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Pain In My Heart

BY GERALD SELIGMAN

"The music industry." These days the term is almost spat out, muttered with dismissive disdain. "Good riddance," they say. "Piracy is just desserts to a corrupt industry ripping off musicians and fans. The industry's demise is a good thing. Death to the gatekeepers! Long live democracy!"

Watching the major labels' (and their litigious衍) it is indeed hard to be sympathetic. Slapping 14-year-olds with six-digit fines wasn't designed to win the public relations battle; it was designed to intimidate. Yet all did it was lend one more rationalization to those who justify theft with the whiff of good deeds. We're Robin Hoods all, stealing from the rich to give to the... well, to ourselves. And why not? The artists don't see any of the money, anyway.

At a recent arts conference in Maputo, Mozambique, a young European pup from the Observatorio Culturel (ACP) (Africa Caribbean) in Brussels, did the yeah-sayers one better. "Piracy is a form of cultural diversity," he declared, erasing on the side of cool. Then spoke Abdul Aziz Dieng, chairman of the Senegalese music union, whose voice cracking as he told of the loss of income to already impoverished artists. "We need help," he pleaded. Not clever turns of phrase.

But wait. Artists paired by piracy, hurt by the accelerating collapse of their music industry? Yes, indeed, along with all the honest players who have dedicated their lives and livelihoods to music and the artists who make it.

For the music industry isn't just the ever-shrinking group of major multimillionaires with stone-age business plans and lawyers' wits where their strategies should be. It's any artist who wants to earn a living from his or her work—just as all of us do in our own professions. It's any small-label owner who takes huge risks to bring the music to the world.

Look at the past 75 years. So often it was the independent labels and operators who supported, then sustained the best of what has come down to us. It was the indie sector where the commitment was: the willingness to fund unlikely choices, that first risky step in a possible career for tens of thousands of artists. Sure, there were major-label saints like John Hammond who signed everyone from Count Basie and Billie Holiday to Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. But they were the exceptions, not the rule. For every Ahmet Ertegun, there were a dozen Moses Asch, Chris Strachwitz, Chris Blackwells, Russell Simmonses. For it was the independent label network that broke streetlight and nurtured new artists long before the bean counters could count them out.

After more than 25 years in the music business, I'm still striving to support music I want to go home and listen to—wherever it may be, wherever it comes from. In the process, I've met thousands of people dedicated to working honestly and well, some of the best people I know who have dedicated their lives to—here it comes—culture.

Sure, some labels have made exceptions to that. Haven't paid royalties, have robbed artists in the age-old style. But many others have bestowed us with music we never would have known and can no longer quite live without.

These labels—and the artists they support—are the ones being hurt by piracy. Royalties are disappearing faster than sympathy for the RIAA. There's just no way to rationalize that for every song downloaded illegally, swapped or simply given away without authorization, artists and bosses operators lose out. Yes, some in affluent societies write it off to marketing and publicity. But others, many, most—cannot. And as that window shrugs on labels hoping to recoup risky investments to break new artists, they can hardly afford it to open up for a new musical treasure to climb through. Where does that leave us? Like any host that's had its blood sucked dry by a parasite. No more Grateful Dead, just stone cold dead.

It is time to express solidarity with all those who have brought us new artists and new music who have helped sustain the careers of the ones who have broken through.

Gerard Seligman has worked in the music industry for more than 25 years. Until recently he was general director of WOMEX, the World Music Expo, housed in Berlin.
As 2009 winds to a close, MySpace Music is celebrating its first year of existence by attempting to strengthen its position in the U.S. digital music market. The company is in the process of acquiring rival on-demand music streaming service imeem, according to sources familiar with the deal (Billboard.biz, Nov. 17). If completed, it would mark the second major acquisition for MySpace Music, following its purchase in August of music social network like. What's more, MySpace Music, a joint venture between News Corp. and the major labels, has settled its long-running standoff with independent music group Merlin in a deal that restructures its partnerships with independent labels (Billboard.biz, Nov. 20).

Both developments come at a crucial time for MySpace Music, which is facing questions over whether it can continue offering free on-demand streaming music, which is supported by advertising or whether a paid monthly subscription model is inevitable. Additionally, it will face a new competitor sometime next year when European sensation Spotify is expected to go live in the United States.

On the acquisition front, MySpace is benefiting from the inevitable contraction of the digital music market. By acquiring imeem, MySpace would emerge as the only significant on-demand, ad-supported music streaming service in the States. As such, MySpace could potentially serve as the sole outlet for advertisers interested in running online music campaigns, which could allow the company to charge higher rates than if it had to compete with other services for the same dollar.

Beyond that, MySpace will gain much-needed innovation by acquiring imeem’s technology and services, as well as the minds behind their creation. MySpace’s acquisition of imeem will bring another social recommendation service under its roof with built-in links to concert ticket sales as well as a team of iPhone app developers, among other things. Like iLike, imeem is one of the digital music services that recently partnered with Google as part of its enhanced music search service.

iLike boasts a battle-scared advertising sales team that increased the number of custom ad campaigns it ran from 30 in 2007 to more than 175 so far this year. It also acquires imeem’s Snocap technology, which in addition to its content ID and filtering capabilities adds a download music service that MySpace could use to sell music directly rather than linking to iTunes or Amazon as it does now.

While all this looks great on paper, neither iLike nor imeem has been able to convert its user base into a solid revenue stream. And a partnership that MySpace entered with Snocap in 2006 to enable artists to sell music from their MySpace pages never gained traction. MySpace is gambling that the integration of these companies into its music service—backed by the deep pockets of News Corp.—will allow them to thrive.

“The consolidation of all the players inside a single house that has the backing of a large organization that can make big bets will make things easier,” a former executive of a rival ad-supported music service says.

As for its deal with Merlin, MySpace didn’t disclose the specific terms of the deal. But the two sides said in a statement that indie label representatives will “have an opportunity to participate in and benefit from the financial growth of MySpace Music,” even though they aren’t part of the joint venture between MySpace and the four major labels. Under their restructured partnership with MySpace, Merlin and indie label representatives will also be allowed to attend some MySpace Music board meetings. Merlin-affiliated labels include Domino, Epitaph and Beggars Group, which release music by such acts as Animal Collective, Tom Waits and Vampire Weekend.

“I wanted to make sure MySpace didn’t lose track of what its core was,” MySpace Music president Courtney Holt says. “This is an opening up of an opportunity to everybody that I wish had been there at the beginning, and I’m glad it’s there now.”

The deals wrap up a busy year for MySpace, during which the company added Holt as president, expanded into Australia and New Zealand and launched a music video hub, a data analytics tool for participating artists, a streaming music search deal with Google and other initiatives.

Still unclear is whether these efforts will lift MySpace Music to the levels of profitability the labels are seeking from the joint venture or merely serve to add ballast to an already struggling model.
Caiman Holdings, '07 Acquirer Of Tower.com, Says It No Longer Owns The Site. So Who Does?

Caiman Holdings' Oct. 29 filing of Chapter 727 liquidation papers in the 11th Judicial Circuit Court for Miami-Dade County in Florida leaves behind the question of who owns Tower.com. Tower.com is still up and running and sources say be supplied with product and fulfilled to consumers by Alliance Entertainment.

Caiman Holdings CFO Didier Pilon, who in 2007 represented himself as the owner of Tower.com, now says that ownership changed hands a while ago, but he won't disclose who the new owners are. Pilon did say, however, that he has left Tower.com and claims that the new owners were conducting a search for a new CEO. Sources say Tower.com is currently being run by Sanny Wong, who previously has been identified to Billboard by sources as a Caiman employee. Wong didn't return a call for comment.

In April 2007, Caiman acquired Tower.com in an auction, paying $4.2 million for the Web site, the Tower logo and other intellectual property at the company. It was one of the last assets to be sold as part of the liquidation of Tower Records, the long-beloved music chain.

At the time, Caiman was an online retailer that sold music from its own Web site and through the Amazon Marketplace. But with its acquisition of Tower.com, Caiman stopped operating under its own name and concentrated on the Tower brand, switching to acting as a wholesaler and fulfillment operation for the Tower site.

Prior to being an online retailer, Caiman operated as a music distributor but filed for Chapter 11 protection in 2002. After that filing, it stopped being a distributor and started operating as an online merchant, mainly operating through the Amazon Marketplace. In the early days of Caiman's ownership of Tower.com, Pilon was sometimes accompanied by a man named "Dennis" who was described by the New York Times in a Sept. 15, 1997, article, "as a Dutch businessman who started his record company Caiman." It isn't clear whether the label was connected to Caiman Holdings.

Pilon says Smeets is no longer affiliated with Tower.com. Smeets couldn't be located for comment.

In the latest Chapter 727 filing — the Florida state equivalent of a federal Chapter 7 liquidation filing — Caiman seeks to assign $578,000 in assets to Phillip J. Von Kahle, a managing director of Michael Moecker & Associates, a firm that specializes in liquidating companies among other services.

While the filing lists assets of $578,000, Billboard estimates that creditors' claims total somewhere between $6 million and $10 million, depending on whether the amount it owes each creditor is counted in full or as settlements. At least three creditors say that Caiman never made good on the terms of their settlement.

For example, should Baker & Taylor's claim be counted as the $8 million it said it was owed on $64 million in purchases made by Caiman since 2005, in a court filing it made to the U.S. District Court in Southern Florida? Or should it be counted as the $4.1 million it agreed to in a court settlement overseen by the same District Court? The final settlement was ultimately sealed but sources say it was similar to the settlement spelled out in the filing, which was structured with a $1 million initial payment due within 90 days of the signed agreement and 26 subsequent monthly payments of $120,000. Sources say Caiman never made the initial payment.

The creditors privately tell Billboard that they suspect they will never see one cent of the $578,000 because the Chapter 727 filings say that there are "scheduled liens well in access of the liquidation value." But some of the creditors nevertheless are considering trying to convert the Chapter 727 filing into a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

While a Chapter 11 proceeding is more expensive, which means creditors would probably get less than they would in a 727 proceeding, they say a U.S. Chapter 11 trustee can perform forensic accounting. They say that process might also reveal what one creditor calls the "$64 million question: Who owns and is running Tower.com?"

Sony Corp. says its planned entertainment content distribution service for network-compatible TVs and other devices will launch next year. Sony plans to launch a new online service to distribute movies, music, books and other content to network-capable TVs, Blu-ray players, e-books and other devices in a bid to add value to its hardware.

Compiled by Chris M. Walsh, Reporting by Antony Bruno, Mariel Conception, Andre Paine, Robert Thompson and Reuters.

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CONTACT KERRY HOLZ, CITY OF HOPE, SR. DIRECTOR, MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
Pretty Persuasion

AAIM Members Enlist Support Of Indie Acts For Anti-Piracy PSA Drive

Since the explosion of music piracy in the late 90s, no one in the recording industry has been able to figure out how to persuade young consumers that stealing music is wrong. Through the years, acts ranging from Metallica to Lily Allen have gone public with the completely defensible argument that they should be paid for their creative work, only to be subject to derision and backlash. Even staunchly pro-copyright artists friends of mine roll their eyes at some of the RIAA's PSAs, which can come across as clunky and preachy.

Now members of the American Assn. of Independent Music are seeking to change that with a grass-roots effort to convey a simple message: "Stealing music sucks." As part of the effort, AAIM members have created a Facebook group asking music acts to record DIY PSAs urging fans to pay for their music and explaining how illegal downloading hurts artists.

While the initiative is still in its early stages, Long Live Crime Records head Susan Ferris has already recruited a director and producer to help her create the first two PSAs, which are posted on Facebook, YouTube and MySpace. One ad features the band his Orchestra, with members of an audience interrupting the group's set and taking away its instruments one by one, until the music is silenced. The other ad features a young man washing a car while talking about how much hard work went into scraping together the money to buy it—only to have someone drive off with it at the end.

Both ads conclude with the following screen message: "Support musicians and their music by paying for the tunes you want!"

Brett Roelen, singer/guitarist of the Uprising, allowed Ferris to use one of his songs in the ad. "As an artist, I wanted to bring attention to piracy issue," he says.

Roelen adds that his songs have been used without his permission on a number of occasions. "I was in a video store and all of a sudden I heard my song in a snowboarding movie," he says. "We never gave anyone permission to do that. And I’ve gotten calls from friends saying they heard our tracks on TV shows that never reached out to us for a license."

And while almost all the outlets that have taken his work without permission have stopped using the tracks when he calls them, Roelen says he’s never been retroactively compensated for use.

"It's one thing to give away a song voluntarily," he says. "But it's another thing to have a song used in an ad or on a TV show that someone else is making money on."

Ferris adds that while individual decisions to give away music should be respected, a clear distinction should be drawn between that and music being downloaded illegally.

"While the message is the same whether an artist is a superstar or a baby band, it just seems more poignant with indie bands," she says. "Indie bands often don't have lots of other revenue streams and for some, this is how they pay the rent."

While the artists in the ads might be indie, Ferris says she wants as much mainstream exposure for the campaign as possible. "I want them on Fuse, MTV, VH1 everywhere," she says. "AAIM has really backed the initiative, and I'd love to get some huge PR company to help us out. We sent the PSAs over to the U.K. and we’re working on developing partnerships with schools. I want these to be massive."

Another future initiative associated with the campaign might highlight who else suffers when music is stolen. After all, it's not just artists who lose out. Those who work behind the scenes have also suffered a decline in work and income, according to Douglas Smith, lead vocalist for his Orchestra and one of the stars of the HBO drama "Big Love."

"If music should be free, then studio time and engineers should be free and we should all live in a Marxist paradise with rotating jobs and zero possessions," Smith says. "If you like the tune, for the love of potatoes, drop the 99 cents."

When Dispatch, a band with only one album with sales in the six-figure range, sold out three nights at New York's Madison Square Garden, most people in the music industry were shocked.

But the band's manager, Steve Bursky, wasn't surprised in the least. "For a band that had a radio hit to reunite after three years and headline MSG would be almost impossible," he says. "But for a band that grew through word-of-mouth and whose fans had a sense of ownership, it wasn't surprising."

Bursky is working the same type of slow-burn, grass-roots magic with Owl City, the gentle electro-pop act that seems to have come out of nowhere to perch atop the Billboard Hot 100 for two weeks with the track "Fireflies." (It's No. 3 this week.) But looks can be deceiving. Here, Bursky explains just how much work goes into creating an overnight sensation.

1 How does the success you had with Dispatch inform what you're doing with Owl City?

I started working with Dispatch my freshman year of college. Doing it from my dorm room. Pretty early on, it was clear that these guys were going to redefine the norms of the music business. They had no desire to be on a major label or to adapt their sound to radio or be part of a scene that was cool. They had a vision for building a community and a fan base. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention Napster. Back in 2000 and 2001 when it was a free service, bands like Dispatch really began to thrive, based on word-of-mouth.

2 How did you first connect with Owl City?

To me, Owl City is a story of hope in the music business. Adam Young, the band's frontman, was an only child from the middle of nowhere in Minnesota; he was loading trucks for Coca-Cola and decided he hated his life and started recording tracks in his basement and putting them up on MySpace and then did a deal with CD Baby to get them on iTunes. The week we started working with him in November of last year, he sold 2,919 tracks off his independent EP and LP combined and 220 albums. The same week 12 month later, he sold 262,000 tracks and 14,000 albums.

