SPECIAL REPORT: AMERICAN IDOL
BEHIND THE CURTAIN OF THE HIT-MAKING MACHINE

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OPINION

Transmission Control

ASCAP's Views On Copyright Law

BY BRUCE BROUGHTON

A momentous court decision is about to be made regarding the right of public performance inherent in all digital transmissions of musical works—including song downloads.

This decision will significantly affect my livelihood and that of all songwriters and composers who create musical works, both today and tomorrow. It will also determine whether huge commercial Internet businesses, which make a great deal of money by leveraging the artistic works created by composers like me, will be successful in their continued attempts to chip away at long-established copyright laws that protect us.

While it is ASCAP that is leading this legal action, make no mistake: It is music creators like me who are ultimately on the front line of this struggle. As such, ASCAP is speaking with my voice, the voice of the music creator.

Those who run businesses in the digital arena are well aware of the tremendous appeal of our musical works. Without it many popular sites and services would have little to attract consumers or advertisers, thereby greatly diminishing their economic value.

Music creators and those that represent us have fought for court and legislative actions to, we believe, determine the following:

1. The right of public performance exists in every transmission of copyright music to the public.
2. A download of a musical work is the transmission of a performance of that work on the Internet.
3. A work is performed when it is transmitted by means of any device or process.
4. Transmissions of copyrighted works are public performances even when the public cannot perceive them entirely.

While this logic and the law is clear and compelling to me, businesses like those represented by the Digital Media Assn. (DiMA) want to build their profits on the back of my creative work while shortchanging my colleagues and me. They therefore make the misguided claim that I am “doubling dipping” by wanting a performance royalty as well as a mechanical or synchronization royalty. The fact and the law are that both reproduction and performance rights are involved in their transmissions, and both should be paid for.

Let’s make no mistake. DiMA and the other entities opposing ASCAP in this legal action seek to limit their financial liability for the use of the copyrighted works of music creators. If they prevail, it will mean even less compensation for composers like me as well as all music creators.

The purpose of downloading music is playing music. It seems difficult to disagree on that point. Without question, those who create music have every right to be fairly compensated for its use. Similarly, those who build their entire businesses around the value that music provides have the legal and ethical obligation to pay for it, and to pay for it fully.

Bruce Broughton's scores for TV shows have been nominated for 22 Emmy Awards and won a record 10 times. His film scores include the Academy Award-nominated “Silverado.” He is on the ASCAP board of directors and a governor of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

I was pleased to see Billboard's coverage of India—it’s been a long time coming. India really is more than Bollywood. Spend time with any kid in Bangalore or Calcutta, and they are more interested in Jimi Hendrix and Judas Priest than Bollywood.

While author Susan Butler correctly stated that Bollywood soundtracks account for 70% of the music market, that is because it is the only music that has any marketing budget behind it. In fact, most record companies do not even pay for the production of the album. Furthermore, Butler states that few Western filmmakers present a visible presence in India, but that is for lack of consumers. Rather, it is for lack of marketing and distribution.

In a time when U.S. record executives are struggling to gain new audiences they are overlooking a strong number: 1.2 billion people inhabit the Indian subcontinent, of which 65% will be younger than 25 in just 18 months. What’s more, there is an emerging and globally conscious upper-middle class that is estimated to be the equivalent of the entire U.S. population. This demographic is not limited to Bangalore, Bombay and Delhi. It can be found in progressive music markets like the northeast of India. Danish band Michael Learns To Rock attracted 4.000-7.000 people in Bombay and Bangalore, but drew 30,000 people (at the same ticket price) at its concert in Shillong.

Enforcement of copyright laws and reducing piracy is occurring through education and reform, but U.S. music executives need to take part in the cultural and financial revolution that India is experiencing in order to really see change.

Aarti Tandon, Esq.

New York
SIGNED FOR SINGLES

Select Labels Offer Artists Contracts For A Song—Or Three—At A Time

Add Universal Music Latin America to the list of labels that have begun experimenting with signing new acts to limited singles deals, rather than full-album deals.

In select cases, the label is offering packs that call for artists to release one or two singles, which are marketed and promoted online and at radio, with an option for a full album if a song attains enough success.

In the United States, Universal's Latin label, Universal Music Latino (UML), so far has signed three artists—Leny, Baby Boy and J.C.—to such deals. Their singles are slated for release between April and May. They all are urban bachata artists, but the label says it is not limiting its singles signings by genre.

Indeed, in Latin America, the label has been quietly signing to single deals since last year—four in Brazil and two in Mexico—range from hip-hop to pop.

"The intent behind this was to find ways to continue to give opportunities to other new talent, even if we had less resources," explains Jesús López, chairman of Universal Music Latin America/Iberian Peninsula, which oversees Universal's operations in Latin America, Spain and Portugal, along with its Latin operations in the United States.

The concept of signing acts to contracts geared toward delivering a defined number of tracks, rather than albums, is not entirely new. A small handful of major and indie labels alike have been dabbling in business models centering on singles deals for the better part of two years. Most notably, Warner Music Group (WMG) has been operating an EP-driven digital label called Cordless Recordings for the last 18 months.

But in a twist from previous efforts, UML's "singles" acts are signed to the flagship label as opposed to a special imprint.

"It's a back-to-the-roots approach," UML president John Echevarría says. "Remember how it was with the Beatles? They would release singles, then the album."

López says he had toyed with the idea of signing acts to singles deals for the past four years, but he encountered resistance from artist managers and members of his own team, who were dubious on how to measure possible success with a single cut in the market.

Now, thanks to social networking sites—plus mobile and digital sales—added to traditional airplay, UML excess says it's easier to predict success.

Because digital sales are only beginning to establish themselves in Latin America, the measure of success is judged largely by site traffic around an artist.

"Sales are not so essential for me," López says. For example, if an audience shows interest by visiting a MySpace site, "I know I can sell" that artist.

UML's commitment to its singles acts involves promotion via the Internet, mobile and radio. A video is not automatically part of the deal, but can be included. As is the case with most of the label's new signings, the deals give UML a percentage of other revenue streams, such as touring and sponsorships.

Of course, UML hasn't stopped signing new acts to full-album deals. The vast majority are still signed the traditional way. But the new model gives the company more mileage for its A&R budget.

"If we're able to give an opportunity to three acts in stead of one, well, that's wonderful," Echevarría says.

Similar thinking has been in play at WMG with Cordless, which signs some artists to deliver songs in bunches of three called clusters. The deals include options for additional clusters and ultimately an album.

Since launching in 2005, Cordless—which is headed by president Jason Fiber and former Elektra Records founder Jeff Hoffman—has signed 20 plus artists. One act, electronic duo Dangerous Muse, has been optioned for an album deal with Warner Bros. Records' Sire imprint. It is being upstreamed after delivering two digital EPs last year to Cordless.

Addtional reporting by Ed Christian in New York.

HFA OVERALL COLLECTIONS UP

At the Harry Fox Agency, mechanical royalty collections were down while overall collections were up for 2006. Total collections reached $379.4 million, up 2% from the prior year due primarily to the agency's royalty compliance examinations of licensees' accounting records. But mechanicals, about $349.2 million, were down 4% from 2005. HFA reports the decrease reflects the continued decline in CD sales.

In the past, the Copyright Royalty Hearing Office has been asked to set new rates for mechanicals, but the U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE has not been asked to do so.

The office last issued new mechanical rates in 2000. Since then,数字 music services have become more popular, and the new rates would have to reflect that.

"We're not asking for a complete change," HFA president John Echevarría says. "We're asking for some changes, but we're not asking for a complete rate change."

One change is expected to be in the long-term licensing agreement. Under the current agreement, labels can make all their deals with HFA for a stipulated period—usually 3-5 years—and then renegotiate. The UML would like to see the label negotiate with HFA every year, but the copyright office has been hesitant to take on that responsibility.

But HFA is hoping to get a rate increase in the long-term licensing agreement.
No Risk To Discs
Growing Digital Album Sales Haven't Hurt Indie Bands In Stores
When Arcade Fire's "Neon Bible" debi-
ted this week at No. 2 in the United States with 92,000 units sold, 27,000 of
those were sold digitally, according to
Nielsen SoundScan. The number equaled about 30% of the Merge album's first-week
sales, a stat that the indie community is hitting with regularity.

See the Shin's "Wincing the Night Away" (Sub Pop), which also debuted at No. 2 recently with 30% of its 118,000
first-week sales coming from the digital sector, or Bloc Party's "A Weekend in the City" (Vice), which arrived with digital
albums comprising 33% of its 48,000 first-week units. On a smaller scale, Deer-
hoof's Kill Rock Stars effort "Friend Opportunity" sold 33% of its 16,000
first-week units online.

Digital sales volume in its many configurations now accounts for 15% of total U.S. music sales. The
Nielsen SoundScan reports CD sales down 20.3% this year, to 81.5 million as of March 11, album downloads have
totaled nearly 9 million, a 56.4% increase over the same period last year. That
equals nearly 10% of all U.S. album sales.

Yet, despite the figures, a number of top indie labels insist that the fast-rising
digital sector is not affecting their manufacturing calculations.

"We can pretty much count on the digital percentage being greater than a third of the
first release than it was last time," Sub Pop head of sales Andy Kotowicz says.
"But right now we still spend most of our resources on trying to get people into stores and buying the physical
records we shipped. There's not much of a risk in having people not download a record. There's much more a risk in
getting records returned."

Drag City head of sales Brian Murphy concurs. Unlike the majors, which cite file sharing as the main culprit for
delaying sales, Murphy's label is experiencing a growth spurt.
Digital sales, he says, rarely enter into the equation in setting up an album's retail plan.

"We're not looking at digital numbers to analyze sales prospects," he says. "We look at what's happening in terms of LPs and CDs on the last record, and we formulate from there. The digital does not
seem to affect the number of real copies we sell. It's a happy thing. Digital is
growing, but it is not necessarily shrinking the other sides of the market for us.

And the digital attention surrounding
a new indie release is helping indies get albums in larger accounts such as
Target. A sales exec with one indie distri-
bution notes that it now places two or three titles per month at Target.

"Three years ago we were only put-
ing a couple of records a year into Tar-
get," he says. "That's an interesting phe-
nomena. They're paying more attention to the social networking sites. There's some value, if we can articulate the traffic these sites are seeing in the same way accounts used to look at radio."

Indeed, in setting up the forthcoming
album from indie rapper El-P, De-
finitive Jux is hoping the artist's success in
the online world will result in larger
buy-ins from the big-box retailers.

"To a degree, everyone has worked
themselves up to a lather over the digital world," Definitive Jux CEO Amaechi
Uzorogwu says. "But I'm more concerned about
Best Buy and getting them to truly understand this
record. They need to un-
derstand this record be-
cause that's where the
money is. It's not in digital."

Representatives from Best Buy and
Target did not return calls by press time.
The digital retail sector, some labels
say, won't truly become a factor until
iTunes gets some hearty competition.

"The big question is why aren't there
more record stores online," Vice GM Adam Shore says. "The physical stores
close all the time, but everyone still
shops at one digital store. It's just crazy.
I feel a lot of the retail environment will
change when every Web site is a store.
Everything you see on a blog, you should
be able to buy."
Shhh. Sounds like applause
Coke congratulates American Idol on 200 episodes.
A SNAG FOR SLACKER?
Portable Internet Radio Venture Still Needs A Rights Framework

Slacker Inc., a new venture from the executives behind MusicMatch, Rio and iRiver America, wants to revolutionize Internet radio by making it portable. But like many companies looking to create fresh uses for digital music that don't have an existing rights framework around them, there's a hitch in transforming vision to reality: The San Diego-based startup still must secure the contractual approval of labels and publishers for a never-before-tried interactive radio right that allows for portability.

The right Slacker is seeking enables many hours of interactive radio programming beamed from PCs, wireless networks and satellite signals to be stored for a limited time in the cache of a line of handheld devices the company is developing.

In the scheme of rights clearances, the rate for such a feature lies somewhere between PC-tethered interactive radio and a portable on-demand subscription service, sources familiar with the situation say.

So far Universal Music Group, Sony BMG Music Entertainment and a number of independent labels have signed off on the service, which Slacker hopes to bow in the second half of 2007, according to VP of marketing Jonathan Sasse. But the company still needs to come to terms with publishers, and with Warner Music Group (WMG) and EMI. Given contentiousness over Internet radio costs in the wake of a Copyright Review Board ruling on noninteractive streaming rates (see story, page 22), that's no small matter.

At least one digital music service operator says it has looked at the concept of portable customized radio and passed on it due to reterations over licensing hurdles. There are also concerns that the money that can be generated from advertising might not be enough to cover content costs of a free ad-supported model Slacker is proposing for its basic tier of service. But Slacker execs say they are confident they can secure the necessary deals and revenue.

Sasse claims the company is close to an agreement with WMG and at least three leading music publishers. As for content costs, he points out that the company will look to bolster its ad revenue with sales of its line of portable devices, and fees from technology licensing to third parties and from premium services that allow users to listen to tracks on demand.

STARBUCKS/CONCORD DEAL AN ASSET FOR ARTISTS
With the launch of Starbucks and Concord Music Group's Hear Music label, the two companies are putting a successful model of co-releases to the test. Artists and managers are optimistic about what the companies' combined strengths can offer that a traditional label can't.

Under the joint venture, Starbucks will take primary responsibility for A&R, while Concord will aid in marketing, promotion and distribution of Hear Music artists outside the cafes. Starbucks Entertainment president Ken Lombard says artists' desire to sign directly with the coffee chain prompted the label's creation. "They're disenfranchised and looking for a fresh new approach, and that is the commitment that both Starbucks and Concord have to this new endeavor," Lombard says. Product from the new label will be available simultaneously at Starbucks stores, as well as traditional and digital retail.

"The awareness that's created by Starbucks has a very positive effect in other channels," says Concord president Glen Burris, whose string of collaborations with Starbucks began with Ray Charles' "Genius Loves Company" in 2004. Hear Music expects to release its first album by the end of this year, with plans for up to eight releases per year from established and emerging artists.

HANCOCK

Digital

By Brian Garrity

Digital

By Ayala Ben-Yehuda

Retail

By T. Scott Kirchner

Musician and manager and label execs discuss what content works best on mobile phones; and a close look at how mobile business models affect the content created for them.

Afternoon breakout sessions will delve deeper into such topics as mobile search, social networking and place shifting; the latest device innovations; target marketing; international case studies; and survival strategies for competing in the mobile market.

That evening, Billboard and the Mobile Marketing Assn. will host a reception where the 88 and David Martin will perform.

Mobile Blend

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MEET AND GREET
New Industry Confab Takes Hold In Milan

MILAN—Europe's music industry calendar has a new entry. This September sees the debut of a trade fair moving in on a stage previously dominated by MIDEM in Cannes and PopKomm in Berlin. The Music Events and Entertainment Technology conference MEET Milano will take place Sept. 21-24 at the city's Fiera Milano Rho exhibition complex—overlapping one day with PopKomm (Sept. 19-21).

Although MEET Milano will be open to the public, it will heavily feature lighting, soundstage and recording studio technology—not a major focus of the content-oriented PopKomm or MIDEM. Fabio Majocchi, director-general of organizer Expo CTS, says it will also be "a marketplace for business."

Majocchi says the event will cater to "labels, publishers and musical instrument manufacturers" and will feature "conferences and meetings hosted by [authors]body SIAE and other institutions."

Majocchi insists the proximity to PopKomm is "pure coincidence." He also notes that MEET Milano is largely a "business to customer" event, while PopKomm's public element is confined to the concerts that run alongside its trade exhibition/conference. MIDEM, held each January, is a delegate-only trade show.

"Our aim is to attract 100,000 visitors over four days," Majocchi says. He notes that entry prices are not yet fixed, although exhibitors will receive cheap or free trade tickets. Conference program details are not yet available.

PopKomm director Kaija Bittner admits to being "curious" about MEET Milano. "From what I've seen on its Web site, its exact focus isn't entirely clear," she says, "but there's always room for a new event if it's a great one."

Bittner says the calendar clash with MEET Milano is unlikely to affect PopKomm attendance. "Berlin and Milan are only 90 minutes apart by plane," she says, "so European and American delegates could theoretically attend both."

Franco De Gemini, owner of Rome indie Beat Records, is a member of MIDEM advisory group: the international honorary committee. "I'm not worried about the idea of another event," he says. "I don't know whether Milan can compete with Cannes in terms of luxury hotels in close proximity—but in format terms, I'd advise the organizers to try and be different from MIDEM."

Basic stand spaces at MEET Milano cost €140 ($184) per square meter for areas under 120 square meters. PopKomm's cheapest 2007 stand area (for spaces under 36 square meters) costs €157.50 ($207) per square meter. MIDEM does not have a comparable basic rate. Costs vary according to stand location and decoration.

MEET Milano will have two main areas. Majocchi says he expects about 150 exhibitors to occupy the public-access "Music International Village" section. The trade-only "On-Back Stage" section, mainly dedicated to "professional technology for entertainment and communication," will accommodate 200 exhibitors.

In 2006, PopKomm claimed 817 exhibitors and 15,311 delegates. MIDEM 2007 had 2,376 exhibitors and 9,452 delegates.

Majocchi says MEET Milano will primarily be an Italian affair, but hopes that "Milan's appeal as a trade fair location will give the event an international identity." The city hosts international design, fashion and tourism trade events. Expo CTS alone is organizing 21 exhibitions there this year.

MEET Milano's arrival has been cautiously welcomed by local music industry figures. "We really don't know too much about it yet," says Enzo Nazza, president of IFPI-affiliated labels body FIMI, "but we'll be having meetings with the organizers in due course."

Chuck Rolandi, director of Sony ATV Publishing Italy, sees the event as having potential, largely due to the public's participation. "I think the organizers see it as a way of educating the public about music," he says. "Publishers see it as a way of educating the public about not stealing music."

Rolandi's counterpart at Universal Music Publishing Italy, Claudio Buja, agrees. "It could be great for promoting awareness of copyright issues," he says. "A lot of people will be passing through."

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GLOBAL NEWSLINE

>>>MTV EUROPE AWARDS TO MUNICH

MTV Networks' annual European Music Awards is returning to Germany. This year's gala will be held Nov. 1 at the OlympiaHalle Arena in the Bavarian capital, Munich. It will be the second time the EMAs have been held in Germany, following the inaugural 1994 event in Berlin and the 2001 show in Frankfurt.

The multipurpose OlympiaHalle was constructed to host the gymnastics and handball competitions at the 1972 Olympic Games. It is a regular concert venue, and in the coming months, Beyoncé, Pearl Jam and Aerosmith are among the front-line acts booked to perform there. —Lars Brandie

>>>V2 CALLS FOR AIM/MOS TRUCE

London-based independent label V2 has called for a truce between its fellow indie label Ministry of Sound and Europe's trade bodies.

In a March 9 statement the London-based indie has urged the independent community to show a united front, and described MOS' recent berating of U.K. indie labels' body AIM and pan-European body Impala over the latter's recent deal with Warner Music Group as "a total distraction" that fails to "recognize that the war is actually being lost on all sides." The letter was issued on behalf of V2 Music Group CEO Tony Harlow and V2 UK managing director David Steele.

MoS recently resigned from AIM after Brussels-based Impala (of which AIM is a member) agreed it would oppose a WMG approach for EMG Group. —Lars Brandie

>>>DIAM'S BLANK NIGHT AT VICTOIRES

The 22nd annual French music industry awards show, Victoires de la Musique, saw double wins for Benabar, Olivia Ruiz and Grand Corps Malade March 10 at the Paris Zenith venue. However, quadruple nominee Diam's—the current queen of the French pop scene—went home empty-handed.

Jive Epic "new chanson" singer/songwriter Bonabar was named best male artist, and his "Le Diner" was best song. Polydor/Universal pop/rock singer Ruiz took the best female artist and best music show/best tour honors, while Anouche Production/A2 Universal rapper Grand Corps Malade collected the awards for best breakthrough artist and best album by a newcomer. The 15 categories are voted on mostly by a 1,000-strong industry academy. The best breakthrough artist is decided by public votes.

According to ratings company Médiamétrie, the live broadcast of the show on public channel France 2 attracted an average of 3.5 million viewers.

—Aymeric Pichevin

>>>BRITS HONOR VERNON HANDLEY

Distinguished British conductor Dr. Vernon Handley will receive a lifetime achievement award at the Classical Brit Awards 2007, to be held May 3 at London's Royal Albert Hall.

During a prolific career, Handley has recorded more than 150 albums, 90 of which feature British composers. At the event, Handley will conduct a special performance of one movement from Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto, featuring Natalie Clein.

Other performers include the 60-strong Fron Male Voice Choir and Chinese pianist Lang Lang. —Lars Brandie

>>>DIVINE CHOICE IN IRELAND

Former Parlophone/EMI act the Divine Comedy won the Irish music industry's second annual Choice Music Prize for its 2006 album "Victory for the Comic Music."

The Irish "album of the year" award is modeled on the United Kingdom's Mercury Prize. It is chosen by a panel of 12 judges from a shortlist of 10 albums. Divine Comedy is the creation of singer-songwriter Neil Hannon, its main and sometimes only member. Despite Hannon's act being dropped by his label in January, it beat competition from the likes of Snow Patrol's "Eyes Open" (Fiction/Polydor), Duke Special's "Songs From the Deep Forest" (V2) and David Kitt's "Not Fade Away" (Rough Trade).

Hannon received a check for €10,000 ($13,200). The event is funded by labels' body the Irish Recorded Music Assn. and authors' body the Irish Music Rights Organization. The Feb. 28 ceremony in Dublin's Vicar Street venue featured live performances from eight of the 10 nominated acts and was broadcast live via national commercial radio station Today FM.

—Nick Kelly
NOT ALL OF THE HOLLYWOOD ACTION TAKES PLACE ON THE SET.

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LONDON—The United Kingdom's summer festival centerpiece, Glastonbury, is back after a year off—buckled-up and determined to give the ticket-buying public exactly what they need.

For the June 22-24 event, Glastonbury founder/promoter Michael Eavis has developed a multi-tiered initiative with the ticket-agency SeeTickets to defeat scalpers and forgers.

"I really care about fans being ripped off by the touts," Eavis says. "I went to London recently and two people [separately] told me they paid £500 [$961] in 2005 for a ticket. If I can hear two stories when I randomly go to London, there must be thousands out there. So I'm trying to stop that."

The new ticketing procedure required applicants to download a registration form and return it with a photograph to organizers by March 5. Only those with a valid reference number can buy tickets when they go on sale April 1 on a "first come, first served" basis. Eavis says more than 400,000 people registered.

Even with 25,000 additional tickets available and capacity rising to 175,000, this year's event is hugely oversubscribed. That level of interest is, in a way, paradoxical. In previous years, says Melvin Benn, managing director of U.K. promoter/venues operator Mean Fiddler Music Group (MFMG), which has handled Glastonbury's licensing and security since 2002, despite Glastonbury's roots in the '60s/ '70s counterculture, Eavis says opposition to the new ticketing setup has been muted. "People have really accepted the argument about touting," he says. "Integrating the photo on the ticket is only costing £1 [$1.93] each, and people get to keep the ticket forever. It's the only way to stop touting."

Rival festivals, however, are not rushing to follow suit.

