly Staskel.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Sleepless in L.A.: PUDDLE OF MUD

Pulling An All-Nighter
For Puddle Of Mudd, Lack Of Sleep Leads To An Abundance Of Hits

It's 5 a.m., and while most of his neighbors in Los Angeles sleep, Puddle of Mudd frontman Wes Scantlin is lounging on his couch with an acoustic guitar, a six-pack of beer and a small recording device to capture new song ideas for his rock band.

His early-bird method of songwriting has proved to be successful at radio. Since Puddle of Mudd's 2001 debut album, "Come Clean," the group has had five No. 1 songs on Billboard's Mainstream Rock chart, tied for second-most this decade with 3 Doors Down, Godsmack and Linkin Park.

But some of those hits have come at the expense of a concerned woman, who often comes down the stairs at about 4:30 a.m. to ask Scantlin, "When are you coming to bed? Are you ever coming to bed—ever?" he recalls with a laugh.

But Scantlin knows how to make the best of the situation. On Puddle of Mudd's fourth studio set, "Volume 4: Songs in the Key of Love & Hate," due Dec. 8 on Flawless/Geffen, the musician used his wife's complaint as inspiration for the song "Pitchin' a Fit."

"She's my little muse," he says, noting that new track "Keep It Together" is another love song written for her. "I get a song out of any mood that my wife is in."

In contrast, the first single from "Volume 4"—the follow-up to 2007's "Famous," which has sold 363,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan—is the sex-energized rocker "Spaceship." The track is No. 11 on Mainstream Rock, No. 11 on Active Rock, No. 15 on Heritage Rock and No. 33 on Alternative. "Spaceship" premiered on AOL Music's Noisecreep blog in mid-October and has sold 10,000 downloads, according to SoundScan.

Interscope/Geffen marketing director Matt LaMotte says his primary goal with "Volume 4" is to bring out Puddle of Mudd's personality and charisma to a digital audience. "Just about everyone has a Puddle of Mudd song in their iTunes library," he says. "But I'm not sure that all of those people subscribe to the mailing list or go to their Web site regularly."

In addition to constant Twitter updates from Puddle of Mudd members, the first step in galvanizing the band's online fan base was releasing teaser clips of the video for "Spaceship"—which features the band with cast members from MTV's "Nitro Circus" traveling the galaxy in search of alien girls—in the days leading up to its Nov. 16 debut on Yahoo Music.

Puddle of Mudd's team also hopes to boost the band's TV exposure in 2010. The group is scheduled to perform Jan. 7 on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and is currently negotiating other late night bookings. LaMotte says the act will also be marketed heavily at sporting events for brands like the NFL, UFC and NASCAR.

"We have a heavy street initiative going out to the sports crowd, handing out Puddle of Mudd beer koozies and bottle openers," he says. "They crowd likes this band already and would like to have some material like that."

"Volume 4" will also be promoted through a North American package tour that will visit small arenas in January and February, according to Promising Park senior VP of music Peter Kasis, who co-manages Puddle of Mudd with Bill McGathy.

Meanwhile, Scantlin says he's already busy working on the group's next album.

He collaborated with his bandmates—including guitarist Paul Phillips, who rejoined the band in February after leaving in 2005—for several songs on "Volume 4." And he's willing to do it again for future material—if, of course, they can stay up past their bedtime. 

LATEST BUZZ

>> RIHANNA, JAY-Z TEAM UP LIVE

R&B star Rihanna was joined onstage by her mentor, Jay-Z, as she launched her new album, "Rude R," in London. The pair performed "Run This Town" and "Umbrella" during a short set at London's Brixton Academy Nov. 6. Rihanna also debuted songs from "Rude R" (due worldwide Nov. 23), such as the lead single, "Russian Roulette," and "Hard," where she was joined by Young Jeezy, Nokio, which streamed the event around the world, will also offer an exclusive version of "Rude R" at its Nokio Music Store.

>> SLAYER, MEGADETH REUNITE FOR TOUR

Slayer has postponed its U.K. and European tour until spring 2010 and will instead co-headline the American Carnage tour with Megadeth early next year. Kicking off Jan. 18 in Seattle for 26 North American shows, the tour will include six Canadian dates that were postponed earlier this month. Testament will be the tour's special guest.

American Carnage represents the first time that Slayer and Megadeth will have toured the United States together since 1991’s Clash of the Titans outing, and a portion of tickets will be sold for the "1991 price" of $10. Tickets for most shows go on sale Nov. 20.

>> VELVET UNDERGROUND TO SHARE A STAGE

Former Velvet Underground members Lou Reed, Maureen Tucker and Doug Yule will make a rare public appearance Dec. 8 at the New York Public Library. The three will discuss the band's music and legacy with rock journalist David Fricke as part of the "Live From the NYPL" series. The reunion of the legendary New York band follows the publication of Fricke's book "The Velvet Underground: New York Art," a new compendium of previously unseen photographs, cover designs by Andy Warhol and Reed's handwritten lyrics, among other memorabilia.

Reporting by Andre Paine, David J. Prince and Mark Sutherland.
the sweet, simple songs that Intocable used to play when its gigs were weddings and quinceañeras. "My dad had the original albums and I remember listening to them," lead singer Ricky Muñoz says.

Like Muñoz's own band, Los Relampagos were known for putting their own spin on norteño music in the '60s. "They were the first norteño band to have an actual drum set in the band," Muñoz says. "And when we came into the scene we were innovators as well...we're used to experimenting with our music and our influences. In this case we're exploring our influences, but it's strictly back to the roots."

On the business side, however, Intocable is focused on the future. When its contract with EMI was up, the band began looking for a more flexible, equitable arrangement. Intocable formed its own label, Good 1, and had planned to release future albums independently. The band had even secured favorable pricing and positioning at Wal-Mart, including a "Soundcheck" play (though the album wasn't exclusive to the retailer). "We cut some aggressive deals with distributors to make sure that our music got out there," Intocable manager Alan Baxter says. Those deals remain, even as Intocable licensed "Classic" to Sony Music Latin. Baxter says that rather than licensing the album to Sony pan-regionally, Intocable negotiated separate agreements with Sony Music Latin in the United States and Sony Music Mexico. "One encompassing deal doesn't make sense for us," Baxter says. "The cost of marketing and promotion is different...we are looking at each territory as a different opportunity for partners." Intocable will also put the video for "Hay Ojitos" up for sale on its own.

Intocable's deal with Sony, which doesn't include touring, is "more than a license. It's a partnership," Muñoz says. "If we win, we both win. If we lose, we both lose."

Sony Music Latin VP of marketing and A&R Nir Seroussi adds, "Whatever we both bring to the table we split halfway. It's not your typical five-album deal. It's more of an opened-ended deal."

So far, so good. First single "Hay Ojitos," which peaked at No. 1 in Billboard's Regional Mexican Airplay chart this year and the fastest since Intocable's "Tu Adios No Mata" debuted on the chart at No. 1 last year. "Hay Ojitos" returns to No. 1 this week.

"It was time for a change," Muñoz says. Under its new label deal, "the excitement is there..."

