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> P28

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The Amphitheater Is Not A Cash Machine

BY SETH HURWITZ

Enjoy it now. Reality is coming. This chicken will come home to roost.

The stupid money that has been tossed around at amphitheaters for the last several years in the name of tomorrow is just that—stupid.

As I enter my fourth year operating Merriweather Pavilion, I am still waiting for the magic treasure box of money to reveal itself that everybody is so convinced is there at amphitheaters. Are they places to print money? No question, on a given night, with a sold-out show, and people drinking like it’s a sleepover.

Otherwise, it’s just another show. Any perceived giant windfall from keeping the ancillaries is certainly counterbalanced with yearly expenses, mortgage or rent, maintenance, year-round salaries to keep good people there, improvements and everything else that if you don’t pay attention to, you won’t be keeping that shed for very long.

With the leading promoter (Live Nation) basically opening the bank vaults and inviting the agents in, and then claiming that business is wonderful, it’s not hard to understand why people would think otherwise. Business is so great that Live Nation is now selling off sheds (see “Shedding Sheds,” page 11), and the No. 2 shed operator (House of Blues) capitalized, recently selling itself to Live Nation. CEO Michael Rapino is the best Live Nation has ever had, and he’s doing what he can, and even still there has been a merry-go-round of executives at the top since promoter consolidation began.

I hear, “Oh, but you don’t understand. There are streams of income that you just don’t even know about.” And Santa Claus. And the Tooth Fairy. And agents that want you to make as much money as you can.

Sponsorship dollars as a cure-all is a myth. But, for the sake of this ridiculous theory that sheds have some magic touch when it comes to netting sponsorship windfalls, let’s assume for a moment that it’s true. Wouldn’t this giant sponsor from another planet spend less money per venue in order to get a shed-wide sponsorship deal? As in quantity discount? Otherwise, wouldn’t it just negotiate on a per-base value basis? Why would that be about as smart as someone selling one promoter a tour for less per gig if it negotiated each deal separately. Are we suggesting that big money sponsors are as dumb and lazy as current agents?

We have sponsorship deals at Merriweather. Negotiated by a slick dude in New York who does this for a living. I know what’s out there. It’s enough to save you from a really bad stiff. Or may be two normal losers. That’s it. And, again, nobody is giving away more money per venue to get a multi-shed deal. They would be less per venue, not more.

Revenue from ticket rebates? Facility fees? Busted! The agents have already taken their share of those revenue streams by adjusting their deals accordingly. As promoters need to find new ways of hidden money to replace those income streams.

Is the shed problem curable? Yes. It’s simple. Really, the problem. As anyone who knows me is sick of hearing about, is bad shows. Too many of them. They will eat away at any of the other revenue streams, let alone vague, mythical ones.

At the recent Billboard Touring Conference, there was much discussion of how to fill up seats for shows that people aren’t buying.

Here’s an answer. Don’t book them.

There is not a problem with business. There is a problem with the industry. There are too many shows. They clutter the ad. They take tickets from other shows. Why, if one were to look at what shows were being booked, one could get the impression that people were looking wherever shows they could get their hands on.

But, of course, that could not be possible. Why would someone do that? Oh, right...I don’t understand...there’s just tons of money coming in from all directions at amphitheaters, and the more shows there are, the more that money gets delivered by the truckload.

Of course, if one wanted to keep up the impression that the system was working, then one couldn’t afford to let those grosses and number of shows decrease, lest people suspect that there was a downward trend.

So let’s just keep booking those shows while we figure out how to make it work.

It will not work. Amphitheaters are profitable if run right and shows are bought with discretion and sold smartly. Otherwise, what are we saying here? Buy every show you can, pay whatever you to get it booked and you’ll make lots of money? Does anyone really believe that to be true?

For our industry to become truly healthy again, promoters need to start treating talent like they are individual entrepreneurs again. The problem, of course, is that they are not. While this idea of being a factory where you can place one phone call and do all your shopping may appeal to acts that don’t think they need help, it does not serve the ones that do. And the problem there is that act thinks it is the one that needs help. Help from real promoters.

Of course, I am a genius and everybody else doesn’t know what they are doing. I’ll just wait here while the rest of the world figures that out. While I’m counting all those big piles of dough.

And there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. You can’t negotiate reality.


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When country KZLA Los Angeles flipped to a rhythmic AC format last August, alarms sounded in the country music radio and record communities. Los Angeles joined New York, which has lacked a country station since 2002, and San Francisco, which bowed out of the country game in early 2005, as the third among the top five markets with no FM country outlet. (Mount: Wilson FM Broadcasters recently flipped two of its Los Angeles-area VHF stations to country.)

Among the reasons for the KZLA switch: It's increasingly difficult to succeed with country radio in a market where Caucasians carry less and less sway. A 2006 Arbitron report estimated that only 5.4% of country radio's nationwide audience is Hispanic and 2.3% is black, while 92.3% of country listeners fall into Arbitron's "other" category—which includes Caucasians and Pacific Islanders—but in recent years, U.S. Census figures show, the Hispanic portion of Los Angeles County's population—which slipped to 31.1% of the total in 2000 from 40.8% in 1990—has grown.

At the annual Country Radio Seminar, to be held Feb. 28-March 2 in Nashville, Edison Media Research and industry trade group Country Radio Broadcasters will present results of a collaborative study of the relationship of Hispanics with country radio and music. Meanwhile, with demographics shifting across the United States, country radio will have to adapt if it hopes to maintain its role as radio's top format. As of December 2006 there were 2,047 country stations in the United States, according to M Street Journal. News/talk was second with 2,007 stations.

While most country stations continue to focus on their declining core, at least one has been more aggressive when it comes to attracting Hispanic and African-American listeners. Since the former comprises 46% of the 12-plus demographic and the latter another 20%, Miami might appear to be a bad place for a country station. But WKIS (Kiss Country) has aired the format for more than 25 years. Historically, Arbitron has tended to rank the station No. 1 or No. 2 in the market among non-black/non-Hispanic 25- to 54-year-olds, according to PIB Bob Barnett. But the market's leadership of NARM, formerly president/CEO of Global Venues & Alliances, will direct the North American local and national live music strategy, including concert promotion, venue management and sponsorship/alliances.

NRM, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame will launch the definitive 200 campaign aimed at promoting the most commercial or critically successful albums in history. The albums on the list—which should be in everyone's music collection, according to the two organizations—will be highlighted at retail nationwide. The promotion will be enhanced by artist appearances and live performances.

Fat Joe to a worldwide publishing agreement for the songs on the rapper's current album. "Me, Myself & I," released through Terror Squad/Imperial/Virgin. New York-based Reach Global spots an urban roster that includes Public Enemy, Remy Ma, Pete Rock and DJ Kid Capri.

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Busta Rhymes featuring Kelis & Will.I.Am

MAS QUE NADA
Sergio Mendes featuring The Black Eyed Peas

TIMELESS
Sergio Mendes

BEST URBAN/ALTERNATIVE PERFORMANCE

THAT HEAT
Sergio Mendes featuring Erykah Badu & Will.I.Am

MAS QUE NADA
Sergio Mendes featuring The Black Eyed Peas

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MY HUMPS
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ALBUM OF THE YEAR

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CASH FROM CLICKS
Attempts To Monetize Web 2.0 Dominate MIDEM '07

CANNES—If last year saw the music business grappling with the possibilities of Web 2.0, then 2007 will be the year the industry learns to monetize those activities, according to delegates at the 41st annual MIDEM music conference. The conference was notable for a number of deals and mission statements from companies looking to turn the success of user-generated content and social networking companies into cold, hard cash.

The early-conference launch of digital music agency Merlin waved a wand over the independent music community, and gave the conference its highest talon pointing. Described by Bergara Group chairman Martin Mills as a “virtual fifth major,” the nonprofit-making, privately funded project left some scratching their heads over its money distribution model, but was generally received as an exciting opportunity for the sector.

“It’s simply great for the independent labels. And it’s a positive that they are bringing competition into the online market,” said Peter Enders, president/CEO of EMI Music Publishing Continental Europe. Digital issues dominated the panels, with independent labels calling for the abolition of digital rights management (DRM) and seeking solutions for turning the popularity of sites like YouTube and MySpace into actual revenue.

“This is absolutely the year in which increasing digital income can overtake the decline in physical sales,” said Richard Corbett, CEO of digital music marketplace Ricall, who announced a conference deal with downloads Web site indiestore.com. “The trick will be for companies to be aware of licensing opportunities on every platform.”

Interest in the digital sector is reflected in increased attendance for the pre-MIDEM technology conference MusicNet, which attracted 1,322 visitors, up from 1,206 in 2006. However, total MIDEM attendance declined to 9,452 delegates, compared with 9,798 last year.

In an upbeat conference, where companies also looked to mobile phones or expansion beyond traditional national borders to increase profits, one panelist had a radical solution, should all else fail.

“All we’ve got to do,” Mushroom Music managing director Ian James declared during the “Small Rivers Make Main River Streams” panel, “is figure out a way to get everyone in China to buy you 20 bucks, and everything will be fine.”

MORE FROM MIDEM
• The Big Deals: Licensing agency Merlin strikes first deal with Snocap. Phenographic Performance Ltd. completes merger with PMRA and AURA, expands into European collections... Independent Online Distribution Alliance completes acquisition of digital music distributor Uploader.

The conference’s biggest dispute kicked off in Middleton Net’s first session, where Consumer Electronics Assn. president/CEO Gary Shapiro and RIAA chairman Mitch Bainwol clashed over DRM and legal issues. Bainwol accused Shapiro of “making the RIAA look evil.” Shapiro shot back: “I don’t make you look evil. The lawsuits you make against old people and kids make you look evil.”

Amy Winehouse at the British at MIDEM Showcase was the hottest conference set, but artists also took center stage on the panels. Barenaked Ladies frontman Steve Page spoke about social networking sites expanding his band’s brand—and was spotted checking his MySpace page mere minutes after the panel finished.

George Clinton delighted the crowd with tales of bar- ber shops and counterfeit money. And the Black Eyed Peas’ Will.i.am revealed more than anyone—his personal e-mail address, when he had to log on to his Musicane Web site on the conference big screen.

The best party was the Personability of the Year event for Montreux Jazz Festival founder and CEO Claude Nobs. The likes of Nile Rodgers, Seymour Stein and Harvey Goldsmith were in the crowd, while Nobs joined Randy Crawford and Otis Redding on stage for the musical entertainment.

Billboard itself enjoyed an active conference. Our MIDEM Masters Breakfast attracted a huge turnout of top executives. The conference also saw Billboard announce a new strategic agreement with Center Staging Musical Productions. The deal will see Billboard cooperate with the Burbank, Calif.-based company on discovering and promoting new talent, as well as producing music industry events.

EMI Group CEO Eric Nicoli isn’t wasting any time putting his stamp on the company now that he’s calling all the shots. Less than two weeks after throwing out recorded music chiefais Alan Levy and David Mannis, Nicoli radically revamped the label unit that reports directly to him by merging EMI’s hit-starved North American pop, rock and urban operations.

The Capitol and Virgin labels are combining into a single unit called the Capitol Music Group, under the direction of Jason Flom. Andrew Slater is out after six years as president/CEO of Capitol Records.

The shakeup is part of EMI Group’s recently announced strategy to deliver $110 million ($217 million) in annual savings across its business. But it doesn’t affect all aspects of the music giant’s North American music efforts.

Blue Note Label group president/CEO Bruce Lundvall will continue to report directly to Nicoli, as will EMI Music North America CEO Ivan Gavin and EMI Music North America CFO Colin Finnemore. EMI Music Marketing president Ronn Werre, Capitol Nashville president/CEO Mike Dungan, EMI Christian Music group president/chairman/CEO Bill Heim and Caroline Distribution GM/senior VP Bill Hein will all continue reporting to Gavin.

The big winner is Flom, who joined EMI as Virgin chairman/CEO in November 2005 after a long career with Atlantic Records. He now oversees the combined Capitol and Virgin rosters in the United States and reports to Nicoli. “Jason Flom quickly demonstrated his leadership and artist-development abilities since he has been at Virgin. I am confident that he will take us to new levels of success," Nicoli said in a statement.

Flom has his work cut out for him. EMI finished a distant fourth among the major labels in current U.S. market share last year and once again was the only major to claim less than 10% in current market share (9.2%), according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Flom scored wins in the last year with Korn, KT Tunstall and 30 Seconds To Mars, and Virgin’s current market share is up (see chart), albeit slightly, during his brief reign.
Shedding The Sheds
As Suburban Land Values Skyrocket, Live Nation Puts A Few Amphitheaters On the Market

live Nation, the world’s largest promoter and venue operator, is quietly selling 20 amphitheaters on the block, but the company maintains the move says more about real estate values than the amphitheater business.

In the years since most contemporary amphitheaters were built, urban sprawl has reached the shed sites, making the land the venues occupy much more valuable than when initially purchased. Many of the venues date to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when land in the suburbs outside major markets was less expensive and noiseless an issue.

When Germain Amphitheatre was developed in Columbus, Ohio, in 1991, for example, land at its location was valued at about $50,000 per acre, according to the Columbus Dispatch. Now the paper puts the value at about $500,000 per acre if sold for real estate.

Germain is now one of four venues listed by real estate broker CB Richard Ellis. Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Noblesville, Ind., (near Indianapolis), Sleep Train Amphitheatre in Marysville, Calif. (near Sacramento) and Starwood Amphitheatre in Antioch, Tenn. (near Nashville) are the others. They all have capacities of between 17,000 and 20,000, and all will present full concert seasons in 2007.

"Last year we announced that we had contracted CB Richard Ellis to do a global analysis of our real estate holdings on an alternative use basis, or in other words, assess the value of the underlying real estate, not as a music venue," Live Nation CEO, North American Music Bruce Eskowitz says.

Eskowitz says the current listings are the result of the Ellis evaluation. "Obviously, Live Nation is a live music company, not a real estate operator, and strategically we want to utilize our real estate in a way that creates the most long-term value for the company," he says. "In some cases selling the properties and redeveloping the capital may be the best use of the assets for Live Nation. We’ve put the properties on the market to explore the possibility further. This of course, does not mean the sale of these properties is guaranteed.”

Industry speculation abounds as to which shed or sheds, if any, might be next on the block. "Generally speaking, I expect there to be adjustments in our venue portfolio from time to time,” Eskowitz says, adding that "adjustments don’t necessarily mean unloading. "We may bring a venue into the Live Nation family, like we did with the Dodge Theatre in Phoenix, which is a long-term lease, by the way. And, we may explore the sales of certain venues like we are doing with Marysville, Indianapolis and Columbus."

Add Nashville to that list. Starwood was the prototype amphitheater in the Pace Concerts portfolio, a 17,000 capacity venue that in many ways opened the floodgates for amphitheater development in the late 1980s. These venues were conceived as an entrance for promoters into the venue game, allowing the risk-takers to share in ancillary revenue like parking and concessions that were typically off limits in other venues. After Pace built several amphitheaters, Cellar Door and other promoters followed. When Robert Sillerman of SFX (now Live Nation) consolidated the promoters in the late 1990s, a North American amphitheater polith was born.

Louis Messina was president of Pace and was instrumental in building more than a half dozen amphitheatre business, Messina, now president of TMI/AGL Live, says that without sheds, "our company wouldn’t have grown the way it did. And when Sillerman purchased all the promotors, the first ones he purchased were those that had property. That’s why some people weren’t part of the big money round, they had no equity in anything.”

The early success of amphitheaters was a double-edged sword, Messina says. “In one way it was great for us because it put Pace Concerts on the map, big time. We immediately became one of the top buyers in America and we had the purse strings. But in another way we ruined the business."

Programming amphitheaters for a summer turned artists into "inventory," Messina says. "That’s when the money started getting stupid, because the artist was nothing more than a vehicle to trigger all the profit streams: parking, facility fees, rebates, etc.,” he says. "The artists realized it, and smart people like [manager] Howard Kaufman started counting our money. It definitely opened the doors to ‘show me the money’ and that’s why we’re in the state of the business we are today.”

Most sheds do great business in the warm-weather window. According to Billboard Business, the top-performing Live Nation venues in 2006 were Tweeter Center at the Waterfront in Camden, N.J., ($279 million, $414,000 attendance, 108 shows); Nikon at Jones Beach Theater in Wantagh, N.Y., ($212 million, 366,237 attendance, 36 shows); and Tweeter Center for the Performing Arts in Mansfield, Mass. ($183 million, 389,991 attendance, 29 shows). Conversely, the Live Nation sheds on the block performed poorly. Maryland ($3.6 million, 120,274 attendance, 12 shows), Columbus, Ohio ($5.9 million, 203,014, 20 shows), Nashville ($4.6 million, 183,630, 16 shows) and Noblesville ($10.8 million, 360,215, 27 shows).

"Ask if this performance was a factor in determining which sheds might be shed, Eskowitz responds, "The question we are asking ourselves when selling these venues is, ‘Is the capital we could generate by a potential sale better redeplored in other areas of the company?’"

With the $350 million acquisition of House of Blues Entertainment last year and HOB’s club network (and Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino’s admitted desire to capitalize on the hot small and midsize venue market), and the need to pay for an aggressive buying spree in 2006, moving some of the less productive real-estate holdings seems a savvy idea.

Even so, it appears Live Nation is still very bullish on the amphitheater business, not surprising given the company owns and/or operates some 50 of them in North America and annually spends millions on talent to program these venues.

"Our show counts and attendance for the first nine months of 2006 were up in our amphitheaters over the similar period in 2005, and I’m excited about the variety of acts we expect to bring into the [shed] this summer," Eskowitz says. Adding that Live Nation is far more than just an amphitheater company.

"As the world’s largest concert promoter and a leading venue owner/manager... we need to be connected with the music fans on all kinds of levels, whether at the club, theater or large venue," Eskowitz says. "Having a diverse presence in major markets across the country is an important part of our overall strategy at Live Nation.”

In other words, Live Nation likes to cut a deep venue swath in its best markets. For agents routing tours, losing a venue in a big market may not be negative. Sometimes, many would argue, an act playing in a 20,000-seat shed as part of a national amphitheater tour might be better served to play a smaller venue in a given market. The prevailing sentiment for the concert business has long been that it’s usually better to leave money on the table at a smaller venue than to have acts play in front of thousands of empty seats.

