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TOURING Billboard’s Touring Conference & Awards will feature panels, networking opportunities and an awards reception targeting promoters, agents, venues, managers, sponsors and production professionals. See billboardevents.com.


Contest
MOBILE BEAT Billboard has teamed with LG Mobile to create the first mobile blogging contest. Contests will critique concerts in their area and upload mobile photos and reviews to a customized Billboard blog. See billboard.com/mobilebeat.

Blogging
THE JADED INSIDER Another season of “American Idol” is now in the books. Want the real scoop on what went down with the winner and the also-rans alike? Visit Billboard’s Jaded Insider blog at jadedinsider.com.
Secondhand Seige

BY ROB PERKINS

Having operated record stores for more than 25 years, I have had my share of regulatory headaches. A few years ago, I had to sort out the complications of the Louisiana law restricting used CD sales. I thought that was an isolated misunderstanding, but during the past few months a dozen or so states have either enacted or considered laws that would require anyone trying to resell a used CD to down a payment on a new one to give up sensitive identifying information to be stored in a retailer’s files. If this were to become the rule, then we might as well start sticker new CDs: “Warning: If you decide to sell it back, you will be required to disclose your name, address, birth date, phone number, Social Security number and thumpprint.” Retailers would also have to wait several days before reselling the CD. The profit on a used CD pales in comparison to the burden of such regulations.

Fundamentally, selling used CDs without having to disclose who you are to the shopkeeper for the police or other prying eyes is a basic freedom we should all cherish. The government has no right to know what books we borrow from the library. The law protects our privacy in what videos we rent. Taste in music is part of our personal identity, and we should be able to keep it to ourselves as well.

I have seen no evidence that anyone is setting out to deliberately suppress the sale of used CDs. Instead, I believe we have simply been caught up in inefficiencies to trace stolen goods. Lawmakers had the foresight to exclude used books, but failed to exclude used CDs and other media because no one brought it up. So I will.

Thumpprints, waiting periods and databases of customer Social Security numbers will not pin a CD baggy on the thief. CDs are low-cost commodities without serial numbers (unlike paper money) and no other way to identify the previous owner. Whether the customer pays for music with a $20 bill or by trading it in, there is no reason to suspect either payment method implicates a thief.

There is no question that CD theft is a problem. As a merchant, I have been the victim. But until the thief is caught red-handed or attempts to dispose of the loot in bulk, the chance that an isolated used CD at a store across town can be matched to one stolen from my store is virtually nil.

Used copies are no novelty—Abraham Lincoln earned his license to practice law by studying used books. That people are free to sell what they own is part of the fabric of our society, and in a day of heightened environmental sensitivity, disposal of used CDs by resale is certainly preferable to a landfill.

There are also millions of Americans who depend on “used” markets for practically everything—used cars, used clothing, used sports equipment. CDs are no different. Used CDs lower the entry price for a budding music fan to discover a new favorite artist’s creation—the fan who can’t afford the price of a concert ticket and for whom a new CD may be luxuries.

The used CDs I buy extend my catalog beyond the collection I stock as new and make copy and have one more reason to visit a store?

Secondhand sales benefit local economies. The suppression of used CD sales means fewer sales taxes collected and fewer of my store sales associates processing used CD transactions. In a day when new CD sales have plummeted, used CDs will help keep my stores and others open for business.

Rob Perkins is president/CEO of the 50-store Value Music Concepts chain and is on the NARM board of directors.

FREAK NASTY RESPONDS

I’m a producer/artist that bangs out five or six songs per week—this has been my routine since even before recording my platinum song “Da’ Dip.” Coming from New Orleans and the ATL after leaving Cash Money Records, I’ve been grinding and hustlin’ across the country. I’ve never had the backing of a star is get from a major, but I was still able to get nominated for an MTV Award, sell millions of records and hold a place in the market. Now I feel a huge controversy brewing, pitting my “Rockstar” song against the Shop Boyz version. But of all the songs titled “Party Like a Rockstar” from different artists on itunes, why single out mine? I wrote my song in 2005—they just happened to get radio play first. If the Shop Boyz radio play is helping me sell downloads, as claimed in a recent article (Billboard, May 26), it should help the other artists with similar titles selling downloads as well.

I expect any artist that’s signed to a major to do far better than any independent artist. Unlike the Shop Boyz, I don’t have a video. I also don’t have any radio play or marketing. They do. My song sounds oddly different from theirs, and our names are distinctly different. So how can consumers be confused?

I have much love and respect for the Shop Boyz, and I would never do anything to block their shine. I’m the most humble cat in this game, and everyone that knows me would speak highly of me and my work ethic. I have a catalog of more than 20 songs that’s growing every year, all of genres of music. Just imagine the success that could follow if I partnered with a major.

Eric Timmons, a.k.a Freak Nasty

FOR THE RECORD

■ In the May 26 article “Brash’s Brass Ring,” sales of Aaron Shutt’s album “Anything Worth Saying” should have been reported as 196,000, according to Nelsen SoundScan.

■ In the review of Ozzy Osbourne’s “Black Rain” in the Mother, the album’s producers should have been listed as Ozzy Osbourne and Kevin Churko.

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“Greys Anatomy,” “Las Vegas” and “Cold
Case” are

raising

exposing new and old music

to

tv viewers.

Their

success

is not on prospec-
tive advertisers and music supervisors, who are now
focused

on

the

upcoming

fall tv season.

In recent weeks, the networks staged their “up-
fronts” in New York, presenting new programs and
schedules to potential advertisers and media.

Most of the shows are still in pilot mode, with music
supervisors yet to be assigned. Keeping that in
mind, Billboard queried networks, producers and supervi-
sors on what shows were likely to prominently feature
music. What follows is an alphabetical guide to
seriess that will likely be
looking for your music in
the

fall, and what sort of tunes they’ll want.

GOSSIP GIRL (THE CW)

Based on the series of books by the same name, the executive
producers of “Gossip” are Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage
of “The OC,” a major music plat-
form. In “Gossip,” rich

Teenagers in Manhattan engage

in

casual

confrontations,

to

a

soundtrack of alternative music and indie rock.

“Our demo is 18-34 so we’re smack in the middle

of

the

record-buying audience,” CW music VP

Leonard Richardson says. “We have a very strong
focus on music, not only on our shows, but the whole
network in terms of marketing, promotion and any

type of branding we do.”

Ad cards at the end of each “Gossip Girl” episode
will tell viewers what they heard and display album
covers. Music can be purchased directly on the CW
Website. Platinum-selling acts will benefit from the
“platinum” ad program, which will also feature
music video snippets.

IDOLOS DE JUVENTUD (TELEMUNDO)

Although the setting for this series based on the music
industry is still up for grabs between Miami and Mex-
ico, the premise is set: A music producer who has
launched multiple careers—including his wife’s—looks
for the next new thing in a music reality show.

Telemundo is looking for a mixture of covers and new
material, particularly for the love stories that take place
as part of the plot. “We typically end up with ‘couple
themes’ for the romantic couples,” Telemundo VP

of music affairs Margaret Guerra Rogers says.

JOURNEYMAN (NBC)

This epic fantasy drama about a journalist who trav-

els

back in time to help people fix past

errors will feature appropriate music from the

70s,

80s and 90s.

K-VILLE (FOX)

This drama about police buddies is set and shot in
post-Katrina New Orleans, with the heroes at odds
as to how to navigate their torn town. Music is slated
to be an integral part of the show, with plans for a
score and main title theme that incorporate the city’s
music. The pilot alone featured several local bands
on-camera, and similar showcases will likely con-
tinue through the season.

Las Brujas de Southbeach (Telemundo)

Four women living in South Beach were, in a past
life, sisters in 12th century

Spain. Now, they must overcome their differences
to vanquish evil. The series will be “loaded” with music,
Telemundo’s Guerra Rogers says. Romantic music is
being looked for to enhance each character, but in addi-
tion, different styles are needed to enhance the set-
ing. Befitting South Beach, the search is on for dance,
salsa and Latin fare.

Miss Guided (ABC)

Upon returning to her former high school, a guid-
ance counselor finds her old nemesis, the cheerleader,
the new English teacher who is glad to remind her
of her unpopular past. Abundant flashbacks will be
filled with music from the ‘80s.

Reaper (The CW)

A slacker wakes up on his 21st

birthday to find that his parents
have sold his soul to the devil and now
he must work for Satan as a
bounty hunter. Dramatic but hu-

morous, “Reaper” will under-
score its lighthearted side with

alternative and pop music. Like

“Gossip Girl,” it will also feature
ad cards at the end of each episode. Ad cards are avail-
able for three acts per show.

Viva Laughlin (CBS)

Executive-produced by Tony and Emmy Award win-
er Hugh Jackman ("X-Men"); “Viva Laughlin” is the
closest thing to a musical in the new lineup. Based
on the hit BBC show “Viva Blackpool,” the mystery
drama chronicles a freewheeling businessman, Ripley
Holds, who wants to run a casino in Laughlin, Nev.,
but gets tripped up by issues like a murder investiga-
tion, financing problems and family strife. Music is
integral, with lead characters lip-synching to iconic
hits. Tracks in the pilot include the Rolling Stones’
“Sympathy for the Devil”; Blondie’s “One Way or
Another” and Elvis Presley’s “Viva Las Vegas.”

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**E.M.I. FACES ITS FUTURE**

Can WMG Trump Private Equity With New Bid?

LONDON — So E.M.I. Group's enduring search for a new owner is over—or is it? The music giant's recommendation of private equity firm Terra Firma's offer (billboard.biz, May 21) means a takeover process could now move swiftly to completion.

E.M.I. Group CEO Eric Nolli told investors and analysts in a May 22 conference call that the deal should be cleared within 88 days, “if the process runs in a straightforward way.”

That, however, is far from a given, with long-term suitor Warner Music Group (W.M.G.) and rival private-equity firms Fortress, Cerberus and One Equity understood to be interested in buying E.M.I.

Many anticipate further bids, especially as E.M.I.'s stock immediately surged beyond 265 pence ($5.26) per share. So, with the clock ticking, billboard polled industry experts on which potential new owner would make the best bedfellow for reviving E.M.I.

The CASE FOR W.M.G. Synergies. WMG’s ace is that the two companies make a “good fit.” WMG has a strong American roster with the likes of Madonna, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Green Day, while E.M.I. has plenty of British talent, including the Beatles, Robbie Williams and Coldplay. Combined, they would have had a 2006 albums market share of 29.8% in the United Kingdom (according to the Official U.K. Charts Co.) and a 2007 albums market share to date of 30.8% in the United States (according to Nielsen SoundScan), putting them at No. 2 and No. 1, respectively.

Cost savings. Combining operations would also save money. Bridgewell Securities media analyst Patrick Yau says, “It’s in record companies where you would get the majority of cost savings” in distribution, manufacturing, packaging, marketing and artist rosters. Music knows music. “It would be better if [E.M.I.] was run by another recorded-music company,” says Empire Artist Management’s Nele Easterby, who manages Parlophone-signed Lily Allen and E.M.I. Music Publishing-signed Natasha Bedingfield. Though if Terra Firma buys E.M.I., Easterby says, “that might be the case anyway. They might buy it to sell it and keep the publishing arm.”

**THE CASE FOR PRIVATE EQUITY** No post-merger insight. “E.M.I. would be best served by a private equity group,” says CMO Management’s Chris Morrison, who looks after E.M.I. acts Blur and Gorillaz. “The culture of Warner’s and E.M.I.’s current management would clash.” The two also have very different digital rights management stances. “E.M.I.’s decision to ditch DRM is correct and irreversible,” says Ben Drury, founder of British online music retailer 7digital. “If Warners were to buy E.M.I. and then subsequently reintroduce DRM, the backlash from consumers and retailers would render their position untenable.”

**WHO IS TERRA FIRMA?**

LONDON — Time will tell if E.M.I. Group’s shareholders see Terra Firma as solid ground. But the venture capitalist’s track record is strong enough to have won over the music corporate’s board of directors.

The bid for E.M.I. is Terra Firma’s first in the music industry, a spokesman says. But the company is a player in the property and bars fields, and has a stake in Europe’s broader media game, through its 2004 acquisition of cinema group UCI. The company is the brainchild of its CEO, Guy Hands, an Oxford University graduate recognized as a gutsy dealmaker. He’s best-known for leading an audacious, if ultimately failed, bid for Europe’s leading pharmacy-laid health and beauty group Alliance Boots.

The venture capital firm makes its objectives clear on its Web site, stating, “We target large, asset-rich companies that have often been neglected, undermanaged or underinvested by their owners.” Nonetheless, the Terra Firma spokesman counters any speculation that Hands may shred E.M.I.’s management and strip the company’s assets. “The intention is to build the business, grow the business on all sides,” he says.

---LB

Smooth transition. A WMG/E.M.I. union would have to undergo long, expensive competition clearance. Significantly, E.M.I. chairman John Gilder-sleeve highlighted Terra Firma’s delivery of “cash now, without regulatory uncertainty.” Sources close to the deal suggest a WMG bid would have to reach at least 285 pence/290 pence ($5.85-$2.90) per share before the deal and risk would be worth it.

Cash. Terra Firma has money and knows what to do with it. Informed sources say the company has made commitments to keep E.M.I. Music Publishing intact and perhaps even inject more capital. Since many believe Universal Music Publishing Group will become the largest independent publisher following European Commission approval of its BMI Publishing acquisition, that money will be needed to put E.M.I. back on top.

--- Additional reporting by Susan Butler.

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**AN APPROVAL’S AFTEREFFECTS**

Biz Considers Implications Of Universal/BMG Deal

The battle was hard fought, and some publishing gems were lost, but Universal Music Group got the result it wanted when it finally secured European Commission (EC) approval to take over BMI Music Publishing (billboard.biz, May 22).

The green light from the European Union’s (EU) antitrust authority was the last major regulatory hurdle for the €1.63 billion ($2.05 billion) deal, which is likely to have regulatory repercussions for any future music biz mergers and also affects the wider publishing world.

**REGULATORY IMPLICATIONS** Universal had always been confident the law was on its side, but nothing could be taken for granted after a European court last year annulled the EC’s clearance of the 2004 Sony-BMG merger. EU competition commissioner Neelie Kroes said that concessions squeezed from Universal as part of the May 22 clearance were vital in an environment where digital music could change the face of the European music industry.

Going forward, the EC’s decision may prove relevant to any Warner Music Group/E.M.I. tie-up, where questions about a merger include both companies’ music publishing arms.

According to figures included in Universal’s merger submission, E.M.I. Music Publishing and Warner/Chappell Music’s combined share of the total European publishing market would be 34%. By contrast, Universal and BMI claimed a combined 22% share.

“Given these numbers, it is inconceivable that the commission would not ask for concessions in a Warners-E.M.I. deal,” one Brussels veteran says.

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**PUBLISHING IMPLICATIONS**

As a condition of the approval, “the EC insisted that Universal sell off about €100 million [$135 million] worth of assets,” a source says.

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**GLOBAL**

BY LEO CENDROWICZ AND SUSAN BUTLER

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Among the assets to hit the auction block are European rights in copyrights acquired in the United Kingdom by Universal’s Rondor Music U.K., BMI’s Zomba Music Publishing U.K., 19 Music and 19 Songs.

The catalogs include songs penned by producer/songwriter Martin Karl “Max Martin” Sandberg (Backstreet Boys, *N Sync, Britney Spears) and artist/songwriters Leo Sayer and the Kaiser Chiefs. Universal will also be selling European rights in the Zomba U.S. catalog, which includes hits by Justin Timberlake and R. Kelly.

Even though Universal was reluctant to sell off these rights, the company chose these particular catalogs because they could be more easily grouped together to meet the sell-off demands of the EC, according to a source close to the deal.

8 | BILLBOARD | JUNE 2, 2007
CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Top Female Vocalist
Album of the Year
Video of the Year

LITTLE BIG TOWN
Top New Duo or Vocal Group

MIRANDA LAMBERT
Top New Female Vocalist

RODNEY ATKINS
Top New Male Vocalist

BROOKS & DUNN
Top Vocal Duo
Vocal Event of the Year
Home Depot Humanitarian Award

RASCAL FLATTS
Top Vocal Group

SONG OF THE YEAR
"GIVE IT AWAY"
BILL ANDERSON & JAME JOHNSON
Sony/ATV Tree Publishing
Mr. Bubba Music
EMI Blackwood Music

VINCE GILL
Vocal Event of the Year

SHERYL CROW
Vocal Event of the Year

TONY BROWN
Single Record of the Year
Vocal Event of the Year

INTERNATIONAL AWARD
BUCK OWENS

PIONEER AWARD
HARLAN HOWARD

PIONEER AWARD
DOLLY PARTON

PIONEER AWARD
WAYLON JENNINGS

STUART DUNCAN
Specialty Instrument Player of the Year

AUBREY HAYNE
Fiddle Player of the Year

JOHN HOBBS
Piano/Keyboard Player of the Year

MKE JOHNSON
Steel Guitar Player of the Year

BRENT MASON
Guitar Player of the Year

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ALTERNATE REALITY

MTV Show Gives Real-Life Talent Agency A Boost

On "Taquita & Kaul," an MTV reality show that follows two aspiring starlets in Las Vegas, Ricky Greenstein plays the role of Mr. Manager. But in real life, Greenstein is co-CEO, along with Michael Schweiger, of talent agency Central Entertainment Group. And in the weeks since the show's April debut, CEG has watched its artist roster grow.