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Squeezes out superstar: INTOCABLE

Squeezes out superstar: INTOCABLE

LIGTS ON

Don't try pigeonholing Valerie Poxleitner. The Canadian singer, who records as Lights, is already a recording artist, a live act—and an illustrator. In late September, MTV began airing in North America "Audio Quest: A Captain Lights Adventure," a 10-episode short-form "motion comic" series developed with Marvel Comics artist Tomm Coker that features Lights as the main character.

As a result, the singer says she's now drawing the attention of comic book geeks.

"I was on a flight and had my Nintendo and my comics and my drawings out," she says with a giggle. "And there was this 12-year-old kid next to me, getting progressively closer. It was annoying—until I realized I have the same interests as a 12-year-old boy."

The MTV exposure set up the Oct. 6 U.S. release of Lights' second album, "The Listening," on Doghouse/Universal, following its Sept. 22 Canadian release on Underground Operations/Universal. The album, which made No. 129 on the Billboard 200 Oct. 24, displays Lights' fascination with "bedroom" synth-pop. "When you make things independently and at home," she says, "you're expected to be as left-field or progressive as you can. But I'm a huge pop music fan."

Lights, signed to Sony/ATV Publishing, is touring North America through Feb. 2, booked through the Agency Group, ahead of European shows supporting the U.S. electronica act Owl City (Feb. 17-March 5).

—Robert Thompson

GUN HAPPY


A fan of classic Motown, acid jazz and Jamiroquai, Platts describes it as "a kaleidoscope of a record that travels through genres. The one thing it tries to keep is the euphoria of soul music." The album is scheduled for a late-January release in the Netherlands and in Germany, where Mamas Gun opened for the domestic hip-hop act Die Fantastischen Vier in front of 60,000 people in August in September.

Mamas Gun is supporting the U.K. soul singer Beverley Knight on a British tour. It's booked by Helsk Shetler and has Japanese shows booked at the Billboard Live venues in Tokyo (Jan. 30-31) and Osaka (Feb. 1). Publishers, which vary by territory, include Imagem (United Kingdom) and Universal Music Publishing (Japan).

—Paul Sexton

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6 QUESTIONS

with STING

by MONICA HERRERA

Sting's "If on a Winter's Night..." may feature holiday-inspired songs, but don't call it a Christmas album. "The whole season is much broader than that," he says. "Winter is about inspiration and imagination."

While collecting source material for "Winter's Night"—which debuted at No. 6 on the Billboard 200 and has sold 139,000 copies since its Oct. 26 release, according to Nielsen SoundScan—Sting found inspiration in everything from a 14th-century Carol ("Gabriel's Message") to traditional lullabies and poems. He also collaborated with a host of musicians from the British Isles and performed with the ensemble at England's Durham Cathedral in a concert that will be broadcast Thanksgiving night on PBS' "Great Performances" and released Nov. 23 on DVD.

1. How did you decide on the concept for "If on a Winter's Night..."?

It was during last winter that I decided I would do an album based on the season. It has this kind of gravitational pull toward one's roots—the family home, the cradle or church—but a lot of people face it without any of those things. The sadness of not being able to go home is probably encapsulated best in "Christmas at Sea," which is based on a 19th-century Robert Louis Stevenson poem about a sailor who is sinking off the coast and realizes his home is on the cliff top. He's pulled toward home, yet he's in terrible danger. That sums up the ambiguous feeling of this record. It's not entirely happy, and I also avoided symbols that I think have been overused, like Santa Claus or Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

2. What was it like recording with such a large group of musicians?

My first instinct was to look for traditional musicians from north of England: Kathryn Tickell, who plays the Northumbrian pipes; her brother, Peter, who plays the fiddle; and the Meloduo player: Julian Sutton are all from my hometown. We started recording in my house in Italy last January. We sat around the kitchen table with the fire on, huddled up with coats and scarves and explored these songs together. It was like method recording—it had to be cold for us to begin this thing.

3. Many of the songs on "Winter's Night" are deeply rooted in Christian themes. Did you have to reconfigure your own agnosticism with recording nonsecular material?

I was brought up in the church, and the Christian story is part of my background. At the same time, I can't really accept a lot of the elements of those stories as articles of faith. I think there is one true unassailable religion, and that is the human ability to tell stories—to make myth of why we're here and what we do. So I put those Christian stories next to pre-Christian stories. I treated them with a great deal of reverence and respect. But again, I'm not singing articles of faith; I'm singing magical stories.

4. Your daughter recently said in an interview that your practice of tantric sex is just a myth. What's the real story?

People get very silly about what tantra is. It's using your normal life as a devotional practice, which includes breathing, walking, eating, being and making love. All of those things are practiced consciously, and that's really what it's about. Music is my tantra. It's my way of saying "thank you" to anything, whatever it may be.

5. What was it like reuniting with the Police through last year?

We tied up a lot of loose ends with the last Police tour. I was glad I did it, and people were very happy to see us together again. They came out in droves to see us play. It was an exercise in nostalgia, but we don't need to keep repeating that. I need to be doing something new all the time.

6. Would you like to make another concept album?

I don't know, we'll see how this one does. It's an interesting way of working, collecting or writing material around one theme rather than just writing songs. But if you said to me, "Are you going to do spring next?" No, that would be far too expected.
DASHBOARD CONFESIONAL
Alter the Ending
Producers: Butch Walker, Adam Schlesinger
Interscope
Release Date: Nov. 10
Dashboard Confessional frontman Chris Carrabba could likely take his pick of any female fan in the audience. But somehow the singer/songwriter always manages to get his heart broken by the opposite sex. The band’s sixth studio album, “Alter the Ending,” is a perfectly blended concoction of acoustic melodies, graceful harmonies and powerful anthems wrapped around the story of a man trying desperately to save a failing relationship. The pounding drums on the opener, “Get Me Right,” emphasizes Carrabba’s pursuit of love, while the heavy title track finds him pleading with the object of his affection to stay. And on the closer, “Hell on the Throat,” the artist sings about loss and acceptance over simple acoustic chords. “Alter the Ending” displays much of the same raw sincerity that Carrabba has become known for, but also shows emotional growth, as heard on “Water and Bridges,” where he sings, “I’ll make the best of the best I can, and I’ll be better for it if ever get my chance.” —CB

SAY ANYTHING
Say Anything
Producer: Neal Avra
RCA Records
Release Date: Nov. 3
Pop-punk band Say Anything’s new self-titled album reflects the changing life of frontman Max Bemis—he is now married (wife Sherrin DuPree guests on the songs “She Won’t Follow You” and “Cemetery”), has converted to Christianity (referenced in the upbeat single “Hate Everyone”) and hasn’t suffered bipolar relapses that have previously derailed tours. Life has settled down for Bemis, but it doesn’t show on the new set. Taking a cue from painter Jackson Pollock, the artist splatters pieces of his influences and experiences across an audio canvas for listeners to interpret. “Do Better” leans on strings and electronics to create a musical takeover (Bemis sings, “We could do better/We could be the greatest band in the world”), while “Less Cute” features horns during the verse that lead into a rocking chorus. The chaos is nothing new for Say Anything, but the band’s newest release is tightly executed and gives fans a deeper look into Bemis’ clever mind. —ECJ

