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1 888-273-8990 qwest.com/integrated
5 HEART IN MOTION
Amy Grant jumps to EMI after three decades with Word.
9 Retail Track
10 Latin
11 Legal Matters
12 The Indies, Garage Rock
14 Globall
16 On The Road
17 Digital Entertainment
18 Q&A: Alan Tuchman

FEATURES
THE SUMMER PREVIEW
19 Hot Albums, Hot Tours, Hot Gear, And T.I.
SWEET SOUNDS OF SUMMER
A month-by-month look at 160 albums you'll be hearing about.
SUMMER TIME
With hits already emerging from his July album, T.I. is riding a wave of success that only he can stop.
RING IN THE NEW
Three hot handsets beating Apple's iPhone to market.
STAGES OF THE SUN
With more than 130 tours and festivals in the works, summer holds some serious shows.

MUSIC
RUSH HOUR
Trio returns after five years, but band has kept busy.
6 Questions. Linda Perry
35 Reviews

IN EVERY ISSUE
4 Opinion
37 Over The Counter
37 Market Watch
38 Charts
55 Marketplace
57 Backbeat: inside Track. Executive Turntable

Contents
Those Not Invited To Talk About Rap Spoke Louder Than Those Who Were

BY HILLARY CROSLEY

In mid-April, I, along with most of the urban music community, watched Oprah Winfrey’s two-day town hall piece, titled “After Imus. Now What?” And while I’m generally a Winfrey fan, I was skeptical.

As a black female hip-hop reporter, I do find some of what urban music talks about questionable. Hip-hop does use a large amount of “bitches,” “ho’s” and “n-words” and their use does affect the internal American-African social perspective. We, as the urban music community, should absolutely take responsibility for the images we portray.

However, using Imus’ racist comments as a catalyst to discuss black America coverage of itself is a stretch. Imus is not part of hip-hop’s audience. So it’s curious that now hip-hop culture, rather than the culture that created and supported Imus, is being held responsible. Maybe we should just blame the Rutgers basketball team for Imus calling them “nappy-headed ho’s.”

As for Winfrey, it’s no secret that she has had a longstanding gripe with hip-hop’s misogynistic lyrics—and hip-hop’s not fond of her, either. Everyone from 50 Cent to snoop dogg extraordinare Ludacris has complained about Winfrey’s refusal to cover America’s contemporary pop music. She’s interviewed MCs like Kanye West and Will Smith, but she’s never covered more aggressive platinum artists like 50 Cent or T.I. When Ludacris appeared on her show a few years ago to promote his movie “Crash,” ironically a film dealing with America’s racist undertones, she attacked him for all of hip-hop’s ills. The major media’s continued Ludacris attack only exasperates their ignoration of hip-hop.

Winfrey tried to quell some hip-hop mud-slinging last year by pumping R&B/hip-hop station WWPR (Power 105) New York; at the time, she proclaimed that she listens to 50 Cent on her iPod. However, in appearances won’t dissolve hip-hop’s ire if she doesn’t present fair and balanced hip-hop coverage. And last week’s panel didn’t display much of that.

Corolling Warner Music Group VP Kevin Liles, conscious rapper Common and Hip Hop Summit Action Network founder Ben Chavis on a panel, Winfrey teleconferenced from Atlanta girls from Spelman College—a school that picked Nelly, and his pornographic video “Tip Drill,” years ago. Instead of discussing Imus’ comments and what the African-American community can do regarding hip-hop’s degrading female images, the exchange became a full-on attack of the panel.

New York Daily News columnist Stan-

ton Gough called rappers “clowns” and the Spelman students—young people living in arguably the world’s hip-hop capital—proclaimed they didn’t listen to offensive hip-hop. Meanwhile Winfrey dismissed Simson’s notion that most rappers rhyme about their poor socio-economic environment. So in order for hip-hop to stop saying “bitch,” Winfrey said with a laugh, “we’ve got to stop poverty.”

The show was a disappointment on sev-
eral levels. Only one panelist, Liles, has power to directly promote any hip-hop acts. So Winfrey’s show was restless vent-
ing rather than a practical forum—town hall meetings usually include the mayor. Truthfully, only executives such as Interscope’s Jimmy Lovine, Warner Bros.’ Lyor Cohen or Def Jam’s Anmous “LA.” Read or maybe Jay-Z have the power to change hip-hop’s course. The music industry is a business, and corporations repeat financially successful formulas. Currently, the crack-selling, “bitch” and “ho” spewing rappers sell. Conventional wisdom says that if you don’t fit that formula as an artist, you won’t get signed or promoted.

But the largest disappointment was Winfrey misrepresenting hip-hop by dismissing the socio-economic status of many rappers and lumping all of hip-hop into a group. Winfrey’s opinions are law in millions of minds. To misrepresent hip-hop was careless and, perhaps worse, missed an opportunity to affect the change she says she so badly wants.

Mr. Simson’s statements that we are not. There was a fair system put in place by Congress that allowed webcasters to pay based on income. That has now been stripped away and the webcasting community on the verge of collapse because of it. Hopefully everyone will take the time to hear the reasons from both sides before forming an opinion on this very important issue.

John Parker
VP of Ad/Air dance promotion
Robbins Entertainment,
Owner, B91, The Rhythm of the City
webcast on Live365.com

FEEDBACK

WEBCASTER RESPONSE

I found John Simson’s opinion piece in the April 28 issue of Billboard to contain several inaccuracies. He makes the connection of CD album sales being down with the rise of Internet radio but

fails to note the astronomical rise of legal digital single sales. The marketplace has gone from an album-based model to that of a singles-based model. That has nothing to do with Internet radio and everything to do with consumer choice.

Mr. Simson also states that no station pays me, a station president, anything close to what they paid me, a station president, for the same role in 2006. The information is completely false. It is my position that we do not, nor have we ever paid, any station president a retainer.

The webcasting community is all for fairly compensating performers despite

WRITE US. Share your feedback with Billboard readers around the world. Send correspondence to letters@billboard.com. Include name, title, address and phone number for verification. Letters should be concise and may be edited. All submissions published will become the sole property of Billboard, which shall own the copyright in whole or part, for publication.

OPINION
HEART IN MOTION

Amy Grant Jumps To EMI After Three Decades With Word

NASHVILLE—After 30 years with Warners-owned Word Records, Christian music pioneer Amy Grant has left the roster, signing a deal with EMI Christian Music Group’s Sparrow label that will include her catalog as well as new music. Grant signed with Word in October 1976, one month shy of her 16th birthday. “I had a great run with Word and still love the people there,” Grant says. “But I feel like EMI is uniquely outfitted to do great things for the catalog. And I’ve known Bill Hearn [president/CEO of EMI Christian Music Group] and his father [Billy Ray Hearn, chairman of EMI Christian Music Group] for over 25 years. There’s a comfort level there.”

EMI has the Beach Boys, the Beatles, Bob Seger, Frank Sinatra and other major catalogs, and EMI executives say they look forward to working Grant’s music. “We really have a passion and mission for Amy’s catalog,” Bill Hearn says. “We’re going to repackage and remaster all 16 of her catalog titles and release them all together on Aug. 14 both physically and digitally as well as a suite of mobile products for the cell phone.

There’s never been a ‘Baby, Baby’ ringtone. Imagine how popular that could be.

“We are certainly honored by Amy’s confidence in us to carry on her musical legacy,” Hearn adds. “It certainly is a historical moment for EMI.”

In addition to the August release, EMI will release a new greatest hits package in October that will include at least one song from each of Grant’s previous studio albums. There will also be a special edition that will include a DVD of Grant’s music videos and other content. When news surfaced that Grant’s contract with Word was ending, there was much speculation as to whether she’d stay with the label or sign with one of the other three major Christian music companies. At one point, there were rumors she might sign with Sony BMG’s Provident Music Group because Grant is managed by Nashville-based firm Blan- ton, Harrell, Cooke and Corzine, whose other major client, Michael W. Smith, is on Provident’s Reunion label.

In the end, EMI won out. “I just think we presented a marketing plan that really resonated with Amy’s team,” Hearn says. “That’s why we got the deal. We have a unique situation here at EMI CMG in that we have a strong partnership with EMI Music’s catalog marketing division.”

Grant is able to take her catalog with her to EMI because she has always owned her master recordings.

CHRISTIAN BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

DAVID UPSETS GOLIATH

Indies Shine At Dove Awards

Amy Grant is considered instrumental in moving Christian music beyond church songs and Southern gospel, by introducing sounds that could cross over to a young pop audience. The Gospel Music Assn.’s 38th annual Dove Awards recognized a diverse stylistic scope of acts who have walked through the doors that Grant opened.

“Now in every style of music, there’s someone singing about Jesus,” says Mark Hall of Casting Crowns, which won the group and pop/contemporary song of the year. Indie artists competing against majors won key categories as well. Aaron Shust took home three major awards—new artist, songwriter and song of the year for “My Savior My God.” Shust records for Atlanta-based indie Brash Music, distributed by Word. Slanted Records band Decemberadio won rock album of the year.

“Radio no longer cares where a record comes from,” EMI Christian Music Group president/CEO Bill Hearn says. “If it researches well and impacts their audience, then they are going to play it. They don’t care whether it comes from an independent label or a major.”

The Doves were held April 25 at Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry House. Chris Tomlin was the night’s big winner, netting six Dove awards, including artist of the year and male vocalist, both categories he had also won last year. For a complete list of winners, see billboard.com. -DEP
**DELUXE DISPUTE**

A Copyright Snag For Beyoncé's Special Edition

Columbia Records is facing the prospect of having to pull the new deluxe edition of Beyoncé's "B'Day" from stores amid a dispute over publishing rights. But rather than recalling the release altogether, multiple sources say Columbia parent company Sony BMG plans to manufacture and distribute a new version of the deluxe edition, minus one track featuring the challenged copyright.

At the heart of the controversy is the track and accompanying video "Still in Love (Kissing You)," a new reworking of Des'ree's 1996 song "I'm Kissing You." The Royalty Network, a publishing company administering the copyright on behalf of Timothy Attack, co-writer of the song, alleges that Sony BMG didn't receive its permission to use "I'm Kissing You." It is pressing the matter by filing a copyright infringement complaint with the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York—a move that has led to a temporary halt of distribution of the albums.

Sony BMG, Sony BMG Sales Enterprise, Beyoncé, her B-Day Publishing company and EMI April Music are all named in the suit.

A preliminary injunction hearing is set for May 4, which could require Sony BMG to permanently stop distributing the copies of "B'Day—Deluxe Edition" and the special Wal-Mart version "B'Day—Deluxe Edition/Video Anthology," and perhaps even remove unsold discs from stores. As part of the temporary cease-and-desist, "Still in Love" has been yanked from digital services and its video has been pulled.

**Ticket Time Bomb**

The Intricacies Of Ticketmaster's Lawsuit With StubHub

Ticketmaster's suit against StubHub and its parent eBay, which alleges intentional interference with Ticketmaster's contractual rights and other charges, seems like a time bomb that's been ticking for some time.

The suit centers around, but is not limited to, the Lynyrd Skynyrd/Hank Williams Jr. Rowdy Frynds tour. StubHub has been offering "official premium tickets" to the tour, which Ticketmaster claims violates its exclusivity contracts with venues.

While StubHub and Ticketmaster are in the secondary or reselling game, this suit is more about primary sales to the general public. "The issue in this case is these tickets posted on StubHub for a tour were tickets that were made available to the general public, and in these particular instances, we had the exclusive right with our clients," Ticketmaster president/CEO Sean Mioriarty says. "It's very obvious to us that they're selling seats in the venue directly to the general public. It doesn't get any more complicated than that."

The legalities may be more complicated, however. A source familiar with the situation says the tickets are in fact being purchased by Vector Management (management for Skynyrd and Williams), with all applicable Ticketmaster service fees paid, and then provided to StubHub to sell, with profits going to charities such as MusiCares. An argument could be made that this creates a de facto secondary market, but the legal hair-splitting will center around how the courts perceive the initial purchase of the tickets by Vector.

While StubHub head of business development Chuck LaVallee could not specifically address details of the Ticketmaster suit, he did confirm that "my day is with Vector, Skynyrd and Hank Williams." LaVallee continues, "The artist is the seller of the tickets on our site. We never own inventory. We're a platform for the artist to access the secondary market."

The StubHub lawsuit revolves around the Rowdy Frynds tour, featuring LYNYRD SKYNYRD.

Artist sales estimates that Sony BMG has shipped several hundred thousand copies of the deluxe editions to date. The editions, which include the top 10 hit "Beautiful Dark," a duet with Shakira, have sold 214,000 copies since their release at the beginning of April. Nielsen SoundScan reports.

Both retail and legal sources suggest that the matter can still go away for the right price. But retail sources say Sony BMG seems disinclined to settle. The company has put the word out that the current version of "B'Day—Deluxe Edition" is no longer available for order and that it plans to soon issue a replacement. The cost is expected to be minimal to Sony BMG, because most of the product that had initially hit stores has been sold and the company needed to manufacture more units anyway, sources say.

**UPFRONT**

**BRIAN GARRITY**

**RETAIL**

**BEST BUY EXPANDS HD RADIO LINEUP**

Best Buy, which has partnered with the HD Digital Radio Alliance and iBioDigital, has become the first national retailer to make HD radio products available throughout its national chain of 852 stores. The HD Digital Radio Alliance has previously partnered with RadioShack, Circuit City,Sharper Image and Wal-Mart to provide consumers with HD radio products in select stores.

**GRACENOTE, YAHOO LAUNCH LYRICS SERVICE**

Yahoo Music has teamed with Gracenote to debut a legal, industry-backed music lyrics web site. At launch, the lyrics to about 400,000 songs are available, with more being added on a weekly basis. Since last summer Gracenote has been busy aggregating rights to songs lyrics from all the major publishing bodies in North America and creating a complex database and payment scheme. Gracenote's deal with Yahoo is not exclusive, and the company expects to power music lyric search products for other services in the near future.

**OTHER MUSIC DIGITAL STORE OPENS**

Independent New York retailer Other Music has launched a digital download store. The site, which the retailer says is "in house," is offering digital rights management-protected MP3 sales from what it says are "hundreds of labels and thousands of artists." Among the indie labels featured on the site on launch day are Beggars Banquet, Domino, Mush Records, Paw Tracks and Thrill Jockey Records. Pricing is variable and so far the site is enabled only for North American sales.

**TOURING**

**RAY WADDELL**

**Ticket Time Bomb**

**The Intricacies Of Ticketmaster's Lawsuit With StubHub**

The StubHub lawsuit revolves around the Rowdy Frynds tour, featuring LYNYRD SKYNYRD.
If you’ve heard The Veronicas, The Butterfly Effect, Powderfinger or Pete Murray you’ve experienced the kind of music that convinced Billboard to name Brisbane, Australia one of five global music hotspots to watch in 2007. Brisbane is spawning some of the world’s best new talent with attitude. Hear it. See it. Sign it. Come to Big Sound in October and grab it with both hands.
A Hip-Hop History Lesson

With Rap Under Fire Again, Will Industry Fallout Repeat Itself?

May be this sounds familiar: Hip-hop, coming off a year of declining sales and bemoaning a lack of new superstar talent, sees its problems further mount as a firestorm of media controversy swirls around its lyrical content and video imagery.

Major label groups are accused of profiteering from racial, sexual and socio-economic exploitation. With a variety of watchdog organizations on the attack and fears of legislative intervention looming, the recording industry attempts to police hip-hop content in an effort to find the "delicate balance between artists' rights to express themselves and the legitimate concerns of parents and corporate responsibility." Complaints by artists of the potential for a chilling effect on creativity follow.

Only the year isn't 2007—it's 1995. And Warner Music Group (WMG)—which had already been taking heat for years for so-called "gangsta rap" releases by Tupac Shakur and Snoop Dogg, and hardcore releases like Ice-T's Body Count via its Interscope/Death Row unit—sees the issue come to a head in Hip Hop with a pending release from Snoop crew members Tha Dogg Pound.

As the current public debate over racially charged and sexist content in hip-hop rages (see opinion piece, page 4), it is important to remember that controversies in a genre that specializes in controversy are cyclical and to be expected. But should media scrutiny of the issue intensify, it is also noteworthy that such situations can also have serious implications for the power dynamics in the music business, depending on how companies react to public pressure.

In the last major go-around on hip-hop content, now more than a decade old (though certainly there have been numerous other smaller controversies since), the issue wouldn't go away until WMG parent Time Warner made the fateful decision to rid itself of its 50% stake in Interscope Records—a move that has haunted WMG ever since.

What it will take to quiet the current dispute remains to be seen. In a bid to mute the genre's current critics, the Hip-hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), a group led by Def Jam Records co-founder Russell Simmons and NAACP head Benjamin Chavis, is recommending that the recording industry and broadcasters voluntarily break and/or delete the words "bitch," "hoo" and the "n word" from songs. The recommendation follows a widely reported meeting of the leaders of the hip-hop community in the wake of the Don Imus controversy.

Of course, radio and MTV already police such content to a large extent, and labels often release "clean" and "explicit" versions of hip-hop and rap albums. But HSAN CEO Chavis says more can be done. He argues that there is no consistency or standard used in editing clean versions of records.

"It's not banning," Chavis says. "It is deleting, bleeping and removing those from clean versions, which the music industry is supposed to do anyway." The Rev. Al Sharpton, for his part, has pledged to buy stock in companies that release and broadcast hip-hop, in order to put additional pressure on the industry to better police lyrical content.

That approach has precedents as well. In 1995, C. Delores Tucker, chairman of the National Political Congress of Black Women, helped xpek pressure on Time Warner and WMG by attending a shareholders meeting and denouncing the company's support of hip-hop.

The current flap over hip-hop comes at a sensitive time for publicly traded companies like WMG, which has made building its urban music efforts a priority under the leadership of CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. and U.S. recorded music CEO Lyor Cohen, and is attempting to pursue a merger with EMI. Should the scandal intensify and spook investors, that could cause a dip in the company's already fragile stock price, which in turn could cause problems for its consolidation strategy, analysts say.

But Hilary Rosen, former chairman/CEO of the RIAA and now an industry consultant, says there is a key difference between earlier hip-hop content controversies she helped guide the music business through and the current one: In the current crisis there is no one record company or artist that has emerged as a focal point of criticism.

Still, Rosen warns that hip-hop remains an easy target for politicians and culture critics and that its ability to avoid the threat of regulation and further media criticism will hinge on its ability to lead the conversation by asking hard questions about itself. So far labels are yet to announce support for HSAN's recommendations or suggest other measures. And no further meetings involving label heads have been scheduled.

"Those who want to batten down the hatches and wait for this to blow over can achieve that. Because it will," Rosen says. "But those who want to see new progressive values move into this area will view this as an opportunity."

Additional reporting by Mariel Conception.

Latin

By Leila Coob

Small Labels Win Big

Indie Artists, New Styles Dominate Billboard Latin Awards

In a year awash in reggaeton and pop, the big winner at the 2007 Billboard Latin Music Awards was a romantic Mexican tango with both youth and adult appeal.

Mariano Barba, who records for small indie Three Sound Records, and who was a virtual unknown until last year, took home four awards including Hot Latin Song of the year for "Alfio del Triunfo." Barba's win underlined the continued importance of the regional Mexican market, which still comprises more than 50% of all Latin music sales. But it also highlighted the possibilities open to new labels and new acts at a time when the Latin music industry is undergoing dramatic changes.

Indeed, no big acts dominated this year's winners list, which often reflected alternative marketing and unconventional styles. Following Barba in sheer number of wins was pop phenom RBD, which won three awards. Beyond that, nearly a dozen acts took home two awards each—including maverick urban bachata group Aventura, which records for another indie, Premium Latin.