The primary reasons to consider the latter would seem to be financial. "I would imagine some agents would be unhappy if historically they were on the receiving end of an overall tour deal, got overpaid in markets where they wouldn’t attempt to sell hand tickets and [then] couldn’t go back for more," says Kirk Sommer, agent at the William Morris Agency in Nashville.

"If you’re good, you’ll bring revenue into the shed inventory where they can’t make money on advertising, concessions and parking alone, they should." Says Kirk Sommer, agent at the William Morris Agency in Nashville.

Arenas and other venues in markets where a shed may suffer could gain a competitive edge. If Starwood closed in Nashville, "I think it helps us put more events in the building," says Hugh Lombardi, GM of the Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville.

That said, a lack of an amphitheater could cost some markets. “The venues are assets that are destined to go to amphitheaters, that’s how their production is set up,” Lombardi says. “Likewise, some are geared for arena shows. I just think this is a good market to play, inside or outside. If it’s a quality event, people will show up.”

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TORONTO—How much is a niche record really worth? Independent labels in Canada say hefty markups on niche product by leading music merchants are hindering their ability to sell their blues, jazz and folk titles.

“We get constant complaints from artists about pricing,” Vancouver-based Festival Distribution president Jack Schiller says. Festival-affiliated label Jericho Beach Music, also headed by Schiller, has a roster including folk trio the Wallin’ Jennys and singer/songwriter James Keelghan. “All the chains are a problem,” Schiller says, “but HMV is the most visible.”

“The major chains don’t give a damn about the niches of the music world,” says Git Laskin, co-owner of Toronto-based Borealis Records, home of Canadian folk acts the Bills and Ron Hynes. “HMV is the worst offender.”

“At HMV, a lot of my catalog sells for $24.99 Canadian ($21.52) and $25.99 Canadian ($22.18),” says Ottawa-based Fred Litvin, president of NorthernBlues Music, home to such Canadian bands as Paul Reddick and Carlos del Junco. “There’s a huge markup.”

Canadian indies say they generally sell all product to independent distributors at between $8 and $9.50 Canadian ($6.82 and $8.04) per unit, which is then supplied to retailers at between $13.50 and $14.50 Canadian ($11.52 and $12.37).

Billboard has now learned that in the wake of labels’ complaints, HMV Canada will investigate ways of reducing its niche product pricing. “I absolutely understand their concerns,” Canada president Humphrey Kadner says. “We have to get prices lower. The ideal would be if we can get

Music World. Kadner says HMV is looking to conduct tests on lower-priced niche material in conjunction with labels. However, distributors and labels fear having to lower their wholesale prices in such an initiative.

“If you lower the price in these genres,” Montreal-based Distribution Fusion III president Jim West asks, “how many more copies are you going to sell? It’s probably negligible, so then it’s worth lowering the catalog (trade) price.”

The Canadian Record Industry Association does not break out statistics for niche genres, with much of the product imported. Insiders say that in the genres most affected by the high pricing, a strong seller will shift between 2,000 and 5,000 units.

The majors’ front-line trade prices range from $11.10 to $14.50 Canadian ($9.47 to $12.37) per unit, although this is often deeply discounted. “How does a $13.50 Canadian or $14.50 Canadian title compete with a title that has been knocked down to $8 (by a major) so it can retail for $9.99 Canadian ($8.52)?” asks Bruce Mackenzie, director of purchasing at Pinoff Record Sales, which operates the 83-store Music World chain nationally.

Canada’s music chains claim their business model involves significantly higher costs than many smaller merchants for staff, rent, inventory investment, advertising and store design/fixtures. They say that explains why some indies are able to sell the same product for up to $5 Canadian ($4.27) less.

“Retailers are saying, ‘Why carry this product when we only turn it twice a year?’” Koch Entertainment Canada VP Cyril Kaye says. “Instead of paying $14.50 Canadian for

enough unit uplift to compensate for lower prices.

“But whatever we do,” Kadner adds, “I have to [be sure] we aren’t worse off through doing it.”

While HMV is the target for most griping, even its distributors admit the 114-store merchant has invested more in stocking niche product than other such chains as CDPlus, Sunrise Records and

SACEM and SAGA are each launching initiatives to streamline the licensing process for songs they control.

The move follows EMI Music Publishing’s initiative announced last year to offer Pan-European licenses. But the services that want licences shouldn’t expect that securing rights for all of the works will be without a hitch.

The process for licensing publishing rights throughout Europe has required a service to negotiate with one or two societies in each of the 25 European Union member states. Laws in many European countries require that those who want to license compositions must do so only through a local collective society rather than directly from a publisher. Under agreements reached between EU societies, the society in each country could offer a license for any composition owned by any publisher worldwide, but only for use within that country’s borders.

The European Commission, believing that this system may be anti-competitive and may therefore hamper the growth of digital offerings, issued a formal recommendation in October 2004 to change the system to promote competition among the societies.

In response, EMI selected only one place where Pan-European licenses for their Anglo-American repertoire could be obtained: through a joint venture formed by the United Kingdom’s MCPS-PRS Alliance and Germany’s GEMA for this purpose. They launched the licensing service called CELAS this month. Control over the languages in these genres, they say, is not tied to specific EU societies because they were not written in Europe.

And now, at this year’s MIDEM, Warner/Chappell revealed its plan to offer Pan-European licenses for its Anglo-American repertoire. Rather than offer licenses through one society, the publisher invited all EU societies to become one-stop shops if they agree to comply with the publisher’s specified standards. This would allow a society—or multiple societies—to offer a Pan-European license for digital and mobile uses.

Jane Dyball, senior VP of international legal and business affairs for Warner/Chappell, says the publisher believes it will be easier for the services to license rights when they have the option to select one of many societies.

“Services may prefer to deal with a society [within a certain country] either due to a tax benefit, language, experience in dealing with that society or for [the society’s way of] accounting. It’s not necessarily a bad thing to only go to one place [like under the EMI initiative], but we presume they may want a choice.”

Even though some societies undoubtedly object to the publisher permitting more than one society to represent Warner/Chappell throughout the EU, Dyball expects to have some societies onboard by March.

Also at MIDEM, France’s SACEM and Spain’s SAGA announced their plans to form a joint venture offering Pan-European rights to repertoire they control. SACEM president/CEO Bernad Miet and SAGA chairman Eduardo Bautista say Italy’s SIAE also plans to become part of the joint venture soon.

The three societies control rights to repertoire owned by authors and publishers within the borders of their countries, along with millions of songs owned by others worldwide.

SACEM and SAGA are working together to develop an automated system designed to identify the compositions and the society that controls rights to them. The venture plans to work in cooperation with societies in other countries so that the rights can be offered throughout the EU.

While the new models offer hope for streamlined digital licensing, some publishing industry executives at MIDEM wanted to keep the status quo, at least for now. For example, one indie publisher who shares rights with EMI said that she hadn’t given the major permission to offer her repertoire through CELAS. EMI and Warner/Chappell will only be able to offer compositions in which they control all rights or have the consent of co-owners.

In such cases, digital and mobile services will still need to make the rounds to all the other EU societies to get rights for the co-owned songs.

Other publishers said that they don’t want societies to be building new technology structures if the cost is ultimately deducted from publishers’ royalties through increased administration fees.

Universal Music Publishing Group and BMG Music Publishing are not expected to launch any Pan-European ventures while the BMG acquisition is still under review by the European competition authority. Sony/ATV Music declined to comment on its own activities, although there was whispering among some people attending MIDEM that the publisher may be revealing a plan shortly.

For 24-7 publishing news and analysis, see billboard.biz/publishing.
Coinciding with the 25th Canadian Music Week, Billboard's annual special feature on the Canadian music market will examine the artists and issues making an impact on the music scene up north for 2007. As Canadian Music Week turns 25, we'll examine the important role they've played in the market and talk one-on-one with David Foster about his induction into the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame. We'll also include a preview of the 2007 Juno Awards and report on the strength of Canada's touring industry.

Don't miss your opportunity to showcase your brand in front of the international music community during Billboard's special feature on Canadian music!

**Issue Date:** March 10  **Ad Close:** Feb. 12
The Blue Chip BRITs
On The United Kingdom's Crowded Awards Calendar, One Ceremony STands Out

LONDON—In 1989, the British recorded music industry gamed on a tactic to rev up its annual BPI Awards ceremony. With a new, snappier name—the BRIT Awards—the gala was televised live for the first time.

That pulled out all the stops. A fateful night became the stuff of legend, with co-hosts Fleetwood Mac drummer Mick Fleetwood and glamor model-turned-pop signer Samantha Fox straddled haplessly at the podium as the show turned into “car crash” TV, replete with technical failures, botched lines, missed presenters and late-arriving guests. Unsurprisingly, the BPI has opted for a delayed feed ever since.

This year, though, will see the Feb. 14 show televised live—for the first time since 1989. The BRITs have gone from laughing stock to blue-chip stock, acknowledged as the jewel in the crown of the U.K. awards calendar—despite the arrival of a plethora of new honors in recent years.

Of all the U.K. awards shows, the BRITs have had the most notable effect on sales. In the Official U.K. Charts Co. (OCC) album listing published Feb. 19 after the Feb. 16 broadcast of the BRIT awards show in 2006, for example, double award-winner KT Tunstall’s “Eye to the Telescope” (Relentless/Virgin) leapt from No. 135 to No. 16 on the sales chart published by the OCC on Sept. 11, 2005, with retailers reporting a 20-fold week-on-week sales increase (Billboard, Sept. 24, 2005).

London now hosts at least 30 music award ceremonies annually, catering to virtually every sector. Take in the Vodafone Live Music Awards, dance music’s DJ Awards, the U.K. Music Hall of Fame, the BT Digital Music Awards and the events hosted by rock weekly Kerrang or music magazines NME or Q—and you’re only scratching the surface.

“At the moment,” suggests Kim Bayley, secretary general of trade body the Entertainment Retailers Assn., “[the ceremonies] all work. If anything, there are gaps within the year.”

But others argue that the calendar is already overcrowded. “Some of the magazine awards have pushed their luck,” says music critic David Sinclair, a regular contributor to The Times newspaper. “[They’ve] created vague categories and fanciful ‘inspiration’-type trophies which are doled out to whoever can persuade to show up. The ones that matter to the artists are the Mercury Music Prize, for credibility, and the BRITs, for sales.”

The U.K. business has “to be very aware that it can overlook the goose by having too many awards ceremonies,” cautions Bernard Doherty, CEO of British PR firm LD Publicity, which has handled the BRIT Awards, MTV Europe Music Awards and the Sony Radio Academy Awards, among others.

For the U.K. mass-market tabloid press, it’s the BRITs that rule supreme. The veteran plugger, whose key music Horny intro trots up. The ones that matter to the artists are the Mercury Music Prize, for credibility, and the BRITs, for sales. “The BRITs business has ‘to be very aware that it can overlook the goose by having too many awards ceremonies,” cautions Bernard Doherty, CEO of British PR firm LD Publicity, which has handled the BRIT Awards, MTV Europe Music Awards and the Sony Radio Academy Awards, among others.

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pushing consumers to spend their money on other entertainment goods," SNPE director general Hervé Rony suggests. —Aymen Pichevín

"Music is dead," says French music trade body SNPE president Roger Faxon will be among those taking part in a Copyright Summit May 30-31 in Brussels, organized by the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC). The gathering will include other representatives of the creative sector plus government officials and legal experts. The aim will be to discuss digital challenges to traditional copyright issues.

Other confirmed guests include EMI Music International chairman/CEO Jean-François Cecillon, Creative Commons founder Lawrence Lessig and Microsoft entertainment and devices director Rich Lappenbusch. —Lars Brandle

Recorded-music sales fell in France during 2006. According to initial estimates that industry trade body SNPE unveiled Jan. 16, the trade value of the physical market in 2006 dropped to around €800 million ($1.04 billion), down 14% from 2005. SNPE warns that digital sales are not yet close to compensating for the loss. The trade body estimates that digital formats registered a 40% year-on-year rise in value to between €40 million and €45 million ($51 million-$58 million). A full sales report from SNPE is due shortly.

"Music available for free (on peer-to-peer networks) is

pushing consumers to spend their money on other entertainment goods," SNPE director general Hervé Rony suggests. —Aymen Pichevín

"Spanish shipments down" (A1P Recordings/Shock), after winning the initial award with its previous album, "Wait Long by the River and the Bodies of Your Enemies Will Float by" (Infidelity/Shock).

The Amp 2006 list will be narrowed down Jan. 31 to a shortlist of eight. The winner, decided by an industry panel March 7, receives $25,000 Australian ($19,557) from the Phonographic Performance Co. of Australia, the event's principal backer. Other nominees this year include Augie March, Hilltop Hoods, Gerling, the Grates and Sarah Blasko. —John Ferguson

Universal Music Austria managing director Hannes Eder has been named the new president of the Austrian arm of IFPI. The general assembly of the trade body elected Eder for a two-year period. In his new, Vienna-based role, he succeeds Manfred Lappe, Warner Music Germany/Switzerland/Austria president/COO of Eastern Europe.

Lappe, who has been president of IFPI Austria for the past eight years, remains on its board, together with Sony BMG Austria managing director Horst Unterholzer, EMI Austria GM Thomas Thron and Edel Music Austria managing director Mark Flury. —Wolfgang Spahr

>> DRONES BUZZ BACK FOR AMP 2

The Drones, the inaugural winners of the Australian Music Prize in 2006, are back in contention for this year's event. The alternative rock act is included in the list of 25 finalists, whittled down from the 200 entries received for the AMP, which honors outstanding creativity by an Australian act.

The band is nominated for its current album, "Gala Mill," (ATP Recordings/Shock), after winning the initial award with its previous album, "Wait Long by the River and the Bodies of Your Enemies Will Float by" (Infidelity/Shock).

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SUM Entomation, a Shanghai, China-based joint venture between Universal Music and Shanghai Music Group, has appointed Antonio Chen as its new GM, effective immediately.

SUM is a Chinese-language media and entertainment production company and is the first joint-venture between an international music company and a major Chinese media group.

Chen replaces Carol Choi, who helped set up SUM in 2004 and left the company in December 2006. Chen reports to SUM managing director Hung Tikk. Chen joined Universal in April 2006 from a position at Sony Music joint venture Shanghai Epic Entertainment as senior A&R consultant for Universal Music China and Hong Kong.

Based in Shanghai, he had been working closely with Choi and SUM's roster of young artists. —Mark McCord
TODD MARTENS tmartens@billboard.com

Making The Brand
MICHAEL PAOLETTA mpaolletta@billboard.com

Keeping The Faith
Cole Hoping For Sales Boost With 'Studio 60' Appearance

Sure, NBC's "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip" is struggling in the ratings department. But that is not stopping record labels and artists from pursuing ways to get their acts on the show. Let's face it: The show averages roughly 9 million viewers each week, according to Nielsen Media Research. And quite frankly, 9 million sets of ears and eyes is not a bad number to reach.

Just ask Sting and Corinne Bailey Rae, who have appeared and performed on the show in recent months. Both artists saw spikes in sales of their new discs, "Songs From the Labyrinth" (Deutsche Grammophon/Universal Music Classics Group) and Rae's self-titled debut (Capitol), following their "Studio 60" guest spots.

On Feb. 5, Natalie Cole will follow in Sting and Rae's footsteps and perform on the show (within the show), singing a version of the Burt Bacharach/Hal David classic "I Say a Little Prayer." It's a song that could have easily appeared on her new album of covers, "Leavin','" for Verve Records.

This new version of "I Say a Little Prayer"—produced by Mark Feist and Damon Sharp—was created and conceived by faith-based company Good News Holdings for the launch of its Save My Life initiative (savemylife.org). The not-for-profit Save My Life raises funds and awareness for children affected and infected by AIDS in Africa.

Cole's appearance on "Studio 60" arrives six nights before the 49th annual Grammy Awards, where the singer is nominated in the best female R&B vocal performance category for "Day Dreaming." Cole also appears in Nap's new video for "Can't Forget About You," which references "Unforgettable," Cole's "duet" with her father.

From where Cole sits, the timing of all this activity is serendipitous. "Today, more than ever, it's really important to diversify and reach as many people as possible," the eight-time Grammy winner says. "You must be more aggressive, because the marketplace is so competitive. The Internet is a double-edged sword. There's so much music out there."

Which is why TV shows like "Studio 60," "Cold Case" and "Grey's Anatomy" have become important marketing tools for the music industry, she adds. "These shows have such broad appeal—and they're all using music in interesting and creative ways."

More important, she notes, "The music supervisors are not necessarily looking for the most recognizable songs or the hits. They're taking chances."

In the episode, Cole performs at a fictitious ceremony for Catholics in Media (in fact, a real organization), which honors the show's Christian character, Harriet Hayes, with an award.

During Cole's introduction on "Studio 60," Save My Life is mentioned, but it's not a blatant advertisement, executive director Thomas Schlammes notes. "Our interest was pretty simple," he says. "How can we organically make this work in the story we're telling? In the end, the artist must work within the context of the show."

Last year, ABC's "Grey's Anatomy" did something similar when it helped promote Ford's Warriors in Pink campaign to fight breast cancer.

Talks between Good News Holdings and "Studio 60" had been going on for quite some time before "I Say a Little Prayer" was mentioned, according to Good News Holdings co-founder/managing director Martha Cotton. "This gave us our first outlet to introduce Save My Life," she recalls.

Savemylife.org goes live Jan. 29, which is when people can purchase the digital track on the site, as well as at other digital music stores. A video for the song is in the works. The song and video—as well as Save My Life—will be heavily marketed and promoted on the Internet via secular and faith-based sites.

At the present time, though, there appears to be one missing link: Verve Records. We realize the label is going through a major transition, but this is one of those instances where the stars are aligning for Cole. A little cross-marketing love from Verve—which has nothing planned—could bring additional attention, and sales, to Cole's album "Leavin'," which has sold 50,000 copies so far, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Verve should take a cue from another Universal Music Group member, Universal Music Classics Group, which notified retailers of Sting's upcoming TV appearances. Because of this, stores knew Sting would be on "Studio 60" during the album's second week of release—a week when most records drop 30%-50% in sales. Universal Music Classics Group GM Paul Foley says, "So, the retailers kept it positioned front and center. This helped us greatly."