RYAN LESLIE
Transition
Producer: Ryan Leslie
NextSelection/Universal Motown
Release Date: Nov. 3
Nearly nine months after the release of his self-titled album, Ryan Leslie continues to push the envelope musically, penning even more lustful lyrics, delivering sweet melodies and creating captivating productions. On “Something That I Like” (featuring Pusha T), the production—reminiscent of rap group Clipse’s “We Got It for Cheap”—meshes with the soulful chorus, in which he confesses, “She’s got something that I like.” Over hand claps and a psychedelic piano arrangement, Leslie keeps “Zodiac” fresh with flirty lyrics like, “What’s your zodiac sign?/Are we compatible, baby?/If it matches with mine/Then we should think about dating.” Other standout tracks include the horn-laden “Sunday Night,” about spending a quiet evening with a special lady, “All My Love,” with its sluggish beat and erratic drums, and the heart-pounding closer “I Choose You,” which can be ideal for any wedding day. —MC

NORAH JONES
The Fall
Producer: Jacquire King
Blue Note Records
Release Date: Nov. 17
NORAH JONES’ fourth album, “The Fall,” may surprise some of her die-hard fans, or at least disarm them a bit. During the 13-song set, Jones ditches the gentle piano-playing of her previous work and rises to a new level of creative boldness. With a new group of musicians behind her, Jones incorporates a fresh, beat-savvy sensibility into these noir-like arrangements, playing plenty of electric guitar and exploring the piercing quality of swirling electric piano. Jones adopt a smoky voice and soulful veneer for the opening track and first single, “Chasing Pirates,” while displaying a slyly kind of ambience on “Light As A Feather” (co-written with Ryan Adams). The social commentary “It’s Gonna Be” offers a garage-rock attitude, and “You’re Gonna Love Me” integrates some of Jones’ biggest influences. Jones is still a little bit country (“Tell Ya Mama”) and a little bit rock’n’roll (“Stuck”). Overall, the artist straddles those lines in an entirely different manner than she ever has before. —GG

BIG KENNY
The Quiet Times of a Rock and Roll Farm Boy
Producers: Big Kenny, Chris Stone
Glotown/Love Everybody/Bigger Picture
Release Date: Nov. 10
In many ways, Big Kenny and John Rich—who make up country duo Big & Rich—are the perfect couple. But Big Kenny’s new album, “The Quiet Times of a Rock and Roll Farm Boy,” is a thoughtful, often profound sojourn into musical independence—his former major label reportedly rejected every solo project he turned in. That frustration led to the defiant “Free Like Me,” which warns, “Don’t fit me inside your expectations/You’ll never know everything I can be.” Big Kenny’s musical kinship with Rich is evident on “Wake Up,” in which the singer demonstrates moving poetry and surprisingly head-turning lead vocals. The lead single, “Long After I’m Gone,” is a midtempo stop-and-smell-the-roses anthem, while “To Find A Heart” may well be the album’s sleeper hit. Sonically, “Farm Boy” puts the artist’s influences on intriguing display (he cites Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, the Beatles, Queen, Bob Marley and Bill Withers, among others), yet manages the often elusive combination of cohesive, articulate and entertaining experience from first note to last. —WJ

RIHANNA
Rated R
Producers: various
Label: Def Jam
Release Date: Nov. 23
Rihanna may have been a good girl gone bad on her 2007 album, but on her new one, she’s a good girl gone bad-ass. During the electric-guitar-soused “Rock Star,” the R&B singer revels in her bad-girl rebellion, crooning, “Got my middle finger up/I don’t really give a fuck.” And over double-speed drums on “G4L,” she warns, “Any motherfuckers want to disrespect/We don’t play that shit.” Meanwhile, the singles “Wait Your Turn” and “Hard” find Rihanna singing buoyant lyrics—“I’m such a fucking lady” and “the hottest bitch in heels,” respectively—over epic piano patterns. But the artist doesn’t talk tough all the way through the set. “Photographs” features Rihanna lamenting over a lost relationship above static drums, whereas on the heartfelt ballad “Stupid in Love,” she croons over a pulsating beat, “You don’t know what you lost/And you won’t realize it till I’m gone.” In either case, she proves that the good girl in her has gone bad indefinitely. —MC

Universal Music Enterprises
Release Date: Nov. 10
The younger pop artists featured on “A Very Special Christmas Vol. 7” will certainly appeal to the Disney Channel set, but the album’s infectious classics and varying musical styles will also likely draw in their parents.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
A Very Special Christmas Vol. 7
Producers: various

www.americanradiohistory.com
upbeat guitar riffs and exuberant shout-outs. Vanessa Hudgens puts her best slighty purr during a jazz take of "Winter Wonderland," while Sean Kingston takes a reggae-pop approach to "The Little Drummer Boy." Country music is also represented on the album, with an uplifting piano accompanying Carrie Underwood's version of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." —KP

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Play On

Producers: Mark Bright, Max Martin, Shellback

Release Date: Nov. 3

There's no doubt that Carrie Underwood's third album, "Play On," is her best collection yet. Here, the artist seems to finally feel comfortable in her own skin. It's a wide-ranging album—she's in love, light-hearted and playful. But isn't that real life? The bass-heavy and lyrically light first single, "Cowboy Casanova" (which Underwood co-wrote), makes for fine radio candy, but it's not the type of song that defines the album. The socially conscious anthem "Change" and the spiritual-sounding "Temporary Home" (another Underwood co-write) provide the meat and potatoes that make the syrupy-sweet dessert offerings more palatable. "What Can I Say" (featuring Sons of Sylvia) is a soaring lamentation about how love was lost, while "Somebody When I Stop Loving You" is a well-written look at a life that's going downhill. Elsewhere, Vince Gill's high harmony on "Look at Me" helps elevate a simple song to a potential country classic.—KT

VITAL REISSUES

NIRVANA
Bleach (20th-anniversary deluxe edition)

Producer: Jack Endino

Sub Pop Records

Release Date: Nov. 3

"This is off our first record, most people don't own it. Kurt Cobain whispered before strumming the opening chords of "About a Girl" during Nirvana's 1993 "MTV Unplugged" performance. "I don't think Cobain hesitated to record, but it was a very different place back then," Gilgquotes. "It's a little more personal."—KP

SINGLES

ROBIN THICKE
Sex Therapy (4:34)

Producers: Pooh Da Don, Robin Thicke, Ho Ho, Sauce

Writers: various

Publishers: various

Star Trek/Interscope

Robin Thicke delivers his signature smooth talk on "Sex Therapy," the first single from his as-yet-untitled fourth album. Producers Poow Da Don and Hot Sauce set up a languorous backbeat with understated synths and soft drum kicks, while Thicke turns the heat all the way up. "Stressed out, uptight, over-worked, wound up/Unleash what you got, let's explore your naughty side," the singer croons. "Just let me love you, lay right here, I'll be your fantasy/Give you sex therapy."