3 Why did you take a slow-burn approach with Owl City?

He had the viral word-of-mouth coming in, so that helped. My idea was to make sure every gatekeeper in the music business—every journalist, every music supervisor, every radio programmer—discovered Owl City the same way his fan base discovered him, as opposed to him being just another minor-label priority shoved down people's throats. I started feeding people facts, showing them how much it was growing and making it so undeniable they couldn't help but get onboard.

4 What role did MySpace and other sites play in the launch?

The "MySpace phenomenon" bands are really a dime a dozen, and who cares if you have 10,000 friends or 100,000 plays if that doesn't translate to you selling records? But in the case of Owl City, it did translate. Weeks when the number of plays on his MySpace page went up, his sales would go up and vice versa. Two, his MySpace fans weren't passive, they were active. He was getting comments from kids every minute.

5 What was the tipping point when Owl City went from underground artist to bona fide pop star?

Was there a moment when you knew he was going to cross over?

It's been a long series of moments. The best part about it is that Adam is so grateful to be able to do this and is so unfazed by it. Every time I tell him about some new milestone, he says, "Is that good?" The touring is unbelievable. We're in China right now and playing to sold-out crowds every night. The film and TV promotion is great, and the press is starting to come around on him. It's so funny, too, because "Fireflies" was never supposed to be the first single—it became the single because we got a call at the top of June from iTunes saying they wanted to make it the single of the week, and we went from there.

6 How are you positioning him as a careerist?

I don't think he's going to be a one-hit wonder, because his album is really deep. We also have a lot going on besides radio. We are working the road and other avenues to make sure he's exposed. And I'm going to put him in the studio in May and make a record for next summer so we can go seamlessly into the new album.
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Shifting Out Of Neutral

Opposition To Net Neutrality Is Bound To Build In The Recording Industry

While the recording industry has rarely been shy about voicing opinions about digital-related matters, its stance on the now-escalating debate over Internet neutrality has by and large remained strangely, well, neutral.

However, it's only a matter of time before the industry hops off the fence and lands firmly on the side opposing Net neutrality. With content creators worried about piracy and Internet service providers keeping an eye out for new business models, their common interest is likely to lead to some collaboration on the issue.

On its simplest level, Internet neutrality rules would prohibit ISPs from placing any kind of restrictions on the content and services transmitted over their networks. ISPs oppose any such legislation or regulation because they want the freedom to manage their networks as they see fit. With all the multimedia content that's transmitted over the Internet, ISPs are feeling the strain and want to start directing the flow of content much like a traffic cop manages a busy intersection.

Meanwhile, those supporting Internet neutrality fear ISPs would do so by charging for access to the speedier lanes, meaning smaller companies could have a harder time competing on the Internet against larger, richer firms. What's more, neutrality advocates say protections are needed to ensure that ISPs' offering content services—either of their own creation or through partnerships—don't purposely degrade the distribution capabilities of rival offerings.

The ongoing debate gained newfound life after the FCC voted in October to begin a formal rule-making process on rules proposed by FCC chairman Julius Genachowski that would prohibit ISPs from preventing users from accessing lawful content and applications and would define what "reasonable network management" practices ISPs would be allowed to pursue to minimize the impact of network congestion.

Members of the public can submit comments on the issue until Jan. 14, and all music industry lobbying groups will likely weigh in. But don't expect to see more than a few such parties take a strong position one way or another. On the one hand, labels, publishers and artists support an open Internet that will let independent and major-label artists have equal access to distribution and audience. The Future of Music Coalition's "Rock the Net" campaign.

Hands off the Web: Wilco is among the bands coming to bear in favor of Net neutrality through the Future of Music Coalition's 'Rock the Net' campaign.

SHIPPING on its simplest level, Internet neutrality rules would prohibit ISPs from placing any kind of restrictions on the content and services transmitted over their networks. ISPs oppose any such legislation or regulation because they want the freedom to manage their networks as they see fit. With all the multimedia content that's transmitted over the Internet, ISPs are feeling the strain and want to start directing the flow of content much like a traffic cop manages a busy intersection.

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VISION QUEST

Music acts interested in sharing their lives with their fans often use a quality webcam for online chats and to capture candid footage of recording sessions, live shows and other behind-the-scenes activities.

Consumer electronics maker Agama has unveiled a new line of high-definition webcams that artists may find useful. The flagship model features two-megapixel auto focus, HD video, high-def audio and a USB 2.0 connection to either Mac or PC devices. Other models include such features as one-click access to Skype and infrared night-vision capabilities for capturing video in the dark.

Prices for Agama models range from $35 to $70.—AB

http://www.americanradiohistory.com
Lilith Returns
The Celebrated Festival Prepares A 2010 Comeback

Among the wealth of ‘90s multi-act festival tours, Lilith Fair was perhaps the most unique, celebrating a diverse range of female artists and drawing attention to women’s issues and charitable causes. Branded as the Lilith tour, the fest returns next June, steered by its four founding partners: artist Sarah McLachlan, Network Music Group founders Terry McBride and Dan Fraser, and Paradigm agent Marty Diamond.

“Marty and I do talent together, Marty and Dan do venues together, I don’t do the marketing, and Sarah is our moral compass on literally everything,” McBride says.

Much will remain the same. “We’ll still have 11 artists a day, five on the main stage, three on the B stage and three in the Village,” McBride says. “There will still be $1 per ticket going to local charity. We’ll run a local talent contest in every single marketplace; a local artist will open up every Lilith show. And it will have a very diverse lineup, with rock, pop, urban, Latin, jazz, indie rock and a good age range, from 15-year-olds to 50-year-olds.”

What’s different this time around is Lilith’s partnership with the I.R.C. Campaign, the debut initiative of the year-old holding company Touchpoint Trust Group, which invests in socially conscious companies. McBride says the I.R.C. partnership will completely change the makeup of the Village.

“Last time around, the Village was more of a hippie-dip-dip of hemp necklaces and local causes,” he says. “This time, we’ll still have the local causes, but we’ll have a very sophisticated Village in that the four to six socially conscious-for-profit companies that we invest in will be the anchor tenants of our Village, connecting people with the fact that $1 per ticket has gone into investing in these for-profit, green conscious companies. Our goal is to invest, make some returns and use that as a way of supporting our nonprofits.”

The idea is that profits from the socially conscious businesses on the course will sustain Lilith’s charitable efforts. In 1997-99, Lilith donated more than $10 million to women’s causes. “But when Lilith Fair ended, so did its charitable efforts,” McBride says. “So this time we’re investing in conscious, for-profit companies to build up a portfolio that we can have to support our nonprofit efforts when Lilith ends.”

McBride says the initial goal is to raise about $3 million “that will create a sort of Lilith 4c (venture capitalist) fund, and we’ll invest in four to six businesses, and those businesses will then vend on the actual tour so fans can see what they are part of.”

Casey Verbeck, a former music exec who launched Touchpoint Trust Group and the I.R.C. Campaign with partner Rich Frankheimer, says the festival seeks to address the difficulty for these socially conscious enterprises in finding growth capital, a scenario exacerbated in the current economy. “We’re lacking that issue and trying to mobilize a movement in getting commitments from the arts and entertainment community, and Lilith is the first one to step up and be part of a campaign to help support and drive awareness and dollars to support those types of enterprises.”

Some 100-120 artists will participate in Lilith, with the first batch of 30-40 performers to be announced Dec. 1. Clearly, the bar is set high for talent. Among those who played Lilith Fair were then developing acts like Christina Aguilera, Tegan & Sara and Nelly Furtado, along with first-time festival performances from Queen Latifah, Erykah Badu, Missy Elliott and Dixie Chicks. “Lilith Fair shattered boundaries of ‘I can’t play with this,’ non-female players with females, but music that isn’t genre-based,” McBride says.

The plan is for 35 shows in North America, another six-to-eight in Europe, then Asia and Australia in spring 2011. “Then we’ll come back to North America and do it one more time,” McBride says. “Then after that, we’re thinking about taking the North American section and making it a destination: Coachella, Stagecoach (both in Indio, Calif.), then maybe Lilith would be the weekend afterward.”

As for 4c, which was conceived last April, Verbeck says momentum has grown. “Obviously, Terry and Sarah got the importance of it right away, and we’re just starting to reach out to other people to join us,” he says. “In a lot ways, this movement is a call to action to get other artists to participate.”

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REPLICATING RHIANNA

Barbados Proves To Be A Hot Spot For Talent

There’s more to Barbados than rum and Rihanna. Just outside the Caribbean island’s capital of Bridgetown, a heavily trafficked street called the St. Lawrence Gap teems with the sounds more people associate with the region. Reggae, soca and calypso bands draw tourists and locals alike into bustling clubs, as they have for decades.

But it’s the 21st-century urban sound of Barbados-born Rihanna that has inspired a new wave of young Barbadian acts, with five recently securing major-label deals: Shontelle (SRG/Universal), Livvi Franc (Jive/Sony), Jacko (Capitol/EMI), Hal Linton and Vita Chambers (both SRP/Universal Motown).

That’s an impressive strike rate for an island with a population of just 280,000—and locals are swift to credit their nation’s most famous R&B hitmaker.

“Rihanna has inspired a lot of Barbadian artists,” says Jacko, whose Capitol debut, “Can I...” drops in first-quarter 2010. “Before Rihanna, it almost seemed impossible for a Barbadian artist to get a record deal, but her success made me believe I could do it.”

“Rihanna’s superstardom has drawn greater attention to Barbados,” says Barbadian producer Chris Allman, owner of Slam City Productions and the man behind local hits for soca stars like Rupee and Edwin Yearwood. “If she can come from here and be so successful, it stands to reason there are others who can be nearly as successful.”

The duo that discovered Rihanna is New York-based production/songwriting team Evan Rogers and Carl Sturken. Both are frequent visitors to the island. “They’ve successfully placed four Barbadian acts with U.S. majors through their production company Syndicated Rhythm Productions (SRP).

While visiting Barbados in 2004 they auditioned singers, including the then-15-year-old Rihanna, who had never sung professionally. “Rihanna had incredible presence and a very distinctive voice,” Rogers recalls, “but it needed development.”

The pair signed Rihanna to SRP and relocated her to New York—a crucial move, Sturken says, if an artist wants a shot at U.S. success. There, they developed her skills before placing her with Def Jam in 2005. Following Rihanna’s breakthrough, the duo put a new label together, signing Shontelle in 2006, by the end of the year, she’d signed to SRP/Universal Motown. Shontelle’s single “T-Shirt,” from her debut, “Shontelligence,” peaked at No. 21 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 2008 and reached No. 6 on the United Kingdom’s Official Charts Co. listing early the following year.

SRP also signed soulful crooner Hal Linton and pop-rocker Vita Chambers in 2008 and 2009, respectively. When SRP struck a label deal with Universal Motown in early 2009, they became SRP Records’ first artists. Shontelle, Linton and Chambers will perform at a Sturken and Rogers-produced “Motown 50th Tribute” special televised during Fox’s coverage of the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers football game on Thanksgiving Day.

Universal Motown president Sylvia Rhone says the artists have “worldwide appeal and cannot be pigeonholed by Barbados, ethnicity or genre.”

YOUNG, GIFTED AND BARBADIAN

VITA CHAMBERS
Based: White Plains, N.Y.
Forthcoming release: As-yet-untitled album on SRP/Universal Motown, due out in early 2010
Booking agent: Paradigm (worldwide)

Vita Chambers’ “Going to the Casino” single was picked up by DJ Andy Butler from Mix 96.5 in Manchester, England, which led to a tour with Yung Joc.

JAICKO
Based: Queens, N.Y.
Forthcoming release: "Can I..." (Capitol), due out in early 2010
Booking agent: William Morris Endeavor Entertainment (United States)

Jaicko, 18, has been performing in Barbados with 4D People—his father Philip Forrester’s band, and one of the island’s most popular acts—since he was 9. He says the experience honed his singing, songwriting and performing skills.

Sturken says he “brought” Jacko to SRP with “Babylon/Radioactive” in 2008. “Jacko is a unique R&B talent who can hit the high notes and low, and I think the world of him.”

HAL LINTON
Based: Queens, N.Y.
Forthcoming release: “Return From the Future” (SRP/Universal Motown), due out in early 2010
Booking agent: Creative Artists Agency (worldwide)

Hal Linton’s self-produced debut album, “Spirit: Life. Love” (C.R.S Music), earned four wins at the 2007 Barbados Music Awards. It also helped him win financial backing from economic development agency Invest Barbados, which assisted in staging several U.S. showcases before he signed with SRP.

“Hal has a unique vocal tone and soul that sets him apart from any of the male artists in the market today,” Universal Motown’s Rhone says. “It’s like Marvin Gaye meets Maxwell meets D’Angelo meets 2010.”
Converse sees itself as an advocate and catalyst for creativity. It’s something that drives how we allocate all of our marketing resources. As a brand, our job is to support and celebrate the creative community around the world.

In China, we saw an opening to do just that by aligning ourselves with the country’s incredibly vibrant underground indie music scene.

There are great new bands, an energy and an edge that other cities lost long ago. What they lack is support. There isn’t a touring infrastructure in China. There aren’t any city-to-city caravans of tour buses and big rigs. Venues are few and far between.

Converse saw an opportunity to work with a few of these young bands. We didn’t ask them to star in commercials wearing our shoes. We didn’t ask them to write jingles for us. Instead, we got to know them and asked what kind of help they needed.

They told us they had always dreamed of going out on tour. They explained to us that they wanted to explore their own country and share their music with like-minded kids. So we bought a tour bus, hired a driver and hit the road with them in late 2008.

So many people in China refer to the music that these artists create as “noise” that musicians embraced that tag and proudly declare that they “make noise.” We loved that idea so much that we named our bus trip the Converse Love Noise tour. We connected with two bands and created a five-city tour for them—and for us.

Our headliners, both from Beijing, were PK14, a respected pioneer of the underground scene, and Queen Sea Big Shark, a new-generation upstart. The bands didn’t play in big venues, but along the way we stopped at small clubs and on street corners in Nanjing, Hangzhou, Changsha, Wuhan and Xian. As we rolled into each city, we added a local band to the bill. Each night these acts played to audiences of 200-300 people.

So, what happened along the way? Beyond buying the tour bus and coordinating the tour dates, venues and logistics, we sent a small camera crew on the road to capture the personal stories of each of the bands’ members. The bus itself went from being a big white vehicle to an interactive canvas as the bands and the kids along the journey took it upon themselves to paint every inch of it. When it rolled back into Beijing, it was covered in graffiti and other artistic expressions. It was a mess, but one of the most beautiful things we had ever seen. It told a story.

During the tour, the bands blogged about their journey and gave personal, on-camera interviews. We learned that these kids have something to say and just want to be heard. As China increasingly opens up, allowing its young artists to travel, we’re seizing the opportunity to help them.

Global
BY TOM FERGUSON

Hospitality Hostility
U.K. Collecting Society Faces Setback In Income After Copyright Tribunal Loss

LONDON—U.K. performers and labels may have to tighten their belts after losing the first round of their ongoing beef with the country’s hospitality industry.