The Billboard Latin Music Awards aired live April 26 on the Telemundo network from the BankUnited Center in Miami. Finalists and winners are determined by their performances in the Billboard charts. For a complete list of winners, see billboard.com for more Billboard Latin Music Conference coverage, see page 10.
Breaking The Ice In The Windy City

Usually when the industry heads into another NARM annual convention—this year’s is April 29-May 2 at the Hilton Chicago—I fill this space with the issues expected to be discussed at NARM.

For that story, see last week’s issue (April 28).

However, since it’s been about a decade since the last time I wrote a primer on how to comport oneself at the NARM gathering, I thought I would share my vast experience once again for all the newbies who now attend.

As anyone who has met me knows, Retail Track is a social animal, who shines brightest at conventions. But I realize that not everybody is blessed with the ability to pontificate. I mean, with the gift of gab like I am. So here are a couple of conversation movers.

The new realistic greeting at NARM is to high-five old friends who you haven’t seen in a while, thus acknowledging that—in these trying times of consolidation, with thousands of jobs downsized and many familiar faces no longer around—both of you are still in the game, enjoying a steady flow of income and are damn happy about it.

After you get done catching up on the fate of mutual friends who are missing in action, you can always fall back on the old standby. “When do you get it in?”

But eventually you are going to need something of substance to hold up your end of the conversation. In the past, I would have filled this column with enough rumor, gossip and innuendo to titillate even the most boring cocktail parties, but either I am off my game or nothing overly dramatic is happening out there. After all, how many times can we talk about the fate of EMI? None of the chains or accounts appear to be up for sale or, thank God, in trouble. And I can’t even get the goods on the few label deals I am chasing.

Regardless, I do have a couple of suggestions to keep conversation flowing and hope growing. First off, Tower Records founder Russ Solomon may not be attending the convention, but that’s because he is home in Sacramento, Calif., preparing to open his first new store, which will operate under the logo RS. And speaking of supermarkets, you know that Virgin Entertainment Group North America is looking for locations in New York and Los Angeles, right? But that’s not the only company checking out those markets.

Didier Pilon—the chairman of online retail merchant Caiman, which recently purchased the Tower.com site, the Tower Records DBA and the company’s intellectual property for $4.2 million—says that not only does he plan to relaunch the Tower site, but he plans to open brick-and-mortar supermarkets within nine months in places like New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. “Why not,” he says. “Nobody else is doing it anymore.”

If that conversation is too upbeat for you, and you’d rather be touting doom and gloom, don’t forget that everyone’s radar is tuned to whether the big boxes are reducing inventory due to declining music sales. Fueling that very worry, sources say Wal-Mart has just made about $50 million in product returns to labels.

Some of that figure comes from stores where music space is indeed being reduced because the category is under-performing for the chain, but sources say the reduction will only be 15%-20% of SKUs in a small percentage of stores. Furthermore, Wal-Mart also appears to be cutting depth of inventory—i.e., taking fewer copies on initial buy-ins of new releases. But, sources say, those moves combined against Wal-Mart’s overall music market share will likely result in only a single-digit percentage reduction in space.

OK, so between this column and my story last week, you are now armed to hold forth in the convention hotel bars, and if you can’t figure out which one will become the schmoozatorium, that’s nothing that can be taught here. Meanwhile, another story last week highlighted which shows to attend at night. You should also seriously consider checking out an off-site show featuring Bayside Tosser and Four Letter Lie (that local label) Victory Records has scheduled for Sunday night.

But as the convention draws to a close, don’t forget to besow the ultimate parting accolade showing your concern and respect for your esteemed colleagues. “When ya headin’ back!”
Focus On The Future
Latin Conference Keys On Piracy, Teens And New Business Models

What keeps executives in the Latin music industry up at night, just as much as their mainstream counterparts, can be summed up in the title of a particularly animated panel at this year’s Billboard Latin Music Conference.

At the “What Teens Want” panel, Alex Pels, GM of panel sponsor mun2, presented the results of a survey of Latino teens that showed that 63% of them reported having bought a CD within the last three months. Nearly half also reported using peer-to-peer networks.

The teens freely admitted to illegally downloading music, while exasperated adults tried to explain to them the ethical implications of doing so.

“The people in this industry are earning a living creating things you take for free,” one audience member said. “How do you advise them to educate your generation to pay for music again?”

Piracy, both physical and online, continues to disproportionately plague Latin music, with 30%-40% of the U.S. Latin and 60%-70% of Latin-American product estimated to be pirated, according to the RIAA and international trade group IFPI.

“If we could only monetize 10% of what’s being downloaded, our financial blues would be rosy,” Universal Music Latino president John Echevarria said at the conference’s RIAA-sponsored anti-piracy panel.

While Echevarria touted the trade group’s suing young people as an effective deterrent, new business models have sprung up to cash in on what Billboard panel teens said they do pay for—live shows, mobile entertainment, artist-endorsed products and albums by artists they love packaged with extra content.

How to engage the desire for music while sustaining the business via mobile, digital, touring and anti-piracy initiatives was the central topic of discussion at the conference, held April 23-26 at Miami’s InterContinental Hotel. A number of models were discussed: Event promoter Ruptus also manages acts such as merchant-happy RBD and has moved into social networking; Larry Gold, owner of venerable New York club S.O.B.’s, is starting a label and management arm; and digital distributors, like the independent Online Distribution Alliance and Latin company View Premium, are hooking up artists with mobile deals.

On the social networking side, MySpace announced its launch of two new Spanish-language portals, MySpace en Espanol and MySpace Latinoamerica, which will prominently feature Latin artists. ElHood.com is branching out from a social network that shares ad revenue with artists and labels to one that powers official fan sites for bands like Maná.

Indeed, despite accusations from a major-label executive at the conference that illegal downloads were “killing the music” by making it unprofitable, the creative spirit was alive and well.

Regional Mexican artist Mariano Barba wowed a pop-oriented Miami crowd at BMI’s songwriting panel with an acoustic performance of his bracingly intimate romantic banda.

And during the keynote Q&A, in his first U.S. interview in a year, Colombian pop-rock superstar Juanes spoke about not compromising his Latin roots. "'Camisa Negra' is a mix of what I am—rock and Colombian rhythms," Juanes said of his global hit song. "It gave me an opening internationally . . . but after a while I realized my music is from Medellin, and it's not going to change."

“If I could turn back time, I would study music,” he told the packed conference audience, which included many Berklee College of Music students. “So you couldn’t be in a band place.”

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda
**Legal Matters**

SUSAN BUTLER sbutler@billboard.com

**Will EMI Securitize Its Publishing?**

How The Financing Deal Works

Headlines in London are reaching Shakespearean proportions as the press monitors every move of EMI Group chairman Eric Nicoli. "EMI Unveils 'Poison Pill' Plan to Raise Cash From Back Catalogue," the Independent wrote recently. This latest brouhaha is over EMI Group's April 19 trading update. EMI announced it is examining potential "securitization" of its music publishing assets to help reduce its net debt of about £910 million ($1.9 billion) and to "optimize its balance sheet," U.K. media reported. "A 'call' said the move could act as a poison pill for Warner Music Group's attempted acquisition of EMI. But several finance industry sources, who deal extensively with entertainment assets, say those analysts' statements are not necessarily true. The impact of a securitization on a WMG bid will depend on how EMI structures the securitization and what WMG wants. In a securitization, a company pools a group of similar assets, like the rights in its publishing catalog. The company sells the assets at their present value to a newly created entity called a special purpose vehicle (SPV). If the assets in the SPV are sufficiently large and diverse with a good cash flow, a securitization firm raises cash by selling "structured debt" securities to investors—most often institutional investors like pension funds, banks and insurance companies. Cash flow from the assets, like publishing royalties, repays the debt plus interest by a specified date.

Unlike a bank loan secured by publishing assets, a securitization is a true sale of the assets. Since it is a sale, the SPV is "bankruptcy-remote," which means that creditors of the company cannot reach those assets. Only the SPV's investors, called debt holders, can foreclose on the assets, and only if the principal and interest are not paid.

Miller explains that for some of the intracies, I called on J.P. Morgan Securities' entertainment industries group managing director and group head John Miller, who works with film studios, and VP Jason Somerville, who works with music companies.

The typical structure for an SPV is for a company to have the right to control the assets and later buy them back for the debt outstanding at the time, Somerville says. The risk for a company is that the SPV's assets wouldn't generate enough revenue to pay the debt holders. A securitization can raise larger sums of money for a company than a bank loan could provide, at lower financing costs, with a longer payback period plus other benefits.

Miller explains that a securitization, a firm like J.P. Morgan works with credit rating agencies for an investment-grade rating on the securitization. If the SPV can get at least a BBB credit rating, Miller says, it can buy a monoline insurance policy. This type of insurance guarantees payment to the debt holders, which can bump the rating to AAA.

"In the bank market, we may go out to traditional corporate and commercial banks, but there's only so much appetite that market," Somerville says. But if we can get a certain credit rating, then we have access to a much larger investment community, like funds that otherwise would not be able to—or would prefer not to—invest in traditional bank products.

Also, a securitization can move the assets "off-balance sheet" (i.e., from the company's to the SPV's balance sheet), replacing the assets with a cash equivalent. The liability to repay appears only as a debt of the SPV. This is helpful for a company that may believe it has too much debt on its balance sheet to attract certain investors or to raise more funds.

One music industry attorney says he believes securitization could be a good move if EMI wants to sell its record division. The group could use the money it receives to clean up the negative balance on the record company's books, and then sell the division for more money because it's being sold without debt.

And even if a company like WMG wants to acquire all of EMI rather than just the record division, securitization isn't necessarily that poison pill. With the right structure to an SPV, whoever might buy EMI could buy back the assets. It would simply cost more, Somerville says—add an additional percentage point or two on the debt as an early payment penalty.

For help explaining some of the intricacies, I called on J.P. Morgan Securities' Entertainment Industries Group managing director and group head John Miller, who works with film studios, and VP Jason Somerville, who works with music companies.
Catalog Scratch Fever
Retail Pricing Programs Target Indie Titles

When it comes to stocking catalog, retailers say they can't get it cheap enough, and labels say they can't find any shelf space for it—especially outside the nation's top indie stores. The demise of Tower, of course, doesn't help. To potentially ease a label's pain, online retailer Amazon is making a pitch to indepies to fulfill the void left by the loss of the chain, albeit for a limited time and with a somewhat curated program.

Last week Amazon placed about 150 indie titles on sale for $9.99 as part of its “Go Indie” program. Another 700 or so albums not on sale are also featured in Amazon's promotion, which showcases titles from 30 labels and runs through May 7. Amazon spokesman Sean Sundwall says it is inspired by the company's success with similar sales of classical music.

Amazon is hoping to not only reach the indie fan, but also the “general music lover who may be looking to check out this indie music fad that's going on,” Sundwall says. Labels featured include Alligator, Epitaph, Koch, Matador, Rykodisc, Touch & Go and Ultra.

And here are a few of the titles available for $9.99 in Amazon's sale: the Shins' "Chutes Too Narrow," Neko Case's "Blacklisted," "Senses Fail's "Still Searching," Stint's "Spiderland" and the Drive By Truckers' "A Blessing and a Curse." Sundwall says the labels did not have a say in the 150 titles placed on sale.

"That the range the consumer wants to pay. This is good to see," says Dreese. "Yet to get there, it might eventually mean labels and publishing rights holders will have to re-examine their businesses. If the Fontana promotion proves to be a long-term success, it could be a step toward that happening."

"I'm not an advocate overall of ultra-cheap pricing," says Dreese. "But the heavy lifting here is to get an entire industry to see that a lot of deep catalog simply needs to come down. I think there's an awful lot of managers and publishing companies leaving an awful lot on the table just by sticking to their guns and an old-school model. The market has moved a lot. There's a lot of price depreciation out there, and I think it's all for good reason. It gives consumers good choices."

And for the labels that shirk at the low promotional cost in such a program?

"Whether the individual titles make money or not, all I can say is that this particular artists involved are certainly going to get a lot more exposure," says Dreese. "In terms of life of hand branding, it can't be a wholly bad thing."

Some wild publishing stuff going on. Sony/ATV, a joint venture of Sony and Michael Jackson, just added the catalog of legends Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller to their already impressive roster that includes the Beatles, Bob Dylan and Hank Williams.

You may remember a few of the pair's obscure tunes like "Standing By Me," "Jailhouse Rock" and "Hound Dog."

This should make Marty Bandier, new head of Sony/ATV, the happiest boy in Pub Land—give or take Lawrence Mestel, head of Primary Wave Music Publishing, which just bought Julian Lennon's piece of his father's writing royalties, that publishing Sony/ATV mostly has. Everyone I've talked to about this has been really surprised and happy; Julian has been taken care of a little bit by his father's estate.

Meanwhile, Vivendi Universal is about to become the world's biggest publisher by buying BMG Music Publishing from Bertelsmann, which shouldn't be confused with Sony BMG Entertainment or Sony/ATV for that matter.

You following this nonsense? It doesn't really matter anyway, it's all real estate. None of this has anything to do with music, since publishers have no legal obligation to do anything with songs once they buy them.

When publishers started, and actually worked for a living, their job was to support and encourage writers, then connect songs to an appropriate singer or TV advertiser or whoever. Now they mainly sit back and collect money from either automatic annual revenue streams or some ad agency music fan or film supervisor happily picking their songs.

Lance Freed from Rondor/Universal is the only exception I know. He came up the old-school way and never changed. His company may have been absorbed by one of the faceless titans, but he knows every song by every writer he's ever signed and his people are actually working existing catalog, while he continues to encourage songwriters to work together and write, write, write. He knows no matter what may be trendy this week or next, eventually, if the music business is going to continue to exist, it's going to need to create music. This has become radical thought. You know, songs. Written by geniuses like Leiber & Stoller.

See you on the radio.

COOLEST GARAGE SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE/LABEL</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>SAILOR'S SWEETHEART</td>
<td>THE LEN PRICE 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HERO OF NINETEEN EIGHTY THREE</td>
<td>PEACHFUZZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAPON OF CHOICE</td>
<td>BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MY HEART IS BEATING</td>
<td>MARY WEISS</td>
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<td>FREE AND FREAKY</td>
<td>THE STOOGES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANCING ON THE LIP OF A VOLCANO</td>
<td>NEW YORK DOLLS</td>
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<td>IN THE MODERN WORLD</td>
<td>JESSE MALIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN EYES</td>
<td>THE APPLES IN STEREO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECAUSE I'M AWESOME</td>
<td>THE DOLLYROTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUBY</td>
<td>KAISER CHIEFS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Extended deadline for entries is MAY 16, 2007**

**GOSPEL METAL HIP HOP PUNK JAZZ COUNTRY EMO ROCK RAP WORLD POP BLUEGRASS MAMBO SALSA R&B FOLK JAM CRUNK ACOUSTIC A CAPPELLA ALTERNATIVE LATIN SOUL BLUES SINGER-SONGWRITER FUNK FLAMENCO**
From Queensland To The World
Australian State Invests In Music Exports

MELBOURNE—With two multiplatinum albums at home, Brisbane-based singer-songwriter Pete Murray looks like a healthy export prospect. But the Sony BMG Australia artist’s Musexpo showcase in Los Angeles is not the result of label efforts. This is government business.

Murray is one of several artists benefiting from his home state Queensland’s proactive stance toward exporting creative talent—a policy that has already delivered overseas deals for a string of local acts.

State funded trips are enabling Murray, rock trio Transport (Shock Records) and jazz/hip-hop artist Tyrone Noonan (Jellyfish/MGM) to showcase at the Musexpo A&R conference. They are the third group of acts to have such funding. Queensland’s government says it spent a total $113,000 Australian ($93,360) on previous expeditions.

“I could’ve gone to Musexpo by myself to hold discussions,” Transport’s Brisbane-based manager Leanne deSouza says, “but this support means I can rely on attention from the showcase.”

DeSouza is seeking U.S. co-management plus licensing for Transport’s album “The Inner Chimp,” while Murray’s manager Stuart McCalloch of Amplife Management says the artists is scouting a North American deal.

Noonan sees an opportunity to explore U.S. label-management deals plus U.S. co-writes. “I’m impressed with the (government’s) enthusiasm,” he says.

Transport, Noonan and Brisbane rock band Dead Day Sun will also play the state-organized Queensland Expatriate Awards event May 8 in New York, hosted by state premier Peter Beattie.

According to Beattie, creative industries “add $1.1 billion Australian ($907.5 million) in exports to the state economy each year.”

Since 2004, Queensland has grouped its arts, trade and international departments together in initiatives to boost those exports by $1 million Australian ($820,500) annually. Queensland’s minister for state development John Mickel says that target was passed in fiscal 2005-06, adding that the U.S. market is an overseas priority, as “success [there] often opens doors in other markets.”

In Australia, Queensland has set an example for other states through years of progressive policies encouraging live music and artist development. Other initiatives include funding Brisbane’s Big Sound conference each October.

However, Sydney-based music analyst Phil Tripp notes that while recently, Queensland had lagged behind other states on music exports.

“West Australia, New South Wales and South Australia have long been export-savvy,” he says.

The L.A. showcases April 29-May 2 are part of a deal between the government and Musexpo’s L.A.-based parent—artist development agency A&R Worldwide—to market Queensland acts internationally to labels and broadcast/media companies.

To date, that has brought several acts overseas deals. Vocalist Micky Nason of MGM signed hard rock band Shifter says the A&R Worldwide tie-in fostered a global management deal with L.A.-based Boo Management. Hip-hop act Resin Dogs (Hydrofunk/EMI) had a track placed last year on the videogame “FIFA World Cup” after the publishers, Electronic Arts, saw the band at Musexpo. And MGM-distributed pop act the Boat People’s manager Rick Chazan says clothing company Nautica has licensed a track by the band for a U.S. TV ad campaign this summer.

Government funding also helped Transport and five other Queensland acts score U.K. licensing deals. Birmingham, England-based independent label MSR Music’s managing director John Hemmings was invited to Big Sound 2006, where, impressed by the Brisbane talent, he licensed albums by Transport, Brindle, Dr Octopus, Intercooler, Giants of Science and Mary Trembles. All have “a certain English quality I knew would work in the U.K.,” says Hemmings, who is planning a late 2007 multi-act “Brisbane Invasion” U.K. tour, funded by Queensland’s government.

The first physical release, distributed by Code 7/Plastic Head, will be Transport’s single “The People Have Spoken” (May 14), followed by a four-act compilation album in June.

The government’s efforts are not confined to English-speaking markets. Brisbane singer-songwriter Nik Phillips’ 2006 album, “Songs from the 4th Floor” (Raw Productions/MGM), will appear in China this summer through Guangdong-based label Pacific Audio and Video—a deal initiated by Queensland’s Trade & Investment Office for Hong Kong and Southern China.

daughter of leading jazz saxophonist McCoy Mrubatu.

A few weeks later, Cape Town-based jazz pianist/session musician Melissa van der Spuy was held at gunpoint as robbers ransacked her home.

And despite government claims that crime levels are dropping, its own statistics show a daily average of 50 murders, 150 rapes and 35 car hijackings in a country with a population of only 47 million.

“Crime’s impact has been dramatic for us,” says Carl Hoffman, owner of Pretoria-based music events company Oppikoppi Productions.

“We’re having to rent a lot more on-site security. We’ve had a few ‘incidents’ in the recent past.”

Oppikoppi organizes several of South Africa’s outdoor festivals and in 2006 booked British singer-songwriter Lloyd Cole, U.S. folk artist Michelle Shocked and hip-hop poet Saul Williams.

“We’re now adding more security to the traveling parties of international acts,” he says.