Are you listening, Verve?
One Chain's Gain
After A Cold December, Virgin Stands Alone

Last week, I speculated on whether any retailers were still in trouble or any merchants were on credit managers’ watch lists. In doing so, I’m glad I failed to mention that some sources told me Virgin Entertainment Group North America fell into the latter category.

VEGNA was on the watch list because it looked like it was pulling an HMV, which shuttered stores one by one without admitting it was pulling out of the U.S. market, which it ultimately did in 2004. Since 2003, the U.S. Virgin Megastore chain has closed 10 stores, slimming from 23 to its current total of 10 outlets. Rumors even swirled that the chain was about to shutter its 14th Street store in Manhattan—which made no sense to me, considering it’s the chain’s second-highest-volume store.

But credit managers can rest easy, and sales and distribution executives need to sit up and take notice. This week VEGNA announced that it had a great holiday selling season, unlike practically every other traditional music merchant. Although it’s not a publicly traded company, it released some financial information on how well it performed. Let’s look at the numbers.

For December, the 15-store chain produced a 12.1% comparable-store increase and a 9.5% gain for the fourth quarter. What’s more, for the entire year, the chain produced a 5% comparable-store gain.

“The U.S. performance was accompanied by a good performance in the U.K., where holiday [comparable-store] sales grew by 4%,” Virgin Entertainment Group International CEO Simon Wright adds. Meanwhile, sales were up by 14% in Australia, Wright says, while in France they were down by 2%.

Moving back to the United States, VEGNA also said that music was up 8% for December, and from what I can tell that’s not only unique for the traditional category—Even the big boxes were crying the blues about their December music sales.

“It’s been a fantastic year for the Virgin Megastore brand, and it was the best holiday season we’ve seen in the past five years,” Wright said in a statement. How many music chains can make such a claim?

Right about now, I can hear the more cynical readers thinking, “Yeah, so what’s the big deal, Christmas? What did you expect would happen with Tower going out of business?”

But that’s the point: Not only was Tower open right up until Dec. 22, but it was giving its stock away for the last two weeks, escalating from 50% off to 90% off. The liquidating chain was certainly pulling in crowds, even if there was a mess of out-of-stocks near the end.

So while Virgin may have picked up some business from customers that couldn’t find what they wanted at Tower, its real Tower windfall more likely began Jan. 1, and will continue.

The key to the Virgin turnaround is the renovating and/or remerchandising of several stores, beginning with its Times Square store in Manhattan in September 2005. It also renovated its Orlando, Fla., and Anaheim, Calif., stores, spending more than $1 million, and remerchandised most other stores. Also, VEGNA expanded its advertising buys during the period, spending 30% of its annual budget during the holidays. In addition to using circulars for the first time, it also spread word about its expanded product offering via cable TV commercials.

Music sales at Virgin were down 4% last year compared with 2005. But in the remerchandising, Virgin reduced music inventory by 10% to make room for British fashion clothing lines and electronics. It also upped its DVD inventory by 14% at stores. Consequently, electronics grew 25% while apparel and other merchandise grew by 26%, but Wright adds that in the case of the last category that’s on top of an 80% increase in the prior year.

Music, which used to comprise 70% of sales at the chain, was at 43% in December. So far this month it’s at 50%.

Rounding out December sales, DVDs comprise 33% of business: electronics, clothes, books and accessories 17%; and videogames 7%.

And by the way, when asked about 14th Street, Wright says, “No way will we shut down that store. We are very focused on New York and California right now.”

Simon says the Anaheim renovation is also performing nicely. “It had been constantly suffering a minus 5% in sales, and now it’s trading at a plus 20%,” he says. “To see that kind of turnaround was amazing.”

Also, in the Orlando store, which was already strong, Simon says he sees a pickup in sales in wake of the renovation and adds that Virgin plans to renovate more stores.

Of course, the clearest signal that Virgin can send about its intentions for the U.S. market would be to open a new store. But Wright is a savvy business executive. So before he makes that kind of decision, he’s no doubt watching closely to see where the market is going—especially after the industry’s successive double-digit SoundScan sales drops in the first three weeks of the new year.

For 24-7 retail news and analysis, see billboard.biz/retail.
The only important thing right now is that Question Mark’s house burned down, and he needs our help. Check out the video and info at 96tears.net.

I talked to him, and checked the address, and the money does get right to him. You can also contact him with letters of support (and checks) at Question Mark and the Mysterians P.O. Box 96 Cluo, MI 48420

Believe me, he could use your support right now.

In lesser news: I am the last person in the world who will tolerate stolen music, and the thought of intellectual property rights disappearing makes me physically ill. I don’t even like the subscription idea. But we really have to rethink this digital rights management (DRM) thing. Congress is trying to pass legislation to require copy protection technology, and it means well. But we’d better be clear about this before a move that radical gets made.

I am thinking it comes down to two things. First, any song should be downloadable to any device, from any site—legally, I mean. I paid for The DRM technology, from what I understand, will not allow that.

And second, I believe that any kid who wants to steal something will find a way to do it. We can teach them ethics, but we’ll never be smarter or faster than they are. And in many cases the kid stealing is doing it for sport and probably wouldn’t have bought it anyway.

We may lose thousands of sales to the younger audience for emerging bands if there is limited access to the independent digital distributors. These needs to be a dialogue on this. Right now. See you on the radio.

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**COOLEST GARAGE SONGS**

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**COOLEST GARAGE ALBUMS**

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Little Steven’s Underground Garage column is produced exclusively for Billboard. For more information go to UNDERGROUNDGARAGE.COM

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**Who Needs Tickets?**

**eBay’s Acquisition Of StubHub Brings More Juice To Secondary Biz**

So does eBay’s $310 million acquisition of StubHub officially bring the prototypical ticket reseller off the street corner and into a safe landing on a trusted planet in cyberspace?

If nothing else, the secondary space is now more universal than ever.

Bay has agreed to acquire the privately held StubHub, a leading online secondary-ticketing site, with hopes to expand its presence in the online ticketing world (billion.biz, Jan. 4).

From StubHub’s point of view, the purchase represents a massive cash infusion and the opportunity to scale its business with the e-commerce resources of eBay.

And eBay now owns arguably the most respected upstart player in the secondary space.

eBay corporate communications manager Catherine England says the two are a great fit. “StubHub delivers a best-in-class buying and selling experience, and eBay is focused on creating tailored shopping experiences for online shoppers and buyers,” she says. “StubHub will help us build out the customer experience eBay offers to the ticket areas.”

Launched in 2000 and based in San Francisco, StubHub has become the leading online secondary-ticketing company. The eBay acquisition will likely bring more perceived “legitimacy” to StubHub from consumers and a touring industry that has slowly warmed to online secondary market up-and-comers.

Much of the primary market—those directly involved in booking, promoting, hosting and producing concerts—will view these secondary brokers basically as parasites who profit from a show while contributing nothing toward making it happen.

Beyond those brokers who establish businesses with the intent of purchasing tickets for resale at a marked-up price, secondary sites like StubHub also make profits out of Joe Consumer, who sees a chance at making a buck. It’s not unlike those who lined up to buy coveted Sony PlayStation 3 consoles before Christmas, then quickly put them up on eBay for hundreds of dollars more.

The primary business says any money made on a ticket should be shared by the artist and those involved in setting up the show.

StubHub founder/CEO Jeff Fluhr has maintained in Billboard and elsewhere that his company fulfills a need by filling seats that might otherwise go empty, resulting in lost merch and concessions revenue. Consumers have certainly latched on to the concept; StubHub says buyers purchased more than $400 million worth of tickets on its site in 2006, generating more than $100 million in revenue last year. Since its inception, StubHub has brokered the sale of more than 5 million tickets; buyers and sellers each pay a low double-digit percentage of each transaction.

And StubHub has made inroads in the mainstream marketplace. Last summer, all tickets for an INXS performance at the Lobero Theatre in Santa Barbara, Calif., were sold in an open auction format through stubhub.com, with fans determining final ticket prices.

John Scher, co-CEO of Metropolitan Talent and producer of the INXS tour, calls the experiment "quite successful. We didn’t get any negative feedback from the fans and it gave us some insight into buying patterns." Scher adds that the pattern were “what you would naturally see on the black or grey market. The best tickets went for much higher than we were charging, and the last few [cheap] went for lower than were charging.”

Scher believes the eBay/StubHub deal makes the ticketing game more "wide open" than ever. "With StubHub making this move and theoretically being able to get this huge number of eyeballs, the choices are there for the public are becoming more viable," he says.

Scher has long been a vocal anti-scalping voice, and that hasn’t changed. "Ticket scalpers are the scum of the earth. They don’t have any legitimate investment in producing a particular concert, career or artist, or the health of industry," he says. "I would not put StubHub in that category. They have made themselves legitimate and accountable, which is the most important thing.”

**Clarification:** In Billboard’s Jan. 6 "Best Bets" issue, Roger Waters was cited as having a top ticket price of $600 last year. While technically that’s true, only the Hollywood Bowl show was priced that high; most markets topped out at $125.

For 24-7 touring news and analysis, see billboard.biz/touring.
A Post-Presale Era?

For Some, The Honeymoon Is Over

Presales—a relatively new phenomenon where fans are offered access to a "limited" pool of choice tickets through sponsor promotions, fan club membership, venue promotions or a combination thereof—have served as both a reward for loyal fans and customers and a barometer of a tour's "hotness." But now presales seem to have hit critical mass, with too many programs diluting the exclusiveness of the concept.

In 2005, the international demand for tickets through fan club presales for U2's Vertigo tour was so intense it pretty much overloaded the system and vastly outstripped supply. In 2006, tepid presales in several markets for the Dixie Chicks' Accidents & Accusations tour gave producers a pretty good idea that the tour needed to be reconfigured.

"In most cases nowadays, most presales are really just watered-down on-sales," says Dennis Arfa, president of Artists Group International, a resident for such acts as Billy Joel, Rod Stewart and Metallica. He says with the exception of a few acts who have developed a community base through fan clubs, presales are eating up the premium ticket inventory.

Arfa adds that presales are not doing much to alleviate scalping of premium seats, with many brokers simply doing what it takes to get in on the presale. "We've had shows with tickets on sale on eBay before we were even clear what date we were playing on," he says. "And the regular customer who goes online at 10 o'clock in the morning when tickets go on sale, there's nothing there. If he isn't a gold card member or an active participaint with the local basketball team or whatever it took to have access, there's nothing available in the lower bowl."

"The presale game has become so convoluted, with so many different options, that sometimes it can confuse the consumer," Arfa says and notes that his honeymoon is pretty much over with the concept.

For some upcoming Joel and Stewart dates, Arfa says AGI is considering forgone presales entirely.
SPANGLISH STRATEGY

BEYONCÉ'S GOT THE LATEST BILINGUAL HIT TO SCORE ON LATIN RADIO

When a Spanish version of Beyoncé’s “Irreplaceable” hit KVIB (95.1 Latino Vibe) Phoenix a month and a half ago, listeners liked what they heard—even if they weren’t sure who was singing.

“People were calling and saying, ‘Who is that? It sounds like Beyoncé,’” afternoon drive DJ Ruben S. recalls. “People were pretty surprised to hear it was Beyoncé.”

Since then, the track, whose title translates as “Irreplaceable,” has consistently ranked among KVIB’s top five requested songs. Taken together, spins of the Spanish and English versions on Latin radio nationwide have placed the tune at No. 8 this week on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart.

That is well in advance of simultaneous English and Spanish releases of “B’Day” scheduled for April, Music World Entertainment CEO Mathew Knowles says. The Spanish version will have five bonus tracks, including duets with Shakira and Alejandro Fernandez.

Knowles, who manages his daughter’s career and whose imprint will put out the albums with Columbia, says, “She wants to expand her fan base.”

The same goes for Ford Motor, which wrapped a Univesion.com campaign for its 2007 Edge around the Web site’s exclusive Spanish ringtones of “Día Vu” and “Ring the Alarm.” Fans who downloaded the ringtones were entered to win a trip to Beyoncé’s July 21 show in Monterrey, Mexico.

Dave Sanabria, crossover vehicle advertising manager for Ford, says Univision’s approach was a perfect fit.

“Not only music, but technology plays a key role in the English customer’s life,” Sanabria says.

A major platform for English, Spanish and Spanish-language songs to coexist is Latin urban radio, a format that developed after the reggaeton explosion a few years ago. This week’s Latin Rhythm chart features 10 songs released primarily in English.

Los Angeles’ bilingual KXOL (Latino 96.3) is playing a remix of Akon’s “I Wanna Love You” with Tego Calderón, as well as the English and Spanish versions of “Irreplaceable.”

“The people that Beyoncé made her song for—we’re bilingual, and we don’t want to be put in a box,” Spanish broadcasting System senior VP of programming Pio Ferro says. “When you see the people that go out to the clubs and show you their events, it’s a very urban look: the way they dress, the way they act, the way they talk.”

KXOL music director/associate PD Jerry Pulles says, “It’s the hip-hop lifestyle.”

Arguably the most successful, English-to-Spanish crossover album of date has been Christina Aguilera’s “Mi Re- flejo,” which has sold 472,000 copies in the United States and Puerto Rico, according to Nielsen SoundScan. (Rudy Perez, who produced “Mi Re- flejo,” is also producing Beyoncé’s Spanish songs.)

Sony BMG Latin America president Kevin Lawrie says his label will co-market “B’Day” to Latin audiences in the United States and handle marketing and distribution in Latin America.

A reshuffled Spanish version of the “Irreplaceable” video premiered last week on “MTV Latino,” the video countdown show on bilingual channel MTV Tíe. KXOL’s Pulles says, “It kind of comes off a little bit as a novelty, but I think the listeners take it as, ‘she’s validating us, and we speak Spanish, and we have a young urban movement and it’s cool to speak Spanish’.”

...
Subscriptions Canceled

Big Internet Brands Leave Music Services To The Specialists

So far, 2007 has not started off well for music subscription services. The closure of AOL Music Now and Virgin Digital illustrates just how difficult selling music by subscription is, even for companies with deep financial resources and widely recognized brands.

That both unloading their services onto Napster has some analysts questioning whether the business is better left to smaller companies specializing solely on running a subscription service, rather than large Internet portals or consumer brands with many other irons in the fire.

“We wouldn’t be surprised to see more players take this approach over the coming 12 months, as the initial rush of hype around digital music dies down, and those faced with the reality of a hugely difficult market tend to look to the reins over to specialist players,” Ovum analyst Jonathan Arber writes.

Veterans of the subscription service field say a successful music subscription business needs at least 1 million subscribers in order to reach critical mass and become self-sustaining, although one can be profitable with lower numbers. To date, the only company to achieve that milestone is RealNetworks’ Rhapsody. Assuming it can retain most of the subscribers it acquired from AOL and Virgin, Napster will not be far behind, at around 300,000 subscribers.

Meanwhile, household names like Yahoo and MTV are not even close. Neither company has disclosed subscriber figures, but analysts estimate they lag far behind. AOL Music Now had just 50,000 subscribers when it handed the service over to Napster—100,000 less than when it acquired Music Now in November 2005.

To be fair, the AOL service was profitable, according to Music Now head Gary Cohen. The decision to shutter it was more of a result of AOL’s desire to focus on advertising revenue over subscription revenue. But Cohen says it was better to sell off Music Now and get an advertising and promotions deal out of it, “Cohen says, which is exactly what happened. Napster paid AOL $15 million for both the subscriber base and to advertise the Napster service through the AOL community. Yet the sale plainly illustrates how music subscription services have failed to live up to the expectations AOL and others had when they entered the digital music goulash during the last two years.

Lured by a relatively easy marker entry thanks to generic service providers like MusicNet and readily available compatible devices, AOL, MTV, Virgin and Yahoo all launched music subscription services thinking their marketing prowess, strong brands and existing customer base would revolutionize the industry.

What was found was a complex market that to this day is defined by technology, device and supplier problems far out of their control.

The technology governing the transfer of subscription tracks to portable devices still has problems. None of the services work with the popular iPod, the few devices that are compatible are unoriginal clones that have not sold well, and the monthly music licensing fees are a constant drain on already thin resources.

And to cap it all off, most consumers are just not ready to accept the concept of music as a service rather than as a product. Convincing consumers otherwise will take an expensive marketing effort that the surviving services from MTV and Yahoo have promised, but not yet delivered.

While they certainly have the money to do more to promote their services, it’s hard to justify the expense when compared to the relatively low returns and overall difficulty of running the service.

What’s more, record labels and publishers seem content to remain on the sidelines. “There’s no industry desire to see subscription services succeed,” a former music subscription service executive says. “[Labels] love the idea of reoccurring revenue but they know it’s replacement revenue. They recognize that unlimited access to content wherever you are whenever you want equals no CD sales.” Collectively, these factors resulted in a rude awakening to the newcomers, but may ultimately play right into the hands of Napster and Rhapsody, which have been around for much longer. Both built their business largely around music subscription and would be in a good position to take over the services of rivals MTV and Yahoo should either decide it is no longer worth the investment.

Additionally, the ongoing fishing dispute over consolry music licensing is keeping potential new players like Amazon and Target from entering the market. They could easily decide to source a subscription service as well, such as how MSN abandoned its subscription plans and partnered with Rhapsody, instead.

But it may take some time before that point is reached. A January 2007 Jupiter Research report found that spending on music subscription services grew 14% in the United States last year, to $183 million, and is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 32% during the next five years. That may be incentive enough for both existing and potential subscription services to tough it out while the market slowly reveals itself.

For 24-7 digital news and analysis, see billboard.biz/digital.

THE PHONE WEARS PRADA

Still oohing and ahing over Apple’s iPhone that Steve Jobs pimped out at MacWorld earlier this month? LG Electronics has teamed up with music brand Prada to unveil a similar touchscreen multimedia phone as well. Like the iPhone, it has a 2 megapixel camera, video and music player and completely buttonless interface. The phone is a bit smaller, but also slightly thicker, than the iPhone. And instead of a hard drive, it’s got a spot for removable memory cards—something the iPhone lacks. It also has third-generation high-speed wireless network connectivity and Bluetooth capabilities.