The come-hither lyrics, accompanied by Thicke's breathily falsetto and deep bass undertones, give the song an unfocused eroticism that feels ideal for lovers of romance. Thicke's stripped-down brand of R&B is of an ultra-suggestive nature, but his earnest vocal performance is what ultimately keeps it classy.—KP

LATINA

LATIN BITMAN FEATURING FRANCISCA VALENZUELA
Help Me (3:57)

Producer: Latin Bitman

Writers: J. Bravo, P. Valenzuela

Publishers: Canciones Nacionales, Warner

For the lead single from his new album "Colours," Latin Bitman finds a talented co-writer and guest vocalist in fellow Chilean artist Francisca Valenzuela, who moans bleak lyrics that tint the song with an appealing despondency. "I'm hitting bottom," Valenzuela sings to a falling baseline. "Help me find out how to pick up the shell, she beckons soulfully, while an electric funk guitar and saxophone take agitation and naiveté forward, trying to break through the track's rolling loops. The production mixes buoyancy with heft, as Bitman allows dub beats to rebound off a weighted hip-hop backbeat. The song's main riff drops in and out, revealing a playful subtext of timbales and tambourine scratches. The lyrics are a call for signs of life in a dreary city, and the music, always in motion, awakens just that."—SG

JAY SEAN FEATURING SEAN PAUL & LIL JON
Do You Remember (3:31)

Producers: J. Remy, Bobby Bass

Writers: various

Publishers: various

Universal Republic

"The saying goes: If it isn't broken, don't fix it." That seems to be the strategy Jay Sean and his team employed by releasing "Do You Remember" as the second single off his All or Nothing album. Much like his recent Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 "Down," "Remember" finds Sean avowing his desire for love. "Just you and me tonight, everything will be OK Baby let's take this time, let's make new memories," he sings over similar brusque violin strings and drums. Sean also goes into cyclical mode on the chorus, looping the title and the phrase "Let's bring it back" over and over as on "Down." There are some modifications to the formula, however, like the all-too-familiar ad-libs by Lil Jon. The rapper/producer guests alongside Sean Paul, who adds a pleasant reggae twist.—MC

THALÍA

Equivocada (4:05)

Producer: Aurelio Riaño

Writers: M. Dann, M. Riaño

Publishers: Sony/ATV Diaco, Westwood Publishing

Sonic

For the first single from her Nov. 17 live album "Thalía en Primera Fila" ("Thalía in the Front Row"), Mexican pop star Thalía delivers a moving ballad about a once-serious relationship that turned out to be a mistake. "I was always wrong, and I just didn't want to see it," she sings in Spanish. "Because for you I gave my life/Because everything that begins also ends." After a string of dance-pop singles that aimed for a crossover audience, it's refreshing to hear Thalía pull back and tackle a downtempo number with a classic feel, particularly in a live setting that allows her to showcase her vocals. Thalía recently posted a YouTube clip of herself in the studio with Aventura recording a bachata version of "Equivocada," a sign that her latest hit could find radio success in more ways than one.—Mv

LEGEND/CREDITS

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

CONTRIBUTORS: Crystal Bell, Ayaka Ben-Yehuda, Hane⁄ Concepcion, Sandy Gordon, Gary Graff, Monica Herrera, Walter Jessen, Evan C. Jones, Michael Menachem, Kelley Paine, Mitchell Peters, Ken Tucker

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

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

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Mitchell Peters at Billboard, 505 5th Street Blvd., Suite 1000, Los Angeles, CA 90036 and review copies to Monica Herrera at Billboard, 505 5th Street Blvd., Suite 1000, New York, NY 10036, or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.
When Omarion sings, "I done cut the braids, low cut, got my grown on," in a raspy croon on his new single 'I Get It In,' he's referencing a turning point in his career.

"I felt like my braids defined who I was, and there's so much more to me," says the 25-year-old singer, who—in the wake of Ludacris and Mario—shed his signature hairstyle in July. "I'm not a kid in the industry anymore, I have a sense of self."

'I Get It In' is No. 26 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and No. 18 on Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop. The track, which features a cameo by in-demand rapper Gucci Mane, provides a solid setup for the former B2K singer's third solo album. Due Jan. 12, 'Ollusion' will be released on the artist's own Starworld Entertainment imprint through EMI Label Services.

"It's the first record I've put out since '2005's 'Touch' that has a high-energy dance vibe," Omarion says. "I have a new look and my own label now, so it felt like the right way to kick things off."

Omarion, whose real name is Omari Grandberry, recently released a choreography-laden music video for "I Get It In." His second single will be a song he co-produced with four-person production team 235. Titled 'Speed'n,' the midtempo number recalls past hits 'O' and 'Ice Box.' The singer adds, "It's got that classic Omarion feel."

Other standout tracks include "Hoodie," a boastful jam featuring Jay Rock, and "What Do You Say," a ballad Omarion co-wrote with his friend Chris Brown.

In early August, the future of "Ollusion" and Omarion's label home looked unclear. The singer's deal with Young Money fell through two weeks after label founder Lil Wayne introduced him at a concert, sparking rumors that he was dropped. This followed an earlier split from Timbaland, who was originally set to produce and release Omarion's new album under his Interscope-distributed Mosley Music Group.

"Timbaland had so much on his plate," Omarion recalls. "And when I saw I couldn't have the relationship I wanted to have with him, I knew it wasn't the home for me. With Young Money, it was getting close to the end of the year, and I wanted to build momentum for the first quarter. Wayne had other plans, though ... he's the captain of his ship."

Those events could have easily derailed another artist's career. Yet Omarion pushed ahead, striking a new deal with EMI by late September.

"Everyone was speculating that I was out for the count," he says, "but I never sweated. Stepping out as an entrepreneur was the smartest thing I could do."

"Now we have Omarion the artist and Omar the boss," says Cheryl Trimmer, who previously worked with the singer's manager Chris Stokes and is now president of Starworld. "He wouldn't have been able to wear both hats at Young Money."

Omarion already has a stable of acts under Starworld: one female and one male solo singer, a singing group and a male rapper, whom he'll likely introduce while touring in support of 'Ollusion.'

"You'll start to see his artists roll out in the fourth quarter of next year," Trimmer says. "Right now the focus is getting him established where he needs to be."

Omarion says he's ready for the challenge, noting that he's been especially determined to take his career to the next level ever since his idol, Michael Jackson, died. "I was sitting at his funeral with Chris [Brown]," he recalls, "and I just had this moment where I said to myself, 'I have to step up to the plate now and drive myself further than I've ever gone before.'"

---

**HOLIDAY CHEER**

Billboard's seasonal Top Holiday Songs chart makes its annual return to our chart menu this week (see billboard.biz/charts). The tally lists the week's most popular seasonal songs, ranked by radio airplay detections on Nielsen BDS-monitored AC stations. After Thanksgiving, many AC stations flip to an all-holiday songs format, and by Christmas, nearly three-quarters of the monitored AC outlets are playing nothing but seasonal hits. In recent years, stations have moved to the all-holiday format earlier than usual. Because of this, Top Holiday Songs bows this week, reflecting data for the week ending Nov. 15. The chart will continue to be compiled through the end of the year, when stations return to their normal programming. Billboard established the Nielsen BDS-based Top Holiday Songs chart in 2001. The accompanying chart exclusively details the tally's 10 best-performing tunes, based on airplay during the weeks the titles appeared on Top Holiday Songs. The top 10 is primarily filled with standards from yesteryear, save for Mariah Carey's more contemporary classic, "All I Want for Christmas Is You," which debuted in 1994.