This growth continues with a new strategic relationship CEG has formed with Total Entertainment and Arts Marketing, the recently launched agency helmed by Britney Spears' former manager Larry Rudolph and entertainment marketer Nicole Winnaman. TEAM focuses on securing sponsorship and endorsement dollars for its client roster, which includes A&M/Interscope's Pussycat Dolls.

RUDY MAYER

Unprecedented Sponsorship Of John Mayer Tour Will Help Launch Curve Phone

In a first for both sponsor and sponsorsee, Blackberry will present John Mayer's upcoming North American tour. Billboard has learned.

Portable communication device Blackberry will use the Mayer tour to help launch its upcoming AT&T carried mobile phone, Curve. The 40 date Blackberry Presents John Mayer in Concert tour begins June 1 in Ridgefield, Wash., with Ben Folds supporting. Live Nation is promoting the majority of dates on the tour and reports that sales are strong in the early going.

Paul Kalbfleisch, senior director of corporate marketing for Blackberry parent Research in Motion (RIM), says recent additions to the Blackberry product line such as Pearl and the new Curve make live music a viable avenue to reach consumers in search of devices with plenty of capabilities.

"John Mayer's concert tour gives us that venue and that context to talk about Blackberry to a group of people that maybe we haven't talked to before, and to make them think about how Blackberry fits into their whole life, not just their work life," Kalbfleisch says.

Mayer's dense fits the Blackberry target, Kalbfleisch adds. "We're able to reach out to a new audience, maybe a slightly younger audience in their 20s, without at all alienating the existing Blackberry audience," he says.

In activating the campaign, Blackberry will launch a site highlighting the tour and the company's relationship with Mayer. Marketing in traditional and new media are part of the promotion, as is an on-site presence at concert venues. Consumer interactive contests are being finalized, and Blackberry will host VIP parties and backstage meet-and-greets at shows.

"On-site during every concert we'll have the ability to showcase and demonstrate Blackberry Curve, along with our carrier partner AT&T, so that people coming to the concerts will see, touch and feel our product, learn what it has to offer them, take pictures with it, have a little bit of fun with it," Kalbfleisch says. "We will have the ability to interact with the audience without interfering with the concert itself."

Live event sponsorship, particularly music events, has experienced huge growth in the past few years as marketers struggle to reach consumers in an efficient way. So why is Blackberry just now getting into the tour sponsorship game?

"The product offering and our strategy had to be in line with reaching out to this type of audience," says Kalbfleisch, who says the Blackberry reach is now broad and the brand more mainstream than it was only a few years ago.

"The entertainment world and more unique opportunities started to make sense to us now. Two years ago it probably wasn't time yet."

For the Mayer camp, it's great to be Blackberry's first. "Since we were approached by them, it showed they really wanted to be in business with John," says Michael McDonald, Mayer's manager.

Both sides declined to talk financial specifics, but typically such extensive tour sponsorships are valued at more than $1 million in cash and more in marketing. McDonald says upfront money from Blackberry goes into upfront tour costs.

"Something we're really focused on is putting the check to good use," McDonald says, adding that marketing is also a big plus.

"Between RIM and the sort of carriers they're in business with, they certainly have a greater and wider marketing reach than we have, so it's great to be able to tap into that," McDonald says. "So far, it's been done in conjunction with us and we feel apart of the marketing effort. It's not like a stranger is coming in and taking over our marketing initiatives."

The deal was brokered by Kalbfleisch, Marcie Allen Cardwell at Creative Artists Agency, and Amy Pesa and Andrea Gaccetta at event marketing firm George P. Johnson. Scott Clayton is Mayer's responsible agent at CAA.

Compiled by Chris M. Walsh. Reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda, Lars Brandt, Anthony Bruno, John Ferguson, Katie Hastly and Michael Paolella.

THE LATEST NEWS FROM biz

>>> SANZ U.S. TREK POSTPONED

Alejandro Sanz's El Tren de los Momentos U.S. tour has been postponed until November, a spokesperson for Sanz tells Billboard. Ten dates have been rescheduled; additional shows will be announced shortly. The spokesperson says the tour was postponed under orders from doctors in Spain that the singer, who has been touring in Latin America, take "absolute rest" before embarking on the U.S. leg of his tour.

>>> SPARKS IS SIXTH AMERICAN IDOL

Jordin Sparks has been crowned the sixth season winner of "American Idol." Competing against 25-year-old Blake Lewis for the crown, the 17-year-old Glendale, Ariz., native brought in the most of 74 million votes after the final performance show, broadcast from the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on Fox. Sparks scored a recording contract with RCA Music Group as her prize.

>>> PRINCE READIES PERFUME LINE

Revelations Perfume and Cosmetics will develop and market 3121, a fragrance collection for global superstar Prince. The women's perfume debuts July 7 with a 24-hour online charity event at 3121perume.com. The collection will be sold online and at select Macy's stores. The fragrance line, encompassing perfume and body crème, ranges in price from $21.25 to $70.

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THE LATEST NEWS FROM biz

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>>> SANZ U.S. TREK POSTPONED

Alejandro Sanz's El Tren de los Momentos U.S. tour has been postponed until November, a spokesperson for Sanz tells Billboard. Ten dates have been rescheduled; additional shows will be announced shortly. The spokesperson says the tour was postponed under orders from doctors in Spain that the singer, who has been touring in Latin America, take "absolute rest" before embarking on the U.S. leg of his tour.

>>> SPARKS IS SIXTH AMERICAN IDOL

Jordin Sparks has been crowned the sixth season winner of "American Idol." Competing against 25-year-old Blake Lewis for the crown, the 17-year-old Glendale, Ariz., native brought in the most of 74 million votes after the final performance show, broadcast from the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on Fox. Sparks scored a recording contract with RCA Music Group as her prize.

>>> PRINCE READIES PERFUME LINE

Revelations Perfume and Cosmetics will develop and market 3121, a fragrance collection for global superstar Prince. The women's perfume debuts July 7 with a 24-hour online charity event at 3121perume.com. The collection will be sold online and at select Macy's stores. The fragrance line, encompassing perfume and body crème, ranges in price from $21.25 to $70.

Compiled by Chris M. Walsh. Reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda, Lars Brandt, Anthony Bruno, John Ferguson, Katie Hastly and Michael Paolella.
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- Robert Matthews, Senior Director, Consumer Marketing, Nintendo of America, Inc.
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Keeping It In The House

Canada's Indie Distributors Get Labels Of Their Own

TORONTO—Canada's leading independent distributors are attempting to increase their retail batting averages by stepping up to the plate with their own labels.

Recent arrivals have included Toronto-based Koch Entertainment Canada's imprint Koch Records (rock, country and urban music); Hamilton, Ontario-based Sonic Distribution's joint venture with EMI Canada, Labwork Music (alternative); and Montreal-based Distribution Fusion III's Secret City Records (roots/alternative). Synchronously, other distributors have significantly stepped up A&R at interesting new labels.

The indie distributors say they are preparing the ground for their future digital businesses, where Fusion III president Jim West predicts they will be involved as "record label, in management, publishing—everything."

West's son Justin now heads Secret City Records, home to alternative rock band Patrick Watson and alternative rock/pop act Miracle Fortress. Fusion III has also operated jazz label Justin Time since 1983.

"Part of the future is having the ability to control copyrights," Toronto-based Outside Music president Lloyd Nashimura says. "Our label has become a real priority for us." Launched in 2002, the Outside Records label roster includes roots-styled acts the Sadies and Oh Susanna.

The 2006-launched Koch Records label's releases to date include albums by Jeff Martin, fiddler Natalie MacMaster and rock act Brandon Paris Band.

"We used to push artists toward labels we were distributing," Koch Entertainment Canada president Dominique Zgarka says, "but realized we were doing all of the work. We decided to keep things under one roof."

Despite the added competition for signings, Canadian indie scenes largely sanguine about the distributors' moves. "They're just protecting their rear ends," Toronto-based True North Records president Bernie Finkelstein says. "In five years, acts might not need a distributor if the business is all digital."

Sonic co-owner Tim Potocic says adding Labwork to its wholly owned labels Sonic Unyon Records and Good Feeling will mean 20 album releases in 2007, its highest in-house total yet. "There's lots of opportunities around," he says.

Those opportunities have partly risen through Canada's majors reducing domestic signings in recent years. Universal Music Canada's most recent direct domestic signing was 18 months ago, although senior VP and Allan Reid says the company is increasingly linking licensing deals as "more artists are coming forward with finished masters, seeking to retain master ownership."

Warner Music Canada VP of A&R Steve Blair confirms the domestic roster shrinkage. "When I started here nine years ago," he says, "we had 22 (Canadian) bands. Now we have 12."

Independents have also been affected by changes in the administration of Department of Canadian Heritage funding for new recordings in 2006, those changes saw larger independents like Network Productions, True North and MapleCore switch from funding under the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Records scheme to another program, the Music Entrepreneurial Component. FACTOR's annual $12.9 million Canadian ($11.65 million) budget provides loans/grants for individual recordings, regardless of that project's success.

However, MEC's $8.5 million Canadian ($7.7 million) budget goes directly to labels annually as loans/grants to cover overall operating costs. Importantly, it employs a sales target-based formula—and missing targets can mean reduced or revoked funding.

"If you get signed less acts [with MEC than if I was in FACTOR]," Vancouver-based Netwerk president Rick Arbour says. "Before I could take a chance on an act. Now, I have to know it's going to be a winner."

However, some insist the MEC system has benefits. "What's the point of companies signing more acts," Finkelstein says, "if their infrastructure is weak and they can't produce results?"

"MEC leaves it to me to decide how I spend my money—providing I get results."

Epic Everlasting

Sony BMG's Doherty Brings Label Back In The United Kingdom

LONDON—Sony BMG U.K. chief Ged Doherty has some Epic plans.

As the company adapts to the demands of the digital age, Sony BMG Music Entertainment U.K. and Ireland chairman/CEO Doherty has already launched an innovative online A&R service (billboard.biz, March 30). But he's also heading back to the future—reintroducing the Epic label division that disappeared in the United Kingdom almost five years ago.

Epic Label U.K. is helmed by managing director Nick Raphael, a 10-year-plus Sony BMG Music veteran, who reckons the time is right for a U.K. return. "Brit music is particularly strong at the moment," Raphael says. "We want to build a formidable roster that will be spoken about on a global basis."

Raphael was previously managing director of Epic U.K. in September 2002, when Sony BMG replaced its three-label structure (Columbia, Epic and S2) with international and U.K. repertoire divisions and he became VP of the latter. Most recently, he was managing director of Sony BMG U.K. label White Rabbit, now an Epic imprint, with acts including R&B/pop vocalist Lemar, dance act Mylo and singer/songwriter Imogen Heap.

Although the label division disappeared, Epic continued as a Sony BMG imprint, registering a 2.3% U.K. albums market share in 2005, according to labels body the BPI (2006 figures are not yet available). In previous years, its share swung between 6.6% (1994) and 2.5% (2000).

Doherty succeeded Rob Stringer after the latter's June 2006 appointment as president of Sony Music Label Group. His "new" Epic sits alongside front-line U.K. label groups RCA and Columbia.

"In the first year [after the 2004 BMG merger]," Doherty says, "we had an enormous blob of labels lumped together. The second year was always planned to bring back Columbia and RCA, and I remember thinking at the time, 'if things go well, we'll launch a third label! Epic is our next best-known brand.'"

The revived Epic's A&R philosophy will reflect the previous broad mix of domestic signings, which ranged from alternative rockers Manic Street Preachers to pop acts like B'witched and George Michael. Raphael says he's aiming for a roster of "versatile, non-genre-specific acts . . . which we can sell in the U.K. and abroad."

The label was also the U.K. home for such international acts as Michael Jackson, Celine Dion and Rage Against the Machine, but Doherty says, "Epic in the U.K. will be primarily U.K. repertoire-based."

HMV marketing director Graham Sim says he is watching the Epic developments with interest. "Universal, for one, has shown how classic labels can be successfully revived and re-energized to drive the record company forward. Epic certainly had a lot of heritage as a label."

The new Epic's first album will be the Aug. 6 release of "Memory Man" by eclectic British alternative singer/songwriter Aqualung, signed to Columbia worldwide out of New York. Aqualung's Brighton-based manager Phil Nelson enthuses about being in at the start of the revived division. "It really does feel like a team that's not only really into the [act], but currently doesn't have a huge amount of product to work with," he says.

"We can really get our hands dirty together and micro-manage.

Doherty's recent introduction of online A&R "virtual neighborhoods" for RCA and Columbia, where unsigned acts can post demos while Sony BMG U.K. staffers participate as bloggers, will expand with the launch of an Epic area.

He says the innovation is intended to counter mistrust between the artistic and label communities. "This is the first step to say, 'Here we are—take a look at us, warts and all,'" he says.

"The major record company in the future will be based much more on a partnership basis with the artist," Doherty adds. "You can only get to that point if you start from a position of openness and transparency."
No Giant Killer

Why Amazon Won't Dominate The Digital Marketplace

Things really will get interesting when Amazon finally jumps into the digital fray. Amazon is a powerhouse in the book marketplace but has so far failed to duplicate that feat in music, although its business is on the upswing with Tower Records' demise.

Still, even though Amazon has been in music since 1999, iTunes—which debuted in 2003—now sells four times as much music. Billboard estimates, Retail Track figures Amazon's market share at about 2.5%-3%, while iTunes will end this year at about 12%-13%, making it the fourth-largest music retailer, behind Wal-Mart, Best Buy and Target.

Although Amazon claims its service will launch with 12,000 labels, the four-year-old digital music model in the States is much smaller. Meanwhile, iTunes has signed deals with labels, including the majors, that likely generate about 95% of retail business in the States.

If Amazon were to push digital downloads the way it pushed the opening of its bookstore, Retail Track would be betting that it would kick iTunes' ass. That's because Amazon is far more skilled than Apple at merchandising music. Also, its business model is built around getting lower pricing than iTunes (Billboard, May 26), but only time will tell how successful it will be in that approach. (More on pricing later.)

But since Amazon is opening its store with labels that comprise only about one-quarter of the marketplace, it won't be able to establish dominance like it did with books. Those commercialists are looking for a place to contain the world's biggest bookstore don't apply here.

No, that type of marketing approach simply ain't going to work this time around. And that's why the majors were disappointed when Amazon abandoned its previous digital approach last fall, one that would've seen it launch a subscription download service with its own private-label, digital-rights-managed-powered portable player and with a physical product tie-in. The majors were hoping that Amazon would help them maintain a DRM world, while at the same time taking on iTunes head-to-head. The majors prays for such a champion every day, as they try to figure out how to get out of the box Steve Jobs has them in.

But instead of being a potential giant killer out of the gate, Amazon now looks like it might be a spoiler to those majors with a stake in DRM. The staunchest proponent for DRM is Sony BMG's Music Entertainment Global Digital Business and U.S. Sales president Thomas Hesse. Hesse's stand against an MP3 commercial marketplace stems from the belief that eventual bandwidth advancements may eventually allow peer-to-peer to trade entire music libraries in a matter of minutes—or, in other words, the whole world becomes one giant dorm.

Amazon certainly represents another crack in the DRM foundation, which may be why Hesse wouldn't even let RED negotiate with the merchant on behalf of the independent labels it distributes. While I applaud him for taking a principled stand, I wonder at the wisdom of losing the chance to monitor how MP3 sales perform in the marketplace, let alone how it affects physical and even digital sales.

Warner Music Group also refused to supply its music to Amazon, but it's already agreed to allow its Alternative Distribution Alliance to negotiate a digital deal with the merchant on behalf of its independent labels. Likewise, Universal Music Group Distribution is negotiating for its Fontana-distributed independent labels, as well as wherever MP3 tests UMG's own labels will undertake, but a deal has yet to be signed.

And compounding that situation, if Amazon is successful in its label negotiations and its launch with consumers, it will only box the labels in even more. Besides Bertelsmann's record club, Amazon and its marketplace is the lowest-priced player in CDs in the States, even withstanding Best Buy, Wal-Mart and Target. If it emerges as a dominant player in digital sales, it would likely add its voice to iTunes in insisting on low-priced downloads. That would not only be bad news to labels, but brick-and-mortar merchants struggling to prop up the CD see cheap downloads as undermining the CD price point.

All of which leads to a mea culpa, with a little history. When EMI announced it was going DRM-free and would sell higher-quality downloads, which would carry an impied $1.29 list price, brick-and-mortar merchants counted that as good news.