"If this system does prove successful, it's definitely a path we will consider for the future," says Geoff Ellis, chief executive of D.F. Concerts, promoters of Scotland's giant festival T in the Park. "However, we should not have to put fans through this process. What we really need is a change in the law covering the resale of tickets."

Stuart Galbraith, managing director of Live Nation U.K., which jointly owns MFMG with Irish promoter Gaiety. Solely or through MFMG, Live Nation operates several annual U.K. festivals including the Reading, Leeds, Download and Wireless events.

Glastonbury is "unique in the market-place," Galbraith says. "It's the only event strong enough to cause their customers to go through so much inconvenience to get a ticket."

If other festivals aped Glastonbury's system, Galbraith suggests, "it would certainly affect the commercial income of the event."

"I seem to be the only promoter who is so concerned about this," Eavis says. "I don't think [scammers] are interested in it, provided they sell their tickets out.

So far, Glastonbury organizers have their own clear of March 26-27, when Benn attends a hearing with the council, seeking a four-year license capping the site's capacity at 175,000. Some 144,000 of that is ticketed; the remainder is largely allocated to staff, artists and crew.

After giving the site a "fallow year" in 2006, Eavis is confident that Glastonbury 2007 will be the best yet. "The buzz is fantastic," he says. "I turn 72 this year. I'm cracking on a bit, but I've never enjoyed it as much as now. It's extraordinary."

Glastonbury traditionally reveals its bill after tickets go on sale. Billboard has learned that respective nightly headliners this year will be Arctic Monkeys, The Killers and the Who, with the Kaiser Chiefs, the Kooks and Kasabian taking second billing.

Others tipped to appear include Arcade Fire, Björk and Corinne Bailey Rae. Even a performance by a re-formed Creedence Clearwater Revival has been rumored.

"If we play Glastonbury this year," Kaiser Chiefs frontman Ricky Wilson says, "it will make our summer."

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At What Price Tickets?

Government Impasse Angers U.K. Promoters

LONDON—While Glastonbury prepares its "tout-proof" tickets (see story, this page), other U.K. live sector voices are rising in anger at government inaction on tackling scalpers.

The secondary sale of concert tickets above face value remains legal in the United Kingdom. Attempting to change that, the live music community has engaged with government since November 2005 in an ongoing series of "ticketing summits."

The most recent, Feb. 8 at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in London, was attended by leading live entertainment players including SJM Concerts, Mean Fiddler Music Group (MFMG) and Clear Channel Entertainment.

The live music sector is particularly frustrated that the United Kingdom's primary legislation outlawing scalping—introduced to reduce public order offenses—covers only soccer matches.

MFMG managing director Melvin Benn describes the dialogue with government as "a complete and utter waste of time."

According to Benn, "In terms of the government's attempt to try and regulate ticketing, they don't know their arse from their elbow."

In a post-summit statement, Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell insisted the government was keen to protect consumers against "excessive profiteering by touts."

The DCMS, she added, would work with the industry to expunge unfair practices, but it would be "unfair" if consumers were "unable to sell their own tickets... and get their money back."

Glastonbury organizers have a significant hurdle of their own to clear March 26-27, when Benn attends a hearing with the council, seeking a four-year license capping the site's capacity at 175,000. Some 144,000 of that is ticketed; the remainder is largely allocated to staff, artists and crew.

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Live Nation U.K. managing director Stuart Galbraith accuses the government of a "U-turn."

Jowell "spoke very promisingly initially," Galbraith says. "We were working down the route that they would bring in legislation making toutng of tickets and overt profiting from tickets illegal. But now they've effectively washing their hands of it."

Rob Ballantine, director of SJM and U.K. trade body the Concert Promoters Aswn. (CPA), welcomes Jowell's comments on profiteering, but adds, "We are frustrated that they have still not acted to give us the necessary tools to self-police our touts."

The issue has attracted recent U.K. media attention. Weekly music magazine NME ran an anti-scalping campaign, while consumer rights publication "Which?" warned of ticket prices rising to reflect market values if anti-scalper legislation was not adopted.

It has also been reported that promoters may increasingly invite auction bids for their best seats in order to head off scalpers, although a CPA source admits its members "have very mixed feelings on this."

The DCMS claims some relief may come with the incorporation into U.K. law (by Dec. 12) of the European Union's 2005 Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. One of its aims is to ban "unfair practices" in the ticket market.

"Let's test out this new law," a DCMS representative says, "before we start overlegislat.
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Making The Brand

GIRL AUTHORITY

By MICHAEL PAOLETTA
mpaolettabillboard.com

This American Life producer Jane Feltes says she used to be lucky to run the volume controls on a BBC documentary. That was in 2003, when she was pouring drinks three nights a week at Bar Vertigo in Chicago and interning at public radio station WBZ.

She went full time with WBZ in 2004, working with Ira Glass on the observational-styled journalism of “This American Life.” Today, she also acts as a music supervisor on the TV version, which debuts March 22 on Showtime. She recently discussed her crash course in learning the difference between scoring a radio series and a TV show.

What’s the sound of “This American Life” to you?
In radio, we look for something with a pretty clear melody and rhythm, and something that builds and builds. It’ll start kind of quiet under some important thing somebody is saying, and then at the moment someone has a nice little quote, the music will post—there will be some change in the music. That’s really the only requirement, and that’s easily loopable since we do all the mixing ourselves. We look for the same stuff on the television show, but it’s mostly unknown artists.

Are you ever able to talk people down?
I feel like some of the artists we wanted to work with would just rather not deal with this side of it. They’ll say they really want to be involved in the [TV] show, but we have to talk to the publishing agency. Then we talk to the publishers, and often they say, “It’s $40,000. That’s the bottom line.” We have to walk away. There are some people who call the publisher and say, “Well, how about 1% of that?” We were just so used to using whatever the heck we want. But then we just jump on MySpace and click on “electronic” and find an act like Balamour, who we used.

So it challenged you to dig deeper?
We did a piece about [hot dog stand] the Weiner Circle in Chicago. Towards the end, there’s this beautiful scene where the women working there are singing “Shout” by Tears for Fears. They’re slamming on the counter and singing it really loud and the whole crowd is jumping up and down. It was exciting tape. But to have them singing it for 15 seconds we were going to cost us $30,000. But I have this friend Kenny Blue [aka DJ Krash], a hip-hop producer in Chicago, and we put his song on. We just didn’t use the shot where you can see people’s lips moving.

Did you think about having someone score the series?
Mark Mothersbaugh called me in the beginning of the whole TV thing. He said he wanted to do the music for the entire series. I said we couldn’t afford him, and we probably didn’t want to go that route in that we’d want to mix it up a bit. But he sent us his entire libraries. He has all these leftovers; half-made tracks, stuff that was rejected for films. We used a lot of those, and he was really nice about letting us use them.

We use anything on the radio. We use tons of film scores, and a lot of Jon Brion and Mark Mothersbaugh and a lot of stuff from Philip Glass and David Byrne. But we also use some DMX instrumentals, and Ira likes to use the instrumentals from Dr. Dre’s “Chronic 2000.” It’s across the spectrum. Anything as long as it’s an instrumental. When we moved into TV, we couldn’t afford any of that.

Even a lot of the indie stuff?
We use a lot of Calexico on radio, for example. I was talking to them and they were like, “Oh, yeah, totally use everything on the TV show.” We started mixing with their songs and then had to get into making up some license agreements. We contacted their publishers, and they said, “Great, that’s $40,000 a cue.” I don’t even know if we had $40,000 to make the entire series.
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**GUITAR GAINS**

Gibson Courts The Latin Market

Gibson Guitar’s plan to corner the Latin consumer market? Be everywhere that Latin musicians are—and make sure they’re playing Gibson instruments.

In an effort to make itself the brand of choice for famous and amateur Latin artists alike, Gibson is opening a showroom in Miami this month, hiring artist relations representatives in Mexico and Brazil and negotiating signature lines with Latin artists.

The company, which also owns the Baldwin and Wurlitzer piano brands, sponsors everyone from pop stars Julieta Venegas and Luis Fonsi to indie darling Kinski. Anecdotal evidence from dealers suggests Latin buyers are responsible for an increasing share of the company’s sales, Gibson chairman/CEO Henry Juszkiewicz says.

“The Latin community in the U.S. is growing and becoming more affluent,” Juszkiewicz says. “So they have more disposable income and can get into higher-quality and more prestigious goods, where we are particularly strong.”

Rather than rely on traditional advertising, Gibson gets its name out on Los Angeles’ Gibson Amphitheatre, which hosts most of the top Latin acts passing through the city—and on showrooms like its new 10,500-square-foot facility in Miami. The showroom will host press conferences, VIP events and showcases and display instruments used by Latin stars.

A guitar room will be named after Colombian singer/songwriter Soraya, who died of breast cancer last year. To inaugurate the showroom, Gibson plans to put up a series of guitar sculptures in Miami signed by Latin celebrities and auctioned off for charity.

Further, “The more the stars play our stuff, the more ordinary people will want to participate,” Juszkiewicz says of Gibson’s approach to outfitting artists for tours, photo shoots and TV appearances.

Competitor Fender sponsors Husan and fashioned a Swarovski crystal-covered guitar for Shakira’s World Cup closing ceremonies performance in 2006.

But pop-rocker Luis Fonsi says Gibson has been unusually aggressive in courting the Latin market. Fonsi, whose first guitar as a college student was a Gibson Epiphone, now calls an acoustic Emmylou Harris model “my baby.” “I’m really happy with the sound live,” Fonsi says. “It’s a normal body but it sounds huge.”

The company is also donating guitars for an upcoming Fonsi concert benefiting cancer research—a cause close to the artist’s heart since his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago. “Things like that,” Fonsi says, “make the difference between (Gibson and) the other guys out there.”

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

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**Latin Notas**

**LEILA COBO icobo@billboard.com**

**Latins Online**

Pew Study Suggests Language, Education, Nation Of Origin Indicate Likelihood Of Internet Use

Increasingly, the Internet has become an essential tool to market, promote and sell Latin music. To that effect, multiple studies have been conducted on how the Internet is used by Latinos.

But who exactly is using it?

A broad study released March 14 by the Pew Hispanic Center and the Pew Internet & American Life Project indicates that when it comes to Latinos accessing the Internet, language is the key.

Latinas make up 14% of the U.S. population, according to Census figures published in 2005. A little more than half of them—56%—use the Internet, compared with 71% of non-Hispanic whites and 60% of non-Hispanic blacks. The discrepancy is largely the result of language and education.

Most dramatic, 78% of Latinos who are English-dominant and 76% of those who are bilingual use the Internet. But only 32% of Spanish-dominant adults do so.

“Whoever used us most was how strong the association is with language,” study co-author Susannah Fox says.

Language, of course, is also associated with education and socioeconomic status. Eighty-nine percent of Latin college graduates use the Internet while only 31% of Latinos who didn’t complete high school go online. Likewise, 76% of U.S.-born Latinos go online versus 43% of those foreign-born.

And, while Latinos of Mexican origin are the largest U.S. Latin population, accounting for 65% of the total, only 52% of them go online. This fact held steady, even when taking into account other factors like age, language, income and nativity. Likewise, Latinos of South American descent have the highest rate of Internet use—70%—a number that remains relatively constant even when accounting for higher education rates among that sector.

Finally, only 29% of Latinos have broadband connections at home.

But the Pew numbers are significant for many reasons, chief among them the sheer size of the sample, which included more than 6,000 Latin adults in all 50 states, and gives added credibility and objectivity to this study.

What to glean from a music perspective? First and foremost, that the opportunities afforded via the Internet are enormous, and that advertisers and content providers should be ready to leap on a bandwagon whose pace can only accelerate.

“The companies that are providing broadband service are very hungry for content,” says Demain Bellumio, president of Hoodley Entertainment Group, which owns bilingual social networking site elhood.com. While Bellumio admits to being surpassed at the gap in Internet use between Spanish and non-Spanish speakers, he believes it can be partly attributed to lack of quality content.

“One of the reasons we exist is exactly because there are not many sites that provide the same experience online for Spanish speakers as for English speakers,” Bellumio says. “We have identified an entertainment space in that gap, and we really want to connect users and the music industry in a high-quality type of setting.”

What happens, then, with Spanish-only sites? Judging from growing traffic quoted for every major site, that percentage of Spanish-dominant users is clearly avid for content in a world of few choices.

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**EXPANSION, REGIONAL MEXICAN STYLE**

Universal Music Latino is further expanding its reach into the regional Mexican market with the launch of Starmex, a new joint-venture label with producer Yari Camarena. Starmex’s first release, due in April, is an album by La Banda Guasaveña, the group of the late singer Valentín Elizalde.

Los Angeles-based Starmex is Universal’s third joint venture within the regional Mexican realm. Its focus, Universal Music Latino president John Echevarria says, will be youth-oriented fare that can appeal to both pop and regional Mexican listeners.

“We continue to believe in the regional Mexican market and in the young regional Mexican market,” Echevarria says.

Starmex will act as an A&R agent, and Universal will market, promote and distribute its albums. In recent weeks, Universal has remained in the top 10 of Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart with regional Mexican titles by Diana Reyes and Elizalde.

**EXPANSION, BRAZILIAN STYLE**

In a move to unify its entire Latin operation, EMI Music Publishing has expanded its umbrella to encompass Brazil. That country’s publishing operation will now fall under the jurisdiction of EMI Music Publishing Latin America, led by regional managing director Nestor Casonó.

Miami-based Casonó supervises EMI’s regionwide operation, which includes offices in Argentina, Chile and now Brazil. The company’s U.S. Latin signings also fall under Casonó. He continues to report to Roger Faxon, chairman/CEO of EMI Music Publishing worldwide.

EMI Music Publishing’s Brazil operation was formerly led by managing director Jose Antonio Perdomo, who will step down from his post but will continue as a senior consultant to Casonó. Perdomo will also continue to represent EMI to the Brazilian Composer’s Union.

EMI’s roster of Latin acts includes Kike Santander, Ricardo Montaner, Luly Tunes and Enrique Iglesias.

—Leila Cobo
Our Coolest Song in the World comes generally from two categories: contemporary garage rock (traditional rock 'n' roll) and songs that transcend all categories and exist under the fringe of our as-inclusive-as-possible big wide circuit ten in the category of simply "very cool."

It is to the latter category that we welcome Arcade Fire’s "Intervention," most likely the only Coolest Song there will ever be that waits a minute and a half for the drums to enter. The band is part of the new indie mainstream that has been getting popular in spite of probably not wanting to, as well as being uncategorizable. Oh, what the hell, let’s try a category anyway. It’s sort of, give or take, more or less, neo-noir romantic/gothic-psych/folk-rock. Intellectually sophisticated yet somehow young and innocent. Emotionally inarticulate, yet deeply emotional, with occasional unforgettable melody. Musically dense but rarely linear.

In a word, subtly, but unmistakably, doomed.

It’s Arcade Fire, the Decemberists, the Shins, Of Montreal, Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, Silversun Pickups, Band of Horses, Broken Social Scene, Deerhoof, Tapes ‘N Tapes, Peter Bjorn & John, Bright Eyes, etc. There are lots. It’s a sensibility that is specifically modern. It introduces a new level of isolation-riding a helpless, sexless desperation. A stoic acceptance by an overinformed youth who know there is no future. A college kid version of punk. Perhaps it’s an earlier stage of discovering one’s fate, before the anger. Perhaps it’s less violent because it’s less working-class.

The general language and attitude of the communication extends even to the less folksy, more poppy stuff like Radiohead and Coldplay, access to Franz Ferdinand and Bloc Party. You can hear it in the Libertines or Pete Doverty’s and Carl Barat’s solo stuff, all the way to the Strokes, Arctic Monkeys, the Killers and My Chemical Romance. It all came from that late ’70s/early ’80s break with tradition from which was born rock’s first rootless mutant offspring— Television, then the Cure, Depeche Mode, the Smiths, Joy Division, the Jesus and Mary Chain, et al. All absorbed and summed up, but not necessarily exemplified, by U2 and R.E.M. and worshiping Lou Reed as his pagan spiritual dofather with a witch or two like David Bowie and Patti Smith stirring the brew that must be drunk to erase all traces of one’s ancestors.

What can I tell you? It ain’t rock’n’roll, but I occasionally like it. And by the way, it’s big. Indie rock is about to take its place alongside pop, hip-hop and hard rock/free-punk as the fourth commercial genre.

Longevity? Only if doom turns to discipline. We will see. Of course, even in indieville we’re still the 2 year old with too much energy trying to climb out of the playpen. We’re the black sheep of our own genre. It’s OK. Eventually this generation will see up its angst, experience enough catharsis, and, with a little bit of appropriate mourning the state of our horrifying world and need an energy infusion to party again. And we’ll be right here waiting. See you on the radio.

I would like to acknowledge Bruce Henderson, and all of the tremendously gifted former employees of Urban Box Office, Inc. "UBO" for their unsung contribution to the careers of:

- The UBO/Capitol artist MIMS, who is #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 this week with the literally unstoppable "This Is Why I'm Hot"
- Tony Sunshine, who with Lumidee is roaring up the charts with "She's Like the Wind", and is finally getting the attention his extraordinary talent deserves.
- Voz A Voz on the occasion of their recent Latin Billboard Award nominations for their debut album, the future classic, "En Presencia Del Futuro".

I applaud you,

Adam Kidron
Former President/CEO
Trading Cards And Trivia Games
Two Companies Dream Up New Ways Music Can Fit On Your Phone

For the next few weeks, wireless will be the subject of much discussion as the music and mobile industries gear up for a pair of back-to-back conferences focused on mobile entertainment.

And while there will be many announcements unveiling new music phones or services from the major handset manufacturers and wireless operators, Billboard has learned of several more unique mobile music initiatives under way that show how record labels are beginning to think considerably farther outside the box when it comes to mobile opportunities.

For instance, at the CTIA Wireless conference in Orlando, Fla., the week of March 26, Warner Music Group will be unveiling the first label partner involved in an artist-based mobile trading card application from Hook Mobile, the first of which will involve rapper Yung Joc.

The application is a new twist on the traditional mobile wallpaper application (usage of which has been steadily declining during the past year, a dip that’s been largely attributed to the increasing popularity of camera phones). The trading-card app works like this: Each artist in the program will develop about 10 digital trading cards that will be distributed in random packs of three to fans paying $3 per week for the service. Some of the “cards” will be rarer than others, making it difficult to collect all 10. Fans participating in the service will be able to trade cards with one another to fill holes in their collections, until they’ve completed them all.

Those with the complete set can then redeem them for various prizes, such as ring-tones, signed T-shirts, concert tickets or even backstage passes. The cards can also be assigned as a phone wallpaper graphic.

Sonar Branding Solution is also set to announce artist promotions for a variety of new services coming to market in the coming months. At the CTIA show, the company will unveil a mobile trivia game called “Name That Music Video” that tests players’ knowledge about the many elements of a given music video. The game also allows players to buy and download the music video itself, as well as the ringtone of the song or the wallpaper image of the artist.

The trivia game is just one of several initiatives the company has under way that brings a fresh perspective to how consumers can find, acquire and interact with music on their mobile phones. For instance, Sonar Branding’s TuneMaker DJ product— which lets users create their own ring-tones from a stock catalog of sounds—will be expanding to include new releases from such artists as Paul Wall, T.I. and acts on indie labels Fuelled by Ramm such as the Academy Is and Cine is What We Aim For.

Finally, Sonar is preparing a service called FanJam, expected sometime in the second quarter. It is a Tennis-like game where players must piece together bits of a puzzle to reveal artist images that correspond with constantly shifting streamed tracks. At any time, the game can be paused to allow the player to buy a specific song or image.

It is working with Warner Music Group labels to create artist-specific versions of the game, such as FanJam: Digital Dance Edition. That smaller developer Hook and Sonar Branding are now on the radar of major record labels speaks to how the music industry is searching for new ways to address the mobile market outside of the standard ring-tone or full-song download. Both companies’ applications collect subscription and sale revenue—all of which is shared with the labels as part of the licensing agreement.

According to Sonar CEO David Danon, the firm took a year and a half to strike the licensing deals needed for its first product— "Name That Tune"— but is now getting deals done in three to six months for the FanJam application.

"Yes, it was complicated to convince people that we have other ideas and other models that could have the same success as ring-tones," Danon says. "But it was a downhill battle from there."

One mobile application that is fast becoming a hotbed of activity for label is mobile games. In addition to the trading card program, Atlantic is building a mobile game around the theme of Young Joc’s upcoming album, "Hustlemonics."

Although it’s been more than two years since the “American Idiot” album dropped, Green Day is creating a mobile game based on the album’s story line, due out sometime this summer. Other artists making mobile games include Kid Rock, Missy Elliot and Beyoncé.

Billboard will be exploring these and other mobile entertainment developments at its Mobile Entertainment Live conference, taking place in conjunction with the CTIA show. For information on the agenda and registration, visit billboardconferences.com.

COLD LAMPIN’ WITH FLAVOR
It’s a lamp! It’s a speaker! It’s a home theater system!
Addressing the apparently burgeoning demand for speakers that don’t look like speakers, Soundolier has introduced a floor lamp that features an omnidirectional wireless speaker hidden within. If purchased as a pair, they can double as surround-sound speakers. The included transmitter will project sound from any audio device to the lamp within 200 feet. It also features output jacks to accommodate an optional subwoofer or other speaker extension, as well as a repeater module that extends the system’s range.

Oh, and the light works too.

The Soundolier lamp will become available April 1 from soundlamp.com for $300. —Antony Bruno

THE SONIC BRANDING SOLUTION SERVICE FANJAM ALLOWS PLAYERS TO PIECE TOGETHER BITS OF A PUZZLE TO REVEAL IMAGES OF SUCH ARTISTS AS FAT JOE.

BITS & BRIEFs
CRUNKISH AND SIMULISH
Electronic Arts has released the latest installment of the hip-hop rumble series "Djem Jam: Icon" for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360, featuring the likenesses and music of such artists as Big Boi, Ludacris, Lil Jon and T.I. EA has also released the soundtrack to virtual reality game "The Sims 2," featuring major artists singing their songs in the game’s "Simlish" language. Participating acts include Lily Allen, the String Cheese Incident and the Veronicas.

GET’CHA HEAD IN THE GAME
Disney is getting into the videogame, um...game with a karaoke adaptation of the hit "High School Musical" for Nintendo’s Wii console. The game will follow the story of the movie, allowing players to sing the songs from the soundtrack and be judged on their performance. It will ship with a special microphone device that works with the Wii console and is the first music-based game for the Nintendo system.

STREAMED FROM STAGE
Internet video site Dovetail has partnered with indie music and culture site RIOTT to stream concert performances from RIOTT’S "Captured: Online Music Festival" event. A dozen of the 27 acts that participated in the music festival, held last November in San Francisco, are available now, with more being added over time. The videos are available as both a stream or as a downloadable file using Dovetail’s high-definition video service.

HOT RINGTONES, MAR 19, 2007

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RED Rock

Distributor Stays One Step Ahead

Product presentations and live performances highlighted RED Distribution's strategic business meetings the week of March 5. But one of the event's ironies was that, while the indie distributor held its meeting at the headquarters of a major—its parent, Sony BMG Music Entertainment—the third-party labels that have recently partnered with RED presented the most polished acts, while the more indie-sounding artists were on Columbia and Epic. All of which helps explain why developing acts are going through RED in the first place.