However, it does not feature a Wi-Fi wireless connection, nor will it be able to play iTunes files. The Prada phone will be sold on the iPhone’s network, in Europe anyway, debuting next month for about $775. No word yet on when U.S. carriers will offer the phone. —Antony Bruno
For producer/director John Stagliano, the music in porn films is as important as the in-your-face action on the screen. He's made a name for being on the cutting edge of employing current original music in feature films, and for working directly with music supervisors. And that's not the only name he's made: in the adult film industry, Stagliano is known affectionately as "Buttmann." Indeed, the man has an obsession with all that relates to a certain part of a woman's body. For proof, look no further than his numerous porn films, including "Buda," "Batman in the Cock" and "Bend Over Brazilian Babes." His film "The Fashionistas," released in 2002, took home 11 Adult Video News Awards including best DVD. Earlier this month, "Fashionistas Safado" was awarded three trophies, including best group sex scene, at the annual AVN Awards ceremony in Las Vegas. "Safado: Berlin" is due later this year.

Stagliano releases his films via his company Evil Angel, which he formed in the early '80s. These days Evil Angel has production deals with some of pornoland's biggest director/producers, including John Leslie, Rocco Siffredi, Joey Silvera, Christoph Clark and Nacho Vidal. In each production deal, the respective director/producer retains ownership of his content, while Evil Angel's sales department handles all sales. When not lensing or editing a film, Stagliano can be found in Las Vegas, where his live show, the 2-year-old "John Stagliano's Fashionistas," is in the process of migrating from the Krave nightclub to the Empire Ballroom. Stagliano is also in talks with a "well-known nightclub in a casino to create a sensual live show mixed with video." Throughout the porn mogul's business empire music is a powerful force.

What has most surprised you about producing a show in Las Vegas? The amount of marketing that must go into a show and dealing with the competition of other shows on the Strip. I thought if the show got good reviews and it was successful, I could at least break even. But I'm losing a lot of money on the show each week. Still, it's been a sobering experience. I was thinking that I was on top of the world after my film "The Fashionistas" did very well. And then the Vegas dance show [based on the movie] opened to good reviews. But the reality of the situation is that this is a much more difficult way to make money.

In the show you use the music of many known acts, including Tool, Led Zeppelin, the Crystal Method and Lords of Acid. How difficult—or not—was it navigating the music industry to license this material? I'm not sure that it's 100% legal, but there are over 20 shows in Las Vegas that use music by mainstream artists, and, from what I can tell, the hotels, casinos and nightclubs pay a blanket license to ASCAP and BMI that should cover such fees. Of course, a good lawyer for one of these artists could say, "You're charging admission for this show and even though you're doing it in a venue that's paid for this license, the spirit of that law was not meant to apply to this." It's possible I'd have to close the show because of that. While it might be a gray area [in music licensing], the show would never have been built if I didn't think it was legal to do.

These days, artists like Matmos, Tommy Sunshine and others are working with directors and producers to feature their original music in pornos. Why is this happening? Porn is gaining a lot more respect over the years. Each subsequent generation has been exposed to more pornographic images. It's become more acceptable, which I suspect will continue for a while. Besides, these artists lending their music are very likely fans of pornography.

How important is music in a porno? In my new film "Fashionistas: The Challenge," I put more music into it because it was conceived as a feature. I worked on the music for nearly a year with Douglass Mariah, who lives in Vegas. We scored the music to the scenes in features, music can be important to the storytelling. This is why I did the "Fashionistas" dance show in Vegas. I love music, I love dance. This is what motivates me. The art I want to create is an integration of visuals and music. The music must be right or it destroys the scene.

How is the porn industry dealing with and combating piracy? It's gotten bad for my company. I'm involved in two legal cases right now. There is a guy in Canada who is distributing good quality copies of 55 of my DVD titles. While the Canadian case is on hold for now, we have gained jurisdiction for this action in the U.S., as [the company] also does business here. We could still pursue something in Canada after the U.S. case is resolved. There's also a guy in Germany, who we were selling to, but who was duping a lot more. This is a criminal case that we are helping to prosecute. The owner of the company, Paradise Films, is free on bail. I have no information on dates for the further prosecution of this company.

How do you keep growing your market? I'm not sure. [laughs] Pure lunacy, probably. Seriously, I can grow because I'm successful. When you're successful, you get opportunities opened up for you. I can grow by inviting other producers to be part of Evil Angel. I can also grow by finding more ways of getting revenue for the producers I already have. I do both. We're putting a lot of money into the Internet now. Though it's not yet common with porn sites on the Internet, we're encoding everything so that all the content is full-screened. Also, we're creating niche sites from the product we already have. This is the way things are best sold on the Internet.

What do you attribute Evil Angel's success to? I focus on maintaining a consistent quality, which was lacking in the porno business. Equally important, though, is how I've organized my company. The gross sales of my own movies are a very small percentage of the total gross sales of Evil Angel. But I have 12 other directors in the Evil Angel fold, including Joey Silvera, John Leslie and Rocco Siffredi. I helped them own their own product. I only keep a percentage of the gross sales, which no one in the porn industry was offering directors before.

What prompted you to take that business approach? I was interested in what motivates people to do a good job. So, when I started my own company, I wanted to create a situation for director friends of mine who would be rewarded for doing a better job, for putting extra effort into the movie — rather than just being paid a little fee. Jules Jordan is a great example. Before joining Evil Angel, he was working for Pleasure Productions where, as a director, he was making $2,000 per movie. He recently left Evil Angel to start his own business. At the time he left my company, he was making one movie a month. Between his catalog sales and new titles, he got over $100,000 a month. By developing a solid reputation, his old movies continued to sell, because he cared about the value of his name, how he marketed his name and shaped his product, Jules had greater potential for future rewards. He owns these movies. If you have physical ownership of something, you will put more work into it.

So, what's the biggest misconception people have about your job? That I'm getting paid all the time. It's work. It's a business. People may think there are porn girls walking in and out of here. But they're not. We're not getting blow jobs here. There's no casting couch in my facility. ••
Billboard's annual all-inclusive coverage of SXSW gives a VIP tour of this year's event, including the top acts to watch and conference highlights. Our special feature will also report on the critical part SXSW plays in launching and building artists for independent labels and distributors, and a look at the indie labels experiencing chart success. Don’t miss your opportunity to be a part of Billboard's annual SXSW special feature and showcase yourself at one of the most important industry events of the year!

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Jenny From El Barrio

J-Lo embraces her roots with Latin-themed film and TV projects and a collection of romantic ballads, the first Spanish-language album of her career.
Jennifer Lopez catapulted her acting career with her starring role in "Selena," a biopic on the Latin Tejano star who sang in Spanish and was on the verge of an English-language crossover prior to her death. Ten years after "Selena," and following a multiplatinum recording career in English, Lopez is ready to sing en Espanol once again.

"Como Una Una Mujer" ("How a Woman Loves"), Lopez’s first Spanish-language album, will be released by Epic and worked in conjunction with Sony BMG Latin for the U.S. Latin marketplace and Latin America. The all-Spanish album, co-written and co-produced by Lopez’s husband Marc Anthony in conjunction with Estefán and Julio Reyes, hits stores April 3 supported by groundbreaking media synergies. At the heart of all is a deal in the works with the Univision TV network to produce a five-part miniseries based on a treatment by Lopez, which in turn is based on the content of the album. The series will feature the album’s music. Lopez will not act in the series, but she will perform a track at the end of each episode.

"It’s the first time we’ve done something like this," says Simon Fields, Lopez’s production partner in Nuyorican Productions and the Los Angeles-based film and TV company. Each song will embody one of the series’ storylines. "It will be as strong as if it were a movie series," Fields says, adding that he expects the approach to work as a template for other projects.

The deal—still under negotiation at press time—would also encompass tie-ins with a major retailer who would sponsor the series, as well as opportunities with other Univision properties and tie-ins in the digital and mobile arena.

However, "Como Una Una Mujer" wasn’t conceived as a clever way to utilize multiple media platforms. The notion of recording in Spanish was behind Lopez’s very first demo when she finished filming "Selena" in 1997 (see Q&A, this page). The concept materialized three years ago, when Anthony was wrapping up production of his album "Amor Sin Mentiras" with Estefán and Reyes.

Lopez went into the studio to record one song with her husband and got hooked. "Emotionally speaking, to me this album is more me than any other album," she says. "Como Una Una Mujer" makes no concessions to the English market. It is mainstream, traditional Latin pop, with no English-language versions on the album nor any plans to record them. Lopez is working on a more urban-leaning, full-fledged English-language album that she plans to release before year’s end.

A consistent multiplatform seller (see chart, next page), Lopez has seen declining sales for her recent releases. Her last album "Rebirth," released in 2005, was her first to miss the million mark, selling slightly more than 700,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Regardless, Epic executives fully expect the album and the single, "Qué Hiciste," to get plenty of attention in both Latin and mainstream marketplaces.

According to Epic senior VP of marketing Lee Stimmel, "Qué Hiciste" will air on MTV and MTV Tr3s. This would mark only the second time that MTV has played a Spanish-language video, following the 2005 airing of Shakira’s "La Tortura."

The Lopez track has yet to break major ground in radio. It entered the Latin Pop Airplay chart this week at No. 29, with plays at 20 stations—four less than the week before. Still, Stimmel says, he expects success, not just at Spanish-language radio, but also at key English-language stations like Kiss FM Los Angeles.

"It’s Jennifer Lopez," Stimmel says when asked if he thinks the single can play at English radio. "We’re very optimistic about the single traveling in all different kinds of formats, and a lot of it has to do with the appeal of this artist."

Working Latin acts in both marketplaces is not new for Epic. Possibly the most experienced label in this realm thanks to artists like Shakira, Ricky Martin and Anthony.

Lopez is a household name among Latinos in the United States. Latin America and around the world, but as a monolingual celebrity, famed for films as much as for music. And when it comes to music, Sony BMG Latin America president Kevin Lawrie says, "The key here is credibility."

Sony BMG Latin America is co-marketing the album with Epic. "The mistake would be to lean too hard on the Jennifer Lopez brand, which is a worldwide brand. People respond to music generally with their ears, and we need to be very, very respectful of that and approach this from a very credible way."

Lopez has just started to dip her toes into Hispanic media to support her album. She was recently featured on the cover of People en Español’s "100 Most Influential Hispanics" issue, talking about the record, and has done a few interviews on Spanish-language stations around the United States.

Lopez’s first major public appearance to support the album came Jan. 23, at a private listening session in a Miami Beach studio. Sitting alongside producer Reyes and her husband, she spoke about making the album and played a selection of tracks. Some 300 VIPs, among them local and international media and key distributors, attended. Lopez—garbed always in a clingy, white dress—stayed away from the fray, chatting with Anthony for nearly two hours. Later she greeted some of the heaviest of the heavy hitters: Latin Recording Academy president Gabriel Abaroa, Shakira’s manager Pepo Ferradas and Alex Lopez Negrete, CEO of top Latin ad agency Lopez Negrete.

The following day, Lopez was announced as a surprise guest for a pre-Super Bowl party Feb. 3 in Miami, where she’ll perform alongside her husband. Plans also call for her to go on promotion trips to Argentina and Mexico.

Stateside, Epic and Sony BMG Latin will work mirror cam-

Prior to kicking off promotion for her new album, Lopez spoke exclusively with Billboard from her Los Angeles home about her burgeoning Latin creative side.

This album is nothing like your English-language fare at all. Why? Because I love the music. I love the drama. It must be the actress in me. I love the deep, intense passionate way of expressing yourself in those kinds of songs. And it’s really not something that lends itself to English music, and not something I’d been able to tap into before.

Do you feel that there are two completely different aspects of yourself? I think so. I think this is the side of me that people don’t know, and it is really a big part of who I am. This album is closer to who I am than any album I’ve ever done.

You didn’t actually write on this album, but you told your writers what you wanted to say. I had to really, really express to them the kind of album I wanted to make. But it started to come very naturally to the writers when they got to know me, when I spoke about the things that were important to me. I would say, "This song needs to be about a person, and when he’s leaving," and they would turn around and write it in Spanish. Like [the single] "Qué Hiciste." I said, "I know what this song is about. It’s this relationship that he destroys by his own hands." And it would be in that kind of song.

"Por Arriesgaros" is a duet with your husband, Marc Anthony, but a very subtle duet, with his vocals almost hidden. It wasn’t supposed to be a duet at all. It was the very first things you understand, these are things you’ve always wanted to say, now tell me the story." It was very natural.

Your voice sounds much more lyrical than on your albums. Much bigger, too. I’ve matured as a singer. Marc gave me confidence in the studio as well. When someone believes in you so much, you don’t want to let them down. And it’s also the material. I think this material lent itself to my voice. And it actually made me approach my new English album in a different way. I have a different standard now.
paigns in Latin and mainstream media. In the digital arena, for example, a preorder for “Cómo Ama” went up Jan. 30 at both iTunes and iTunes Latino.

In addition, Epic president Charlie Walk says, “We also understand a second generation of Latinos that speak English and Spanish, and we’re very interested in reaching them as well. You’re not just promoting and marketing to the pure Latin marketplace. You can hit the English market where you know Latin music will be there.”

“Cómo Ama Una Mujer” sounds nothing like Lopez’s previous English fare. Unabashedly romantic, it is quintessentially Latin in its big arrangements, romantic themes and vocally dramatic interpretations. With no musical indication of crossover aspirations into English, the album is not exactly what the world might have expected, but exactly what Lopez wanted to do.

The album comes at a time when Lopez seems to be getting more in touch than ever before with her Latin roots. It is just one of a string of recent, current or upcoming Latin-themed projects. This coming summer will see the release of “El Cantante,” a film based on the life of singer Hector Lavoe, starring Lopez and Anthony. The film is set for theatrical release July 27 with a soundtrack to be released on Sony Records (although Lopez does not sing on it). Also hitting theaters with Lopez as star will be “Bordertown,” a political thriller surrounding the missing women of Juarez, Mexico. There is also a new, Latin-themed perfume to be launched later in the year, and several Latin-themed TV shows in various stages of development. Lopez’s Nuyorican Productions is involved in the development of a TV show for Fox called “The Brethren,” another TV show titled “Ayuda,” about the world of Latin nannies in Los Angeles; a movie for Lifetime TV; and a TV series titled “Echo Park.”

While it is impossible to underestimate the impact of the Lopez name on her musical promotion, label execs are hoping the music will stand on its own.

“We feel we have an absolute gem, and music that was done with the heart,” Lawrie says. “That will connect independently of the Jennifer Lopez brand.”

CHARTING LOPEZ

J-Ló has scored high on the Billboard charts. A quick hit history of SINGLES (below) and ALBUM SALES (right).

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<td>Control Myself</td>
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<td>Have You Met</td>
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<td>Do This</td>
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Are there plans to record English-language versions of any of the songs? I would never mess with the integrity of this album. This album is what it is.

Was it important that Latin audiences not hear you as a translation of J-Ló in English?

When I started to make music in English I was at a different time, and at a different age. And now, they’re going to get me now. When I say this has always been a dream of mine, it’s the truth. The first demo I ever made was in Spanish. It was called “Vivir Sin Ti.” This was 11 years ago. It was actually written by the backup singers of Selena, but it didn’t come to me through the movie. I don’t even remember how it came to my hands. And I went to [producer] Sergio George, and I said, “Do you want to do this demo?” We did, and my manager took it to the Work Group in Los Angeles and there was interest. And the head of the label was Tommy Morotola, and he said, “You speak English.” And I said, “Of course.” And he said, “We ought to do an English record.” And the rest is kind of history.

There’s a song on here I particularly like: “Tu.” It showcases your voice, and the melody is reminiscent of Italian pop—very uplifting but wistful at the same time. What is the story behind that?

We were almost over with the album, and we said, “Let’s make believe we don’t have any songs, and let’s do three or four more.” And one of the first songs we came up with was “Tu.” It was an emotion I had about wanting to sing that to my child one day. That’s where the song was born from. To sing it to my own child, I don’t like to say things because I like people to interpret them for themselves, so they think it’s for their husband, or their girlfriend, but for me that’s where the idea was born from, and then we went from there.

You’ve said you can’t take credit for opening the door for Latina acrosses playing non-Latin roles in Hollywood, but actually, you have been able to do all kinds of roles, which is unusual. That was important to me at one point in my career, because I didn’t want to be pigeonholed. Why do we have to define this character in this piece if it doesn’t mean anything in this story?

But being bilingual has been very important to you. That’s one of the best things. I was born in the Bronx. I speak English and that was my first language. But one of the beautiful things about being in the public eye, because I didn’t grow up speaking Spanish in my household, I had to learn to speak it. And it has been one of the best choices in my life.

‘This is the side of me that people don’t know... This album is closer to who I am than any album I’ve ever done.’
THE SHINS, from left, are bassist DAVE HERNANDEZ, guitarist/vocalist JAMES MERCER, keyboardist/guitarist MARTIN CRANDALL, and drummer JESSIE SANDVELL.
When Natalie Portman told Zach Braff in the 2004 movie “Garden State” that the Shins song “New Slang” would change his life, it changed the shape of the Portland, Ore., indie-pop band’s career, too. Two years later, the Shins’ Seattle-based label, Sub Pop, is facing one of the biggest and most nerve-wracking opportunities it’s ever had—a Jan. 23 launch for the band’s third album, “Wincing the Night Away,” that’s easily the largest in the label’s history and the challenge of playing by independent, relatively low-budget rules as the Shins try to grow from a college-mixtape staple into full-on alternative rock stars.

For the first few years, the Shins, originally formed in Albuquerque, N.M., by frontman/songwriter James Mercer, built their audience slowly but consistently. The band’s first two Sub Pop albums, 2001’s “Oh, Inverted World” and 2003’s “Chutes Too Narrow,” respectively sold about 1,000 and 16,000 copies in their first week of release, according to Nielsen SoundScan. And the albums kept moving steadily since then, thanks to solid word-of-mouth, college-radio play and steady touring. Along the way, Mercer moved to Portland and the rest of the band gradually followed him to the Pacific Northwest. “Albuquerque’s nice,” keyboardist/guitarist Martin Crandall says, “but there’s not much going on musically, unless you want to watch ska bands.” Portland was a more congenial atmosphere for a group like the Shins. It’s home to such indie notables as the Decemberists, Sleater-Kinney and Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks, as well as innumerable smallish music venues.