That is because some merchants were under the mistaken impression that EMI's digital albums would then sell for $12.99, which doesn't undermine the CD's price point in traditional stores the way $9.99 does.

But while EMI will wholesale DRM-free, higher-quality digital track downloads at 90 cents, it will continue to wholesale its $9.98 list-price album downloads at $7, as reported in Billboard last week. What that story left out, though, is that the major has other single-album pricing levels as well, of $7.98, $11.98 and $12.98.
ROCKIN’ THE MIC
Rage, Wu-Tang Add Heft To Summer Hip-Hop Tour

With a lineup catering to the b-boy, backpackers and graffiti art culture, this summer’s traveling Rock the Bells festival could be the rap community’s answer in the Vans Warped tour. Rock the Bells, which went down in the hip-hop record books in 2004 after reuniting the Wu-Tang Clan (including Ol’ Dirty Bastard) for an onstage performance, will revisit history by hosting the recently re-formed Rage Against the Machine at Randall’s Island in New York (July 28-29); the NOS Events Center in San Bernardino, Calif. (Aug. 11); and theMcCovey Cove Parking Lot in San Francisco (Aug. 18).

Although Rage Against the Machine, which played its first show in seven years at last month’s Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival, is slated to perform on only four of Rock the Bells’ 19 cross-country dates, founder and organizer Chang Weisberg of Guerilla Union is hopeful that the political rockers’ involvement “spills into other markets. The fact that Rage Against the Machine is playing these shows has made it a big deal not only nationally but worldwide. So, you try to leverage that and be thankful for that awareness.”

At press time, these remain the only shows on Rage’s schedule.

New York rapper Nas will co-headline the majority of the trek along with the Wu-Tang Clan, which has signed on for the entire festival to promote its upcoming reunion album “No Digga’s.” Cypress Hill, Talib Kweli, Pharoahe Monch, Immortal Technique and Jedi Mind Tricks will perform on all fest dates, while the Roots, Public Enemy, Sage Francis, Mos Def, EPMD, MF Doom and others will play select shows.

Ticket prices for each of the four bi-coastal festivals range from $75 to $80 and expect to draw approximately 40,000 concertgoers. Prices for the remaining 15 dates, which will visit primarily outdoor venues, range from $40 to $45, and Weisberg says that between 8,000 and 10,000 people are expected. So far, Rock the Bells has teamed with several hip-hop media partners, and SanDisk signed on as the title sponsor.

GLOBAL NEWSLINE

>>> COLLECTIONS FALL AT JASRAC
Japanese authors society Jasrac says copyright fee collections for the year ending March 31 fell 2.2% year-on-year to 111.1 billion yen ($923.2 million)—the first time in five years collections have not risen. Performance-right royalties rose 0.9% to 48.8 billion yen ($405.3 million), but mechanical fee collections fell 5.4% to 41.9 billion yen ($348.4 million), largely due to declining CD sales. Royalties from rhymphonic ringtones fell to 3.3 billion yen ($27.8 million) as Japanese mobile-phone users turned increasingly to master ringtones. Collections from the latter increased 23.3% to 2.2 billion yen ($18.2 million).

—Steve McClure

>>> ROLLINS, REICH HONORED IN SWEDEN
Seminal jazz artist Sonny Rollins and minimalist composer Steve Reich jointly received the 16th annual Polar Music Prize from King Carl Gustaf XVI of Sweden at a May 21 cere-

mony in Stockholm. The nationally televised event took place at the Konserthuset venue. Both recipients were awarded 1 million Swedish kronor ($145,960) from a fund set up in 1989 by ABBAs’ producer, manager and co-lyricist, the late Stig Anderson. The prize is based on nominations submitted by the board of the Stig Anderson Music Award Foundation, consisting of representatives from his family, the Swedish Society of Popular Music Composers and the Swedish Performing Rights Society. Previous winners of the prize include Paul McCartney, Quincy Jones, Elton John and Bob Dylan.

—Fred Bronson

>>> RECORD REVENUE AT PPL
U.K. collecting society Phonographic Performance Ltd. published its best-ever financial results. The society, which licenses performance rights on sound recordings on behalf of record labels and performers, reported license fee income of £97.9 million ($193 million) in 2006, up 13% from 2005. Distributable...
Although the festival’s 15 U.S. dates without Rage have a solid lineup of “established touring acts,” according to Weisberg, some industry observers speculate that the absence of a mass-appeal urban headliner could make high attendance draws challenging. And with virtually no other large-scale hip-hop package tours going out this summer, rap looks unlikely to crack the Billboard year-end list of the top 25 grossing tours, which it hasn’t done since 2005’s Eminem/50 Cent Anger Management tour, which pulled in $22.7 million from 23 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore. Prior to that, in 2003 50 Cent rang up nearly $23 million in ticket sales, much of it co-headlining with Jay-Z on the Roc-the-Mic tour.

But Weisberg, who through the years has promoted one-off festivals and dozens of club gigs under the Rock the Bells moniker, doesn’t compare his festival to mainstream rap. “Even if Eminem, 50 Cent or Jay-Z were touring this summer, that wouldn’t be an indication to me that this is the right time for Rock the Bells,” he says. “The indication for me is the music and growth of it in the markets we’ve done it in.”

Last summer, a one-off Rock the Bells drew an impressive crowd to Concord, Calif.’s Sleep Train Pavilion, says Rick Mueller, president of Live Nation San Francisco, which is co-producing the Aug. 18 date. “For a lineup that didn’t have 50 Cent, Eminem or a flashy headliner, we did 10,000 people at a $50 ticket,” Mueller says, “which is a great number.” As opposed to chart-topping rappers who “might be really good in the studio” but “not really able to perform,” Weisberg says that the bottom line with Rock the Bells “is that everybody on the show can fucking perform. People want to go to a show and be entertained,” he says. “They don’t want to go to a show where six dudes are onstage running around not knowing how to project their voice correctly.”

Indie rapper Sage Francis, a self-declared “road warrior,” will perform on the Paid Dues stage on select Rock the Bells dates. He says his indie hip-hop contemporaries like Atmosphere, Brother Ali, El-P, Cage and Buck 65 aren’t strangers to drawing respectable crowds and commanding the stage. “We’re all people who’ve been out for 10 years developing our fan bases,” says Francis, who will embark on a 40-date club/theater trek later this month to promote his latest Epitaph effort, “Human the Death Dance.”

“We stay focused on what we do, how we do it and make sure it continues to grow,” the rapper continues. “Our shows entail a lot more interesting elements. I don’t think that a lot of other hip-hop acts have the tenacity or fuel that we do.”

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**PUBLIC ENEMY will perform select dates on the Rock the Bells tour. RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE (inset) is slated to play four shows.**

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[begin internal navigation]

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**SANCTUARY RECEIVES TAKEOVER BID**

Financially troubled British music company Sanctuary Group confirms it has received at least one takeover bid. Sanctuary issued a statement May 18 saying it had “received approaches from third parties that may or may not lead to an offer for the company.” The company said a further announcement would be made “in due course.” The London-based firm issued the statement to the London Stock Exchange after the update that its stock price rose 40% on May 18 to 15.75 pence (31 cents). Sanctuary has been cited by a handful of suitors in recent years. Recently, the company has been pushing ahead with a program of strategic disposals, including the sale of its stake in independent label Rought Trade. British indie powerhouse Beggars Group is understood to be in talks for Rought Trade. —Lars Brandle

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**SMEJ SALES ON THE RISE**

Japanese market-leading record company Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) has reported healthy sales results for the year ended March 31, boosted by solid performances by its noncore businesses. Revenue for SMEJ and its 44 subsidiaries totaled 162.3 billion yen ($1.3 billion), up 6.4% from the previous year. Sales and distribution of recorded music fell 4.8% to 81.6 billion yen ($674.5 million); the remaining 80.6 billion yen ($666.5 million) came from music publishing, artist management and other SMEJ subsidiaries, up 20.8%. SMEJ does not publish profit figures. Domestic product accounted for 77.4% of music sales, down from 79.4% in the previous year. —Steve McClure

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[more content]

**IT’S OFFICIAL**

23rd ANNUAL KENTUCKY DERBY BET WINNERS.

IT PAYS TO HAVE STREET SENSE!

Freedom Hall’s 23rd Annual Derby Bet netted six winners picking Street Sense, paying $1.80 on the $2 bet. Winners are:

Brad Garrett – Police Productions
Andrea King – Beaver Productions
Dan Zelisko – Live Nation-Phoenix
John Porco – World Wrestling Entertainment
Annie O’Toole – Live 360
Steven DePaul

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JUNE 2, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 15
Friday And Saturday Night Special
A No-Brainer Bargain For Hank Jr. And Skynyrd’s Rowdy Friends

Sometimes you just gotta get rowdy.

The Rowdy Frynd’s tour—produced by Red Mountain Entertainment and Blue Goose, and booked by the William Morris Agency—is a perfect gumbo recipe for fried-eyes Friday and Saturday nights. It gives fans value for the day, provides arenas with a solid-looking and double-digit concession per-caps, and in many ways, puts Red Mountain on the map as tour producer. Oh, yeah, and it rocks mightily, which came as no surprise to me at the May 4 show in Nashville.

Truth is, Red Mountain stepped up when other promoters passed. “I’m not so sure that the big guys understood the value and the nuances involved in this thing,” philosophizes Greg Oswald, VP at WMA and responsible agent for Frynds. “It doesn’t even really take any balls. You just either understand it or you don’t.” He continues, “I have to admit, you have to have a feel for that lifestyle, but it’s not a secret. It’s been going on for 30 years.”

Ah, the lifestyle out in full force. “You’ve got Hank [Williams, Jr.] and [Lynyrd] Skynyrd, who both have extremely solid, loyal fan bases,” says Brock Jones, senior director of booking at Nashville’s Sonnet Center, where Rowdy Frynds grossed a stout $709,774 from 12,575 rowdy friends, according to Billboard Boxscore. “Then you have 38 Special, which adds a new dynamic, both from Van Zant on tour together. There’s a high entertainment value for this ticket price.”

The tour was indeed a big move for Birmingham, Ala.-based Red Mountain, and its partners, Gary Weinerberger and John Ruffino. Ruffino’s father, Tony, was a legendary Southern concert promoter who was instrumental in breaking Williams in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

“Over the years we’ve promoted Hank all over the place,” John Ruffino says. “The opportunity came up to do Hank and Skynyrd, and it was a no-brainer for us.”

Still, 20 dates with a healthy combined guarantee is bringing a lot for a midsize independent, with a guarantee Oswald admits is “stiff.”

“Most of the time we buy four or five cities. This was the first time we’ve bought 20 cities,” Ruffino says. “Obviously, when you’re booking that many dates there is a fear involved, but we believe in both [Williams and Skynyrd] and, like I say, it made sense to us.”

Ross Schilling, who manages all three acts with Ken Levitan through Vector Management, says Ruffino’s Weinerberger and Blue Goose president Russell Dousman “were believers in the beginning and saw the viability of these artists, and saw a very active fan base. They really micromanage each promotion and make sure it fits the market.”

There’s no denying that Skynyrd and Williams have legions of fans, but there was a very real question as to whether these fans were the same people. Synergy means one plus one equals three, not one plus one equals one. To cop a quote from manager Doc McGhee, this ain’t exactly “cats and dogs living together.” Rowdy is as rowdy does.

Musically, it works good. It’s not exactly the same, but it’s in the same range,” Ruffino says. “We did almost 13,000 people in Nashville, so it looks like one plus one equals three.”

Oswald says he’d like to do a “scientific poll” of the audience, which to me is kind of scary. “I think what you would find would be the following: a significant percentage of the diehard Skynyrd fans that never miss a show, the diehard Hank fans that never miss a show, the diehard rebel rockers. Confederate flag waving group that likes racing—the Southern rock lifestyle-oriented people—and the people who remember or have recently heard what a party it could be to see a real live Hank and Skynyrd show,” Oswald says. “The latter are the ones I think got mobilized that wouldn’t have ordinarily been there.”

It helps that the show is value-priced, with tickets at $69.50, $55.50, $39.50 and $25. “Obviously, we have to get enough of a ticket to pay all the bills and guarantees, but we didn’t want to chase any, money away,” Ruffino says. Schilling adds, “Pound for pound, I don’t think there is another tour out there that is giving the fans four-and-a-half hours of hit music from start to finish. I’m glad we decided to tour on Friday and Saturday nights only—it lets everyone recuperate the next day.”

The tour is scheduled for 26 markets through June 16, but discussions are underway to extend into the fall.

**BOXSCORE**

**Concert Grosses**

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Crespo Updates Aging Genre With New Sounds

Elvis Crespo's first album in three years is titled "Regresó El Jefe" ("The Boss Is Back"). Due June 5, its name isn't subtle, but then again, there is nothing subtle about the artist who, in his heyday in the late '90s, reinvented merengue and took it to a broader audience than ever before.

That was when Crespo was signed to Sony Discos, the Latin music powerhouse of the day, when CDs were selling hand over fist. Crespo's debut, "Suavemente," sold more than 800,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, an extraordinary figure by any standard.

That was also when merengue, the fast-clipped, two-time dance music from the Dominican Republic, was at its height, dominating airwaves and precipitating a slew of tropical stations that popularized their playlists with these sounds.

Today's Crespo will release "El Jefe" on Machete, the successful urban-leaning label belonging to Universal. For Crespo, whose last three albums were on indie OLE (the label owned by former Sony Discos chief Oscar Llordó), it is a return to the majors and the beginning of something entirely new.

"I'm living a very mature moment, where I see the business from a very different perspective," says Crespo, whose last album, 2004's "Saborealo," sold 60,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. "I'm a firm believer that one has to live within the times and forget about past glories. But the essence has to remain."

Crespo's essence is merengue bomba, a more driven, edgier merengue, initially popularized by such acts as Los Hermanos Rosario. On "El Jefe," he returns to that, but blends in multiple fusions, from bachata to rap.

Also, in a clear bid to propel a genre that has largely floundered in the past five years, he features collaborations with merengue stars like Los Hermanos Rosario, Giselle and the original lineup of Grupo Mania (to which he once belonged).

There are also newcomers like Zone D'Tambora, a group featured on first single "La Foto Se Me Borro." Their inclusion, Crespo says, is part of his endeavor to bring new blood to the genre.

That kind of thought process made Crespo particularly appealing to Machete president Gustavo Lopez. "Who wouldn't take the opportunity of doing business with someone who has sold millions of albums?" says Lopez, who picked up Crespo's contract from OLE. "But what really got me into the record was hearing the music. I felt it was fresh. It was young, the lyrics are youth-driven. I have a lot of faith. And we’re putting our money where our mouth is."

For the week ending May 18, "La Foto Se Me Borro" entered Billboard's Tropical Airplay chart at No. 19 and should climb with promotion around New York's Puerto Rican Day parade, where Crespo will have his own float. The track will also be heavily promoted in DJ record pools. This is, after all, music that almost forces you to get up and dance, and Crespo hopes that appeal never goes away.

"I feel merengue has needed [more] life," Crespo says. "But those of us in the genre have never stopped working. This is a genre with a 150 year history, but it was necessary for us to give things a new look, to not give up, but show programmers that merengue is viable."

JOHNNY Sigal, Superstar?

Balladeer Ramps Up Rock Opera And Solo Careers

Johnny Sigal was seeking his musical fortunes in Miami when the call came from Caracas—a casting director was looking for someone to play God. Sigal was reluctant to return to Venezuela—after all, his home country's top musical exports had found their biggest success abroad—but he ended up going home and landing the title role in "Jesus Christ, Superstar."

"I quickly realized it was the best decision I'd ever made in my artistic life," says Sigal, 27, during a break from rehearsals. In addition to film and TV offers in Venezuela, another opportunity was the "We Hear the Future" competition at the recent Billboard Latin Music Conference in Miami, which Sigal won along with Colombian singer/songwriter Monica Giraldo. Sigal ducked out of preparations for the musical to fly to Miami for the event.

He's also started working on his debut album with producer Marcello Azevedo (Chayanne, Paulina Rubio), the husband of one of his fellow cast members.

"It's a great window to present myself in a totally different market," Sigal says of his record, which he hopes to release independently and shop to labels in August.

Meanwhile, Sigal says his role in the rock opera—which was scheduled for 12 shows in Caracas through the end of May before going on the road—has allowed him to pack the powerful vocal punch he's always wanted to.

"I sang for six years in a cover band. But I have my own style," he says. "I like projecting my voice."

Sigal has been a power balladeer at heart since playing quinceañeras in a rock band as a teenager. To get the attention of a girl he liked, the gangly Pearl Jam fan learned all of Luis Miguel's repertoire.

He studied music theory after high school and was in the choral group at Caracas' Metropolitan University. He also learned guitar, Venezuelan cuto and Afro-Caribbean percussion.

He eventually joined dance-pop group Tartara, which mostly performs live and plays private functions but released its debut album last July.

Sigal left the group to start a solo career, and then play Jesus—which isn't as hard as it would seem, he says.