In October, the U.K. Copyright Tribunal ruled that tariffs introduced by collecting society Phonographic Performance Ltd. on Jan. 1, 2005, should be scrapped, describing the higher rates for the use of recorded music as “unreasonable and unjustifiable.”

That leaves PPL looking at repaying millions of pounds in collected fees to the owners of pubs, bars, hotels and restaurants—if its appeal, lodged Nov. 12 at the High Court in London, proves unsuccessful.

If PPL loses, trade groups the British Hotels Assn. (BHA) and the British Bar & Pub Assn. (BBPA) claim their sector could benefit from refunds of up to £20 million ($33.5 million), plus annual savings of some £5 million ($8.4 million).

“Those sorts of figures aren’t out of the question,” says PPL executive director Peter Leatham, who expects the appeal hearing to be held next summer.

The BHA and the BBPA both declined to comment. However, in a joint statement, BBPA chief executive Brigid Simmonds said the two groups “will be doing everything we can to ensure any appeal case is heard quickly, so that the matter of repayments can be settled as soon as possible.”

PPL collects royalties on behalf of 3,400 record companies and 39,500 performers in the United Kingdom, paying out £110.3 million ($184.5 million) in 2008.

According to Leatham, the society will not ask members to return payments if it needs to refund the hospitality sector. While that’s welcome news for artists and labels whose PPL income is a much-needed supplement to falling revenue from record sales, many remain concerned.

“Any cut in the revenue PPL collects on behalf of my clients will have a detrimental effect,” says London-based artist manager John Taylor, who represents veteran U.K. artists Andy Fairweather-Low, Joe Brown and former Dr. Hook vocalist Dennis Locorsiere.

PPL chairman/CEO Fran Nevrlka says what’s really at stake is the “global issue of parity for performers’ and composers’ rights.”

“Why are the [U.S.] labels and performers fighting for the broadcast right?” Nevrlka asks. “Because the two sets of constituents should not be discriminated against.”

The 2005 rates were, in part, intended to move PPL’s fees closer to the considerably higher authors’ rights fees collected by PRS for Music. However, the Copyright Tribunal rejected PPL’s claims that its pre-2005 rates undervalued its music, noting that PPL had been aware of PRS’s substantially higher rates when setting earlier tariffs and couldn’t justifiably ask for parity now.

Under the 2005 rates, premises paid annually on a sliding scale, according to “audible area” floor space. Premises with a floor space of less than 100 square meters paid £100 ($167), those between 101 and 200 square meters paid £200 (£335) and so on. But under the Tribunal’s new rates, all premises less than 400 square meters pay just £109.75 ($184)—the equivalent of a 50 cent (50p) penny.

That, Nevrlka says, is about half the price of a packet of peanuts in a London pub.

Taylor backs PPL’s decision to appeal.

“It’s that we want people to go out of business, but 30 pence a day for worldwide repertoire? I find it outrageous.”

—FRAN NEVRKLA, PPL
Can Superstars Change Their Fans' Perceptions Of Them? Making over established acts isn’t an easy task. Take Sha- kra. She’s gone from rebellious, thoughtful rocker to blonde, sexy vixen who favors erotic dancing over forceful vocals. Luis Enrique went from salsa singer to brooding singer/songwriter to salsa singer again. Gloria Estefan has trave-ersed English, Spanish, pop and tropical roots. And then there’s Thalia, the erstwhile soap star who was more TV personality than singer. For her new album, she has opted to go from histrionic to earthy (see story, page 27). While Shakira and Thalia have undergone sonic changes, their real transformation lies in their images and how they’re presented to fans. “The visual issue is very im- portant,” says Paula Kamin- ski, VP of marketing for Sony Music Latin, which is releas- ing “Thalia En Primera Fila” Dec. 1. “It’s about engaging people from the emotional side of the story.” To this end, the “Primera Fila” (First Row) concept is par- ticularly useful. The album is part of a Sony series of releases that are recorded during intimate, live performances and released separately on CD and DVD. The first “Primera Fila” was released in 2008 and fea- tured ranchera icon Vi- cente Fernandez. The second, featuring Thalia—an artist who has never been known for intimate performances or even for any kind of significant touring in the United States—was a surprise. But it offered Sony a way to at- tract a marquee artist who had left a longtime label and was looking for options. “Many major acts want to be repositioned,” Kamin- ski says, “and arrive at a moment where they “Where do I go from here?” For Thalia, that moment had long been coming and culminated with her last album for EMI, 2008’s “Lunas,” a dance- tinged, tropical-laced set that sold only 14,000 copies in the States and Puerto Rico, accord- ing to Nielsen SoundScan. Sony then approached her with the “Primera Fila” idea. The notion, Sony Music Latin VP of A&R Paul Forat says, was “to distill the true artist behind the character, take away all those acces- sories she’s used as crutches and expose her.” “This project is very risky,” he adds. “I think that previously, people had never really sat down to listen to her sing.” It was also important to show how different Thalia was, and she goes through great pains to appear casual and relaxed on the “Primera Fila” DVD, wearing jeans, sneakers and a T-shirt and spending most of her time singing from a stool. Sony also filmed a documentary of her life story, and again, the im- age, editing and overall aes- thetic of the movie attempt to convey a down-to-earth, even self-deprecating character. The documentary will not be sold to fans. Instead, 45 minutes of footage and a handful of performances aired as a TV special Nov. 21 on Mexico’s Televisa network. In the States it will air Dec. 13 on Univision, and negotiations are under way for other territories. The sale of those rights around the world—a soap star, Thalia’s popu- larity extends to places as far- flung as the Philippines—is part of the “Primera Fila” business model. Sony’s deal with Thalia only covers this project, and sources say the making of the special and the document- ary cost close to $1 mil- lion—a rarity for a Latin project nowadays. However, recoup- ment will come not only from CD and DVD sales (some 100,000 units will be shipped region-wide, including Latin America), but also sales of the TV special and a possible tour for which Thalia and Sony will go in as partners. “The business is a far greater scale than just album sales,” Forat says.

**Drama King**

**Telefominos Casts Jencarlos Canela In Starring Role On Albums Chart**

Life is complicated for the main character in “Más Sabe el Diablo,” the top-rated Tele- fominos soap about a grand larcenist with a heart of gold who’s in love with his one-time defense lawyer—even though she’s married to his father, who’s secretly also a master thief. And even as his character tries to recapture his lost love, actor/singer Jencarlos Canela made time to score a No. 2 debut on Bill- board’s Top Latin Albums chart with extraordinary pro- motion on Telemundo. Canela sang the original title theme of the soap when it premiered earlier this year, but Telemundo swapped the song for his single “Amor Quedaste” in the run-up to Nov. 10 re- lease of his album, “Buscame.” Canela’s music video for the song was used for the show’s opening sequence in the month leading up to release. The track is No. 17 on the Latin pop airplay chart this week. Telemundo is also running ads in prime time for “Bus- came!” until early next year as part of a deal in which the net- work shares in his music sales. “It’s a unique situation because he is the main pro-tagonist of the show. It couldn’t have been done with anyone else,” Telemundo VP of music Margaret Guerra Rogers says. The network’s support was the key factor that gave Canela’s independent label, Bullseye Music, “the ammu- nition to go toe-to-toe with the majors,” CEO Rick Stev- ens says. The label is a part- nership between former Poly- dor/EMI executive Stevens and two Latin music industry veterans, producer Rudy Pe- rez and former EMI Latin chairman Marco Bissi. Canela’s feat—entering the Latin albums chart at No. 2 with a debut album distrib- uted independently—appears to be unprecedented. “The one area where an independent can’t compete is in mar- keting,” Stevens says. “This approach of partnering with a media company is very much a part of our future.” Canela also sung the theme for another Telemu- ndo soap, “Pecados Ajenos.” Perez produced “Buscame” and played it for the network to pitch as a new theme for “Más Sabe el Diablo.” Bullseye assembled an experienced team to work Canela’s album, including dis- tribution by Select-O-Hits and sales and marketing by Venetian Marketing Group, the company formed by former Univision Music Group VP of sales Jeff Young. Bullseye hired promotion consultants like Intocable manager Alan Baxter and In-Style to do digital marketing. Following a series of in- stores in Puerto Rico, the mar- keting push behind “Bus- came!” will continue into the first quarter, Stevens says, with a Wal-Mart “Sound-check,” and a cross-merchandising of the album and a “Más Sabe el Di-ablo” DVD. The soap is airing in Mexico as part of a deal Tele- fominos has to air its program- ming on cable chan- nels, so Bullseye is in talks with

**EXTREME MAKEOVER: POP EDITION**

**IDEAS TELCEL CUTS PRICES**

Ideas Telcel, Mexico’s domi- nant wireless operator, has cut per-track prices in its digi- tal music store to 10 pesos (77 cents). The price cut ap- plies to all 1.4 million songs in Ideas Telcel’s catalog but doesn’t include a transmis- sion charge of 5 pesos for over-the-air downloads. The move was reportedly intended to compete with iTunes’ prices in Mexico, which range from 12 pesos to 15 pesos per track, with albums going for as little as 110 pesos ($8.42). AiiDigital reports that Ideas Telcel had been sell- ing tracks for 11-15 pesos, in line with its competitors like Mixup Digital and Nokia Music Store.

2008’s iPop Media study showed 58% of Mexican re- spondents reported having downloaded music online within the last three months, up from 42% in 2007. But the study also estimated that the number of illegally down- loaded songs doubled dur- ing the same period.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

**PROMUSICA LAUNCHES NEW SITE**

Spanish labels’ group Promusica- ce has unveiled a new portal, ElPortadeMúsicas.es, offering the latest charts, music streams from 60 labels, links to online download stores and editorial content in a move to encourage legal online digital payments.

“We want to dispel the ur- ban legend that piracy exists because there is no legal alterna- tive,” Promusica president Antonio Guisasola says.

The portal itself isn’t an on- line store, but offers streaming and links to such legal services as YouTube, Spotify, I tunes, Yes.fm, Vodafone Music and Nokia Music Store.

In separate announcement, culture minister Angeles González-Sinde revealed that a new Web site containing legal digital content, including millions of tracks and films, with a special focus on U.S. cin- ema, will be inaugurated in the coming months.

The culture ministry will help finance the site, but the enter- tainment industry’s Coalition of Creators and Content Indus- tries will supply the content and technology.

—Howard Llewellyn
Rob Cavallo

After returning to Warner as its new chief creative officer, the veteran producer talks about his new job and his future projects—and why he likes Meat Loaf.

Producer Rob Cavallo has made so many albums for artists signed to Warner Music Group that it has sometimes seemed like he worked there. For much of his career, he did—that is, from 1987 as an intern at Warner Bros. Records and eventually as a senior A&R executive, when he signed such acts as Goo Goo Dolls and Green Day.

After a few years working at the entertainment technology company Level 7, he returned to Warner in October as chief creative officer, a new position that will allow him to sign talent, produce albums and perhaps even bring some of his outside projects to the label.

In the last five years, albums Cavallo has worked on have sold more than 13 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan—and more than double that worldwide, according to WMG. That makes him one of the most successful producers of recent years and almost certainly the top seller in rock. Although he’s well-known for his long relationship with Green Day, Cavallo’s projects in recent years have also included My Chemical Romance’s “The Black Parade,” Kid Rock’s “Rock N Roll Jesus” and new albums by Shinedown, Paramore and the Dave Matthews Band.

Just because Cavallo is best-known as a producer doesn’t mean he’ll play that role in every project he’s involved. “I always like to supply an environment where the band gets to do what they want,” he says, “so that they feel comfortable doing what they want to do.”

That’s an interesting point. I want the studio to support what the band wants to hear back. What I think the really hard part of producing is—the noble part of producing—is getting the band to write their best songs, recognize when they’ve done so and guide them in how to get there. That’s the trick. That’s why I think Rick Rubin is so great. People talk about how he’s not in the studio that much, but he understands how to talk to artists and how to get them to be confident in the directions they’re choosing.

You’re also working with Meat Loaf. How did that happen? He just called me and said, “I need a new guy, someone who can handle my kind of music.” The reason I got the call was because he had heard “American Idol” and “The Black Parade,” and both of those records have a lot of drama. They’re very Meat Loaf-like. And then, once we got into the studio, it was like a love affair. To me, he has more rock’n’roll spirit in him than anybody I’ve ever met. He’s on Universal outside of America, but right now he doesn’t have a North American deal. We’ve decided to do it in and then present it.

Your dad is Bob Cavallo, a veteran music executive who now runs Disney’s music business. How much has he influenced your career decisions? A little bit. All I really knew about it as a kid was that you could get free tickets and that he was in the office several times, so I didn’t seem like that much fun to me sometimes. Then when I got older and he was managing Prince I realized, “Oh, my God, this is big stuff.”

I went to USC but I didn’t know what I was going to do until my dad said, “Why don’t you try being an A&R guy?” At the time I was producing as a hobby—I was making little tapes at my house. Then I met with Warner and I became a listener—I would listen to 100 demo tapes a week and write reviews. And I ended up getting assigned to Black Sabbath as an A&R guy basically by default. We had to do a song for “Wayne’s World,” and in the middle of the production, the producer fell ill. And then about a week later I came back to L.A. and I had the finished song with me and they were like, “You can produce.”

Do you still get advice from your father? Oh, yeah, we talk all the time—most of the time about business stuff, but we occasionally talk about creative stuff because he’s very much a song guy. I’m still shocked and amazed that he can do what he does. He’s 70 years old and he’s the guy who really picks the hits.

Production is always about what you don’t do as well as what you do. So if the band is really on fire—which clearly [Paramore was when recording its new album]—then you don’t have to say anything.
Spirit in the night:
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
It's a cool, crisp November evening in Nashville, and yes, Bruce Springsteen knows exactly where the hell he is. It's a few days after Springsteen committed what he called "every frontman's nightmare" by confessing Michigan during an onstage callout with neighbor and rival Ohio. But if Springsteen gets mixed up occasionally as to which city or state he might be about to rock, it's understandable. Springsteen and his E Street Band have been on a global tour since 2007, through two album cycles, performances at both the Super Bowl and presidential inauguration and first-time appearances at several major festivals. Even for an artist who has largely built his career on epic shows, Springsteen and the E Streeters have found another gear. Similarly, Springsteen has been unusually prolific in the studio, releasing albums of new material in 2007 ("Magic") and this year ("Working on a Dream"), while at the same time acknowledging his beloved albums of the past by playing full sets of classic recordings in concert. On this night in Nashville his 1975 breakthrough album "Born to Run" will get the live treatment, to stunning effect. "This last year, in my point of view, was as great a year as we've ever had," longtime Springsteen manager Jon Landau says backstage at Nashville's Sommet Center. "It's fair to say I've never spent a year with him where he's been so consistently enthusiastic, energetic. And Bruce is one of those guys who leads by example. When you're working with him, if you're a collaborator, a manager or in the band, you can't be doing less than 1,000%. You wouldn't like yourself if you didn't dig as deep as he's digging." Springsteen is indeed digging deep, but in his dressing room prior to the show, he laughs it off. "We were talking about it the other day—we said, 'I don't know if we've been this busy since 1985, or ever.'" he says. "It's just the way things worked out. Some of those things we planned and some of them just happened." Four nights before this marathon trek is set to end in Buffalo, N.Y., Springsteen isn't fatigued, but excited about his own future and that of his E Street Band. What the Boss is most concerned about is his pending show, blowing the roof off yet another house as he rolls on in front of this speeding train. And this Springsteen will do, repeatedly assuring the ecstatic crowd that he knows he's in Nashville, Tenn.—and is thrilled to be there.