The crime wave has not yet visibly discouraged overseas artists. Cape Town-based Big Concerts managing director Attie van Wyk says he promoted 22 international acts...
in 2006 "without incident." Small to midsize live venues are most at risk from violent crime, says Maniwa Chinoomugi, GM of Johannesburg-based promoter Truusmanic, which booked Gerald and Eddie Lever during 2006. "We're reluctant to take cash at the door these days," he says.

Gary van Zyl, owner of Johannesburg's Tanz Cafe, adds that he has just installed closed circuit TV cameras at his 200-capacity venue. "We're in a shopping area where the food store was [recently] hit by armed robbers," he says, "so we are not taking chances.

South African artists are also responding. Van der Spuy's loss led fellow Cape Town musician Shannon Mowday to organize a February benefit gig at the city's Foyges Railway House where the award-winning jazz saxophonist was joined by the pianist and other local artists under the banner "Musicians Against Crime."

Noting that she finds travelling home at night from gigs "scary," Mowday adds, "I love my country, but the level of crime means I have to develop a career beyond its borders." Recently, she has been training in Australia, where she recorded her self-released 2006 debut album "African Eyes" with Aussie trumpeter James Morrison.

Other artists have penned material inspired by current events. Rhythm Records veteran singer/songwriter Koos Kombuis is performing, "Reconciliation Day," inspired by Petersen's death, at live shows, while Sony BMG artist Biaan Malan has written the cutting "As Die Kar Nog Daar Is" ("If the Car Is Still There") for a forthcoming album by popular satirical trio Radio Kalahari Orkes.

Leading Afrikaans artist Steve Hofmeyr has also taken a public stance against crime, joining protesters outside a courthouse in the coastal town of Scottburgh in January during a rape trial. "When it comes to the kind of crime that has let us paralyze," he says, "the government needs to tighten up their act."

South Africa will host the 2010 soccer World Cup tournament, and with that deadline looming, president Thabo Mbeki recently promised increased police force numbers to "further intensify the struggle against crime."

However, there is widespread skepticism as to how quickly government will deliver. "The collective will may be there," Mowday says, "but that doesn't help us in the day-to-day."

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When it comes to the kind of crime that has left us paralysed, the government needs to tighten up their act."

--STEVE HOFMEYR

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The Zodiac redevelopment follows investment in AMG during March by concert giant Live Nation and Ireland-based Gaiety Investments, which jointly acquired 56% of the company.

--Andre Painne

>>>NAPSTER GOES OVER-THE-AIR IN JAPAN

Napster Japan says it will launch an over-the-air music subscription service through a joint venture with Tower Records Japan. The service is being launched in cooperation with Japan's biggest mobile carrier NTT DoCoMo--Tower Records Japan's biggest shareholder--and will provide DoCoMo customers with wireless access to Napster's streaming and downloading services.

No launch date has been announced for the service, which will be fully integrated with Napster's PC-based subscription service. The Napster OTA service will be available to DoCoMo's iMode subscribers via a soon-to-be-released 904i series of handsets. DoCoMo's customers will have access to OTA subscription functionality as an extension of the existing Napster to Go service at no additional cost.

--Steve McClure

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**Gateway to China**

Touring Acts Increasingly Stop Off In Shanghai

China West, launched by ADAM WILKES, ROBB SPITZER and STEVE SYBESMA (most) staged this year's Shanghai show by KENNY G (top).

That situation affects even major international operations--U.S.-based Live Nation and local state-owned Oriental Pearl Group teamed for the Feb. 12 Grand Stage Waters show, for example.

The cost of sourcing appropriate pop/rock sound systems is also hefty for venues like Grand Stage, which were designed for classical performances. As a result, corporate sponsor-ship is often seen as vital (Billboard, Jan. 27).

Yet Spitzer insists, "It's not true that a show has to be sponsored to be profitable." He says China West's sold-out February 2006 Brown show, at the 1,500-capacity Yungfeng Theater, was not sponsored, nor was the March 2007 Marley show. In contrast, Kenny G's March Yungfeng show was sponsored by Chrysler's Chinese joint venture BBDC.

"While we'll continue to seek sponsorship for larger events," Spitzer says, "as the market matures it will increasingly be possible to organize unsponsored events on the standard ticket revenue model."

Whereas Emma, for example, sets premium prices--the most expensive ticket for the Stones' April 2006 Shanghai show was 3,000 yuan ($310)--Spitzer claims China West keeps ticket prices within the 130 yuan-1,280 yuan ($19-$165) range.

Hamilton notes that Split Works organized Sonic Youth's Shanghai and Beijing performances in April without corporate support. "Even if we'd sold out both shows, [we'd] lose $10,000," he says. "We have to do everything ourselves. The overhead is massive."

However, promoters will accept occasional short-term losses in the interest of growing the market long term.

Spitzer says it will take time before acts touring China include dates in cities other than Shanghai and Beijing. "The challenge is the economics of those places," he says, "with lower salaries and tighter spending."

As a result, Spitzer thinks Shanghai will increasingly attract Western acts. "Most [artists] we've dealt with make their normal rate," he says. "Pretty much all the bands we've brought have had a good time--and wish to come back to perform in China again."

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**BOXSCORE Concert Grosses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST(S)</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>GROSS/PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>Promoter</th>
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<td><strong>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, HAR HAR SUPERSTAR</strong></td>
<td>45,329</td>
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<td>38,801</td>
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<td><strong>JOSH GROBAN, ANGELIQUE KIDJO</strong></td>
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<td>23,072</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**UPFRONT**

**On The Road**

RAY WADDELL rwaddell@billboard.com

The Meaning Of Free

Ozzfest going out as "Freefest" is a bold move to retain value for fans, regardless of the motivation of its producers, Live Nation and Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne.

It’s only 20-some dates, after all. But what about the bands? Dave Kirby, president of TKO, the agency for several bands on Ozzfest, has been outspoken about the "freefest" model (Billboard, Feb. 24) and its impact on artists. One of Kirby's bees began at the press conference that first announced Ozzfest. "There was a person in the crowd who stood up and asked, 'Are the bands being paid?'" Kirby says. "Frankly, I felt that the appropriate response to that would have been, 'We do not discuss our financial arrangements with the artists. It's like discussing your paycheck, buddy. How much did you make this week?'"

But Kirby says that was not the response. "They just had to say, 'The bands aren't going to get paid.' What does that do is set up a stigma, because even if a band wants to help and has the wherewithal to be able to substantially reduce their fee, they still are stigmatized by the fact that they went out and played for free. How do I sell that to a promoter in October or November for money when the promoter can turn to me and say, 'Didn't this band just play for nothing for two months?' It erodes the band's value and their ability to make a living."

Besides, for a band with production, paying for free means losing money. "What is free? Free is not zero," Kirby says. "If you take a band and send them out, they have expenses, rentals, buses, trucks, all of that has to be paid for. If the promoter is looking to pay zero, then in fact the band is investing. If the promoter were paying expenses and the band is effectively breaking even, well, they are for free."

Word is that some of the bands on Ozzfest are being financially compensated. "Although I'm not privy to all the deals being made, I am aware of most of them," Kirby continues. "When you look at the bill, the bands you would expect to be compensated are being compensated. The other bands would not normally be compensated anyway—these are bands that would be on the second stage of Ozzfest playing for free. And in many cases a check would be written by their record company to be on that tour."

TKO bands on Ozzfest include Hatebreed, Nick Oliveri and Mondo Generator. Anka, Circus Diablo, 3 Inches of Blood and In This Moment, more than any agency. So which TKO bands are being paid and how much? "I am not going to discuss their fees, and I never would. I wouldn't listen to your question, it is for the truck. They have a different picture than a band like Hatebreed, who has been on the road for many years and has legitimate operating expenses, like any other band of their stature, and has established value with talent buyers."

Live Nation president of North American music Jason Garner puts it this way: "We're not paying any of the acts a salary for participating, but we have had a couple of the larger acts who we think really help us draw fans to the venue come to us and show us their running costs and we have agreed to make a contribution toward their expense of being on the road."

To be fair, Garner and Live Nation never ruled out compensation, at least to me. "The idea was always for promoter and bands to tighten their belts so we could give a free show to the fans, but it was never for a large band who can sell a bunch of tickets to get hurt in the process," Garner says.

Garner does not believe playing on Freefest could hurt future paydays. "I think that in the case of Ozzfest that going out and giving a free concert to 20,000 people a night can only be a positive thing for everyone involved," he says. "Any time that a promoter and a band makes that kind of commitment and statement to the public, that can only be career-enhancing. And if a buyer doesn't know what's going on with Ozzfest this year, they live on Mars."

And, as was always the plan, bands are playing for money on Ozzfest off-days. But Kirby still doesn't seem 100% sold on Freefest. "I still think it's a reaction to the fact that they have been raped and pillaged by the acts on the top end of the mainstream bill over the past three years, and I think they should have said 'no more often,'" Kirby says. And he's worried about no-shows and the likely chance that free tickets will end up for sale on the secondary market. "I'm also concerned about what do you do next once something's free," he says. "Are we going to pay the crowd to show up next year?"

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Digital rights management (DRM) technology has reached a fork in the road.

Road A represents the status quo—locking music with proprietary software that requires devices to have the corresponding key to play or even recognize the files, yet restricts users from transferring tracks to different devices.

The future of road A requires a solution to the current interoperability problem. As long as music purchased from sources other than iTunes won’t work with the iPod, the outlook of the lock-and-key DRM model is limited. While a number of efforts are underway to address interoperability, none are yet available for commercial use, and Apple doesn’t participate in any of them.

EMI chose to circumvent the interoperability issue by omitting DRM altogether. That move—combined with the assumption, rightly or wrongly, that other labels are close behind—has taken the wind out of an already-founding DRM interoperability movement.

“It’s got to throw a little bit of uncertainty into … what the next generation of DRM is,” says Mark Kirstein, digital entertainment analyst with iSuppli.

Venture capital support for companies developing DRM technology or interoperability initiatives is already drying up. If the other major labels follow EMI’s lead and go DRM-free before efforts to solve the interoperability problem succeed, the music industry is unlikely to ever return to a DRM environment as we know it.

“If you set the precedent that in the digital world you’re not using DRM, then you’ve sealed your fate for the next 20 years,” Kirstein says. “It’ll be very difficult to put the cat back in the bag.”

Besides, few industry insiders believe that a perfect DRM solution—one that protects content from piracy and gives consumers the freedom to use their music as they like—will ever be developed. And Apple would never adopt it even if it were.

“You might as well get working on cloud storage,” says Michael Robertson, founder of AnywhereCD and a vocal opponent of DRM technologies.

“We have a decade of development that says it doesn’t work. It’s not like people haven’t been trying this for ever and ever.”

Which brings us to road B. Even if every record label were to abandon DRM and sell unprotected digital files, they’ll still expect to make money by doing so. In a world where music is unrestricted, the definition of DRM would have to change from a means of control to a means of monetization.

With no DRM restrictions on digital music, consumers are guaranteed to share it virally through e-mail, blogs, peer-to-peer (P2P) services and social networking sites.

The trick is to turn this behavior into a revenue stream, with advertising leading the charge as a potential solution.

Those betting on this future are looking to technologies like watermarking and fingerprinting as the DRM of tomorrow. Watermarking technology inserts digital files with an ID tag that can be used to track ownership. From an enforcement perspective, one could trace leaked files back to the original infringer and take action accordingly.

Fingerprinting technology, such as that offered by Audible Magic and Snocap, allows online services to identify what kind of content users are currently uploading or accessing, and then set certain rules around it. Such a service could include anything from preventing the upload outright, to limiting the length of playback to 30 seconds, to requiring the service provider to pay a percentage of advertising revenue to the copyright holder for each time the file is accessed.

Of course these technologies only provide the tools needed to extract advertising revenue from music services. Individual providers will still have to implement the technology, and record labels will still have to negotiate business terms with them.

But if there’s any doubt over the momentum behind these “new school” DRM systems, just follow the money. In April, Intent Mediaworks, a P2P distribution platform provider and strong supporter of watermarking technology, was launched with $10 million in venture-backed funding led by Greycroft Partners, among others.

Attributor, a startup fingerprinting technology firm, also landed $10 million in funding this past December, led by Sigma Partners.

Which road the other music labels take remains to be seen. Some DRM experts, such as Bill Rosenblat of GiantStep Media Technology Strategies, say there could even be a schism among the major labels where some follow road A and others road B until the market eventually picks the winning strategy.

Regardless, it’s clear that EMI’s gamble doesn’t simply risk the future of an individual label. An entire industry is hanging in the balance.
Alan Tuchman

There is always a place for the physical CD because there is still a certain part of the population that is tied to the CD.
Summer begins with a Beatle, a reggaetón superstar and country music’s most off-the-wall duo. Paul McCartney, Daddy Yankee and Big & Rich lead the release slate for the first Tuesday of the summer retail season (June 5), which the industry is hoping will right the course of dramatically slumping CD sales. New albums from a number of platinum acts are on the docket in the weeks ahead, from Toby Keith and 50 Cent to Bon Jovi and Velvet Revolver, while indie favorites like Spoon, Interpol and M.I.A. also have releases on the horizon. Wild cards include projects from Mandy Moore, the reunited Smashing Pumpkins and Wu-Tang Clan and a Bad Brains album produced by the Beastie Boys’ Adam Yauch. Billboard guides you through the best albums hitting the marketplace in the next three months.

May

### R. Kelly

**"Double Up" (Jive, May 29)**

R. Kelly is arguably the most ubiquitous name in urban music, rarely taking more than two years between albums and popping up with alarming regularity as a guest on other artists’ records. And even as the "Trapped in the Closet" saga from his 2005 album "TP.3 Reloaded" finds new life (another DVD, containing chapters 13-22 of the story, is due July 24), Kelly has more music to share. "Double Up" includes the single "I’m a Flirt" that features T.I. and T-Pain (not to be confused with Bow Wow’s own version), plus guest turns by Young Jeezy and Young Dro on "Blow It Up," Snoop Dogg on "Freaky in the Club" and Ludacris on "Rockstar." Kelly says the project is mostly uptempo, especially compared with "TP.3 Reloaded," but boasts a handful of slower tunes.

### Daddy Yankee

**"El Cartel: The Big Boss" (El Cartel/Interscope, June 5)**

Daddy Yankee is Latin music’s top-selling artist, and he wants to extend his dominance with "El Cartel: The Big Boss." His first studio album under his joint-venture deal with Interscope will not be a crossover into English, but it will have tons of mainstream appeal. Yankee worked with producers like Scott Storch and Will.i.am, as well as Luny Tunes and Nelly from his native Puerto Rico. Guests include Akon and Pergie, who appears on the English-language remix of the single "Impacto" and in that song’s video.

### Rihanna

**"Good Girl Gone Bad" (Def Jam, June 5)**

The young Barbados native has Jay-Z in her corner on "Umbrella," the first single from her third album since 2005. Ne-Yo penned and guest on intended second single "I Hate That I Love You," which samples New Order’s "Blue Monday," while Stargate produced dance-friendly cuts like "Don’t Stop the Music" and "Shut Up and Drive." Producers Tricky Stewart and J.R Rotem and writers Terius "Dream" Nash, Makeba Riddick and Frankie also lent a hand on the album.

June

### Paul McCartney

**"Memory Almost Full" (Hear Music, June 5)**

The Beatle great ended a decades-long association with Capitol to sign with Starbuck’s new Hear Music label, for which “Memory Almost Full” will be the maiden release. The follow-up to 2005’s Grammy Award-nominated “Chaos and Creation in the Backyard” was produced by David Kahne and finds McCartney playing most of the instruments. “A lot of it’s very personal to me,” McCartney says of the project, which is led by the upbeat, reflective track “Ever Present Past.” The songs are in some ways a little bit retrospective. Some of them are of now, some of them hark back to the past, but all of them are songs I’m very proud of.”

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### Chris Cornell

**"Carry On" (Suretone, June 5)**

After abruptly leaving Audioslave early this year, Chris Cornell moved right along to craft "Carry On," his first solo album since 1999’s "Euphoria Morning." The 14-track set was produced by Steve Lillywhite and includes a cover of Michael Jackson’s "Billie Jean" (which Cornell has been known to play live) as well as "You Know My Name," the theme to the recent James Bond film "Casino Royale." "At least half the record really is just kind of getting up in the morning and chasing whatever that original inspiration is—that is the first thing I think of," Cornell says. "I’ve written a lot of songs that are unlike anything I’ve ever done."
Queens of the Stone Age
“Era Vulgaris” (Interscope, June 12)
“...It has taken me 15 years to find guys that want to skip the B5 and make something that is really gestalt—it’s the sum of the parts,” frontman Josh Homme says of QOTSA bandmates Troy Van Leeuwen’s and Joey Castil’s contributions on “Era Vulgaris.” As usual, the group delivers songs jam-packed with fast, powerful riffs (“Sick, Sick, Sick” featuring the Strokes’ Julian Casablancas) and psychedelic, boogie-ish rhythms (“I’m Designer”). On-again/off-again contributor Mark Lanegan returns for “River on the Road,” while QOTSA also reworks “Make It Wit Chu,” which Lanegan previously sang on volumes nine and 10 of Homme’s long-running Desert Sessions releases. “That’s just a song that really puts the finishing touches on the shape of the record,” Homme says. “And also, it’s the best song about screwing that I’ve ever been able to play on.”

Nine Inch Nails’ Trent Reznor guests on the title cut, but you won’t find it on the album. “It will be released in sexier ways, but that doesn’t mean it will be played in strip bars around the world,” Homme says.

Enrique Iglesias
“Insomniac” (Interscope, June 12)
After a three-year hiatus from the recording studio, Enrique Iglesias returns with this English-language effort. First single “Do You Know (The Ping Pong Song),” penned by Sean Garrett, went to radio April 16. Iglesias wrote or co-wrote most of the tracks on the album, which also features material by Johnna Austin, Steve Morales and Max Martin. “Insomniac” will contain Spanish-language versions of four tracks, including the single, whose Spanish title is “Dinelo.”

Toby Keith
“Big Dog Daddy” (Show Dog Nashville, June 12)
Love him or hate him, Toby Keith remains a cornerstone of country music. He reigned in 2006 as the most-played country artist on Nielsen BDS-monitored stations—and that’s for the fourth straight year. In a first, Keith produced “Big Dog Daddy” himself. Lead single “High Maintenance Woman” has been climbing the charts, and this issue sits at No. 5 on Hot Country Songs. The full track list is to be announced, but such songs as “Love Me If You Can,” “Get My Drink On,” the title cut and the Fred Eaglesmith-penned “White Rose” have been confirmed.

Fabolous
“From Nuthin’ to Somethin’” (Def Jam, June 12)
After splitting with Atlantic and taking an extended break from the public eye, Fabolous has a new home at Def Jam for his 11th album. “From Nuthin’ to Somethin’.” Young Jeezy guests on first single “Diamonds,” while Ne-Yo handles the hook on the Timbaland-produced “You Make Me Better.”

Bon Jovi
“Lost Highway” (Island/Mercury Nashville, June 19)
Country audiences embraced these Jersey boys with last year’s No. 1 Hot Country Songs hit “Who Says: You Can’t Go Home,” and on “Lost Highway,” Bon Jovi gives the love right back. Producer Dann Huff (Rascal Flatts, Keith Urban) worked on six cuts, while Big & Rich and LeAnn Rimes turn up as duet partners. Jon Bon Jovi says he got inspired to write only after realizing, “I didn’t like what I heard on the top 40. I had nothing in common with any of that stuff. But when I listened to Keith Urban, Gary Allen and Big & Rich, I heard the same kind of stories I’ve been writing for 25 years. I thought, ‘I get it: Write a record, go back to your storytelling days and say something about yourself.’ ”

Brad Paisley
“5th Gear” (Arista Nashville, June 19)
Brad Paisley introduced “5th Gear” with the single “Ticks,” a chuckle-inducing tale of backwoods lust and its associated dangers. With its recent No. 40 debut on The Billboard Hot 100, “Ticks” became the highest entry by a solo country male artist since Lee Greenwood’s “God Bless the USA” began at No. 16 in September 2001. In the coming weeks, look for Paisley at the face of a high-profile campaign for Hershey’s, which is sponsoring his summer tour.