Wednesday's performers included Ari Hest and Jessica Hoop, both on Columbia; Ronnie Day on Epic; Until June on Provident; and Chantal Kreviazuk on Network/RCA. The next day, Warren Haynes, on his own Evil Teen label, did a tasty acoustic set while MRI artist Constantine Maroulis from "American Idol" did four songs, and Montage act Little Texas rocked the house with the full band plugged in.

So don't get me wrong. I enjoyed all the music I heard from the majors, too. But outside of Kreviazuk, who is already a star in Canada, their acts were either on-stage musically or, how can I say, in need of some seasoning. Bob Morelli, who has just been upsed to RED president from the GM slot, told me at the meeting that 10% of the company's volume comes from Sony labels while 90% comes from third-party labels.

While the industry has been downsizing since the turn of the century, RED has been successful at retaining its revenue volume. Depending on whether you are talking net or total sales, Billboard estimates RED's volume at somewhere between $125 million and $175 million last year—on par with the past few years.

Morelli declines comment on that estimate, but does say that RED has done well because it has a good group of labels. He says RED has "a structure that is very progressive and trys to stay one step ahead of what the market needs." That philosophy played into the timing of the meetings. Usually held in the fall, the confab was moved up to the spring so the company can plan how to keep in front of the game.

As part of that, the company has just undergone a small restructuring. While it closed its Chicago office, letting three people go, Morelli also split the company geographically. Denise Fanelli, previously senior director, was named VP for the West Coast region, and Paul Reitz, previously director, became senior director for the East Coast region. Also, just before the meeting, Lynn Hazen DeVaul, senior VP of finance, was upped to executive VP/GM for the company.

WAY COOL! At the RED meeting, Wicked Cool had its coming-out party. Little Steven of "The Sopranos" and Bruce Springsteen fame, who has been championing garage, punk and power-pop music for a while now on his "Underground Garage" radio show and in the pages of Billboard, launched a label last year and cut a deal to put records exclusively into Best Buy. While that riled some independent merchants at the time—who think that they, rather than chains, are the main supporters of those types of music—the deal is said to have been done because the label didn't yet have a distributor.

In any event, Little Steven led Wicked Cool's product presentation, which began with, naturally, four go-go dancers, shaking it for all they were worth against a film montage of what Little Steven might call cool culture. He began by acknowledging that the bad news is that "we picked the most craziest insane time in the record industry to start a label. Who knows what new horror will next come out of the digital Pandora's steel box?"

Wicked Cool plans to release records in three categories. First, it will reissue albums like "The Mindbending Sounds of the Chesterfield Kings," which first came out in 2003 on Sundazed. Second, it will put together compilations like "The Coolest Songs in the World Vol. 1," which features 15 songs that are played on his radio show. And third, it will issue new records from bands like the Charms and the Woogles.

Little Steven closed by noting, "We are not sure what music is going to be fashionable, and we don't know where technology is going, and we don't give a fuck."
BOXSCORE Concert Grosses

GROSS/ (Grosses) ARTIST(S) Location Date Attendance Promoter
1 $4,381,499 $359.413 ROD STEWART Madison Square Garden, New York, Feb. 6, 8, 11, 21 45,792 VIP seat holders, TV tapings Concerts West/AEG Live
2 $2,710,997 $359.413 FLORICENTA EN VIVO Mexico City, Mexico City, Feb. 18-19 44,918 Ticketmaster, TV tapings OCESA Presents
3 $2,271,097 $359.413 CÉLINE DION Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, March 4-12 2,271 $389.00/tourer Ticketmaster, TV tapings Concerts West/AEG Live
4 $3,201,550 $359.413 MANÁ American Airlines Arena, Miami, March 8 24,381 Live Nation
5 $1,500,878 $359.413 ROD STEWART Budweiser, Medieval, Feb. 24 10,881 Live Nation
6 $1,263,012 $359.413 RICO GORDON Auditions Nacional, Mexico, City, Feb. 28, 29 37,963 Ticketmaster, TV tapings OCESA Presents
7 $1,316,086 $359.413 JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, PINK American Airlines Arena, Miami, March 5, 6 11,545 Live Nation
8 $1,508,916 $726.539 BILLY JOEL John Paul Jones Arena, Charlottesville, Va., Feb. 23 13,159 Live Nation
9 $1,002,583 $726.539 BILLY JOEL Phillips Arena, Atlanta, March 1 15,129 Live Nation
10 $1,066,678 $393.515 JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, PINK St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla., Feb. 22 14,453 Live Nation
11 $1,556,610 $393.515 GEORGE STRAIT, RONNY MILSAP, TAYLOR SWIFT Peppi Center, Denver, March 3 14,103 Live Nation
12 $1,033,025 $393.515 JOSH GROBAN, ANGELIQUE KIDJO United Center, Chicago, Feb. 24 15,751 Live Nation
13 $1,011,660 $393.515 JOSH GROBAN, ANGELIQUE KIDJO Toyota Center, Houston, March 16 15,965 Live Nation
14 $991,774 $393.515 JOSH GROBAN, ANGELIQUE KIDJO Pageant, St. Louis, March 16 14,517 Live Nation, Palace Sports & Entertainment
15 $951,705 $393.515 SNARKY TOURING, Amsterdam, Belgium, Jan. 22 16,531 Live Nation
16 $850,420 $393.515 MAN American Airlines Arena, Miami, Feb. 27 13,794 Live Nation, Latino Event & Marketing Services
17 $800,772 $726.539 MARCO ANTONIO SOLÍS Auditorio Nacional, Mexico City, March 17 11,275 Live Nation
18 $795,367 $133.780 JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, PINK Scotiabank Centre, Toronto, March 19 13,136 Live Nation
19 $791,627 $133.780 JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, PINK HSBC Arena, Buffalo, N.Y., Feb. 18 11,260 Live Nation
20 $775,365 $133.780 JOSH GROBAN, ANGELIQUE KIDJO Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, Feb. 17 11,255 Live Nation
21 $726,539 $133.780 LIONEL RICHIE Barone Park, Holmdel, N.J., July 2 11,431 Live Nation
22 $711,655 $133.780 GEORGE STRAIT, RONNY MILSAP, TAYLOR SWIFT Compaq Arena, Houston, Feb. 23 11,275 Live Nation
23 $683,271 $133.780 RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, GNARLS BARKLEY Sleep Train Arena, Lake Elsinore, Calif., March 2 17,847 Jem Productions
24 $630,455 $133.780 RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, GNARLS BARKLEY Sleep Train Arena, Lake Elsinore, Calif., March 2 17,847 Jem Productions
25 $594,580 $133.780 JAMES TAYLOR Sleep Train Arena, Lake Elsinore, Calif., March 2 11,663 Live Nation
26 $589,420 $133.780 LARRY THE CABLE GUY, RENO COLLIER Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Feb. 17 13,804 Outback Concerts, House of Blues Canada
27 $578,485 $133.780 JOSH GROBAN, ANGELIQUE KIDJO Scotiabank Arena, Toronto, March 19 13,804 Outback Concerts, House of Blues Canada
28 $563,420 $726.539 MANÁ American Airlines Arena, Miami, March 2 8,240 Live Nation, Latino Event & Marketing Services, Inhouse
29 $523,302 $726.539 VIVA ROMANCE: JENNIFER LOPEZ, DAVID BISBAL & OTHERS American Airlines Arena, Miami, March 2 7,680 Sunshine Entertainment
30 $470,740 $726.539 JOHN MAYER, MAT KARNER Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 18 11,430 Live Nation
31 $455,288 $726.539 LARRY THE CABLE GUY, RENO COLLIER Wiltern Theatre, Los Angeles, Calif., Feb. 20-21 10,650 Outback Concerts
32 $442,548 $726.539 JOHN MAYER, MAT KARNER Rupp Arena, Lexington, Ky., Feb. 24 10,740 Live Nation
33 $372,800 $726.539 MICHAEL CRAWFORD, LONG BEACH SYMPHONY, DALE KRISTEN American Airlines Arena, Miami, March 2 6,723 Live Nation
34 $359,413 $726.539 RAPHAEL American Airlines Arena, Miami, March 2 7,765 Erre El Associos

Push And Pull

Can Consumers Control The Live Music Picture?

"Delete fear." That was what fiber manager Terry McBride suggested to a packed ballroom during a fascinating keynote presentation at Canadian Music Week in Toronto. McBride was not just talking about how to get consumers to buy tickets. He is embracing change, creating a new music biz paradigm and hoping people follow his lead.

McBride's setup for the novelties is a ground-breaking. As Todd Martens points out in his profile of Lavigne's new release "Best Damn Thing" on April 17 (Billboard, March 10), marketing of the record is centered around a serial Japanese-style comic book/mobile initiative. McBride gave those in attendance a taste of the first "episode," set to the instrumental track from the song "Girlfriend." This seems to be a very valuable marketing tool for what McBride terms the "pull generation," kids who want to dictate what their entertainment is, how, when and where they want it. In 2007, McBride says, the "dog is firmly wagging the tail," the consumer controlling the music biz.

For most acts signed to a record label, touring is tied to the release of an album and is designed to capitalize on media exposure, radio play and the record company's marketing muscle. There is a general consensus among music business professionals that touring helps sell albums. Even though touring is a "parallel" business to selling records, artists generally attempt to maximize both simultaneously. Tracking figures have demonstrated time and again that album sales for an artist spike in a given market when the artist plays a concert in that market.

McBride says Lavigne won't tour on this upcoming release until February of next year, though she'll do plenty of international promotion of the record. By next year, McBride says, she'll have a firmer idea of how to tour more efficiently, where to best play, what size venues, who the audience is, if the record blows up at all. And then, there will be huge demand for Lavigne's show. But what if it doesn't fly? As creative as the concept may be, a comic book won't replace a killer show in Toronto.

NEW VENUES FOR COALITION: Just past its one-year anniversary, the Venue Coalition, which represents more than 20 North American arenas as an advocate to bring in more events, has added several new member buildings. New to the coalition are the Brick Breeden Fieldhouse in Bozeman, Mont.; Don Haskins Center at the University of Texas-El Paso; Crown Center in Fayetteville, N.C.; War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne, Ind.; Hampton (Va.) Coliseum; Rupp Arena in Lexington, Ky.; United Spirit Arena in Lubbock, Texas; First Tier Event Center in Kearney, Neb.; and Midwest Wireless Center in Mankato, Minn. Originally just nine venues, Venue Coalition now has 12 in Canada and 13 in the United States.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Touring

Grand Slam

Video Game Company 2K Sports Pairs With Tapes 'N Tapes

Indie act Tapes 'N Tapes has scored a home run with 2K Sports. Not only has the Minneapolis-based outfit landed its song "Insistor" on the soundtrack to the new "Major League Baseball 2K7" videogame, but 2K Sports will also sponsor the band's upcoming tour, which hits 400- to 1,100-capacity venues across North America this spring.

The pairing exemplifies videogame companies' increased presence in the touring business. Since its inception in 2003, the annual Nintendo Fusion Tour has helped boost the profile of such acts as Fall Out Boy, My Chemical Romance and Panic! at the Disco, while other gaming companies have been sponsors at major festivals like Lollapalooza, Ozzfest and the Vans Warped tour.

"A couple weeks after we agreed to have our song on the videogame they asked us what we would think about them sponsoring us on tour," says Tapes 'N Tapes frontman Josh Grier. "It was a no-brainer, we're huge fans of the game." Early on, Tapes 'N Tapes were one of hundreds of acts uploaded to the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 consoles and were thus immediately scheduled to drop this fall. Tapes 'N Tapes kickoff the second leg of the 2K Sports Hit- n-Run tour, starting April 16 at the Blue Note in Columbia, Mo., and wrapping May 19 at the Paradise Rock Club in Boston. The Hit- n-Run tour is an ongoing effort to promote "Major League Baseball 2K7," which features a heavy alt-rock focus (Billboard, March 10). The soundtrack will be streaming on 2ksports.com, and listeners will have the option to purchase the songs via iTunes, Rosa says. 2K Sports is no stranger to touring sponsorships, adds Rosa, who also handpicks music for 2K Sports tours and video games. For the past couple of years, 2K Sports has sponsored the annual Bounce hip-hop tour. 2K Sports will also launch a separate videogame tour this summer, Rosa says, but declined to provide further details.

For the Tapes 'N Tapes jaunt, 2K Sports will provide the band with financial tour support, radio/street team promo and exposure through its Web site. Venues will also be equipped with Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 console lounges, which could include preshow contests between patrons and Tapes 'N Tapes band members.

"The venues love it because it allows them to market their events earlier to get people into the doors," Rosa says. "It gives people another incentive to come out."
Inside The Webcaster Outcry

What Will The CRB Hike Really Mean?

It's 2002 all over again. That's the last time a copyright tribunal set royalty rates for streaming sound recordings, and webcasters warned that the high rates would run them out of business. After the Copyright Royalty Board set new rates earlier this month, the outcry is the same. But this time, it's not entirely about the rates. It's also about the CRB rejecting a royalty based on a percentage of small webcasters' revenue. The RIAA negotiated this revenue-based structure with services for 2003-2005 rates that became the Small Webcaster Settlement Act, which expired in 2005.

Now, the CRB has set the 2006-2010 compulsory-licensing royalty rates that webcasters and simulcasters must pay to perform recordings on noninteractive websites (section 114 of the Copyright Act). In their 115-page opinion, the judges explained that the rate must reflect one that would be negotiated between a willing seller (record labels) and a willing buyer (webcasters) if there were no compulsory license. After considering expert testimony, the judges decided that the per-stream rate negotiated for interactive streams (which are not subject to a compulsory license) between services and labels was the best benchmark (see chart, below).

The CRB rejected a percentage-of-revenue royalty because ensuring payment for the value of copyrighted recordings presents several problems under this model (see sidebar, below). But the judges added that if the services, copyright owners and performers ever figure out a way to overcome these problems, a future royalty could be based on a service's revenue.

The decision came after a two-year proceeding involving 25 parties, including SoundExchange, the group designated by the government to administer compulsory non-interactive webcast licenses. SoundExchange represented labels, recording artists, background musicians and vocalists. Other parties included the Digital Media Ass'n (DiMA), webcasters (including AOL, Yahoo and Live365), broadcasters (including AccuRadio), the Corp. for Public Broadcasting and college-radio groups. The judges listened to 31 witnesses during 48 days of testimony that filled 13,288 pages of transcript.

Several parties are expected to ask for a rehearing or appeal, but small webcasters may not have the money to keep fighting on the legal front. DiMA and other groups are also expected to try negotiating for different rates or rate structures, like a percentage of revenue.

Copyright owners and performers are not obligated to offer only the compulsory rates that the CRB set March 2; they may always negotiate directly with services. And SoundExchange could certainly negotiate directly with webcasters and offer the terms for their members to either accept or reject. They could also negotiate alternate ways of reporting performances instead of per stream, such as "per aggregated tuning hour" (ATH), which is sometimes easier to calculate because it uses average, rather than exact, numbers.

To help compare old versus negotiated versus new rates, I created three hypothetical webcasters: large (e.g., AOL or Yahoo), midsized (e.g., Live365) and small (e.g., AcuRadio).

Hypothetical figures for small webcasters are based on a comparison to AccuRadio, which participated in the CRB proceeding. AccuRadio president/CEO Kurt Hanson represented to Billboard that the webcaster would owe $600,000 for 2006 under the new CRB rates.

A service that pays per-stream is likely to pay about the same per ATH. ATH is the total hours paid to all programmers during a stated time period. One hour streamed to 20 simultaneous listeners is 20 ATH. If the webcaster has an average number of programs at 20 simultaneous listeners per hour, then for a month it has 14,600 ATH (an average of 20 listeners per hour multiplied by 24 hours by 365 days divided by 12 months).

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

How The New CRB Rates Size Up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMERCIAL WEBCASTERS AND SIMULCASTERS (SUBSCRIPTION AND NON-SUBSCRIPTION)</th>
<th>2002 RATES</th>
<th>2004-2005 NEGOTIATED RATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Stream</td>
<td>Minimum Fee</td>
<td>$500 per channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Rates</td>
<td>0.0762X per stream per listener</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005 Negotiated Rates</td>
<td>Non-subscription services have the option to elect per stream or ATH rate; subscription services may also elect revenue-share rate. Per stream: $0.0762x per stream per listener; minimum 4% for streams never connected properly. ATH: Webcasts, 117.4X per ATH (0.0762x a song per hour minus 4%) or, non-music program, 0.0762x per ATH (0.0762x 12 songs per hour due to commercials and talk minus 4%) or, of non-music program, 0.0762x per ATH; Revenue Share: 10.9% of gross revenue, but not less than 276 per subscriber; Minimum Fee: Per stream or ATH, $500 per channel; or, not more than 2,500; Revenue share, $5,000 per channel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005 Hypothetical Large Webcaster (like an AOL or Yahoo) would pay $15.3 million or 71k for every listener on the service; midsize (like a Live365) would pay $5.5 million or 59k for every listener; small (like an AccuRadio) would pay $406,000 or 264 for every listener.</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>COMMERCIAL SMALL WEBCASTERS (IE, SMALL WEBCASTERS NOT EXCEEDING $1.25 MILLION)</th>
<th>2002 RATES</th>
<th>2004-2005 SMALL WEBCASTER SETTLEMENT ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Stream</td>
<td>Minimum Fee</td>
<td>$500 up to 3 channels. Additional channels pay at 2002 commercial rates above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Rates</td>
<td>0.021764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005 Negotiated Rates</td>
<td>Option to elect Librarian of Congress rates or small webcaster rates, above. For up to 3 channels, the small webcaster minimum charge was $500 ($250 if a school of less than 10,000 students or news/talk/sports program); For more than 3 channels, rates for additional channels charged as if the service were a large commercial webcaster;Streams in excess of 146,000 ATH in a month (200 average simultaneous listeners per hour) charged either Per Stream: 0.02764 or ATH: 0.021764; or, 2004-2005 Hypothetical College station with fewer listeners than an average NPR station (248 simultaneous listeners per hour for a 2004 survey paid $250-$500.</td>
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<th>NONCOMMERCIAL WEBCASTERS AND SIMULCASTERS</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Stream</td>
<td>Minimum Fee</td>
<td>$300 up to 3 channels. Additional channels pay at 2002 commercial rates above.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.016</td>
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CRB: As more rights are used, payments should increase.

NEW CRB RATES

- Per Stream: 0.08 for 2006, 1.1k for 2007, 1.4k for 2008, 1.9k for 2009, 2.4k for 2010
- Minimum: $500 per channel or station per year

HYPOTHETICAL In 2007, large webcasters might owe $23 million or $107 for every listener on the service; midsize, $7.5 million or 89k per listener per month; small, $610,000 or 85k per month per listener.

SAME AS ABOVE.

HYPOTHETICAL In 2007, a small webcaster with 4,800 average simultaneous listeners per hour from 6 a.m. to midnight and 60,000 total listeners on the service might owe $610,000, which is $84k per month for every listener on the service.

$50 flat fee per channel or station plus commercial per-stream rate when monthly streams exceed 159,140 ATH (i.e., 218 simultaneous listeners per hour at 80% of NPR stations in 2004). HYPOTHETICAL In 2007, a college station would owe $500. If more listeners than the average NPR station, it would owe commercial rates for the extra listeners.

FIVE REASONS REVENUE WON'T DETERMINE RATES

The Copyright Royalty Judges cited the following reasons for selecting a per-stream rate over a percentage-of-revenue rate: 

- With a per-stream metric, services pay more royalties as they stream more music. Since revenue can be influenced by factors that have nothing to do with music, revenue should only be a metric when it can be clearly defined to correspond to the intrinsic value of the sound recording performance. 
- Neither of the revenue-based metrics proposed by SoundExchange and the Digital Media Ass'n were consistent with the basic notion that as more rights are used, payments should increase in direct proportion to that use.
- Percentage-of-revenue models present measurement difficulties because identifying the relevant webcaster revenue can be complex, especially when webcasters offer content unrelated to music.
- The parties in the proceeding did not offer an unambiguous definition of revenue that properly related the royalty to the value of the performance right being licensed.
- A revenue-based metric can create problems for auditing and enforcing rights depending on how a service defines and allocates revenue. A per-stream approach, in contrast, is relatively straightforward.

To calculate annual streaming by the hypothetical large and midsized services, the average number of listeners per hour for AOL, Yahoo and Live365 were multiplied by 365 hours by 12 to calculate an estimated 10% to account for listeners between midnight and midnight, a 14% multiplier for 10-second commercials inserted between midnight and midnight, 14% for 15-second commercials, a 16% multiplier for the number of songs a webcaster streamed per hour to each listener, multiplied by 365 days for the year. For the hypothetical small webcasters, revenue calculations were made from AccuRadio listener figures ($400,000 for 2009 divided by 10 cents per song, times the number of songs).
On the menu was a wild mushroom risotto with white truffle oil and a mixed grill of New Zealand lamb chops and beef tenderloin. The record release party thrown by Good Records in Dallas for Arcade Fire’s “Neon Bible” was a bit more sophisticated than the typical midnight-sale fare.

Held in partnership with local restaurant Urbano Paninoteca, about 50 diners sampled albums that came out on the indie-heavy release date of March 6 (Air., III, RJD2 and Gruff Rhys., among others). Urban Paninoteca owners Mitch and Kristen Kauffman approached Good Records, which is owned in part by the Polyphonic Spree’s Tim DeLaughter, about staging such events in January. Menus are double-sided, complete with a track list, and the week’s new releases are displayed—art gallery-style—as guests enter the restaurant.

With indie rock kids willing to shell out $30 (plus the cost of some booze) for a three-course meal, no wonder the genre is thriving while the rest of the industry cries afoul.

“Neon Bible” landed at No. 2 on The Billboard 200 after moving 92,000 first-week units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The band’s 2004 debut, “Funeral,” has sold more than 327,000 copies in the States.

“Neon Bible” was the largest release in the 17-year history of the band’s label, Chapel Hill, N.C.-based Merge Records.

Head of sales Paul Cardillo puts the initial ship-out at about 220,000 units, and says the label booked retail programs beyond anything it had done in the past.

“Neon Bible” was in the Sunday circulars for Best Buy, Circuit City and Target. “To compete with a release like a Norah Jones, and I hate to put that way because we’ve never operated like that before, people need to see it,” he says. “We did a program where there’s a poster in every Borders store. Just keeping the visibility enough is much more important on a record like this. On our smaller releases, I feel it’s more important for people to hear it.”

Merge’s marketing/publicity guru Martin Hall says the label typically budgets for its releases to sell somewhere between 17,000 and 50,000 units, and this time was working on an initial budget to sell 300,000. But Arcade Fire didn’t finish the album until late December, pushing many marketing plans by the wayside. For instance, so far no video has been shot.

“They wanted to do some short films that they would distribute to their Web site in lieu of doing the traditional video,” Hall says. “But that may not happen till April now.”

Sniping at bus stops in major cities was considered, but it was decided such a tactic wouldn’t sit well with the heavily-DIY band. (Arcade Fire licenses its albums to Merge and pays for the recordings itself.)

“We really did talk about [sniping] with the Arcade Fire, but it’s not what the band is about,” Hall says. “I think they would cringe if they saw their faces on a telephone pole.”