The last couple of years for you have been pretty exceptional in terms of productivity, both live and in the studio. I've been prolific with my songwriting, so I've been able to just get more music out there, which is something I always wanted to do. I found my 50s to be very, very fruitful. The songs came—

I don't want to say easy—but they came in a continuous flow. I had a lot of things I wanted to write about, so it allowed us to record quite a bit, and then back it up with the touring.

Really, with the end of these shows, we're coming to the end of a decade-long project with the band that really was a tremendous renewal of the power, the strength and the service that our band hopefully provides. It's just been a great 10 years, not just the past couple. A decade ago I wasn't quite sure if I wrote in a style that was suited to the band anymore. I wasn't quite sure how we functioned as a unit. And to sort of see the whole thing just have so much vitality and power and strength, it's just one of the sweetest chapters in our entire time together.

I remember as a kid waiting three years for the release of "Darkness on the Edge of Town" in 1978. Why so prolific now?

Looking back, when you look at "Tracks" [1995's boxed set of unreleased songs], I guess I always wrote them. For every record we released there was a record I didn't release. I think at the time I was very interested in shaping what I was about, what I wanted to be. I was very cautious in my releases and I wanted my records to have very strong identities and be about a very particular thing.

The nice thing about where we are now, the rules are much fewer and far between. You can really record anything you like. This past decade I had this huge folk band that I toured and recorded with, and that was a wonderful experience. I toured solo and I loved that, and then to have the E Street Band at full power, I can do all these things now and I can really record whatever kind of music comes into my mind. Who you are and what you do is already established, so you don't have those identity concerns that you had back in the day.
So you were less cautious about it and just turned it loose?
You become better at discerning your good
songs from your not-as-good songs. The
writing process is shorter, because you re-
fine what you leave in and what you leave
out. You’re able to do more work in a com-
pressed amount of time without the qual-
ity suffering in any way.

Why work the road so hard for so long?
Isn’t it a grind?
I can’t say I experience it as a grind. Of
course, you’re flying in, you’re flying out,
you’re driving, but I really like the people
that I do this with, I like being with them
onstage and off. I enjoy the time we spend
traveling together, and I enjoy the work
that we do.

If you’re a sports figure, your prime
passes at such a young age. There’s no ceil-
ing here. I believe if you come and see us
now, you’re seeing the best E Street Band
that’s ever played; it just continues to im-
prove. Not that you don’t get tired or fa-
tigued, but no matter how tired you are,
when you’re onstage during the night there’s
always this point that you go, “Oh, my God,
this is just wonderful.”

When did you start taking the requests
from the audience?
People would always bring signs, and we’d say,
“Let’s do that one, let’s do that one.” But then
somewhere along the way, I believe it was at the
very end of the Magic tour, we just started to do
more of it, and people started to bring more
signs. Then we started to take unusual requests,
and we started to do things sometimes that we’d
never played before, just depending on the com-
mon memory that the band would have from
everyone’s individual playing experience as
teenagers. And then we ended up with a sys-
tem where we can jump on a lot pretty quick.

How many songs are in your arsenal?
Since the Magic tour, I think we’ve done up-
wards of 150-160 songs, maybe more, because
we do a lot of things just once.

I was told you played 43 different songs
at the Spectrum in Philadelphia over the
four nights.
Yeah, we did a different show every night, and
a third to half of it was different. If you see us
two or three nights in a row at some of these
stands that we do, you may hear 35-50 differ-
ent songs. That’s just something we’re able
to do. It’s a combination of the old bar band
experience and something I just ask the guys
to do. We have a little bit of a set list, and I fol-
low the end of it and I follow the beginning
of it. Then there’s a little section in there where
it just slips and slides.

It depends on what’s going on with the au-
dience on any given night and what I think the
band can pull off. It allows the fans to have
input into the show in a way that just pumps
the blood into everything and enlivens the
evening. We’ve done stuff by the Ramones, the
Clash and Tommy James.

Was it always a focus from early in your
career—even during your time in the band
Steel Mill—to make the live shows special?
Yeah, because you have to understand that
you lived and died by your ability to perform.
You had no records. So either you were going
to be locked into being a bar band or your per-
formance level was simply going to be exci-
When and why did you decide you were going to perform full-album sets?

It was like, "OK, what can we do that we haven't done?" There were some people in the band who were starting to do it and my audience fundamentally experienced all my music in album form. People took "Born to Run" home and played it start to finish 100 times; they didn't slip on a cut in the middle. It was a different era in the way that people heard and experienced music.

And when we made albums, we took a long time, and we built them to last. The idea is, "There's no stinkers on this thing." And we spent months or years or whatever it took to try to make sure that was so. So the albums play real well, and I think when you hear it [live] you go, "Wow, I can't believe all those songs were on one record," whether it's "Darkness" or "[The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle]." Those are records that are packed with things that have lasted 30-35 years. It simply was an idea of a way to revisit the show and make it something that was appealing and fun for the fans, but it ended up being a much bigger emotional experience than I thought it would be.

"The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle" would seem a challenging task to just go up and whip out onstage. We knew most of the stuff on "Wild & Innocent." I think we ran over "Wild Billy's Circus Story"—I made sure the guys got much closer to the parts that were on the record. We added a horn section and a string section. We played that in New York City, so it was this very eclectic, colorful, big night of music, and there's only seven songs on it.

1980's double-album, "The River"—that's a lot to tackle. That was a trip. We had to learn a few things for that. That was basically a rock band record, but it went on for 20 songs. Before you do it, you don't know how it's going to come out. But it worked on the record, and I sequenced the record to feel like a live show. So you have four fast songs and a couple of ballads. It played real well when we went to play it.

It's fun being surprised, learning "Cadillac Ranch" and "I'm a Rocker," which I remember always worked well on the record, and bang, it just whipping you onstage. It was, "Oh, yeah, that works great." So we were kind of having a first-time experience the same way the audience was. Those were great, memorable shows.

Any thoughts on what you might do with some of these shows, like a DVD or album set?

We didn't have any plans, we just planned to do it in performance. They've been filmed. I don't know if they've been filmed to put out.

No one in your camp has said anything about it, but this tour has felt really celebratory, with so many milestones. Not to put you on the spot, but does this feel like it might be the last run for the E Street Band?

No. We don't even really think of it. The only thing that came into my mind was the age when I hit 50. I was onstage in Philadelphia, and you realize, "OK, this is exactly where I want to be right now. I wouldn't want to be any place else." You realize there is a finiteness to it.
Here's an early Christmas miracle: Some music merchants are relatively bullish about the holiday selling season. Yes, the economy still casts a long shadow over consumer spending. And the decline in recorded-music sales so far this year is keeping pace with last year’s slide, leaving other distributors and retailers wary of what the final weeks of the year will bring. Still, the sentiment is quite a contrast from last year, when retailers were talking doom and gloom (Billboard, Dec. 6, 2008), despite record label optimism that later proved to be misplaced. “Our sales turned positive in September and October, and if you look at Hastings Entertainment historically, if we have a good September and a good October, it will be a good holiday season,” says Dan Crow, VP of finance for the Amarillo, Texas-based chain, which runs 150 multimedia entertainment stores. In its third fiscal quarter ended Oct. 31, Hastings’ merchandise sales were up 2% on a comparable-store basis from a year earlier, while video rentals were up 4.1%. Other merchants also say business started picking up around the same time. In October, Newbury Comics “sold more CDs and DVDs combined than the year before,” CEO Mike Dreese says. Despite continuing economic uncertainty and a stubbornly high unemployment rate in the United States, there are some signs of optimism for the holiday season. The International Council of Shopping Centers is forecasting a 1% comparable-store gain for chain stores. And an American Express survey of card holders found that 10% intended to spend more than last Christmas while another 43% said they would spend at least at the same amount.

**Strong Slate of New Releases**

Sure to contribute to his holiday season’s sales performance is that everyone will be going up against abysmal numbers from 2008, when album sales during the last seven weeks of the year plunged 19% in the United States from the same period a year earlier, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

A strong release schedule is another key factor fueling holiday hopes. A slew of high-profile albums hit U.S. store shelves this week, including Rihanna’s “Rated R,” Lady Gaga’s “The Fame Monster,” Adam Lambert’s “For Your Entertainment,” Shakira’s “She Wolf,” Susan Boyle’s “I Dreamed a Dream” and Birdman’s “Priceless.”

They join other recent releases that are sure to be on the minds of gift buyers, such as 50 Cent’s “Before I Self-Destruct,” Bon Jovi’s “The Circle,” John Mayer’s “Battle Studies,” Norah Jones’ “The Fall,” Carrie Underwood’s “Play On,” Weezer’s “Raditude,” Jay Sean’s “All or Nothing,” “Glee: The Music, Vol. 1” and “This Is It,” the soundtrack to the movie that has become Michael Jackson’s swan song.


A bit of skepticism about some of those latter titles may be in order, given that expected album releases by U2, Eminem and 50 Cent failed to materialize during last year’s holiday season. “Rebirth,” Lil Wayne’s follow-up to his 2008 blockbuster “Tha Carter III,” promises to be one of the holiday season’s biggest sellers. But its release has already been delayed numerous times this year.

“I see a Lil Wayne one-sheet and we will see if that comes out,” says Carl Mello, head of purchasing at Newbury Comics, who adds that while the release schedule for the remainder of the year looks strong, “it remains to be seen if it all comes out.”

An executive at another retail chain is more skeptical. “I will believe Lil Wayne is coming out when I see the product,” he says. In addition to hit product, merchants and label executives say they expect continued robust sales for Jackson and the Beatles, who have sold a combined 9 million units in the United States so far this year, sparked by Jackson’s death June 25 and EMI Music’s reissue of the Fab Four’s catalog in September.

But not everyone is optimistic that holiday shoppers will bring good tidings. Alliance Entertainment president Alan Tuchman says he has low expectations for music because stores are carrying less inventory and devoting less floor space to it. Hastings’ Crow says the chain has reduced its music inventory by 20% this year in about 40 of its stores.

Meanwhile, Borders recently completed efforts to reduce music shelf space at its locations. Previously, all of the chain’s stores carried about 9,000 titles. But earlier this year, the chain split its stores into four tiers, with some stores carrying only 50 titles, others stocking 1,300 titles, a third tier maintaining about 6,000 titles and a much smaller group of stores keeping fully stocked music departments with about 13,000 titles.

In addition to the loss of floor space at brick-and-mortar retailers, music sales are also being pressured by the continued slide in CD sales and the slowing of digital sales growth, according to a major label distribution executive. While some in the industry maintain that music is recession-proof, this distribution executive argues that it’s not in the current environment.

Pricing also will be a big factor during the holiday selling season. Much like last year, some merchants started Black Friday-themed advertising in early November. By the second week of the month, merchants like Sears, Kmart and J&R Music World were conveying the message that there was no need to wait until Black Friday because their stores were already offering low prices.

The Web site BlackFriday.GottaDeal.com has posted information about Black Friday sales showing that Best Buy will price the latest album releases by Norah Jones, Bon Jovi, Carrie Underwood and others for $6.99 and that Target will sell more than 60 CDs at $5.60 each. But the site also shows that not all retailers will be slashing prices on hit CDs, revealing that Kmart will sell CD titles by top artists for $9.99.

As brick-and-mortar merchants gear up for Black Friday, online merchants appear poised to enjoy strong sales on Thanksgiving Day, when most of the Black Friday advertising comes out, according to Tuchman at Alliance, which does product fulfillment for online merchants.

“Our distribution center is open on Thanksgiving,” Tuchman says. “I expect sales to start earlier and last all weekend, so I expect the sales activity to last longer and produce more sales.”

As physical music sales continue to shift to online merchants, Amazon will again be the big winner this holiday season, Tuchman says.

After Christmas, Universal Music Group Distribution president/CEO Jim Urie says he is expecting huge download sales, thanks to massive iTunes gift card redemptions. In past years, the download weekly average has been known to grow sharply during January. Apple declined to comment.

**Competition from Movies, Books, Games**

While big boxes have commonly used music in years past as a key holiday traffic driver, its profile will continue to shrink this year, ceding more ground to movies and videogames. Movies and books, in particular, will boast attractive price points that could further distract consumer attention from music.

“Music will have a smaller [footprint] in the hot spots of the store and, more importantly, in the circular,” Urie predicts.
Stocking stuffers: Retailers are counting on robust holiday sales of recent releases by (opposite page, from left) LADY GAGA, 50 CENT, WEEZER, CARRIE UNDERWOOD and BIRDMAN.

Indeed, according to BlackFridayGottaDeal.com, the Wal-Mart circular for Thanksgiving doesn’t even include music, even though it prominently features books, movies and videogames.

As the big boxes continue to rely less on music to bring holiday shoppers into stores, bargain-priced Blu-ray players and flat-screen TVs are expected to be the big traffic generators this year. Home entertainment software retailers are hoping that cheaper pricing for Blu-ray players and movies will finally drive sales growth for the format, with BlackFridayGottaDeal.com showing that Best Buy will offer Black Friday specials on Blu-ray versions of movies like “I Am Legend” and “The Departed” for $7.99. Meijer will have 24 Blu-ray titles at $9, Target will have select Blu-ray items at $7.99, and Wal-Mart will have 30-plus Blu-ray titles priced at $10.

“It’s a good two-prong approach, with Blu-ray hardware and software both priced very promotionally,” the head of one retail chain’s movie and videogame department says. “Because of this pricing, Blu-ray has to catch hold this fourth quarter.”

But a major-label distribution executive says he believes low holiday pricing for Blu-ray is a sign that studios are trying to sell off dead inventory.

“All the retailers have dedicated all this extra space to Blu-ray, taking it away from music, and it’s done nothing for them,” he says, adding that merchants should put music back in that space.

Beyond Blu-ray, merchants say there will be plenty of Black Friday deals on DVD catalog as well, with some titles available for as low as $1.99. Indeed, once again merchants say movies will own the front of the store, thanks to the pricing promotions that the studios put together for the fourth quarter.

At those prices, even heavily discounted CDs will have a tough time vying for the attention of holiday shoppers.

The videogame department will see plenty of traffic too. Activision’s “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2” will go toe to toe with Nintendo’s “New Super Mario Bros. Wii” for sales supremacy. And “Guitar Hero: Van Halen” will be released Dec. 22 and is expected to enjoy brisk Christmas week sales.

On the other hand, merchants say they have been disappointed with sales of “The Beatles: Rock Band.” “They should offer a rebate and let us cut pricing so we can get rid of inventory,” one merchant says.

Big boxes are also engaged in a knock-down, drag-out price war over books. Amazon, Target and Best Buy are offering hardcover best-sellers at $8.99 and $9.99, well below cost.

If the big-box price wars over books and movies continues, a distribution executive predicts further pain for multimedia merchants, which could soon be stuck with two more unprofitable product categories besides music.