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**TOP 10 HOLIDAY SONGS (SINCE 2001)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABELS</th>
<th>DEBUT YEAR</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. BURL IVES</td>
<td>&quot;A Holly Jolly Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>MCA Special Products/UMe</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Brenda Lee</td>
<td>&quot;Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree&quot;</td>
<td>MCA/UMe</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nat &quot;King&quot; Cole</td>
<td>&quot;The Christmas Song (Merry Christmas to You)&quot;</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bobby Helms</td>
<td>&quot;Jingle Bell Rock&quot;</td>
<td>Decca/MCA/UMe</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Andy Williams</td>
<td>&quot;It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year&quot;</td>
<td>Columbia/Legacy</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. John Lennon &amp; Yoko Ono</td>
<td>&quot;Happy Xmas (War Is Over)&quot;</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bing Crosby</td>
<td>&quot;White Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>MCA/UMe</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Carpenters</td>
<td>&quot;Merry Christmas Darling&quot;</td>
<td>A&amp;M/UMe</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Johnny Mathis</td>
<td>&quot;It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>Columbia/Legacy</td>
<td>1986</td>
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ROCK

BY SARAH MacRORY

The Next Phase

U.K. Hitmakers The Cribs Welcome Johnny Marr to The Fold

Since the release of their third album, 2007’s “Men’s Needs, Women’s Needs, Whatever,” the Cribs have built a fervent U.K. following. Now the band hopes to mirror that fervor in the United States. Paving the way is its second Warner Bros. release, “Ignore the Ignorant.” It’s the group’s first album with new member Johnny Marr—co-founder of ’80s group the Smiths, a member of ’90s duo Electronic and guitarist for Modest Mouse.

Released stateside Nov. 10, “Ignore the Ignorant” became the Cribs’ highest charting album in the United Kingdom, reaching No. 8 on the Official Charts Co. tally. While the group’s 2004 self-titled debut and 2005 follow-up, “The New Fellas,” failed to dent the U.K. list, “Men’s Needs” peaked at No. 13. To date, the Wakefield, Yorkshire, band has scored seven U.K. top 40 singles.

The addition of Marr in summer 2008 “brings out a different side of us,” says Cribs guitarist/vocalist Ryan Jarman, who co-founded the band with his brothers Gary (bass) and Ross (drums). “There was a lot more texture that we wanted to bring out rather than just full-on punk-rock songs. This record has a lot more subtleties; having a second guitar player has complemented what we were doing and has definitely helped us fully realize certain songs we’ve wanted to do.”

The Cribs recorded “Ignore the Ignorant” live at Seedy Underbelly studios in Los Angeles with British producer Nick Launay (Yeah Yeahs, Arcade Fire). Marr says Launay “believed the band’s strength was in the live recording.” Jarman adds, “We just plugged in and played. That’s the way we like it.”

To build awareness about the Cribs’ new album, a series of club shows were staged during the week of release in Hollywood, New York and Portland, Ore. The Cribs also made their third appearance on “Late Show With David Letterman” Nov. 12. Having completed some European dates with Franz Ferdinand, the band will kick off its U.K. headlining tour Dec. 2 at Birmingham Academy, with dates including a Dec. 12 show at London’s 5,000-capacity Brixton Academy. Then it’s back to the States in mid-January to launch a U.S. leg.

“You never know how things are going to translate in America,” Jarman says the day after the group’s “Letterman” appearance. “But last night just felt really good. There was a lot of energy in the room.”

WHERE HE’S COMING FROM

In the midst of recording his next project, a self-titled album slated for spring 2010, Wyclef Jean decided to revisit his hip-hop roots on the newly released “DJ Drama Presents Wyclef Jean Aka Toussaint: St. Jean From the Hut to the Projects to the Mansion.” Issued Nov. 10 on Jean’s own Carnival House Records through Megaforce/Sony Music, the EP bows at No. 36 this week on Billboard’s Top R&B/Hip Hop Albums chart.

The 11-track EP finds the MC/songwriter/producer adopting the persona of Toussaint St. Jean, loosely based on the 18th-century Haitian revolutionary hero Toussaint L’Ouverture. Hosted by DJ Drama, the set of all-new material features Timbland, Eve, Lil’ Kim and an electrifying collaboration with Cyndi Lauper.

“When you get to a certain point in your career, people forget where you came from,” Jean says of the EP’s concept. “So now, Toussaint is going to show everyone my skills and how I got started in hip-hop. Just in case you thought Clef was dead and he don’t spit: Here’s the reinvention.”

In addition to the assertive “Warrior’s Anthem,” the EP’s other standout tracks include “The Streets Pronounce Me Dead,” which finds Jean addressing all naysayers, and the Lauper-assisted “Slumdog Millionaire,” on which she sings, “We don’t care what you say, from the hut to the projects to the mansion, now a millionaire/If you come from the hood, expect nothing less/I wanna see you get your money.”

The point of the EP, Jean adds, is that “whatever you want to do, you can accomplish. If I came from nothing and became something, if I was chosen for greatness, then so can you.”

Jean is among the list of artists chosen to perform at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert Dec. 11 with Will Smith, Toby Keith and Donna Summer. In the meantime, he’s already recorded several songs for his upcoming studio album, including features with Lil Wayne (“Seventeen”) and Natasha Bedingfield (“Tonight”). Also on his guest wish list: Young Jeezy and Amy Winehouse.

—Mariel Concepcion

HOLIDAY MAGIC

Christmas has come early for a cappella group Straight No Chaser. Its 10 members are celebrating the burgeoning success of their second holiday album, “Christmas Cheers.” Released Nov. 3 on ATCO/Atlantic, the album debuted at No. 90 on the Billboard 200 and No. 1 on Top Holiday Albums with 7,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“There’s a lot of momentum for a cappella,” founding member Randy Stine says. “Singing right now is kind of cool. You don’t have to be the frontman or a guitar player in a band to be cool.”

Just two years ago, the members of Straight No Chaser were in seven different cities, working 9-to-5 jobs after graduating from Indiana University, where the group got its start. But everything changed when Stine posted clips from one of the group’s 1998 university concerts on YouTube.

Straight No Chaser’s version of “The 12 Days of Christmas”—which interpolates Toto’s 1983 No. 1 pop hit “Africa”—received more than 7 million views. And one of those viewers was Atlantic chairman/CEO Craig Kallman.

With the group’s story playing out like a holiday miracle, Straight No Chaser signed with ATCO/Atlantic. The act’s 2008 debut album, “Holiday Spirits,” sparked a headlining tour and album sales of 188,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

While its predecessor leaned more traditional, “Christmas Cheers” adds a comedic thread to its mix of inventively rearranged holiday standards and originals. In addition to the single “The Christmas Can-Can,” the music video for another original track, “Who Spiked the Eggnog?,” will premiere Nov. 30 on MNS. The album also includes a studio version of “The 12 Days of Christmas.”


And next year, Straight No Chaser will find out if its magic extends beyond the holiday season. The group is finishing up “With a Twist,” a pop album due in spring 2010.

—Crystal Bell
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Bon Jovi claims its fourth No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 as “The Circle” lands in the penthouse with 163,000 copies sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

It’s the band’s second topper in a row, following its 2007 release “Lost Highway.” The latter bowed with 292,000—the group’s best sales week—since SoundScan launched tabulating with its CD-only format in 1991. Still, the song for “Circle” is in line with the band’s last few debuts. “Have a Nice Day” started with an “Oprah Winfrey Show” infusion 202,000 in 2005. “Lonesome” bowed with 160,000 in 2002, and “Crush” crashed in with 115,000 in 2000.