The band also nixed some new-media initiatives. “We explored some digital phone stuff, but they’re not into ringtones,” Merge label manager Spott Philpott says. “It makes it hard to find something innovative that they’re interested in, but that’s what makes them who they are.”

And yet nothing Merge is—or isn’t—doing is turning focus away from the band. Hall says the press-shy act has done only a handful of interviews, yet he reads daily blog complaints that the act is being overhyped.

“I was just reading something online about somebody complaining about the Arcade Fire being everywhere and why can’t they say no to an interview,” he says. “They’ve only done, like, three interviews. But we can’t stop people from writing about them. We’re not beating anyone over the head. The band has turned down everything so far.”

failed to monitor this:
A March 10 column about digital stores at indie retailers noted that coalition Music Monitor Network will launch a new Web site with MP3 capability in March. Yet it failed to give MMN credit for already selling files in the Windows digital rights management format.

For 24/7 Indies news and analysis, see billboard.biz/indies.
Simon Fox

In the wake of HMV Group’s latest profit warning, the U.K. retail chief talks about what’s in store for his company’s stores—at home, abroad and online.

Simon Fox’s first job as a teenager was a summertime gig “selling ice cream on a beach in France.” These days, the South Londoner has a rather more challenging role—reviving the fortunes of U.K.-based retail giant HMV Group. The 45-year-old Fox has helmed the group since Sept. 28 last year, when he replaced exiting chief executive Alan Giles. He was previously COO of U.K.-based Pan-European electrical retailing group Kesa Electricals.

It’s been a challenging six months for HMV Group. There’s been executive upheaval, notably in January when the managing director of the group’s market-leading U.K. business, Steve Knott, departed. And the business has issued profit warnings—most recently on March 13.

The latest warning coincided with Fox unveiling a three-year strategic/operational review, underpinned by cost-cutting aimed at saving £40 million ($77.2 million) per year by 2010. The review involves store closures at the group’s U.K. book retailing chain Waterstone’s (which took over smaller rival Ottakars last year), while expanding music specialist HMV U.K.’s online operations and introducing its own social networking site (SNS). Fox wants online sales of downloads and physical product from the hmvco.uk Web site to account for 20% of U.K. revenue by 2010. The group also announced a trading partnership with U.K. mobile phone network 3 and said it will trial an HMV U.K. “Store of the Future” concept this fall.

Fox has spent most of his six months at the group focusing on its core U.K. businesses. Currently doubling up as HMV U.K. and Ireland acting managing director, he spoke to Billboard in London the day after the strategic review was announced.

Will your strategic review mean HMV U.K. store closures?
No. The profits warning was deeply disappointing, but was primarily driven by poor performance [by] Waterstone’s. About 10% of the Waterstone’s space is now under review—over a period of time, that will lead to store closures.

HMV [U.K. and Ireland] reported positive like-for-like sales, which now gives us six months of small—but nonetheless positive—like-for-like increases. So the HMV sales performance remains solid. There will be eight new stores opening in the next year, of which four will be in [London] airport locations.

U.K. store openings have been running at a rate of around 20 a year, but going forward, we’ll only be opening a small number each year. Broadly, we have full national coverage through our 230 stores. We’re rechanneling capital expenditure from new openings to refurbishment.

Will you merge HMV and Waterstone’s back-office functions?
Yes. Waterstone’s and HMV currently operate separate but very similar back-office finance and IT systems and processes. So we are implementing a shared back-office function, but the front ends remain completely separate brands.

Has HMV Group been under-achieving?
The last two years have been periods of rapid profit decline—there’s no getting away from that. We haven’t adapted as quickly as we should have to some of the changing trends in the market. I need to now work very quickly with the team to make sure we are meeting the needs of today’s customer.

What’s the logic behind launching an HMV-branded SNS?
We’ve recognized that 25% of [internet users in] the U.K. are now actively using social networking sites, and they’re clearly influencing their music preferences. This is the way that customers are now choosing to learn about music, the way they’re choosing to spend time with one another, and we can’t be on the sidelines …

We’ll launch at the end of this year.

How can you ramp up HMV U.K.’s online business to 20% of sales?
Improving the functionality of the site [hmvco.uk], doubling our online marketing and better integrating our online offer with our store offer. This year, online’s been running at 6% of U.K. sales. We were slow to start online, but we’re growing at more than 150% per annum, and we’ve already got 10% of online [entertainment] sales in the U.K. We’re now No. 3 behind Amazon and Play.com.

What’s the group’s strategy for its overseas businesses?
We do have to be market leader in our markets. We clearly have that position in Canada, where I think our competitors are weakening, and we have a number of growth opportunities. We’re just now rolling games out across the chain, and we’re about to launch our own online business there. The existing online [hmv.com] business is linked with Amazon, but we will be taking that on ourselves from May.

In Japan, we have a profitable business and a market-leading Internet business [hmv.co.jp], which already represents 25% of the sales of our Japanese operation. At the moment, we’re opening stores there—on March 23, we opened a Japanese version of the “Store of the Future” in Yokohama.

But we have also just launched a strategic review of our options in Japan, because we are not the market leader there. That review will be completed by June.

My focus is on getting the U.K. humming again. We are growing, both through store rollouts and organically through like-for-like sales. But frankly, we’ve got to improve our profit position.

How are you finding dealing with the U.K. music business?
I’ve been delighted with the co-operative nature of the retail/label relationship. I’ve met with many—but not yet all—of the heads of the major labels. I’ve been impressed by their passion for the product, and—despite what one might read in the press—the very great awareness of the structural changes in the industry.

What content will you be providing to 3?
We’ll work with 3 to broadcast music content and music videos through a concept we’re calling Channel HMV. 3 already has very strong relationships with labels—we’ll be looking to supplement that. As well as content from labels, there’s an opportunity to use the live performances that we have in-store.

What will be key to HMV’s “Store of the Future”? We want to combine the best of online with the best of the retail experience, with music being the absolute key part of that. Within the store, there will be a refreshment area, where customers can sit down and access the online site while also burning tracks to CD. There will also be [SNS] access.

How can your non-entertainment background help HMV?
My last nine years have been spent in electricals and the issues facing the electrical market are not so dissimilar to those facing the music market—namely the very rapid growth of the mass-merchant channels, and the growth of online purchasing, combined with price deflation.

Where do you see HMV Group being at the end of your first year?
I’d like to be looking back on a period of delivery and change. I think we’ve got great brands, great people and lots of opportunity. In the next six months, I want to start turning that opportunity into action. I want to be in a really strong place to be ready for next Christmas.
Get a 360-degree look at all wireless content and applications, including mobile gaming, TV, video, animation, messaging, marketing, social networking and more.

Program highlights include:

- **Handset Heaven:** The latest technologies & services and how they effect consumer electronics.
- **State of the Industry:** Current state of mobile convergence activities in music, film and gaming industries.
- **Networking/Ask an Expert:** Roundtable discussions with leaders in the mobile & wireless industries.
- **Producing Mobile Content:** Hear how the leading creative minds approach developing content for the mobile phone—what works, what needs to work, and what isn't working.
- **Connected Consumers:** Social networking, user generated content, and placeshifting—discover the opportunities and challenges for both wireless operators and content creators.
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- **Where's the Money?** Examine the different ways to extract revenue from mobile content.

Plus...Just announced... with live performance by AOL

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COMPOSITIONS

Booked to write songs by the biggest
stars, R&B's hottest hand gets back to
the business of his own career

by Hillary Crosley Photograph by Chris Baldwin
IN A SMALL OFFICE on the 27th floor of Def Jam, Ne-Yo glances over Manhattan's West Side. He's wearing his trademark skull hat, along with jeans and sneakers. A modestly-sized diamond-studded cuff note hangs around his neck. He swaps his check as he hops into one of the armchairs. Cracking open a Kiwi Strawberry Snap-ple—his favorite—the jubilant Ne-Yo is ready to reflect on his recent career growth.

"I'm kind of important," Ne-Yo jokes, in a mock deep voice that emulates newsmen Ron Burgundy, played to such spectacular ridiculousness in the movie "Anchorman" by Will Ferrell. "People know me.

There must be caffeine in that Snapple. Tired, come get some hang!!!" He's steaming a line from "Napoleonic Dynamite" when the protagonist is feeding his grandmother's pet llama. "That's the funnest line of 2004. I swear. I have my friends just sit around quoting 'Anchorman,' 'Nacho Libre' and 'Napoleonic Dynamite.' Those three movies are so funny.

Ne-Yo might be laughing at himself, but his career—once derailed when he was dropped by a major label—is no joke these days. Most folks now know him as a recording star. His debut album, "In My Own Words," moved 301,000 copies in its first week last February and 1.4 million to date, and showcased his deft songwriting touch. He crafted his own heartbreak hit, "So Sick," which spent two weeks at No. 1 on The Billboard Hot 100, and sold 19 weeks at No. 1 on The Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and 10 weeks on the Hot 100. It remains Beyoncé's biggest success on both charts.

His success is now breeding more success. The ubiquitousness of "In My Own Words" peaked the interest of America's sweetheart and AC giant Celine Dion.

"She said, 'I'm going to be the person that doesn't ask you for 'In My Own Words,'" Ne-Yo says. "For someone like Celine, it's about writing a song that's timeless. It's not about convincing people that you're the one that can write.'"

"Columbia senior VP of A&R John Doel says Ne-Yo is up to the challenge. "He's a classic songwriter and what he writes will have a life beyond today," Doel says. "With 'In My Own Words,' he finds a way to write about a relationship ending but in a very different way. And he still puts together the pieces with incredible melodies."

Ne-Yo's also writing for Whitney Houston, and once again looking to buck expectations.

"They played me about eight tracks that were all very 'I'm Whitney and I've been through some things and now I'm triumphant,'" Ne-Yo says. "'But you can only do that for so long, so I said I'd do the same thing for Whitney that I'm doing for Celine, which is to bring them to the everyday person.'"

And while working with all of these stars has been a great experience, Ne-Yo says, at least one recently-shorn startet might want to read the following as more inspiration to get her life in order.

"We set up no less than four sessions for Britney to just come and sing the songs I wrote for her," Ne-Yo says. "She never showed up. I think they want me to hold these songs that I've written until she finishes going through her thing. But a couple might be perfect for the Pussycat Dolls! Nicole Sherzinger, so..."

THE IDEA OF NE-YO even teasing about casting aside the former teen queen would have once seemed preposterous. Earlier this decade, Ne-Yo was dropped by Columbia Records along with another (then) little-known singer named Alicia Keys. Instead of looking for another artist deal, Ne-Yo began writing songs for other R&B artists. Shopping, Ne-Yo eventually got a chance meeting with Tina Davis, then Def Jam senior VP of A&R, in 2004.

"After I heard his demo, I asked him to perform for me," says Davis, now manager of Chris Brown. "I immediately thought, 'This kid needs to be an artist.' I took him to L.A. Red and told Ne-Yo, 'Baby, you're going to be the next big thing.'"

Signed to Def Jam that day, Davis and Reid's intuition proved true. Building on the success of his platinum recording career, Ne-Yo dropped two films in 2006, playing himself in "Save the Last Dance 2" and the character Rich Brown in "Stomp the Yard." The latter film claimed the No. 1 spot its opening weekend and now Ne-Yo is looking to hop onto the smaller screen.

"I was fortunate that my first role in 'Stomp the Yard' was so close to my own personality," Ne-Yo says. "But now I'd like to do something like 'The OC.' There are a few scripts that I'm looking at but it needs to fit with my music. I'd actually love for my next role to have no singing or dancing."

That's probably just as well. The composer will have enough music swirling through his production company, Compound Entertainment. Ne-Yo founded the company in 2004 with his two managers, Reynell Hay and Tishaun Gayle, and hosts in-house producers and several writers. Now a few different labels are courting him for an imprint distribution deal and Ne-Yo's demands are simple.

"I just want creative control," Ne-Yo says, before he does a nebulous cartoon voice and starts joking again. "Which shouldn't be a problem because I've proven myself to be able to write good songs if given the opportunity."

Ne-Yo's about to see if he still has the right touch on his own tracks, with the release of "Know Me." His first single, "Because Of You," already checks in at No. 26 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. It's an ode to Michael Jackson, one of Ne-Yo's favorite singers. The layered vocals on the bridge remind of the books lustered throughout Jackson's "Off the Wall" album.

Ne-Yo insists "Know Me" is a mirror into his entire personality rather than just his pen skills.

"The first album was the sweet, sincere and heartbroken Ne-Yo. "Yo's got this love story," Ne-Yo says. "This new one is more "Watch out, mama, here I come.""

Ne-Yo even addresses the nympho charge head-on, with the song "Addicted," a hilarious cut where he has a little fun with the accusation.

"I'm not addicted to sex, but girl, if you lay with me then you just might be," Ne-Yo says.

Another memorable moment—both for Ne-Yo as well as on the album—comes in the form of a Jennifer Hudson duet. Usually he writes his hits alone in a studio, but for "Leaving," the Academy Award winner showed up with a few girlfriends, memorized the lyrics in 15 minutes—and proceeded to sing Ne-Yo under the table.

"To be an artist is to crave acceptance, so it's difficult to tell people things sometimes," Ne-Yo says. "You almost have to take a back seat to the artist, especially if they've had a little bit of success. But by the grace of God, Jennifer Hudson is still normal. When I asked her to bring out a note, or change something, it was done. She out-sung me on my own song. It's not Jennifer Hudson featuring Ne-Yo..."

The lush strings of "Leaving" and the echoing drums of the sultry "Talk To Me" prove that Ne-Yo has moved beyond the happy Stargate sound that's come to define him. The Norwegian duo, who produced his "Sexy Love," and "So Sick" on his freshman effort, produced only three cuts on "Know Me." In terms of spreading the word on the new album, Ne-Yo will perform March 29 at Atlanta's Tabernacle venue for the "Circular Sounds" wireless campaign. The show will air on Cingular phones, two weeks before "Know Me" drops. "Because of You" is the commercial theme song for Ice Cube's upcoming film, "Are We Done Yet?" Also being screened in April, Ne-Yo's also filming a series of webisodes, which follow him on tour and will air via his Web site.

Def Jam expects Ne-Yo's singles to pull the sales of "Know Me"—the company withheld "So Sick" from iTunes and other digital music stores until "In My Own Words" dropped, and may repeat the strategy this time around. But marketing director Ashley Ayars says the label is also going to work to help Ne-Yo increase his celebrity.

"He's such a writer," Ayars says. "He's happy to be in the studio." To get him—and his profile—out and about, Def Jam says it will pair him with Noah Tepperberg, co-founder and partner of Factory Entertainment Group, a special events, marketing and public relations firm.

"He throws all the parties for young Hollywood," Ayars says. "This time it's about presenting him as the superstar we know that he is."

After all, even though Ne-Yo would never say it himself, at least not with a straight face, he's kind of important. It only makes sense that soon even more people will know him. --

/scoring hits/Ne-Yo Has Written Six Top 10 Hits With Five Different Acts

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MEDIA COMPANIES SPENT ALMOST $9 BILLION FOR ONLINE Mergers AND Acquisitions LAST YEAR—AND THE NUMBER OF DEALS IS GROWING. BILLBOARD PRESENTS THE WEB 2.0 TO GO GUIDE.

BY BRIAN GARRITY ILLUSTRATION BY ELLEN WEINSTEIN

JUST HOW RAVENOJS is the appetite among media and technology companies for hot Web 2.0 properties? Consider Ticketmaster, a unit of Barry Diller’s IAC, which in December paid more than $13 million for a 25% stake in iLike, a 4-month-old social networking site that allows users to share information about their iTunes listening habits. Ticketmaster is betting that it can also serve as a strategic partner for promoting concerts and selling tickets. The deal sets a value of $50 million on the Seattle-based startup, which claims a half-million users. And it sets up iLike, an offshoot of unsigned-band site Garageband.com, as a ripe target for full acquisition, either by Ticketmaster or some other third party. Forget that iLike doesn’t yet have a proper revenue model or that there are at least a half-dozen other startups attempting to do something similar. Media and tech heavyweights like News Corp, Google and others have decided that online tools and communities that connect Web users, enable them to socialize and allow them to share their tastes with each other are the new must-have feature set. And they’re buying up such properties, which often center around music, TV and user-generated videos, at an ever faster rate. Media companies spent more than $8.9 billion on online media mergers and acquisitions in 2006, according to the Jordan, Edmiston Group, a New York-based investment bank. That’s actually down 26% in total value from 2005 when online media M&A topped $12 billion. But the number of transactions was up markedly last year—rising 55% to 181 deals. With Google laying out $1.65 billion for YouTube last October, and venture capital investing in digital media up more than 66% last year to $4.4 billion, according to Rutberg & Co., there are no signs of...
a slowdown in the Web 2.0 arms race among leading media players. Google alone is sitting on a cash war chest of more than $11 billion, up from cash reserves of slightly more than $2 billion in 2004, according to the company’s financial statements.

Already this year has seen Electronic Arts gobble up online karaoke site SingShot Media for a small undisclosed sum. But much bigger deals could be coming. Rumors are swirling that Viacom is mulling paying more than $400 million for Last.fm, an online radio

Rumors are swirling that Viacom may pay $400 million for Last.fm.

and music recommendation community.

"Many companies are aiming to be acquired based on the way they are running their businesses," says Tim Westergren, founder of San Francisco-based Pandora, another privately held music recommendation service, which has raised well more than $20 million in venture capital (published reports peg the number closer to $50 million.)

Billboard interviewed a dozen venture capitalists (VC), entrepreneurs, analysts and label executives about the prospects for M&A in music-related online media in the year ahead. The following are 10 potential targets to watch:

Last.fm
LOCATION: London
CEO: Felix Miller
Part music recommendation engine, part social networking site, part online radio service creates community around music fans. Last.fm’s radio users can choose either to listen to a free custom radio service or pay for a premium subscription to listen to personalized music tailored to their music taste. The company also has a technology called Audioscrobbler that enables Last.fm to personalize users’ entire experience on their listening habits on such media players as iTunes.
BACKERS: Index Ventures
YEAR FOUNDED: 2002
COMPETITORS: Pandora, iLike, Moq, iMeem, FineTune

Pandora
LOCATION: San Francisco
CEO: Joe Kennedy
The other major player in next-generation music recommendation Internet radio services along with Last.fm, Pandora takes a decidedly different approach to programming. Recommendations are automated from a technology called the Music Genome Project that weights more than 400 different musical attributes and genres when selecting songs to pair in a playlist. The service has three subscription plans: a free offer supported by ads, and a fee-based subscription without ads.
BACKERS: Walden, Labrador, Crosslink, Garage Technology Ventures, Key Principle Partners
YEAR FOUNDED: 2000
COMPETITORS: Last.fm, iLike, Moq, iMeem, FineTune

Gracenote
LOCATION: Emeryville, Calif.
CEO: Craig Palmer
The leader in CD metadata recognition, Gracenote (formerly Cddb) licenses its technology for use in media players from Apple, RealNetworks and Microsoft.
BACKERS: Sequoia Capital, Gracenote founder Scott Jones, Bessemer Ventures, Philips Electronics
YEAR FOUNDED: 1995
COMPETITORS: Audible Magic, Loudeye, Muze, AllMusic, MusicBrainz

Second Life
LOCATION: San Francisco
CEO: Philip Rosedale
A Web-based virtual 3-D world where members use digital replicas called avatars to buy land and buildings, and pay real money to purchase fake clothes, weapons and—increasingly—music.
BACKERS: Globespan Capital Partners, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Lotus founder Mitch Kapor, the Omidyar Network, Catamount Ventures
YEAR FOUNDED: 2002
COMPETITORS: Gaia, Doppelganger
THE STORY: Linden Labs’ Second Life has enjoyed a breakthrough in popularity in the last year, with membership skyrocketing from 100,000 at the beginning of 2005 to more than 4 million today. Some analysts predict 9 million members by June. Addidas, American Apparel, Dell Computer and Toyota have all established presences to market and promote their products. Sony BMG last year opened a Media Island where visitors can stream music and most music labels are now preparing Second Life strategies.
STRATEGIC FITS: Viacom, News Corp, Google, Microsoft, AOL, Yahoo, Sony, Vivendi
THE VC TAKE: Acquisition talk on the company is low at the moment. But virtual social networking is emerging as the next big Web 2.0 trend hot on the heels of social networking and viral video. Major media is short on portfolio exposure to the business. Second Life appears to be approaching a similar inflection point. YouTube reached last year and MySpace hit in 2005. “It’s a new category. It’s social media meets virtual worlds—it’s not really one or the other. I’d like to have a couple of other projects in the space,” one West Coast VC admits, noting that what he finds interesting about the business is that “it’s a little more aspirational. It’s about who you want to be, not who you are."
COMPETITORS: Bablegum, YouTube, BitTorrent
THE STORY: The service is still in an early beta phase of around 40,000 users, but given Zennström and Friis’ pedigree and anticipation is already huge. Using peer-to-peer technology to deliver high-quality long-form video content, Joost aims to transform YouTube-style clip watching into an interactive TV experience. Unlike other video sites, Joost already claims content deals with Warner Music Group, Nettwerk, MusicNation, Voy and Viacom.

STRATEGIC FITS: Viacom, News Corp, Google, Microsoft, AOL, Yahoo
THE VC TAKE: Given that the company is only in its first year of existence, a quick flip is a long shot. Even without any publicly announced VC backing Zennström and Friis are sitting on $2.6 billion from the sale of Skype to eBay last October. But stranger things have happened. The life cycle of angel funding to exit has compressed to a window of two years and under in many cases. And in the era of PC and TV convergence, Joost represents an intriguing bridge. Virtually every player in the media and technology space is scrambling to find a foothold in the digital living room. “Video on the Web in three years will be at least a $3 billion a year business,” one California-based VC says. “It will be just like the monetization of search was in 1998 with Google and Yahoo. Companies in that space will see explosive growth.” Key to Joost’s proposition, the VC adds, is that it is “a copyright-respecting technology.”

Joost
LOCATION: Luxembourg
CEO: Fredrik de Wahl
A new ad-supported Web TV site from Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis, the developers behind peer-to-peer giant Kazaa and Internet telephone sensation Skype.
BACKERS: Undisclosed
YEAR FOUNDED: 2006
COMPETITORS: Bablegum, YouTube, BitTorrent
THE STORY: The service is still in an early beta phase of around 40,000 users, but given Zennström and Friis’ pedigree and anticipation is already huge. Using peer-to-peer technology to deliver high-quality long-form video content, Joost aims to transform YouTube-style clip watching into an interactive TV experience. Unlike other video sites, Joost already claims content deals with Warner Music Group, Nettwerk, MusicNation, Voy and Viacom.

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Brightcove
LOCATION: Cambridge, Mass.
CEO: Jeremy Allaire
An Internet TV and viral video specialist that oversees the sanctioned distribution of Web clips.
YEAR FOUNDED: 2004
COMPETITORS: Google, Yahoo, News Corp
THE STORY: Brightcove is helping media companies cash in on the Web-based video phenomenon by creating a secure ad-supported platform that allows content owners to decide where and when to release clips online. The likes of Sony BMG, Warner Music Group, Viacom and The New York Times are already taking advantage of the technology to cash in on viral distribution of music videos and original clips. In January the company closed a $50 million strategic funding round that will allow it to further build itself as an Internet TV company and expand internationally.