Then the Shins endorsement in “Garden State” came along, and the movie’s Grammy Award-winning soundtrack (assembled by Braff) included two tracks from “Oh, Inverted World.” “New Slang” (which also appeared in a McDonald’s commercial) belatedly became an alternative radio hit. As Mercer jokes, having toured for a year to support its second album, the band went back to touring behind its first album. At the time of the film’s peak in late 2004 and early 2005, both Shins albums sold several thousand copies every week. Even now, “World” moves about 1,000 copies weekly, and “Chutes Too Narrow,” a little fewer than that.

Mercer started recording the gentle, varied, lushly produced “Wincing the Night Away” about a year ago, and some songs have been around even longer. “I’m just so eager to have the thing out,” Mercer says backstage at the band’s final gig of 2006, a hometown show at Portland’s Crystal Ballroom, as the other Shins run around snapping Polaroids that will be included with a British 7-inch vinyl single. “My life right now is just this anticipation.”
The 1,500-capacity Crystal is on the west side of Portland, in the downtown area with most of the city’s bigger rock clubs. It’s not too close to the bohemian neighborhoods on the northeast side of town, where Crandall and drummer Jesse Sandoval live—the band still rehearses in Crandall’s basement) or on the southeast side (where Mercer lives in a house that he recently discovered was where Elliott Smith wrote his first album). But the Shins sold out the Crystal show long in advance. Their audience is much too big for any of the east-side clubs now.

Meanwhile, in the uncertain post–Tower Records environment, Sub Pop is preparing to sell “Wincing” on a scale it’s never attempted before for a new release. “The most we’ve had to lay out on street before for any of our releases before is 40,000 for Sunny Day Real Estate,” label GM Megan Jasper says. “For this record, we’re hoping to do a minimum of 200,000, and I suspect we’ll end up somewhere around 220,000 or 230,000. It’s always a little bit scary when you’re laying out that many records, because you’re thinking about returns and oversaturation—that’s what we need to avoid.”

“I’m taking stuff I learned from going fairly big with the Postal Service [whose album “Give Up” went gold] and applying it,” Sub Pop head of retail Andy Kotowicz says. “In its first week, the Death Cab for Cutie record that came out on Atlantic did close to 100,000, so we hope to be in that kind of range. We’re going to be doing a fairly heavy discount on the catalog stuff leading up to the release of [“Wincing”], so I expect the catalog will go up, and hopefully ‘Oh, Inverted World’ will go gold while we’re at it. That’s not super, super close; we’re probably about 100,000 copies away, shipping-wise.” (According to SoundScan, “World” has sold 480,000 copies, but Kotowicz says that number’s somewhat inflated.)

The first line of attack for the new album is indie stores, the band’s initial fan base. “One of the things we did that was unusual for us,” Jasper says, “was that in order to make a gesture to the independent stores who’ve supported the Shins for so many years and so strongly, we offered the ‘Phantom Limb’ single only to independent stores from its release, Nov. 21, through the end of the year. It’s kind of a big deal for us, because you really don’t want to exclude anybody, but we felt it was important to us to make that gesture for independent retailers.” The single has scanned about 9,000 copies, as well as another 27,000 copies as a digital download.

Beyond the single, “Wincing” builds on the lacy, dreamy guitar-pop of the Shins’ first two albums, expanding the band’s range to encompass subtle funk and even a bit of twinkling electronics. Mercer’s lyrics are even more elliptical than before—the first line of the album is “Go without, till the need seeps in/You low animal/Collect your novel petals for the stem”—but he still delivers misty zingers. (The best is in the chiming kiss-off “Turn on Me”: “You had to know that I was fond of you/Fond of Y-O-U”.)

“We think the album is going to be huge, and I think it’s a great record,” says Don Van Cleave, president of the Coalition of Independent Music Stores. “Thank God it got pushed back to January, because even the record company was so jam-packed—that this lets it get the attention it needs.” Kotowicz is also happy “Wincing” is a January release, but for a different reason. “It’s going to save dramatically in co-op advertising,” he says, “but we’re probably spending half of what we would have in those places at the end of the year.”

The co-op plan involves circulars with big-box retailers like Target and Best Buy as well as some rebates.

“That’s a little bit scary,” Kotowicz says, “because if the record winds up exploding, you end up giving a lot back in rebates, but we’re walking a fine line. This band is still beloved by indie-record stores, but the fact of the matter is that we’ve sold an awful lot through the chains and the racks and the big boxes as well. So we’re trying to play both sides of the fence—we have to.” And every retail venue is clamoring for exclusive content, which the perfectionist, not terribly prolific, Shins don’t really have to offer.

“It can be kind of frustrating trying to make everyone happy,” Kotowicz says.

Isaac Slusarenko, who runs the Portland store Jackpot Records, says he expects “Wincing” to be his store’s best seller the week it’s released. “The previous Shins recordings have brought new faces into Jackpot to pick up their records,” he says. “I think this new release will attract even more fans who are curious to hear what they sound like now. It was also a smart decision that they stayed with a Northwest label instead of jumping to a major label.”

In fact, the Shins’ Sub Pop contract ends with this album. “I’m hoping to put together something very lucrative as far as the next contract,” Mercer says. “I think nowadays most bands are thinking that there are bands that are making more money for selling fewer records because they own their own masters or own their own labels. You see that stuff, and you think there has to be something innovative you can do. Right? So you can get secure.” For his part, Sub Pop co-founder Jonathan Poneman says that the Shins “may end up somewhere else later, but we have a strong desire to keep working with them.”

Beginning a week after the album’s release, it’s going to be sold in a venue Sub Pop has never tried before—Starbucks, which Jasper reports has come in for 36,000 copies. “Maybe people who were introduced to the band through ‘Garden State’ are being reached through the Starbucks opportunity,” Jasper says. “(The album itself is great.) Starbucks Entertainment president Ken Lombard says, ‘and we felt it’s something our customers were going to love.’” The label’s effort to reach Shins fans from a slightly older demographic, who don’t frequent the usual indie-rock channels, also involves a new advertising strategy, with some publications like U2 Reader that, as Jasper says, “would maybe be geared more toward an NPR listener.”

The strongest fan base for the Shins, though, is younger and very Web-savvy. “Wincing” will be featured on the front page of MySpace the week it’s released, in exchange for the site exclusively having the right to stream the album Jan. 18–21—a deal in which no money was exchanged. “We wanted to be able to work exclusively with MySpace,” Jasper says, “but the bands we work with are not simply because they’re a source that so many people go to. We’d be completely stupid not to tap into that.” The band has more than 95,000 friends listed on MySpace, and an advertisement on the site for volunteers for a new Shins street team Sub Pop is assembling yielded 700 responses in its first half hour.

The band’s online popularity has its downside though. Sub Pop publicist Steve Manning sent out a handful of watermarked copies of the album to reviewers, mostly press outlets that were interested in the Shins before—only to have the album promptly leaked to peer-to-peer networks anyway (“The Safety Dance,” Billboard, Nov. 25, 2006). “I think we thought we’d be safe by doing watermarked copies of the record,” Manning says. “It turns out that wasn’t the case, and the leak was from a smaller publication in France. People in the U.S. have been really respectful. We had to hire a Web sheriff, which is not cheap, and watermarked copies are not cheap either. It was abummer, but I think we learned some lessons in there.”

The other pillar of Shins support has historically been college radio, which is already building up interest in “Wincing.” Sub Pop serviced the “Phantom Limb” single to only 250 college radio stations, and it ended up at No. 8 on CMJ’s final college chart of the year. “For a single that’s pretty awesome,” the label’s head of radio promotions Susan Busch says, “it doesn’t look like we’ve lost too many fans due to the commercial success of the band.” The bigger challenge, of course, is commercial modern rock and triple-A radio—especially for a label like Sub Pop—but Manning says that “Phantom Limb” is likely to be Sub Pop’s first top 40 modern rock single. West Coast stations like KNRR-FM Portland, KITS-FM San Francisco and KNDD-FM Seattle have been picking up the record. On the East Coast, it’s been more triple-A stations, according to Busch.

“Luckily, this band has built up an enormous fan base and such a diverse fan base that there’s a lot of good will toward them,” Busch says. “We’re lucky that we don’t really have to play a lot of the big-money games that major labels have to play.” Sub Pop’s radio-promo philosophy is summed up by its infamous early-’90s T-shirt: “What part of ‘we have no money’ don’t you understand?” Instead, Busch says, Sub Pop offers Shins appearances for events like radio festivals. “The one in Seattle was like Angels and Airwaves and My Chemical Romance and Taking Back Sunday...and then there’s the Shins. I think it’s really interesting that the market is as heavy as it still is, and we’re still able to sneak in the back door and be a part of it.”

As part of their promotional schedule, the Shins appeared on “Saturday Night Live” Jan. 13 and planned in-stores at Virgin Records in New York’s Union Square and at Amoeba in Los Angeles for the album’s release week. They’re also gearing up for an extended world tour beginning in February, with their live lineup newly expanded to include Eric Johnson of Sub Pop labelmates the Fruit Bats. Like bassist Crandall, Johnson composing music for the band for that tour.

Still, the Shins will be taking a few months off in the spring, since Mercer and his wife are expecting a baby in May. “Our booking agent wants us to continue touring forever,” he says. “I’ve found it a challenge to focus on the big picture.” As for the signs that the Shins will have made it to the next career milestone, Mercer says, “There’s always the cover of Rolling Stone. Or having a video on MTV that they’re actually playing and not just at 3:30 in the morning.”

“If we keep doing the way we’ve been doing, we can live this way,” Crandall says. “I hope this might be the record that allows us to become our own enterprise and call our own shots. We’ve got the friendship and the experience behind us—it’ll be challenging, but it’s something that we can do.”

So is “Wincing” set to be Sub Pop’s biggest record ever? Poneman is cautious. “It would have to catch up to [Nirvana’s] platinum’ Bleach,’ which God willing, right? But it’s our biggest release by far, and I think it’ll do very well. We feel confident that the music and the band will back up the hype. The worst thing you could do is not simply because the market is as fickle as it is, but because that’s the way we do business—incrementally.”

‘This record might allow us to become our own enterprise and call our own shots.’
—MARTIN CRANDALL
ADMIRERS PAY TRIBUTE TO A MUSIC BUSINESS MAVERICK

LEE HAZLEWOOD

SPECIAL FEATURE
The twanging guitar of Duane Eddy's "Rebel Rouser." The sexy anger of Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made for Walkin.'" The dramatic romance of Sinatra's "Summer Wine," memorably covered by Bon Jovi & the Corrs.

The link between these classics and more? Lee Hazlewood.

As a songwriter, producer and artist, Hazlewood has scored his share of hits throughout five decades in the music business—and always on his own terms. Even decades after his greatest success on the charts, Hazlewood is revered by a new generation of artists.


Sonic Youth's Steve Shelley reissured Hazlewood's classic solo albums on his Smells Like Records label and, in 1999, released a new set from the writer with the characteristically bizarre title "Farmish, Flatulence, Origami, ARF!!! and Me . . . ."

"He's a three-time genius," says indie-rock luminary Dean Wareham of Galaxie 500 and Luna. "A pioneering rock 'n' roll producer—Phil Spector actually went to Arizona to learn from him—one of the great American songwriters and a singer who can make anything sound profound. He will make you laugh one minute and cry the next."

Rhino Records plans a two-CD set of vintage Hazlewood for release later this year. But he also has a new album, "Cake or Death," released on Ever Records, of the 'K7 Label Group, with U.S. distribution through Caroline. The album sessions were likely his last.

"He's suffering from kidney cancer and has been very open about it," his manager Wyndham Wallace says. "But he's always said this would be his last record. He feels he's spent enough time over the last 50-60 years in studios, so he always meant it to be his last stand."

A Hazlewood fan who became his publicist in 1999, then eventually his manager, Wallace offers his perspective on this music business maverick:

"He can be very difficult and almost belligerent, but he's also one of the most generous, kindhearted people I've ever met," Wallace says. "He's a man who absolutely refuses to compromise, who insists on doing things his way and doesn't like to take no for an answer. I think that's why so many people respect him so much."

Regarding Hazlewood's unique style, Wallace adds, "It's very rare to find an artist capable of putting humor and sentiment in music without it being cheesy. Everything he does is from the heart, though he can sound very dismissive of it. But to be able to write a bubble-gum pop song like [Nancy Sinatra's 1966 hit] 'Sugar Town' that gets tons of airplay—when it's actually about kids tripping on acid—you have to be a monumental writer."

For her part, Sinatra declares Hazlewood is "the real deal."

Hazlewood "is not a country-bumpkin shiit kicker, as he would have people believe," Sinatra says. "He's a brainy, highly intelligent intellectual who happens to have re..."
Lee,

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Hazelwood's work with Sinatra is key to his influence on younger artists.

"The first time I heard [the Sinatra/Hazelwood duet] 'Some Velvet Morning' must have been from the 'Best of Nancy and Lee' in my parents' record collection," the Church's Marty Wilson-Piper says. "It was the eeriest piece of music. The way it changed tempo for Nancy's bit and the way he said 'Phaedra' was just the most evocative thing I had ever heard. Still love it to this day."

Born Barton Lee Hazelwood on July 9, 1929, in Mannford, Okla., the future songwriting/producing/performing legend grew up in Arkansas and Texas, and served in Korea after attending Southern Methodist University in Dallas. He went to broadcasting school in California after his discharge and landed a job at KCKY Coolidge, Ariz., gaining a following for his inventive on-air play-acting.

One fan was teen guitarist Eddy, who recorded songs written and produced by Hazelwood and accompanied him on trips to Phoenix for country music shows. Eventually Hazelwood moved to Phoenix and a DJ gig at radio station KRUX. Setting up his own Vix label, Hazelwood recorded sessions with Eddy and guitarist Al Casey.

Through Casey, Hazelwood met Sanford Clark, who recorded Hazelwood's song "The Fool." When Dot Records picked it up, it became Hazelwood's first national hit. Dot then hired Hazelwood to write and produce full time. But Dot owner Randy Wood passed on Eddy's "Rebel Rouser," which became a 1958 hit instead on Jamie Records.

After his deal with Dot dissolved, Hazelwood teamed up with Lester Sill, who previously had worked with the hitmaking songwriting team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The two founded the Tery label. An associate of Sill released some of his earliest productions on Tery. His name was Phil Spector.

Hazelwood went on to launch his own label LHI, for Lee Hazelwood Industries. LHI signed the International Submarine Band featuring Gram Parsons, fielded the folk-pop group the Shacklefords and in 1963, issued Hazelwood's first solo album, a country-concept record titled "Trouble Is a Lonesome Town."

In 1965, Reprise Records' Jimmy Bowen tapped Hazelwood to produce the teen trio Dino, Desi & Billy, comprising the sons, respectively, of Dean Martin and Desi Arnaz, with school classmates Billy Hinsche. The trio had moderate success.

But it paled next to Bowen's next Reprise project for Hazelwood.

"My contract was going to expire at Reprise," recalls Sinatra, who had released several singles with little success through the label founded by her father, Frank. But she was a fan of Hazelwood's work with Eddy and Dino, Desi & Billy. "He told Bowen he'd get me on the charts, 'or you can fire both of us.'"

"These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" topped the singles chart in 1966, and Sinatra and Hazelwood were off to the races.

"He really understood me," Sinatra says. "He read me like a recipe—knew exactly what was going on in my head when I didn't know it. He said, 'You've been married and divorced, and you can't sing like a little virgin anymore because nobody believes you.' I never thought about that. He was right on all the time."

Hazelwood would produce hits for Sinatra throughout the rest of the decade, with high points including "Somethin' Stupid," her 1967..."
SERVING UP ‘CAKE OR DEATH’

Lee Hazlewood’s new album, “Cake or Death,” is on Ever Records, part of the ‘K7 Label Group, with U.S. distribution through Caroline. It features the songwriter’s perennially popular hit “These Boots Are Made for Walkin’”.

Hazelewood uses an original melody that actually predates Nancy Sinatra’s chart-topping success with the song in 1966.

The album also includes Hazlewood’s version of his song “Some Velvet Morning,” which has been widely covered by acts including Vanilla Fudge, Lydia Lunch and Primal Scream. The disc features Hazlewood’s 8-year-old granddaughter Phaedra (which is the name of a character in the song), old cohorts Al Casey and rock pioneer Duane Eddy on guitar, blues singer Tommy Parsons, Scandinavian jazz singer Ann Kristin Hedmark and French acts La Grande Sophie and Emilie Simon.

“I was in retail when his albums were reissued and swore I could never listen to country music,” says Jennifer Massett, U.S. label manager for K7.

“Lee Hazlewood bridged the gap between Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. Sixteen-year-old girls listen to Jessica Simpson [who recently covered “Boots”], and a lot of college kids learning about music get into him, so his songwriting has crossed generations,” Theo Bark, media director of ‘K7 Records, adds.

“It’s a natural progression. You find out Lee is one of Beck’s favorite artists. That’s how we find out about his music, listening to their influences,” Hazlewood’s manager, Wynham Wallace, believes “Cake or Death” will appeal to “the generation who grew up with him as well as the younger one who discovered him in the last 10 years. His records are utterly timeless because they’re so unique.”

—Jim Bessman

Lee Hazlewood

The new album

Cake or Death

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Keep On Keeping On

Staples Takes Inspiration From Civil Rights Era For Anti-Debut

The music of the civil rights era is on the mind of soul legend Mavis Staples. Her forthcoming spring album, “We'll Never Turn Back,” leans heavily on songs from the period in which the Staples Singers began to shine on the gospel/folk circuit. But this is not an album about the past.

Trained for the first time with producer/composer Ry Cooder, Staples offers contemporary arrangements and reworked lyrics to a number of traditional offerings. Check “99 and 1/2,” which loops finger-picked blues notes and a dance groove under Staples’ impassioned, feisty vocals.