The White Stripes
“Icky Thump” (Third Man/Warner Bros., June 19)
Bagpipers and trumpet work from a previously unknown Latin musician are among the new sounds to be heard on the White Stripes’ “Icky Thump,” the duo’s first album under a new deal with Warner Bros. The title cut/first single reintroduces the Stripes with classic rock riffs and an unhinged Jack White singing about immigrants and cleaning the bathtub. There is no piano on “Icky Thump” despite the instrument’s significant presence on 2005’s “Get Behind Me Satan,” though several tracks are punctuated with synths and Wurlitzer. Cuts like “100 M.P.H. Torrenal Otputour Blues” and “Catch Hell Blues” are a return to the garage blues that underscored the band’s earlier records, while bagpipes and a rollicking Scottish dance structure are applied to “Prickly Thorn, But Sweetly Worn.”

Mandy Moore
“Wild Hope” (Firm Music, June 19)
“No one’s out there desperately waiting for my next album,” Moore told Billboard earlier this year. “I have so much fun doing film stuff, and I feel really fulfilled creatively doing that right now. So I have to do the music way. It means too much to me. I can’t just go into the studio and make a crappy pop record to please somebody else.” Moore did quite the opposite on “Wild Hope,” an appealing folk-pop confection likely to appeal to fans of Norah Jones, Michelle Branch or Corinne Bailey Rae.

The Chemical Brothers
“We Are the Night” (Astralwerks, June 19)
The Chemical Brothers have one foot planted in the clubs and the other in a more intimate house party on their sixth album, “We Are the Night.” Upstart U.K. rock act The Klaxons appear on the interner rave-up “All Rights Reversed,” while indie rock outfit Midlake guests on the downtempo closer “The Pillo Won’t Help You Now.” Other highlights include classic Chemical Brothers bangers like “Burst Generator,” the sleeky minimal electro jam “Saturate,” the dirty pop of first single “Do It Again” and the amusing “Salmon Dance,” with rappers Fatlip and “Sammy the Salmon” teaching “fun facts” about the titular fish. “There will always be a place on our album for music we can play in dark, sweaty places,” group member Tom Rowlands says.

50 Cent
“Curtis” (Shady/Aftermath/Interscope, June 26)
A cavalcade of stars are onboard for the New York rapper’s first album since 2005’s “The Massacre,” including Dr. Dre, who mixed the first single, “Straight to the Bank.” Also look for production from Timbaland and Eminem, plus guest appearances by Akon, Justin Timberlake, Mary J. Blige, Robin Thicke and Nicole Scherzinger from the Pussycat Dolls.

Kelly Rowland
“Ms. Kelly” (Columbia, June 26)
Kelly Rowland’s sophomore album has changed titles twice and release dates three times since last year. But “Ms. Kelly” is finally ready to make its proper debut June 26, and the former Destiny’s Child member assures she has “put her heart and soul into this record.” First single “Like This” features Eve, and Snoop Dogg is found on second single “Ghetto.” “This album is very different from the last record. It was so alternative, and this record is urban,” Rowland says. “That’s where I started, and that’s what feels natural to me.”

Bad Brains
“Build a Nation” (Megaforce, June 26)
As Billboard first revealed in March, the new Bad Brains album not only reunites the group’s classic lineup of singer H.R., guitarist Dr. Know, bassist Darryl Jenifer and drummer Earl Hudson, it features production by the Beasties Boys’ Adam Yauch. “I kind of felt like I knew the way
they should sound, because I grew up listening to them,” Vauch says. For Jennifer, “Build a Nation” is a chance “to show fans who we are. Bad Brains has always experimented, forging ahead in terms of riffs and searching for unique ways to approach rock music, but we said this time we’re going to take it back to the way we used to kick it.”

DJ Drama

“Gangsta Grillz” (Grand Hustle/Atlantic, TBA)

Before DJ Drama’s infamous Jan. 16 arrest, he was simply 2006’s Just Mixtape DJ of the year. Now, he’s the poster child for unlicensed music and the industry’s mysterious relationship with mixtape culture. And though police confiscated the hard drive containing “Gangsta Grillz” while raiding his office, Drama has used his arrest as a platform to garner international support for the project, which he rerecorded in three weeks. First single “Taking Pictures” combines verses from Jim Jones, Rick Ross, Young Jeezy, T.I. and his own Affiliates Music Group MC, Willie the Kid. The album’s other features are longer than a Christmas list, with everyone from Cassidy, Javonille, Jadakiss, Bun B, Pharrrell, the Clipse, Lil Wayne, Paul Wall, Slim Thug and the elusive OutKast popping up.

July

Velvet Revolver

“Libertad” (RCA, July 3)

“I think ‘Contraband’ was a great record,” bassist Duff McKagan says of Velvet Revolver’s hit ’04 debut. “It was the right one for us to make as our first record. But ‘Libertad’ really goes way beyond that musically. I don’t think any of us could have made a better record at this point in our careers.” First single “She Builds Quick Machines” has a “kick-ass guitar riff, a great chorus, a really big bridge and a great Slash solo,” according to McKagan, but he points to “Last Flight” and “She Mine” as examples of the band’s new experiments. The former is “maybe like 70% first Rod Stewart solo record in sound. It’s almost radio-friendly, without our intending it to be,” while the latter is “a fun pop ditty.” The band credits producer Brendan O’Brien for taking charge of the 30 songs it had written, following a stint working with Rick Rubin that didn’t pan out. “He was playing guitar with us. I’d never worked with a producer who could play anything, and he can play everything well,” McKagan says of O’Brien.

The Smashing Pumpkins

“Zeitgeist” (Martha’s Music/Reprise, July 7)

It’s 1993 all over again on the opening portion of the reconstructed Smashing Pumpkins’ first album since 2000, which is being released off-cycle on July 7, a Saturday. Big, loud rockers like “Doomday Clock,” “Tatantula,” “Orchid” and 7 Shades of Black” back to the heyday of grunge thanks to frontman Billy Corgan’s de-tuned guitar assaults and the pounding drums of Jimmy Chamberlin. A more nuanced attack is evident on “Never Lost,” which has vibraphone and organ tucked into the mix, while the bass-driven “For God and Country” offers shades of Depeche Mode-style synth-rock. The album closes with the mostly synth-powered “Pomp and Circumstance,” as Corgan’s multitracked vocals take on an angelic effect.

Common

“Finding Forever” (Geffen, July 10)

The Chicago rapper teamed with hometown hero Kanye West on his 2005 album “Be,” which opened at a career-best No. 2 on the Billboard 200. West is back in the producer’s chair for “Finding Forever,” which Common says is the product of trying to make “something that was special and timeless.” West produced first single “The People” and “Black Mayb,” while trading lines with Common on “Southside,” during which he points out, “Your fly is open, MCFly.” The long-lost D’Angelo turns up on “So Far To Go,” which J Dilla produced before his death last year from lupus. As usual, there are some left-field guest appearances, (Common previously worked with Stereolab’s Laetitia Sadier and John Mayer.) Lily Allen appears on the light-hearted “Driving Me Wild,” which references how a MySpace page can have an unhealthy influence on an attraction to the opposite sex.

Spoon

“Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga” (Merge, July 10)

Just a few months after releasing Arcade Fire’s instant smash “Neon Bible,” Merge has its album of the summer with veteran indie rock act Spoon. Songs like the curiously spelled “Don’t You Evah” and “Finer Feelings” have all the swagger, sticky melodies and soul that Spoon fans have come to adore, but the band indulges in a more experimental approach on the tense opener “Don’t Make Me A Target” and “The Ghost Of You Lingers,” which is marked by pounding piano chords and ominous, echoing vocal accoutrements. Elsewhere, horns provide a new accent on the power poppin’ “You Got Ye Cherry Bomb” and the bouncy “The Underdog,” while “My Little Japanese Cigarette Case” even has a flamenco guitar solo.

Interpol

“Our Love To Admire” (Capitol, July 10)

After shifting more than 1 million copies combined of its first two albums for Matador, Interpol jumped to Capitol for its third effort, produced by Rich Costey. The album begins with the funeral, nearly six-minute “Pioneer to the Falls,” featuring Jim Morrison-esque crooning from frontman Paul Banks, and wraps with another unusually ambient piece, “The Lighthouse.” Hints of soul creep in on the spaced-out “Rest My Chemistry,” and “Pace Is The Trick.” The band is on more familiar footing with tracks like first single “The Heinrich Maneuver,” a kiss-off to an ex-love now residing on the opposite coast, the tense “No I In Threesome” and the relentless “Mammoth.”

They Might Be Giants

“The Else” (Idéalwild/Rounder, July 10)

They Might Be Giants have spent the past few years releasing albums and DVDs aimed at young kids, but the quirky duo returns to their rock roots on the Dust Brothers-produced “The Else.” “We got loops from them early in the process, a huge collection of their delightful drum loops. That’s how we started a bunch of the tracks,” TMBG principal John Linnell says. “Then they came to New York and helped us re-assess stuff we’d written and deemed on our own.” “Withered Hope” and “Upside Down Frown” were written over the aforementioned drum loops, while “Take Out The Trash” got the Dust Brothers treatment later in the process. Another song, “The Cap,” sports “a loop of a stadium rock crowd clapping along rhythmically,” Linnell says.

Ulrich Schnauss

“Goodbye” (Domino, July 10)

This German artist came out of nowhere in 2003 with a brand of electronica that was eaten up by fans of Underworld and My Bloody Valentine alike. For “Goodbye,” Schnauss spent months trying to mix new songs with upwards of 100 different tracks playing simultaneously. “Soundwise, I wanted to take the whole labeling idea to the next level,” he says. “There’s far more stuff happening in these tracks than on the previous two records.”

Best Of The Rest

The Summer Lineup Also Includes:

- Christi Michele’s “I Am” (Def Jam)
- Matthew Dear’s “Asa Breed” (Ghostly International) // Shellac’s “Excellent Italian Greyhound” (Touch & Go)
- Various artists’ “Monterey Pop—40th Anniversary Edition” (Shout Factor)
- Dizzee Rascal’s “Maths + English (Xl)” (Poison, “Posion’d!” (Capitol))
- Cari Thomas’ “So Much Better” (Bun B) // The Light Burns’ “Cruel Melody” (I Am: Wolfpack/Adrenaline Music) // Afghan Whigs’ “Unbreakable: A Retrospective” (Rhino) // Larry the Cable Guy’s “Morning Constitutions” (Warner Bros. Nashville)
- Bryan Ferry’s “Dylan-esque” (Virgin) // Fridge’s “The Sun” (Tectonic Residence) // Savath & Savalas’ “Golden Pollen” (Anti) // The Clash’s “The Best of the Clash” (Legacy) // Talib Kweli’s “Ear Drum” (Blacksmith/Warner Bros.) // Lil Wayne’s “Tha Carter 3” (Universal) // Rooney’s “Calling the World” (Cherrytree/Interscope) // Pega Young’s “Young” (Warner Bros.) // Kenna’s “Make Sure They See My Face” (Interscope) // Dashboard Confessional’s “Duck and Summer” deluxe edition (Vagrant) // Straight Light Run’s “The Needles the Space” (Universal) // John Coltrane’s “My Favorite Things: Complete Coltrane at Newport” (Impulse) // Deborah Cox’s “Destination Moon” (Decca)
- Vue’s “Notebook Paper” (Joe) // The Price of a Million’s “Better Days” (Universal) // Robert Forster’s “Grant McLennan, Intermission—The Best of the Solo Recordings 1990-1997” (Beggars Banquet) // Bondo De Role’s “With Lasers” (Domino) // Mala Rodriguez’s “Malamarismo” (Machete) // Miley Cyrus’ “Hannah Montana 2: Best of Both Worlds” (Walt Disney Records) // Mýa’s “Liberation” (Universal) // Ja Rule’s “The Mirror” (Universal) // Ryan Adams’ “Easy Tiger” (Lost Highway) // Lifehouse’s...
The Flaming Lips

"U.F.O.s at the Zoo" DVD (Warner Bros., July 10)

"I'm telling you, it's a local legend around here," Lips frontman Wayne Coyne enthuses of the September 2006 show in the group's Oklahoma City hometown that makes up this live DVD release. "Everybody ended up bringing like five friends to this thing. Amid the rock frenzy of confetti, smoke machines and fans onstage in superhero costumes, the gig (at the city zoo's amphitheater, hence the title) found the Lips unearthing rarities like "Love Your Brain" and "The Spark That Bleed" for the hometown crowd.

"It was the last awesome night of the summer," Coyne says. "A lot of times here in September, it has turned cold and rainy. But for some reason, it all held off. It was just a perfect night."

Meat Puppets

"Rise to Your Knees" (Anodyne, July 17)

"Brothers Curt and Craig Kirkwood are back on the scene with their first Meat Puppets album together since 1995's "No Joke!" Before he could resume playing music with his brother, Curt had to overcome a near-fatal heroin addiction and complete an 18-month prison sentence stemming from an altercation with a security guard, during which he was shot. Album tracks include "Split," which Kirkwood compares to "Another Moon" from the Puppets' 1991 album "Forbidden Places," and "Enemy Love Song," which he describes as "cheesy reggae" in the vein of Blondie's "The Tide Is High."

"It's a lot of 'singer around the campfire' songs, but done electrically," he says, adding that the material has a free spirit in keeping with the Puppets' beloved early albums on SST.

Mario

"Go" (R, July 31)

R&B artist Mario will turn 21 just after the release of his third album, which was originally titled "Effortless" and due last fall. First single "How Do I Breathe?" failed to dent the Billboard charts at the end of '06, but is being re-released in the days ahead. Pharrell Williams, Timbaland, Akon, Polow Da Don, Rich Boy, Fabolous and Scott Storch are among the contributors to the follow-up to 2004's platinum-plus "Turning Point," which includes a remake of Keith Sweat's "Right and Wrong Way."

August

Natasha Bedingfield

"& (Epic, TBA)

"A lot of what I wrote about on this album is relationships," Bedingfield says of the follow-up to her 2004 hit debut, "Unwritten." "I've grown away from home for a year-and-a-half and been independent and on the road. I really just value relationships. That gave me a lot of ammo to write with. Among the contributors here are producer Mike Elizondo, Maroon 5 vocalist Adam Levine, rapper Eve and such producers as Nate "Danja" Hills. The artist describes "Soulmate," which was written and demoed in a single afternoon, as "probably the most universal song on the album. I tried later to rework it and sing it again, but nothing was as good as that first day."

M.I.A.

"Kala" (Interscope, Aug. 21)

Eclectic Sri Lankan artist M.I.A. didn't quite translate the deafening buzz of her 2005 debut, "Arular," into big sales, but the disc did move 129,000 copies in the United States. After recording in India, Trinidad, New York, London and Baltimore during the past year, M.I.A. is back with "Kala," which sports contributions from Timbaland, Diplo, Baltimore act Blaqtar and house DJ/productor Dave Taylor (also known as Switch). The track list isn't finalized, but it will feature "Bird Flu," which has been making the rounds online in recent months.

The New Pornographers

"Challengers" (Matador, Aug. 21)

Principal member Carl Newman is particularly high on the three Dan Bejar-penned songs tipped for the Canadian rock outfit's latest, including "Myriad Heart." Vocalist Neko Case also takes the mic on three songs, one of which, "Go Places," Newman describes as "kind of like the early-'70s country hit 'I Never Promised You a Rose Garden.""

"Maybe that's just my warped take on it," he says. "I'm kind of fascinated by that song because it's one of the biggest departures for us. I'm trying to figure out how to Pornografia-it."

Summer TBA

The Beastie Boys

TBA (Capitol)

Surprise! The Beastie Boys' latest album is an all-instrumental affair. The hip-hop trio dabbled in this area before on 1996's "The In Sound From Out!," which consisted mainly of instrumental tracks from "Check Your Head" and "Ill Communication." To get into the spirit, the Beasties are also playing some instrumental shows this summer.

Wu-Tang Clan

8 Diagrams" (SRC)

After years of false starts and delays, the Wu-Tang Clan's first album since 2001's "Iron Flag" is ready to emerge this summer. According to principal member RZA, it will include an unreleased performance from the late Ol' Dirty Bastard and a long-in-the-works tribute to the artist dubbed "Life Changes."

Looking Forward

SEPTEMBER TBA: Alicia Keys, TBA (J) // Kelly Clarkson, "My December" (RCA) // Chris Brown, "Exclusive" (Jive) // Missy Elliott, TBA (The Gold Mind/Atlantic) // Snarks Barkley, TBA (Downtown/Atlantic) // Panic! at the Disco, TBA (Atlantic) // Kid Rock, TBA (Atlantic)

SEPTEMBER 18: James Blunt, TBA (Custard/Atlantic) // Cassie, TBA (Bad Boy/Atlantic) // Dido, TBA (Arista) // Annie Lennox, TBA (Arista) // Barry Manilow, "Great Songs of the 70s" (Atlantic) // The Beastie Boys, TBA (Mercury, Nashville) // The Cheetah Girls, TBA (Hollywood)

SEPTEMBER 25: Lyle Lovett, TBA (Lost Highway) // Danity Kane, TBA (Bad Boy/Atlantic) // Queen Latifah, TBA (Verve) // Aly & AJ, holiday album, TBA (Hollywood)


Additional reporting by Leila Cocho, Marel Conception, Hillary Croxley, Katie Hasty, Gary Graff, Gail Mitchell, Marc Pellegrino, Deborah Evans Price, Ken Tucker, Jeff Vrbal and Mikael Wood.