STRATEGIC FITS: AOL, Time Warner, IAC, NBC, Disney
THE VC TAKE: Everybody and their brother is looking for their own viral video solution in the age of YouTube. Brightcove offers a secure, ready-made back-end solution. But with more than $50 million in venture funding raised, the growth-focused company doesn’t have a pressing exit need and a purchase won’t come cheap.

Sling Media
LOCATION: San Mateo, Calif.
CEO: Blake Krikorian
Sling allows consumers to remotely watch TV shows stored on their digital video recorder at home from any computer and select mobile phones with a broadband Internet connection.
BACKERS: Mobius Venture Capital, Doolin Management, Hearst Media, Allen & Co., EchoStar Communications, Goldman Sachs, Liberty Media
YEAR FOUNDED: 2004
COMPETITORS: MobilTV, Avenue
THE STORY: Sling made waves two years ago when it introduced “place shifting” TV watching. While its strategy has so far been linked to a hardware platform called the Sling Box, the company is open to licensing its technology platform to third parties. Sling is eying the YouTube crowd with a new feature called Clip+Sling that allows users to capture short segments of programming, live or recorded, and share them with other Slingbox customers, as well as on viral video sites.

STRATEGIC FITS: TiVo, EchoStar, Sony, Microsoft, Comcast
THE VC TAKE: Fair. Sling is still building its service and has plenty of VC funding. The question is whether Sling will attract the major-label content and video comes of age. As consumers increasingly look to remotely access massive libraries of music, film and TV content, media and technology players are looking to continue to have a role in how they access their media. One East Coast VC says that “we are at step one” of redefining TV. “There’s not going to be a price war or a programming war because everyone is going to have access to everything. But there is going to be a functionality war. So the technologies that are really interesting in the future are those that bring unfettered access to video back to the television.”

Napster
LOCATION: Los Angeles
CEO: Chris Gorog
Legendary file sharing brand turned legit retailer of music downloads and subscriptions
BACKERS: Public
YEAR FOUNDED: 1999
COMPETITORS: Apple, RealNetworks, eMusic, Verizon, Sprint
THE STORY: It’s been a bumpy road for Napster since its relaunch as a legitimate service in 2003. Lacking compatibility with Apple’s iTunes and championing a music rental model that is yet to connect massively with mainstream consumers, the company lately has pushed for ways to draw traffic with an ad-supported music sampling service, and worked to create opportunities and partnerships in the mobile space. It also picked up AOL’s music customer base after the online portal shuttered its MusicNow offering. In September Napster announced that it had hired investment bank UBS to explore a possible sale.

STRATEGIC FITS: Verison, Sprint, Amazon, Target, RealNetworks
THE VC TAKE: Napster, which has a market cap of around $170 million, has had no takers yet. But the company claims one of the best-known brands in digital music, close to 1 million subscribers and more than $81 million in revenue through the first nine months of its current fiscal year. One investment specialist thinks the company may yet work for a wireless player looking to solidify its presence in the PC space.

eMusic
LOCATION: New York
CEO: David Pakman
A digital retailer of independent music catalogs that sells exclusively in the MP3 format
BACKERS: Dimensional Associates
YEAR FOUNDED: 1998
COMPETITORS: Apple, RealNetworks, Napster, Verizon, Sprint
THE STORY: Without a stitch of major-label content, eMusic has emerged as the No. 2 player in digital music retail market share thanks to the company’s appeal to independent music fans and the service’s use of the MP3 to gain a foothold among the iPod crowd.

STRATEGIC FITS: Verizon, Sprint, Amazon, Target
THE VC TAKE: eMusic, which one source estimates could generate upwards of $40 million in revenue this year, is already one of the core assets in the digital music portfolio of Dimensional Associates, the New York-based private equity arm of JDS Capital Management. Dimensional execs say there are no plans to sell. But with interoperability becoming an increasingly important issue in the digital music marketplace, some VCs think the company could emerge as a target for larger media players or retailers looking to buy their way into the retail space.
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Los Angeles
HOW THE NATION'S MOST POPULAR TALENT CONTEST DISCOVERS NEW STARS AND SELLS THE AMERICAN DREAM

american idol
Trying to explain a juggernaut like Fox's "American Idol" is enough to drive executives to distraction. Trying to ensure its continued success—that apparently requires a massage.

At least it does for Fox head of alternative programming Mike Darnell.

For several years, Darnell has spent the premiere night for "Idol" at the Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel & Spa in Pasadena, Calif. It started out as a convenience (he was there for a press tour already) and has turned into a talisman. And when he gets a massage, the ratings go up.

"I'm very superstitious," Darnell says. "This year, I had no reason to be there, but I drove all the way to Pasadena because I wanted the premiere to do well."

It's as good a reason as any for the reign of "Idol" over virtually everything else currently on broadcast TV or cable. And for its substantial and ongoing impact on the music industry.

On TV, "Idol" has competitors covering in its wake (NBC Universal president/CEO Jeff Zucker has said it's "the most impactful show in television history") and advertisers clamoring to get a toehold.

From its inception, "Idol" has had Coca-Cola and Ford as sponsors, and after 200 episodes can boast returns in the form of platinum albums, Grammy Award victors and even an Academy Award winner in Jennifer Hudson.

It's January premiere brought in its highest ratings yet, with 37 million viewers tuning in to see who will become its next success story. And two of its executive producers—Nigel Lythgoe and Ken Warwick—have been tapped to produce this year's Emmy Awards.

But the answers behind all the show's success have little to do with superstition and everything to do with the mechanics of running a TV show in the 21st century. Like no other program, "Idol" is down to a science.

"The secret is that there is no secret," says Warwick, who along with 19 Television president Lythgoe takes care of the show's day-to-day operations.

"The show is the culmination of something that's been building since 2000, which is the return of event TV," says TV historian Tim Brooks, who is executive VP of research at cable channel Lifetime.

"What they have done is take a well-established familiar genre with basic appeal and give it a whole new packaging."

Lythgoe echoes that opinion. "We've repackaged the American dream and brought it back to this country," he says.

However, "American Idol" creator and 19 Entertainment president Simon Fuller sees the success as more than just packaging. To him, the key ingredient is in the team he has assembled, particularly the three judges, Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul and Randy Jackson; host Ryan Seacrest; and his production crew of Lythgoe, Warwick and Cecile Frot-Coutaz, CEO of FremantleMedia North America (FMNA), 19's partner. As one of the executive producers for "Idol," Frot-Coutaz handles the business side of the operations.

"I have a final say, but everyone feels a part of it," Fuller says. "That's what makes it a family. It's pretty cool how it works."

In TV years, this family has been together ever since. Fuller's 19 Entertainment group has been around since 1985, and his earliest successes came from managing Annie Lennox and the Spice Girls. In the late '90s, he came up with the idea of a televised talent competition for singers, which debuted as "Pop Idol" in 2001 in the United Kingdom.

Quickly, it became clear that the concept could be exported, and "American Idol" debuted as a summer replacement show in June 2002 on Fox. Almost immediately it was must-see, water-cooler TV, racking up ratings unheard of on broadcast TV since cable and the Internet began draining viewership.

The second season gave Fox its highest ratings ever for a non-

AS TV'S BIGGEST JUGGERNAUT, 'AMERICAN IDOL' WOULD LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SING— AND THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY HOW TO SURVIVE

BY BETH PINSKER

'idol' worship
TO THE SHOW
THAT’S IN A UNIVERSE
ALL ITS OWN...

HAPPY 200TH AND WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS TO SIMON FULLER, NIGEL LYTHGOE, KEN WARWICK AND THE AMERICAN IDOL FAMILY FOR CREATING HISTORY!

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Internally, however, has been another mat- ter. Fuller's family at 19 and FMNA have wrestled with ker- fluffles and mild scandals almost since the show's inception—from the press calling Cowell's critiques mean to allegations, that Abdul had an affair with a contestant. But the biggest rift came when, in 2004, Cowell created a tal- ent search show called "The X Factor" for British TV, and Fuller claimed the "Factor" format was too close to "Idol."

The copyrighting of formats was a subject that intrigued the judicial system, but it never got beyond initial hearings. At the end of 2005, Fuller and Cowell reached a settlement in the United Kingdom.

"The X Factor" remains on the air, produced by a divi- sion of FMNA and Cowell's SyCoTV, and Cowell remains at the "Idol" judging table with a multiyear deal.

But Cowell is hardly the only "Idol" participant to use the show as a jumping-off point for other ventures. Doors have opened for nearly every principal.

Fuller has Fox's "So You Think You Can Dance," now about to begin its third season, and a currently untitled HBO show. In addition to producing the Emmys, Lythgoe and Warwick will appear in their own Fox reality show about a vineyard the pair purchased called "Cork Screw: The Wrath of Grapes.

Seacrest, who since "Idol" took off has taken over the national radio show "American Top 40," among other hosting and music-related jobs, says, "All of us on the show have looked at this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's not enough for any of us to sit back and just do this. We've all got other business.

This fuels those businesses and allows us to capitalize in other ways."

Frot-Coutaz also has experienced a boost in responsibility. She now handles all of FMNA, overseeing a half-dozen shows, including CBS game show "The Price Is Right.

"There are lots of companies, agendas, egos and disputes, and it's hard to keep everyone working as a team," she says.

Keeping everyone onboard and happy is really Fuller's job now, and he takes his duties as head of the family seriously.

"Everyone wants to capitalize on the moment, but there's only so much one human can do. The fact is, I think everyone knows which side of the bread is buttered."

Keeping "Idol" fresh does mean knowing who writes the paychecks, but it also requires constant tinkering, with some changes more apparent than others.

Although the show was going strong in its first three seas- ons, a major change for season four was—as most everyone associated with the show agrees—in order.

The pacing of the show slowed after audition rounds, and some round-winning contestants wouldn't be seen for weeks as the numbers were cut to the final 12 contenders.

That was a waste of time, Lythgoe remembers, saying, "The biggest thing about 'Idol' is that you care about the people. So, we did a major swing around.

For season four, the format was changed to its current boy- girl sets of 12 finalists, with two getting the boot each week until the group was halved. The new setup allows audiences to grow more attached, more quickly, to individual contestants.

Since the change, Fox has let the cre- ators of "Idol" tweak the show as they see fit, even if it makes the executives anxious.

"Every time you wake up to a rating that's not a 30, you're tempted" to intervene, Fox Entertainment president Peter lignot says. But he adds, "There's nothing I can think of that I want to change. The minor adjustments come from the cre- ators. They have a tremendous grasp of the show."

Other adjustments have been minor, but they have had tremendous impact. Season two had producers bringing on musical guests to widen the selection of songs—and, hopefully, the show's demographics.

This year, the song base will stretch even further with the ad- dition of an online songwriting competition.

But it all would mean nothing if the show's winners had gone on to release flop albums. Although the winner (and some of the runners-up, on occasion) is guaranteed a record deal, there was no guarantee the public would go out and buy those albums.

"You can't just put them out there on their own and take for granted that just because it's 'American Idol,' it will sell," Billboard director of charts/senior analyst Geoff Mayfield says.

Fortunately, "Idol" champs have generally proved to be music-monthly deals for video downloads and mobile videos.

That's a long way from the early days of the show, when Seacrest had to demonstrate on the air how to send a text- message vote and the show could count on 2,000 messages at best. Today, "Idol" has an on-air-text-message trivia con- test running, giving away $10,000 every week with a $100,000 grand prize.

For his part, Fuller is hot on the prospect of "Idol" summer camps, the global market, full-song downloads and growth of the Web site, plus that online songwriting competition.

"I'm always thinking about what's next," he says. "I'm the only person who has crossed every level of 'Idol,' from the idea, to looking after the kids, to taking them on the road. So, I see it from inside, outside, front and sideways."

What it comes down to, in the end, is one reason why it all works. As Warwick says, the secret is not much of a secret.

"The No. 1 reason we're successful is that we have the best people working for us," Fuller says. "Whether it's Nigel or Ken doing the physical production or Cécile doing the budgeting or the tour managers or the music people or the talent—we get the best people. That's why the show is as good as it is."
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Anyone doubting the impact of “American Idol” on the music business need only take a look at the last four months of “Idol”-related activity.

In November, the album “Daughtry,” featuring “Idol” runner-up rocker Chris Daughtry, debuted at No. 2 on The Billboard 200. Steady sales of the album would help it stay in the top 11 for nine weeks, allowing it to eventually climb to the top during a slow sales week in January.

The album that knocked from the summit was the “Dreamgirls” soundtrack, featuring another former “Idol” contestant, Kelly Clarkson, the first “Idol” winner. Clarkson, the first “Idol” winner, won “American Idol,” the show that has helped launch the careers of Clay Aiken, Daughtry, and Kelly Clarkson.

The show made its sixth-season debut drawing a monster: 37 million viewers.

Then in February, on the music industry’s biggest night, the 49th annual Grammy Awards, 2005 “Idol” winner Carrie Underwood took home the coveted best new artist award as well as a trophy for best country vocal performance for “Jesus, Take the Wheel.” (The tune was also named best country song.)

It is safe to assume that the Recording Academy members just couldn’t ignore the tremendous success of this former “Idol,” whose debut album, “Some Hearts,” has sold more than 4.9 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

It was not the first time that the Recording Academy has recognized an American Idol, and odds are it won’t be the last.

Kelly Clarkson, the first Idol, won two Grammys in 2005—best female pop vocal performance for “Since U Been Gone” and best pop vocal album for “Breakaway.”

That album, her sophomore effort, has sold more than 5.7 million copies, besting her 2003 debut, “Thankful,” and quieting the naysayers who suggested that Idols were one-trick ponies.

To date, the “Idol” franchise has racked up sales of an estimated 23 million albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Still, Recording Academy president Neil Portnow acknowledges that some in the industry are put off by the show and its trappings.

“ ‘Idol’ is not just about the music,” he says. “It’s also about the human stories, the goofy, humorous, wacky and outlandish things that people will do to promote themselves and be part of it.

The fact the ‘Idol’ plays to the public is exactly why it works, 19 Entertainment chief and “Idol” creator Simon Fuller says. The real idea behind ‘Idol’ is to turn over the process of finding the talent to the public and make it interactive,” he says. The “Idol” franchise has turned into a bonfire for Sony BMG, which has exclusive rights to release titles by the contestants.

“Idol” is a key component to our company’s bottom line and will be for the foreseeable future,” Sony BMG executive VP/GM Tom Corson says. The company has the option to sign any of the top 24 contestants of each season to a record contract, to a merchandising sponsor deal and a management deal.
CONGRATULATIONS TO
AMERICAN IDOL
FOR AIRING OVER 200 EPISODES

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO
CLIVE, SIMON, RANDY, PAULA, RYAN, SIMON FULLER, KEN AND NIGEL
FOR SHOWCASING AND RECORDING SO MANY
OF MY SONGS OVER THE YEARS

LOVE AND SONGS
DIANE WARREN

Dear Nigel Lythgoe, Ken Warwick, Cecile Frot-Coutaz, Simon Fuller, Ryan Seacrest,
Paula Abdul, Randy Jackson, Simon Cowell, Mike Darnell and the FOX Broadcasting Co.,
the glorious gang at FremantleMedia, 19 Entertainment and all the hardworking
staff and crew,

Congratulations! Thank you for the wisdom, stamina and passion every single one of
you puts into American Idol every single day.

Happy 200th episode!

Love from me to you,

Debra Byrd

'Byrd'
Congratulations to Simon Fuller and 19 Entertainment for crafting the magic that is American Idol. Thanks to one brilliant idea, thousands of the world’s brightest stars now have a stage to shine on. 200 episodes later, your creative air is still giving life to the dreams of the undiscovered, and to those who have risen to the top, where they rightly belong.
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from >>p42

“We base those decisions on the artists we have the most confidence in, whether they win or they don’t,” Pr zie says.

Aside from the label, 19 also has a management wing that has taken on several “Idol” contestants, including Underwood, Daughtry and Fantasia Barrino.

The initial singles by the winner and the runner-up are rush-released to the market. The signings’ full albums are released about six months after the show wraps but are also on a tight schedule, especially since the budding stars are spending much of the time on the road with the “Idol” package concert tour.

The A&R challenge was to use A&R in its best form, and that is to find songs,” Davis says. “We were given a window as the A&R team, about a 10-week period of time to come up with songs for the artist, because they go on tour right after the show ends until the summer is over and album has to be out that year by October or November the latest.

Davis adds that it’s the A&R process of selecting potential hits and the subsequent airplay that helps push the post-“Idol” releases into platinum sales.

Even with its pop focus, “Idol” has managed to churn out a diverse roster of talent, ranging from pop crooners Clarkson and Clay Aiken, R&B belters Ruben Studdard and Fantasia, country queens Underwood and Kellie Pickler and rocker Daughtry.

“Many have developed niches and pooled off to various formats now,” notes Sean Ross, VP of music and programming at Edison Media Research. “Katherine [McPhee]’s record went to top 40 first. Taylor Hicks’ single went to AC. What they all have in common is that TV has allowed them to circumvent the usually tortuous process of making an artist or record familiar to much of America.”

While the pop and R&B stars are a good fit, country has also proved to be a genre that is particularly well-suited to furthering the career of an “Idol” artist.

“You can’t force an American Idol into country music,” Sony BMG Nashville chairman Joe Galante says. “It’s not a natural fit in the case of both Carrie and Kelly. They’re two singers who have absolutely grown up on country music and love the format, so it’s a natural fit.”

Still, some are not convinced that the “Idol” offspring will have meaningful and lengthy careers. Especially since none of the former Idols write their own songs, save for Daughtry, who co-wrote much of the material on his band’s recent debut effort.

“What blew the business up was credible artists writing their own songs that spoke from their soul. That is the synthesis of American Idol,” says Bob Lefsetz, author of music industry newsletter/blog The Lefsetz Letter. “They’re very similar to: Barbe or Colorforms. These are human beings who have reasonable voices upon which they put layers of production. This is Clive Davis’ dream. They’re not going to complain, ‘I don’t want to do this.’ They’re raw material. They’re putty in his hands.”

Still even Lefsetz admits that “Idol” makes for good TV and applauds Simon Cowell’s honesty. Even he doesn’t think “Idol” is going away anytime soon. “The ratings are up from last year, because it’s a great train wreck, but nothing lasts forever. It will end and the record sales will die before the television show, but how many years did ‘Star Search’ run?”


Corson has no doubts about the long-term potential of “Idol.” “It’s not a fad,” he says. “It’s a trend that won’t fad,” he says. “It’s a trend that’s created other trends. It’s been incredibly well managed as a TV show. It’s been sanctioned by great artists who have sustainable careers that have come out of it with a good collaboration between us and the show. Because it’s been mandated by the public,” he adds, “the public will not let it fail.”

TEXT MESSAGING, LIVE VOTING RESULTS AND A MULTILAYERED WEB SITE HELP FANS GET THEIR ‘IDOL’ FIX 24/7

BY CARLA MAYBERRY

While the other broadcast networks look with envy at the iron grip Fox’s “American Idol” has on audiences, the show’s creators have ensured that its reach goes well beyond its successful prime time slot—all in the name of extending the brand and feeding its insatiable viewers.

“When it comes to keeping fans connected, there’s just a hunger for ‘American Idol,’” admits Jeff King, VP at Fox Interactive Media, who also serves as editor in chief of AmericanIdol.com.

Here’s a look at the show’s reach in the digital realm:

The show is also working to seamlessly integrate online and on-air elements.

- To continue to accommodate online users, last month online video-game company King.com signed a multi-year license for a browser-based game that will be available through AmericanIdol.com, King.com and Yahoo.
- Featuring licensed songs from the show, the game’s premise is to re-create the experience of going before the “Idol” jury.
- Viewers cast a total of 570 million votes for all of the season five contestants, according to Telescope, the company that counts the phone and text-message votes.
- With 65 million text messages sent during season three’s final episode, and a participation rate of more than 40% of Cingular customers using the provider to text their votes, it’s no wonder that FreemantleMedia director of interactive Jason Turner says “Idol” is behind the popularity of text messaging.
- In March 2006, AmericanIdol.com drew its highest number of unique visitors, with 6.2 million staying at the site for an average of 12.5 minutes. In January, the numbers spiked again to 2.1 million unique visitors, each of whom stayed at the site for five minutes. But numbers tend to stay high only as long as the show is on the air. Without the broadcast, visitor numbers tend to dip below the ability of Nielsen/NetRatings to measure them.
- This year, the mobile application has been embedded deeper into the show with a cross-carrier short message service competition, where fans can win cash, a visit to a music video shoot and a trip to the show’s finale. Additionally, with more advanced applications and third-generation-enabled phones, subscribers are adding video performances from contestants to the more traditional wireless downloads of ringtones and wallpapers.
- The show is also working to integrate the online and on-air elements as seamlessly as possible. The Web site will allow fans to provide questions for host Ryan Seacrest to ask on-air, plus give them a chance to win show tickets. “We’re incorporating anything that gets people to do things online that has a payoff on-air,” King says.

Online plans include viewers submitting questions for host RYAN SEACREST to ask of show contestants.
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— Ken Warwick, Executive Producer, AMERICAN IDOL | THE 59TH PRIMETIME EMMY AWARDS
For anyone who might think the “American Idol” merchandising machine stops when the show wraps up each season—think again.

It’s just a different, but as extensive marketing machine, driving endorsement deals, merchandise licensing and a nationwide tour that kicks into gear to support the newly crowned Idol and often the runners-up.

“The journey starts when the show finishes,” says Mark Brittain, head of commercial for “American Idol” at 19 Entertainment, which co-produces the show with FremantleMedia North America.

“We look for extensions that will enhance the brand and expand the number of opportunities for people to interact with it,” he adds.

Take the tour, known as American Idol Live, which brings the winners and some runners-up around the country. It’s wholly owned by 19 Entertainment, which is able to spearhead endorsement deals through its management of “Idol” performers. Since its inception five years ago, the tour has put on more than 200 performances, grossing $88 million, according to Billboard Boxscore.

“We’re incredibly proud of the tour. Last year we played more than 60 dates and reached more than 600,000 people, and tickets sold out in a matter of hours,” Brittain says. “It’s a great opportunity for viewers to interact with the performers and launch the artists into the next phase of their careers.”

The tour also serves as a lucrative profit center for selling corporate sponsorship. For example, Kellogg’s Pop-Tarts brand has served as the tour’s presenting sponsor for each of the last five years—an impressive run given that most annual entertainment tours churn through new partners every year.

On top of its estimated low-seven-figure annual sponsorship fee, Kellogg’s provides the tour with valuable exposure through its retail activation programs. The company last year ran a promotion offering access to websites that provided a behind-the-scenes look at the American Idol Live tour.

Kellogg’s touted the promo on product packaging, in-store promotions and through other marketing initiatives.

Additional sponsors for the 2007 tour should be announced by 19 Entertainment this spring, Brittain says.

 Elsewhere, the company extends the “Idol” brand through endorsement deals with the show’s performers. For example, last year Ford Motor partnered with season five winner Taylor Hicks while hair care and cosmetic product marketer Sexy Hair Concepts teamed with that season’s runner-up, Katharine McPhee.

Footwear company Skechers USA aligned with season four winner Carrie Underwood on a global endorsement deal following the 2005 season.

The Creative Artists Agency assists 19 Entertainment in securing corporate partners for the tour and endorsement deals. The TV show’s growing popularity, combined with Fox Broadcast casting’s contract extension through 2010, have allowed the producers to cast a wider net when it comes to securing corporate partners, Brittain says.