An astute observer pointed out to me that the first-week sales for “Lost” appeared to be an anomaly in the band’s traditional sales pattern, hence why the star for “Circle” seems disproportionately smaller.

The opening week for “Lost” in 2007 was likely aided by the band’s then newfound success in the country market. In 2006, the group had reached No. 1 on the Hot Country Songs chart with “Who Says You Can’t Go Home” (with Sugarland’s Jennifer Nettles), a track from its “Have a Nice Day” album.

That hit helped build a bridge to country radio and fans, for the first single from “Lost Highway,” “(You Want To) Make A Memory,” reached No. 35 on the Hot Country Songs chart. Additionally, “Lost” could have been interpreted as the band’s “country” album, as it was recorded in Nashville with veteran country producer Dann Huff and featured guests LeAnn Rimes and Big & Rich.

All of that friendliness toward country likely helped “Lost,” especially in its first week.

The new “Circle” isn’t coming across as a country set, nor was its first single, “We Were Born To Follow,” promoted to country radio. The song is, however, bulleted for a second week at No. 13 on the Adult Top 40 chart while it rises to No. 17 on Adult Contemporary.

Additionally, the first-week sales for “Circle” could have been hampered because it was physically available only in the CD/ DVD configuration. A CD-only version of the album will be released Nov. 23. It’s sort of a reverse-deluxe-edition scenario, which kicked into gear more than a year ago, when Sugarland released the higher-priced deluxe version of “Love On The Inside” one week before the standard edition hit stores. The “Circle” CD/DVD carries a list price of $19.99, though retailers were selling it for between $11.99 and $14.99 last week. Generally, most high-profile CD-only sets are offered for around $9.99 in their first week, so perhaps some consumers frowned at the higher price for the “Circle” package.

All told, the veteran group has racked up 10 top 10 albums, and all of its studio releases since 1986 have reached the top 10. Including Bon Jovi, only 17 rock bands have claimed top 10 spots on the Billboard 200 in the 80s, 90s and 00s.

50 and Counting: The world has waited months for 50 Cent’s often-delayed new album to arrive, and now we must wait one more week before the set graces the Billboard 200.

The digital version of the rapper’s “Before I Self Destruct” was rushed released in the United States through Apple’s iTunes store on Monday, Nov. 9, ahead of its CD counterpart’s bow on Monday, Nov. 16.

All configurations of the set were originally scheduled to drop on Monday, Nov. 23, but the set leaked to the Internet nearly a month before that, prompting Interscope Records and Universal Music Group Distribution to push its release forward.

Because of this situation, Interscope has requested that Billboard and Nielsen SoundScan uphold an existing policy regarding album Internet leaks.

In a rule instituted nearly a year ago based on industry input, a label may ask Nielsen SoundScan to hold the digital sales of an album title for up to one week, and Billboard to delay charting that title, when a leak has resulted in a digital album beating its physical counterpart to market. Therefore, the first-week digital sales for “Before” will be added to its overall retail sum for the week ending Nov. 22 and the title will debut in next week’s issue.

Billboard, along with Nielsen SoundScan, will review the merit of maintaining this rule.

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**Market Watch**

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

**Weekly Unit Sales**

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<th>Total Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>2,055,000</td>
<td>1,205,000</td>
<td>3,260,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>3.0M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year-To-Date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Album</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>348,302,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ALBUM SALES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>348,302,000</td>
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**SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Units</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>290,786,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>1,545,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>117,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>310.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Debt Santa**

Michael Bublé is among the guests on “Letters to Santa,” an album by No. 74 on the Billboard 200. Sold only through U.S. Post Offices, it also debuted at No. 11 on Holiday Albums and No. 3 on Traditional Jazz Albums.

---

**Chart Beat**

>>“Empire State of Mind” becomes the first-ever rock-themed Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 title. Similar efforts to reach the top have included Steve Miller’s “The Book ofaddy Days” and Manhattan Transfer’s “Boy From New York City” and R. Kelly’s “Gotham City.”

>>Chart Beat reader Pablo Nelson of Berkeley, Calif., notes that 39 years after peaking at No. 3, the Monkees’ “Over a Week-End Street” reaches the Hot 100’s summit as a sample in “Empire State of Mind.” Nelson also points out that the survey has now hosted No. 1 by an artist that feels “like an insomniac” (Owls City, “Firebirds”) followed by a charting artist’s anthem for the city that never sleeps.

Read Chart Beat every week at billboard.com/chartbeat.
# Billboard 200 Chart

The Billboard 200 chart is a weekly ranking of the best-selling albums in the United States. Here is a snapshot of the chart from November 28, 2009:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sales Last Week</th>
<th>Sales This Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>The Circle</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>210,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bebe &amp; Cece Winans</td>
<td>Love Is The Answer</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barbra Streisand</td>
<td>The Beatles In Stereo</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Beatles</td>
<td>Love Is The Answer</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wolfmother</td>
<td>You'reakin</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Fearless</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nickelback</td>
<td>Dark Horse</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>Defying Gravity</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mariah Carey</td>
<td>Memoirs Of An Imperfect Angel</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>New Kids On The Block</td>
<td>No. 1 Hits Live/Never Gonna Let You Down</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- The top album, **Bon Jovi's The Circle**, sold 210,000 copies this week.
- **Barbra Streisand**'s *The Beatles In Stereo* sold 160,000 copies.
- **Taylor Swift**'s *Fearless* sold 130,000 copies.
- **Nickelback**'s *Dark Horse* sold 120,000 copies.
- **Keith Urban**'s *Defying Gravity* sold 110,000 copies.
- **Mariah Carey**'s *Memoirs Of An Imperfect Angel* sold 100,000 copies.

---

**Additional Insights:**
- The *Billboard 200* chart tracks the most popular albums across all genres.
- Sales numbers reflect album chart positions and sales figures for the week ending November 21, 2009.
- This chart is compiled by Billboard, a well-known music industry publication.

---

**Source:**
Information from the November 28, 2009 edition of *Billboard* magazine.

---

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

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**Contact:**
- For more information, contact Billboard Media, LLC at info@billboard.com.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neil Diamond</td>
<td>A Cherry Cherry Christmas</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirvana</td>
<td>Live At Reading</td>
<td>ELEPHANT</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Crowderband</td>
<td>Church Music</td>
<td>20TH CENTURY MUSIC</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynyrd Skynyrd</td>
<td>God &amp; Guns</td>
<td>AMERICAN RECORDER</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamele Mann</td>
<td>The Master Plan</td>
<td>21ST CENTURY</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cage The Elephant</td>
<td>Cage The Elephant</td>
<td>ELEPHANT</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victor Manuelle</td>
<td>Yo Mama</td>
<td>ROCK THE KARDIN</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>In Love &amp; War</td>
<td>ROCK THE KARDIN</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugarland</td>
<td>Live On The Inside</td>
<td>21ST CENTURY</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bily Currington</td>
<td>Little Bit Of Everything</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Leslie</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>21ST CENTURY</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mário</td>
<td>D.N.A.</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dethklok</td>
<td>Melacnycleslive: Dethbalm II (Soundtrack)</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Avett Brothers</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Volume 1</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Casablancas</td>
<td>Phantasm For The Young</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Clarkson</td>
<td>All I Ever Wanted</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say Anything</td>
<td>Say Anything</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Mcknight</td>
<td>Evolution Of A Man</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atreyu</td>
<td>Congregation Of The Damned</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demi Lovato</td>
<td>Here We Go Again</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory Of A Deadman</td>
<td>Scars &amp; Souvenirs</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Avett Brothers</td>
<td>I And You And Love</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackson 5</td>
<td>Ultimate Christmas Collection</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fabulous Unloading</td>
<td>Amphitheater Live (EP)</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>EP</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>Fred Hammond</td>
<td>Love Unstoppable</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Fray</td>
<td>The Fray</td>
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<td>Foreigner</td>
<td>Can't Slow Down</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tegan And Sara</td>
<td>Sashand</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>镐道蛙</td>
<td>The Carter III</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monsters Of Folk</td>
<td>Monsters Of Folk</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>Disney: Phineas And Ferb</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>NOW That's What I Call Dance Classics</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise Gees</td>
<td>The Ultimate Bee Gees</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Moore</td>
<td>I'll Be With You</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Matthews Band</td>
<td>Big Whisky And The GoodGuys King</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Like Girls</td>
<td>Love Drunk</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevelle</td>
<td>Sci-Fi Crimes</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAMSTEIN</td>
<td>Liebt ist Fur Afe Da</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kid Bop Kids</td>
<td>It's My Time</td>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Billboard 200**