"Who We Are" (Geffen) // Nick Lowe, "At My Age" (Yep Roc) // Brick & Lace, "Love Is Wicked" (Geffen) // Collie Buddz, "Collie Buddz" (Columbia) // Sinéad O'Connor, "Theology" (Koch) // Art Brut, "It's A Bit Complicated" (Downtown) // Emily King, "East Side Story" (J) // Pharoahe Monch, "Desire" (Universal) // Elephant Man, TBA (Bad Boy/Atlantic) // Kelly Willis, "Transcend From Love" (Ryekid) // The Stabilisers, "Wanna Do the Wild Plastic Brane Love Thing?" (Wicked Cool) // The Click Five, "Modern Minds and Pastimes" (Atlantic)

JULY 3: T.I., "T.I. vs. T.I.P." (Grand Hustle/Atlantic) // Misty Stone, "The Magic Numbers, Those the Brokes" (Astralwerks)

JULY 10: A.J. & A.J., TBA (Hollywood) // Yung Joc, "Hustlenomics" (Bad Boy/Atlantic) // Crowded House, "Time on Earth" (ATO) // Against Me!, "New Wave" (Sire) // Carole King, "Tapestry-Legacy Edition" (Legacy) // Baby Bash, TBA (J) // Buffy Tcm, "Three Easy Pieces" (Amma/New West) // Minnie Driver, "Seastories" (Zik/2Rounder) // One Chance, "Private" (J) // Jesse Harris, "Feel" (Velour Music Group) // Hawaii Mud Bombers, "Mondo Primo" (Wicked Cool)

JULY 17: Korn, TBA (Virgin) // Amerie, "Because I Love It" (Columbia) // Yellowcard, "Paper Walls" (Capitol) // Suzanne Vega, "Beauty & Crime" (Blue Note) // Raul Malo, "After Hours" (New Door/Ume)

JULY 24: P. Kelly, "Trapped in the Closet Chapters 13-22" DVD (Jive) // Puddle of Mudd, "Living on Borrowed Time" (Geffen) // Sum 41, "Underclass Hero" (Island) // Tegan & Sara, "The Con" (Vapor/Sandstorm) // Teddy Thompson, "Up Front and Down Low" (Verve Forecast) // The Chesterfield Kings, "Psychedelic Sunrise" (Wicked Cool)

AUG. 2: The Go! Team, TBA (Columbia) // VHS or Beta, TBA (Astralwerks) // Sara Evans, TBA (RCA) // Van Zant, TBA (Columbia) // Gavin DeGraw, TBA (J)

AUG. 7: Eve, "Here I Am" (Geffen) // Twista, TBA (Atlantic) // Tera Kline, TBA (BMI/Atlantic) // "Architecture in Helsinki, Places Like This" (Polyvinyl) // Various artists, "Coolest Songs in the World! Vol. 2" (Wicked Cool)

AUG. 14: Cassidy, TBA (J) // Lori McKenna, "UnGawmorous" (Warner Bros./Nashville/Styleiconic) // Ferraby Lionheart, TBA (Netwerk) // Loreena McKennitt, "Live at the Alhambra" (Verve) // Atreyu, "Anchora" (Merge)

AUG. 28: Nelly, TBA (Universal) // LeAnn Rimes, TBA (Curb) // Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, TBA (Warner Bros.) // Mary Gauthier, TBA (Mercury Nashville) // Billy Ray Cyrus, TBA (Disney Records)

SUMMER TBA: Uncle Kracker, "Happy Hour" (Atlantic) // Hot Heat, TBA (Sire) // Aretha Franklin, "Aretha: A Woman Falling Out of Love" (Aretha's Records)
It's just after midnight and T.I. is waiting to go home from Teterboro, N.J.,'s Atlantic airport in a private G-3 aircraft, courtesy of producer Wyclef Jean. The plane is equipped with 10 seats, a padded bench and an overeager stewardess tending to Atlanta's favorite rapper and his three friends, who are indulging in a shit-talking game of spades over the cabin's coffee table. "This is when you throw that out," T.I. hollers, pounding the cards on the table. "Two of aces is the got'damm high card! Cha' mon!" Playful yelling aside, everyone here knows T.I. well enough to expect that he's going to cheat—it's just a matter of when. Sure enough, after a few hands, T.I. gathers a freshly won mess of cards into his corner and slickly peels the top card back into the fan between his fingers.

C-Rod, longtime friend and Grand Hustle MC, raises a wary eyebrow. "I seen that, man," he mumbles, smiling, cigarette dangling from his lip. "He been doing it all night."

With his mouth hanging open and his face frozen in laughter, T.I. chuckles his suspect stack of cards and falls to his padded seat that's more 1-2-Boy than airline seat. After the commotion calms, T.I. tries to play his cheating card again. "I said put it back, man!" C-Rod says with a laugh, and T.I. finally, sheepishly, puts the card back into pile.

Be all fun and games on the airplane, but the high-decibel battle may actually speak to a darker side of T.I., a side that T.I. himself is showcasing in his upcoming album, "T.I. vs. T.I.P.," due July 3. Much of the public knows T.I. as the ultra-smooth, super-stylish rapper, the guy who guests in Justin Timberlake videos and makes the ladies swoon. But hip-hop heads and those closest to T.I. know he's a man fighting demons and thus fighting to hold onto his blustering career momentum. That's the essence of T.I.'s new album. He is the pop star, focused on expanding his horizons and his bottom line.T.I.P.—a childhood nickname shortened to T.I. when the rapper signed his first deal, out of respect to Q-Tip—is the bad boy.

No doubt, life has been good. His last album, "King," featured arguably the song of the year in 2006, "What You Know." The song sat at No. 1 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart for six weeks and was the theme for the movie in which he starred, "ATL." The album was also the top seller of the year, entering The Billboard 200 at No. 1 and moving 522,000 its first week. It has sold 1.7 million to date, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Then, in spring 2006, while his Grand Hustle label celebrated the release of its first artist, Young Dro, and his song, "Shoulder Lean," earning the No. 1 hip-hop slot in the country, Jive's now-president of urban music, Mark Pitts, reached out to see if T.I. might be interested in working with Timberlake. The pop star's "My Love" featuring T.I. hit No. 1 on The Billboard Hot 100, hurrying T.I. from hip-hop star to pop success. In the fall, T.I. was nominated for four Grammy Awards and won two for best rap solo performance for "What You Know" and best rap/sung collaboration for "My Love."

His hot streak hasn't stopped. Currently "Top Back," from "King," "Where They At," from his upcoming album, and his feature on R. Kelly's "I'm a Flirt" sit on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

But then T.I.P. — friends and label execs refer to him as "Tip" routinely—always seems to be lurking around the corner. In 1997, a pre-rap T.I.P. was arrested, convicted and sentenced to parole for drug charges and giving authorities a false name. Then in 2004, just as his "Rubberband Man" single was proving itself as a hit, T.I. turned himself in for violating parole and served roughly four months in Cobb County jail. Instead of promoting his sophomore album, "Trap Muzik,"
ON A ROLL

Earlier the same day of his flight home, T.I. seems far from his troubles—literally and figuratively. He's in downtown Manhattan for the photo shoot that produced the image on the cover of this issue, sporting a madras-print jacket with khaki shorts from one of his favorite stores—Brooks Brothers—and lacing up a pair of Louis Vuitton sneakers. Photographers, assistants, security and entourage swirl around. As the photographer snaps him against a faux shoreline flanked by a beach ball and an oversized rainbow umbrella, T.I. mentions that he's hungry but turns away the fancy thin pizza synonymous with downtown Manhattan—not enough grease and cheese, his publicist jokes.

"I was in a session with Timbaland and Danja last night," T.I. drawsl when asked what he's been up to. "Then I woke up and came here."

The new album mixes plenty of still-hood tracks—that would be T.I.'s—and some poppier moments. The just-released first official single, "Big Shit Poppin,'" produced by Mannie Fresh, could be a remix to "Top Back," the last single from "King," still on the charts. The new song's repeatable chorus, "Big shit poppin' and little shit stoppin'," is classic T.I. The lyrics are routinely boastful; at one point he mentions impressing his Academy Award-winning "American Gangster" costar (see story, right).

"Denzel say, 'Damn, I ain't know it was like that,'" T.I. raps.

Though the album's final sequence isn't hammered out yet, Timbaland, Eminem, Danja Hands, Swizz Beatz, the Runners, Just Blaze, Scott Storch, Akon, Wyclef Jean and in-house Grand Hustle producer Lil C have lent their production talents to "T.I. vs T.I.P." so far. One song, "Goodbye My Dear," T.I. wrote and produced himself. The track sports lazy drumps, a synthy piano and Ciara on the hook, while T.I. rhymes about why his relationship must end. It's clearly a track aimed for the ladies.

"He was much more open to my new things this time around," Geter says of T.I.

Wyclef, for example, may sound like an odd fit as a producer for T.I., but he made a solid track, including second single "You Know What It Is." (The track features a bouncing guitar strum, strategic snaps and the firehouse horn that hip-hop fans, while T.I. rhymes, "I had the album of the year... Grammy or not." The ubiquitous Akon also pops up with the extremely hard to hate "We Get It Poppin." Young Jeezy's "Soul Survivor" for 2007.

While the tentative album ultimately sounds like a comfortable stretch from the commercial feel of "King,' it's clear that T.I. was careful not to leave his core fan base too far behind.

"I can never go pop, the hood is in me," T.I. says. "I'm just going for a different audience than I usually target. It's not fair to me to keep talking about the same things. I've gone so far past the hood that I've got to talk about other things."

While digital partnerships are still being determined, T.I. will continue his reign as a mobile master. A total of 15 mobile products will be released to set up the album, among them the launch, with partner Sonic Branding, of a mobile game called "FanJam: T.I. Edition;" a customized version of a "Tetris"-like game, and the release of the ToneMaker D.J. application to let fans remix his songs into custom ring tones.

Following the current TV spots featuring T.I. with Mary J. Blige and Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet will service another commercial this summer, as well as a print campaign. T.I. is also releasing a preppy designer clothing line, A.K.O.O., which stands for "A King of Oneself," this year.

The only question remaining is whether the rapper will be focused enough to stay out of trouble and promote his album. In other words, all his Grand Hustle signings, his executives at Atlantic and those closest to him will be waiting to see the winner of "T.I. vs. T.I.P."

"Letting my rage and my temper get the best of me, like missing the second half of '2 Traps Musik' for serving a sentence—things like that, these are the things that hold me back," he says.

"These are the things that T.I.P. does to keep T.I. from getting where T.I. thinks he can be. The only person that can beat me is me."
ON THE MOVE

Whether it's on a cell phone, a laptop or simply a TV set far from the nearest computer, we increasingly expect our favorite digital diversions to follow us wherever we go. These four products and services exemplify that growing mobile-media mind-set. —SM

AVVENU
This free service, currently in beta testing, lets you stream the music you've ripped into your iTunes library to Web browsers running on a PC, Mac or Windows Mobile smartphone, such as Samsung Blackjack or T-Mobile Dash. You can invite your friends to access your music collection too (at least until the RIAA gets pissed off), and Avvenu will even store 250 of your favorite tracks online, so they'll be accessible when your computer is off. AVVENU.COM

SANDISK SANSA CONNECT
This handsome portable nails most of the features we want in a Wi-Fi-enabled music player. The basics—user controls and menus, sound quality, audio file format support—are all first-rate, and logging on to an open Wi-Fi hotspot is simple. Sign up for the Yahoo Music Unlimited to Go service ($15 per month or $11.99 per month for an annual subscription) and you get unlimited downloads from a 2 million-song library to your PC or wirelessly direct to the Sansa Connect. The missing link: a browser that lets you get past the legal agreement screen required to access Wi-Fi in many hotels and public places, which the company says is in the works. $250, SANDISK.COM

JOOST
Founded by the folks who made Skype the dirt-cheap phone service of choice worldwide, Joost (pronounced “juiced”) aims to deliver ad-supported professional TV shows (as opposed to user-generated clips) free of charge over the Internet. They’ve already signed content deals with Viacom (MTV, BET, Comedy Central, Paramount Pictures), Warner Bros. Records and many niche programmers. The latest version of the downloadable player software in beta testing already delivers a solid “Rocky & Bullwinkle”-watching experience. JOOST.COM

NETGEAR EVA8000 DIGITAL ENTERTAINER
Apple TV lets you view your iTunes library on your TV. But this Netgear-networked media player goes much further, putting all your digital entertainment options just a remote control-click away. Connected via Ethernet or wireless network, the Digital Entertainer streams from a networked computer, a network-attached storage device or directly over the Internet, providing access to YouTube, BitTorrent and Flickr content, Internet radio streams plus media files in about any format. And while it supports widescreen high-def TVs, the Netgear box also works with standard-definition displays, unlike Apple TV. $399, NETGEAR.COM

RING IN THE NEW

GEAR GUIDE

MP3-playing music phones have been around since the year 2000 (anyone remember the Samsung Uproar?) without getting much traction, at least in the United States. According to a recent study by Arbitron/Telephia, only 6% of cell phone subscribers now listen to mobile audio. Of course, that was before Apple’s buzz-generating iPhone injected instant heat into the category.

The iPhone design dips with sex appeal—a slender cellular sliver with gorgeous touch-sensitive display to make the most of your iTunes music and videos and favorite Web sites. After the initial endorphin rush, though, questions arise. There’s no keyboard and poking at on-screen pictures of buttons is clumsy (and will certainly grease up the screen). What about scratches on that lovely screen? What’s the real-world battery life? Will anyone beyond deep-pocketed Macolyes fork over $499-$599 (4GB and 8GB models, respectively) and embrace Cingular service, with its sluggish data network, for a two-year contract?

The answers must wait until the iPhone release in late June. In the meantime, a variety of hot phones with innovative music and video support are bearing the iPhone to market.

Three Hot Handsets Beating Apple’s iPhone To Market

by Steve Morgenstern

NOKIA N95
AT&T/Cingular or T-Mobile /// $749 /// 3.9 x 2.1 x 0.8 inches, 4.2 oz /// nokia.com
The luxurious N95 does music right, with surprisingly pleasing stereo speakers and a standard 3.5mm audio jack to accommodate your favorite headphones or earbuds (instead of settling for cellular-specific gear). With the first 5-megapixel camera in the United States, the N95 delivers outstanding stills, and video is captured at full TV-quality resolution and frame rate. Built-in Global Positioning System, Wi-Fi networking and dedicated audio control buttons round out a powerhouse package. Only drawback: With no cell carrier subsidizing the purchase price, you’ll pay full freight at a Nokia store or independent dealer.

SAMSUNG UPSTAGE (SPH-M620)
Sprint /// $150 with two-year contract /// 4.1 x 1.7 x 0.4 inches, 2.6 oz /// sprint.com
The “UpStage” name clearly indicates Samsung’s hope of one-upping Apple, and in several ways it may succeed. The unique two-faced design has phone buttons and a small screen on one side, dedicated music controls and a sharp 2.1-inch display on the other. The included wallet-style case is an ingenious touch. In addition to protecting the phone, it incorporates a second battery, raising total talk time to an impressive 6.3 hours. Most striking, though, is Sprint’s decision to cut the price of music downloads direct to the phone to just 99 cents—the iPhone won’t allow direct downloads at all.

LG VX9400
Verizon /// $250 with two-year contract /// 4.1 x 1.7 x 0.4 inches, 2.6 oz /// verizonwireless.com
While its music-playing features are impressive, the killer feature here is Verizon’s V Cast Mobile TV, a $15 per month service delivering eight TV channels (including prime-time shows from NBC, Fox, Comedy Central, ESPN and MTV) that play smoothly and look sharp and beautiful on the 2.2-inch pivoting screen. V Cast Mobile TV is currently available in more than 20 cities and rolling out nationwide.
STAGES OF THE SUN

With More Than 30 Tours And Festivals In The Works, Summer Holds Some Serious Shows by Ray Waddell and Mitch Peters

AMERICAN IDOLS LIVE: Dates: July-September /// Shows: 50

Beyoncé: Support: Robin Thicke /// July-September /// 30-plus

Big & Rich: June-September /// 50 /// Also Playing: festivals, fairs

Big & Rich will play "at least" 50 fairs and festivals across the United States this summer, says agent Greg Oswald with William Morris Agency in Nashville. /// As Oswald likes to say, the shows will be for the "everything between New York and L.A. people," which is the country duo's bread and butter. "If you play the big venues at the big fairs, you're going to see anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 people," Oswald says. "A minimum of 50% of those people will be first-timers." /// He adds that in a hard-ticket setting, such as an arena, 80% of concertgoers have already seen the show. /// That said, the idea is to give fans more of an experience than just a concert. "You've got Big Kenny preaching and John Rich running up and down the stage with his Flying V," he says. "It's an extravaganza — musically and visually."

Kelly Clarkson: Support: Matt Kearney /// July-September /// 35-plus

Dispatch: July /// 3

 Jail-friendly trio Dispatch, which built a respectable East Coast fan base in the 90s, came out of nowhere earlier this year announcing three gigs at New York's Madison Square Garden that immediately sold out. Of the reunion, band member Chad Urmston says, "We agreed to do it only if it was going to be a 100% benefit." Proceeds for the concerts will go to humanitarian efforts in Zimbabwe.

Genesis (Worldwide): June-October /// 40 /// Also Playing: stadiums

Josh Groban: Support: Angelique Kidjo /// July-August /// 25-plus

Lynyrd Skynyrd/Hank Williams Jr./38 Special: April-June /// 20-plus

/// Ticket sales are strong, beer sales should be even stronger.

Tim McGraw/Faith Hill: June-August /// 40-plus

/// Already the top-grossing country tour ever, last year's first couple give it another shot.

Slayer/Marilyn Manson: July-September /// 25-plus

Justin Timberlake (Worldwide): April-September /// 80-plus

/// Tool: April-June /// 20-plus

/// A band that keeps finding another gear on the road.

Keith Urban (North America): June-September /// 30-plus

The Who (Europe): May-July 30 /// Also Playing: festivals

Cirque du Soleil's "Delirium": April-July /// 30-plus

The Wiggles: July-August /// 20-plus

TWANG TAKES OFF

Country music has arguably been the most consistent touring genre for the past several years. Not only do established superstars like Kenny Chesney, George Strait, Tim McGraw (the past two years with wife Faith Hill), Toby Keith and now Rascal Flatts continue to draw big, but country is also breaking new artists into headliner status. /// Brian O'Connell is president of country touring for Live Nation, and Live Nation president of North American music Jason Garner says O'Connell will deliver the goods this summer. /// "When you look at the country lineup Brian has put together for us, it's really amazing," Garner says. "Tim and Faith Indoors, Kenny [with AEG Live/TMJ], Toby, Brooks & Dunn/Alan Jackson, Rascal Flatts, and then you have Brad Paisley, who we think is a breakout superstar." /// Add Keith Urban, Martina McBride, Big & Rich, Sugarland and Carrie Underwood to the growing list of country ticket sellers. Last year was regarded by many to be the best summer in terms of touring in the history of country music," O'Connell says. "The fans have all of their favorites coming to them with the most elaborate production elements, packaging and affordability taken into consideration."

—RW
THE ROLLING STONES

The band that most thought would never happen begins May 28 in Vancouver. The first North American leg has already generated about $102 million in sales of some 900,000 tickets. Another 23 shows on sale in Europe add about $66 million to the pot and 630,000 tickets sold. The Police reunion is indeed a global phenomenon that tour producer Arthur Fogel, president of TNA International and global music chairman for Live Nation, ranks with the biggest he has worked on. "This was like the Stones in '89, that was incredible at the time," Fogel says. "Pink Floyd's Division Bell tour in 1994, in that moment we were going, 'Holy shit, that's unbelievable.' The last couple of U2 tours, Madama, same thing. And the Police tour ranks right up there." The Police tour is one of the more creatively booked tours since the Stones' Toast Tour (tour of arenas, stadiums and theaters) in 2003. The band will play stadiums, ballparks and arenas; Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky.; key festivals like Bonnaroo in Tennessee and V Fest in Baltimore; and Live Earth at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. "When we started off we had multiple scenarios," Fogel says. "It was really about assessing each market and its capabilities individually and deciding what would be best," he says. "I don't believe in 'cookie cutters' and never have."


May 28 Vancouver, B.C., Canada 
June 9-10 Ontario, Canada 
June 29, 30 New York, N.Y. 
July 17, 18 London, England 
July 22-23 Paris, France 
July 25-26 Saint Petersburg, Russia

The Stones crank back up A Bigger Bang, already the top-grossing tour of all time. The tally will likely near $600 million before they pull the plug.

In The Works

10 Tours Ready To Roll, With Details Forthcoming

ALY & AJ: Theaters, festivals
BEASTIE BOYS: Dates: July-August // Shows: 20 (some instrumental)
GOOD CHARLOTTE: June (tentative)
HILARY DUFF: Summer // Amphitheaters, arenas, festivals
HOT HOT HEAT: May-September
JESSE MCCARTNEY: Support: Jonas Brothers // Theaters, arenas
MIKA: June-September
PROJECT REVOLUTION: Linkin Park, My Chemical Romance
TENACIOUS D


No artist in country music history has sold more tickets than Chesney during the past five years.