As the 66-year-old singer calls out the government’s response to Hurricane Katrina, the listener can hear every bristling strain in her vocal chords. Cooder’s beat-heavy take on the gospel cut is as modern a take on tradition as Moby’s 1999 sampling of dance and blues traditions, “Play.”

The idea for the album sprung from Anti-president Andy Kaulkin, who signed Staples after learning she had exited her Alligator Records contract. Kaulkin says he was inspired by the civil rights book, “Walking With the Wind,” written by Congressman John Lewis, D-Ga., and pitched an album to Staples in which she would tackle music of those times.

Speaking from her Chicago home, Staples confesses she was skeptical of the concept at first. But then she says she spent a little time thinking about current events.

“I realized what these songs were about wasn’t all in the past,” she says. “You’ve got Katrina, and all of those black people—and some whites—floating around in this water with signs asking for help. And you’ve got policemen shooting these black guys with 50 shots. Why? And then you have a white median standing on shore and shouting the ‘N word.’ So it’s all in here.”

Due April 24, “We’ll Never Turn Back” takes a decidedly different approach than Staples’ 2004 solo return, “Have a Little Faith.” The Alligator release saw the singer grappling with issues of faith and family as she worked through the loss of her father, Roebuck “Pops” Staples.

At the time, Staples says she was hesitant to record without her family, as her sister Cleo had recently been stricken with Alzheimer’s disease and the 50-year run of the Staples Singers had come to an end. But the critically acclaimed album has sold 29,000 units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and the Staples Singers received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2005 Grammy Awards.

Today, the singer can barely wait to get back in front of an audience; she spent about one-third of her 90-minute Billboard interview singing. She also seems rejuvenated by the heavily improvised recording sessions with Cooder, who brought in members of the Freedom Singers to record with her.

To Kaulkin, the concept brings Staples’ career full-circle while pushing it forward. “The two things I don’t like are the nostalgia and kowtowing to what artists think the kids want to hear,” he says. “Neither of those works. I like to think that what we’re doing with these concept records and thematic records is opening the artist up to themselves.”

Anti- has some experience in the soul market, having previously released albums from Solomon Burke and Bettye LaVette. But the adult-learning imprint of Epitaph also has firm roots in Americana, thanks to such artists as Tom Waits and Neko Case.

It’s this diversity that attracted the label to David Barthlett, who manages Staples with Matt Cornell for 325 Worldwide Management. “White Anti doesn’t have a history in the gospel world, the people who have reacted to voodoo since we’ve been working with her have been the roots, Americana-type world,” he says. “So we wanted to build on that.”

Alligator owner Bruce Iglauer was s l o to see Staples leave. Barthlett says there was language in the contract that allowed the team to seek a new deal.

“I feel very bad that I wrote the contract,” Iglauer says. “It’s a little heartbreaking. But if she had to leave Alligator, Anti-would be the only other label I would choose for her.”

Working with Anti- and Cooder also inspired Staples to pick up her own pen. She contributes a rare original to the album with “My Own Eyes,” a slow-burnning, stripped-down number that takes Staples through her career, pairing recollections of her father and Martin Luther King Jr. with today’s news reports.

“I’m not a writer, and I think if I played an instrument I’d do better at writing,” Staples says. “But I wanted something on this CD. So much of it is a part of my life. I don’t know if my songs will change anything, but these songs will live until we get things right.”
After The Award

In The Wake Of A Best-Song Oscar, Jorge Drexler Expands His Niche

Few people knew of Jorge Drexler when he won the Academy Award for best song in 2005 for "Al Otro Lado del Río," a song from the film "The Motorcycle Diaries." It was a song he had penned in a couple of hours and recorded on a laptop with a borrowed microphone, with no pretensions or aspirations.

But probably no one was more surprised at the win than Drexler himself, who up to that point was a highly respected singer-songwriter with seven albums to his name and a niche following that had yet to translate into mass appeal.

Since then, Drexler’s popularity hasn’t exploded, but his circle of fans has grown noticeably larger.

His new album, "12 Segundos de Oscuridad," has sold nearly 35,000 copies in Spain—Drexler’s home, and his biggest market by far—since its release there in September 2006. The album will street Feb. 6 in the United States on Warner Music Latina, but he isn’t being worked as a mainstream Latin pop artist. Instead, Drexler is widely regarded as more of a niche, or even a world artist, with a following that includes many non-Latinos intrigued by his mix of songwriter’s intimacy with traditional Latin-American rhythms.

Of all his previous albums, only “Eco,” which was rereleased to include “Al Otro Lado del Río,” sold significantly, notching 10,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Now, "12 Segundos" will capitalize on Drexler’s growing name and his appeal to many audiences; the album even includes an English song, a cover of Radiohead’s “High and Dry.”

“Recognition in the United States has come to me more from the English-speaking side,” Drexler says, noting that U.S. audiences in his shows include English and Spanish speakers. “There’s a growing interest in Spanish language and in Latin culture here.”

The interest in Drexler’s music, however, has come in roundabout ways.

In Brazil, where he frequently tours, he gained a following thanks to his relationships with several key artists, including Adriana Calcanhotto, Chico Cesar and Maria Rita, who recorded one of his songs on her new record, and who is also a guest artist on “12 Segundos.”

His current tour in Spain, with nearly 30 major shows scheduled, kicked off in September. Starting March 1 in the United States, Drexler will play venues with an average capacity of 1,000. His Academy Award win, agent Tom Windish says, is a major selling point.

Yet Drexler’s Oscar has yet to translate to other film opportunities, despite the fact that he’s scored indie films in the past.

“Maybe it’s because I don’t live in Los Angeles,” he says with a laugh.

More than films, or even selling records, he says, his aspirations are simple: “What interests me most is having a song that people can look into and see their reflection within.”

Global Pulse

Joy To The World

German Singer Spreads Earthy Music Across The Continents

This February and March sees German urban vocalist Joy Denalane’s second album rolling out across international markets.

The singer, daughter of a German mother and a South African father, released her first album, “Marrani” (Four Music/Sony BMG Germany) in 2002. It was a top 10 hit on Germany’s Media Control charts, attracting critical acclaim for its lyrical content, which ranged against the iniquities of racism and AIDS.

The album was also released in Switzerland, Austria, South Africa and Japan.

The BMG Music Publishing-signed Denalane opted for English lyrics on her Philadelphia-recorded sophomore set, “Born and Raised,” co-writing its 15 songs with her producer husband Max Herre and German-based songwriter Sékou Nebelt.

BMG Music Publishing Germany/Switzerland/Austria senior VP Hartwig Mansuch says, “Switching from German to English lyrics has created a sound which will introduce [Denalane] to international audiences. Her voice now sounds grittier, more mature, even earthier—and genuine.”

Sony BMG released the album in the G/J/A markets on Denalane’s own Nenola Records imprint in August 2006. It peaked at No. 2 in Germany and has since appeared in Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy and South Africa, with a February/March rollout through Europe and Japan to follow.

—Wolfgang Spahr
A Sales Explosion
Instrumental Rock Outfit Sees Dividends From Football Soundtrack

As recently as three years ago, Explosions in the Sky lacked so much as a manager. Thanks to its instrument rock compositions that run nearly double digits in length, the band seemed destined for underground status. But one football movie later, and things began to change.

If scoring the 2004 Peter Berg film “Friday Night Lights” didn’t turn Explosions in the Sky into an overnight success, it did give the band a national presence. And, ahead of the Feb. 20 release of a new album, “All of a Sudden I Miss Everyone,” this once tiny band on an even smaller label can be heard on any given Wednesday, as the NBC series named after Berg’s movie regularly uses Explosions in the Sky’s music.

“It wasn’t like we suddenly sold 30,000 copies,” drummer Chris Hrasky says. “It was still a gradual incline. But we are getting more younger kids at shows. If you look on our MySpace page, we now have 14-year-old kids who listen to our music listening to us. Three years ago, we were more exclusive to underground, experimental music fans.”

The music of Explosions in the Sky is all about the tension of the slow build. The band’s sweeping arrangements unfold like deconstructed rock anthems, where a flurry of a melancholic guitar note can suddenly give way to a churning rhythmic march.

When pitching the band, “Friday Night Lights” music supervisor Brian Reitzell played up the fact that three of the four band members hail from Midland, Texas, a city about 23 miles from Odessa, the football-obsessed, working-class setting of the film. “I was skeptical since I didn’t know there was a music scene in Midland,” Berg says. “But Brian played me several of [the band’s] songs, and I was hooked. We had been trying to find a much more emotional and ethereal sound for the film, something that went against stereotypical football music. They were perfect for that.”

It also brought the band a more mainstream following. Explosions’ last disc, “The Earth Is Not a Cold Dead Place,” has sold 55,000 units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, with 14,000 copies sold after the October 2004 theatrical release of “Friday Night Lights.” The band is by far the biggest act on New York-based indie Temporary Residence Limited.

But no one is worried that the sales numbers for “The Earth” were inflated because of the film’s success. “The band built its following in a slow way, and I think that makes for a genuine following,” manager Ben Dickey says. “There’s a buzz with them, but no one is in this to hear a hit.”

That said, Explosions in the Sky helped build Temporary Residence into a fully functioning label. Founder Jeremy Devine says the band’s 2001 effort, “Those Who Tell the Truth Shall Die, Those Who Tell the Truth Shall Live Forever,” had sold 8,000 copies when “The Earth” was released. When “Friday Night Lights” hit, Devine and his distributor, Secretly Canadian, faced the challenge of educating retailers.

“That wasn’t necessary this time,” as Secretly Canadian expects to ship about 30,000 units in the first month. A two-disc version with a bonus remix CD will be sent to indie retailers and limited to 20,000 copies.

“Our campaign still pales in comparison to the new Shins record,” Devine says. “But we now have a cash flow and employees. Up until a year ago, it was just me sitting on a floor.”

Devine’s dedication inspired extreme loyalty within the band. Dickey notes that this is the last album Explosions owes to Temporary Residence, but Hrasky doesn’t expect a move. “I just don’t know if we’d be good and doing whatever it is you have to do when you’re on a bigger label,” he says. “And you can get our records anywhere, so it’s hard for me to see an advantage of a bigger label.”

EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY

MUSIC & MONEY SYMPOSIUM
March 1, The St. Regis, New York City
Known as "undoubtedly the power players conference, " the Music & Money Symposium brings together the movers and shakers from the music, legal, financial communities. Don’t miss the premier event for the music industry decision-makers, entrepreneurs and companies interested in providing funding for entertainment ventures.

"From a networking, finance and business development point of view, this was an excellent symposium to gain insight into current thinking within the US music marketplace."

- Scott Campbell, Industry Advisor, UK TRADE & INVESTMENT

Mobile Entertainment Live-Spring 2007
March 26, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards
April 23-26, InterContinental, Miami

R&B Hip Hop Conference & Awards
September 5-7, Renaissance Waverly, Atlanta

Mobile Entertainment Live-Fall 2007
October 22, The Moscone Center, San Francisco

Billboard Dance Music Summit
September, TBD, Las Vegas

The Hollywood Reporter/ Billboard Film and TV Music Conference
November 1-2, Beverly Hilton, Los Angeles

Touring Conference & Awards
November 14-15, The Roosevelt Hotel, New York City

Regional Mexican Music Summit
November, TBD, Los Angeles

DEMIXX Awards,
November, Hyatt Regency Century Plaza, Los Angeles

Billboard Music Awards
December, MGM Grand, Las Vegas
The Evolution Of Opera’s ‘It Girl’

During the past couple of years, Russian soprano Anna Netrebko has become opera’s “it girl,” drawing in besotted fans the world over. With recent triumphs like Verdi’s “La Traviata” in Salzburg, Austria, with tenor Rolando Villazon—not to mention the worldwide hit CD/DVD of that opera that quickly followed—as well as the successful solo recital albums “Sempre Libera” and “Opera Arias” (all made for Deutsche Grammophon), it seems as if Netrebko became a meteor overnight. Known listeners, however, will recall that the singer’s breakthrough performances came courtesy of conductor Valery Gergiev. Gergiev’s presentation of such Russian operas as Glinka’s “Ruslan and Lyudmila” and Prokofiev’s “Betrothal in a Monastery” (both recorded for Philips), as well as Prokofiev’s “War and Peace.”

Now Gergiev and Netrebko have teamed up for her “Russian Album” (DG, Jan. 9), which brings some gems from Russian opera to new audiences, including arias from Rimsky-Korsakov’s “The Snow Maiden,” Tchaikovsky’s “Eugene Onegin” and “War and Peace,” the opera that served as Netrebko’s Metropolitan Opera debut. Gergiev has not only been his generation’s evangelist for operas from his homeland, but has famously been the 35-year-old Netrebko’s mentor. When Gergiev brought Netrebko, whom he fondly calls “Anechka,” to sing “Ruslan” in 1995 in San Francisco, he took what he called an “insane risk” in casting her.

“She was then a very young singer with no experience,” Gergiev says, “with an absolutely central, extremely difficult, virtuosic role. But the result was tremendous. Seldom in life does a risk pay off like this one did.”

For her part, Netrebko says that collaborating for “Russian Album” with Gergiev and the Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre (a company of which the singer is still nominally a member) was a special treat. It has given her not only an opportunity to record in her native tongue, but also to continue to illuminate music that sadly re- mains unknown to much of the non-Slavic world, even among many opera aficionados.

“Eleven years after we appeared in San Francisco in ’Rus- lan,’” she says, “people still remember that occasion as something really significant. This opera, this music, is still ringing in people’s ears, and I think that’s wonderful.”

SOUNDS OF CHICAGO: The Chicago Symphony Orches- tra is the latest major Amer- ican orchestra to create its own in-house recording label. Called CSO Resound, the label will launch this spring. Initial plans are for at least six new CD releases to be issued during the next three years, with its offerings to be culled from the orchestra’s live concerts. Three to four additional recordings will be issued each year as digital downloads only.

The first CSO Resound release will be Mahler’s Symphony No. 3, led by principal conductor Bernard Haitink, with mezzo-soprano Michelle De- Young, members of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the Chicago Children’s Choir. (In a bit of trivia of familiar terrain, DeYoung was also featured on the San Francisco Symphony’s highly acclaimed recording of the same symphony on its own label, SFS Media—an album that won the best classical album Grammy Award in 2003.)

Sales channels for physical and digital product include the orchestra’s online store at cso.org, iTunes, Amazon and other retailers in partnership with the Independent Online Distribution Alliance.

Netrebko Highlights Favorite Arias On New Album

MusiQ, “interpretations” possesses an in-your-face, no-holds-barred vibe that infused a renewed vibrancy. Khan’s funk-up taken as a standup, is as Ndeggecello’s turn.

White and Herb Trawick, his partner in Kalimba Entertainment, first approached Concord with the concept about four years ago at the start of the covers wave. But the pair became sidetracked by another Kalimba venture, the Broadway musical “Hot Feet,” which also incorporated signature EWF music (Billboard, July 29, 2005). Having shut down the play last August, Kalimba is now entertaining a film option.

Circling back around to “interpretations,” White and Trawick revised the original concept.

“The initial response we received for the project came from major pop and R&B acts,” Trawick recounts. “But when the Stax notion was introduced, the concept evolved. We wanted roots- based singers who could organically interpret these songs. This was more of a question of how to honor the music versus doing something for blockbuster reasons.”

Trawick and Stax VP of A&R Collin Stanback drew up a wish list of artists for White’s approval. Beyond that, White says he didn’t want to step on the artists’ creative inspirations as they recorded the songs they chose. “If I’d been on site, I would have been making suggestions,” White says with a laugh. “I wanted to alleviate all that.”

“You’re stepping into a dangerous zone when you try to re-create something that’s basically a masterpiece,” says Stambach, who reviewed each recreation with White. “But we gave people the freedom to own the songs in their way and still respect the EWF legacy.”

White and Franklin begin shooting a video for “September” next week. To what extent White will be hitting the promotion and performing routes on behalf of “interpretations” is still in the planning stages, as are other future Kalimba/Concord ventures. But one project in the discussion stages is a new album by White. “I’d like to do more complicated music, like jazz,” says White, who early on played drums for Ramsey Lewis. “I’d like to recap- ture where I came from.”

www.americanradiohistory.com
Actress Beverly Mitchell Reveals Musical And Entrepreneurial Talents

Beverly Mitchell has been supportive of her musical efforts. While her first trip to Nashville was a risk, she says, "I just jumped in head first and I'm not going to look back." Mitchell visited the city in 1999, and in 2004 she embarked a recording career. She has been working with such A-list writers as Greg Becker, who has penned tunes for Rascal Flatts and Carrie Underwood, and the legendary Jim Weathery, who wrote the Gladys Knight & the Pips classic "Midnight Train to Georgia." When she decided to record an album in 2004, Mitchell collaborated with such writers as the late Ham and "Mean People," which has been featured on "7th Heaven." While writing the bulk of her self-titled debut, Mitchell collaborated with such A-list writers as Greg Becker—who has penned tunes for Rascal Flatts and Carrie Underwood—and the legendary Jim Weathery, who wrote the Gladys Knight & the Pips classic "Midnight Train to Georgia." When she decided to record an album in 2004, Mitchell met with several interested labels, but admits she found "the Nashville time line is quite a long one. You don't get into circulation right off the bat." So she opted to start her own label, Rocky Ocean Music. "I just jumped in head first and said, 'If anyone is going to take a risk right now, it's going to be my risk.'" In late 2004, she partnered with Daywind Records to prepare for the album's Jan. 23 street date. The album will be distributed to Christian retail through Word Distribution and to the mainstream through WEA. "Heaven on Earth Down Here" will be worked to country radio, and "Angel" will be worked to Christian radio's inspirational format, aka "inspo."

The young entrepreneur is also launching a line of shoes called B-Plat. "It's all flat shoes, because I cannot wear heels. They are bad for my back," she says. "We are going to make adorable flats." The line is slated to bow in 2008. Mitchell gives the partnership with Daywind high praise and says Nashville in general has been supportive of her musical efforts. "People were pretty receptive," she says while munching on chips and salsa at a Music City Mexican eatery. "I'm just trying to add whatever I bring to the table."