For the week of November 28, 2009.
**TOP INDEPENDENT**

1. **JASON ALDEAN**
   - Title: "My Kinda Party" (MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER)
   - Sales: 1,100

2. **BEDE & CECE PENN**
   - Title: "I Got You (I Hate You)" (MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER)
   - Sales: 108

3. **TAMALA MANNS**
   - Title: "I Got You (I Hate You)" (MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER)
   - Sales: 9

4. **CAGE THE ELEPHANT**
   - Title: "The Bird" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 5

5. **PHOENIX**
   - Title: "W티pping Arizona" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 4

**TOP DIGITAL**

1. **DON JOS**
   - Title: "The Closer" (MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER)
   - Sales: 3

2. **FLY LEAF**
   - Title: "The Music (Live) (Vol. 2)" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 2

3. **THE SWELL SEED"" THE MUSIC: VOLUME 1 (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

4. **MIKE AND THE ATOMIC ROCKET**
   - Title: "The Music: Volume 2 (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

5. **VANCE JOHNSON**
   - Title: "The Music: Volume 3 (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

**TOP HOLIDAY**

1. **ELIZABETH HURLEY**
   - Title: "Christmas" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 2

2. **TAYLOR SWIFT**
   - Title: "Christmas With Taylor Swift" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

3. **JASON ALDEAN**
   - Title: "Christmas With Jason Aldean" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

4. **TAYLOR SWIFT**
   - Title: "Christmas With Taylor Swift" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

5. **JASON ALDEAN**
   - Title: "Christmas With Jason Aldean" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

**TOP 10 SONGS ON YAHOO! MUSIC**

1. **YOU BELONG WITH ME**
   - Artist: Taylor Swift
   - Label: Big Machine

2. **BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME**
   - Artist: Between The Buried And Me
   - Label: Roadrunner

3. **THE XX**
   - Artist: The XX
   - Label: Domino

4. **AIRBOY**
   - Artist: Airboy
   - Label: Domino

5. **CASTING CROWNS**
   - Artist: Casting Crowns
   - Label: Provident

6. **CLIQUE**
   - Artist: Clique
   - Label: Atlantic

7. **ART OF ANGER**
   - Artist: Art Of Anger
   - Label: Relapse

8. **ERIC BLOCH**
   - Artist: Eric Bloch
   - Label: Relapse

9. **BOB DYLAN**
   - Artist: Bob Dylan
   - Label: Columbia

10. **JASON ALDEAN**
    - Artist: Jason Aldean
    - Label: Big Machine

**TOP COMEDY ALBUMS**

1. **JACK AND COKE**
   - Title: "It’s Only Us" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 2

2. **DANIEL KAHN**
   - Title: "It’s Only Us" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

3. **TED BROWN**
   - Title: "It’s Only Us" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

4. **JASON ALDEAN**
   - Title: "It’s Only Us" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1

5. **TAYLOR SWIFT**
   - Title: "It’s Only Us" (Case The Elephant)
   - Sales: 1
## MAINSTREAM TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WHATCHA SAY</td>
<td>PAPARAZZI</td>
<td>ATLANTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>NEW FANG</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>VENDOME</td>
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</table>

## ADULT CONTEMPORARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You Belong With Me</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>REPRISE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Storm to Follow</td>
<td>Paramore</td>
<td>FUELED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTIST</td>
<td>TOP R&amp;B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEYONCE</td>
<td>TOP R&amp;B/HIP-HOP SONGS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAINSTREAM R&amp;B/HIP-HOP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ADULT R&amp;B</td>
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**BEYONCE’S ‘SWEET’ SEVENTH NO. 1**

Beyoncé’s seventh No. 1 on the Rhythmic chart, “Sweet Dreams,” ties 50 Cent, Nelly, T-Pain and Usher for the most Rhythmic No. 1s this decade and Mariah Carey for the most by a woman in the chart’s 17-year history. "Sweet" is her first chart-topper since "Irreplaceable" in 2006 and the first from "I Am... Sasha Fierce," which charted five previous tracks. (The multiformat smash "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)" peaked at No. 2.)

On Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, two newcomers launch their careers with top five debuts. Washington, D.C., native Waie earns the Hot Shot Debut at No. 3 with "Attention Deficit" while Canadian Melanie Fiona’s first effort, "The Bridge," is No. 4. Chart vet Wyclef Jean, Joe and 50 Cent also bow at Nos. 36, 47 and 48, respectively, with early sales.

---

*Note: The text contains a series of entries and charts, likely related to music charts and artist rankings. The specific content is too extensive to transcribe here.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HOT LATIN SONGS</strong></th>
<th><strong>TOP LATIN ALBUMS</strong></th>
<th><strong>REGIONAL MEXICAN AIRPLAY</strong></th>
<th><strong>LATIN POP AIRPLAY</strong></th>
<th><strong>LATIN RHYTHM AIRPLAY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TITLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>ARTIST</strong></td>
<td><strong>LABEL</strong></td>
<td><strong>TITLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>ARTIST</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

Sanz: 'Paradise Found'

Despite competition from Latin pop newcomer Jencarlos, Alejandro Sanz debuts at No. 1 on Top Latin Albums and Top Latin Pop Albums with "Paradise Express," selling 9,000 copies. It's his fifth top five debut on Latin Albums and his highest low since "No Es Lo Mismo" started at No. 1 in the Sept. 20, 2003, issue. Lead single "Looking for Paradise" continues to dominate the airplay charts, residing at the top of every tally except Regional Mexican Airplay. — Raúl Ramirez

---

*To view the entire chart, please visit www.billboard.com.*
### Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Album</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>spiral</td>
<td>Miwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Guns &amp; Roses</td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blue Moon</td>
<td>Robbi Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alive</td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Looking Glass</td>
<td>Richard Marx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Love You Good</td>
<td>Yukihiro Takahashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Never Mind</td>
<td>Hikaru Utada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Remember</td>
<td>Kazumasa Oda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Heartbreak</td>
<td>Daichi Miura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I Can Love You</td>
<td>Bii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### United Kingdom

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Album</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Angels</td>
<td>Robbie Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ghostbusters</td>
<td>Tom Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Take My Breath</td>
<td>Dido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Girls Talk</td>
<td>The Pussycat Dolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Electric Ladybird</td>
<td>The Ting Tings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Heartbreak</td>
<td>Neneh Cherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I'm Not the Only One</td>
<td>Cee Lo Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>Sam Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Don't Ask Why</td>
<td>The Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Everything Is Broken</td>
<td>Leona Lewis</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Germany

<table>
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**Versatile vocalist Vanessa Amorosi gains her third top 10 debut album on the Australia Album chart with "Inescapable" entering at No. 7.**
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: Sony Music Nashville names Kerri Fox-Metoyer VP of sales. She served in the same role at Walt Disney Records. EMI Music names Shane Naughton CFO and Kyla Mullins general counsel, effective in February 2010 and Nov. 24, respectively. Naughton currently serves in the same role at UBM Information, and Mullins was group legal director and a member of the executive committee at ITV.