He’s not alone in that concern. Russ Solomon, founder of now-defunct Tower Records and owner of the Sacramento, Calif., indie store R5, says the ultra-low pricing of best-selling books feels distressingly familiar. “Here you have Target and Wal-Mart moving to wreck the book industry,” Solomon says, just like they wrecked the music industry.”

STUNG BY EXCESSIVE INVENTORIES IN ’08, RETAILERS TAKE A MORE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH

In a sign of the times, sales, distribution and retail executives are embracing the philosophy that running short of product may be better than having too much for the holiday selling season.

Sources say retailers are becoming more conservative with inventory, something that would normally be a cause for concern. But this time around, distribution execs are sighing with relief.

Last year, music merchandisers loaded up on inventory for the holiday selling season before the economy went south. As the recession deepened, most merchants either didn’t realize the depth of the downturn or stubbornly stuck to the belief that music sales were recession-proof.

The result was heavy discounts in December and a high rate of returns following January, hurting the income statements of labels and merchants.

This year, retailers are already recycling inventory—that is, returning slow-moving titles and/or moving inventory out of overstocked stores into outlets where the merchandise is needed, according to a major-label distribution executive. “When we get into January, we won’t have to duck from all the returns,” he says. “It’s a thoughtful holiday from an inventory-management standpoint.”

However, tight inventory could be problematic if there’s a last-minute rush from shoppers. If that happens, the beneficiaries will be merchants like Trans World and indie stores that specialize in niche product and normally carry a wider breadth of music inventory.

“This year will be a home run for any retailer with inventory on the shelf,” Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese says. “We are seeing what’s going on with inventory, at Borders and Best Buy, so we are definitely getting the benefits of last man standing.”
With 'Until the Whole World Hears,' Casting Crowns Extends Its Reign on the Charts

By Deborah Evans Price
As the seven members of the Atlanta-based band Casting Crowns settle into the front of one of their tour buses, they are all warm and friendly, eager to share the latest photos of their kids and happenings at their churches. If they seem more like your child’s favorite teacher, your next-door neighbor or a local youth group worker, it’s because they are. They’d be the first to tell you they are unlikely pop stars—and therein lies their charm.

The act is getting ready to sound-check for an appearance where the band will join Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith and MercyMe at Nashville’s Loveless Barn to raise money for the Gospel Music Assn. (GMA). Just a couple of days earlier the group played the Sommet Center, Nashville’s downtown arena, drawing an enthusiastic crowd anxious to hear new music from its Nov. 17 release, “Until the Whole World Hears.”

Casting Crowns is the top-selling act in Christian music, earning the No. 1 slot on Billboard’s Top Christian Album Artists year-end tally for the past two years. The release of “Until the Whole World Hears”—which sold 167,000 copies in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan, landing it at No. 4 on the Billboard 200—cements the band’s status as the genre’s leader. It’s a fact that’s even more remarkable because the group hasn’t yet achieved a crossover hit.
At those didn’t tions,” Miller says of Hall’s late entry into the music business. “Then you hook him up with a country guy that produces the record and everything shouldn’t work. Everything that’s planned is so something it just shouldn’t work, including the numbers. That’s when I attribute 100% to God’s provision.”

However, what might not have looked like it added up on paper began adding up at the cash registers. “All our CDs have three elements,” Hall says. “You’re always going to heat, ‘God loves you’—he’s pursuing you—and you’re going to hear the gospel.”

The success of Casting Crowns also demonstrates the power of the Christian consumer. “Believers buy groceries and they buy CDs,” Hall says. “They buy all kinds of stuff.”

And although the band hasn’t had a crossover hit, Miller suggests Casting Crowns has mass appeal. “People buy their records that don’t buy Christian records,” he says. “People go to their concerts that don’t necessarily go to Christian concerts. You don’t sell that many records just to the Christian community. You aren’t going to do those kind of numbers.”

The band admits to feeling pressure to succeed with each successive release. “You can play it off like you don’t feel it, but who doesn’t want to be liked?” Hall asks. “There is definitely a lot of pressure that people are expecting something...
Embraced By The Hip-Hop Community, Robin Thicke Continues To Croon About Sex And Love

For perhaps the first time in history, a Caucasian soul singer who once rocked hippie hair and whose father portrayed a TV dad on an '80s sitcom was ballsy enough to adopt a celebrated rapper's lyrics and make a love song out of it—and his effort is winning praise.

On his upcoming fourth solo effort, “Sex Therapy,” slated for a Dec. 15 release on Star Trak/Interscope Records, Robin Thicke took lines from Rakim's “Mahogany” and laid them atop a sample of Al Green’s “I'm Glad You're Mine” for a track titled “Mrs. Sexy.”

“When I played it for Jay-Z, he was like, ‘First of all, who do you think you are with Rakim's lyrics?’” Thicke jokes. “But I’m doing it totally out of respect for the great Rakim. I'm bringing his lyrics to a new generation because everybody should know how amazing he is.”

Thicke—who previously collaborated with Lil Wayne, Busta Rhymes, 50 Cent, Pharrell and Rick Ross, among others—has long embraced the hip-hop community, and the affection has been reciprocated. Guests include Snoop Dogg, Kid Cudi, Lil Wayne protege Nicki Minaj, Jay-Z and the Game. R&B cohorts Estelle and Jazmine Sullivan also appear on the album, while Polow Da Don, Teddy Riley, Dre and Vidal, and Jeff Bhasker are among the producers, marking the first time Thicke and longtime collaborators Pro Jay have turned over the controls.

“You have to believe that it has something to do with him being a good artist and his music being legit,” manager/A&R man Neil Jacobson says. “He doesn’t make hip-hop music, but it’s a common genre there for him. When Lil Wayne heard ‘Shooters,’ he reached out and jumped on the track. Robin also has Andre Harrell, one of the most special people in the music industry, mentoring him. This results in [Thicke] having his finger on the pulse of the hip-hop and R&B community."

Other tracks on the album—which is available at a 12-song, more dance-driven set titled “Sex Therapy: The Session” or a pricier 17-track, ballad-heavy version titled “Sex Therapy: The Experience”—include “Diamonds” featuring the Game, in which Thicke shouts out the likes of Queen Latifah and Keysia Cole, “Shakin It 4 Daddy,” featuring Minaj, which will be serviced to radio and club DJs in the coming week, and the title track, which is No. 54 on Billboard's R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

Oddly enough, in comparison with his previous sets, Thicke describes this album as having more of a “popular” sound. “In the past I've always held on to that mentality. I wanted to write and produce all the music and I wanted it to be more dance, but with this mentality I think I might have lost a little bit of the fun,” he says. “With this album, I really just wanted to go back to what makes me happy and what is fun and just let it happen. As a result, the people that like radio and popular music might think this album is probably not bad.”

In the same vein, the modest Thicke recently collaborated with new artist Leighton Meester from “Gossip Girl” fame, appearing on the first single from her Time Act/Universal Republic electro-pop debut album, “Somebody I Love.”

“They called me and asked if I'd be interested in doing the song with her. I checked it out and thought it was a really good song,” Thicke says of the collaboration. “It was a fun, cute, young pop song and I wanted to get in front of that audience to help them recognize my music and my new album when it comes out. So, it worked out for everybody.”

Thicke is also featured on the new R. Kelly “Untitled” album, on a track titled “Pregnant” alongside Tyrese.

Thicke is currently on a promotional tour and will embark on an official tour early next year close to Valentine's Day, Jacobson says. The singer is also delving into the fashion world: He's part of a campaign with Hugo Boss for the launch of its latest cologne, Hugo Element, according to Interscope head of marketing Dennis Donnelly. Plus, Thicke has landed a role in an animated film that will premiere next year.

But in the meantime, he will keep reveling in his acceptance by the hip-hop community, calling the genre “no bullshit—it's all about keeping it real. For a white kid whose dad was on 'Growing Pains'—if he can work with Wayne and Busta and Ross and 50 and seem real, then he must be real.”
OK, THEN

OK Go Hops Off The Treadmill And Heads Into The Wild

In the music video for "WTF," the first single from OK Go's upcoming album "The Blue Colour of the Sky," the pop-rockers use a single take in front of a green screen to capture a dizzying palette of slowly fading colors. While the innovative clip recalls the hugely successful treadmill video for 2006's "Here It Goes Again," the song's jazzy funk and odd time signature hint at a more experimental approach for the act's third full-length.

"There's nothing more boring than making the same record over and over," vocalist/guitarist Damian Kulash says. "Sky," due Jan. 12 on Capitol Records, is a collection of offbeat pop tracks that depart from the band's catchy rock sound of past hits like "Get Over It" and "A Million Ways." "(The album) is more melancholic, and I love it. I'm so much more proud of it than anything before it," Kulash says.

For the follow-up to 2005's "Oh No," Kulash, bassist Tim Nordwind, keyboardist Andy Ross and drummer Dan Konopka recruited producer Dave Fridmann (MGMT, Thursday) for a more 'spacious, surreal' sound. The album was recorded in two week intervals from October 2008 to May 2009, and OK Go traded off studio time with the Flaming Lips at Fridmann's secluded Tarbox Road Studios. A converted Amish barn in upstate New York.

The band emerged with what Kulash describes as a "wintery, dark record," with tracks like "Skyscrapers" and "All Is Lost," showcasing a slower, more false-to-driven sound. Although the band is not expecting a radio push for "WTF," a Nov. 10 iTunes-exclusive premiere of the song and video helped "warn people that something completely new is coming," as Kulash puts it.

OK Go plans to release mul-

LATEST BUZZ

BONNAROO PRESALE_begins

The ninth Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival will be held June 10-13 on its usual site in Manchester, Tenn. The first round of ticket presales began Nov. 27, a lineup announcement is expected early next year. Ticket information can be found on Bonnaroo.com. As first introduced last year, the initial batch of tickets can be purchased for five installments of $50 until midnight Dec. 31. More than 10% of the tickets for the 2009 festival were sold on layaway.

MCARTNEY, STARR TO Duet

Ringo Starr is joined by his former Beatles bandmate Paul McCartney for a duet on "V "Not, the drummer's forthcoming solo album due Jan. 12 on Hip-O/Records/Universal Music Entertainment. The album also includes vocal turns by Joss Stone, Ben Harper and Richard Marx as well as musical and songwriting contributions from the Eagles' Joe Walsh, Benmont Tench of Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Dave Stewart, Glen Ballard and Van Dyke Parks, among others. Other album tracks include "The Other Side of Liverpool," an autobiographical song exploring Starr's pre-Beatles days where he encountered poverty and violence in his hometown.

KINGS OF LEON, GREEN DAY WIN WOODIES

Kings of Leon won the Woodie of the year and Green Day took home the best performing Woodie at the 2009 mtvU Woodie Awards, which united a cross-section of established and breaking acts Nov. 19 at New York's Roseland Ballroom. Although neither band was in attendance, Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dime and Tré Cool accepted their award by video. Presenter highlights included Fall Out Boy's Pete Wentz, pop duo 3OH!3, Asher Roth and surprise guest Cyndi Lauper. The Woodie Awards air Dec. 4 on MTV Networks.

Reporting by Jason Lipshutz and David J. Prince.

RAP

On The Rebound

The Clipse Eyes A Fresh Start With First Columbia Album

Between label setbacks and its ex-manager's legal case, rap duo the Clipse has weathered its share of drama. Instead of wallowing in self-pity or anger, however, the brothers (Genius "Malice" and Terrence "Pusha T" Thornton) are reveling in the fresh start afforded by their third album, "Til The Casket Drops" (Re-Up/Columbia, Dec. 8).

"We've come through the fire," Malice says. "Thanks to our fans, we're still here."

"Til The Casket Drops" revisits the drug and crime themes the Clipse lyrically addressed to critical acclaim on its first two albums. But whereas 2002's "Lord Willin'" was more easy-going and 2006's "Hell Hath No Fury" was much darker, "Casket" strikes a balance between those two moods.

Peaking at No. 27 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, its lead single, "I'm Good"—produced by longtime collaborator Pharrell Williams (half of the production duo the Neptunes)—captures the pair's survivor spirit. Chosen to build on the "Good" momentum is the head-bobbing hood anthem "Popular Demand (Pop-Eyes)." Featuring fellow rap stalwart Capp'N Ron, the mixshow track was also produced by Williams. Additional guests include Keri Hilson on "All Eyes On Me" and Kanye West on the project's setup single, "Kida Like A Big Deal."

Meanwhile, the Clipse go dark and gritty with "Door Man," where Pusha T raps, "If the good die young, then the greats go to jail... I'm missing my Tony." The verse references former manager Anthony Gonzalez, who recently struck a plea deal on a federal drug conspiracy charge and is due to be sentenced in January. The duo is now managed by Stevens Victor for William Victor Management and Yankee Arts.

"This album is full of unlandcuffed drive and energy," Pusha T says of "Casket," which also features production by DJ Khalil and Sean C & LV. "We popped out of our usual element with the Neptunes, but it still has all the richness the Clipse are known for."

After an Elektra debut album was shelved in the late '90s, the Virginia Beach, Va., native No. 1 R&B/hip-hop debut with their 2002 Star Trak/Arista bow, "Lord Willin'." But the pair's momentum was halted in 2004 when its second record, "Hell Hath No Fury," got caught up in Arinta's merger into sister label Jive Records. Owing to contractual stipulations, the Clipse stayed on with the Neptunes' remaining roster and signed with Columbia.

An agreement was reached in 2006 for the Clipse to release "Hell" on its own Re-Up Records through Jive; a year later the duo left Jive and signed with Columbia. "Lord Willin'" (featuring hit singles "Grindin'" and "When The Last Time") has sold 959,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. "Hell" stands at 205,000 units.

The chief element of Columbia/Sony Music's marketing push behind "Casket," Columbia VP product marketing Liz Haule says, is the company's first female apparel alliance with retailer Downtown Locker Room. The partnership will roll out an exclusive line of "I'm Good" Clipse T-shirts in its 70 stores during release week. The storewide campaign encompasses prime window space, banners tying in the album with the T-shirt line and a promotional mixtape CD. The T-shirt is separate from the Clipse's own Play Cloths apparel line. Celebrating its one-year anniversary, the brand boasts such fans as Jay-Z and Lupe Fiasco.

On the Clipse's immediate schedule are several high-profile appearances: the Bayou Classic in New Orleans (Nov. 28), mtvU's Woodie Awards (airing Dec. 4) and the "106 & Park" New Year's Eve bash on BET ("106 & Party"). A major 2010 tour is also being planned. "The machine is there now and it's rolling in our favor," Malice says.