KENNY CHESNEY:

WWW.AMERICANRADIOHISTORY.COM
Amphitheatres

CLAY AIKEN: Dates: July-August. /// Shows: 13 /// Also Playing: performing arts centers

DIERKS BENTLEY: June-August /// 45 /// Also Playing: arenas, festivals, fairs
**This could be a breakout year for Bentley as a headliner.**

BROOKS & DUNN/ALAN JACKSON: May-October /// 30-plus

JIMMY BUFFETT: April-September /// 12

CHICAGO/AMERICA: June-July /// 18

DAFT PUNK: Support: The Rapture, Sebastian, Kavinsky /// May-August /// 8 /// Also Playing: arenas, stadiums
**Last year Daft Punk teased North American fans with only two shows at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival and the Bang! Music Festival. Paul Tollett, president of Goldenvoice, which is producing the electronics act’s upcoming sold-out concert at the Los Angeles Sports Arena, caught both festival sets. He sums up the duo’s live show with one word—“insane.”**

DEF LEPPARD: Support: Styx, Foreigner /// June-September /// 50
**Def Leppard/Journey was last year’s sleeper tour. Will Styx and Foreigner pack the same punch?**

BOB DYLAN: June-July /// 22 /// Also playing: arenas, festivals

FAMILY VALUES TOUR: Korn, Evanescence /// Support: Atreyu, Flyleaf, Hellyeah, Trivium /// July-September /// 30-plus

JOHN FOGERTY: July /// 30-plus

THE FRAY: Support: OK Go, Gomez, Eisley, Max, Meese, Single File (all on various dates) /// June-August /// 35-plus /// Also Playing: arenas

VINCE GILL: Support: Amy Grant, the Del McCoury Band /// July-September /// 16 /// Also Playing: theaters, arenas

B.B. KING: June-September /// 40-plus /// Also Playing: theaters, casinos, festivals

B.B. KING BLUES FESTIVAL: B.B. King, Etta James, Al Green /// July-September /// 4
**The trek, packaged by the William Morris Agency, will mark the first time the three legendary artists unite for a tour, according to Brad Goodman, King’s booking agent with the William Morris Agency. “We had a vision for the new B.B. King Blues Festival to be at an elevated level of talent.” Goodman says. “In the past, it was more about B.B.’s summer tour, and everybody else jumping on that tour.”**

CIPSY KINGS: May-August /// 15-plus

HONDA CIVIC TOUR: Fall Out Boy /// Support: +44, the Academy Is ..., Cobra Starship, Paul Wall /// May-July /// 40-plus

NORAH JONES: April-June /// 35-plus /// Also Playing: theaters

DIANA KRALL/CHRIS BOTTI: June-September /// 40 /// Also Playing: theaters

ROCK THE BELLS: Wu-Tang Clan, Nas, Rage Against the Machine (select) /// Support: Cypress Hill, the Roots, Public Enemy /// July-August /// 18 /// Also playing: various
**This summer’s Rock the Bells jaunt will launch with large scale festivals at Randall’s Island in New York (July 28), the NOS Events Center in San Bernardino, Calif. (Aug. 11) and the McCoy Cove Park ing Lot in San Francisco (Aug. 18). The newly reformed Rage Against the Machine, Wu-Tang Clan and Nas will headline those dates. After the festivals, RTB will expand to 15 additional markets across the United States. Rage Against the Machine is signed on for only the three initial festivals, but RTB founder Chang Weisberg of Guerilla Union feels “blessed” to have the political rockers as a part of the event. “We are so fortunate. It fell into our lap,” Weisberg says. “I think [Rage] was ready to do something. They saw Rock the Bells and Coachella as platforms to do what they love to do.”**

ALISON Krauss AND UNION STATION FEATURING JERRY DOUGLAS: June-July /// 25-plus /// Also Playing: arenas

LOS LONELY BOYS: June-August /// 25-plus /// Also Playing: casinos, festivals

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND: Support: various /// July-October /// 35-plus
**DMB is the most consistent touring act of the past decade.**

JOHN MAYER: Support: Ben Folds, James Morrison, Mat Kearney /// June-August /// 40-plus /// Also Playing: arenas

WILLIE NELSON: June-July /// 30-plus /// Also Playing: arenas, theaters

NICKEL CREEK: Support: Glen Phillips, TBA /// July-September /// 30 /// Also Playing: theaters, festivals

LONG, HARD SUMMER

Bands that don’t get mainstream exposure via radio and TV—namely hard rock, punk and jam acts—have to tour to consistently reach fans. In the case of metal bands, they also pack a good-sized package of support, and there are a wealth of hard music multi-act tours to choose from this summer.

OZZFEST: Ozzy Osbourne, Lamb of God, Lordi, Hatebreed (and others) /// July-August /// 20-plus
**The brave new world of “Freefest” will be one of the most closely observed tours ever for the concert industry.**

BRAD PAISLEY: Support: various /// April-November /// 75 /// Also Playing: arenas

POISON/RATT: June-August /// 50-plus /// Also Playing: festivals, fairs
**A summer trek is nothing new for Poison, but...**

THE DECENDERS

June-July /// 3 /// Also Playing: festivals
**Former indie darlings the Descendents, who last year jumped from K Rock Stars to Capitol with the album “The Crane Wife,” will play five 4,500- to 17,000-capacity shows that will cover the band’s entire tour, from the Los Angeles Palomar and Chicago’s Grant Park Orchestra. “They’ll be playing songs from their entire catalog,” says booking agent Kevin French with Big Shot Touring Artists. “But it’s such a special event that it’s more than just the Descendents drawing. The orchestra will be responsible for a lot of the people as well.”**

JOHANNA REES, who books shows at Los Angeles’ Hollywood Bowl, first approached French with the idea. “[We] started talking and said, ‘This would be a great idea to do in some other places around the country.’” Rees, who also books at Los Angeles’ Walt Disney Concert Hall, adds, “It’s such a perfect band to put with an orchestra. Musically, they’re just astounding.” /// Expect to see the Descendents out in theaters this fall.
this year the perennial '80s act will be joined by Brat for the first time since 1999. The bands will visit sheds, festivals and fairs in such cities as Boston, Detroit, New York and Los Angeles, says Troy Blakey, who books Poison with the Agency for the Performing Arts. The group will tour in support of its upcoming covers album, "Poison'd."

RASCAL FLATTS: Support: Jason Aldean // July-November // 50 // Also Playing: arenas, two stadiums » Country's biggest development story of the new century has yet to peak on the road.

RUSH: June-September // 45-plus » Early box-office returns herald a top-25 tour.

ALEJANDRO SANZ: June-July // 16 // Also Playing: arenas

STEELY DAN: May-July // 25-plus // Also Playing: theaters, festivals

GWEN STEFANI: Support: Lady Sovereign, Akon // May-June // 19 » Nice synergy touring with Akon, who has helped her hit "The Swe: Escape" peak at No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100. And value-priced.

311: Support: Matisyahu // June-August // 45-plus

THREE DAYS GRACE/BREAKING BENJAMIN: Support: Puddle of Mudd // May-June // 30-plus

TRUE COLORS TOUR: Erykah, Cyndi Lauper, Debbie Harry, Dresden Dolls, the Gossip // June // 15

VANS WARPED TOUR: New Found Glory, Bad Religion // Support: Coheed and Cambria, Flogging Molly, Hawthorne Heights, Pennywise, Underoath, the Used, Bayside, Yellowcard (and others) // June-August // 45

» Bringing fresh, diverse talent to an annual traveling festival can be difficult for any genre of music. // But after 13 years, Waved tour producer Kevin Lyman hasn't let the nonbelievers get under his skin. He has one thing to say to Internet bash-talkers who whined about this year's lineup, "Stay the fuck at home." // This year's Waved is laced with such up-and-comers as K-OSS and Cute Is What We Aim For, along with seasoned vets Bad Religion and New Found Glory. Aaron Gillespie, who fronts solo emo project the Almost, which is featured on this year's trek, says, "The tour has always been about helping bands get recognition, and it's always going to be about that."

ROGER WATERS (NORTH AMERICA/EUROPE): May-July // 25-plus // Also Playing: arenas


BONNAROO MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL: The Police, Tool, Widespread Panic, the White Stripes, Wilco, Franz Ferdinad, String Cheese Incident, Ben Harper & The Innocent Criminals, Ziggy Marley, Gov't Mule, the Black Keys // June 14-17 // Manchester, Tenn.

BUMBLEBEAT: The Shins, Wu-Tang Clan, Panci at the Disco, Crowd House, Lube Fiasco, Steve Earle, Devotchka, Devendra Banhart, Roky Erickson, Allison Moorer, Magnolia Electric Company // Sept. 1-3 // Seattle Center, Seattle


CISCO OTTAWA BLUESFEST: Bob Dylan, the White Stripes, Cat Power, INXS, Kanye West, Built to Spill // July 5-15 // Lansdowne Plats Park


ESSENCE MUSIC FESTIVAL: Beyoncé, Chris Brown, Lionel Richie, Mary J. Blige, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, Ciara, Ludacris, Ne-Yo, the O'Jays with Keith Sweat and Johnny Gill, Robin Thicke // July 5-7 // Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans

LOLLAPALOOZA: Pearl Jam, Daft Punk, the Stooges, My Morning Jacket, Muse, Modest Mouse, Interpol, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Snow Patrol // Aug. 3-5 // Grant Park, Chicago

MILWAUKEE SUMMERFEST: TBA // June 28-July 8 // Marcus Amphitheater, Milwaukee

PITCHFORK MUSIC FESTIVAL: Sonic Youth, Slint, GZA, Cat Power, Stephan Malkmus, new Pornographers // TBA // July 13-15 // Grant Park, Chicago


10,000 LAKES FESTIVAL: Tragically Hip, Zappa Plays Zappa, Particle, Umphrey's McGee, Gov't Mule, moe., Bob Weir & Rat-Dog, Trey Anastasio // Date: July 18-21 // Location: Detroit Lakes, Minn.


VIRGIN FESTIVAL—TORONTO: The Smashing Pumpkins, the Police, Björk, the Killers, Beastie Boys, Modest Mouse, Incubus, Bad Brains, Velvet Revolver, Regina Spektor, Interpol, Wu-Tang Clan, Amy Winehouse // Sept. 8-9 // Toronto Island Park

VIRGIN FESTIVAL—VANCOUVER: My Chemical Romance, the Killers, Billy Talent, Metric, Hot Heat, AFI, Mute Math, Rise Against, Smosh, Thursday // May 20-21 // Thunderbird Stadium

» What do the sites of this year's Canadian Virgin Festivals have in common? Both have a rich festival history // At Vancouver's Thunderbird Stadium, which sits on the campus of the University of British Columbia, "all of the early Lollapalooza years took place" at the venue, says Elliot Lefko, VP of Los Angeles-based Goldenvoice, which is co-promoting the fests with Toronto-based Emrge Entertainment. // And at Toronto Island Park, "There's a lot of tradition because it was the home of the Mariposa Folk Festival in the '60s," he adds. // This year marks Toronto's second year hosting the Virgin Festival and Vancouver's first.

VIRGIN MUSIC FESTIVAL BY VIRGIN MOBILE: The Police, Beastie Boys, the Smashing Pumpkins // Aug. 4-5 // Pimlico Race Course, Baltimore, Md.

FESTIVALS FLY HIGH

Long a mainstay of the European summer scene, multiday music festivals have become a much bigger part of the North American music landscape in the new millennium. Powered by immersive, expertly booked lineups such as Coachella, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza and the Austin City Limits Music Festival, festivals are now must-attend events programmed by some of the savviest talent buyers in the business. // Music fans have learned that festivals are often the best way to discover a great live act. "We have always subscribed to the theory that the real magic of a festival is buried in the guts of the lineup," says Charles Atal, partner in C3, producers of Lolla, ACL and the Big State country festival. // "People come to see the headliners but their best experiences are often seeing a new band for the first time," Atal says. "It is these magical moments that keep people coming back." // The key to success is not only in offering the right talent, but in giving fans an "experience" above and beyond a standard up concert. // "I think that with the level of quality that the festivals have established here, there is a great trust from the audience that they are going to be well taken care of, and that is why they do so well," says Seth Hurwitz, president of I.M.P. and producer of V-Fest in Baltimore. "There used to be a litany of learning-curve missteps, but people like Charles Atal go into a brand new market and get it right the first time. That helps us all, and we should all be very careful not to betray that trust from the public." // —RW
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500,000 SPINS

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- Run It! / Chris Brown / JIVE/Zomba
- Tutushumping / Chumbawamba / Universal Republic
- Dilemma / Nelly Feat. Kelly Rowland / UNIVERSAL

400,000 SPINS

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- Brain Steew / Green Day / REPRISE
- My Favorite Mistake / Sheryl Crow / A&M
- Hand In My Pocket / Alainis Morissette / MAVERICK

300,000 SPINS

- Breathe (2 AM) / Anna Nalick / Columbia
- Give A Little Bit / Goo Goo Dolls / Warner Bros.
- Stickwitu / Pussycat Dolls / A&M/Interscope
- I Wanna Love You / Akon Feat. Snoop Dogg / SRC/Universal Motown

200,000 SPINS

- Say It Right / Nelly Furtado / MOSLEY/GEFFEN
- Through Glass / Stone Sour / ROADRUNNER/LAVA/ATLANTIC
- Before He Cheats / Carrie Underwood / ARISTA/ARISTA NASHVILLE
- Can't Stop Loving You / Phil Collins / ATLANTIC
- Step In The Name Of Love / R. Kelly / JIVE/Zomba

100,000 SPINS

- This Is Why I'm Hot / Mims / CAPITOL
- The Sweet Escape / Gwen Stefani Feat. Akon / INTERSCOPE
- Ice Box / Omarion T.U.G. / COLUMBIA
- On The Hotline / Pretty Ricky / ATLANTIC
- Snow (Hey Oh) / Red Hot Chili Peppers / WARNER BROS.
- Don't Matter / Akon / KONVICT/UPFRONT/ROADRUNNER/ATLANTIC
- Ladies Love Country Boys / Trace Adkins / CAPITOL NASHVILLE
- Lost Without U / Robin Thicke / STAR TRAK/INTERSCOPE
- Little Bit Of Life / Craig Morgan / BROKEN BOW
- The Kill (Bury Me) / 30 Seconds To Mars / IMMORTAL/STORM
- Streetcorner Symphony / Rob Thomas / MELISMA/ATLANTIC
- Once In A Lifetime / Keith Urban / CAPITOL NASHVILLE
- Put Your Records On / Corinne Bailey Rae / CAPITOL
- Call On Jesus / Nicole C. Mullen / WORD-CURB
- Pain / Three Days Grace / JIVE/Zomba
- Birmingham / Amanda Marshall / EPIC
- Touch It / Busta Rhymes / AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE

50,000 SPINS

- If Everyone Cared / Nickelback / ROADRUNNER/LAVA/ATLANTIC
- Glamorous / Pergle / WILLIAM/A&M/INTERSCOPE
- Cupid's Chokehold / Gym Class Heroes / DECADE/YOURN/FUELED BY RAMEN/ATLANTIC/LAVA
- Beer In Mexico / Kenny Chesney / BNA
- Give It To Me / Timbaland Feat. Nelly F. & Justin T. / MOSLEYS/BLACKGROUND/INTERSCOPE
- Last Dollar (Fly Away) / Tim McGraw / CURB
- U + Ur Hand / Pink / LAFACE/Zomba
- Last Night / Diddy Feat. Keyshia Cole / BAD BOY/ATLANTIC
- Wasted / Carrie Underwood / ARISTA/ARISTA NASHVILLE
- Hillbilly Deluxe / Brooks & Dunn / ARISTA NASHVILLE
- A Feelin' Like That / Gary Allan / MCA NASHVILLE
- Here (In Your Arms) / Helloworld / DRY-THR/SONIC\NY
- Settin'/ Sugarland / MERCURY
- Long Trip Alone / Dierks Bentley / CAPITOL NASHVILLE
- From Yesterday / 30 Seconds To Mars / IMMORTAL/STORM
- Mas Alla Del Sol / Joan Sebastian / MUSART/BALBOA
- Nothing Compares / Third Day / ESSENTIAL/PLG
- Never Alone / BarlowGirl / FERT/WORD-CURB
- Mi Credo / P-K Paz De La Sierra / DISA
- De Rodillas Te Pido / Alegr\nas De La Sierra / VIVA
- Heaven / Mary Mary / MY BLOCK/COLUMBIA/INTEGRITY
- With All Of My Heart / Zoe\ngirl / SPARROW/EMI CMG
- Crash Here Tonight / Toby Keith / JSHOW DOG NASHVILLE
- The Valley Song / Sing Of Your Mercy / Jars Of Clay / ESSENTIAL/PLG
- Ladies And Gentlemen / Saliva / ISLAND/IDJMG

www.americanradiohistory.com
Thirty-three years into its recording career, Canadian hard-rock trio Rush is finding it easier to make music together.

"You can argue that we don't have much to prove at this point," guitarist Alex Lifeson says. "We're in our 50s now. Geddy [Lee] and I have been doing it 40 years, as a band with Neil [Peart] for 33 years."

"But this was maybe the most fun record I think we've ever made. It just feels different somehow. It's very positive, very forward, all of that new to us for some reason."

He's referring to "Snakes & Arrows," which comes out May 1 on Atlantic/Universal and as an expanded set with a 43-minute video on June 5. It's Rush's first set of all-new material since 2002's "Vapor Trails." But unlike the six-year hiatus before that album, the trio has been busy in the intervening years. It has toured twice, released a covers EP, "Feedback," a live album and two concert DVDs — "Rush in Rio" and "CE."

"At no time do we feel like we're retired or not functioning," singer/bassist/keyboardist Lee says. "We were just waiting for the right moment to get back together and write."

It also appears to be the right moment for Rush to come back into the marketplace, according to Atlantic VP of marketing David Burris. First single "Far Cry" is already a No. 3 hit on Radio & Records' Rock chart, the band's fourth top five in the past five years. Burris says, "Where a couple years ago a lot of programmers were saying, "Rush? Enough already," this time around, when word started leaking about the record they were asking ahead of time, 'When am I getting it?'

The promotional campaign includes extensive press and ads on not just music but also talk and sports broadcast and Internet outlets. Lee, an avid baseball fan, is also featured in a TV ad for ESPN's fantasy leagues.

Rush started work on "Snakes & Arrows" in early 2006 when Lee and Lifeson, who reside two blocks away from each other in Toronto, began working on new music at Lee's house, with lyrics supplied by Peart from California. The spirit of the project, Lee says, was inspired by "Feedback," which "put us in touch with being kids again. I think we came into ["Snakes & Arrows"] with a real nice mental attitude."

Lee and Lifeson had five new songs sketched out when they convened with Peart at a home the drummer owns in Quebec, and the trio continued to develop material, in May and September in Toronto — bringing in Nick Raskin ince (Foo Fighters, Velvet Revolver), Rush's first American-born producer, for the latter session.

In November, the group then repaired to Allaire Studios in New York's Catskill Mountains for five weeks. "We finally got a borscht belt gig," Lifeson cracks, whose residential setting allowed for such spontaneous creations as the instrumental "Hope" and "Malignant Narcissism."

"There's a lot of playing on this record," Lifeson says. "To me it's got our whole history in it, somehow. I've got a lot of the way we wrote songs in the past, the kind of chords we might have used, but not in a nostalgic kind of way."

In fact, Lifeson and Lee agree that many of the new songs hew back to the intricate, prog-rock stylings on which Rush staked its reputation in the '70s — and in turn have inspired more recent rock bands whose work and sound they inhabit interest Rush.

"We like to feel like they're current," Lee says. "We listen to a lot of younger bands, especially Alex. A lot of those bands cite us as an influence. It's ironic that bands that have been influenced by our playing or our past have some instruction for us too. They help us grow."

That pattern has helped Rush become a kind of rite of passage band, handed down from one generation of fans to the next. The trio maintain a particularly strong five following, so expectations are high for a 42-show North American tour that begins June 13 in Atlanta and will be followed by dates around the world, perhaps returning to these shores in 2008.
Being Brandi Carlile

‘Grey’s Anatomy’ Link Propels Sales Of New Album

Brandi Carlile’s self-titled 2005 Columbia debut had a relatively quiet rollout. Released on the label’s Red Ink imprint, the album, which has sold 74,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, never charted.