"Andrew Lloyd Webber gave me a totally human touch," he says. "He had frustrations, including doubts in his faith. He also had human behaviors any of us could have, and I look at my own behaviors to try to represent him." Sigal's solo album will be solely pop-rock, but "a little stronger, more aggressive, more daring vocally than what others do." —Ayala Ben-Yehuda
Sign On A Different Line
Branding Deals Are Changing The Nature Of Artist/Label Contracts

It's a brave new world out there for brand marketing, and that hasn't been lost on managers and labels when it comes time to agree on a contract.

With band/brand marriages creating multi-million-dollar revenue streams—in the face of declining physical CD and flattening digital sales—both parties acknowledge that contracts between labels and artists are morphing into something else.

"These changes started to be earnest in 2006," says Brian Avnet, who manages the careers of Josh Groban and Lori McKenna. "Labels began putting together strategic marketing departments. They had to—the Internet has grabbed them bit by bit."

Indeed. "We're a full-service label, which enables us to ask a percentage of artists' ancillary profits," Epic Records president Charlie Walk says. "A few years ago, it was difficult for labels to get this (additional) percentage. Now, we put our money where our mouths is to get the percentage. This is reflected in new language we are putting into contracts."

Managers like Avnet understand that labels have to develop other sources of income. But, he adds, "It doesn't mean I, as a manager, must buy into it all."

In a general sense, labels have taken the initiative—forced, perhaps—to alter the business models of their economic relationships with artists, with more and more labels acting as agents to bring in branding deals. In the process, labels have become more aggressive in bringing such deals to the table.

"Today, a label is partnering with an artist's own brand," Geffen GM Jeff Harleston says. Historically, the engine for generating revenue was record/CD sales, which drove publishing, touring and, in a few cases, endorsement deals.

"Today, though, other mediums play a part in promoting an artist's brand," Harleston says. "Labels and artists are now becoming partners in these other areas—such that we share in the risks and upside."

In addition to more traditional endorsement deals, today's brands are digging deeper when joining forces with artists, and can include exclusive content and multiplatform campaigns. This is directly affecting today's contracts. On more than one occasion, particularly when dealing with established artists, Harleston and others recall agreements being amended to reflect newer, nontraditional revenue streams. Of course, as is often the case, the nontraditional is fast becoming the traditional.

"Today, a label agrees to investing in business as real estate," says. "We are developing a value together, and will share in revenue splits as a result of that development," she says.

The "profit sharing" plan Lopez speaks of is not etched in stone, and likely never will be. Label/artist splits vary in each case. "It depends on the value of the artist when we get involved," Lopez notes. For example, an artist with a stronger fan base could get a larger percentage of the split.

When discussing branded entertainment, Lopez cannot help but point to two former Tommy Boy artists: Queen Latifah and RuPaul. "Would Queen Latifah be as successful today without a successful recording career?" she wonders aloud. "And would RuPaul have gotten a contract with MAC Cosmetics without "Supermodel"?"

For ReachMedia's Michael Pagnotta, who oversees the careers of Erasure and Girl Authority, today's branding deals hark back to ownership of content. But in the current scenario, this extends to ownership of content. "Does an artist own his or her own likeness and image?" Pagnotta asks. "If not, why not?"

Pagnotta points to years gone by when artists "signed away" their likeness and image for promotion, CD artwork, and touring. "Now, it extends to endorsing a cosmetic brand, appearing in a TV spot for a national brand or designing apparel wear for Nike," he says.

The greatest challenges in all of this is re-tooling the mind set of older executives and reinventing what the companies do. "We all have to think of artists in different ways—as an artist as well as a brand," one 30-something label exec says.

He continues. "If we, the labels, don't deliver, no artist will give up these rights. If we bring two lousy branding opportunities to the artist, but their agent brings them 30, they won't want us to share in the additional revenue. The best publicity for us is if we put money in artists' pockets via successful deals with Jeep, American Express and other widely recognized brands."

For 24/7 branding news and analysis, see billboard.biz/branding.
Monetizing Live Music Online And In Virtual Worlds

In a small abandoned warehouse in an industrial area north of Denver, local bands Bad Weather California, Born in the Flood and Meese are playing a very unusual gig.

At first glance it seems pretty straightforward: The warehouse contains the headquarters and studios of Internet video outfit ManiaTV, which is streaming the performances live via its Internet TV network.

Nothing new there. Ever since the online success of the worldwide Live 8 music festival—during which some 5 million viewers tuned in to AOL to view the concerts—companies like Control Room (formerly Network Live) have emerged to offer concerts live online, while such venues as the Knitting Factory, the Gig, Center Street's rehashs.com and various live nation properties have now record and broadcast almost all of their performances.

What makes this Denver concert different is that it is also being simulcast in the popular virtual world Second Life. Again, by itself that’s nothing unheard-of; Suzanne Vega and Ben Folds performed in avatar form in Second Life last year.

But taken together it’s an attempt to merge the three different platforms—live, Internet and virtual world—into one common experience shared by all. Why? Because with CD sales falling like a rock and digital revenue not yet making up the difference, live events could be the music “product” of the future, sparking a flurry of innovation around monetizing it.

Normally when you simulcast something, [fans] only see one platform—the one they’re viewing,” says Farook Singh, whose company Tantra World Wide conceived of and produced the Denver event. “But the goal here is to be totally seamless between three platforms.”

For instance, those watching the Internet streams on ManiaTV saw the event not only from the perspective of multiple camera angles, but also from the point of view of a special Second Life “cam” that spliced in shots of the different bands’ avatars performing in the virtual world. Meanwhile those in Second Life watching the avatars perform were also viewing video of the real thing streamed from a large screen behind the virtual “stage.” And those in the studios watching it live could also see what was happening in both via about 25 TV monitors set up around the space.

The upcoming Live Earth event is another example. In addition to holding concerts worldwide in multiple locations, producers will air the event live online via MSN—where viewers can choose from several camera angles, interact with venue and city maps where the shows are taking place and even submit their own user-created videos adhering to its green-friendly theme.

Exactly how all this translates to more revenue remains something that needs to be worked out. Acts can charge admission for both Second Life and Internet TV performance, and sponsors might pay a premium for interactive banners in Second Life shows as an extension to their visual banners at the live show.

But before we can expect big bands and big sponsors to add such a multiplatform extension to their upcoming tours, the experience needs a bit of work. As the initial Denver attempt shows… it’s hard.

First, there’s the time lag that has long plagued Second Life. Get more than 30 avatars in the same space and people start losing clothes, the audio skips and video load times get real jumpy, which makes it difficult to seamlessly patch it into live feeds in real life.

Tantora got around the problem somewhat by holding his event simultaneously in 25 Second Life locations so no one would get overcrowded, but some venues still crashed.

NATHANIEL RATELIFF of Born in the Flood, above, and his Second Life avatar, right.

This week

**Bugs & Briefs**

**Blu Bird Is the Word**

Nashville’s Bluebird Café has opened a virtual live music venue within Second Life. The venue plans to bring nationally known acts and local favorites to perform in the virtual world, and will charge between $3 and $10 for admission. Artists initially will perform via streaming video in the Second Life venue. No word yet on whether avatar-based performances are pending.

**I’m Wide Awake, It’s Morning**

Music-based blog community MOG is hosting a contest with Bright Eyes to give away an iPhone. New members to the MOG site are invited to create a page on the social networking service and upload their music collection list for all to see. As long as entrants have at least one Bright Eyes song in their collection, they’re then eligible to not only win an iPhone, but the band’s label Sadie Creek Records will load the device with the entire Bright Eyes catalog.

**Zeros, Not Heroes**

The vastly popular “Guitar Hero” videogame has spawned a real-life band—Guitar Zeros. The group uses the guitar-shaped game controllers connected to laptop computers to create acoustic and electric guitar sounds, along with drums and other digital noises. The devices are shaped like a regular guitar, albeit smaller, but have a series of color-coded buttons on the neck in place of strings, as well as a toggle switch to emulate strumming. The group is based in San Francisco.

**AL Music Top Weekly Streams**

Boy, oh boy, three entries this week are popular with the boys: Ciara’s “Like a Boy” and Baby Boy join Fall Out Boy at No. 9.

His new duet with Jennifer Hudson moves 67-56 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs this week.

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

**For 24/7 digital news and analysis, see billboard.biz/digital.**
Help Me, Rondor

‘Covermount’ Leads To Beach Boys Legal Wrangle

Brian Wilson must have a smile on his face. He is now rid of 18 legal claims that former bandmate Mike Love filed after a London newspaper circulated 2.6 million free compilation CDs of Wilson’s concert performances that included some Beach Boys songs. A U.S. federal court ruled that Wilson didn’t have to notify Love, or secure his permission, before the songs were used for the promotion.

But then Wilson wasn’t really involved in the free-CD promotion anyway—the band’s publisher, Rondor Music had the right to grant permission. The compilation was part of the frenzied, competitive newspaper publishing scene in London—one that is quite lucrative for music publishers.

Shortly before the 2004 release of Wilson’s solo album “Smile,” Billboard worked with Associated Newspapers to compile a promotional CD, called a “covermount.”

Jeremy Fabinyi, executive director of U.K. mechanical rights society MCPS, explains that newspaper publishers will license and wrap a book, a poster or other free products with the newspaper (i.e., mount the product on the cover) to increase its circulation. U.K. music magazines have often wrapped a compilation CD with their issues. But CD covermounts are relatively new to London’s daily newspaper market, where about nine top papers compete for readers. “A couple of years ago, the market had gone absolutely crazy for CD covermounts,” Fabinyi says. “It’s like a drug addiction for the newspapers because you put a covermount of high-quality sound recordings that you give away for nothing, and you get an enormous boost in circulation. Then your competitor does the same. It’s this incredible battle that raged for awhile.”

One music industry source says that in 2005, there were more CDs given away by U.K. newspapers than CDs sold in the country. But those giveaways generated about £12 million ($20.7 million) in 2005 publishing royalties collected by MCPS, Fabinyi says.

For the “Good Vibrations” covermount CD, Associated Newspapers licensed from Sanctuary Wilson’s recordings of some Beach Boys songs from a live concert, along with some recordings of Wilson’s own songs. Associated also licensed the compositions from MCPS, which represents Rondor, publisher of the Beach Boys’ songs.

But Love claimed that the covermount and related activities violated his rights, damaged existing and future sales of the Beach Boys’ albums and concert tickets and tarnished the band’s trademark. Love also argued that his partnership with Wilson meant he had the right to approve any covermount.

“This lawsuit wasn’t about money,” says Wilson’s lawyer, Lee Phillips of Manatt, Phelps and Phillips in Los Angeles. The Beach Boys’ members have a very litigious history. Barry Melion, the Manatt partner in charge of the litigation for Wilson, says that he had to whittle away at each of Love’s 18 legal claims to ultimately get the case dismissed.

Some claims were made under U.S. trademark law. Love’s lawyers argued that a consumer who bought the U.K. covermount CD in the States from eBay was misled into believing it was a Beach Boys CD.

But Wilson’s lawyers had evidence that the “consumer” was actually a client of Love’s attorneys, represented by them “in dozens of gender and age discrimination lawsuits filed against various businesses and nonprofit entities,” the court wrote in a February order. He was not a “confused consumer.”

The court threw out the trade-
LITTLE STEVEN'S UNDERGROUND GARAGE
GARAGE ROCK

All right, look, we've got a year and a half to the election, right? So let's cut to the chase, forget about the issues these clowns are going to be avoiding anyway, and get down to what really matters: the campaign song.

So far we've got Chris Dodd with "Get Ready" (the Temptations), John Edwards with "Our Country" (John Mellencamp), Dennis Kucinich with "America the Beautiful," Wesley Clark, who isn't in the race yet but, more important, has a song anyway—Johnny Cash's version of Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down."

UndergroundGarage.com campaigns (more than we do their speeches) such as John Kerry's "No Surrender" (Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band), Howard Dean's "A Little Less Conversation" (Elvis Presley) and any personal favorite, Bob Dole's "Dole Man" (going to the tune of Sam & Dave's "Soul Man."

As good as those are, let's face it—they're not particularly appropriate given the state of our country's ecology, homelessness, infrastructure, schools, poverty, etc. So I'd like to suggest a few titles that give a more accurate picture for those guys jumping in late and needing a tune.

How about "I'll See You Later" (the Castaways), "All Sold Out" (the Rolling Stones), "Sorry" (the Easybeats), "So Sad About Us" (the Who), "I Take What I Want" (Sam & Dave). "I Had Too Much to Dream Last Night" (the Electric Prunes), "Beg, Borrow, and Snail" (Rare Breed), "Somewhere Else" (the Chesterfield Kings), "Wake Me Shake Me" (Blues Project), "Talk Talk" (the Music Machine), "Boom Boom Go Out the Lights" (Little Walter), "Over Under Sideways Down" (the Yardbirds), "I Ain't Me Babe" (the Turtles), "Lies" (the Knickerbockers), "Dirty Robber" (the Wailers), "A Must to Avoid" (Herman's Hermits), "I'm a Loser" (the Beatles), "Can't Help Thinking About Me" (David Bowie and the Lower Third), "Deserted Cities of the Heart" (Cream) or "I Can't Give You Anything (the Ramones)."

I'm pretty sure a few of those are still available. See you on the radio.

**COOLEST GARAGE SONGS**

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The Indies

Selling Old Music In Old And New Ways

Even as the indie label sector tries to get a handle on the potential of new business models in the Internet age, there are still places where old-school practices reign. Few labels rely on the strength of the indie retail base as much as those that traffic in catalog and reissues.

Check Seattle’s Light in the Attic, a reissue-heavy label that distributes its own music and manages its retail network by loading up the car trunk for an off-licensed road trip. The label isn’t all old school, of course. It recently experimented with lighthearted marketing tactics like a coloring book contest, and co-founder Josh Wright notes that “digital sales are exploding,” but tradition and a conservative approach still rule the day.

Without much money for co-op spending, “we still need to be face-to-face with stores,” Wright says. “I’ve done three trips in the past few years, where I drive all the way to Philadelphia and back.”

On May 15, the label released two albums from punk soul diva Betty Davis, packaging the first two albums from the vibrant, scratchy-voiced singer with extensive liner notes and lively artwork.

“We don’t have a lot of advertising money,” label representative Chris Estey says. “In fact, we don’t have any advertising money. The money goes into whatever we can do on the retail level.”

And the retail landscape for catalog and reissue product isn’t nearly as bustling as it was a few years ago. Chicago’s Numero Group thrives on niche stores like the Windy City’s Dusty Groove and New York’s Other Music, with label co-founder Ken Shipley noting that a store-scribed review at a respected indie inspires more sales than a listening station at a chain retailer.

“When we started, we believed we should spend $5,000 for 10,000 CDs,” he says. “Now, we’re doing less than $500. We need sympathetic record stores. If we’re selling 5,000 records, we cannot afford $2,000 for co-op.”

That’s why he’s concerned about the closing of a number of key stores during the past few years—New York’s Vinyl Fever being the most recent. Yet Numero Group seems well-prepared for any changes brought by digital distribution.

The label sells downloads via its site with a cleverly designed digital store based on an interface with clickable record crates. Ryko-distributed Numero Group, which has focused heavily on heavy vinyl compilations, also has a subscriber series, in which fans can pop down $100 to receive the six albums in Numero’s line each year (think the Sub Pop singles club).

In three years, Numero has about 380 subscribers. Shipley says, “That doesn’t seem like a lot, but if you stuck it up, it’s $100 per person, we’ve just created $38,000 in income. That essentially pays for our entire catalog releases right there. If we’re looking to sell 5,000-10,000 records, we’ll earn at most 500 people, and that’s nearly 10% of the people buying our records.”

Los Angeles-based garage label Alive Records relied a bit more heavily on Tower Records: Tower Rules. And reissues of the past two years. Yet, Alive, which is closely aligned with Bomp Records, will soon begin a larger branding campaign for the latter, whose founder Greg Shaw passed in 2004.

“There’s a Bomp book coming out, and I have a feeling many of the bands in the book will get some attention,” he says. “We’re going to try to use Bomp a little bit as a launch pad for the reissues.” On the horizon is a repackaging of early material from L.A. punk band the Weirdos, as well as Alive’s reissue of Two Gallant’s “The Thirds,” an act now signed to Saddle Creek. Boisell also just recently brought the Bomp mail-order business into the modern era with an online store that offers CDs and limited digital downloads at bompstore.com. Up and running for about two months, the site has more than doubled the mail-order business of Bomp.

“Thank God it did,” Boisell says. “That means people want these records!” She just can’t find them in the stores.”
Is it difficult putting on nothing but all-ages shows in New York?
It’s really difficult. You don’t have to circumvent liquor laws or anything, but the core of the problem is the economics. Most clubs are organized by a cadre of investors who put up a shit-ton of money with the goal of making a shit-ton of money. There’s a lot at stake. They run their clubs like it’s a war. So the idea of bringing in people to a bar or club that aren’t drinking is perplexing to them and more trouble than it’s worth as far as they’re concerned.