In their most recent post-show initiative, last month FremantleMedia and 19 Entertainment announced the inception of Idol Camp, a noncompetitive performing arts camp for kids aged 12-15. For $2,900, the camp offers a 10-day outing featuring performing arts classes, performances by former “American Idol” contestants, music celebrities and other industry professionals.

“That’s a great example of how we can take the American Idol” brand beyond the television show and create a significant brand extension that will enhance the American Idol experience,” Brittain says.

To Brittain, the “Idol” brand is all—and whatever light it casts on products and endorsements is really representative of the American dream.

“American Idol” isn’t just a TV show, he says. “It’s a journey about transformation that celebrates everyday people that can make it. For that reason the brand stands for something that exists outside the television show.”
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All Grown Up
Duff Gets Personal On Dance-Driven New Album

As multimedia momentum goes, no one need teach 19-year-old Hilary Duff a thing. For the past decade, she has built a career that began on TV, peaking in 2001 with her title role in Disney's 65-episode "Lizzie McGuire," making her a name brand among tweens.

Two years later, she recorded a full-length studio album, "Metamorphosis," which catapulted to No. 1 on The Billboard 200, and the single "Come Clean" hit The Billboard Hot 100's top 10. The project sold 3.7 million copies—and a MTV star was born.

With her upcoming "Dignity," due April 3 via Hollywood, Duff is coming out with the majesty of a high-class debutante. Duff co-wrote all songs on the album with A-list Kara DioGuardi, including the up-tempo single "With Love." The artist is also promoting her new Elizabeth Arden fragrance, With Love, in addition to a clothing line, Stuff by Hilary Duff, available at mass-market retailers Wal-Mart, Kohls and Target.

"I know how lucky I am, but I've worked hard," Duff says. "Who could complain? I've traveled the world multiple times with so many rewards."

For the new album, Duff insisted on being more involved. "I knew I couldn't do it myself, but working with Kara allowed me to talk about things on my mind. It was one big therapy session." During the songwriting process, Duff endured the full scope of a relationship—true love, doubt, breakup and resolution—all of which play out during the course of the set's 14 tracks.

"People don't know a lot about my life, but these songs are self-explanatory. It was crazy to be in the midst of a loving relationship, then not knowing why you're still there, then not being in it. I cover those emotions and the feeling of being in the dark," she says.

Even so, the melodic template of the album is refreshingly dance/pop. "It's so different from my other albums, which were pop/rock," Duff says. "I didn't necessarily plan the album to sound like this, but it was so easy to write to.

Hollywood has a flush of promotion in place to ensure that "Dignity" reconnects fans who have grown up alongside the teen. Duff is co-hosting MTV's "TRL" the week before release, in addition to a three-episode reality special following promotion in Italy, Madrid and London. Yahoo also sent a crew to record a multi-episode series surrounding the project, focusing on Duff's musical maturity and refined womanly image. TV includes "Good Morning America," "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," as well as commentary on VH1's "Maxim's Top 100" countdown. Duff is also a spokes-woman for Verizon's Pink Chocolate phone.

Hollywood GM Abbey Konowitch predicts that Duff is a bull's-eye for success with a sound that addresses pop radio's "overlooked middle." He says, "She offers balance between hip-hop and rock—and she's already an iconic pop star crossing into a new generation, versus someone who simply has a nice song for radio.

"Dignity" will also be available as a special edition that includes a DVD interview with Duff discussing her comprehensive career path. "It's a chance for fans to see that she is for real and what happens as a woman grows up," Konowitch says.

Buena Vista Music Group chairman Bob Cavallo adds, "This record is pivotal and Hilary delivered. It's the first time she has co-written, and she's gone in a new musical direction. Her new look is reflective of all of this—confident, beautiful and edgy."

Meanwhile, radio is warming to "With Love," which debuted at No. 37 in early March at top 40 radio. Among the first stations to add the song is powerhouse top 40 WHITZ (Z100) New York. PD Sharon Dastur says, "My first reaction watching the video for 'With Love' was, 'This is exactly the kind of song she should be doing.' Hilary's more mature look completed the package. Her sound and image are a natural progression."

Duff will support "Dignity" with a headlining tour, while she plans for further branding, including a line of eyeglass wear and youthful bedroom furniture to enhance Stuff by Hilary Duff. She also wants to develop "fashion-forward" clothing attuned to her age group.

But most of all, Duff hopes to maintain stature as a role model, based on the title track of her new project. "I don't insinuate that I have a ton of dignity—come on, I'm 19—but it's something I strive to possess and important in how you treat others, how you handle your job and treat yourself," she says. "It's also something that can be easily lost. I hope I can hold on to dignity as I move forward."
Everybody Dance Now

The Winter Music Conference Isn’t Just For Insiders Anymore

Winter Music Conference (WMC): Necess___ory evil, obsolete distraction or the event of ___y year? The genre of music to in-dustry has long debated the relevance of the annual Miami gathering, which during its 22 years has become associated more with spring breakers, sky-high nightclub cover charges and sleepless six-day benders than business. But each March-March 20-25 this year—it was majorly; of label heads, DJs, producers, promoters, PR mongers, booking agents and managers still head south, armed with promos, posters and SFP 30. Things definitely ain’t the same, but there’s new life for dance in the differences.

In its mid-’90s golden days, WMC was known as where the records of the year—or the next five years—were broken. Pete Heller’s “Big Love” and Ar- mand Van Helden’s “U Don’t Me” were “records of the conference” that went on to international acclaim and sizable sales. But there were fewer events back then and a core group of tastemaker attendees. Now there’s a party in every hotel lobby, with more vacationing clubbers than industries.

There are too many events going on at the same time to really pinpoint the most important ones,” says Olga Helyns of Unmanageable Artists, who manages DJs Roger Sanchez and Tom Stephan. “It’s thus almost impossible to know what WMC breaks through records.” The days of a clued-in dancefloor standing in wait for a marquis DJ to christen the next classic are done.

But as the conference shifts from select parties on the cruise to fuzziest to mainstream pilgrimage party, it gains a new type of potency. “WMC is less important for breaking new music than it was, but certainly as important as ever for promoting and marketing dance releases,” says Patrick Moxey, presi-dent of Ultra Records.

On Ultra’s pro-motional slate is the two-day Ultra Music Festival, a new album from the world’s most popular dance artist, Tiesto, and past releases from Ferry Corsten and David Guetta. Moxey is taking the consumer route, with street teams, radio advertising and display advertising in local papers.

In addition to fans, dance music has another audience during WMC week: corporate America, a fair-weather yet powerful friend to various dance initiatives. “WMC is our outlet to engage in co-branding experiments that usually lead to long-term relationships,” says Aurelia Entertainment’s Lainie Cipolletto, who has brokered deals between indie-dance entities like Star 69 Records and Juicy Music, and brands like Armani Exchange and Pioneer.

Scion, Sony Ericsson, Vitamin Water and XM Satellite Radio are throwing their capabilities and coffers behind club events to reach the young, open wallets flooding South Beach. “The idea was to reach our target where it comes to our products: 18- to 30-year-olds who are very interested in music,” says Marren Wrigley, head of corpo-rate PR for Sony Ericsson.

Yes, WMC isn’t what it was. It’s something else now—a show of dance music’s power. The genre doesn’t al-ways move units. It rarely produces stars. But it does still venues worldwide on a weekly basis, and once a year, it can gather a good portion of its very sellable fan base in one tropical place. While international conferences like the Amsterdam Dance Event might eventually eclipse WMC for pure business-to-business work, Miami in March is more impor-tant now than it’s ever been, for the very reason the cognoscenti have come to disdain it—the masses.

What’s Hot In Miami

Winter Music Conference Highlights

“It’s important to go to [the Winter Music Confer-ence] with two minds,” DJ/producer James Zabi-bia says. “The first, of course, is to explore the artistry, and the second, to have fun and enjoy the experience. One without the other doesn’t seem to work.” Below Billboard highlights some of the artists and events attempting to have it both ways. The first two will be pushing his multilonged collabora-tion with fellow young, Sassy-Beat Brit Jack Nic Fanciulli called One+One. The two are releasing a mixed compilation on Ministry of Sound and hitting 18 U.S. cities on a uniquely formatted club tour. They’ll tag-team on a new one-of-a-kind DJ mixing console built for two. To promote the partnership at WMC, they’re playing a private boat party and a tradition-al club event, and recording an Essential Mix for BBC’s tastemaking Radio 1.

On the other hand, Dubfire is celebrating the single life. He’ll be supporting the excellent “Global Underground Taipei” (GU Music), his first mixed compilation without longtime Deep Dish partner Sharam. “Doing comps before there were always two cooks in the kitchen—you end up in a tug of war, and whoever wins gets the longest wins,” he says. “For this one, I had total say, so I wanted to go back to that sound that a lot of people associate with classic Deep Deep. That’s my sound.” In addition to the req-uisite big-room Deep Deep gig, Dubfire is also host-ing a release party for “Taipei” at upscale lounge Mynt and getting a tattoo on-camera for Discovery Channel reality series “Miami Ink.”

Ultra Music Festival, the Lollapalooza of dance music, is extended from one to two nights this year. In a unique one-off performance, dormant alterna-tive favorite the Cure will close out night two. “Dance festivals always bring the same few major dance bands every year. It gets kind of old, constantly re-cycling the same acts,” Ultra creator/director Russ-ell Falksich says. “Ultra is taking the next step by bringing in major bands that have strong roots to the dance community and incorporating them into a killer [electronic dance music] lineup.”

• In what might rank as the strangest combination of the week, Sony Ericsson is hosting Night Tennis, a two-night event featuring a black-light tennis match, fashion show and DJ sets of dance classics from Murk, Masters at Work and Paul Oakenfold. It’s a byproduct of the Sony Ericsson Open being in Miami at the same time as WMC and a follow-up to a similar Madrid event last Novem-ber (also during an SE Open). The goal is to “bring tennis to a younger audience and move it into an arena where it wouldn’t normally go,” says Marren Wrigley, head of corporate PR for SE.

Also in town: Jody Wat-ley, singing for sometimes-producer King Britt’s Art of Seduction party; David Guetta, supporting original album “Guetta Blaster” (Ultra) with press and a Spe’s in-store, and DJ’ing his annual F’ck Me I’m Famous shindig (with Bob Sinclar and Fatboy Slim); the newly reassembled Nervous Records crew, fol-lowing up its infamous after-hours parties at the local Denny’s with a multi-DJ day/night event, simulcast on XM Satellite Radio’s “BPM” show, MySpace pin-up Tila Tequila making the party rounds to push her in-dependently released single “I Love U”; and Amer-i-can Idol” contestant Kimberly Locke promoting remixes of new single “Change” (Curb).
Joe Rides Again

After Four Years Away, R&B Singer/Songwriter Returns With Songs You Can Feel

It's been a minute since Joe was last seen on the R&B charts. Well, going on four years to be exact. That's when Jive released his last album ("And Then..."

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During his break from the scene, the singer/ songwriter (born Joe Thomas 35 years ago this year) has been devoting time to various personal ventures. These include real estate, an upscale clothing line called J Thomas and his own brand of tequila called Sojo.

"I want to branch out and be more than just someone who comes out and sings," Joe says over a meal and mojitos at Los Angeles' Luna Park restaurant. "So it made sense to take a break. I haven't even been working on any outside music projects."

But now he's back and revving up for another promo tour. This time it's on behalf of his sixth Jive album, " Ain't Nothin' Like Me."

As of April 24. While the album's first single, "Where You At?" with rap newcomer Papoose didn't gain traction, Joe is climbing the Adult R&B chart with the Stargate-produced midtempo groove "If I Was Your Man" (No. 16 this week). 

His career dates back to 1993, when the preacher's son released his debut album, " Everything," on Mercury. That album spawned the No. 10 R&B single " I'm in Luv." Signing with Jive, Joe broke out of the pack in 1997 with "All That I Am." Hits like " All the Things (Your Man Won't Do)" and "Don't Wanna Be a Player" pushed the album to 1.2 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

He doubled that number in 2000 with "My Name is Joe." (2.5 million), and from that album enjoyed several top-charting R&B/pop cross-over hits: "I Wanna Know," "Stutter" and a featured role on Mariah Carey's "Thank God I Found You." Fourth album "Better Days" (2001) and "And Then..." both of which went gold, rounded out his discography.

Joe says the intent behind this album is no different from that for his other five. "I just want to do better songs each time. Songs people can feel and visualize, like Prince's 'The Most Beautiful Girl in the World.' Quality music and lyrics had been taking a back seat but they're coming back. They had to."

One of the album's most visual tracks is "Feel for You." A signature Joe ballad, the song is based on a breakup the singer experienced after dating one of the dancers in his show. Collaborating songwriter/producers on the release include Tim & Bob, Sean Garrett, Bryan-Michael Cox, Johnna Austin, Cool & Dre and Jermaine Dupri. Besides Papoose, rap fan Joe has tapped such guests as Chamillionaire, Nas, Fabolous, R&B newcomer (and fellow Kedar Entertainment labelmate) Algebra and Young Buck.

The night before the interview, Joe says he and the A&R team discussed which songs would make the cut. Noting that there's "no time for me to make mistakes now," Joe also underscores he's not stressed about going up against Ne-Yo and others in the next-generation R&B ranks. "The old school like Marvin Gaye set a certain pace and rhythm, then passed the baton. I'll also pass it off," he says. "But I've jumped back in the race and am still holding it. If you bring good music to the table, it will always be in style."
“I’m an emotional and physical wreck,” says Shimon Moore, frontman for Australian indie-rock trio Sick Puppies. “We are not mentally prepared for everything we now have to undertake.”

The “wo” he is referring to extends to his bandmates, bassist Emma Anzai and drummer Mark Goodwin (the lone American of the group). “We have a single at radio, a video all over YouTube, an album ready to come out and we’re on tour.” Pausing, he adds with a laugh, “Now we have to be rock stars. It’s all very daunting.”

RMR/Virgin issues the act’s debut album, “Dressed Up As Life,” April 19. The set’s lead single, “All the Same,” is being embraced by several key rock stations, including KROQ Los Angeles; KFMA Tuscon, Ariz.; WOCL Orlando, Fla.; WHRL Albany, N.Y.; WBCN Boston; and WLUM Milwaukee.

According to KROQ music director Lisa Worden, it was one of the first songs the stations added in January. “We had all just gotten back from the holidays, and we were listening to tons of new music,” she says. “We had an unmastered version of ‘All the Same,’ and we saw the video on YouTube. We liked what we heard and saw, so we added it. Two months later, Worden says the song is doing well, with “lots of requests from KROQ listeners.”

The video Worden is referring to has been watched more than 10 million times on YouTube alone, resulting in a worldwide virtual group hug.

Directed by Moore, the video stars local Sydney eccentric Juan Mann, who maintained a presence at a shopping mall with a handwritten poster offering unconditional free hugs. The local council, though, tried banning Mann from the street, citing a public liability issue, Moore says. What followed was a grassroots movement of support for the hug-happy man. The council backed down when it was presented with a 10,000 signature petition. The music video is the group’s tribute to Mann.

Moore says he worked on the video for 12 hours and posted it to YouTube about six months ago.

With a hot video on their hands, Sick Puppies found themselves in the middle of a label building war—with labels, Moore happily points out, that had ignored the band in the past. “See what a little hug can do,” he says.

With a wealth of activity surrounding the band, Capitol Music Group president Lee Trink stresses the importance of creating a thread throughout the campaign. “We are connecting the dots between the single, the video and the tour—all the while keeping the focus on the band.”

Before the majors and indies came calling, Sick Puppies realized they needed some outside assistance in the design and marketing departments. “We suck at design and marketing,” Moore says. “We needed help.”

Enter: The Deutsch agency and its Musical Arts Program for college interns. Deutsch brought in 12 Fashion Institute of Technology students last October and gave them full exposure to the agency. The students were split into five groups. Each group was responsible for creating a top-to-bottom branding campaign for Sick Puppies, encompassing CD packaging, a logo and merchandise design.

The band chose the winning team, which was helmed by FIT student Jordan Roland. The team’s concepts/designs will be featured throughout the campaign for “Dressed Up As Life.”

Deutsch copywriter Mike Lebowitz, art director Eric Rojas and other agency creatives oversaw the work being done by the interns. Rick Stone, senior VP/GM of Jeff McCluskey & Associates, and the band’s manager Paul Palmer were instrumental in partnering band and agency.

The cost for the label and band: zero. “We did it because we get exposed to some amazing talent,” Rojas says. “The students, meanwhile, receive real agency experience. As for the label, they get a great marketing plan.” Pro bono.

Despite their name, British alternative rock quartet the Rakes spend little time tidying the garden. Currently the act—named because its members are all “skinny as rakes”—has more pressing matters to attend to.

Sophomore album “Ten New Messages” is released worldwide by V2 March 19, when the band also hits the road for its biggest U.K. tour to date. A U.S. release has yet to be confirmed.

London-based V2 head of international Mark Bond says the album has been well-received at U.K. radio. It is, he says, “every bit as socially relevant as Bloc Party’s new album, and there are three or four (potential) big singles.”

Bond says the band is one of V2’s current international priorities. The United Kingdom is its biggest sales market, but Japan and continental Europe are also being targeted. “We built an excellent base in Europe on (August 2005 album) “Capture/Release” through early touring, backed by very strong promotion,” he says. France became a particularly strong market, Bond says, after the track “Open Book” featured in a French TV ad campaign during the 2006 soccer World Cup.

The Rakes play European shows April 18-May 7, booked by Free Trade Agency. U.S. dates through William Morris are under consideration. Publishing is by Warner/Chappell.

—Steve Adams


After forming in 2003 in Melbourne and signing a recording/publishing deal with local independent Jellyfish Records, Borne garnered domestic airplay with the EPs “Borne” (June 2005) and “Souls on Satellite” (July 2006). But its key breakthrough came with a November 2006 booking to play an Apple Australia media function in Sydney. That set impressed Apple international marketing executives, and four months later, Borne was on iTunes in 22 territories.

Debut album “Loss of Signal” was released exclusively through iTunes Feb. 13, with one track, “Guide,” becoming a free single of the week in eight territories, including the United States. Band manager Harvey Russell says “Guide” was downloaded 500,000 times that week. “Loss of Signal” subsequently entered Billboard’s Top Digital Albums chart at No. 13 on March 3. Russell reports subsequent interest from U.S. and U.K. labels and U.S. booking agencies. Jellyfish issues the album domestically in May.

Other U.S. doors are opening. Album track “Don’t Go Now” appears in sports-wear manufacturer Nautica’s TV ad campaign this April, while Russell reports interest in using Borne’s music from a U.S. clothes firm and a Hollywood film studio. “We’re astounded at the response to a band that’s hardly out of the garage,” he says.

The band hopes to play May European and U.S. shows, following a South by Southwest appearance March 14. Domestic bookings are through Premier/ Harbour.

—Christie Eliezer
Highway To Heaven And Hell

Black Sabbath's Dio Lineup Hits The Road Under Another Name

The reunion of the Ronnie James Dio-fronted version of Black Sabbath has been a long time coming. But it's not likely to be a long-term affair.

In fact, Dio says, "We've approached this as really having an ending period. We all have other commitments, and we've had a lot of turmoil in the past. So maybe this is the way to avoid it."

But guitarist and Sabbath mainstay Tony Iommi sounds a more optimistic note. "We haven't locked the doors," he says. "It's one of those 'Let's just see how it goes' situations."

This much is known: the quartet—Dio, Iommi, bassist Terry "Geezer" Butler and drummer Vinnie Appice, who last worked together in 1992—is touring the world this year, starting March 11 in Vancouver, with a March 30 show at New York's Radio City Music Hall and a full-scale U.S. trek starting April 22 in Phoenix. Megadeth and Machine Head are opening the U.S. dates.


The wrinkle, however, is that when the band hits the road it won't be called Black Sabbath. Instead it will be dubbed Heaven and Hell, which was the title of Dio's 1980 debut with Sabbath.

The change was made so as not to confuse this lineup with the reactivated original Sabbath—featuring singer Ozzy Osbourne and drummer Bill Ward—that intends to record a new album and tour in 2008.

"I'm quite glad, actually, because it really is a different kind of music," Butler says. "I'd have loved to have changed it back then when Ronnie joined the band actually. It does make it a bit complicated now, but the people who follow us will understand."

Dio says that the 2006 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction of the original Sabbath lineup established a clear identity for that band. "We wanted to put a bit more finality on Black Sabbath with Ozzy," he says, "and go with something a bit fresher for this endeavor. It made more sense to appease everyone in this instance and go with Heaven and Hell."

But the switch means that some "education" has been in order for promoters and the public, according to Pinnacle Entertainment's Scott Sokol, Heaven and Hell's booking agent.

"Once people were told it was Ronnie James Dio, Tony Iommi . . . a little light went on and everybody kind of got it," Sokol says.

Sokol says the "Heaven and Hell" album cover is being used in ad mats for the shows, while "a lot of publicity" for the tour and the "Dio Years" anthology will also identify the band. And so far confusion seems minimal. Sales for the 11 Canadian dates have been "very, very strong" while the Radio City show sold out in 30 minutes.

"People haven't seen them in 15 years," Sokol says, "and people are always excited to see what they haven't seen in a long time."

Iommi says the tour will feature songs only from the Dio periods of the band, which included three studio albums—the platinum "Heaven and Hell," which Ward played on, 1981's gold "Mob Rules" and 1992's "Dehumanizer"—and the 1982 concert set "Live Evil." "Heaven and Hell plans to film and record at least one show on this year's tour for a future release as well.

The guitarist says the reunion is going well so far, and that's why the group came up with three new songs rather than just the two Rhino requested. Any past animosities, according to Iommi, have been put to rest as well.

"These things, they get blown out of proportion," he says. "When you see each other everything gets sorted out, especially with this lineup. We've always sort of got on very well, and it's like we haven't been away from each other. So there's no point in holding grudges against anybody, I don't think—certainly not at our bloody ages."
Venezuelan singer/songwriter Franco De Vita is often described as a “Latin Elton John” thanks to his memorably piano-propelled story songs. With an arsenal of compositions that have virtually served as the soundtrack for generations, De Vita has redefined the scope of the Latin singer/songwriter tradition, remaining relevant for more than two decades with lyrics as poetic as they are colloquial. Following the 2006 release of his live album, “Mil y Una Historias” (A Thousand and One Stories), on Sony BMG, ASCAP will recognize De Vita with its Latin Heritage Award on March 21. De Vita spoke with Billboard about songwriting, his fans’ taste and more.

Are you an author or a singer first?
Both. If I weren’t a songwriter, I wouldn’t be a singer. If I couldn’t write my own songs, I probably would have done something else with my life... I never thought to be a singer. I always thought to be a singer/songwriter.

Have you sung other people’s songs?
I had to sing everybody’s songs. When I started, I had a cover band, and we played everything: Tom Jones, Led Zeppelin, Billows, Bozos. We would play little rock shows which were always shut down by the police because we had long hair, and we had to run out, hiding stuff inside our instrument cases.