Pusha T adds, "It's fresh; no drama, no chains. This is our victory lap."
multiple videos as a key part of the rollout for "Sky." After the clip for "Here It Goes Again" pushed the song to No. 38 on the Billboard Hot 100 and netted a Grammy Award for best short form music video, the band realized that videos could be an inventive—and inexpensive—means of promotion. "Videos were understood as a medium of art and advertising, but the bottom fell out on the advertising side," Kulash says. "But most artists still want to create something cool. If we have the opportunity to do something fun and crazy, we'll do it." OK Go's visual artistry will carry over to a performance at the Design Miami international fair in December, in which the band will use customized Gibson guitars that project laser lights on a video wall. The appearance of the new track "Shooting the Moon" in the "Twilight: New Moon" film and on its soundtrack rounds out a carefully planned marketing strategy. "This is the band's third record, so there's not a lot of new-hothings stories. You have to find your fun and reintroduce yourself," Capitol VP of marketing Harkins says. "Coming out with a video for 'WTF' eight weeks before the release gives us the proper platform to reintegrate the band into the marketplace." With a European tour lined up for January and an Asian and U.S. trek soon to follow, OK Go is ready to change people's perceptions of it. "We're not going to duplicate ourselves in any way. There won't be a video of us on elliptical trainers," Kulash says. "We just want to be the band who does weird stuff."...-

With careers in music and acting, a syndicated weekly radio program, a TV show (on the V-Me network) and multiple lines of clothing and accessories to her name, Mexican star Thalía is much more than just a singer. But on her upcoming live album "Primer Fila," Thalía seeks to showcase her voice. The set, Thalía's first on Sony Music Latin after years with EMI, is part of the label's "Primer Fila" (First Row) series of live recordings and features Thalía performing with a 12-piece band. Set for release Dec. 1, "Primer Fila" will be sold as both a CD and a DVD. Additionally, a 45-minute documentary will air as a special on Televisa and Univisión along with some of the live performances.

1. Where did the idea for this album come from?

I always wanted to record a live album, using great musicians and with challenging songs. Nearly two years ago, we got a call from [former Sony Music Latin president] Kevin Lawrie, who was at the taping of Vicente Fernández's "Primera Fila." Kevin called Tommy [Motola, Thalía's husband] and said, "This is exactly what I think Thalía should do." And Tommy said, "Don't tell me. She's been talking about it for years." I then met [Sony Music Latin VP of A&R] Paul Forat and [producer] Áureo Baqueiro, who I've known since I was 14 years old. This group of people was totally in sync with this dream and took it to the next level.

2. This is so different from your previous performances and recordings. Would you really have done it before?

It wouldn't have been the same album five years ago. This album found me at a moment in my career where I've done everything. I've been a singer, a dancer, an interpreter, everything. Being a mother of [2-year-old Sabrina] has changed my core. And also, two years ago, I contracted Lyme disease, and that broke my life structure. I had to stop and ask myself, "What do you want? What makes you happy?" It liberated me of all my preconceptions, of everything my name means. And the Thalía who spends time at home with a ponytail and who goes out for pizza in her jeans is the same person that's on that stage.

3. In the documentary, you mention that your singing abilities have been questioned. It was amusing to share that skepticism because it's been voiced. I've sung from the most "pop" songs to deep ballads. I started my career at 7 years old, singing from town to town. I've worn every outfit imaginable. I've danced every choreography. I've been on fire. Everything. But as a singer, I did need to interpret songs with weight and depth and structure that opened up another part of me. It doesn't mean that what I've done wasn't important, just at that very moment, I'm the person you see on "Primera Fila."

4. You sold a lot of albums when the market was at its peak. Are you prepared for the lower sales of today's market?
The album has become a promotional tool to enable us to be in contact with your fans, to continue to grow and develop your career. If you think you're going to make money selling albums, you're on another planet. First of all, where would you buy it? Those spectacular music stores are gone. And culture has become disposable. There's no longer that culture of following an entire album. What I want to do is take this DVD—this small stage with great musicians—and re-create it on tour. Allow people to almost rest their elbows on the stage.

5. Did you feel naked performing without the usual bells and whistles?

You have no idea what I felt those two first rehearsal days. I was trembling, my hands were freezing. I was so nervous about being so vulnerable for the first time and having people see me as I am. But I think being so nervous allowed me to go beyond my limits. I never doubted myself, because the stage has been my school.

6. You include a duet with Joan Sebastian—written just for you—and a duet with newcomer Pedro Capó. Was anything left off the album?

We did everything we planned. It's important to underscore: I prepared very hard. I took voice lessons for six months with Celine Dion's teacher. Physically prepared with a workout routine. I rehearted the songs to death.

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ALBUMS

**TORI AMOS**
Midwinter Graces
Producer: Tori Amos
Universal Republic
Release Date: Nov. 10
With past references to “the little g,” the incriminating questions of “God” and a penchant to debate spiritual issues, Tori Amos hardly seems the type to make a holiday album. But the Methodist minister's daughter rarely ceases to surprise. Her latest release, “Midwinter Graces,” is a typically provocative—in the best possible way—entry in the yuletide canon. Amos reaches deep into the world of carols for ancient and less obvious fare that the subsequently records on string-laden songs like “Candle: Coventry Carol,” “Jeanette, Isabella,” “Holly, Ivy and Rose” (which features her daughter, Natahaya) and “Emmanuel.” The lush, big band-styled “Pink and Glitter” is the most interesting of Amos’ five originals, though on the album-closing “Our New Year,” she appears to express hope, but not expectation, for a messianic visitation—**GG**

**ROCK**

**SWITCHFOOT**
Hello Hurricane
Producers: Mike Elizondo, Switchfoot
Lowercase People/Atlantic
Release Date: Nov. 10
After establishing a berth at mainstream radio with “Dare You to Move” (from its 2003 album, “The Dazzling Proper Debut,” Switchfoot hasn’t quite managed to complete its crossover from the Christian-music scene that first embraced the group. The band’s latest release, “Hello Hurricane,” may (and should) change that: It’s a sleekly presented modern-rock album with no shortage of bruising guitars or catchy choruses. Like much of U2’s work, these songs were a faith-based message in a secular package. Switchfoot produced “Hello Hurricane” with Mike Elizondo, and the album’s varied arrangements reflect his diverse résumé. On “Needle and Haystack Life,” singer Jon Foreman works his breathy croon over surging pop-punk guitars; “This Is the Sound” has a brash, heavy-metal vibe; “Enough” rides a percolating art-folk groove; and “Bullet Soul” could be something by Swedish garage rock band the Hives.—**GW**

**THEM CROOKED VULTURES**
Them Crooked Vultures
Producers: Them Crooked Vultures
Interscope Records
Release Date: Nov. 17
With Queens of the Stone Age’s Josh Homme on guitar/vocals, Foo Fighters’ Dave Grohl on drums and Led Zeppelin’s John Paul Jones on bass/keyboards, Them Crooked Vultures’ self-titled debut comes with a high pedigree and even higher expectations. Like Monsters of Folk (Conor Oberst, Jim James, M. Ward and Mike Mogis), this rock supergroup delivers by drawing upon each member’s talents and creating a sound that’s refreshingly singular and remarkably fun. “Them Crooked Vultures” features technically polished, bluesy guitar-driven bar rock, with the song “Mind Eraser, No Chaser” and first single “New Fang” relying on start-stop tempos and punishing solos. While Jones adds depth on bass and Grohl’s drumming is predictably top-notch, Homme commands the spotlight throughout the album with sexually charged yet haunting vocals. “I don’t need a reason, baby/Put your arms around me,” he sings on “Caliguelove” before an unexpected keyboard solo sweeps the track in a different direction. The set may be a one-off experiment, but the band’s chemistry points to a potentially bright future with this star-studded lineup.—**JL**

**RAP**

**WALE**
Attention Deficit
Producers: various
Alloyo/Interscope
Release Date: Nov. 10
Washington, D.C., rapper Wale owns the distinction of being the most well-rounded of hip-hop’s latest class. He packed quirky smarts into last year’s “Seinfeld”-themed “The Mixtape About Nothing” before splashing onto radio with the hook-laden Lady Gaga collaboration “Chillin.” He continues to show his range on “Attention Deficit,” his long-delayed yet sonically dazzling proper debut. Working with an all-star list of producers, Wale sounds as comfortable on indie fare like the Dave Sitek-produced “TV in the Radio” as on sizzling stereo-bangers like Cool & Dre’s “World Tour.” His lyrical themes also cover a lot of ground, from the loathario came-ons of “Pretty Girls” to the cautious tale of superfidelity told on “90210.” Luckily, Wale never seems himself too thin on “Attention Deficit” and maintains the urgency of his mixtapes to ensure that the set contains little filler. With an immediate likability and a penchant for innovative pop music, Wale could soon reach Kanye West-esque heights of artistic and commercial viability.—**JL**

**LATIN**

**ALEJANDRO SANZ**
Paraiso Express
Producer: Tommy Torres
Warner Music Latina
Release Date: Nov. 10
The sound of Spanish pop star Alejandro Sanz’s new studio set, “Paraiso Express,” is more melodic and commercial than his past two, more ruminative efforts—and this is a good thing. Sanz wrote most of the new songs at the piano, and it shows on tracks like “Sin Que Se Note,” which conjures vintage Elton John in his big choruses and melodies. Sanz’s quirky, inventive side is heard on the reggae-tinged “Mala,” with its punctuated guitars—a mix of flamenco and rock—and on the moody “Loa Soleadad,” a kind of vampy tango imbued with melancholia and awash in a multiplicity of surprising arrangements. The songs on “Paraiso Express” veer in many directions, from solo piano to walls of electric guitar to a prediction for the Hammond B-3 Organ. The least surprising track is the bilingual single “Looking for Paradise,” which features Alicia Keys. Take it as the light sorbet that cleanses the palate before a gourmet meal.—**LC**

**R. KELLY**
Unified
Producers: various
Jive
Release Date: Dec. 1
Outside of the hits “Same Girl” and “I’m A Flirt,” R. Kelly’s last album in 2007, “Double Up,” was a guest-heavy exercise in boredom. But the singer/songwriter redeems himself on his newest release, “Unified.” Predictably, sex and love are both displayed in ample measure. But this time around, Kelly eschews the Interplanetary sexcapades of “Double Up” for fewer cameos and more down-to-earth fare. Beyond an ode to one (Keri Hilson), the album is signature Kelly: fantasy-filled romps, club jams and heartfelt ballads brought to life by the singer’s ear for catchy beats and melodies and mood-setting lyrics. Leading the charge are the playful “Echo” (abetted by Kelly’s sexy yodeling) and “Whole Lot of Love,” a sizzling duet with a (nod to his stepping roots) and the emotionally sincere ballads “Religious” and “Elsewhere.” The one constant throughout: Kelly’s soul-dripping tenor. With 18 years and counting under his belt, the singer/songwriter reminds us why he remains an R&B force.—**GM**

**MELANIE FIONA**
The Bridge
Producers: various
Universal Motown
Release Date: Nov. 10
Although the release date of her debut album, “The Bridge,” was pushed back numerous times, singer Melanie Fiona didn’t miss her opportunity for greatness. On the set, Fiona brings the same sultry vocals and self-assured antics atop soulful instrumentation that fans fell in love with on the first...
**Boys Like Girls Featuring Taylor Swift**

*Two Is Better Than One (4:03)*

**Producers:** Brian Howes  
**Writer:** M. Johnson  
**Publishers:** EMI April Music, Martin Johnson Music (ASCAP), Sony/ATV (BMI)

Columbia

Boys Like Girls roared into the top 40 this summer with the hyperactive single “Love Drunk,” but for its follow-up, the band slows things down and displays a softer side. The group pairs up with Taylor Swift for “Two Is Better Than One,” which fits its own repertoire as well as the country star’s. Lead singer/songwriter Martin Johnson’s falsetto complements Swift’s sweet tone, and producer Brian Howes builds an orchestrational arrangement around their vocals that would be well-suited to a cinematic movie moment. The delicate violin strings, conducted by David Campbell, echo the song’s declaration about the importance of mending a relationship on the rocks. Already on track to be another hit for Boys Like Girls, this moving duet stands as proof of its own title.—**MM**

**The Billboard**

**Reviews**

**Singles**

**Nirvana**

*Live at Reading*

**Producer:** Nirvana  
**Release Date:** Nov. 9

A hollering moment of Nirvana’s 1991 performance in England’s Reading Festival comes during the intro to the powerful rocker “Lithium.” Dressed in a white medical gown and blue jeans, frontman Kurt Cobain hits a wrong note and is forced to restart the tune. It wouldn’t be the first instance during the band’s 90-minute set that Cobain flubs a song (he struggles to tune his guitar throughout “Love Buzz”), but the thousands of concertgoers who sang along in unison to “Lithium” proved that a few mistakes couldn’t spoil this historic event. Cobain isn’t remembered for his technical chops, but this Reading appearance—released for the first time on the CD/DVD package “Live at Reading”—captured the trio’s skill at turning simple power chords into some of the most memorable rock anthems of the ’90s. Filmed less than a year after the release of “Nevermind,” the concert features intense performances of “Aneurysm,” “Tunette’s” and “Territorial Pissings,” mixed with such alternative gems as “All Apologies,” “Polly” and “Come As You Are.” For those who missed Nirvana in the flesh, “Live at Reading” pre-serves their long stage presence during its short-lived career.—**MP**

**Shakira Featuring Lil Wayne**

*Give It Up To Me (3:03)*

**Producer:** Timbaland

“Give It Up To Me” is sexy and danceable. Shakira’s flirtation with a different genre ultimately obscures her own unique style.—**KP**

**Leighton Meester Featuring Robin Thicke**

*Somebody To Love (3:32)*

**Producer:** M. Carr

“Somebody To Love” is a carefully constructed ode to vintage Madonna—particularly in its “Vogue”-like verses, where Meester semi-raps rather than sings. The lyrics are lighthearted, as she celebrates her jet-setter lifestyle but also mourns her inability to settle down. “It’s hard to find a mate when you’re gone before he waits,” Meester says. “They say it’s hard to achieve, but can’t a girl believe?” The song’s high point, however, comes during Robin Thicke’s cameo, as the R&B singer delivers a catchy chorus that cries out for a sped-up dance remix.—**SM**

**Vampire Weekend**

*Cousins (2:25)*

**Producer:** Rostan Batmanglij

“Cousins” finds the boat-shod singer/songwriter offering zingers like, “Dad was a risk taker/His was a shoemaker/You, greatest hits 2006 little list-maker.” None of it makes much sense, but then again, neither did Koeing’s head-scratching odes to Oxford commas and Lil Jon. Besides, isn’t that what quality new wave is all about?—**RH**
Coming Full ‘Circle’

Ticketmaster, Bon Jovi Use Concert Ticket Sales To Drive Music Sales

A partnership involving Ticketmaster Entertainment, Island Def Jam (IDJ), promoter AEG Live and Bon Jovi helped drive the band’s album “The Circle” to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 last week on the strength of first-week sales of 163,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. More than 20,000 of those sales were notched during a four-day Ticketmaster promotion that allowed purchasers of presale Bon Jovi tour tickets to also buy a digital download of “The Circle” for $9.99.

“The Circle” is the fourth consecutive Bon Jovi album tied to a Ticketmaster promotion, dating back to “Bounce” in 2002. That relationship has evolved from recorded-music sales driving ticket sales to ticket sales driving music sales—which in many ways is reflective of the music industry at large.

“We’ve done things where if you bought the album, there was a code inside allowing fans to purchase presale tickets,” says Greg Schimel, president of music services at Ticketmaster. “Here, we put the presale up before the album came out. We wanted to allow consumers to see the ticket inventory before they committed to purchasing the album. Then the sale of the album was added to the order.”