Warner Music Group in London promotes Jim Reid to the newly created role of senior VP of synchronization for Europe. He was head of film, TV and advertising at Warner/Chappell Music U.K.

TOURING: Buddy Lee Attraction's names Kevin Neal president. He was senior VP. APA taps John Pante as a music agent for its concerts department. He was an agent at United Talent Agency. Live Nation Florida names Carlos Orjuela Latin talent buyer. He previously ran his own booking and concert promotion agency, Orjuela Music.

ARTISTS HELP BABY WINSTON
Pixies frontman Black Francis may have his hands full balancing family life (he and his wife, Violet Clark, have five kids), ongoing Pixies' tour and solo career, but it didn't take much convincing for him to participate in a two-night musical comedy benefit in Los Angeles for 9-month-old Winston Bertrand, who was born with lymphatic and venous malformations.

"I saw one picture of Winston and I said, 'Alright, I'm in,'" Francis says. "He's too cute. I can't stand it."

The first Winston Calling benefit show will be held Dec. 8 at The Echoplex and feature Francis performing solo and with members of the Pixies, plus appearances by Weird Al Yankovic (who plans to sing the Pixies song "I Bleed"), Michael Penn, Flea, the 88, Grand Duchy and members of Love & Rockets and Sile Winstead Revenge. The following night at The Echo will feature comedy sets by Tim & Eric, Bob Odenkirk, Pixies drummer David Lovering and another performance by Francis, who will host both nights.

"I'm hoping to raise $30,000 through this benefit," says Clark, who helped organize the events and plays in the band Grand Duchy with Francis. "It would be nice to see it become a yearly benefit, at least for a few years until [Winston] is out of the dark times."

Money raised will go to Winston's family. Clark has also started Winston's Village (winstonsvillage.blooblog.com), a Web site to help raise funds for his medical bills. Clark became "e-mail buddies" with Winston's mother, Jennifer Bertrand, after reaching out on MySpace to congratulate her for winning season three of HD TV's "Design Star." "Since our whole family was kind of addicted to HD TV at the time, we had all been rooting for her," Clark says.

Several e-mails later, Clark learned about Winston's condition and decided to help. "As a mother of five, it hit a really deep chord with me and I was moved," she says. "I was heartbroken for her family."

— Mitchell Peters

INSIDE TRACK
NEIL SERVES UP 'TEQUILA'
Mötley Crüe may be taking 2010 off, but fans will still see plenty of frontman Vince Neil. The singer is working on "Tattoos and Tequila," his first solo studio album since 1995's "Carved in Stone." He plans to hit the studio the first week of December, with Night Ranger's Jack Blades producing, and have the title track first single out in January, followed by the album in March and a tour in the spring and summer.

"It sounds like rock'n'roll. It sounds like me, basically," Neil says of the new material, which comes on the heels of The Crue's new "Greatest Hits (Updated)" album. "I'm not going to go out and do any experimentation with stuff. I've done that before. I've found what I do best is sing straight-ahead rock'n'roll, and that's what I set out to do here."

Neil says Blades "has been a buddy of mine forever." The two worked together on the 1992 single "You're Invited (But Your Friend Can't Come)," and both have homes in northern California near San Francisco. "Jack has a studio up there, so it's convenient to work on music and just hang out."

Neil—who owns tattoo parlor, a tequila brand and a growing restaurant chain—anticipates working on new Crue m sic in 2010. The group is also gearing up for its 30th anniversary in 2011.

WORCHESTER - NOVEMBER 28: Neil Diamond performs at the DCU Center in Worcester. (Photo by Richard Dole/WHERE)

2009 COUNTRY MUSIC ASSN. AWARDS
The 43rd annual Country Music Assn. Awards (CMAs), held Nov. 11 at the Sommet Center in Nashville, were co-hosted by Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley. Paisley picked up two of the night's honors: male vocalist and musical event of the year for his duet with Keith Urban. "Start a Band." Taylor Swift made history when she became the first female solo artist in more than a decade and the youngest performer to take home the entertainer of the year award. Swift also picked up the trophies for female vocalist, album ("Fearless") and music video ("Love Story") of the year. Other winners included Darius Rucker (new artist), Lady Antebellum (single of the year for "Run to You") and Sugarland (vocal duo).


From left: Singer/songwriter Luke Bryan, Capitol Records Nashville president/CEO Mike Dungan, Dave Haywood, Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott of Lady Antebellum; Randy Houser at the Capitol Records post-party at Sommet Center; at the Warner Music Nashville post-party.

MEDIA AND MONEY CONFERENCE

The third annual Media and Money Conference, hosted by Nielsen and Dow Jones, was held Nov. 12-13 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York. The two-day event was designed to unite the most important forward-thinking leaders in the evolving media and entertainment landscape to discuss its challenges and opportunities.


Speakers on the “Controlling Content in a Digital World” panel from left: Rainbow Media president/CEO Joshua Sapan, Yahoo VP of media, Jimmy Pitaro, various Communications VP of current strategy, and executive Terry Davis, vice president/CEO of Vevo Careull and Booz & Co. partner/leader of global media and entertainment Christopher Vollmer, who moderated.
2009 YEAR IN MUSIC

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Two spectacular nights for BMI songwriters and publishers!

CMA Song of the Year, "In Color," written by Jamey Johnson, Lee Thomas Miller and James Otto.

Lady Antebellum, CMA Vocal Group of the Year and Single of the Year.

Taylor Swift, CMA Entertainer of the Year, Female Vocalist of the Year, Album of the Year and Music Video of the Year.

Keith Urban, CMA Musical Event of the Year.

Taylor Swift and Nathan Chapman, CMA Album of the Year, Fearless.

Barbara Mandrell and Roy Clark, Country Music Hall of Fame Inductees.

Ronnie Dunn and Kix Brooks receive The President's Award at the BMI Country Awards. Brooks was also named CMA Broadcast Personality of the Year.

BMI Country Publisher of the Year Sony/ATV Music Publishing's Troy Tomlinson and Martin Bandier. Del Bryant, BMI Icon Kris Kristofferson. BMI Country Song of the Year honoree Taylor Swift. BMI Country Songwriter of the Year Bobby Pinson and Jody Williams, Clay Bradley and Phil Graham at the BMI Country Awards.

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