Did you include your own songs?
Yes. We would play things that, sadly, I never recorded. They got lost along the way. I wrote a song called “A Very Famous Mystery.” A little alter was located just behind my home. The Caracas Theater. It was emblematic because I would sneak in there when I was a little kid to watch rock shows. I would plead with the ushers to let me in. And one day, a construction company tore it down. I wrote a song called “El Teatro Murio” (The Theater Died). I must have been 18. And I don’t remember it anymore. It’s a shame.

What was your breakthrough song?
“El Buen Perdedor” (The Good Loser). And it still is. Most of my shows end with that song. I haven’t been able to remove it from the playlist. It wasn’t written for anyone in particular. In fact, when I wrote that song, I was living a beautiful relationship and I wrote many songs, simply by imagining that I could lose this wonderful thing.

With your last tour, you made a point of sponsoring new singer/songwriters and inviting them onstage on your different stops. As an established star, is this a duty?
It’s about helping them, and helping people hear them and hopefully having something happen. The truth is, they’re good, and music has to keep going and it’s a tremendous loss if we don’t rescue them and we don’t help people hear what they have to say. Most are songwriters. Some are still developing their songwriting. It’s not an obligation. But it encourages and excites me greatly to hear these people. I’m optimistic, and I help them because I think they’re the future of the industry. A lot of people can do electronic music. But few people can craft music that has true emotion.

You’ve been doing this for more than 20 years now. What does that tell you about people’s musical taste?
The genre has a lot to do with it. It’s pop, and it’s timeless. Of course, sounds change, forms change, and you have to change too. If you maintain the same writing you used 20 years ago, it’s hard to last. Every album has to offer something different. But maintaining a simple language that everyone can understand and relate to, that isn’t trite, making up new phrases, a hook phrase. We all speak about love and loss, but you have to find a way to say it that doesn’t sound like someone else, or like you yourself said it 15 years ago.

Is it just me or has YouTube become the newest way to make sure hip-hop fans don’t forget your face? And I don’t mean random candid camera personality clips or the Internet reality shows that Diddy especially went too far with. Diddy’s show had a few highlights, the brightest among them being him stepping out of the delivery room just after his twin girls were born to address his Web fans. But in the past few weeks, funded by either label budget or personal wealth, 50 Cent, Cam’Ron, Kanye West and Prodigy have all released videos aimed at the Internet. Each MC has an album coming this year so clips are expected. However, the content of their latest videos—naked women and/or heavy artillery—suggests their airing would once have made the most sense on BET’s former racy video show “Uncut.” But since “Uncut” was cancelled last year, I can only assume these clips are Internet-specific, almost like stand-alone webisodes.

50 Cent’s “Funeral Music” was the first clip that caught my attention. It featured Austin Powers-esque bikini-clad models brandishing handguns and appeared to be filmed at 50’s Connecticut home. The clip hit YouTube in February, the week after 50’s on-air spat with Cam’Ron at WQHT New York. In response, Cam shot his own video, “Curtis,” titled after 50 Cent’s given name, Curtis Jackson. Shot around Cam’s own Harlem neighborhood, the clip even featured a parody PSA, essentially describing 50 and his friends “from the streets” as “assholes.” The clip was released on the Internet about two weeks after 50’s, and I haven’t seen either on BET, MTV or their side channels. The videos parallel MC’s trading diss songs via mixtapes, instead of mainstream radio playlists.

The third example is West’s video for his remix of Rich Boy’s “Throw Some D’s.” Often rappers concoct personal and sometimes unauthorized remixes of hit songs. And with “Throw Some D’s” on its way to No. 1 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop songs chart.

Alabama For The Net
Racy Rap Videos For The Post-‘Uncut’ YouTube Age

Alabama, Inspired
Country Vets Follow Up A Successful Gospel Album

NASHVILLE—Fans of veteran country band Alabama had to wait nearly two decades for the band to deliver its first gospel album, but they aren’t waiting long for the follow-up. On the heels of last year’s successful “Songs of Inspiration,” RCA Records is issuing “Songs of Inspiration, Vol. II” on March 27.

Alabama lead vocalist Randy Owen says the group had long wanted to record a gospel collection, and he was thrilled at the album’s reception. “These are songs that have been hits for hundreds of years.” Owen says of the gospel classics they chose for both volumes. “You’re stepping onto hallowed ground when
you are recording music that has been done so beautifully.

I wanted to make it authentic and very much like the way I heard [these songs] when I was a kid, when my lady and mama and aunties and uncles would all sing together," he says.

"Songs of Inspiration" was released last fall and was Alabama's first new album in more than five years. It debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Top Country Albums, Top Christian/Gospel Albums and Top Current Contemporary Christian Charts. It marked the first time an Alabama title debuted at No. 1 since the inception of Nielsen SoundScan in 1991. The project has sold 157,000 units, according to SoundScan.

The albums are distributed to the general market via Sony BMG and being worked to Christian retail through Sony BMG's Christian arm Provident Music Group. Though it might seem unusual to release a second volume just a few months later when there is still so much life in the first release, RCA Records VP of marketing/artist development Jon Elliot says the plan was a "one-two punch. We wanted to get one release out in time for Thanksgiving/Christmas last year and this one out in time for Easter this year so we have the whole year to sell."

Gospel albums by country artists are selling extremely well these days. Alan Jackson's 2006 "Precious Memories" has been certified platinum, and the compilation "Believe," featuring country artists doing faith-based songs, has sold 90,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. "With the success of the Alan Jackson album we knew there was a fan base out there of country music fans that want gospel music," Elliott says. "So the timing has been really good for Alabama."

Sales of the band's first gospel project were boosted by an appearance on QVC, and the second volume will get the same exposure. Plans call for an hour-long special on the channel to air March 15. Owen has also been highly visible as a judge on this season's "Nashville Star" talent competition on USA Network. He recently taped "Front Row Live," an hourlong concert featuring music from the "Inspiration" projects that will air on the Gospel Music Channel, and he was a guest during a recent taping for Southern gospel patriarch Bill Gaither's popular DVD series as well.

"Songs of Inspiration, Vol. II" includes several classics along with two originals. Special guest riders in the Skyjohns Alabama on "Love Lifted Me" and the Del McCoury Band appears on "Why the Circle Be Unbroken." Owen says the gospel albums were a joy to produce. "To work with the greatest musicians in the world and have them understand your vision immediately, what your feelings are and what direction you want to take the project, it's really a unique situation," he says.

After a lifetime as the frontman for Alabama, Owen is working on his first solo album. It will be a country record, and he says longtime manager Dale Morris is looking for a label home for the project. "It's another great opportunity," he says. "It's something that I have wanted to do for 25 years."

For a jazz album, the first-time collaborative recording by consummate improvisers Pat Metheny and Brad Mehldau has fared quite well. Released Sept. 16 on Nonesuch—the home label for both artists—"Metheny Mehldau" has already sold more than 30,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and "considerably north of 100,000" worldwide, according to label president and album executive producer Robert Hurwitz.

In a subgenre—instrumental mainstream jazz—where CDs typically sell in the high three-figure and low four-figure range, that's a landmark achievement. In 2006, of the 32 jazz titles that sold 30,000 or more copies, most were from the contemporary jazz chart, while on the traditional chart the big sellers included such jazz luminaries as Michael Bublé, Diana Ross and Gladys Knight.

Equally remarkable is that on March 13, a mere six months after the first Metheny-Mehldau album, Nonesuch released "Quartet," another disc recorded during the same session—also with Metheny's trio mates, bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jeff Ballard. Doesn't this fly in the face of sound economics when it comes to selling albums these days? Hurwitz dismisses that line of thought.

"That's not an issue," he says. "This music comes from an incredibly collaborative experience. We're talking about people who in three days recorded this music that will continue to sell for the next 20-30 years."

Metheny agrees. "All of my albums have high sales figures, and these two records that I've done with Brad will be the same," he says. "My first album, 'Bright Size Life' [1997, ECM], sold 1,200 copies the first year. It's sold hundreds of thousands since. These days people tend to react hysterically if a record doesn't sell a lot of copies in the first month. Everyone is panicking because the compass of the music world is pointed too much on a business level. I'd like to see the compass pointing back toward the value intrinsic in the notes that are played."

Music with "good notes," Metheny says, works in favor of albums that can have long legs in the marketplace. "Look at Bach," he says. "The appreciation of his music at the time he was composing it was very small. That didn't stop him from creating one of the world's greatest bodies of work. That's how we work: approaching notes with timelessness. And that's what Bob Hurwitz believes in. He produces music that may fly under the radar, but in the end becomes very successful."

KENNEDY LEGENDS: On March 3, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., kicked off its weekend Jazz in Our Time festival by honoring 35 jazz artists with its newly created Living Legends Award. The ceremony included performances by Wynton Marsalis and Dave Brubeck, both of whom were among the 32 honorees who attended. "We wanted to honor the greats who have given so much to jazz the past 50-60 years," Kennedy Center president Michael Kaiser says. "It was a special night for all these musicians to spend time together."

Dr. Billy Taylor, who is the center's artistic director, says, "This was a first for me, ever, to see everyone in one place at once. Usually we're all out on the road." As for the award, a one-time-only celebration, Taylor says, "Many of us are more highly recognized in Europe and Asia. It's nice to smell the flowers at home."
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Bad Day/ Daniel Powter /WARNER BROS

300,000 SPINS
Irreplaceable/ Beyonce /MUSIC WORLD/COLUMBIA
Far Away/ Nickelback /ROADRUNNER/LAVA/ATLANTIC
SexyBack/ Justin Timberlake /JIVE/ZOMBA
Who Wouldn't Wanna Be Me/ Keith Urban /CAPITOL NASHVILLE
Savin' Me/ Nickelback /ROADRUNNER/LAVA/ATLANTIC
Caught Up/ Usher /LAFACE/ZOMBA
Soldier/ Destiny's Child /MUSIC WORLD/COLUMBIA
How To Save A Life/ The Fray /EPIC

200,000 SPINS
Waiting On The World To Change/ John Mayer /AWARE/COLUMBIA
Too Little Too Late/ JoJo /DA FAMILY/BACKGOUND/UNIVERSAL MOTOWN
Hell Yeah/ Montgomery Gentry /COLUMBIA
If You're Going Through Hell (Before The Devil Even Knows)/ Rodney Atkins /CURB
Diary/ Alicia Keys /J/RMG
Better Life/ Keith Urban /CAPITOL NASHVILLE

100,000 SPINS
Runaway Love/ Ludacris Feat. Mary J. Blige /DEF CON II/IDJMG
You/ Lloyd Feat. Lil Wayne /THE INC./UNIVERSAL MOTOWN
It's Not Over/ Daughtry /RCA/RMG
What Goes Around...Comes Around/ Justin Timberlake /JIVE/ZOMBA
Watching You/ Rodney Atkins /CURB
It Just Comes Natural/ George Strait /MCA NASHVILLE
Amarillo Sky/ Jason Aldean /BROKEN BOW
It Ends Tonight/ All-American Rejects /DOGHOUSE/INTERSCOPE
Break It Off/ Rihanna Feat. Sean Paul /DEF JAM/IDJMG
Nothing Left To Lose/ Mat Kearney /AWARE/COLUMBIA
Tim McGraw/ Taylor Swift /BIG MACHINE
I Call It Love/ Lionel Richie /ISLAND/IDJMG
Suddenly I See/ KT Tunstall /RECENTLESS/VIRGIN
Me And My Gang/ Rascal Flatts /LYRIC STREET
The Real Thing/ Bo Bice /RCA/RMG
Take You Back/ Jeremy Camp /BEC/TOOTH & NAIL
S. E. X. / Lyle Jennings /LAVA
Untitled (How Can This Happen To Me?)/ Simple Plan /LAVA
Back Then/ Mike Jones /WB/SWISHAHOUSE/ASYLUM

50,000 SPINS
Ice Box/ Omarion /T.U.G./COLUMBIA
This Is Why I'm Hot/ MIMS /CAPITOL
This Ain't A Scene, It's An Arms Race/ Fall Out Boy /ISLAND/IDJMG
The Sweet Escape/ Gwen Stefani Feat. Akon /INTERSCOPE
Stupid Boy/ Keith Urban /CAPITOL NASHVILLE
Keep Holding On/ Avril Lavigne /RCA/RMG
Face Down/ Red Jumpsuit Apparatus /VIRGIN
Lost Without U/ Robin Thicke /STAR TRAK/INTERSCOPE
Poppin' Chris Brown Feat. Jay-Z /JIVE/ZOMBA
Throw Some D's/ Rich Boy /ZONE 4/INTERSCOPE
Anyway/ Martina McBride /RCA
You'll Always Be My Baby/ Sara Evans /RCA
The Way I Live/ Baby Boy Da Prince /UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC
Into The Ocean/ Blue October /UNIVERSAL MOTOWN
Let Love In/ Goo Goo Dolls /WARNER BROS
Made To Worship/ Chris Tomlin /SIXSTEPS/SPARRROW/EMI CMG
Heroes/ Shinedown /ATLANTIC
Mountain Of God/ Third Day /ESSENTIAL/PLG
To Be Loved/ Papa Roach /EL TONAL/GEFFEN
Love And Memories/ O.A.R. /EVERFIRE/LAVA

Nielsen
Broadcast Data Systems
ALBUMS

THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

COUNTRY

WILLIE NELSON, MERLE HAGGER, RAY PRICE

Last of the Breed
Producer: Fred Foster
Lost Highway
Release Date: March 20

As if these three luminaries joining forces for the first time to record a two-disc set of classic songs weren't enough, producer Fred Foster is also onboard. Legendary musicians Buddy Emmons, Boots Randolph, Johnny Gimble and the Jordanares also add their exceptional talents. Likewise, Vince Gill and Price on "Heartaches by the Number"—and Kris Kristofferson—on (what else?) "Why Me Lord?" with Nelson and Price make appearances. Name-checking aside, the trio's handling of everything from "I'll Keep On Loving You" to "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down" to "Sweet Memories" is nothing less than outstanding. And two new songs—Nelson's "Back to Earth" and Haggard's co-write with Kenny Vernon on "Sweet Jesus"—fit right in with the classics. If there's a disappointment, it's that time may keep these three from ever recording together again. ~K7

ROCK

TED LEO & THE PHARMACISTS

Living With the Living
Producer: Brendan Canty
Touch & Go

Release Date: March 20

The first half of "Living With the Living" offers well more of everything that's made Leo and his Pharmacists such post-punk studs: melody-kissed stomps ("the hand-clappy, torrential "The Sons of Cain"), unabashed melody ("La Costa Brava"), more Clash ("Who Do You Love?") and especially more cynical rage (the satisfyingly unsubtle "Bomb. Repeat. Bomb."). The less cohesive second half offers dub style on "The Unwanted Things" and a Queen-worthy bouncy track called "Annunciation Day/Born on Christmas Day." As usual, the lively state of world affairs dictates Leo's game plan, but rather than just throw cirin around, he's looking for closure ("Everyone wants body counts, and I just want to cry," he sings). He nearly finds it on "The Toro and the Toroeador," a surprisingly soulful power ballad with a guitar solo you might expect Slash to pull off in a desert somewhere.—JV

DANCE

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

Sound of Silver
Producer: James Murphy
 DFA/Capitol

Release Date: March 20

Sarcasm is the calling card of James Murphy's music as LCD Soundsystem, even when his disco beats are speaking for themselves. The rhythms work on pure dance music but also carry air quotes, looking backward to their first meetings with buzzing guitars and art-school attitude in the '70s and '80s. The lyrics brim with groovy wit: "North American Scum" mocks both Europeans who believe the Ugly American stereotype and the ugly Americans themselves. The title track centers on a chant about wanting to feel like a teenager—until you remember what your emotions really were like then. The single nondance track, "New York I Love You But You're Bringing Me Down," wallows in self-conscious nostalgia for the "flitty but fine" city of decades ago. Nice to know the cumudgeon in the nightclub is alive and well.—JMC

R&B

MUSIQ SOULCHILD

Luv vs. War
Producers: various
Atlantic

Release Date: March 13

Romancing is Musiq Soulchild's game, so it's refreshing that a label shift (Def Jam to Atlantic) hasn't changed his ways. Instead, the soul singer's fourth effort, "Luvansuqqi," offers more gently tuned tunes, served sunny side up. Sampling the '80s dance hit "Heartbeat," the trumpet-blaing lead single "B.U.D.D.Y." ends plasmonic friendship over romance. The remaining tracks rest mostly on the downbeat, with tender ballads like "Lullaby" and "Greatest Love." On "Teachmen" and the Raphael Saadiq-crafted "Betterman," Musiq waxes poetic about the benefits of a good woman, and the groovy "Ms. Philadelphia" finds the sucker for love infatuated with a hometown honey. Though it's his staple, the chatty double-time flow can get tedious at times ("Thequestions"), but "Luvansuqqi" finds Musiq comfortably in his lane.—CH

REGGAE

STEPHEN MARLEY

Mind Control
Producers: Stephen Marley, Paul Rodney
Universal

Release Date: March 20

Stephen Marley’s "Mind Control" continues the successful pattern that caught fire with brother Damian Marley and his 2005 hit "Jamrock," which Stephen co-wrote. First single "Traffic Jam," featuring Damian and a mean beatbox beat, is anundeniable party track. "Inna Di Red" is a quiet cut that showcases Marley's textured vocals over conga drums and a light organ. The estranged Mose Def pops up on "Hey Baby" for a verse, while Marley explains why he's free from his baggie. The 11 songs here are half features and half just Stephen. But the collection's guests don't overshadow Marley or convey that he needs their appearances to sell records. "Mind Control" is a genuine jam session, mixing roots, reggae, rock and flamenco into commercially viable dance joints.—HC

BLUEGRASS

RICKY SKAGGS & BRUCE HORNBY

Ricky Skaggs & Bruce Hornsby
Sony BMG/Legacy

Release Date: March 20

Historically the piano has been shut out of a bluegrass setting, dominated by banjo and fiddle as being as fitting its Appalachian mountain roots. But that hasn't stopped Hornsby from collaborating with country wiz Skaggs on a delightful self-titled CD. Highlights include a toe-tapping jaunt through "Across the Rocky Mountains" and even a rippling cover of Rick James' "Super Freak," complete with fiddle breaks and banjo cadences. Featuring Scaggs' top-notch bluegrass band, Kentucky Thunder, the CD bursts out of the gates with the light-hearted Hornsby originals "The Dreaded Spoon," setting a clapper pace for the duration. The album exudes pure fun and even opens a new window on Hornsby's hit, "Mandolin

JOSS STONE

Introducing Joss Stone
Producer: Raphael Saadiq
Virgin

Release Date: March 20

If Stone was a wiz-kid prodigy on her first two albums, "Introducing" brings us the 19-year-old Brit as a confident vocalist demanding some R-E-S-P-E-C-T. She makes that reference directly on "Headturner," aassy, muscular head of steam with a big beat and a Prince-style swagger. Elsewhere, Stone channels the Supremes ("Girl They Won't Believe It"), the Jackson 5 ("Baby, Baby, Baby") and plenty of Sister Re', but don't mistake "Introducing" as a mere collection of homages. Raphael Saadiq's production is brimming with horns and seriously in-the-pocket rhythm sections, but there are also enough high-hats and touches and contemporary arrangements to keep the tracks in the now. And while Stone shows her ability to shout bama-bama with the best of her forebears on "Headturner," she also shines when things quiet down ("I'm Falling," and "Music," which features a great rap guest by Lauryn Hill).—GG

Release deemed by the review editors to deserve special attention

On the basis of musical merit and/or Billboard chart performance
Rain," which the pair re- 

takes to fit the lyrics’ blue-grass 

gent.—DO

THE MCLURKIN 

PROJECT
We Praise You 

Producers: 

Donnie 

McClurkin, 

Stanley Brown 

Gosso 

Centric/Zomba 

Publishers:

Contribution:

Producer Justin Adams, who 

The following pages are a mix of reviews and articles about music and musicians. The text is mostly in English, with occasional mentions of other languages. The content includes reviews of albums, articles about music production, and information about publishers and songwriters. The text is dense and contains technical music terminology. The layout is typical of a music magazine, with sections dedicated to reviews, articles, and advertising. The overall tone is informative and critical, focusing on the quality and impact of various musical works.
**Market Watch**

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

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<th>CATEGORY</th>
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**Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)**

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<td>This Week</td>
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<td>Last Week</td>
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**Weekly Album Sales**

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<th>Year-To-Date</th>
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<td><strong>ALBUM SALES</strong></td>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>108,520,000</td>
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<td><strong>SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT</strong></td>
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<td>CD</td>
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**Third No. 1 For B.I.G.: Arcade Fire Rises Higher**


The Shins' "Wincing the Night Away" bowed at the same rank in the Feb. 10 issue, opening at 118,000.

Arcade Fire's 2004 album, "Funeral," never sold as many as 8,000 in any week. Also joining the top 10 are country man Gary Allan (No. 5, 70,000), Christian act Relient K (64,000) and veteran band Korn (No. 9, 51,000), marking the first frame since the Thanksgiving tracking week that five new albums start in the top 10, albeit this time with much lower sums.

**POP LIFE**

Every once in a while, your interleaved columnist must pull himself away from the piles of charts and data that stack up on his desk and roam through the pop culture that lies outside the music industry. This would be one such occasion.

After all, even the most avid music consumer finds more diversions than ever having at the wallet and praying for the precious commodity that is leisure time. Your competitor isn't just the street but the competition too, vying for the same collective ear as your music.

With that in mind, while the music industry pines for more verve among album releases, did you notice the third that greeted 23. "Jim Carrey's latest movie? Even with its leading man visiting "Today" and "Late Show With David Letterman," the film opened to a meaguer 14.6 million.

Carrey obviously missed warning signs from the small screen, as new TV shows with numbers in their titles struggled since they arrived in the fall. "Six Degrees" and "The Nine" didn't make it to November. "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip" barely made it into January, recently falling off NBC's schedule. "30 Rock" pulled iffy ratings despite critical acclaim.

Kiefer Sutherland must be glad Fox didn't wait until now to launch the popular "24," although I sure can't explain why the film "300" got off to such a fat start.

I've enjoyed three of those troubled series, which is why a new TV season reminds me of my dating life before I courted my wife. I hesitate to like a new one because I'm almost certain it won't work out.

**RADIO WAVES**

Can't remember if I was listening to ESPN Radio or one of the Los Angeles area's public outlets, but I noticed the station's ID mentioned not just the call letters, but the station's HD radio option and Web site address.

"Hey, my friends, is quite a mouthful. Think listeners get fatigued sifting through all that verbiage?"

Meanwhile, since L.A. talk pioneer KABC failed to retain the man who called himself Mr. KABC, I have redesigned one of the first buttons I programmed on my car radio when I moved here 16 years ago.

Once a station that thrived on diversity of opinion—from the likes of political strategist Susan Estrich on the left to the thoughtful Dennis Prager on the right—the station is now wall-to-wall conservative. KABC's current idea of diversity? A lineup that includes an African-American conservative, a gay conservative and, on the weekend, a lesbian conservative.

Meanwhile, I recall a president of a major label telling me two years ago that satellite radio and the Internet had displaced broadcast radio's significance, but guess what. Radio remains the shortest distance to a hit—proved again any time you see a big radio track like Bono's recent chart-topper "Irreplaceable" in vogue album sales.