They don’t think about the fact that these are the next generations that will be at their bar drinking. So I work with establishments that understand their potential for tapping this next generation, are hungry for new music and want to be part of something. By the way, only about 20% of the people who come to see my shows are under 21.

What are your major expenses?
My investment is very small. The big thing you need is a PA—and that’s it. Starting out, I’d take big advantage of Guitar Center’s 30-day, no-questions-asked return policy. Eventually, I bought a $500 PA system, for vocals, and bands bring their own amps. That means I can set up shop wherever and the bar is just happy that I brought in a shit-ton of people who are buying beer.

I work with people who have the same goals and ethics as me and get to take home a ton of money from the bar. I take home 10%, then split the rest between the band and the door guys, who are friends or interns. I run the sound. The house keeps the bar, I keep the door.

Do you think regular rock clubs spend too much money?
Absolutely, and it’s easy to spend money on stuff you don’t need to spend it on. Understandably, there’s the matter of rent and union workers. But then when you’re dropping $500 or more on a sound guy you don’t trust? Or outrageous specifications on sound equipment that’s going to make an indie rock guitar band sound just the same? Trick out your space to look trendier, when people move along so quickly from trends? Indie rock is a cottage industry. It’s like the fashion or wedding industries, with a lot of money to be made and lost based on the fact that they assume you don’t know what you’re doing yourself. I don’t make a lot of money. But I now make about as much as I did wearing a suit as a financial analyst in midtown when I first moved here.

What is your history in this business?
I was booking shows at a coffee shop while I went to school at the University of Texas in Austin. After that, I opened Seventeen Nautical Miles, an all-ages spot, in Portland, Ore. I came here and worked in finance. I didn’t take a cut of the door for the first three years. All in all, I’ve been doing this for about 11 years.

What are some of the problems you see happening at traditional rock venues?
First and foremost, we’re in a country where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and you’re seeing an economy where only the rich can go to a rock show. Some are paying hundreds and hundreds of dollars to see their favorite band. It’s suddenly only a gilded class that can see anything quality, and even for a heralded indie rock band like Wilco, you’re going to pay $50 to a person. And then these expensive shows, they’re so tightly wound. It’s not fun. I don’t like velvet rope or VIP policies either. Everyone there is important. That kind of childish elitism is intolerable. It’s just trying to bow to class divisions in what should be one of the most communal, audience-friendly experiences—a rock show.

Most clubs are organized by a cadre of investors who put up a shit-ton of money with the goal of making a shit-ton of money.

You’ve booked shows for acts like !!! (chk chk chk), Cat Power, Animal Collective, Lightning Bolt, and a host of other very strange places. What is an example of one of your more interesting shows?
At South by Southwest this year, we threw a free party in a lot behind the Amtrak station at 2 a.m. with Spank Rock, Aa, Dan Deacon, Kidz in the Hall and some other hip-hop acts. I didn’t have to ask permission or get a permit. It was in the middle of nowhere, so nobody was going to complain. With all that, 600 people still came out. It was also cool booking Matt & Kim and 900 people coming out. A few months later, they sold out Bowery Ballroom, a 550-person venue, and suddenly everyone’s like, “Oh, wow, they’ve really made it now.”

In what other ways are you expanding the Todd P brand?
I don’t really think of it as a Todd P “brand.” It’s just the Todd P guy. I am running around at nearly every show, hooking things up and dealing with the problems. Right now, I’m working with some investors on securing permanent spaces for shows. These spots could serve as surrogate living rooms for kids in and out of town who are excited about music.

We also have a new biweekly, tabloid sheet called Showpaper, which will list all-ages, DIY shows and events in the tri-state area. While it won’t carry the Todd P name, it is crafted by the people I work with. My ultimate dream is to get these things rolling, hand them off to people I trust, then opening up shop in Mexico City. Those kids down there are primed for these types of raw rock shows. All of these goals serve a larger goal: to invite the nerds to the party.
When executives from Warner Bros. Records were looking to put together a bonus DVD to include in a special Wal-Mart edition of country singer Blake Shelton's latest album, "Pure BS," the label turned to an unconventional partner for visual footage—radio giant Clear Channel.

The broadcaster’s Online Music and Radio (CCOMR) unit in late January had produced a special performance by Shelton at Starstruck Studios in Nashville as part of its "Stripped" series—an upstart video programming initiative for the Web focused on acoustic performances by featured acts.

A number of Warner’s key Music Row executives were at the shoot—including VP of promotion Gator Michaels, VP of sales and marketing Peter Strickland, new-media VP Lynettearbonola and A&R VP Bill Bennett—and they were sold on using it as a value-add.

Five days later, Kelli Cashiola, an online marketing executive at Warner Bros., called Jenny Smythc, one of Clear Channel Online’s regional reps in Nashville, about adding the performance to the Wal-Mart retail package, which was due for a May 1 release.

During the next 48 hours, amid dozens of phone calls and e-mails among Cashiola, Smythc, CCOMR VP of content Peter Harper and video director Mitchell Stuart, a deal was made.

For Clear Channel, the request marked a first. The company was already making inroads with the major labels on participating in the 18-month old "Stripped." Warner Bros. Records Nashville had already teamed with Clear Channel on similar promotions for the Wreckers and Big & Rich. But no label had sought a monetizable use for the content before.

No money changed hands in the deal, but it carried big upside for Clear Channel just the same. Not only was the radio giant receiving validation for its video-programming efforts, but also as part of the agreement "Stripped" received branding on the CD art, the bonus DVD and in tags on the actual footage.

Call it a sign of the times of radio’s shifting role in the digital era.

Just 24 months ago, most radio groups, Clear Channel included, weren’t even available for online streaming, let alone producing Web video.

But since Clear Channel hired Evan Harrison away from AOL in November 2004 to head its digital strategy, the radio giant has been in the midst of a scramble to overhaul its stodgy image online and play catch-up with the leading music powers on the Internet.

Clear Channel, along with the radio business, finds itself under mounting pressure from all sorts of competitors, a group that includes satellite radio, iPods and a new breed of portable inter-net radio startups like Slacker. The company’s ability to adapt to new technology also is coming under greater scrutiny of late in the midst of a controversial buyout bid by a consortium of private equity firms lead by Bain Capital and Thomas H. Lee.

This is the backdrop against which "Stripped" has emerged, syndicated nationally to the local Web sites of more than 1,000 Clear Channel radio stations around the country. The program is one of more than a half-dozen new digital features Harrison and his team of 80 staffers have introduced as part of the company’s Web revitalization effort.

Also in the mix: streaming radio, free on-demand streaming previews of upcoming album releases ("Sneak Peeks"), an emerging-artist program ("New!") music videos on-demand, artist-hosted video channels ("Video 6 Packs"), live concerts on-demand and even social networking.

While on one hand, the company is simply bringing itself up to speed with features that the likes of Yahoo, AOL and MySpace already offer online, the transition is impressive given it is effec-tively delivering on functionalities that are anything but core skill sets of the radio business.

Even more impressive is that the radio giant is making sub-stantial gains in its collective Web traffic in the process. And it is doing so by pushing its sites on-air to people who are trapped in their cars during the morning and afternoon drive hours.

"Radio is incredibly potent," Harrison says. "We saw an opportunity to make it a dual medium by making an event of something on-air while making it interactive online."

Combined, Clear Channel station sites now rank sixth among online music properties (see sidebar, page 26), with almost 11 mill-ion monthly unique visitors, according to ComScore/Media Metrix. While that’s still well behind the top tier of Yahoo (almost 22 million), ArtistDirect (16.9 million) and MySpace (16.4 million), it’s rapidly closing in on AOL (almost 14 million) and MTV Networks’ combined Web properties (more than 14 million). In fact, Clear Channel is almost neck-and-neck with MTV if you count only the latter’s music-related properties. Meanwhile, the radio conglomerate now gets more traffic than MSN’s music portal.

And in the core streaming radio business, Clear Channel has vaulted ahead of AOL as the No. 2 programmer during Arbitron’s four hours of Monday-Friday from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., with more than 1 million average unique listeners—an almost 50% gain in Web listenership during the last eight months.

Also surging is consumer use of Clear Channel’s on-demand content, which has increased more than 90% since January to more than 6.5 million plays per week. The company credits that to the fact that in any given month it now claims content from the majority of artists in the top 20 on The Billboard 200 in any given week.

A Little More Than Two Years After Hiring Evan Harrison From AOL, The Once Fuddy-Duddy, Old-World Radio Conglomerate Clear Channel Has Emerged As An Online Power Broker

Changing The Channel

By Brian Garrity

Illustration by Aaron Goodman
All that growth is paying off for the company. The online division has been the radio unit’s fastest-growing source of revenue in 2005 and 2006—reportedly accounting for approximately 5% total revenue. The radio business reported first-quarter 2007 revenue of more than $819 million, which would put digital revenue in the range of $40 million.

THE MAN WITH THE DIGITAL PLAN

Harrison is sitting in his midtown Manhattan office on a sunny afternoon in late April, proudly demonstrating the online unit’s latest creation—a social networking site.

A week earlier, the company had introduced the feature on more than a half-dozen stations around the country, including New York’s mainstream top-40 station WHTZ (Z100). Harrison is giving Billboard a guided tour of his under-construction profile on Z100’s take on the offering, the Z-Zone.

He is still in the early stages of collecting friends and posting picks. He plays the song he just uploaded. The clip shows Harrison sitting on the couch in his office. He welcomes users to his page, while he changes his shoes. The scene is vaguely reminiscent of the opening, “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” sequence to “Mister Rogers Neighborhood.”

That’s no accident. Harrison sees big opportunity in helping listeners to Clear Channel’s stations draw social connections online.

“The indicators are that people want to connect locally,” he says.

In its competition against rival Web portals, Clear Channel is looking to differentiated features like social networking to make station sites more sticky with users.

“Whereas an MSN or a Yahoo already has tens of millions of people coming online every day to [instant messages] and get news, we’re not the place you go to manage photos and e-mail. So we have to give people a compelling reason to dial up our URL,” Harrison says.

In the midst of the conversation, Warner Bros. VP of marketing Bob Gordon pops into the office to play Harrison cuts from upcoming releases from the White Stripes and the Smashing Pumpkins. Warner is hoping to work with Clear Channel to promote the acts online.

The original programming that may spring from this impromptu meeting is another key way Clear Channel is improving the appeal of its Web sites. And the eagerness of labels to participate is a sign that the moves are working.

However, turning around Clear Channel’s digital fortunes has been anything but easy. When Harrison arrived at the company at the end of 2004, its stations’ Web sites were a decentralized collection of locally managed properties with cluttered design and more often than not, a lack of radio programming.

Primarily, they were destinations to see pictures of on-air talent and register for contests and promotions. And they were awash in a hodgepodge of advertisements.

In hiring Harrison, the company moved to create a new structure that would centralize Clear Channel’s Web infrastructure, but give the stations the autonomy to separately brand, design and operate their online destinations. Stations would also have the freedom to program much of their sites on their own, but would also carry nationally syndicated programming developed by COMR.

Given the immaculate layout of Harrison’s seemingly paper-free workspace, decorated with framed Ramones posters and family photos on the walls, it’s no surprise that one of his first pieces of business was cleaning up the visual presentation of the sites. But just as urgent was ensuring that Clear Channel’s biggest stations were streaming on the Web.

Getting the local stations to buy into the concept that streaming their broadcasts was something they wanted to be doing was one of Harrison’s first hurdle under his new Web strategy.

Many broadcasters at the time viewed streaming as a cost they didn’t want to incur. Stations had made earlier forays into streaming in the late ’90s and early ‘00s, only to later pull back after realizing the bandwidth and copyright royalty expenses associated with delivering content on the Web. At the time, the online advertising market wasn’t offsetting the cash outlay. Nor was it geared toward the kind of local ad business that is Clear Channel’s core revenue driver. There was also the issue of how to get credit for online listeners with terrestrial radio advertisers.

However, as 2005 approached, the online ad market was in the midst of a takeoff, reaching a level of around $9 billion. Digital ad agencies were sprouting in response to the success Yahoo and Google were having selling advertising.

Clear Channel’s radio division CEO John Hogan was determined to tap into that growing market regardless of previous challenges and was willing to invest in streaming radio to make it happen.

“We had to come up with an approach to talk to our audience in a way that made sense for a company that at the time was still measured by Arbitron, which is a diary recall system,” Harrison says.

The answer the company came up with was to push online-at-work listening as a new daypart (the time segments that divide a radio or TV day for ad-scheduling purposes).

We already had deep connections in local markets. We simply gave stations the tools for listeners to choose them at a computer.”

—Evan Harrison

Music’s Web Masters

Clear Channel Is Gaining Ground On The Biggest Names In Online Music

Clear Channel’s growing presence—and nearly 11 million unique monthly visitors—in the online world comes amid a shift in the Web traffic patterns of some of the biggest music-focused portals, according to data tracked by ComScore/Mediakraft. Making hard charges in the space during the last 15 months are both familiar names (MySpace, MTV) and some surprises (ArtistDirect). And while Yahoo remains dominant, former powerhouse like AOL are showing declines in visitors. MSN has fallen out of the top five entirely; in April of last year it was third of all online music properties based on traffic rankings provided by ComScore. MSN is currently in the seventh hole, down to some 9 million unique visitors from roughly 16 million 12 months ago. Billboard breaks down the current horse race among Clear Channel’s competitors in the U.S. online music space, as tracked by ComScore:

**Music’s Web Masters: Clear Channel Is Gaining Ground On The Biggest Names In Online Music**

**YAHOO MUSIC**

Unique visitors: 21.9 million
A year ago: 23 million

**ARTISTDIRECT**

Unique visitors: 16.9 million
A year ago: 14.9 million

**MYSPACE MUSIC**

Unique visitors: 16.4 million
A year ago: 7.9 million

**MTV NETWORKS**

Unique visitors: 14.5 million
A year ago: 11.3 million

**AOL MUSIC**

Unique visitors: 13.8 million
A year ago: 18.3 million

The numbers: Once consistently among the biggest players in online music running neck-and-neck with Yahoo in terms of unique visitors, AOL has seen wild swings in its traffic on a month-to-month basis as the company has transformed from a subscriber-based Internet access business to an ad-supported Web portal.

The numbers: Yahoo Music’s traffic is at its lowest point in more than a year, but it continues to command a solid lead driven by the strength of its streaming radio and video programming, combined with the overall popularity of Yahoo as a destination for everything from news to search to e-mail.

Inside the numbers: Yahoo Music’s traffic is at its lowest point in more than a year, but it continues to command a solid lead driven by the strength of its streaming radio and music video programming, combined with the overall popularity of Yahoo as a destination for everything from news to search to e-mail.

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Dialed Up
Clear Channel’s lead as a destination for online radio is growing. Below, a snapshot of the unique monthly visitors for the top five radio sites.

The notion of at-work listenership is nothing new in the realm of the Internet. But when it comes to terrestrial radio and its interaction with advertisers, much of their business has been rooted in the ratings around the morning and afternoon drive times.

To establish the new daypart, Clear Channel, within three months of Harrison’s arrival, had all the stations in its top 25 markets up on the Web and streaming. The company also registered with ComScore/Interactive MediaMetrics to measure its online listenership. In addition Clear Channel standardized all the banner ad space it offered on its sites to conform with guidelines from the Interactive Advertising Bureau.

At the same time, the company worked closely with its sales force of more than 5,000 to ensure they could sell advertising against the programming and use the ComScore data as proof of its online reach.

This was no small undertaking. For years, a majority of the company’s stations had been giving away online advertising slots as a free bonus to sponsors who bought time on air. Banner ads were offered in all sizes of shapes and sizes. And in most markets there was only one specified person trying to sell Internet advertising.

“We had to pull up the brake and establish internally that there is a value online,” Harrison says. “If we wanted to establish value, we had to stop giving it away.”

Under the new system, the company was incentivizing its sales force to look at selling online in a more holistic fashion. It wasn’t just a case of selling advertisers a banner ad. The goal was to package offers that called on sponsors to buy 15- and 30-second spots in addition to a banner to listeners to streaming radio could hear a call to action and then click through on an accompanying banner to find out more information.

Local advertisers—particularly companies like automotive dealers and direct-response marketers—took a quick liking to the offers and began buying time online.

Listeners came online, too. “The strategy from the beginning felt natural,” Harrison says. “We weren’t trying to force people to go to a new destination. We already had a deep connection in local markets with our listeners. We were simply giving the stations the opportunity and the tools for listeners to choose them when they are behind the computer.”

With a revenue model in place and a growing audience for streaming radio, the company—now six months into its Web transformation—then set its focus on redesigning its Web sites, ramping up its label relationships and building its original-content initiatives.

During the next year-and-a-half the company would roll out revamped destinations along with series of on-demand offerings like “Stripped,” “New!” and “Sneak Peeks.”