HAM EXITS: As first tipped in Inside Track (Billboard, Jan. 27), EMI Christian Music Group executive VP of business development Greg Ham is leaving the company March 31. "Now it is time for me to start a new chapter in my life," Ham says. "I am looking forward to pursuing my dreams and ideas that God has begun to stir in my heart over the past few months." Ham has been in the industry 18 years. He was the third employee hired at ForeFront Records in 1989 and rose from an entry-level post to become the label's president in 1999. EMI purchased ForeFront in 1996, and by 2004 Ham transitioned to his post at EMI CMG. As well as being one of the nicest guys in the industry, Ham is a shrewd businessman who has played an integral role in the careers of dcTalk, Audio Adrenaline, Rebecca St. James and Stacie Orrico. No word yet on Ham's next move, but EMI CMG's loss is going to be another company's gain.
Unexpected Hit About Child Abuse Spurs Jason Michael Carroll's Debut

At the age of 28, Jason Michael Carroll has enough stories to stock a man twice his age. There's the one where he got a surprise call from Garth Brooks when times were tough. And then there's the time he got fired from his first band for booking the best gig they'd ever had. And let's not forget the time he sat around a Texas campfire and traded songs with Jewel while her husband, rodeo star Ty Murray, regaled them with tales from the world of bull riding.

But perhaps the most amazing is how a song that he struggled to write is on the verge of being the North Carolina native's first major hit. In fact, there are several stories surrounding this Arista Nashville debut, which is No. 12 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart and was the fastest-rising debut single by a male country artist in 2006. The song's digital release also scored the highest new country artist debut since the inception of Billboard's Hot Digital Songs chart, with nearly 14,000 purchased downloads.

The original plan was for Carroll's label to release "Lookin' at You," a mid-tempo ode to one woman's beauty, but response from radio and listeners changed that. When Carroll visited WDWT Detroit on his radio tour, PD John Trapane and two other staff members were struck by "Alyssa's Lies," a powerful song about a little girl who attempts to conceal physical abuse by lying to her teacher and classmates. In the end, she "lies with Jesus, because there's nothin' anyone would do."

"All three of us were tearing up big time," Trapane says of hearing the song.

The label didn't leave a copy with the station, but an enterprising staff member purchased a version of the song through Carroll's MySpace page. When the station began spinning the record, the calls poured in. "We had people calling up saying that they were from abused homes," Trapane says.

Arista Nashville VP of promotion Skip Bishop says the response in Detroit and at another station, WUSY Chattanooga, Tenn., "clearly changed our mind" about what the first single should be. "A firestorm started," he says.

The response didn't stop there. The song has brought attention to the subject of child abuse on and off the airwaves. When a teacher in Augusta, Ga., played it for her class, several children stepped forward to identify themselves as victims. And at more than one show, Carroll has been told, "I am an Alyssa" by fans.

The inspiration came from several sources. A friend's poem about abuse was the start, and the next day Carroll saw a TV news story on the subject. "I was thinking, 'Twice in two days, it's definitely something I'm supposed to write,' " he says. Struggling with the subject matter, it took the father of four a year and a half to finish the song.

"There are records, and there are records that matter," veteran radio programmer Trapane says. "You only get those records once in a blue moon."

Produced by Don Gehman (John Mellencamp, Hootie & the Blowfish), Carroll's album "Waitin' in the Country" is due Feb. 6. It also includes a duet and a co-write with Jewel on "No Good In Goodbye," plus a hearty helping of songs from Nashville's top tunemasters, including Craig Wiseman, Jeffrey Steele and Terry McBride. Carroll contributed five tracks.

The next single, "Livin' Our Love Song," was written by Carroll and two bandmates on the bus one day while on a radio tour. It wasn't initially included on his album. But after a positive response from radio and a thumbs-up from senior Sony BMG Nashville execs, the song was quickly recorded and added in.

After such an impressive debut, Arista's Bishop has no worries about a drop-off. Just the opposite, in fact: "We've got five first singles on this album," he says.
NORAH JONES
Not Too Late
Producer: Lee Alexander
Release Date: Jan. 30
Norah Jones has less need to go changing her game than just about any other musician working today. Still, though it sustains the poised, unhurried soulfulness of its predecessors, “Not Too Late” is the first full album of her own songs, and her writing voice has some sneaky surprises. The opening witty “Wish I Could” begins as a lament to a lost love and ends a heart-breaking story about a soldier lost to war. There’s a song set in a prison (“The Sun Doesn’t Like You”) and one whose tale involves a telling gun (“Not My Friend”). But if it can be darker than its sisters, “Not Too Late” is also more fun. Jones goes cabaret-stingy on the New Orleans shuffle “Sinking” Soon and caresses the lovely melodies of “Thinking About You” like she is imagining all the weddings it will be played at this year. Her most complete and satisfying record to date.—JY

CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAAH!
Some Loud Thunder
Producer: Dave Fridmann
Self-released
Release Date: Jan. 30
Clap Your Hands Say Yeah’s 2005 self-titled debut opened with Alex O'Connor introducing the band over a host of carnival noises, an invitation to come party with the Brooklyn quintet. The album captured such reverie, complete with slurred vocals and drunken poetics. “On Some Loud Thunder,” the band has turned to Flaming Lips producer Dave Fridmann and molded its jolting, danceable indie rock into something far more nuanced. The compelling “Love Song No. 7” is built with little more than a forest keyboard, lost-at-sea guitars and a smattering of percussion, and “Goodbye to Mother and the Cave” showcases some downright hypnotic finger picking. But it’s no less warm and engaging on the love the striking rhythm and irresistible backing harmonies that dart around the fuzzed-up guitars of “Emily Jean Stock.” This album turns the indie band of the moment easy into an act built for the long haul.—TM

ELISABETH WITHERS
It Can Happen to Anyone
Producers: Toby Gad, Damon Mendes
Release Date: Jan. 30
Broadway audiences know Elisabeth Withers as Shug Avery in “The Color Purple.” The singer/songwriter is also a graduate of the Berklee School of Music and New York University. But don’t let those credentials fool you into thinking Withers is a highbrow who doesn’t possess the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than the right stuff to connect mainstream attention. Right from the gospel-tinged opener “Simple Things,” Withers’ deep, full-bodied voice draws you in. She goes lighter than

ROD STEWART
Fooled Around and Fell in Love (3:11)
Producer: John Shanks
Writer: E. Bishop
Publisher: Crabbshaw
ASCAP
Records
Rod Stewart is enjoying his greatest success this decade with a top 10 AC cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Have You Ever Seen the Rain?” The second single from No. 1 gold set “Still the Same...Great Rock Classics of Our Time” is a rollicking remake of Elvin Bishop’s 1976 “Fooled Around and Fell in Love”. John Shanks’ production is joyously true to the original, unfolding its percussive and guitar-driven hooks, while a midsection breakdown features the rhythm section called out amid the swirl of voices. “Guess what? I’m in love! I’ve had mercy.” Stewart sounds like he’s having a blast with a song that re-establishes his rep as a raucous, good-timing rocker. As bountifully as “Rain came down,” “Fooled” will return him to the top of the chart.—CT

TY HERNDON
Right About Now (3:15)
Producers: varous
Writers: D. Brown, M. Peterson
Publisher: various
Jackson/Titan Pyramid
Herndon fell under the radar after dazzling country radio last decade with No. 1 “What Mattered Most” and “Living in a Moment”—and then seeing his previous Epic project aborted just before release. He returns with a vengeance on indie Jackson/Titan Pyramid via “Right About Now,” a classic country ballad that renews one of the genre’s most robust, albeit affecting voices as he reflects on lost love. Piano drives the melancholy double-entendre lyric (“you were right about now”), while Herndon diverts from falsetto and his rich, expressive tenor. Radio is reacting, hopefully with intent of returning this deserving artist to its rightful royalty. A confident, easygoing track that sounds as if there were never a blip in his career.—CT
on "Stage Fright," Wide-spread Panic's skittering revitalization of "Chest Fever" or the Allman Brothers' smart, dignified cover of "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" are in the same league. It's maybe the only song on the disc that would impress the Band itself. Featuring the likes of death Cab for Cutie and Blues Traveler, Gomez and Rosanne Cash, "Endless Highway" is widely mediocre otherwise, and bogged down by disappointingly safe covers like Lee Ann Womack's carbon copy of "The Weekender" and Jack Johnson's listless "I Shall Be Released." —WO

DUSTIN KENSURE
Please Come Home
Producers: Dustin Kensure, Teppen Tanashii
Engineer: Mike Dirsche
Release Date: Jan. 30
Beyond the high volume and voltage of Orange County, Calif., screaming darlings Thrice resides the shy, religious familyman Dustin Kensure, whose love for singer/songwriters like Ryan Adams and Cat Stevens has probably been fueled to that of the punk and hardcore on which Thrice was founded. On the eight-song "Please Come Home," that alter ego makes its recorded debut in rather striking fashion. For one, the disc sounds nothing like Thrice. Instead, songs like "Pistol," a sweet ode to Kensure's wife, steps into the same stark territory as early David Gray. In fact, his voice often recalls Gray's, as songs touching on family, faith and society can sound more like an overcast day in Dublin than the sun-bleached O.C. While maybe a little too influenced by Adams' "Heartbreaker" at times, "Please Come Home" is a pleasant surprise that suggests plenty of room to grow for the young artist. —WO

WORLD

SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR
African Spirit
Producer: Robin Hogarth Shankane
Release Date: Jan. 30
In advance of a North American tour, the Soweto Gospel Choir unveils "African Spirit," with 19 dazzling tracks, sung in Zulu, Sotho or English. This choir is versatile; "Avukile Amanzinda/One Love" begins with a very cool bit of township jive that segues effortlessly into the classic Bob Marley cover, including a powerful live version of U2's "One," sung by Bono backed by the choir. Also make note of the beautiful cover of "By the Rivers of Babylon" and the rhythmic gem "Africa," which brings to mind the spirit of South African kwaita music. —PPV

DVD

MADONNA
The Confessions Tour
Producer: Sara Martin
Release Date: Jan. 30
This CD/DVD commemorating Madonna's record-breaking Confessions tour is slightly more than your average concert-on-video release. Thanks to heavy editing and zippy postproduction work, what could have been a static, filmed-for-TV concert has been transformed into a kinetic you-are-there experience. In addition to the concert, there is about 15 minutes worth of behind-the-scenes footage included. It's fun to see some of the choreographers put the dancers (and Madonna) through their paces, though we would have loved then more backstage action also. Featured also is a tria photo gallery—so minimalistic and brief, it seems like an afterthought. While the DVD includes the full concert—from Madonna's disco-ball entrance to her "Hung Up" finale—the accompanying CD contains only 13 highlights of the show—AK

LATIN

GIPSY KINGS
Pasajero
Producer: Philippe Eidel Nunez
Release Date: Jan. 23
After delivering "Roots," an acoustic album, the band's interest in nuance and depth as in commercial appeal, the Gipsy Kings return to their more mainstream pop formula on "Pasajero." The set has tinges from south of the border. The song could make the cumbia beat and accordion of "Recuerdos a Zuarandas," a version of the Cuban classic "Chan" and Andean strains in "Carnavalito" and "Mira la Chica." There is also straight-ahead Gipsy Kings fare, like the title track and "Donde Esta Mi Amor," both essentially fast-flipped fun with flamenco and pop sensibility. Some of it comes off decidedly contrived, as if under obligation to provide a musical map of the continent, and the banality of the lyrics can undermine the musicianship. Still, the musicianship is unfaltering and the ensemble work tight and perfectly balanced. —LC

SINGLES

TAYLOR HICKS Just to Feel That Way (3:10)
Producer: Mark Serletic
Publishers: various
Arista
Is Taylor Hicks the latest "American Idol" to realize that the quickest path to fame and fortune is country, instead of the wall of steel presented by top 40? Seems like that way, based on second Southern rock single "Just to Feel That Way." Granted, first single "Do I Make You Proud" was as formulaic as they come coming off of "AI" debuts. And on "Just to Feel That Way," he emits a powerhouse vocal that goes from coarse/and guy sensitivity, in fact, it is more convincing than most anything he sang on the show. His song could make the grade at country and with the proper promotional push, adult top 40. Hicks may be a star after all—CT

ROCK

AUGUSTANA Boston (4:05)
Producer: Brendan O'Brien
Writers: Augustana
Publishers: EMI April Music/Augustana, ASCAP
Epic
Fans of Train. Five for Fighting and Counting Crows will line up for this ride to "Boston." The one-way ticket is courtesy of gentle rock act Augustana to an ancient destination: a place where no one knows your name. An almost merrily lead piano line does the way as Dan Layus sings of his lady ditching him and trading sunny California for the cold of Beantown (cue Witturiger organ). "I think I need a sunrise/I'm tired of sunset," he sings in a great, double- entendre. The requisite orchestra surges at the chorus, amplifying the chart-worthy power pop. This could be tailor-made for smiling in the background of a "Grey's Anatomy" season finale if that show wasn't around cinderchamped Seattle.—CT

AC

KELLY SWEET Raincoat (3:29)
Producer: Mark Portmann
Writers: J. Angel, T. Verges
Publishers: various
Razor & Tie
Producer: Mark Bright
Writers: T. Verges, M. Green
Label: Razor & Tie

*Label Razor & Tie, best-known for '90s best-selling "Kid Rock" and "Levi's" compilations, has been courting 18-year-old singer/songwriter Kelly Sweet (singing since age 4) to the industry for months, debut LP "We Are One" at last launches in March. Produced by Grammy Award-nominated Mark Portmann, her sound lies between a less drowsy Norah Jones and Josh Groban, meshing pop-classical and smooth jazz. First single "Raincoat" is a breezy, precocious ballad that showcases a winning vocal range, emotive expression and a final note that is the vocal equivalent of cool-smooth to moody. "Totally acoustic guitars and novel lyric: 'I'm gonna throw out my raincoat, gonna find me a rainbow/daydream up in the sky, blues pass me by'". AC radio is the destination here, with a handful of stations already airin' it in week one of release. A radiant, adult-driven discovery.—CT

TRIPLE-A

MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER It Must Have Happened (4:05)
Producer: Chuck Ayland, Matt Rollings
Writer: M. Carpenter
Publisher: not listed
Rounder
After a consistent output since 1997, five-time Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Mary Chapin Carpenter vanished for four years before releasing 10th album "The Calling," due March 6. The new project came as she was recovering from a severe back injury—wondering if she would ever perform again. Now single "It Must Have Happened" is certainly autobiographical ("Can't remember learning how to laugh at catastrophe/Of losing track of who I was supposed to be"). The song is a testament of her greatest hit, 1989's "Never Had It So Good," with a chugging melody, spotless pop/ country acoustic production and a vocal that conjures a one-time best friend reappearing at your door. Leading to triple-A, though country has a hit in hand with Carpenter's momentous return.—CT
No. 1 Albums Need Not Happen in First Week

The ascent to No. 1 on The Billboard 200 by "American Idol" finalist Daughtry signifies a few subtle chart features, the kind that elude more "hit and run" than "work out" starting at the top of the page, a rare sight in recent years but happening a little more often in the past 13 months. It's also the first time in nine years when consecutive No. 1's grew their way to the top slot.

In the June 20, 1998, issue, Master P's "MP Da Last Don" replaced the soundtrack to "City of Angels." In that case, the only reason "Last Don" debuted shy of No. 1 was the staggered shipping schedule the raper favored in those days, having bowed at No. 112 in the prior chart less than a full week of sales.

A more natural back-to-back happened earlier that same year, in the June 24, 2001, issue, when Celine Dion's "Let's Talk About Love" hopped off to the huge soundtrack from "Tr Anastasia," the first of its 16 chart-topping weeks.

Don has grown her way to No. 1 with three different albums, more than any other artist in the SoundScan era. "Let's Talk" rang the bell seven weeks after it bowed at No. 2. Here 1997 set, "Falling Into You," also began at No. 2, but did not reach the top step until its 28th chart week, while hits set "All the Way... A Decade of Song" grew to No. 1 in its second week.

The SoundScan year that saw the most albums reach No. 1 without starting there was 1994, when nine did so. From 1999 to 2006, no two per year made that climb, but with "Daughtry" shadowing "Dreamgirls," four albums have done so in the past 14 months.

In the final week of 2005, Jamie Foxx's "Unpredictable" rose after starting at No. 2. Two months later, Disney Channel's "High School Musical" soundtrack shot to No. 1 in its seventh chart week.

Does the possibility that an album can top the chart in a frame other than its first mean labels might broaden their focus beyond openingweek sales? Maybe, just maybe.

'NOT OVER': Fans are surrounding the new season of ratings champ "American Idol" set the stage for Daughtry's first gain since Christmas week. NBC's "Today" has run so many "Idol" features lately would one think the talent search runs on that network, rather than Fox, and a Cuisinart City sale deeply discounted "Idol"-related albums.

A good-old-fashioned radio hit also fuels "Daughtry." Lea track "It's Not Over" is gaining at four formats, building 34-25 on Hot 100 Airplay.

People associated with the "Dreamgirls" albums are quick to point out that if sales of the celine double-CD version were merged with the edition that topped the bill, the last two weeks, that tide would be ruling. The Billboard 200 for its fourth straight week, this issue with a tally of $2.6 billion.

Since the p.r. of "Dreamgirls" albums hit stores Dec. 5, they have moved a combined 707,000 copies.

Allowing for remixes, there is no restriction on how many tracks may be added to a deluxe package. But, in cases where a special edition adds more than six songs to an album's sales, Billboard and Nielsen SoundScan track those versions separately. The "Deluxe Editions" of "Dreamgirls" carries 10 additional songs.

The policy was galvanized in 1992 when Atlantic Group released two different versions of "AC/DC's "Live": a two-disc set (subtitled "Special Collector's Edition") with 23 tracks, the other a single-CD highlights distillation with 14 songs.

Criteria dictating when sales of a special edition can be merged with those of the original are under frequent review. Those guidelines were last revised in September 2005.
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**Notable Events:**
- Daughtry's album jumps 15% in the wake of the "Sarah" controversy.
- Tyra Banks' self-titled album drops 23 places.
- James BlUNT's "Some Kind Of Trouble" is the biggest debut of the week with 38,000 copies sold.
- Prince is expected to make a big move up the chart with his new album.

**Best Buy Chart:**
- "The White Stripes" is the best selling album for the 10th week in a row.
- "The Daughtry" CD is the biggest seller for the 9th week in a row.
- "The Game" CD is the biggest selling CD with 1.3 million copies sold.