And that label president? I'm not sure what he's doing now. ...
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td><strong>ARCADE FIRE</strong></td>
<td>The Notorius B.I.G. Greatest Hits</td>
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<td><strong>DAUGHTERY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AKON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GARY ALLAN</strong></td>
<td>Greatest Hits</td>
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<td><strong>RELIANT K</strong></td>
<td>Five Score And Seven Years Ago</td>
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<td><strong>NORAH JONES</strong></td>
<td>Not Too Late</td>
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<td><strong>FALL OUT BOY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ROBIN THICKE</strong></td>
<td>The Evolution Of Robin Thicke</td>
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<td><strong>JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE</strong></td>
<td>FutureSex/LoveSounds</td>
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Set earns a big jump (up 35 to No. 1 after its remarkable March 30 debut on the "American Idol" results show.

The film's No. 1 at the U.S. and Canada box office ($77 million: Week 9-11) and Album's $1,000,000 debut.

The debut of the CD's 

The Pussycat Dolls Present the Search for the Next Pussycat Doll

The Blast Parade

**The BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

Data for week of March 24, 2007 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 76

**THE BILLBOARD 200**

32.03.07

**CARRIE UNDERWOOD**

**JOSH GROBAN**

**BRIAN MCPHIE**

**ROBERT ATKINS**

**TobyMac**

**CIARA**

**RODNEY ATKINS**

**GARY ALLAN**

**BAO**

**ANTHONY RAP ANTHONY**

**JUSBOTTAK**

**GERRY LEW**

**THE BEATLES**

**THE RED JUMPFLAPPUS APPARATUS**

**THE BEATLES**

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

**BRAD PAISLEY**

**BIRDMAN & LIL WAYNE**

**NAS**

**ASHLEY TISDALE**

**JASON MILEN CARROLL**

**REGINA SPEKTOR**

**BLUE OCTOBER**

**VAN MORRISON**

**LUDACRIS**

**BOW WOW**

**TIM ELDER**

**LIL RICK**

**THE KILLS**

**TAYLOR SWIFT**

**SERGIO CANALE**

**BOW WOW D refers to releases on "American Idol" and "American Idol" pregnancies.

The "American Idol" pregnancy.

The album's 1,000,000 debut.

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*Note: The chart data is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, a leader in music sales and airplay research. This information is extracted from Billboard Magazine and is for the week ending March 24, 2007. Nielsen SoundScan collects and reports detailed music sales and airplay data for a wide range of music genres and formats. The charts are used by the music industry, media, and consumers to track the popularity of music.
For West's O.G.O.D. imprint, like Common and John Legend. Consequence cites a dispute with the label leading to the album's release (Real Talk, Billboard, Feb. 24). To jump-start the project, he made a series of in-store appearances March 15-16 in New York. Lending to the next issue, a kites brew as albums form Music, Soundchial, Rich Boy and Lloyd will vie for No. 1. —Raphael George
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**HITPREDICTOR**

- **This Week's Hitmaker:**
  - **ARTIST:**
    - **Title:**
    - **Label:**

- **Top 20 Hits:**
  - **Title:**
  - **Artist:**
  - **Label:**

**RHYTHMIC AIRPLAY**

- **Top 20 Hits:**
  - **Title:**
  - **Artist:**
  - **Label:**

- **ADULT R&B & HIP-HOP AIRPLAY**

- **Top 20 Hits:**
  - **Title:**
  - **Artist:**
  - **Label:**

For the complete chart data, visit [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz).
## HOT COUNTRY SONGS

### ARTIST/TITLE/Score (Genres)

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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Rank</th>
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<td><strong>RASCAL FLATTS: THIS MOMENT</strong> (Fly Away)</td>
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<td><strong>BIG &amp; RICH:</strong> <strong>AMERICAN RICKETY BUCKETY BASH</strong> (88.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PETE WILSON: ME</strong> (84.6)</td>
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<td><strong>RONNIE MILLER:</strong> <strong>MANY PEOPLE</strong> (96.3)</td>
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<td><strong>JOHN DALY:</strong> <strong>BRAZIL</strong> (90.3)</td>
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<td><strong>MASTER T TIPS:</strong> <strong>TIP</strong> (95.3)</td>
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### COUNTRY

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<td><strong>FREE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TRY</strong> (83.6)</td>
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<td><strong>THE BLACK CROWES:</strong> <strong>STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN</strong> (80.8)</td>
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<td><strong>ALAN JACKSON:</strong> <strong>WHERE THE HEART IS</strong> (91.8)</td>
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<td><strong>BARRY JENKINS:</strong> <strong>REMEMBER ME</strong> (80.8)</td>
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<td><strong>ERIK THORSEN:</strong> <strong>OH, CANADA</strong> (80.8)</td>
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<td><strong>MARK THERIOT:</strong> <strong>BAYOU</strong> (80.8)</td>
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<td><strong>JASON ALDEAN:</strong> <strong>HEARTiculture</strong> (80.8)</td>
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<td><strong>KEVIN COLSON:</strong> <strong>MIDNIGHT IN MOBILE</strong> (80.8)</td>
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<td><strong>KEVIN COLSON:</strong> <strong>MIDNIGHT IN MOBILE</strong> (80.8)</td>
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### HITPREDICTOR

#### R&B/COUNTRY DAILY UPDATE

Visit www.radioandrecords.com to sign up for your free daily Country Radio Blast.

RadioAndRecords.com

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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

High atop Hot Country Songs, Kenny Chesney logs his 11th trip to the summit with "Beer in Mexico" (32.7 million impressions). Chesney's No. 1 feat occurs in just 13 chart weeks, the quickest trip to No. 1 since George Strait's "Give It Away" also took 13 frames last fall (Billboard, Sept. 30, 2006). It is a quick three ascent since "Summertime" took 11 weeks to reach the top in June 2006. Speaking of Strait, the country kingpin bows at No. 42 with "Wrapped," his 104th new entry on that list. The third single from Strait's "It Just Comes Natural" album starts with 2.1 million audience impressions at 47 of the 123 country stations monitored by Nielsen BDS. While a lofty debut, "Wrapped" isn't Strait's highest entry on Hot Country Songs. In his 25-plus-year career, he achieved his highest bow to date when the title track from "It Just Comes Natural" opened at No. 30 on the Oct. 14, 2006, chart.

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**CHESNEY LOGS 11TH CHART-TOPPER**

---

**DATA PROVIDED BY**

**DRUMMAGAZINE**

See chart legend for rules and explanations. Yellow indicates recently tested title, * indicates true figures.

---

**Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data.**
### LATIN AIRPLAY

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<td>MANDA UNA SENAL</td>
<td>MANDA</td>
<td>SPAIN</td>
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<td>TU RECUERDO</td>
<td>POETRY MARÍN</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>Œ LO AGRADEZCO</td>
<td>POETRY MARÍN</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ó Ó LO QUE QUIERO</td>
<td>AGUSTÍN Y DIEGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>SI NOS QUEDARA TODO</td>
<td>JUANES</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMO YO NADIE TE HA AMADO</td>
<td>NANA</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>BENDITA TU LUZ</td>
<td>NANA</td>
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<td>QUE HICISTE</td>
<td>JUANES</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>TODO SE DERRUMBA</td>
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<td>LA LLAVE DE MI CORAZÓN</td>
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Data for week of MARCH 24, 2007
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<td>How to Save a Life</td>
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<td>The Creeps</td>
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<td>Lil Star</td>
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<td>Standing in the Way of Control</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Say It Right</td>
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### France Singles

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Release Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mauvaise Foi Nocturne</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Aux Arbes Citoyens</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Fais la Poule</td>
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<td>Les Cow-Boys</td>
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<td>Desole Pour Hier Soir</td>
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<td>All Good Things (Come to an End)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Deshabillez-Moi (Live)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Wilde Forever</td>
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### Italy Singles

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<td>Grace Kelly</td>
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<td>Ti Regaleiro Una Rosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shes Maddonna</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I Wanna Love You</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Suddenly I See</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Starz in Their Eyes</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Il Senso Della Vita</td>
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### Spain Singles

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<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shes Maddonna</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Al Final De La Palmera</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Original Rap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>El Cuarto De Las Ratas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Por La Noche</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Corazon De Hierro</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Another One Bites the Dust</td>
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### Denmark Singles

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Amy Winehouse</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jonas Feld &amp; Chatta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arcade Fire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dolly Parton</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Christel Alsis</td>
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### Portugal Albums

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<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feife Filh &amp; Funny Boys</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dolly Parton</td>
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<td>Thomas Helmi</td>
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### Germany Singles

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ein Stern (Der Deinen Namen Tragt)</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Say It Right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wenn nicht jetzt wann dann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Even Heaven Cries</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Sweet Escape</td>
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<td>Fairy Tale Gone Bad</td>
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### France Digital Singles

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<th>Release Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lips of An Angel</td>
<td>March 24, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Sweet Escape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Keep Your Hands Off My Girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Say It Right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>She's Maddonna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I Wanna Love You</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Suddenly I See</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Paralyzer</td>
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### Spain Digital Singles

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<th>Position</th>
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<th>Release Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Collillas En El Sueo</td>
<td>March 24, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shes Maddonna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Original Rap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>El Cuarto De Las Ratas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Por La Noche</td>
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### Portugal Albums

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIBS (Login a Latin)</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grace Kelly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What Goes Around... Comes Around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All Good Things (Come to an End)</td>
<td></td>
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### Greece Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mykonos</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Summer Wine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>O Eratos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To Theho</td>
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### United Kingdom Albums

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Official U.K. Charts CDS</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Sweet Escape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How to Save a Life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Creeps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Standing in the Way of Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Say It Right</td>
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### France Albums

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<tr>
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<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>La Paranza</td>
<td>March 24, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shes Maddonna</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I Wanna Love You</td>
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### Germany Albums

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deutschland</td>
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<td>Deutschland</td>
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### Australia Albums

<table>
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<th>Position</th>
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<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lips of An Angel</td>
<td>March 24, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Sweet Escape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Keep Your Hands Off My Girl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Say It Right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>She's Maddonna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I Wanna Love You</td>
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### Italy Albums

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<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Muzica</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>La Paranza</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shes Maddonna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Original Rap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>El Cuarto De Las Ratas</td>
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### Norway Albums

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All Good Things (Come to an End)</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rehab</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grace Kelly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What Goes Around... Comes Around</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>All Good Things (Come to an End)</td>
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### Portugal

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jose Afonso</td>
<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Arcade Fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tony Carreira</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andre Sardet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Confessions Tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 Taste</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>New Mickey</td>
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<td>O Eratos</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>To Theho</td>
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<td>March 15, 2007</td>
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<td>Summer Wine</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>O Eratos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To Theho</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Confessions Tour</td>
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### Top Christian Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casting Crowns</td>
<td>The Altar and the宗教</td>
<td>Sparrow</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jars of Clay</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Sparrow</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Camp</td>
<td>The Day After Yesterday</td>
<td>Sparrow</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting Crowns</td>
<td>Until the Whole World Sang</td>
<td>Sparrow</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting Crowns</td>
<td>The Altar and the MISSION</td>
<td>Sparrow</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
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### Top Gospel Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yariel</td>
<td>An Unshakable Faith</td>
<td>介质</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latorra Butler</td>
<td>Beyond the Rhythm of Me</td>
<td>介质</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>The Power of the Right Word</td>
<td>介质</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiant</td>
<td>The Power of the Right Word</td>
<td>介质</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony Brown &amp; Group</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>介质</td>
<td>2007-03-13</td>
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</table>

### Top Gospel Songs

- "Ain't No Need to Worry" by Casting Crowns
- "He Has Risen" by Casting Crowns
- "The Altar and the MISSION" by Casting Crowns
- "What About Now" by Casting Crowns
- "Until the Whole World Sang" by Casting Crowns

**Chart Legend**
- For rules and explanations, visit [www.americanradiohistory.com](http://www.americanradiohistory.com)
## ChartAlarms

### Album Charts

**Sales Data**
Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music retailers by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/Hip-Hop retail charts compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national sample of key stores that specialize in these genres.

- **Albums with the greatest sales gains this week:**
  - **The Shins**
  - **Chakara**
  - **Bright Eyes**
  - **Son Volt**
  - **B. G. and the Chopper City Boyz**
  - **Hellowoodge**
  - **SilverSlyncs Popups**

**Pricing & Configuration**
CD/CDQ prices are tagged fit or equivalent prices, which are provided from wholesale prices. 
- **$9.99** prices indicate only available on DeadDisc. 
- **$9.99** prices are for CDQ/DVD combo only available. 
- **$9.99** CDQ/DVD combo available. 
- **$9.99** LP is available. Pricing and vinyl LP is available on all charts.

### Singles Charts

**Radio Airplay Charts**
Compiled from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of airplay audiences impressions, computed by cross-referencing exact times of airplay with Arbitron listener data. The exceptions are the Rhythmic Top 40, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult Hits charts, which are based on total detections.

- **Songs showing an increase in audience (or detections) over the previous week, regardless of chart movement:**
  - **The Shins**
  - **Chakara**
  - **Bright Eyes**
  - **Son Volt**
  - **B. G. and the Chopper City Boyz**
  - **Hellowoodge**
  - **SilverSlyncs Popups**

**Recent Rules**
Songs are removed from the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs & Tracks for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Top 100 and Top 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 30 weeks and rank below 30. Titles that are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50 detections in audience, provided that they are not enough audience points to qualify. Songs are removed from the Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Adult R&B and Hot Dance Airplay charts if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50 for Modern Rock and Lathan 14 if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and below 10.

### Top Singles Sales Charts

The top selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail stores, mass merchants, and internet sales reports, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/Hip-Hop Singles, sales data is compiled from a national subset panel of Top 40 Hip-Hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

**Songs with the greatest sales gains:**

**Conventions**
- **CD Single available**
- **Digital Download available**
- **DVD single available**
- **Vinyl single available**
- **Mix Tape Single available**
- **CD Box Single available**

**Adjustments**
- **For charting purposes only, sales made through mail order, promotional, and other non-distribution sales are not included.**

### Ratings & Reviews

- **HR**
  - Indicates chart-eligible status in that particular format based on research data provided by Promosquad. Charts are ranked by ProMotes using multiple listeners and a nationwide sample of carefully curated music content.
  - Songs are rated on a 1 to 5 scale. Year-end results are based on weighted positives.
  - Songs with a score of 65 or more (75 or more for country) are judged to have hit HR Potential, although this benchmark number can fluctuate (see format based on the strength of available music). For a complete and updated list of hit songs with HR Potential, commentary, polls, and more, please visit www.hypefinder.com.

**Dance Club Play**
Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

**Tracks with the greatest club play increase over the previous week:**

### Award Criteria

**Album Charts**
- **Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)** certification for net sales of 1,000,000 albums (Gold), for net sales of 2,000,000 albums (Platinum), for sales of 5,000,000 albums (Diamond). 
- **Billboard** certification for net sales of 40,000 albums (Platinum), for sales of 80,000 albums (Gold), for sales of 160,000 albums (Platinum). 
- **BMI** certification for net sales of 40,000 albums (Platinum), for sales of 80,000 albums (Gold), for sales of 160,000 albums (Platinum).

**Music Video Sales Charts**
- **RIAA** gold certification for net sales of 50,000 videos for single videos.
- **RIAA** platinum certification for sales of 100,000 videos or 52 million sales in suggested retail price.
- **RIAA** platinum certification for sales of 100,000 videos or 52 million sales in suggested retail price.
  - **RIAA** gold certification for a minimum sale of 125,000 copies or a dollar volume of $1 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at retail for telecastly released programs, and of at least 50,000 units and $2 million at suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.

**DVD Sales/Movies & Sales/Videos/Rentals**
- **RIAA** gold certification for net sales of 50,000 units or $1 million in sales at suggested retail price. 
- **RIAA** platinum certification for sales of 100,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price. 
- **RIAA** gold certification for a minimum sale of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of $1 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at retail for telecastly released programs, and of at least 50,000 units and $2 million at suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.

**Comedy Albums**
- **RIAA** gold certification for net sales of 50,000 albums or $1 million in sales at suggested retail price. 
- **RIAA** platinum certification for sales of 100,000 albums or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price. 
- **RIAA** gold certification for a minimum sale of 125,000 albums or a dollar volume of $1 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or at least 25,000 albums and $1 million at retail for telecastly released programs, and of at least 50,000 albums and $2 million at suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.

**Top Independent Albums**
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Local officials and industry reps gathered Feb. 16 in front of the Staples Center in Los Angeles to release a new report conducted by the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp. identifying losses to local revenue, jobs, wages and taxes due to piracy, and to announce the formation of an intergovernmental task force on piracy and counterfeit goods. From left are RIAA GM of West Coast operations Joel Flatto, Universal artist Francisco Gomez and Sergio Gomez of Awend, Universal Music Group president and CEO of West Coast operations Joe Kennedy, city council member Wendy Greuel, Central City Assn. chairman Chris Essel, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, city attorney Rocky Delgadillo and city council member Jan Perry.

Villaraigosa, DeLuca. is on a U.S. tour in the United States that will keep him busy throughout the summer and into fall. From left are Senate majority leader Stirling Mcllwaine, RCA Music Group executive VP of marketing Richard Palimse, 19 Entertainment CEO Simon Fuller, BMG U.S. chairman/CEO Clive Davis, Villaraigosa, BMG U.S. president/CEO Charles Goldstuck, RIAA Records executive VP Shawn Richey and RIAA executive VP of AR&R Ashley Newton. PHOTO COURTESY OF LARRY BUSACCA

Awards lost totaling $3.3 billion for the entertainment industry last year. According to the survey conducted by music trade magazine Billboard and the Recording Industry Association of America, the music industry lost $1.2 billion in artist revenues, $1.2 billion in royalties, $650 million in promotion and $500 million in production.

In the U.S. for Oct. 12-18, recording artists selling more than 200,000 copies of an album or compact disc in one week will receive a gold certification. Any recording artist selling more than 500,000 copies of an album or compact disc in one week will receive a double-platinum certification. The certification process will work the same for albums and compact discs.

Taylor Swift became the first gold-certified artist for Big Machine Records and producer Nathan Chapman. From left are Big Machine president/CEO Scott Borchetta, Swift, Chapman and Billboard's VP of online promotion Andy Krause. PHOTO COURTESY OF JIMIN LOWE

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Blue Note CEO Bruce Lundvall receives a plaque recognizing his outstanding contribution to music education after speaking at Berklee College of Music's 4th annual Zil & Distinguished Lecture for Music. Business/Management, the school's most popular major.

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R.E.M.'S RICH PAGEANT

R.E.M. was back to its quartet glory March 12 at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony in New York with Bill Berry, retired from the band since 1997, playing drums for a three-song performance of "Begin the Begin," "Gardening at Night" and "Man on the Moon" with Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder. Fans have clamored for Berry's return to the band in any capacity, but bassist Mike Mills tells Track it's probably not going to happen. "At this point, no," he said. "Bill's very happy and content re: being retired. I'm really thrilled we could get him out of the house to do this stuff."

Instead, Mills, vocalist Michael Stipe and guitarist Peter Buck are throwing themselves into work on a new R.E.M. studio album, which will be produced by Jacknife Lee (U2, Snow Patrol). "The way we normally work is, Peter and I are overproductive," Mills said. "We tend to write a lot of music. Michael requires a little more time to focus on it. Musically, I'd say we're pretty far along. Lyrical, we're probably just beginning."

On the heels of 2004's "Around the Sun," which offered a dearth of rock songs, Mills says R.E.M. is "certainly aiming for a more live feel and maybe a little more upempo" approach this time around. "The trouble with making records is that you can plan all you want. But what we find is that the records tend to take on a life of their own, so it couldn't go in any direction."

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Pete Townsend pulled no punches during his March 14 keynote at the South by Southwest festival in Austin. When asked why he wound up reactivating the band after a 1982 farewell tour, he said, "I got back with the Who subsequent to the 1989 reunion tour to help John Entwistle with his money problems. It helped him briefly. But I think he spent most of the profit on cocaine." Entwistle, of course, died of a heart attack brought on by cocaine abuse in 2002 on the eve of a new Who tour.

LIFE IN MOTION

Motion City Soundtrack is recording its third Epiphany album at Electric Lady Studios in New York. The group is working on six songs with producer Ric Ocasek, after having tracked nine others with Fountains of Wayne's Adam Schlesinger and ex-Girls Against Boys' principal Eli Janney at Schlesinger's Stratosphere studio in the Big Apple. While in New York, the group took in a showing of "Point Break: Live," an off-Broadway recreation of the infamous bad Keani Reeves/Patrick Swayze film from the early 1990s. At said show, a member of the audience is picked at random to play Reeves' role ('Johnny Utah'), but on this night, the band's A&R man rigged the process so frontman Justin Pierre was chosen, much to the snickering delight of his bandmates. Track hears Pierre did just fine; after all, how hard is it to re-cite lines like "I've been to every city in Mexico. I came across an unclaimed piece of meat in Baja, turned out to be Rosie. I guess he picked a knife fight with somebody better?"

THAT'S RICH

Rich Boy's "Throw Some D's" is No. 4 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and No. 27 on The Billboard Hot 100, but the rapper tells Track he was no big fan of the tune when he first recorded it. "I never thought it'd actually even touch the chart," he says. "Since I didn't like the beat, which was produced by a guy named Butta and co-produced by Polow Da Don, I just decided to put the first thing I ever wrote right on the track, which is where the hook comes from. It was a situation where they put the record out already, so I didn't think they were going to get the next one in anyway. They put it out and it grew on me, and now I love the song."

BALLARD'S PROPHECY

Award-winning songwriter/producer Glen Ballard says he's seen the future, and the future is motion-capture animation. A la director Bob Zemeckis' "Polar Express" (2004) and this year's fall release "Beowulf," Ballard is working closely with Zemeckis and composer Alan Silvestri on songs for the film, which he's calling the end title. "Bob [Zemeckis] is always stretching the boundaries of the visual medium," Ballard says. "'Beowulf' takes motion capture to the next level. The film stars Angelina Jolie, John Malkovich and Robin Wright Penn. Only Wright Penn tries her hand at a song. (Sorry, Jolie is not going to add singer to her resume just yet.) One project is not enough for Ballard. He's just putting the final touches on Annie Lennox's highly anticipated new album, which will be released in the fourth quarter. "It's a very intense record," he says. "It's very personal to her. We spent a lot of time making sure the music was the way she wanted it." Also out this fall is a solo album from Tony Award-winning actress India Menzel of "Wicked" fame. Ballard co-wrote tracks and produced the album, which he says "goes way beyond Broadway." Ballard is particularly fascinated with the stage at the moment, and may just be working on a secret big project. "Recorded music has become a loss leader. It's terrifying," he says. "You can get music for free and, in a year, movies will be too. Performers and the live experience may be the future of the business. I'm certainly looking at Broadway as a place to go."

BOYS ON THE SIDE

After the 43-date Honda Civic Tour wraps June 10-11 in Chicago, Fall Out Boy's Pete Wentz tells Track the band plans to play some European festivals in the summer and then "go some places we've never been before, like Dubai and South Africa." The group also hopes to go to Uganda, where it works with the awareness group Invisible Children.

FRAC TURED PASSION

Jeff Danna and Mychal Danna are co-scoring "Fracture," which stars Anthony Hopkins and Ryan Gosling. Hopkins loves visiting them in the studio—he actually once considered his passion for music stronger than his passion for acting. An accomplished pianist, he scored his recent film "Slipstream."
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