In each case the purpose of the program was the same—create content that could be syndicated to stations around the country and would give on-air talent a reason to talk up special features on the Web site in an organic way.

“That was a big step,” Harrison says. “Up to that point radio hadn’t been thought of as an outlet for anything but [real-time] programming.”

Clear Channel is now hoping to further improve that circular on-air/on-line relationship with its social networking efforts.

The company plans to drive traffic to the social networks via the “listen live” Web radio streaming area on the flagships of the stations.

As part of the initiative, each station that has a social network will introduce a new chat feature in the Web radio player that will feature profile pictures of social network members who are participating in the chat.

Users will be able to click on the user profiles in the chat area to enter and explore the social network. Stations will also promote the social networks through on-air plugs and special events and promotions centered around the sites.

“That fully completes the circle with our listeners,” says Tom Poleman, senior VP of programming and marketing for Clear Channel/New York and 2100 and one of the executives tasked with implementing the online strategy on the station level. “Back when we all started in radio we got into a dark room with a bunch of records and a microphone, and we thought we were communicating with our listeners. The reality is that was just one way of communication. Now, the process is a full, complete experience.

The company hasn’t yet established additional content or promotion deals with major and indie labels geared around the social networking sites. Harrison says Clear Channel envisions opportunities for everything from artist profile pages to special/exclusive content from artists that will be featured on the networks.

It’s just another way Clear Channel hopes to strengthen itself as a promotional partner with the recording industry.

With most of the top 20 artists on The Billboard 200 featured on the Clear Channel sites in a given week, it’s already the case that locks almost always have something online they can reference. And it’s not just music stations benefiting. For special online features from superstar artists like Bruce Springsteen, doing business with advertisers hadn’t worked with getting in on the act of talking up on-demand programming features on the Web.

The rise of Web programming also gives stations ways to more effectively expose the artists in rotation and even promote more artists to its audience than those getting played on-air.

Suddenly all Clear Channel Web sites featured a listing of the last 10 songs they played on-air. And with the rise of secondary programming streams, developed in conjunction with the company’s high-definition radio efforts, Clear Channel has new outlets of exposure it can offer labels whose artists can’t get on the air.

And with a growing slate of video offerings, the company has also been able to tap into a new source of revenue—local TV advertisers that are now buying time in front of playbacks of “Stripped” performances and on-demand videos.

In the process, the company claims its online advertising growth rate is far outpacing the industry’s overall 20%-30% expansion clip. Clear Channel is now doing business online with more than 10,000 customers and attracting many new advertisers locally in markets like restaurants and retail as well as automotive that may have not previously advertised with online radio. The company is in the midst of building a national base of advertisers, too, to supplement the core local ad business.

In addition to creating programming features and advertising opportunities, the company is also looking to change the influence that online has on the companies’ overall perspective by installing “online program directors” who sit at the same level as traditional PDs and are responsible for stations paying as much attention to the online product as the on-air product.

“Years ago before COMWR was built out, we were inconsistent across all our stations online. For a lot of stations, the Web was kind of an afterthought and now it’s a priority,” Poleman says. “We are miles ahead of where we were.

“The goal remains to continue to build audience, bringing new people in, have users spend more time with us online and start doing business with advertisers we haven’t worked with before,” Harrison says. “All the trends appear to be moving in the right direction.”
BRAD PAISLEY’S CAREER KICKS UP A SERIOUS NOTCH WITH HIS LATEST TOUR AND NEW ALBUM, ‘5TH GEAR’ BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

Brad Paisley says he called his upcoming album “5th Gear” for a few reasons. It is his fifth album, and a half-dozen of the songs mention some sort of vehicle. And, he adds, the June 19 Arista release is “an aggressive-sounding album . . . everything about it feels a bit more intense than artists for the first time.

The title—and that growing intensity—just as well describe what’s happening with Paisley’s career and life right now.

Case in point? Paisley just picked up his first top male vocalist trophy at the Academy of Country Music Awards after several nominations. No small feat considering it’s a field that includes such heavy hitters as Tim McGraw, Keith Urban, Kenny Chesney and others. But Paisley is reaching the level of such superstars in more ways than one.

His last album, “Time Well Wasted,” has been certified double-platinum and won album of the year honors last year from the Country Music Assn. and the ACM. And he’s burning up the road on his Hershey-sponsored Bonfires and Amplifiers tour with Taylor Swift, Kellie Pickler and Jack Ingram. “So far in the first three weekends, everything is pretty much between 50% and 60% higher than what we did last year,” says his agent Rob Beckham, senior VP at the William Morris Agency.

Last year was a breakout year, as Paisley ranked among the top 25 touring artists and ranked No. 23 among all acts in all genres. He grossed $2.8 million with total attendance slightly less than 700,000 from 97 shows.

“We’re traveling in a way that I’d never dreamed possible,” Paisley says. “That you could do it with this much fun and be out here with these kinds of bells and whistles blows my mind every night.”

Paisley has earned a reputation for having one of the industry’s most innovative road shows. He includes animated videos in his performance, which he creates himself, and he utilizes cutting-edge technology. “There’s this unique moment where we’ve got Allison [Krauss] appearing and the way we do it now is you’ll think she’s there,” Paisley says of the performance of “Whiskey Lullaby,” his hit duet with Krauss. “It’s like a hologram. It’s really, really weird how she just walks out and starts singing.”

Paisley says he can tell at his gigs. “That’s really obvious as we look out [from the stage],” he says. “A guy that sells our merchandise out on the road says just in the first three weeks of this tour we’re selling 40% more merchandise than we did last year. That’s exciting because that’s a combination of selling a few more tickets and at the same time people want to buy the stuff even more. I definitely feel like we have momentum on our side and things are going up.

Radio is mirroring his touring success. His latest single, “Ticks,” is one of the fastest-climbing tunes of his career, and sits at No. 4 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart.

“People have an expectation of Brad, and they know that he’s the modern-day Roger Miller,” Sony BMG Nashville VP of marketing Tom Baldrick says. “He can write a phrase unlike anybody else, but what people will really appreciate about this record is it continues with Brad being Brad, but it just takes it to another place. Musically, from a production standpoint, it sounds bigger and better and faster. There’s more of Brad’s guitar work and some stretches by him vocally. He’s stepped up to the challenge of following up ‘Time Well Wasted.’”

Paisley says the label almost came with a greatest-hits package this time, but opted for a new studio album instead. “The label was talking about a greatest hits, but I felt I had things to say. I wrote the first few things and knew that we were really on our way to a whole album of material. I felt like we had what we needed, and I’m happy with the outcome.”

The singer, who has a baby boy with his wife, actress Kimberly Williams-Paisley, says being a new father influenced the record and created a somewhat nostalgic feel. “Letter to Me,” was written to myself at 17 years old,” he says. “I realized later that—even though that was written in January before we knew whether the baby was a boy or a girl—it was written for my kids as much as it is for me because I think children are the closest thing we get to a second chance at things.”

Paisley wrote the song alone and admits it’s very autobiographical. Aunt Rita, who is mentioned in the song, was a favorite aunt who died of cancer: “So much of it is absolutely true,” the West Virginia native says. “Mrs. Brinkman was my speech teacher and when I started speech class as a sophomore, I was petrified to get up in front of the class and talk. I couldn’t do it and she encouraged me.”

As he did on his previous album, Paisley designed the cover. “As I look at the songs on this record, many are retrospective,” he says. “There’s a lot of looking back at high school and mistakes and things that I’ve done as a kid. That’s what the album cover represents. You have the one photo staring in one direction and the other sort of walking off in the distance the other way.

NASHVILLE NUGGETS

CAN ‘5TH GEAR’ KEEP PAISLEY ON HIS IMPRESSIVE ROLL OF HITS?

TOP: BRAD PAISLEY on stage during the 42nd annual Academy of Country Music Awards earlier this month in Las Vegas. BOTTOM: Paisley shakes hands with GEORGE STRAIT after Paisley won the award for top male vocalist at the ACM show.
The new project features a duet with Carrie Underwood on the song “Oh Love.” Underwood toured with Paisley last year and the two would sing “When I Think Backwards.” When he needed a female voice for the new duet, Underwood was a natural choice. “I’m a huge fan of her singing. She’s just tremendous and deserving of everything she’s getting,” he says. “When I heard that song, it flipped me out, [especially the line] ‘Strong like a mother holds her child.’ If that doesn’t appeal to someone at this point, I don’t know what does.”

Previous Paisley albums have included special guest appearances by George Jones, Little Jimmy Dickens and Bill Anderson as the King Pao Buckaroos. Jones is absent from the festivities this time around, but Vince Gill fills in and they join voices on a tune called “Bigger Fish to Fry.”

Paisley includes a gospel song on every album and on the new set he delivers the classic “When We All Get To Heaven.”

One thing fans won’t hear on the new album is a reprise of “Waiting On A Woman.” During a performance at Country Radio Seminar, Paisley announced to media and radio programmers that the song, from his previous album, would be included on the new album and would finally be a single. However, plans changed. “We finished the album and it had all these ballads that really fit the bill for what we needed,” he says, “and I wasn’t going to put ‘Waiting On A Woman’ on this album if there was a chance that it wasn’t going to get singled.”

So now the game plan is for the song to be included on the next album, which will be a greatest-hits collection. Then it will be released as a single. “It’s one of those masterpieces that rarely ever comes along and it will get its shot,” he says.

Fans will get a preview of the new album on Father’s Day weekend when GAC airs a 90-minute special, “Brad Paisley 5th Gear.” The program will include interviews and special segments taped at his farm as well as a recent concert filmed at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in St. Louis.

Paisley’s touring is only gaining momentum. “We’re averaging between 12,000 and 13,000 a night at the amphitheaters,” he says. “It’s only going to get better. The on-sales we are having now are going even stronger, especially in June and July.”

Baldriva feels Paisley’s career is moving up another notch with the new album and tour. “I remember when Kenny [Chesney] headlined the No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problems tour,” Baldriva says. “There was a feeling that he was in a different place. . . you could see the crowd and you could see the energy and the electricity. This feels like where Kenny was when he really hit the launching pad.”

For now, Paisley is enjoying the ride. “It’s a fun time to be me,” he says.
Kara DioGuardi is a busy woman. Perhaps that should be expected for a prolific songwriter/producer with a hand in 19 hits on The Billboard Hot 100 (including Christina Aguilera’s “Ain’t No Other Man” and Kelly Clarkson’s “Walk Away”) and who has contributed to 28 top 10 albums on The Billboard 200 (by everyone from Avril Lavigne and Celine Dion to Santana and Enrique Iglesias). After getting a political science degree from Duke University, the daughter of a congressman pursued a music career while selling ads for Billboard. Her love of music likely comes from her mother’s side of the family, which includes several opera singers. “I wanted to be an artist,” DioGuardi says. “The only reason I became a writer is that no one would give me any songs.” As it turns out, she didn’t need them.

10:30 A.M. At ArtHouse’s weekly meeting, DioGuardi strategizes potential deals for her writers and gets the status update on pending ones as staffers Paige Parsons, Niki Watkins, Kara Britz and Christina Kline take notes for follow-up. One of the most promising new areas for the company’s writers is country music. A reciprocal deal with Nashville publisher Big Loud Shirt helped DioGuardi land cuts on Carrie Underwood’s and Faith Hill’s next releases.

11:15 A.M. Another strategy is hooking up “topliners,” or melody and lyric writers, with track producers—either keeping it in the ArtHouse family or making new connections. DioGuardi is excited about Dream, a topline fresh off Rihanna’s hit “Umbrella” with C. Tricky Stewart. “Can we figure out a way to meet with him?”

Writer Johnny Reid (B Divo) has expressed interest in working with DioGuardi; she suggests meeting with him and ArtHouse writer Emanuille Kirikau (JC Chasez). "I don't want you to have to write every-thing," she says. "It's not where I'm at. I want to be focusing on the business." The way to get more and more pieces of songs is "cross-pollinating all the writers...then have a relationship."


1 P.M. DioGuardi recalls how her rapport with Nicole Scherzinger helped them write together. The Pussycat Doll had asked DioGuardi to look over her part on the Daddy Yankee track “Papi Lover.” DioGuardi recalls the lyric went something like, ” ‘Papi lover, you are everything to me, I am nothing without you. I come to the door, I beg for you.’ So I walk in, and I'm like, ‘Dude, you are not writing that. You're a fucking hot bitch, and you are not begging for anything. These guys are begging for you.’ And she's like, 'Yeah, you're right, fuck that.' So we rewrote it.” (Scherzinger returned the favor, lending DioGuardi a bra to wear for an impromptu on-camera appearance; DioGuardi points out that she is currently wearing it.)
Having found success in the pop world, DioGuardi founded ArtHouse Entertainment three years ago with her manager Stephen Finfer. In addition to her own K'Stuff Publishing, the company administers, publishes and manages a stable of established and up-and-coming songwriters and producers. ArtHouse aggressively pursues collaborations for them with hitmakers across different genres while allowing labels to essentially offload A&R.

"There's never been a bigger need for songs and producers," Finfer says. "Right now, there's less artists who write their own stuff, or at least don't collaborate..."

From left, opposite page: DioGuardi at the ArtHouse office, which also serves as her home, a staff meeting at ArtHouse with Stephen Finfer. DioGuardi writing with Tyler Connolly of Theory of a Deadman at ArtHouse; DioGuardi meets to discuss working with producer Ryan Leslie, left, on a new record by Cassie, right.

rate, than there has been in a very long time. You can just put your artist with us for a week or two and come out with a batch of songs and be almost done with your record.

But DioGuardi's approach is also about mentoring other writers, whether they be teenage addicts at Los Angeles' Phoenix House (where she built a recording studio) or promising pros like ArtHouse's first signing Zu!ohmin Be (Jim Jones' 'We Fly High') and new writer/ Capitol artist Bruce Booncace.

DioGuardi has also recorded with Europthunks' Dave Stewart at Platinum Weird and sometimes sings backing vocals on tracks she co-writes for others. Her upcoming projects include albums from John Rich, Daniel Powter and Britney Spears.

All of this leaves DioGuardi just enough time for finding a buyer for her 300-song catalog, shopping a pilot for a reality show around her songwriting sessions: composing music for an animated DVD based on a new line of dolls by Bratz maker MGA; writing a screenplay, "Baby Love," with a soundtrack, and getting a 1920s house so her current home can be a full-time office and crash pad for her writers. Billboard tried to keep up with DioGuardi a week before she received her seventh BMI Award, and her first as songwriter of the year, May 15.

3:30 P.M. Over cake and ice cream for Kline's birthday, DioGuardi explains a way artists can hear themselves on her songs. "I just listen to what they have to say. Take the 'Dignity' record, the Hilary Duff record. We just talked about her life and based it on what she was going through every day. We sat down and were able to put her life into music in a way that she was happy with. Ultimately, isn't that my job as a songwriter?"

4:15 P.M. Allan and DioGuardi tweak a mix of a Nick Lachey song, "Coming Up for Air," before sending it to Jive/Zomba for possible inclusion on Lachey's next album. The rock sound is a departure for the pop star. "Before it goes out I need to make sure it sounds the way we all envisioned it," DioGuardi says. "Once they listen to it, that's it. They either like it or they don't."

4:30 P.M. Allan proposes adding some more guitars ("I think it can be balser!"), but one music bed seems a little long to DioGuardi. "It feels like there's supposed to be an incredible thing that comes after it, and it's just the chorus again," she says.

4:30 P.M. Allan adjusts the track on ProTools as Tiki chews up Scherzinger's bra, which DioGuardi has ditched on the sofa. If the track is used, it will get a more aggressive reverb from Lachey, but for now DioGuardi steps into the booth to do a husky backing vocal. After listening to Allan's mix, "You can't even hear that it's a girl," she says approvingly.

6:30 P.M. The bra goes back on for a writing date with Leslie and R&B artist Cassie at Encore Studios, which still hasn't aired the internal odor of many a Dr. Dre recording session.

DioGuardi laments with a drowsy Cassie on a small couch and finds they have a similar affliction. "The worst thing about allergies is that they make you really tired," DioGuardi says sympathetically.

Cassie says she'd like to write, but that Leslie usually comes up with material. "We should come up with something to write about," DioGuardi encourages.

Leslie and Paschke have already started a husky, wah-wah synth track onto which Cassie has recorded some vocals about a romance that doesn't get past email. "It keeps coming around, but it never turns into anything," Cassie says.

DioGuardi thinks for a second. "A revolving door, maybe?" With the track blasting, she mugs out a chorus with her voice and hands: "My heart's not an open door... even if it was before... " as she and Leslie serenade each other. "That's old-school right there," DioGuardi says with delight.