According to IDJ, about 23,000 downloads resulted from the presale promotion, which preceded other presales and the public on-sale for the Circle tour, which begins Feb. 19 in Seattle. The promotion’s success is also an example of how music business sectors that once pursued separate agendas are now working together.

“We have to get out of our silos and understand we have to sell everything,” IDJ senior VP of sales Jim Roppo says. “But it has to be a good value proposition. [The album] was priced aggressively so it was competitive in the marketplace. People responded to that.”

Bon Jovi’s Lost Highway trek was last year’s top-grossing tour, at $210 million in gross ticket sales, according to Billboard Boxscore. “It’s really about how do we convert those people to buy albums, and this promotion was ideally crafted to accomplish that,” Roppo says. “Ticketmaster did a great job of messaging all the previous Bon Jovi buyers in their database; we also had a lot of support from BonJovi.com.

From the label side, the messaging was also about timely redemptions. “SoundScan only counts redemptions, not up-front sales,” Roppo adds. “So we put a lot of energy into messaging consumers who had participated in the offer to hurry and redeem the first week.” A bonus of three live songs and an interview with frontman Jon Bon Jovi were offered as added incentive.

While Ticketmaster promotions with “Bounce” and “Have A Nice Day” (2005) included ticket presale coupons in the physical CD, its 2007 promotion for Bon Jovi’s No. 1-debuting “Lost Highway” bundled an album download with presale tickets purchased for the band’s 10-night stand at Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

“With only those 10 shows to work with, there were about 55,000 ticket presales and redemptions were about 16%,” Roppo says. “This time we did about 38,000 ticket presales and had 23,000 redemptions in the first week alone.”

One of the big takeaways from the latest promotion, Roppo notes, is the move toward more first-week digital sales for Bon Jovi. Digital sales for “The Circle” accounted for 98,000 albums, representing 36% of total sales.

Roppo credits Bon Jovi management for understanding the potential of tying in album and ticket sales. “Most managers and artists will say, ‘If I can get $10 more for my ticket, I’d rather take that than sell my album,’’ he says.

Bon Jovi Management’s Paul Korzilius, who co-manages the band, emphasizes that the fans are the bottom line. “Ticketmaster and Bon Jovi have long worked together to distribute tickets and recorded product to customers in as many ways as possible to ensure customers get what they want, when they want it and how they want it,” Korzilius says. “If the customer is happy, we are all happy.”

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POP BY RICHARD SMIRKE

Fantastic Journey

‘X Factor’ Alum JLS Outsells Robbie Williams

A year ago, Alexandra Burke beat freshest-faced British boy band JLS to the crown on "The X Factor." Now, however, the group has won a different crown—No. 1 on the U.K. albums chart following a close battle with U.K. megastar Robbie Williams.

Both JLS’ self-titled Epic debut and Williams’ comeback Virgin album, "Reality Killed the Video Star," arrived in U.K. stores Nov. 9. The group’s sales of 239,000 copies edged out Williams by less than 1%, according to the Official Charts Co. (OCC).

"It’s an amazing achievement," band member Jonathan "J" Gill says. "Usually you have a sense from the midweek sales figures, but we had no idea—it was so close. When I found out, I literally got off the phone and screamed for joy."

Epic U.K. head of marketing Murray Rose describes overtaking Williams as "the icing on the cake." But he also notes that after JLS’ lead single, "Beat Again," hit No. 1 in July, the label always felt "bullish" about dropping the album during the busy fourth quarter. The album has now sold 375,000 copies, according to the OCC.

Crucial to the album’s sales success was the band’s Nov. 1 return to "The X Factor." The ITV1 ratings champ has influenced the singles and albums charts in recent weeks: The last five No. 1 singles (including JLS’ upbeat R&B anthem "Everybody in Love") and four No. 1 albums have all received exposure on the show.

JLS—which stands for "Jack the Lad Swing"—has since appeared on various programs, ranging from ITV’s daytimer "GMTV" (Nov. 3) to Channel 4’s youth-oriented "T4" (Nov. 21). To maximize exposure among the band’s female 15- and-under target demo, a prime-time TV ad campaign rolled out one week prior to the album’s release.

Online marketing has also played a vital role. According to Rose, JLS boasts the third-most popular Web site of all Sony acts—behind Michael Jackson and Adam Lambert—with 3.7 million page impressions for the month up to Nov. 22. The burgeoning popularity of Gill and fellow band members Oritse Williams, Marvin Humes and Aston Merrygold was vividly illustrated when their appearance at a Nov. 14 Christmas concert in Birmingham was abandoned due to overcrowding.

While teenage fans hyperventilate over the band’s good looks, that doesn’t mask the group’s considerable talent. The glossy mix of hook-laden pop hits, electro-flavored R&B and sentimentally earnest ballads on "JLS" offers a surprisingly robust experience, especially on the anthemic "One Shot" and the soulful, acoustic-tinged "Close To You."

Next up for the band—managed by London-based Modest Management, which also handles Burke and Leona Lewis—is a national U.K. theater tour booked by London-based Creative Artists Agency. It kicks off Feb. 1 at Ipswich Regent Theatre. International plans have yet to be finalized, but Rose says a European album launch is likely next year.

Gill says, "We want to go international in due time, but we want to cement ourselves in the U.K. It really is going to be a fantastic journey for JLS and Epic."

DUAL POWER

Steel Magnolia, the country duo of Meghan Linsey and Joshua Scott Jones, is climbing Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart with its first single, “Keep On Lovin’ You.” Written by Chris Stapleton and Trent Willmon, the song is No. 31 this week. But beyond the single, the Big Machine act has a reality show to thank for its current chance to shine.

Linsey and Jones are a real-life couple who were separately pursuing solo careers. After deciding to give it a go as a duo, a friend encouraged the couple to try out for CMT’s "Can You Duet."

The pair won the competition in August and immediately hit the road to visit radio. WWQM Madison, Wis., PD John Sebastian was aware of the pair from the show, but he says it was its station visit that sealed the deal. Describing the single as "hookey and unique," he adds, "With a hипness about them and harmonies reminiscent of the Eagles, they have the look and the sound to go far."

Ponchatoula, La., native Linsey, whose musical influences include Dolly Parton, Janis Joplin and Tanya Tucker—"Anybody with some soul, anyone who can tell a story"—was opening for Brad Paisley, Toby Keith and other acts as a teenager. She moved to Nashville after high school. Jones, of Charleston, Ill., counts the Beatles and Willie Nelson among his influences. He pursued his music career while working in sales at a country radio station in Illinois. Traveling to Nashville to perform at the famed Bluebird Cafe on weekends, Jones eventually convinced the radio company to transfer him to a Nashville station. One night while visiting a downtown karaoke bar, he met Linsey.

Now the pair is finishing its yet-untilled debut album, tentatively due in February. Collaborating with producer Dann Huff (Keith Urban), Linsey and Jones either wrote or co-wrote seven of the album’s 11 tracks.

Noting the duo has "the chemistry factor" in its favor, Linsey says, "We write about real-life stories—like breaking up and getting back together. People relate to that."

Jones cites "the intensity of our vocal blend" as another point of distinction. "I was a more stylistic singer and Meghan was more polished," he says. "We kind of met in the middle and learned from each other. Now it’s evened out into this ‘one voice’ sound that works."

—Ken Tucker

Intriguing lineup: THEM/CROOKED VULTURES

FEEDING FRENZY

With their rich pedigree and dynamic sound, Them Crooked Vultures’ self-titled debut album has made a splash at radio and retail. The alt-rock supergroup—featuring Led Zeppelin’s John Paul Jones, Queens of the Stone Age’s Josh Homme and Foo Fighters’ Dave Grohl—debuts this week at No. 12 on the Billboard 200. The group’s bruising first single, “New Fang,” is No. 15 on the Alternative chart.

Interscope’s Nov. 17 release of "Them Crooked Vultures" is the culmination of a shrewd, tour-driven promotional campaign. The long-rumored collaboration was officially unveiled during a midnight show at Chicago’s Metro during the close of the Lollapalooza festival in August. With Jones on bass and keyboards, Homme on guitar and vocals, Grohl on drums and Alain Johannes on rhythm guitar for its live shows, the group has since played select dates in Europe as well as sold-out stops in New York and Los Angeles.

Although the band sparked intrigue due to its members’ previous work, high demand on modern rock radio suggests the album is being received as more than a casual side project. “This is one of those times when the audience has truly responded to the music, not just the spectacle of three guys from three great bands,” says Matt Pinfield, host of “The Rock Show” on WAXP New York. “Rock fans have wanted bands they can really be excited about. It was never a guarantee that it would all come together on this record, but the band really made this work.”

After “New Fang” was offered as an iTunes free download Nov. 2, Them Crooked Vultures made the 15-track album available as a stream on their YouTube page one week prior to release. According to Pinfield, the move spiked the number of radio requests for non-single tracks and created excitement before the physical release. “It showed that people were feeling the whole album, not just one or two songs,” he says.

Having just wrapped a trek in the Pacific Northwest, the act will visit Germany and the United Kingdom before touring Australia and New Zealand in January.

—Jason Lipshutz
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John Mayer captures his second No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with "Battle Studies" (see story, page 30), bowing atop the tally with 286,000 copies. The Columbia artist leads a pre-Thanksgiving parade of new albums on the list, including debuts from Norah Jones (No. 3 with 180,000), Casting Crowns (No. 4 with 167,000) and 50 Cent (No. 5 with 160,000).

Since May 25, 1991, catalog albums have had their own Billboard home: the Top Pop Catalog chart. Catalog albums are defined as those that are at least 18 months old, have fallen below No. 100 on the Billboard 200 and do not have an active single on our radio charts.

The week, which also not-so-coincidentally marks the first chart week of Billboard's 2010 chart year, we made over the Billboard 200 so that older titles were brought back into the mix. It might be easier to think of it this way:

For the past five years, we've had three main all-genre album charts -- the Billboard 200, Top Pop Catalog Albums and Top Comprehensive Albums.

From May 1991 until last week, the Billboard 200 only housed current or new albums. The "older" titles, or reissues of old albums, charted on Top Pop Catalog. Then, in 2003, we launched the Comprehensive Albums chart, which blended together old and new releases.

Now, this week, we've essentially changed the name of the Comprehensive Albums chart to, you guessed it, the Billboard 200. And, what was the old Billboard 200 will now be called Top Current Albums. We will still compile the Top Pop Catalog chart and continue to employ our rules regarding when an album reaches catalog status.

As you'd notice that some changes will alter Nielsen SoundScan's calculations of its marketing reports. Additionally, the Billboard 200 is our only current-based chart that will be changed by the re-introduction of catalog albums. All of our other current-based albums charts will still abide by our catalog rules. Those include Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, Top Country Albums and so forth.

Now, for the fine details: Any album that had previously been on the Billboard 200 and then fell to catalog status, but returns to the big chart this week, is designated as a "re-entry." In the "weeks on chart" column, the number reflects the total number of weeks the album has spent specifically on the Billboard 200.

In the "peak position" column, the number indicates where the album peaked on the Billboard 200—not on either Top Pop Catalog or Top Comprehensive Albums. (Thus, Michael Jackson's "Number Ones" retains its peak of No. 13, its Billboard 200 high that it reached Dec. 6, 2003, though the album did climb to No. 1 on both the Catalog and Comprehensive charts earlier this year.)

You'll notice that some albums are artificially pushed down the tally, despite their sales gains, partially because of the influx of catalog titles. Thus, an album like Cage the Elephant's self-titled set receives a bulletin rewarding its 26% gain in sales, despite its chart slipage (moving 109-123).

For any questions regarding these changes, please email either director of charts Silvio Pietroluongo (silvi@billboard.com) or myself, Billboard 200 chart manager Keith Caulfield (keithcaulfield@billboard.com).

MARKET WATCH: Week of Feb. 22, 2009

**ALBUM SALES**

This Week
7,965,000 1,684,000 18,960,000

Last Week
7,043,000 1,471,000 19,635,000

Change
13.4% 14.5% -3.5%

The Week Last Year
9,457,000 1,356,000 17,394,000

Change
-15.6% 24.0% 8.9%

Digital album sales are also counted within album sales.
Her fourth studio set arrives with 180,000 copies and follows three straight chart-toppers. Last week, Janet slipped below No. 1, "American Idol" editor's choice and Comedy Central's "Curb Your Enthusiasm" the next day.

The "American Idol" winner becomes the 20th contestant from the show to notch a top 10 album on the chart. Meanwhile, 2009 runner-up Adam Lambert debuts at No. 72 with a set of pres-sing "re-read"ings of his proper debut album next week.

This album (16,000) is the highest ranked catalog set on the newly revamped chart and thus sports a "re-entry" tag. Nor surprisingly, it's "re-entry" not at No. 1 but at No. 25, the same spot it charted in November 2011.

The 10-track album in the band's fourth hits chart, following "Decade of Doo Wop!" (1991, No. 2), the 10-in-a-row name-only "Grocery Store" (1995, No. 20) and the double-disc "Red, White & You" (2005, No. 4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Ending</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>05/02/09</td>
<td>Alter The Ending</td>
<td>DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL</td>
<td>G Jagged Little Pill 03-80046-2</td>
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<td>Desperate Measures</td>
<td>HOLLYWOOD UNDEAD</td>
<td>Ministry 0052153623</td>
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<td>04/18/09</td>
<td>NOW's That I Can Celebrate!</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>FHM 2009</td>
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<td>04/11/09</td>
<td>A Wake</td>
<td>MAXWELL</td>
<td>Blacksummersnight</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>03/28/09</td>
<td>Breakthrough</td>
<td>COLBY CALL</td>
<td>A Day In The Life Of A Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>03/21/09</td>
<td>Defying Gravity</td>
<td>KEITH URBAN</td>
<td>Angel's Name (EP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>03/14/09</td>
<td>#1's ... And Then Some</td>
<td>BROOKS &amp; DUNN</td>
<td>Life Starts Now</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>03/07/09</td>
<td>Relapse</td>
<td>EMERSON</td>
<td>I'm Going Pro</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>02/28/09</td>
<td>It's Their Time</td>
<td>ELVIS PRESLEY</td>
<td>It's Their Time</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>02/21/09</td>
<td>Save Me, San Francisco</td>
<td>MICHAEL BUBLE</td>
<td>Save Me, San Francisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>02/14/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>02/07/09</td>
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<td>LYNZY SKYJNR</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>BARRY MANILOW</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
<td>DONNA NUNN</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>01/02/09</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td>01/02/09</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>THE FRAY</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>01/02/09</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>ANOTHER DAY</td>
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<td>16</td>
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</table>

The Billboard 200 is a chart that ranks the best-selling albums of the week, compiled by Billboard. The chart is based on both sales and streaming of albums. The chart is published weekly and compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, a data tracking company.
Barbra Streisand, Frank Sinatra and limited-run. The 11-track album sold 174,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.
## HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SAY HEY</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FIFTH AVENUE</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SOMEBODY</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>GIVE ME LOVE</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>JUDE</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DRAGONFLY</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SUPERHEAT</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BOW DOWN</td>
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</table>

## HOT DIGITAL SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WHAT THE HELL</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CALL ME Maybe</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BRING IT ON HOME</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IM A BEAUTY</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I WILL TELL YOU WHAT</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EYES WIDE SHUT</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LIVE IN THE NOW</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>COME HOME RAYE</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>KNOCKING AT THE DOOR</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>HOLD IT AGAIN</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
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</table>

## HOT 100 RETAIL CHARTS

### Album Charts

- Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/hip-hop retail charts is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialize in these genres.