**Charts Update:**
- "The Game" CD has sold 10 million copies.
- "The Daughtry" CD has sold 9 million copies.
- "The Game" CD has sold 8 million copies.

**New Releases:**
- "The Game" CD is the biggest seller for the 9th week in a row.
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### Hot 100 Airplay

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<td><strong>1</strong> WHAT SOUNDS LIKE BOOM <strong>2</strong> 100 YEARS</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong> MERCHANDISE</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong> LADIES OF THE NIGHT</td>
<td><strong>8</strong> SOUTHERN GOTH</td>
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### Adult Top 40

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<td><strong>5</strong> JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE (JIVE)</td>
<td><strong>6</strong> RICKY MARTIN</td>
<td><strong>7</strong> A &amp; M</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong> JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE (JIVE)</td>
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### Adult Contemporary

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### Hot Digital Songs

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### Modern Rock

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**Note:** The data represents a snapshot of music popularity as of February 3, 2007. For more details, visit [www.billboard.com](http://www.billboard.com).
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**Hot Singles**

- **Made to Love** - T.I.
- **Thrown Some D's** - Jason Aldean
- **Without You** - Birdie Seth
- **O'Pray** - Poison
- **Everyday** - Jason Mraz
- **How to Touch a Girl** - Neal Marrion
- **Glamorous** - Lenny Kravitz
- **Kings Like Me** - Christina Aguilera
- **Wave Goodbye** - U2
- **Jump to the Rhythm** - Jason Mraz
- **Love Me, Love Me** - Jason Mraz
- **Glamorous** - Lenny Kravitz
- **Everyday** - Jason Mraz
- **How to Touch a Girl** - Neal Marrion
- **Glamorous** - Lenny Kravitz

**POP 100 Airplay**

- **Here in Your Arms** - Joe Jones
- **Fly High** - Young Buck
- **Through Glass** - Stone Sour
- **Promise** - Cupid's Chokehold
- **Face Down** - This Time
- **Like You** - 50 Cent
- **The Drive** - 50 Cent
- **This Ain't A Scene, It's An A$$ Race** - Fergie Feat. Ludacris
- **Hurt** - Stone Sour
- **Teenage Runaway** - 50 Cent

**HitPredictor**

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**POP 100 Chart**

- **Here in Your Arms** - Joe Jones
- **Fly High** - Young Buck
- **Through Glass** - Stone Sour
- **Promise** - Cupid's Chokehold
- **Face Down** - This Time
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**HitPredictor**

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- **Throw Some D's** - Jason Aldean
- **Without You** - Birdie Seth
- **O'Pray** - Poison
- **Everyday** - Jason Mraz
- **How to Touch a Girl** - Neal Marrion
- **Glamorous** - Lenny Kravitz
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- **Hurt** - Stone Sour
- **Teenage Runaway** - 50 Cent
**HOT COUNTRY SONGS**

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<td>Radio Blast</td>
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<td>A Stupid Thing</td>
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<td>Jason Michael Carroll</td>
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<td>Good As Gone</td>
<td>Lee Brice</td>
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**HIT PREDICTOR**

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**NEWER SONGS DASH IN CHART'S TOP HALF**

With Rodney Atkins’ “Watching You” dominating Hot Country Songs for a second week, five new singles make conspicuous gains in the chart’s upper half.

Each of those five have been on the list for fewer than 10 chart weeks, led by a 19-14 leap for Kenny Chesney’s “Beer in Mexico.” With Airpower honors, that track swipes the chart’s biggest gain (up 4.2 million impressions) in its sixth chart week.

Other titles posting similar early results include the top 30 include Tim McGraw’s “Last Dollar (Fly Away),” which jumps 15-8 in its fourth fly week, and Sugarland’s “Settin’,” hops 28-23 in its fourth week.

Further down, Carrie Underwood’s “Wasted” improves 30-25 in its ninth chart week, and Alan Jackson’s “A Woman’s Love” cracks the top 30 (44-30) in its fifth week.

Look for Rascal Flatts’ “Stand” to join those ranks soon. It vaults 47-35 in its third chart week.

-Wade Jason
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<td>Luis Fonsi</td>
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<td>Alejandro Sanz</td>
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<td>Pepe Aguilar</td>
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For more information, please visit [www.billboard.com](http://www.billboard.com).
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**REGIONAL MEXICAN**

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<th>TITLE</th>
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<td>Donde Quieres</td>
<td>JAYLON</td>
<td>PROMOIRI</td>
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<td>Quiero</td>
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**LISTENING IMPRESSIONS**

Data for week of FEBRUARY 3, 2007 | For chart eprints call 646-654-4633 | Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ALBUMS</th>
<th>JAPAN</th>
<th>UNITED KINGDOM</th>
<th>GERMANY</th>
<th>EURO DIGITAL TRACKS</th>
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<td><strong>Takashi Nakagawa</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Carla Bruni</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Oasis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bryan Adams</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Coldplay</strong></td>
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**FRANCE** | **ALBUMS** | **FRANCE** | | **CANADA** | **ALBUMS** |
| **NEW MAKIN' WAVES** | **2008** | | | **NEW LIGHT** | **2008** |
| **1.** | **Benabar** | **1.** | **Nelly Furtado** | **1.** | **Rick Ross** |
| **2.** | **Yannick Noah** | **2.** | **Justin Timberlake** | **2.** | **Ron Sexsmith** |
| **3.** | **Diams** | **3.** | **Pink** | **3.** | **Eminem** |
| **4.** | **Oliver Ruiz** | **4.** | **Various Artists** | **4.** | **Kanye West** |
| **5.** | **Michel Delpech** | **5.** | **U2** | **5.** | **Celine Dion** |
| **6.** | **Various Artists** | **6.** | **Soundtrack** | **6.** | **Lil Wayne** |
| **7.** | **Shy'm** | **7.** | **Skyn** | **7.** | **T.I.** |
| **8.** | **Maures** | **8.** | **Akon** | **8.** | **Kid Rock** |
| **9.** | **Akon** | **9.** | **Chimene Badi** | **9.** | **Fred Durst** |
| **10.** | **Jean-Michel Jarre** | **10.** | **Il Divò** | **10.** | **Kid Rock** |

**ITALY** | **ALBUMS** | **ITALY** | | **UKS** | **ALBUMS** |
| **NEW QUEEN** | **2008** | | | **NEW QUEEN** | **2008** |
| **1.** | **Elisa** | **1.** | **Elvis Presley** | **1.** | **Bryan Adams** |
| **2.** | **Laura Pausini** | **2.** | **Ricky Martin** | **2.** | **The Hives** |
| **3.** | **Nelly Furtado** | **3.** | **Alejandro Sanz** | **3.** | **The White Stripes** |
| **4.** | **Vitto** | **4.** | **Anne-Marie** | **4.** | **Duran Duran** |
| **5.** | **Antonello Venditti** | **5.** | **Markus Schulz** | **5.** | **The Edge** |
| **6.** | **Zucchero** | **6.** | **Carla Bruni** | **6.** | **Sade** |
| **7.** | **Renato Zero** | **7.** | **New Sound** | **7.** | **Chris Martin** |
| **8.** | **Tiziano Ferro** | **8.** | **Mengoni** | **8.** | **The Edge** |
| **9.** | **Adriano Celentano** | **9.** | **Nicole Scherzinger** | **9.** | **Chris Martin** |
| **10.** | **Vasco Rossi** | **10.** | **Jean-Christophe** | **10.** | **The Edge** |

**SWITZERLAND** | **SINGLES** | **SWITZERLAND** | | **HEAVY METAL** | **SINGLES** |
| **NEW** | **Carla Bruni** | **1.** | **Tobias Foss** | **1.** | **Tobias Foss** |
| **1.** | **Stefan Gesell** | **2.** | **Eminem** | **2.** | **Tobias Foss** |
| **2.** | **Nelly Furtado** | **3.** | **Iron Maiden** | **3.** | **Tobias Foss** |
| **3.** | **George Michael** | **4.** | **Metallica** | **4.** | **Tobias Foss** |
| **4.** | **Laura Pausini** | **5.** | **Rammstein** | **5.** | **Tobias Foss** |

**FINLAND** | **SINGLES** | **FINLAND** | | **POLAND** | **SINGLES** |
| **NEW** | **Vikate** | **1.** | **Hillary Duff** | **1.** | **Zbigniew Kisielewski** |
| **1.** | **Jukka Pekka** | **2.** | **Nelly Furtado** | **2.** | **Piotr Rubik** |
| **2.** | **Jukka Pekka** | **3.** | **Sinan Gürsoy** | **3.** | **Piotr Rubik** |
| **3.** | **Sami Suonio** | **4.** | **The Black Eyed Peas** | **4.** | **Piotr Rubik** |
| **4.** | **Petition** | **5.** | **Gorillaz** | **5.** | **Piotr Rubik** |

**HUNGARY** | **SINGLES** | **HUNGARY** | | **UKS** | **SINGLES** |
| **NEW** | **Ruzsa Magdi** | **1.** | **Zsuzsanna Jankó** | **1.** | **Bryan Adams** |
| **1.** | **Magyarország** | **2.** | **Rick Astley** | **2.** | **Bryan Adams** |
| **2.** | **Renaissance** | **3.** | **The Hives** | **3.** | **Bryan Adams** |
| **3.** | **Take No Money** | **4.** | **The Hives** | **4.** | **Bryan Adams** |
| **4.** | **A Corben** | **5.** | **The Hives** | **5.** | **Bryan Adams** |
| **5.** | **Put Your Hands Up For Detroit** | **6.** | **The Hives** | **6.** | **Bryan Adams** |
EUROCHARTS

SINGLE SALES

Top 20

1. "All Good Things (Come to an End)" - Eminem
2. "My Love" - Maroon 5
3. "Promiscuous" - Nelly
5. "Astray in Their Eyes" - Justin Timberlake
6. "Lead the Way" - Black Eyed Peas
7. "I Want You" - Ne-Yo
8. "I Don't Need a Man" - Jennifer Lopez
9. "Window in the Skies" - Maino
10. "America" - NxWavs

ALBUMS

Top 20

1. "All Good Things (Come to an End)" - Eminem
2. "The Very Best of Natalie Cole" - Natalie Cole
3. "The Very Best of Nat King Cole" - Nat King Cole
4. "The Essential Kenny G" - Kenny G
5. "The Very Best of Fats Domino" - Fats Domino

TOP JAZZ

1. "All Good Things (Come to an End)" - Eminem
2. "The Very Best of Natalie Cole" - Natalie Cole
3. "The Very Best of Nat King Cole" - Nat King Cole
4. "The Essential Kenny G" - Kenny G
5. "The Very Best of Fats Domino" - Fats Domino

TOP CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

1. "All Good Things (Come to an End)" - Eminem
2. "The Very Best of Natalie Cole" - Natalie Cole
3. "The Very Best of Nat King Cole" - Nat King Cole
4. "The Essential Kenny G" - Kenny G
5. "The Very Best of Fats Domino" - Fats Domino

TOP CLASSICAL CROSSOVER

1. "All Good Things (Come to an End)" - Eminem
2. "The Very Best of Natalie Cole" - Natalie Cole
3. "The Very Best of Nat King Cole" - Nat King Cole
4. "The Essential Kenny G" - Kenny G
5. "The Very Best of Fats Domino" - Fats Domino

Top 20

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3. "The Very Best of Nat King Cole" - Nat King Cole
4. "The Essential Kenny G" - Kenny G
5. "The Very Best of Fats Domino" - Fats Domino

Data for week of FEBRUARY 3, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633
### Music Video Sales Charts

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan, takes data for RIAA/HD kiosk retail charts compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialist in those genres.

- **Sales Data from** Cross-reference each week’s data from Billboard’s national sample of reports from club and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For RIAA/HD Kiosk Singles Sales, sales data is compiled from a national subset of core RIAA/HD Kiosk stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

- **Top Selling Singles** are calculated from Nielsen SoundScan’s national sample of reports from club and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For RIAA/HD Kiosk Singles Sales, sales data is compiled from a national subset of core RIAA/HD Kiosk stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

- **Data** includes the current Hi-Predictor status in that particular format based on radio and retail sales. If a title is not ranked on the chart, it is not sold in that format. The chart also includes a multi-platinum level, for both steel and double albums with a running time of 100 minutes or more.

- **Platinum** indicates albums that have sold at least 1 million copies.

- **Gold** indicates albums that have sold at least 500,000 copies.

- **Top Selling Singles** indicate albums that have sold more than 100,000 copies.

- **Hi-Predictor** indicates albums that have sold more than 50,000 copies.

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HFA is the foremost mechanical licensing, collections and distribution agency for U.S. Music Publishers. We currently have two opportunities for Royalty Compliance Examiners to conduct royalty examinations of our licensees to determine any areas of underpayment. This position will also assist outside examiners who perform royalty exams on HFA’s behalf.

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Barry Manilow has presented a plaque commemorating his platinum status for his No. 1 debut, "The Greatest Songs of the Fifties," and gold status for his No. 2 debut, "The Greatest Songs of the Sixties." The presentation, which took place backstage at Madison Square Garden in New York, from left, are Miami Record's senior VP of marketing and artists, Brian Grant; Scott Spinar, BMI's senior VP of A&R; and EMI's senior VP of marketing, Rachel Hamby.

Tommy Joe is seen dancing with his band, "Radiator," at the Rock N Roll Hotel in London. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

Gary Graff has signed a worldwide publishing deal with Reach Global Music Publishing for his album "Me, Myself & I," which includes the hit "Make It Rain." Pictured, from left, are Sony BMG VP of creative, Randall Hendrix; Reach VP of A&R, Scott Robin; and Reach president, Joe Chambers.

Canadian MC Baby, left, rocks his new single "Pressure," from upcoming album "Revolution," with R&B superstar Ginuwine. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

The Backbeat section continues...
LIKE FATHER LIKE DAUGHTER

As EMI Music Publishing chairman/co-CEO Marty Bandier prepares to vacate his seat in a couple of months, Track hears that his daughter Jennifer is about to launch her career in the entertainment industry. Ms. Bandier will officially join boutique entertainment PR company Ou! 2 Public Relations in the coming days. Already, she has her eyes set on wearing her father’s crown. On a recent trip to Atlanta, Jennifer was seen talking PR with hip-hop producer Toomp and Young Jock. Don’t forget: She once called the ATL home; that is, during a stint managing supergroup TLC.

STAX GETS ITS GROOVE BACK

Concord Music Group’s revitalization of Stax Records is jumping into full swing. In addition to signing Angie Stone and her earlier mainland Stax “Shaft” Hayes, Stax has added two more singers to its roster: Leon Ware and N’Dambi. Ware is best-known for his writing and production work on Marvin Gaye’s “I Want You” album. He’s also collaborated with Quincy Jones, Minnie Riperton and the Isley Brothers. N’Dambi, well-known in R&B’s indie scene, is a former backing vocalist for Erykah Badu. Look for her and Stone’s albums in late summer; Ware’s is slated for spring/early summer.

In signing artists, Stax VP of A&R Col. in Sanback says the new Stax is looking for heartfelt music and real musicianship. “We need to give people more of a variety in black music to listen to,” he says. “What we see in today’s music is an approach that is pretty much too common. When you look at the ’70s to early ’90s, everyone was in their own lane and nothing sounded alike. We at Stax would like to get back to that.”

As reported earlier on billboard biz, the venerable Memphis label formally began celebrating its 50th anniversary March 13, with the release of a deluxe two-CD set featuring tracks from a who’s who of soul that includes Haynes, the Dramatics, Staple Singers and Mabel John. Two weeks later, Earth, Wind & Fire’s “Interpretations” CD arrives (see story, page 40). Wrapped around this is a yearlong salute to Stax’s 50 years via concerts and exhibits presented by the Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau along with nonprofit Soulsville USA.

DEMAND YOUR ‘LATE NIGHT SPECIAL’

For fans who want and demand it, Pretty Ricky will be only too happy to give them a “Late Night Special.” Putting a user-generated twist on the traditional tour concept, Atlantic Records Group is partnering with San Diego-based Eventful.com to map the stops for a national tour that kicks off in mid-March. It’s all in support of the group’s Jan. 23 sophomore release, “Late Night Special.” On Feb. 5, Pretty Ricky will announce its 1,000 Demand Tour Competition in which fans will compete to have the tour stop in their city. Once a city nets 1,000 demands, Pretty Ricky will book the show. The quartet, which plans to tour for a year, pledges it will perform in any city that its or goes beyond the 1,000 mark. Not a bad way to truly gauge an act’s grass-roots popularity, eh?

HAIRSPRAY IN THE OUTBACK

If you loved the music and the wit of the cult hit movie “Priscilla Queen of the Desert,” get ready for the musical to invade these shores very soon. Track spies in Australia that the show is playing to sellout audiences and is now preparing to tour overseas, including a possible run on Broadway and/or the Las Vegas Strip. The show is packed full of “camp” and club classics, including “I Love the Nightlife.” Finally, “Shave Your Groove Thing,” “I Will Survive” and “Never Been to Me.” And yes, like the movie, the musical is very big on costumes and, of course, hair.

JOAN DOES KIT AND THE WIDOW

British comedy duo Kit and the Widow are busy preparing for their debut at New York’s Joe’s Pub. Those that caught the duo opening for Joan Rivers last year know what to expect: Noel Coward-esque skewings of modern life, pop culture and politics. Indeed, this is the kind of old-style cabaret that intertwines acid tongue lashings and witty parody songs. In a reversal of roles, Track hears that Rivers, so enamored of Kit and the Widow, will open for them at their Feb. 5 gig. Of course, Rivers being Rivers, she may very well show up at their Feb. 9 show, too. She’s that kind of gal.

SYNCHRONICITY

Nobody’s saying anything, but rumors are swirling that the Police will open the Grammy Awards telecast next month in Los Angeles, similar to Simon & Garfunkel’s surprise appearance at the 2003 ceremony. A Grammy representative did not return a request for comment by deadline. A Police/Grammy moment would seem like a logical kickoff for what is widely understood to be a 2007 reunion tour from the group, which has been dormant since 1986. Stay tuned.
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