9 P.M. With the song finally on its way, DioGuardi looks around happily. "At four o'clock I was ready to kill myself," she admits. "But you get in a room with people that inspire you, and you feel rejuvenated."
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Marty Stuart's new album "Compadres" is a collection of previously released duets, along with a few new collaborations. Arriving June 5 on the singer's Superlatone Records imprint through Universal Music Enterprises, the album—from one of Nashville's most beloved performers and champions of traditional country music—can be viewed as a career summation that coincides with an extraordinary confluence of high-profile activities. The Tennessee State Museum on June 5 debuts "Sparkle & Twang: Marty Stuart's American Musical Odyssey," a choice selection from the singer's immense private memorabilia collection.

June 5 also is the publication date of "Country Music—The Masters," a new book of Stuart's photographs of such country music greats as Johnny Cash, who graces the cover. (Stuart's first photography book "Pilgrims: Sinners, Saints and Prophets" was published in 2000.)

The following evening, Stuart will host his sixth annual Late Night Jam at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, to benefit MusiCares. Stuart and his band, the Fabulous Superlatives, are due to host John Rich, Neko Case, Charley Pride, Eric Church, Pam Tillis and Porter Wagoner.

Stuart has already played the inaugural Stagecoach Festival May 5-6, one of several live shows supporting the release of "Compadres." And he hosted a May 19 celebration of Wagoner's 50th year as a performer at the Grand Ole Opry. Stuart also produced Wagoner's new album "Wagonmaster," as well as Kathy Mattea's forthcoming album "Coal," a collection of Appalachian mining songs.

"I just didn't have time to really do a 'legitimate' studio album at the moment," says Stuart, explaining the "Compadres" concept.


So Stuart understandably jumped at the suggestion to take a look back at his many collaborations through the years, "starting with Lester [Flatt] and Johnny [Cash], and Merle [Haggard], Connie [Smith], Steve Earle, R.B. King, the Staples Singers. It just kept going. [to where I said], 'I did all that?'

"So it's a legitimate record. In every sense of the word, and I recorded a couple of new tracks (Dallas Frazier's "Will You Visit Me on Sunday" with Loretta Lynn and the Who's "I Can See for Miles" with the Fabulous Superlatives and the Old Crow Medicine Show). All of a sudden there was a completed circle, with the book and the museum exhibit—and also a career moment to look back at and go 'Wow.'"

The additional tracks on "Compadres" include "Farmer's Blues" with Merle Haggard; "Doer My Time" with Johnny Cash; "Rawhide" with Earl Flatt; "The Whiskey Ain't Workin' Any-more" with Travis Tritt; "Cryin', Watling, Hoping" with Steve Earle; "Hearts Like Ours" with Connie Smith; "The Weight" with the Staple Singers; "Confessing the Blues" with B.B. King; and "Let Us Travel" with Del McCoury; and "Move Along Train" with Mavis Staples.

"It's an amazing collection of artists," says Jeff Moskov, marketing VP at Universal Music Enterprises. "From B.B. King to Steve Earle, from Merle Haggard to Loretta Lynn, it's a stardusted CD—and that's exactly where an icon like Marty Stuart deserves to be.

This album celebrates 'Marty's friendship and leadership in the American musical landscape,' Moskov says.

Universal is using in-house and independent publicity via the Greenroom, a Nashville publicity firm. Coverage of "Compadres" is planned online via Amazon and in such major print outlets as the Los Angeles Times, Chicago Sun-Times and Dallas Morning News.

TV and radio venues lined up so far include CMT and GAC programming, the Craig Ferguson and Conan O'Brien latenight shows and NPR's "All Things Considered." Stuart will do additional interviews during an extensive summer and fall tour.

Universal is in discussions for a marketing campaign with the Home Shopping Network that coincides with HSN's increased emphasis on its entertainment division, and its recognition that Stuart—with all his current projects and his dynamic personality—is a perfect fit for its core target demographic. A proposal calls for HSN to feature exclusive Stuart merchandise that may include such items as signed CDs, photos, limited edition releases and concert vacation packages. Associated merchandise such as Grand Ole Opry product and apparel by famed country designer Manuel (Stuart is a key customer) may also be included in the Stuart promotion. Confirmation of the plans is pending.

The aggressive schedule of activities at this juncture in Stuart's career is what M. Dotore Artist... continued on >>>
MARTY STUART, with guitar, in black, jcoins PORTER WAGNER, in the coat o' many colors, at the Grand Old Opry.

from >>p35

Management had in mind when it began representing the singer three years ago.

"We had a lot of things in the kit bag," manager Marc Dottore says. "Here was a guy who wasn't on the radio so much anymore, so we had to come up with different strategies."

With his new CD, book and museum exhibit, the Late Night Jam and Stuart's production of "Wagonmaster," "we have a foot in the old and the new," Dottore says. "Then we realized that there is a moment in time in early June where we can celebrate this unique, colorful artist who has taken a bit of something special from each place he's been over the years and brought it all to who he is today."

For Stuart, it all comes from what he calls his "Mississippi heritage."

"So much of America's music sprang from there," says the Philadelphia, Miss., native, whose hometown is within 35 miles of Meridian, home of country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers.

Stuart points to such Mississippi music notables as Elvis Presley, B.B. King, Tammy Wynette and Pup Staples among the state's rich legacy of American music figureheads.

"I realized early on that I come from there, and that any form of music that's from there I could legitimately go to, and make a contribution," Stuart continues. "When I embraced that, I went beyond making music from one street, one town to the whole American roots system that's bigger than anybody's chart. I love that!"

A string-playing prodigy, Stuart was on the road with bluegrass gospel group the Sullivan Family at age 12. After befriending Roland White, the mandolin player for bluegrass legend Lester Flatt, at a 1971 bluegrass festival in Indiana, Flatt gave Stuart—then 13—a job as rhythm guitarist. "Compadres" includes the Bill Monroe classic "Rawhide," which was Stuart's mandolin showcase number with Flatt and the Nashville Grass and is taken from a 1974 concert at Vanderbilt University for Flatt's "Live! Bluegrass Festival" set.

"I hadn't heard that song in probably 25 years," Stuart says with a laugh. "I listened and grinned the whole time. I could feel me trying, a young musician trying to find his way. A young musician being favored by the presence of so many titanic figures. The word 'blessed' comes to mind. I wish every musician could have the mentoring I did that shows on this record. Basically, they're the people that raised me."

Flatt had recently split with his performing partner Earl Scruggs, who had gone off to form the more progressive Earl Scruggs Revue. Stuart teams up with Scruggs on the "Compadres" track "Mr. John Henry, the Steel Driving Man," which originally appeared on Stuart's 1999 album "The Pilgrim."

"He's a great singer, musician, talker and entertainer and I've always enjoyed picking with him," says Scruggs. "He's a real asset to everything he does. We've been friends for 35 years."

After his six-year stint with Flatt, Stuart played electric guitar with fiddler Vassar Clements in the band Hillbilly Jazz, and acoustic guitar with Doc and Merle Watson. He joined Johnny Cash's band in 1980—before he turned 20.

"The first two records I ever had were (by) Flatt & Scruggs and Johnny Cash," Stuart says, "and the fact that I ever got to meet—much less play with and be lifelong family with and have them as mentors—is beyond understanding."

His "Compadres" collaboration with Cash, "Doin' My Time," was a Jimmie Skinner prison song that he used to perform live with Cash, and was recorded for Stuart's 1992 album, "This One's Gonna Hurt You."

Stuart's debut solo album was "Marty, With a Little Help From My Friends," released in 1977 for the Ridge Runner label. More substantial was his 1982 set "Busy Bee Cafe" for Sugar Hill. A self-titled album for Columbia came out in 1986. But it was his move to MCA that broke him commercially with 1989's "Hillbilly Rock," thanks to the top 10 title track and two other hits, "Cry Cry Cry" and

continued on >>p36

"Maybe I'm a bridge between the past and the future."

- Marty Stuart

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“Don't Leave Her Lonely Too Long.” His 1991 follow-up “Tempred” yielded another title track hit (along with fellow top 10s “Burn Me Down” and “Little Thing”) and prompted Columbia to release his album “Let There Be Country,” which it previously had shelved.

In 1992, Stuart became a member of the Grand Ole Opry. He also released “This One's Gonna Hurt You,” which featured the duet title track hit with Travis Tritt. He co-wrote and sang on Tritt's Grammy Award-winning hit “The Whiskey Ain't Workin’,” which appeared on Tritt's 1991 album “It's All About Change” and is now included on “Compadres.”

“There are so many things about Marty Stuart that make him unique, aside from his obvious and overwhelming talent as a recording artist, musician, songwriter, producer, etc.,” says Tritt, who also toured with Stuart on the No Hats tour.

“I don’t think enough people give him enough credit for his accomplishments in all these areas. I also don’t think Marty is given enough credit for being a successful part of the music scene for as long as he has been.

“Guys like me who have been making records since the late ’80s are still rookies compared to him,” Tritt continues. “I have learned so much from him over the years and I’m grateful for how our friendship has afforded me the opportunity to be close enough to learn. After all, with teachers like Lester Flatt and Johnny Cash, there is no question that Marty learned from the best.”

Stuart produced and co-wrote Connie Smith’s self-titled 1998 comeback album—and married the legendary country star. From that album, “Hearts Like Ours” has been remixed with a new vocal from Stuart for “Compadres.”

Stuart has been on a particularly creative roll in the last decade. “The Pilgrim,” from 1999, explored the roots of country music in a concept album that featured the likes of Ralph Stanley, Emmylou Harris, George Jones and Cash. In 2005, he launched his Superlative imprint and the string of concept recordings now culminating in “Compadres.”

The two new songs on the new disc also have special significance for Stuart.

“I’d never recorded with Loretta [Lynn]—or cut a Dallas Frazier song,” Stuart says, noting that his wife has missed the Frazier catalog heavily. Of Lynn he adds: “She is such a treasure—that’s the word for her—and it’s wonderful being in her presence.”

Stuart also recorded the Who song “I Can See for Miles” with neotraditional string band Old Crow Medicine Show, an act he first heard busking at an Uncle Dave Macon Days festival in Murfreesboro, Tenn. He later invited the act to play the Grand Ole Opry and has toured with the band. Stuart’s link to the group also serves the vision of his management company.

“A lot of these Americana and jam-band artists are doing Marty’s thing,” Dottore says. “We see him as a bridge. He has a foot in several different musical worlds and because of that he’s always involved in different kinds of projects. So we want to take all these ideas and continue his long career arc.”

Scott Munn, who works with Dottore at Stuart’s management company, says the singer is “an American music icon, naturally encapsulating all the American roots music: rock’n’roll, country, folk, blues, native—even a jazz vibe.”

Dottore wants to encourage Stuart’s work as a producer, a role that Wagner can strongly commend.

“Marty said, ‘It’s really important to me that this is the best album you’ve ever done, and I want you to have all the time to work on it and get [the songs] the way where you sing them the way you want to,’” Wagner recalls.

“I don’t know of anybody else who would give me that much time—and that meant an awful lot to me and showed me the kind of man he was and showed me what his thoughts of me were,” he says.

Stuart has served six terms as president of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum’s board of directors. He has written about music and culture for publications including the Oxford American. He has earned an honorary master’s degree in Lakota Leadership from the Oglala Lakota College in South Dakota.

“And he’s only getting started,” Munn says. “There’s a whole second half coming, with projects in the air right now that we don’t even know about.”

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The earth started shaking when Paula Cole and Bobby Colomby first met—literally. "It was 1994, and I had just seen her perform for the first time in Los Angeles," Blood, Sweat & Tears co-founder Colomby says. "I went backstage to be introduced, and as we shook hands, things started rattling. It was an earthquake." Years later, a reunion between Cole and Colomby would again be accompanied by some serious shifting, this time only on a metaphorical level. "In 2004, I got an e-mail from Bobby wanting to know what I was up to," Cole says. "I had last seen him in '97, and I was in a far different place. I wasn't doing music anymore, and I told him I wasn't sure I ever wanted to again." Although she did not cut ties with Warner Bros. until 2003, Cole had walked away from the business years earlier after her third release failed to match the success of its predecessor, 1996's "This Fire." That album catapulted Cole into the spotlight, earning her two hit singles and several Grammy Award nominations. It has sold 1.64 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Colomby says she had "worked brutally" in the years between her 1994 debut "Hurting" and 1999's "Amen," but he never felt she was seen for the depth of her musicianship. "I felt like a racehorse forced to plow a field in the pop market, and I realized I was hurting too much. At one point, I thought I was never going to do it again." Cole left New York for Los Angeles and turned her attention to A marriage and raising a child, but was soon faced with managing her daughter's severe asthma and an increasingly troubled relationship with her husband. With superman timing, it was then that Colomby stepped back into the picture. "I wanted her to sing on an album I was producing," Colomby says. "I called her manager only to find out he was no longer managing her. He was very cryptic. He just said, 'Paula could use a friend.'"

Colomby was shocked when he reached Cole. "I had no idea she hadn't been singing. I thought that was crazy," he says. Convinced she was too good to quit, he persisted until she agreed to do a session. Colomby says Colomby was "so enthused, positive, that it was like the sunshine was coming back into my life. It was fun and refreshing working with him. I had a realization that at the heart of it, I did still care."

Cole soon started co-writing new material with a select group of songwriters, and, in the meantime, Colomby inked her a new deal with Columbia. A finished album, aptly titled "Courage," ended up sitting on a shelf as Sony and BMG merged, but ultimately formed a new home at Decca/Universal.

Universal Music Classics/Decca Label Group GM Paul Foley says, "We are now signing artists directly to Decca in the U.S., which marks a new phase for us. And Paula is our top priority artist to launch this new phase." Cole says the deal with Decca is "a blessing," in part because the label is more "adult-oriented," thereby better suited to the full range of her talent. "This album isn't constrained to three-and-half-minute pop songs or to one style," she says.

"Courage" runs the gamut from such classic smooth jazz tinged entries as "Lovewhite" to such Southern gothic tinged affairs as "Comin' Down." Elsewhere, gentle bossa beats and lovely acoustic shuffles seem well suited for AC or adult top 40 radio. First single "14," meanwhile, steadily builds its graceful middle tempo to a fiery final verse. "This mighty woman's ready to explode; Fire here below the surface of my volcano."

The album's diversity may prove a marketing challenge, especially at radio, but Foley says, "By no means do we think this record is dependent on radio. We think the press campaign is the major driver. People will want to know where Paula's been, and we're saying, 'She's survived, she's back, and she's better than ever. And you can hear all of that in the music.'"

Decca launched "14" at triple A instead of adult top 40 or pop, feeling that the "slow-building" nature of the format would work to Cole's advantage. The label is also counting on live performances to drive sales. "I went to the showcase she did in February at Berklee College in Boston—you would never have thought she'd been off the road for so many years," Foley says. "It certainly gave us the confidence that when she gets out there, that will strengthen our marketing effort." Dates are still being lined up, but Foley expects Cole to tour through the summer and says the "Courage" campaign will roll into 2008.

Cole reminisces, "I'm a 39-year-old woman in a sexist, ageist business given a second chance, and I'm profoundly grateful for that. I hope music continues to bring me joy. And I hope people still want to listen."
Quik Change

Veteran DJ Back On The Radio With AMG As The Fixxers

Few people have better beats, or better hair, than one of my favorite producers, DJ Quik. His new single, "Can U Werk Wit Dat?" with AMG, under the moniker the Fixxers, is climbing up the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart (No. 76) as well as R&R's Rap radio chart.

"This isn't going to be a DJ Quik record—it's going to be a Fixxers record," AMG says. "We're here to make good songs. 'Can U Werk Wit Dat' doesn't sound like a California record.

Though the track began as a ringtone one-off, Interscope quickly offered the pair an album deal. "Can U Werk Wit Dat!" was recently added to MTV Jams as "Jam of the Week." With spot dates across the country, the guys plan to stop touring in a few weeks,unker down and finish the record, slated for release in the fall.

"Honestly, it's been good music for the time being," DJ Quik says. "It's fun, and I have one piano piece that's a little spiritual. But it's all very minimalist.

Quik, AMG and longtime collaborators Greedy Greg and Hudson Baxter have also launched a production company, Dirty West. They'll be looking for artists in the long term.

"With Dirty West, we're doing the production first," Quik says. "When the artists come, we'll turn the lights on for them."

Meanwhile, Quik and AMG have been producing tracks for Rick Ross, Yung Joc, Wyclef Jean, T.I. and Young Jeezy. Quik also may have found someone, P Traxx, to carry the California producer's torch.

"I've been educating P Traxx about the studio and how to get around it," Quik says. "Just teaching him about the SP12 and the MPC 3000. Give him a few months and he's going to be a killer. Well, maybe I'm not giving him the torch, but I'll be sharing the torch."

BANNER TO THE WORLD: Although David Banner has been quiet for a while, it's not because he hasn't been busy. Rather, he's been doing some soul searching.

"2006 was the worst year of my life," Banner says. "2007 has been the best year of my life. I've learned to say no and not take on everyone's problems.

My father had brain and lung cancer, and I had high blood pressure because I was working 18-hour days. You have to value the person you are."

Banner was one of the first rappers to respond to Hurricane Katrina by giving out his own clothing to victims. But now, he'd like to help those less fortunate by helping himself onto a bigger platform to give back.