Two years later, Carlile’s follow-up disc, “The Story,” is a completely different, well, story. Released April 3, the album opened at No. 76 on The Billboard 200 and made an impressive jump to No. 41 in its second week.

Sony BMG VP of marketing Greg Linn says that while there wasn’t a huge hit or one galvanizing moment with the first album, so much work was done on its behalf that we really built a foundation. We were able to go back to all these people Brandi had connected with—from reviewers to promoters to TV supervisors—and get them involved in this launch.

TV supervisors have been particularly key. Three songs from “Brandi Carlile” were licensed to ABC’s hit drama “Grey’s Anatomy,” which Linn says made for a “great sampler” for new fans. “They came to us with this wonderful opportunity to take the video for the first single (the album’s title track) and intercut it with footage from the first three seasons of the show,” Linn says. “The images worked phenomenally well together.”

The “Grey’s” montage aired April 12 and was made available as a free download on iTunes the next day. “It was amazing to have that happen when it did,” Linn says. “To have album sales jump in the second week is such a rarity in these market conditions.”

Carlile also got a boost when the first single, which went for adds at radio in mid-February, was made the Download of the Week March 13 on iTunes. The cut debuted at No. 75 on The Billboard Hot 100 and has found support at college, triple-A and most recently adult top 40 stations.

“The fact that Brandi can go and perform on [public radio] KCRW Santa Monica Calif. but also have her song played on Star (adult top 40 KYSL Los Angeles) means she can live in such different worlds and appeal to such different audiences,” Linn says.

Carlile will keep up her heavy touring schedule through spring and much of summer, and a three-month fall headlining tour is in the planning stages.

“This is the best tour I’ve ever been on,” she says. “I had heard so many major label horror stories, but so far it’s been a nonissue for me. They haven’t been forceful in any way. They’ve just let me do my thing the way I want to do it.”

Linda Perry has come into her own—the producer, songwriter and A&R person. Her friends call her “a force of nature” because when she sings, she walks, and when she writes, she writes hits. When she signs an artist to her label, Custard Records, she goes with her gut (she inked James Blunt when others passed). Her label is home to up-and-comers Sierra Swan, Sunshine, Ben Jelen and Big Elf, as well as rock veteran Courtney Love.

Perry, who of late has logged studio time with Alicia Keys and the Section Quartet, will be honored for her career achievements April 29 by the San Francisco Recording Academy chapter, along with Sammy Hagar and Narada Michael Walden. The evening will benefit advocacy education and professional development programs spearheaded by the chapter. Perry stole a moment between recording and trying to get some sleep to talk to Billboard about current projects.

When will Courtney Love’s album be ready? We’re going to start mixing, and we’re doing one more song. We’re putting the marketing plan together, and Courtney is going to put a band together. She’s ready and really excited to tour.

How has it been working with Alicia Keys on her new album? We did some really great work together. It’s a whole other thing—old school soul and R&B—but I really made a point to bring it into the Al Green area. Alicia is really open. It is effortless with her.

What can you tell us about the Section Quartet project? I just finished the record. They are covering a lot of popular songs. I love the fact that kids are going to hear popular music arranged in strings. It is going to open their ears that strings aren’t just to pretty—they can rock. It’s very original, even though they’re doing covers.

Was it harder to produce string instruments? It really is. It took me a week to get it. I had to figure out how I was going to approach this. But it was refreshing to jump onto something different. You have to make sure that you get the right emotion across on violin just like you would with a singer. I recorded them and approached them like I was dealing with a band.

How is the Big Elf record coming? Big Elf is almost done. It is Floyd, Sabbath and the Beatles, with some glam mixed in there. It is just so huge.

Where do you feel you are in your career? This thing that I was looking for a long time was respect. When I was in [the] Non-Blondes that’s all I wanted. I just wanted respect and to be known for being a good songwriter and somebody that was contributing something to music in a positive way. I didn’t really feel like I was getting that in the band. All I have been fighting for was one day to be respected for what I do. I have people reaching out to me constantly now to work with me. What it has done is made me realize that I never needed acceptance. I realize now that none of that stuff matters because it is not going to change anything I do.
MIRANDA LAMBERT

Cool Ex-Girlfriend

Producers: Frank Liddell, Mike Wrocke

Columbia Nashville

Release Date: May 1

Best-known for her flame-throwing hit “Kerosene,” Miranda Lambert delivers more of the same on her new album. “Gunpowder & Lead” deals with an abusive mate and exactly how the singer will greet him when he makes bail (“I’m gonna show him what a little girl’s made of,” she warns), while the title cut is as flammable as “Kerosene.” But not every song is as in-your-face. Her new single, the less incendiary “Famous in a Small Town” (“Whether you’re late for church or you’re stuck in jail, word’s gonna get around, everyone dies famous in a small town”) could be the song that breaks through for her. “More Like Her,” which she calls “personal and introspective,” is a sparsely produced ballad that shows her vulnerable side. And her cover of the Emmylou Harris classic “Easy From Now On” is masterfully done.—KT

JOAN ARMATRADING

Into the Blues

Producers: Joan Armatrading

429 Records

Release Date: May 1

Armatrading has certainly had the blues at times during her long career, but she’s never really played them like they were... well, the blues. “Into the Blues,” then, is her sojourn into that well-worn territory, and Armatrading’s take is wide and distinctive and stretches the parameters of what we might consider blues. That said, she still throws down in convincing Chicago style on the chugging “Liza” and “My Baby’s Gone,” and delivers a faithful front-porch sitdown on the rootsy “Baby Blue Eyes.” But smooth, atmospheric pieces such as “A Woman in Love,” “D.N.A.” and the Annie Lennox-styled “Secular Songs” are closer to pop, while a one-chord jam like “Deep Down” falls well below Armatrading’s usual creative standard. Nevertheless, the blues format allows Armatrading, who plays everything except drums, to stretch out more on guitar and fill in the sound with organ, piano and an occasional harmonica.—GO

WORLD

ANGELIQUE KIDJO

Djin Djin

Producer: Tony Visconti

Starbucks Entertainment/Razor & Tie

Release Date: May 1

The title of Kidjo’s new album (pronounced “gin gin”) refers to the sound of a bell in Africa that begins each new day. It is a fitting reference, as the 13-song collection finds the singer returning to her Beninese roots of West Africa. Rich rhythms form the sturdy foundation, over which Kidjo sings in a handful of languages, including English. Covers of the Rolling Stones’ “Gimme Shelter” (featuring Joss Stone) and Sade’s “Pearls” (with Carlos Santana and Josh Groban) surprise and delight, with the former a Sharon Jones-type version. Elsewhere, Kidjo partners with Alicia Keys, Branford Marsalis, Ziggy Marley and Amadou & Mariam, “Salala,” which celebrates life’s joys and sorrows, is a duet between Kidjo and Peter Gabriel. The give and take of their vocal interplay is spirited and moving—like much of this album.—MP

NE-YO

Because of You

Producers: various

Def Jam

Release Date: May 1

Now that the world has become familiar with his lyrics and vocals, Ne-Yo is spicing things up with a sophomore album that’s unpredictable and decidedly more pop than his 2006 debut, “In My Own Words.” Fun is the agenda, whether he’s consciously channeling “Off the Wall” (MJ-style ad-libs and all) via the pulsating rhythms of “Can We Chill?” and the lead single/title track or splicing a finely tuned falsetto a la Prince on “Sex With My Ex” and “Addiction.” Infused with Motown-style organ, the sultry Jennifer Hudson duet “Leaving Tonight” is a bit ambitious for his low-range vocals, while the go-go-esque “ Ain’t Thinking About You” sounds out of character. But Ne-Yo still has a way with melody, managing to upgrade his offerings while showing that the writer in him ain’t dead either.—CH

NE-YO

Because of You

Warner Bros.

Release Date: May 1

“Can We Chill?” and the lead single/title track or splicing a finely tuned falsetto a la Prince on “Sex With My Ex” and “Addiction.” Infused with Motown-style organ, the sultry Jennifer Hudson duet “Leaving Tonight” is a bit ambitious for his low-range vocals, while the go-go-esque “ Ain’t Thinking About You” sounds out of character. But Ne-Yo still has a way with melody, managing to upgrade his offerings while showing that the writer in him ain’t dead either.—CH

MICHAEL BUBLÉ

Call Me Irresponsible

Producers: Michael Bublé, Humberto Gatica

I 43/Reprise

Release Date: May 1

With lead single “Everything” a top 10 AC smash just a month into release, it hardly takes a crystal ball to determine the fate of handsome crooner Bublé’s new set. Previous hits “Home” and “Save the Last Dance for Me” established Bublé as an adult staple. And here, in this jazz arrangements of pop classics “Wonderful Tonight,” “Me & Mrs. Jones” and “The Best Is Yet to Come” and more nicely demonstrate his stately interpretive savvy—passionate without crossing into melodrama. Along with “Everything,” the best cut is his own lovelorn ballad “Lost.” Previous album “It’s Time” has sold 5.5 million copies. “Irresponsible” is primed to catapult Bublé further upon that momentum.—CT

RUSH

Snakes & Arrows

Producers: Nick Raskulinecz, Rush

Anthem/Atlantic

Release Date: May 1

Initial impression with these provokers’ first album since 2002 is that the venerable trio from the Great White North is doing its best to keep up with complicated concept—metal bands like Mastodon the group’s no doubt inspired. Closer inspection, though, reveals that most of the proceedings are fairly clean-cut and midtempo, with guitars only intermittently attaining heavy density (amidst the Cream-like blues-rock of the wartime statement “The Way the Wind Blows.”) For instance, despite the lyrics typically diverting barrage of paradoxical metaphors and phrasing, one commendable, down-to-earth homage to “factory town” life built on a Link Wray- reminiscent twang riff (“Workin’ Them Angels”), three of the album’s most notable tracks are instrumental: “The Main Monkey Business” (mythic with exotic world percussion), “Hope” (holsey, new age loneliness) and “Malignant Narcissism” (booty-shaking, jazz-funk fusion). Here and elsewhere, as usual, time changes will keep the customers satisfied.—CE

NE-YO

Because of You

Warner Bros.

Release Date: May 1

“Can We Chill?” and the lead single/title track or splicing a finely tuned falsetto a la Prince on “Sex With My Ex” and “Addiction.” Infused with Motown-style organ, the sultry Jennifer Hudson duet “Leaving Tonight” is a bit ambitious for his low-range vocals, while the go-go-esque “ Ain’t Thinking About You” sounds out of character. But Ne-Yo still has a way with melody, managing to upgrade his offerings while showing that the writer in him ain’t dead either.—CH

FEB

FEIST

The Reminder

Producers: Feist, Gonzales, Renaud Letang

Cherrytree/Interscope

Release Date: May 1

After two years of constant touring, Canadian singer/songwriter Feist, whose sultry voice is more than magnetic, finally returns with new material. Her chilled-out 2004 debut “Let It Die” eased through bossa, French pop, folk and electronics, suggesting someone blissfully trapped in her own world. But “The Reminder,” recorded in an old mansion outside Paris, has an organic, full-band feel, with more in those rhythmic tracks the equally pulsating bass of “Pop’s Cool Grove” and the soothing “A Quiet Place.” Aiming for the contemporary R&B and AC crowd, Brown shifts into vocal mode (first revealed on 2004 CD “West Coast Coolin’”) for several cuts, including the Brian McKnight-penned “Stay With Me” and “So in Love.” Brown’s strong suit remains his guitar-playing inventiveness and songwriting skills (he wrote/co-wrote nine of the 10 tracks), which harks back to the creative tradition laid down by Benson, Montgomery and others.—GM

continued on p. 36
SANJI PATTY
Falling Forward
Producer: David Hamilton
INO Records
Release Date: April 10
An 11-time winner of the Gospel Music Assn’s female vocalist of the year award, Patty has the voice of an angel. There’s no attempt to sound hip or trendy on “Falling Forward.” Patty and producer David Hamilton have crafted an album that boasts a lush, living perfect fight, perfectly spotlighting the artist’s pristine soprano. She’s never sounded more confident or more in command as she effortlessly soars through up-tempo fare such as the gospel-tinted “Step Into the Joy” and “Sweeter Medleys,” an engaging composite of familiar church favorites. The title track is a poignant ballad about accepting God’s grace and moving forward, even in the face of failure and regrets. This powerful set shows Patty’s ability to breathe life into a great lyric is as impressive as ever.—DEP

SOUNDTRACK
VARIOUS ARTISTS
Spider-Man 3: Music From and Inspired By
Producer: Dave Sardy
Rollercoaster Records
Release Date: May 1
Spider may soon be coming to Broadway, but for now, soaring alt-rock powers his Web-slinging life. The soundtrack to the third “Spider-Man” film begins with Snow Patrol’s stary-eyed powered ballad, “Signal Fire,” and soon shifts gears with the Killers’ “Move Away,” a pumped, early 80s-style workout, while Wolfmother delivers their debut’s “Pleased to Meet You.” More satisfying, moody slow-burners like “Scared of Myself” (Simon Dawes) reach deeper into our super-hero’s soul, better matching the movie’s story line (Peter Parker’s suit suddenly turns black), as do acoustic ballads by indie bands Black Mountain (“Stay Free”) and Rogue Wave (“Sidelines”). Best of the bunch is the flaming Lips’ Supertramp-inspired ballad “The Supreme Being Teaches Spider-Man How to Be In Love,” whose title sums up the set’s refreshing lesson: With great power comes great sensitivity.—SP

VITAL REISSUES
WARREN ZEVON
Presludes: Rare and Unreleased Recordings
Producers: various
Ampal/NeXt
Release Date: May 1
Zevon would have reaped the prospect of a post-mortem plundering of his vault by label suits, which is why it’s only now that we’re beginning to see material from his archives trickle out. Assembled by his son Jordan, the 16 tracks on “Presludes” were culled from more than 100 pre-1976 songs found in an old room case after Zevon’s 2003 death. Curios abound: there’s a super-loose, late-night-jam demo of “Worewolves of London” with a reggae twist, a house party take on “Poor Poor Pitiful Me” and five unreleased tracks (including the gorgeous “Empty Hearted Town”). But especially given the context, “Presludes” is a surprisingly emotional affair, more invested in exploring Zevon’s role as a piano-based songwriter than the arch pirate behind “Lawyers, Guns and Money.” The unfinished feel gives an altered “Studebaker” extra sobriety; same goes for a raw, touching “Accidentally Like a Martyr.”—JV

LEGEND & CREDITS
EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (Assistant and CHUCK TAYLOR (Singles))
CONTRIBUTORS: Molly Brown, Chuck Eddy, Gary Graff, Courier Hope, Stephanie Horst, Ged Michell, Michael Paolletta, Swan Philipp, Deborah Evans Price, Chuck Taylor, Kim Tucker, Crista L. Tuss, Jeff Veselka
PICK: A new release predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format.
CRITICS’ CHOICE X: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for music lovers.
All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathon Cohen and single review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Sixth Floor, New York, NY 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

SINGLES

POP

PLAIN WHITE T’S
Hey There Delilah (3:52)
Producers: Ariel Rechtshaid
Writers: T. Higgenson
Publisher: not listed
Hollywood
Already charting course at modern rock radio, the Plain White T’s revamped single “Hey There Delilah” offers a fresh bounce to the often cliched boy-band ballad, that is irresistibly light-hearted and sweet. Singing into a crowd, Darcy love and earnest teen longing, lead singer Tom Higgenson delivers an eerily acoustic sing-along complete with an audience-enthralling live version. First premiering on the pop-rock quintet’s 2005 album, “All That We Needed,” the song is already a fan favorite and detectable shining star on the group’s Hollywood Records debut EP. With its simple charm and catchy melody, “Delilah” is an easy add for top 40 and may serve as a perfect soundtrack for this summer’s budding romance.—SH

ROCK

NICKELBACK
Side of a Bullet (3:00)
Producers: Joey Moi, Nickelback
Writer: Nickelback
Publisher: various
Roadrunner
The fifth (and final) single from Nickelback’s “All the Right Reasons” recalls when the group flirted with metal on debut album “The State.” On “Side of a Bullet,” a chugging Metallica-esque guitar is an abrupt jolt down memory lane in more ways than one. “Bullet” recalls the power of “Cnnmbb,” Dave Abbott, who was killed on-stage in 2004. As one of many who counted the guitarist as a friend, the band secured permission from Abbott’s family to use his material, so the Texas axeman rides again on a lightning-slick bit tersweet solo. People can snarl about pop-punkers paying tribute to one of metal’s brightest lights, but for the sake of sentiment—a rip ping song that does it justice—criticism should be quelled.—CLT

MODEST MOUSE
Dashboard (4:44)
Producers: Dennis Henning
Writer: Modest Mouse
Publisher: not listed
Epic
Easily a standout from album “We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank,” “Dashboard” packs in all of Modest Mouse’s charms: frontman Isaac Brock’s clipped vocals, steady drum thumps and fiery, raw guitar. It’s the follow-up to “Fiction,” which tri umphed at rock and top 40 radio—but unlike that optimistic track, “Dashboard” stays within the indie rockers’ stomping ground. Brock’s snarly storytelling, the vocal equivalent of never knowing if he’s gonna hug you or clock you in the face, takes center stage, while bandmates bring a steady pounding that crests at the chorus to add drama. “Dashboard” comes enough of a frus trated charge to hold its own at modern rock, but may be too intense for top 40. Doesn’t matter. It’s still worthy of repeated spins.—MB

AC

RASCAL FLATTS
My Wish (3:38)
Producers: Dann Huff, Rascal Flatts
Writer: S. Robison, J. Steele
Publisher: various
Lyric Street
Rascal Flatts’ “Hot Mix” for previous “What Hurts the Most” catapulted the country group to the AC summit with one of the most enduring recorded performances of the year. New pop rerub of Flatts’ no. 1 country “My Wish” again strips away steel guitar and ampls guitars and percussion for a composition with potential to top adult pop and garner catalog airplay for years to come. These guys pretty much have it down: love/rom lyrics, soaring choruses and songwriting that champions the idea that melody still counts for—all no question why the act was the top-selling of 2006, across all genres. A heroic song that females will flock to, again proving that country is the new pop.—CT

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

TONY AMODIO
Ne Olur (3:02)
Producer: Manuel De Pellepe Writers: A. Amodio, M. Depepe, A. Sahin
Publisher: Manuel de Pellepe Entertainment
Mutillingual Italian singer/songwriter/film composer/bassist Tony Amodio, whose stateside success includes recordings by Ai Jarreau and James Ingram, has recorded ambitious album “Dejà Vu,” which includes compositions in English, Spanish, Turkish and Italian. Single “Ne Olur,” sung in the latter two languages, is so hacky that pony Amodio has potential to become a new-day Ricki Martin, given instantaneous checkable appeal aside seductive uptempo singalong—testifying that every so often, hooks transcend boundaries of language. Produced by acclaimed Milanese Manuel De Pellepe, Amodio’s offering is another among the recent bounty of imported releases with potential to pitch a mainstream radio tidal shift. Dance remixes further powder the keg. Top 40, turn the ignition switch.—CT

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS
Do You Know? (The Ping Pong Song) (3:40)
Producers: Sean Garrett, Brian Kidd, Enrique Iglesias, Carlos Pauca r
Writers: S. Garrett, B. Kidd, E. Iglesias
Publisher: various
Interscope
With the forecast for male solo pop a veritable arid wasteland for the past several years, the return of Enrique Iglesias—whose last top 20 entry was in 2003—is cause for three cheers. “Do You Know? (The Ping Pong Song)” is such a consummate midtempo carousel of hooks that it takes only one listen to raise your voice in unison. The “ping pong” references the clever instrumental sound of what resembles a ball being volleyed back and forth. Despite its joyous refrain, Iglesias has actually been dissed, as he sings, “Do you know what it feels like to be the last one to know the lock in the door has changed?” Hopefully his pain will be short-lived, as top 40 and adult top 40 thrust open the gate to this exhilarating summertime anthem. An esteemed launch to upcoming “Insomniac,” due June 12.—CT

DAVE KOZ FEATURING ANITA BAKER
SOMEBEHIND (3:49)
Producer: Phil Ramone Writers: J. Bernsten, S. Sondheim
Publisher: not listed
Capitol
With 10 No. 1 hits and four Grammy Award nominations under his belt, smooth jazz main man Dave Koz serves up his first official AC release, “SOMEBEHIND” from “West Side Story,” one of many scene stealers from his classy new “At the Movies” set. Featuring silken vocals from the incomparable Anita Baker and comparably lush production from Phil Ramone, along with Koz’s courtyard, understated sax, the composition is a triple threat among songsters, the hand sman’s instrumental statesman and consummate production visionary. “SOMEBEHIND” is the audio equivalent of Buckingham Palace. A momentous melodic mother lode.—CT

www.americanradiohistory.com
Regardless of how a clearance dispute on the special edition of Beyoncé's "B'Day" plays out (see story, page 6), consumers have warmly received the enhanced album. Several panelists ages 13-19 echoed that point at the What Teens Want session during this year's Billboard Latin Music Conference in Miami (see story, page 10).