### RECURRENT RULES

- Songs removed from the Billboard Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously after 20 weeks on the Billboard chart.
- If ranking below No. 50, Songs with Hot Airplay TOP 40, Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, and Hot Country Songs and Hot Gospel Songs on their chart weeks.

### CONSERVATIVE RULES

- CD singles available. Digital Download available. Vinyl singles available. CD Maxi-Single available. Configurations are not included on all singles charts.

### HOT DANCE CLUB SONGS

- Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

### AWARD CERT. LEVELS

- Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certification for net shipments of 500,000 albums. RIAA certification for net shipments of 1 million units (Platinum). RIAA certification for net shipments of 10 million units (Diamond). RIAA certification for net shipments of 50 million units (Cassette). RIAA certification for net shipments of 100 million units (Diamond).

## HOT COUNTRY SONGS

- Compiled from a national sample of reports from country music radio stations.

## MUSIC VIDEO SALES CHARTS

- RIAA certification for net shipment of 25,000 units for video singles.

## Dvd Sales/Bluray Sales/Video Rentals

- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units for video singles.
Kelly Clarkson collects her second No. 1 on Adult Top 40, as "Already Gone" soars to No. 1 in its second week. Clarkson spent five weeks at the summit with "Behind These Hazel Eyes" in 2005. The single, which is the third consecutive leader on the survey for U.S. Music Group, topped the chart for two weeks with "No Surprise" in September, and Kings of Leon follow with an 11-week reign with "Nevermind." The only prior to last to date a trio of leaders in the chart's first 10 years (No. 1 on April 8, 1995), the band claimed the top spot for 39 straight weeks with their last leader "Celebrated." Sananda "The Game of Love" featuring Michelle Branch and Ryan Tedder, who co-wrote "The Game of Love," featuring her bass soloist Arie Liner Taulbe's "Beautiful Love."
## Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PEAK</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
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<td>Michael Jackson</td>
<td>Empire State of Mind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 Cent</td>
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<td>Janet Jackson</td>
<td>Love</td>
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<td>The Black Eyed Peas</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay-Z</td>
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## Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
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<td>Forever</td>
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## Adult R&B

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<td>D'Angelo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puttin' You On</td>
<td>Fantasia</td>
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<td>I Need You</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Need You</td>
<td>Fantasia</td>
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## Between the Bullets

**50 Cent Leads Revamped R&B Tally**

After early sales in the prior issue, 50 Cent charges #1 with 160,000 units this week for his fourth No. 1 Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums in the first issue using the chart's revamped methodology. The tally is now compiled from overall album sales just as the Billboard 200 and other genre charts are built. The former ranking was based on sales from Nielsen SoundScan's R&B core panel of stores that monitors retailers specializing in urban music. The other R&B core charts (Rap Albums, R&B/Hip-Hop Catalog and R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales) also move to the new format. Some albums experience unusual shifts as more sales are factored in. Mass-appeal acts like the Black Eyed Peas (10-4) move up, while genre-specific artists like LeToya (20-29) fall backward, but still have sales gains.
### Hot Latin Songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>WEEK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Me Gusta Todo de Ti&quot;</td>
<td>Tony Dize</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Yo Me Confie&quot;</td>
<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ya Se&quot;</td>
<td>Chayanne</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;El Trono de Mexico&quot;</td>
<td>Gilberto Santa Rosa</td>
<td>5</td>
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### Top Latin Albums

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>WEEK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tony Dize</td>
<td>&quot;Me Gusta Todo de Ti&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
<td>&quot;Yo Me Confie&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chayanne</td>
<td>&quot;Ya Se&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilberto Santa Rosa</td>
<td>&quot;El Trono de Mexico&quot;</td>
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### Latin Rhythm Albums

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tony Dize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
<td>&quot;Yo Me Confie&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chayanne</td>
<td>&quot;Ya Se&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gilberto Santa Rosa</td>
<td>&quot;El Trono de Mexico&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Between the Bullets

**DIZE DEBUTS AT NO. 1 ON RHYTHM**

Under new label Pira, Tony Dize's new set "La Melodía de la Calle Upd" #1 lands atop Latin Rhythm Albums (3,000). Previous effort "La Melodía de la Calle" bowed at No. 20 in the May 3, 2003, issue and peaked at No. 3 a week later. Despite the title, "Upd" is a brand-new set that marks his departure from WY; the imprint of longtime collaborators Wist & Vanding. Lead single "El Doctorado" claims 11-15 on Latin Rhythm Airplay (8.6 million in audience, up 22%).

Raul Ramirez
### Japan
**Billboard Japan Hot 100**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AKB48</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>DMM / BANDAI LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AKB48</td>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>DMM / BANDAI LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>AKB48</td>
<td>Axis</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>AKB48</td>
<td>1830</td>
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<td>AKB48</td>
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<td>AKB48</td>
<td>Sennen</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>AKB48</td>
<td>Koisuru</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>AKB48</td>
<td>Always</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>10</td>
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### United Kingdom
**Billboard UK Hot 100**

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<th>Number</th>
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<td>Someone Like You</td>
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<td>Set Fire to the Rain</td>
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**Billboard Germany Hot 100**

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### Spain
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EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

Send submissions to: execute.billboard.com


PUBLISHING: EMI Music Publishing North America names Rich Christina senior VP of creative and Leotis Clyburn senior director of creative. Christina was VP of A&R at Sony/ATV Publishing, and Clyburn was creative director at TVT Publishing.

BMI names Peter Ripley director of online communications and marketing. He was a Web consultant/project manager for the company's network of Web sites.

RELATED FIELDS: Australia’s Film, Television and Radio School names Michael Smellie chairman for a three-year term. He was president of media development for the Asia Pacific region at German media company Bertelsmann.

Marc Shaiman has been named music director for the 82nd Academy Awards. He has worked on the Oscar show on three previous occasions and has been nominated for best original score on numerous films.

AEGC, a division of Opus 1 Music Library, appoints Charley Brooks VP of marketing. She was West Coast representative of career development and industry relations at McNally Smith College of Music.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS

ACTORS BAND TOGETHER FOR CHARITY

Greg Grunberg plays a police detective on NBC’s "Heroes," but for the actor, his real hero is his 13-year-old epileptic son.

“My son is without question my hero, because he’s dealing with it every day,” says Grunberg, who's determined to move epilepsy research forward.

To accomplish this goal, he rallied a “supergroup” of musically inclined actors to start Band From TV, whose lineup includes self-taught drummer Grunberg; guitarist James Denton (“Desperate Housewives”); and Adrian Pasdar (“Heroes”), fiddle player Jesse Spencer (“House”) and singer Rob Guinery (“The Bachelors”). All the proceeds that the group earns from albums, merchandising and more—where it plays rock covers ranging from Bruce Springsteen to the Killers—are donated to such charities as the Fender Music Foundation, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Save the Children and the Pediatric Epilepsy Project.

“We’re not fooling ourselves by thinking people are coming out just for the music,” Grunberg says. “We are actors, but we don’t make ourselves too seriously.”

When Grunberg founded the project three years ago, he thought it would only last for a couple of shows. But “the offers keep pouring in,” he says. “We won’t play for under $10,000 now because we need to make a dent.” So far, Band From TV has raised more than $2 million.

Last October, the group released the CD/DVD set "Huggin’ All the Covers," which reached No. 28 on Billboard’s Top Independent Albums chart and No. 10 on Top Heatseekers Albums. It has sold 2,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

—Sandy Gordon

BACKBEAT

2009 SESAC NASHVILLE MUSIC AWARDS

The SESAC Nashville Music Awards, held Nov. 9 at the performing rights organization’s headquarters in Nashville, honored Monty Powell with the songwriter of the year award and named "Sweet Thing"—a No. 1 hit Powell penned for Keith Urban—song of the year. Powell earned songwriter of the year accolades on the strength of "Sweet Thing" and his other No. 1 for Urban, "Kiss a Girl." Eden Valley Music and Universal Tunes, the publishing companies for Powell, were named country publishers of the year. One of the evening’s highlights was a performance by Universal South artist Joe Nichols. Photos: Courtesy of Ed Rose

Anthony Smith picks up an award for his song "I Want My Life Back" as recorded by Bucky Covington. From left: SESAC director of writer/publisher relations Shannon Tipton-Nees, Grand Roobaum Publishing president Gil Grand, SESAC director of writer/publisher relations John Mullins, Smith and SESAC associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink.

Nanci Griffith takes the stage.

SESAC director of writer/publisher relations Amy Both Hale (center) and associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink (far right) present Americana songwriter Savannah, Dustin and Kevin Welch (from left) a performance award for their work on Mickey & the Motorcars’ album “Neve.”

Songwriter Tim Johnson picks up his performance award for his No. 1 hit for Jimmy Wayne. Do You Believe in Love.” From left: SESAC director of writer/publisher relations John Mullins, State One Co-Founder, America song VP Tim Finch, SESAC director of writer/publisher relations Shannon Tipton-Nees, and SESAC associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink.

From left: SESAC director of writer/publisher relations Shannon Tipton-Nees and associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink, Universal Tunes VP of creative services Kent East, songwriter Monty Powell, Universal Tunes president Pat McNally, SESAC president/CEO Pat Collins and VP of writer/publisher relations Trevor Gale.

Joe Nichols performs "Parental Advisory" from his new album "Old Things Never Die."
INSIDE TRACK

SAADIQ PREPS NEW SET

Raphael Saadiq contends that he hasn’t started working on the follow-up to his 2008 album, “The Way I See It,” but in the next breath he acknowledges that “I’ve recorded some things. I’ve got a couple of things I like.”

Look for him to return to his home studio in January to start working in earnest on the set, and Saadiq says fans can expect it to follow the old-school-fueled path the former Tony! Toni! Toné! leader has been following since his 2002 solo debut, “Instant Vintage.”

“There will be more uptempos,” Saadiq says, “but there’ll be some ’60s and some ’70s and some soulful kind of funk, kind of rock … I love playing with all different types of music, but I’ve had more fun this year playing music than I’ve had in my whole life, so I think I want to play in that arena again a little bit. But I want to raise the bar a whole lot, too.”

While fans wait for that next album they can sample some other Saadiq work that’s currently available. He collaborated on a pair of songs on Ledesi’s latest album, “Turn Me Loose,” and co-wrote and produced Mary J. Blige’s “Can I See in Color” for the film “Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire.” Saadiq is also executive producer of a new sitcom, “Love That Girl!,” and is developing videogames with his company Life.on.Fonic.
BDSCertified Spin Awards October 2009 Recipients:

**900,000 SPINS**
- Yeah/Usher Feat. Ludacris & Lil Jon/LaFace/JLG
- Boulevard of Broken Dreams/Green Day/Reprise

**800,000 SPINS**
- The Middle/Jimmy Eat World/Dreamworks

**500,000 SPINS**
- Hot N Cold/Katy Perry/Capitol

**400,000 SPINS**
- You Belong With Me/Taylor Swift/Big Machine
- So What/Pink/LaFace/JLG

**300,000 SPINS**
- Use Somebody/Kings of Leon/RCA/RMG
- Realize/Colbie Caillat/Universal Republic
- Our Song/Taylor Swift/Big Machine/Universal Republic
- Love Remains the Same/Gavin Rossdale/Interscope
- Halo/Beyonce/Music World/Columbia
- First Time/Lifehouse/Geffen/Interscope

**200,000 SPINS**
- When You're Gone/Avril Lavigne/RCA/RMG
- Psycho/Puddle of Mudd/Flawless/Geffen/Interscope
- No Surprise/Default/19/RCA/RMG
- Love Don't Leave Here/Lady Antebellum/Capitol Nashville
- Fire Burning/Sean Kingston/Beugla Heights/Epic
- Down/Jay Sean Feat. Lil Wayne/Cash Money/Universal Republic

**100,000 SPINS**
- Whatcha Say/Jason Derulo/Beugla Heights/Warner Bros.
- Wetter (Calling You Daddy)/Twista Feat. Erika Shevey/Get Money Gsg/Capitol
- Welcome to the Future/Brad Paisley/Arista Nashville
- Throw It in the Bag/Fabulous Feat. The-Dream/Desert Storm/Def Jam/IDJMG
- The Day That Never Comes/Metallica/Warner Bros.
- Sweet Dreams/Beyonce/Music World/Columbia
- Run This Town/Jay-Z, Rihanna & Kanye West/Roc Nation
- Party in the U.S.A./Miley Cyrus/Hollywood
- Paparazzi/Lady GaGa/Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope
- Only You Can Love Me This Way/Keith Urban/Capitol Nashville
- Magic/Robin Thicke/StarTrak/Interscope
- Love Your Love the Most/Eric Church/Capitol Nashville
- Gettin' You Home (The Black Dress Song)/Chris Young/RCA
- Fallin' for You/Colbie Caillat/Universal Republic
- Closer to Love/Mat Kearney/Awiar/Columbia
- American Ride/Toby Keith/Show Dog Nashville

**50,000 SPINS**
- You're Going Down/Sick Puppies/RMR/Virgin/Capitol
- Whiskey Hangover/Sedsmack/Universal Republic
- Wasted/Gucci Mane Feat. Plies/Asylum/Warner Bros.
- Toes/Zac Brown Band/Home Grown/Atlantic/Bigger Picture
- The Fixer/Pearl Jam/Monkeywrench
- One Time/Justin Bieber/Island/IDJMG
- Meet Me Halfway/Black Eyed Peas/Interscope
- Jars/Chevelle/Epic
- Imma Star (Everywhere We Are)/Jeremih/Mick Schultz/Def Jam/IDJMG
- I'm Alive/Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews/BNA
- Forever/Drake, Kanye West, Lil Wayne & Eminem/Jarvey Mason/
  Zone 4/Streamline/Interscope
- Do I/Luke Bryan/Capitol Nashville
- Cowboy Casanova/Carrrie Underwood/19/Arista Nashville
- Check My Brain/Alice in Chains/Virgin/Capitol
- Bonfire/Craig Morgan/BNA
- Already Gone/Kelly Clarkson/19/RCA/RMG
- All I Ask For Anymore/Trace Adkins/Capitol Nashville
"MADISON SQUARE GARDEN: ROCK 'N' ROLL'S GREAT CATHEDRAL"

- Bono

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ROCK AND ROLL
HALL OF FAME CONCERTS
October 29th and 30th, 2009

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PAUL SIMON
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SIMON & GARFUNKEL
CROSBY, STILLS & NASH
MICK JAGGER
BILLY JOEL
STING
THE BLACK EYED PEAS
JACKSON BROWNE
RAY DAVIES
DION
JOHN FOGERTY
BILLY GIBBONS
BUDDY GUY
BB KING
LENNY KRAVITZ
JOHN LEGEND
ANNIE LENNOX
JERRY LEE LEWIS
LITTLE ANTHONY
& THE IMPERIALS
DARLENE LOVE
SAM MOORE
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SMOKEY ROBINSON
PATI SMITH
JAMES TAYLOR

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