In the first three weeks since its super-sized edition arrived in stores, the album, now No. 13 on The Billboard 200, has sold 214,000 copies, according to Nielsen's SoundScan. Total includes the sales of the original edition, but the bulk of it is from the new package that contains six fresh songs among 12 added tracks. (Billboard has no restriction on how many remixes can be added to an album, but if more than six songs are included, the new volume tracks as its own title.)

The new content includes a Spanish version of No. 1 single "Irreplecable," and a duet with Shakira, "Beautiful Liar."

Some newspaper columnists were up in arms in 2004 when a similarly enhanced edition of Usher's "Confessions" arrived with the Alicia Keys pairing, "My Boo." Among its new ingredients: Isn't it a gouging for Usher to entice fans who already bought the original version to buy this new version? They asked. "Let the consumers decide," was my ambivalent response.

How did they react? The album sold almost 3.5 million copies from the time it was reissued in October 2004 to the time it fell off The Billboard 200 in the Feb. 25, 2006, issue.

Shoppers posting notices at Apple's iTunes store did complain in 2005 when Island Def Jam initially withheld a la carte downloads on Mariah Carey's "Don't Forget About Us," the song added to a reissue of "The Emancipation of Mimi." Despite that irritation, enough fans bought CDs or downloads of the enhanced "Mimi" that the title unexpectedly topped 50 Cent's "The Massacre" to become the year's best-selling album. "Mimi" tracked close to 2 million scans from the time it was reissued until its Billboard 200 run ended.

Originally, Beyoncé's camp toyed with releasing two separate special editions, one with four new songs in English, the other with four in Spanish. Somewhere along the line, the idea came to load one special edition clock-full of new attractions.

But declining album sales prompting labels to rethink their business models and practices, I wondered if it might have been smarter for Columbia to release all the additional content as a new set, perhaps with a value price. According to the teenagers who participated in one of our Latin conference's most popular sessions, Beyoncé is better off being managed by father Mathew Knowles than by me.

All but one of the 11 kids on the panel admitted they occasionally grab illegal downloads, yet when asked the last time they went to a store to buy an album, they didn't have to think too far back to cite an example. The leading answer, by far, was the special "B'Day" package—and the college guy who is obviously infatuated with Beyoncé wasn't the only panelist who said so.

Speaking for a few of her peers, a girl in her early teens said that "for just $2 more" than the original edition, the volume of additional content represented a good value. Shows what I know.

AVRIL, AGAIN: Avril Lavigne collects her second No. 1 on The Billboard 200, albeit with a lighter sales week than she has scored earlier in her career.

Going forward, the last 13 words of the previous sentence won't be seen much in this column. In a year where album sales have plummeted more than 16%, saying that an artist sold less today than in an earlier year feels almost as newsworthy as saying that milkman no longer deliver in most U.S. neighborhoods.

Eight of the nine acts who have been No. 1 this year previously appeared on the big chart. Only three of those eight—Fall Out Boy, Modest Mouse and Pretty Ricky—led with career-best weeks.

"The Best Damn Thing," Lavigne's third chart-topping album, began with 266,000 sold. Her 2004's career-topper "Under My Skin," began with 381,000. Against that backdrop, you can deduce that 187,000 copies for "Nine Inch Nails at No. 2, falls short of that but it's faster week..."
### AIRPLAY SALES DATA

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<td><strong>JOEY REXROTH</strong></td>
<td><strong>WHAT YOU WANT (THE FUTURE KISS)</strong></td>
<td><strong>RENEE SIMMONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>LITTLE TOWN WITHOUT YOU</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LAST NIGHT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LOCUST</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EVERYTHING AWAY</strong></td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS.

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### MODERN ROCK

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**Note:** Data and chart information is for the week ending May 5, 2007. For more information, visit www.billboard.com. Reprinted by permission of The Billboard (Copyright 2007). All rights reserved.
MAY 5, 2007

**POP 100**

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**POP 100 AIRPLAY**

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**HOT SINGLES SALES**

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Data for week of MAY 5, 2007 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 52

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
BETWEEN THE BULLETS... t@pe09@billboard.com

MUSIQ ON TOP, THICKE SURGES

Thanks in part to sale pricing at Circuit City, Macy Gray's "Big" (No. 24) zooms with a Musiq Soulchild's "Luvvsong" earns the
46% increase, the largest on the chart after
Gainer's Gainer trophy on
R&B/Hip-Hop albums, riving back to No.
1. Trailing by a mere
handful of units is the
surgi of Robin Thicke, who
chatted and per-
served in the April 19
episode of "The Oprah
Winter Show."

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

www.americanradiohistory.com
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**THE MIDAS TOUCH BOOSTS EMERSON DRIVE**

Indie label Midas Records logs its first top 10 and first No. 3 Billboard singles as Emerson Drive’s "Moments" skips 13-10 on Hot Country Songs, while labelmate "Fools" eases 12-18 on the chart. Canadian group Emerson Drive competes in the top 10 for the first time since logging two consecutive top five peaks early in the decade with "I Should Be Sleeping" (No. 4, June 2002) and "Fall Into Me" (No. 3, January 2003). Midas is backed by Navajo in the general market and by EMI Christian Music Group in Canadian specialty stores.

Concurrently, Carrie Underwood’s "Wasted" pegs a third week at No. 1 on the country chart. She is the only solo female to notch more than two weeks at No. 1 since Gretchen Wilson’s "Redneck Woman" dominated for five weeks in the spring of 2004. "Wasted" is Underwood’s third chart-topper, all of which logged multiple weeks at the summit. — Wade Jason
NOT LATIN SONGS:

1. "Que Hiciste" by Jennifer Lopez
2. "Bendita Tu Luz" by Mana
3. "Ese" by Conjunto Primavera
4. "Hermano" by Hector El Father
5. "Todo Se Derrumbó" by Givery

TOP LATIN ALBUMS:

1. "La Historia Continúa, Parte II" by Marco Antonio Solís
2. "De Mi Vida Loca" by Chayanne
3. "Como Te Va Mi Amor" by Los Alacranes Musical

For more details, please refer to the Billboard magazine.
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### Japan
- **New**
  1. Looking For
  2. X-Game Crazy Rainbow (CD+DVD)
  3. Dream Lover
  4. Babydoll (First LTD Edition)
  5. Sen No Kaze Ni Natte
  6. Tsubomi
  7. Eternity
  8. Ghost (First LTD Edition)

### United Kingdom
- **New**
  1. Looking For
  2. X-Game Crazy Rainbow (CD+DVD)
  3. Dream Lover
  4. Babydoll (First LTD Edition)
  5. Sen No Kaze Ni Natte
  6. Tsubomi
  7. Eternity
  8. Ghost (First LTD Edition)

### Germany
- **New**
  1. Looking For
  2. X-Game Crazy Rainbow (CD+DVD)
  3. Dream Lover
  4. Babydoll (First LTD Edition)
  5. Sen No Kaze Ni Natte
  6. Tsubomi
  7. Eternity
  8. Ghost (First LTD Edition)

### France
- **New**
  1. Et S'il N'en Restait Qu'une
  2. Mauvaise foî nocturne
  3. Miracle
  4. The Sweet Escape
  5. Good Things (Come To An End)
  6. Destination Calabria
  8. Ta Mejor

### Australia
- **New**
  1. Steer
  2. Girlfriend
  3. The Beautiful Lies
  4. Right Here, Right Now
  5. The Beautiful Lies
  6. Good Reasons
  7. Give It To Me

### Spain
- **New**
  1. Traven Gelachen
  2. Freefall
  3. Say It Right
  4. Girlfriend
  5. The Beautiful Lies
  6.5.2007
  7. Give It To Me

### The Netherlands
- **New**
  1. Traven Gelachen
  2. Freefall
  3. Say It Right
  4. Girlfriend
  5. The Beautiful Lies
  6.5.2007
  7. Give It To Me

### Austria
- **New**
  1. Avril Lavigne
  2. Blaq
  3. Simple Red
  4. Nine Inch Nails
  5. DJ Ötzi

### Greece
- **New**
  1. Yassis Maria
  2. Summer Wine
  3. Pes To Dinata
  4. Thelo
  5. O Erasi

### Billboard's USA Top Tracks
- **New**
  1. Beautiful Liar
  2. Babydoll (First LTD Edition)
  3. Sen No Kaze Ni Natte
  4. Tsubomi
  5. Eternity
  6. Ghost (First LTD Edition)

### Portugal
- **New**
  1. Avril Lavigne
  2. The Beautiful Lies
  3. Give It To Me
  4. The Moment Your Believe
  5. BriaStorm

### Denmark
- **New**
  1. 10,000 Nights of Thunder
  2. Give It To Me
  3. Say It Right
  4. Grace Kelly
  5. Rehan

### Portugal Albums
- **New**
  1. Joe Bonfio
  2. My Way
  3. Paulinho
  4. Martin
  5. The Doors

### Greece Albums
- **New**
  1. Jennifer Lopez
  2. Cumbia de Fuego
  3. Spotify
  4. Soundtrack
  5. Sertanejo

Data for week of May 5, 2007 | Charts Legend on Page 52
# SINGLES & TRACKS

## SONG INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart Codes</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>CINDY LAUPANTZ</td>
<td>&quot;I'm So Happy It's Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>DON HARRIS</td>
<td>&quot;I'll Be Home For Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
<td>Don Harris</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Country</td>
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<td>&quot;I'll Be Home For Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS</td>
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<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>LINDA RONSTADT</td>
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<td>Linda Ronstadt</td>
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<td>Universal</td>
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<td>Mary J. Blige</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Paul Ryan</td>
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</tr>
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<td>&quot;Let It Snow&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
<td>Tina Turner</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
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<td>&quot;Santa Baby&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Country</td>
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<td>&quot;White Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
<td>Tina Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>TINA TURNER</td>
<td>&quot;Winter Wonderland&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>BMG/Chrysalis Publishing</td>
<td>Tina Turner</td>
</tr>
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**Notes:**
- Chart codes indicate genre and artist category.
- "I'll Be Home For Christmas" is highlighted as a popular Christmas song.
- Additional受欢迎的Christmas songs include "Let It Snow," "Merry Christmas Baby," and "Santa Baby."
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MAY 5, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 55
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RECORD COMPANIES: EMI Music in London appoints Mark Nicholas and Matthew Crosswise to VPs of business development of its global digital team. Nicholas was director of content and partnerships at 3UK, and Crosswise was VP of commercial digital media at EMI Music U.K.

Warner Music Latina in Miami promotes Albert Ramirez III to marketing director. He was West Coast promotions director in Los Angeles.

Still Working Musicians names Kurt Donny VP of creative. He has worked in A&R for MCA Records in Los Angeles, Warner-Chappell and Buddy Killen’s KMG Music in Nashville.

Collector’s Choice Music names Michael Jolly merchandising manager of its Heartland catalog. He was retail manager at Shout! Factory.

DISTRIBUTION: Universal Music Distribution promotes Vince Szydlowski to VP of national sales. He was senior director of catalog, classics, jazz and associated labels.

TOURING: Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Conn., names Tom Cantone VP of sports and entertainment. He was VP of entertainment and marketing at Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Palace Sports and Entertainment names Barbara Penchoff quality assurance manager. She was a client services manager at Ticketmaster.

The Nashville Arena names Dewayne Smith senior director of facilities and Terry McConnell director of operations. Smith was director of operations, and McConnell was assistant director of operations.

Monterey Peninsula/Paradigm in Nashville taps Beth Hamilton as an agent for its fairs/festivals division. She was an assistant at the William Morris Agency.

MTV Networks international promotes Shavnet Singh to senior VP/managing director of its emerging markets group. He was deputy GM.

ME Television names Bavu Blakes urban music director. He was programmer/host of the network’s urban show “Smooth.”

Los Angeles-based film/TV literary talent agency Paradigm has tapped industry vet Ed Micone as head of adult contemporary. He was founder of Micono Entertainment Group.

TV: VH1/CMT promotes Richard Gay to executive VP of strategy and business operations. He was senior VP.

MTV Networks Latin America names Juan C. Acosta VP/CFO. He was director of finance at NBCU/Telemundo Network Group.

RELATED FIELDS: HandlerCo. appoints Gira Drewok to assistant VP of strategic initiatives. She was assistant VP of strategic planning.

Edited by Mitchell Peters

TRUE COLORS
Savage Garden’s Darren Hayes has joined Matthew Broderick, Nathan Lane and others to raise awareness for the Trevor Project, a nationwide suicide prevention hotline for gay youth. A June 25 charity event at the Hudson Theatre in the Millennium Broadway Hotel in New York will bring awareness to and raise money for the project. For more info, go to thetrevorproject.org.

FOOD BRINGS CLINTON, THE EDGE, FALLON TOGETHER

U2’s Adam Clayton; Evan Cassell; James Bowie and wife Iran; Ed Burns and his wife, Christy Turlington; Epic Records president Charlie Walk; Food Network president Brooke Johnson; Stanley “Ucci” Rachael Ray and New York chef Coiure Casella. In one of the eve’s funniest moments, Fallon, with guitar in hand, delvered an orig nal tune, the clas sic-in-waiting “Car Wash for Peace.”

Coming face to face with food guru Ray, Thanked her or her slice’ ‘s recipe in the April 28 issue. Realizing who she was dealing with, she playfully pushed you truly in the arm and said, “My test kitchen created five slice’ ‘s recipes to come up with the one we sent you.” Ray said through much laughter, “I had everyone on this, from the Food Network to my downtime TV show.”

INSIDE TRACK

BACKBEAT

ASCAP’S I CREATE MUSIC WEEK—CELEBRATING THE VOICE OF THE MUSIC CREATOR

ASCAP held a week of activities April 15-21 in Los Angeles to celebrate the voice of the music creator. Highlights included the 22nd annual ASCAP Film & Television Music Awards, the 24th annual ASCAP Pop Music Awards and the second annual ASCAP I Create Music Expo, a national of-venue dedicated to songwriting and composing.

The Film & Television Music Awards, held April 17 at the Kodak Theatre, honored the composers and songwriters from the top box-office film music and the best-performed TV music of 2006. Marc Shaiman was honored with the ASCAP Henry Mancini Award in recognition of his outstanding achievements, and a host of stars, including Billy Crystal, Rob Reiner and Harold Ramis, took part in the special tribute.

ABOVE: Pictured, from left, are ASCAP senior VP of the membership group for pop/rock, Tom DeSavia, Tyson Ritter and Nick Wheeler of the All-American Rejects, who received the Vanguard Award and two song awards for “Dirty Little Secret” and “Move Along,” and Joe King and Isaac Slade of the Fray, which received two pop awards for “Over My Head” and “How to Save a Life”...

MAY 5, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 57

From left, songwriters/pie enthusiasts Chaminille, Bun B, Just Black, Timothy "Maddux" Clayton, Edon, "Hill" Moore and Shondee "Mr. Bangladesh" Crawford take part in the "Making It in Hip Hop" panel.

FCOLON, left, and THE EDGE

Jemaine Duft and Jeloha Austin show off their pop songwriting of the year awards. More courtesy of APIC/MARKSMAN.COM.

TAKING PART IN THE "I CREATE MUSIC" PANEL, FROM LEFT, ARE ASCAP EXECUTIVE VP/DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP Todd Kalbauer; COMPO/PERFORMER Juna Aplin; SONGWRITER/PRODUCER TEAM ANDR "ONE" Harris and Vidal Davis; COMPOSER John Compianca and PRODUCER/DIGITAL PRODUCER and Iceland Records urban music producer Jemaine Dufti.

INFORMATION FROM: Courtesy of American Music Business Association; USA TODAY; ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR David Rank; WOLFGANG'S, Inc
INSIDE TRACK

VIVA NASH VEGAS

Curb artist Wynonna Judd personally asked her labelmate and Nashville native Kimberley Locke to join her and Island Def Jam’s Patti LaBelle for Divas NashVegas, which took place April 21 on LP Field in Nashville. Locke warmed up the crowd with her current single “Change,” as well as with “Band of Gold,” both featured on her sophomore album, “based on a True Story,” due May 1. The songbirds expressed excitement over the possibility of taking the act on the road. “In a dream world, I’d co-host ‘The View,’ then head out on the weekend with Wynonna and Patti,” Locke said. Proceeds from Divas NashVegas benefit the programs of Oasis Center, a youth crisis center in Nashville.

AND ENRIQUE MAKES THREE (AND A HALF)

Enrique Iglesias plays a carpenter on the May 7 episode of CBS’ “Two and a Half Men.” The singer’s new international hit, “Do You Know? (The Ping Pong Song),” will be featured in the promos leading up to the track. Hear tracks as EMI Music Publishing’s Jody Gerson, Iglesias’ manager Fernando Giaccardi and CBS’ Jack Sussman and Amy Osler were the dealmakers.

ASCAP’S I CREATE MUSIC WEEK—CELEBRATING THE VOICE OF THE MUSIC CREATOR continued from page 57

The Pop Music Awards, held the next night at the same venue, honored the songwriters and publishers of ASCAP’s most performed pop songs of 2006. Top awards were presented to John Rich and Jermaine Dupri, who shared songwriter of the year honors. “Because of You,” written by Kelly Clarkson, and “Be Without You,” written by Austin and Mary J. Blige, tied for the song of the year, and BMI Music Publishing picked up the publisher of the year title. The Founders Award was presented to Melissa Etheridge, and the All-American Rejects received the Vanguard Award in recognition of the impact of their music and how it helps shape the future of American music.

The ASCAP-I Create Music Expo, held April 19-21 at the Hollywood Renaissance Hotel, featured an array of panels, workshops, keynotes, master classes, song challenges, product displays, state-of-the-art technology demonstrations and performances.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALEXANDRIA GYMA KONECNY

LEFT: Kelly Clarkson, left, and Melissa Etheridge, right, at an ASCAP president/chairman Marilyn Bergman. RIGHT: Sacha Baron Cohen presented an award to his brother, erran Baron Cohen, for the score to “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan.” LEFT, and Sacha celebrate the moment with ASCAP president/chairman Marilyn Bergman. BELOW: From left, songwriter/producers Mark Hudson, Don Was, Jerry hamm and Glenn Ballard took part in the “Songwriters—Producers” panel, which featured performances and stories about the creation of their hit songs.
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