"I took on too much responsibility," Banner says. "I did volunteer work for six hours for Hurricane Katrina but my own business wasn't right."

Now, Banner is focusing on his new album, "The Greatest Story Ever Told," slated for release by summer's end. With production from himself along with Nitti, Cool & Dre, Akon and Get Cool 3000, he's also wrangled features from Chris Brown, Jamie Jones, U.K., Snoop Dogg, Lil Wayne, Carl Thomas and Xscape's Kandy.

"I have a tendency to want to change music," Banner says. "But I realized that people just want hits. The ladies want a 'Play'. I made a Cadillac on 22's, I'm a few like a Pimp.' I did a rock song that's probably going to get me hung. Let's just say the record was written three years ago—'it's just truthful.'"

Banner has also logged time behind the boards of late with Famlay, Lil Wayne, Snoop, Brown and The Shop Boyz.

The Ringtone King

Unk's Second Single Follows His First To Mobile Success

When Unk topped urban radio charts last fall with his dance hit "Walk It Out," inspiring folks across the country to walk bow-leggedly on beat, few industry people thought he would make it a second single. But this month, "2 Step" claimed the No. 1 spot on Billboard's Hot Ringtone chart after just four weeks, the chart's fastest climb in 2007 thus far. "2 Step" has sold 307,000 digital copies and 425,000 ringtones, according to Nielsen SoundScan and RingScan, and is now No. 21 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. Meanwhile, "Walk It Out" has chalked up 1.02 million downloads and 1.51 million ringtones, while demonstrating remarkable staying power—It spent 43 weeks on R&R's rap radio chart.

"We picked up 'Walk It Out' because of the Oomp camp's immense popularity in Atlanta," Koch VP of special markets Bill Crowley says. Big Oomp Records is an Atlanta record, publishing and production company. Unk had joined Oomp's fold after building a name in the local club scene. "When we released the album in October, 'Walk It Out' was a big hit in Atlanta." But Koch heard the song and the album as more than just a regional smash.

So in September 2006 the label joined both with mobile partners Zongz, Hudson, Modern 9 and Squared—owner of mobile company the Mobo— to peddle "Walk It Out" as a ringtone. And even before many urban radio stations and video outlets added the song into their rotation, 9 Squared pulled together TV spots pitching Unk's ringtone on BET and MTV2. The ringtone spent 17 weeks in the Hot Ring-Masters' top 10, and its success gave Koch radio representa-
Elvis Costello fans can’t complain about “No Action” when it comes to his catalog. The Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, who is celebrating his 30th recording anniversary, last year struck a deal with Universal Music Enterprises (UME) for what label president Bruce Resnikoff calls “a multilingual, multiyear, multifaceted series of reissues and special compilations, which is being done with Costello’s full cooperation and involvement. It began with the May 1 release of “The Best of Elvis Costello: The First 10 Years” and “Rock and Roll Music,” as well as the reissue of his first 11 albums in their original form—and for the first time digitallly—with codes that allow buyers access to a wealth of Internet-based bonus material.

“We’re trying to create is the complete Elvis story over the next few years where people can effectively appreciate Elvis’ different styles of music,” Resnikoff says. “While we’re trying to do things that will satisfy the traditionalists and the hardcore Elvis fan, a big part of our strategy is also to seduce music fans who have not traditionally been among that hardcore group.”

Costello, who owns his recordings and licensed them to UMe, is not an artist who routinely delves into his past. “I know most of the records by now,” he says, “so I don’t listen to my own records very much.” But he appreciates UMe’s expansive and detailed plan for bringing his three decades of recordings to the marketplace. “There’s a number of different ways you can focus people’s attention,” Costello says, “particularly people who are listening for the first time. There’s a lot of songs, a lot of records in a short period of time—even if you just consider the 11 records that are being reissued now. That’s quite a lot of material. So [UME] offers a broader choice for the people who have maybe heard your name but find it a little intimidating, this big pile of music, and they don’t really know where to start.”

“The First 10 Years” and “Rock and Roll Music”—the latter of which features rarities such as an alternate take of “Honey, Are You Straight or Are You Blind,” live versions of “You Belong to Me” and “Mystery Dance,” and a demo of “Welcome to the Working Week”—are the first of several “special” compilations UMe plans to release in the program. Resnikoff says that other themes are still being decided upon, but they’ll likely focus on both musical directions and lyrical concepts.

UME also plans to release deluxe edition packages of several Costello albums, starting with a 30th anniversary commemoration of his debut, “My Aim Is True,” this fall. Costello says he and the label have just started “delving down into the Cornish tin mines where the tapes are held to find out what has been left under a rock” for that project. Resnikoff says that the company is thinking about a deluxe edition of 1978’s “This Year’s Model” in 2008, along with others at appropriate intervals. The vault-plundering could also result in some full-length live albums.

Costello has agreed to extensive catalog programs before, in the mid-’90s with Rykodisc and just a few years ago with Rhino. Those releases featured second discs and scores of bonus tracks, but Costello says the UMe program, focusing on his albums in their original form with bonus material housed online—where it can change as additional recordings are discovered—appeals to him more.

“I think it was possible for a number of years to buy every last note pertinent to each of the records in my catalog,” Costello says. “Now it isn’t going to be, and I think that’s all right.”

Resnikoff, meanwhile, says Costello’s involvement in the project makes it likely that there will be no end to UMe’s offerings. “When we made this deal, we mapped out a strategy based on what we already know with the caveat that as we discover things, that will expand,” he says. “With Elvis going through things and discovering them with us, a lot of it is as fresh to him as it is to the consumer because he hasn’t gone back and looked at it before. We call him the head of our marketing team here. He really has been an unbelievable asset, and you can’t say that about every artist in this kind of process.”
COUNTRY  BY KEN TUCKER

Second Time’s A Charm

Aldean Returns With Follow-Up To Smash Debut

Success came in droves on Jason Aldean’s 2005 self-titled debut, which spawned a No. 1 airplay single in “Why,” plus a top 10 and a top five. The album has sold 913,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and helped him earn the top new male award at last year’s Academy of Country Music Awards.

But Aldean says he didn’t feel any pressure when it came to his sophomore release, “Relentless,” out May 29 (see review, page 43). “Obviously, I wanted this new album to do well, but trying to make something better than the last one, or comparing it to the last one, is a bad way to do it,” he says. “I just went out and tried to find some great songs and put together something I was going to be proud of.”

Broken Bow Records GM Brad Howell says Aldean is being modest: “There was tremendous pressure—especially because we’re a small label and his first record went platinum—but he has a great personality and that allows him to handle stress,” Howell says. “He never seems like he’s under pressure.”

Sophomore releases are famously rushed and/or disjoined when it comes to the recording process, particularly when a first album is successful. While Aldean spent two months making his first record, a heavy touring schedule—with Rascal Flatts, Miranda Lambert and Dierks Bentley, among others—and other vagaries of success meant a more sporadic recording routine this time around. “It’s kind of a catch-22,” Aldean says. “It’s bad that you have to squeeze it in and find time to do it, but at the same time it’s a good thing because you are staying busy on the road.”

There was a silver lining, however. “It gave me a lot more periods of time to live with the songs and make sure they were things that I wanted to cut,” Aldean says.

Howell says the artist’s relationship with producer and publishing veteran Michael Knox helped the recording process:

Beatbox

KERRI MASON kmason@billboard.com

Radio Daze

ATB, Ultra Nate Building Fan Base Without Radio’s Help

Want to know what’s wrong with American dance music? Ask a German trance DJ.

“We always have the problem that the quality of the music is a bit low, because people make it to try and get it on the radio,” André Tanneberger, aka ATB, says. “It’s not that important to me for my music to be on the radio.”

Maybe that’s why his latest album, “Triology” (Water Music), which entered the European Top 100 at No. 73 last week, and came out May 22 in the United States, has a number of songs just an edit away from being airplay-ready.

The biggest standout is “Renegade,” ATB’s second collaboration with singer/songwriter
process go smoothly. “While Jason’s out touring and supporting the first album, Michael’s back here in Nashville looking for songs for the new record,” Howell says. “The two of them work extremely well together.”

Big & Rich’s John Rich, who co-wrote “Why,” “Hicktown” and “Amarillo Sky” on Aldean’s first record, contributed two songs to the new set including the first single, the head-over-heels-in-love tale “Johnny Cash,” which is No. 15 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart. But Aldean’s favorite song on the record is “Back in This Cigarette,” a painful tale about trying to rekindle the love in a relationship (“It’s like trying to put smoke back in this cigarette”). “It’s just a kind of swampy, broken-hearted song,” Aldean says. “It’s unlike anything that I’ve done before.”

KMPS Seattle air personality/music director Tony Thomas says once the station added “Hicktown” to its playlist, “we knew right away that listeners had embraced Jason’s energy and attitude. For a new artist to make that listener connection with their first single is pretty rare.”

While he notes that “Hicktown” has been Aldean’s biggest hit for the station, Thomas says “Johnny Cash” is “turning out to be very strong for us. Jason seems to know who he is and who his audience is. He’s a country boy who’s not afraid to really rock out, and listeners clearly love him for it.”

When Aldean played the area with Rascal Flatts earlier this year, he “got a tremendous response,” Thomas says. “That was one rockin’ set, and the crowd was with him all the way.”

Hector Montaner bears an uncanny physical and sonic resemblance to his father, noted songwriter/balladero Ricardo Montaner. But his sophomore album, “Apariencias,” due June 3 on Venemusic, bears his own distinct brand of music. “It’s a natural quest—trying to mark a difference at a musical and lyrical level,” says Montaner, who has a close relationship with his famous dad. “If I sing a classic ballad, it is too Ricardo Montaner. I had to find a way to present my ballads in a different manner.”

As such, “Apariencias,” produced by guitarist Andrés Carraro (who has worked with Carlos Vives, among others), is an acoustic-minded album with pared-down production, plenty of guitars and percussion, and a distinctly earthy singer/songwriter sound. It’s a different approach compared with the more classic feel of Montaner’s first disc, “Amor del Bueno,” released in 2004.

“We wanted something different from his first album and also to try and find his identity as an artist,” Venemusic VP Jorge Pino says. “Maintain his songwriter side, but also develop a commercial sound.”

To that effect, Montaner signed with Venemusic’s publishing arm, Venevision International Publishing Latin, and via its director, José Antonio Beltrán, paired up with a variety of songwriters including stalwarts Donato and Jose Luis Chacín. Most of the new songs were written or co-written by Montaner, and the lyrics have a colloquial feel compared with the more romantic “Amor del Bueno.”

At that point, Montaner, then 23 years old, was very much his father’s prodigy. The album not only counted Ricardo as executive producer, but also as one of three tracks.

Today, the relationship between father and son continues to be airtight, and Hector presented his dad with the Spirit of Hope Award at the Billboard Latin Music Awards in April. But the artist and his label want to make it clear that—despite the kinship—this is a different act with a different potential audience.

Montaner is the third child of Ricardo Montaner, and the second progeny in the close-knit family to embark on a musical career. His older brother, Alejandro, released one album on Sony Discos in 2002, then settled on a different musical route. He is now Hector’s manager, but he also continues writing and penned several songs with his brother, including the first single, “Apariencias.”

The track’s contemporary sound and lyrics appeal to the 18-34 female demographic, says Felix Bonnet, programming VP for Spanish Broadcasting System in Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico, it is being initially programmed on the more youth-driven WOIA (Cadena Estereotempo), where Bonnet says, Montaner will be discovered as an up-and-coming artist.

“He is focused toward a new generation that perhaps wasn’t exposed to his dad, but who are accepting the way he is,” Bonnet says.

If the track is successful on Estereotempo, Bonnet says, he’ll also add it to WCMA (Romance), which is geared to an older female listener. “There they will inevitably associate him with his father, and perhaps it will help,” Bonnet says. “But he shines through on his own merits.”

At a recent showcase in Miami, Montaner was impressive, dominating the stage that he’s called home since he was a little kid who often performed with his dad.

“I am not ashamed of that,” Montaner says of his family ties, noting that he will likely tour with his dad this summer. “The little I’ve done in my career so far, if I’ve done it well, it is thanks to my father’s advice.”
6 QUESTIONS
with AMANDA GHOST
by PAUL SEXTON

When Billboard first championed Amanda Ghost in the summer of 2000 on the eve of her Warner Bros. debut "Ghost Stories," the label's veteran VP of A&R worldwide Andrew Wickham, who had signed her, was moved to say that she "sings in the key of heartbreak."

Heartbreak did indeed ensue when the album founded and Ghost, London-born of Indian and Spanish descent, spent several fruitless years stuck in the deal. But she continued to write and emerged triumphant when "You're Beautiful," co-written with then-unknown former housemate James Blunt, became a global smash, winning her two Ivor Novello Awards and two Grammy Award nominations.

Ghost's latest co-write, "Beautiful Liar" (Columbia) by Beyoncé and Shakira, recently topped the Eurochart Hot 100 Singles list, after reaching No. 3 on The Billboard Hot 100. Ghost is now recording herself, producing and A&R'ing other artists and being courted for her songs by superstars from Britney to Whitney. The very pregnant Ghost spoke to Billboard about how she survived and prospered.

Many people knew you chiefly as the co-writer of "You're Beautiful." Has "Beautiful Liar" laid that ghost to rest?

The great thing about "Beautiful Liar" is that it's not just a success in America or the U.K. It's No. 1 in 10 countries, and it proves I'm versatile. My own style is country-folk-pop with a little bit of electronica. "Liar" is an R&B-Latin groove. I did doubt for a second I could do it. I like R&B, but [only] up until 1975. But it made me realize a good song is a good song.

Do you want to be known primarily as a songwriter?

I want to be known as a musician. That covers me as a singer, a writer and a record producer. And I'd like to be known as a musical entrepreneur, because I scout and sign acts, which is such a buzz for me. I'm working with an artist called Hugo that we've just signed to Island. To take something and develop it and see it succeed, you have a greater sense of achievement.

But your own record will come out through your label Plan A?

Yes, my label that we license through various majors throughout the world. That's because I can't be A&R, I am an A&R, and I know too much [laughs]. The pressure on me to write a hit song is off. Every hit I have [as a writer] will only steer people back to my own music.

Did your previous experience at Warners, as an artist, turn you off to the majors?

It has. The biggest complaint I had from the chairman there, who's still the chairman, was, "Amanda Ghost is a fabulous singer, but she can't write hits." With my artist Hugo, I very much act as a buffer between him and the label. He's sold records [at home] in Thailand, and I've consistently drummed it into his head that [new artists] operate on a 99% failure rate.

Where are the majors at now?

They sign things and then spend two or three years changing everything about the act. I think they should stay out of the A&R process. But they are learning. The edict at Universal U.K. is that they don't want to sign things that don't have a fan base. A lot of people complain there's no artist development, but you have to find alternative ways to fund bands. When the public's saying, "Yes, yes, yes," that's when majors should step in and put their might behind them.

Your baby's due June 22. Will you stop working for a couple of hours?

I'm going to take about a month off. People think I'll be done for the rest of the year, but it's not true at all, as long as you've got a phone and I can sit in a recording studio. It's not like I'm lifting heavy boulders.

A Boost In Belgium
Clouseau Inspects The Top Of The Chart

Belgian pop/rock act Clouseau celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, boosted by the success of its latest EMI Belgium album, "Yvonck en Vuur," which has topped the Flanders Ultratop chart for seven weeks since its March 31 release. The album — Clouseau's 10th studio set — sold more than 60,000 copies in the first three weeks of release, according to EMI. Clouseau is also one of Belgium's leading live attractions.

Since 2002, its annual series of December concerts at Antwerp's Sportpaleis has become an institution. In 2006, it attracted 210,000 to 12 shows at the 17,500-capacity venue. Live dates, which see original members Koen and Kris Wauters joined by six other musicians, are booked by Diest-based King International Agency. The act is self-published.

"Clouseau is the biggest local artist in our market," EMI Music Belgium managing director Erwin Googebeur says. "Retailers confirm that the new album has been one of the fastest-selling albums ever here." He adds that "2007 will be a very Clouseau year" for the major's domestic repertoire arm, with a set of catalog reissues also being planned for release later this year.

The 20th-anniversary celebrations also include a new run of Sportpaleis shows, for which tickets are already on sale.

— Marc Maes

SOUL SLEEPER: Smooth jazz album "A Handful of Soul" by Mario Biondi and the High Five Quintet has been Italy's sleeper hit of the year so far. The album, currently in Italy's top 10, was released Oct. 27, 2006, by independent label Schema. Sales began rising earlier this year after radio-only single "This Is What You Are" picked up hefty airplay on Italy's most-listened-to commercial station, Radio Deejay (top 40/AC). The album hit the No. 1 spot on the FIMI chart in March, and sales have now passed the 130,000 mark, says Schema artistic director Luciano Cantone, who produced the album.

Sicilian Biondi sings in English and cites influences ranging from Isaac Hayes to Colte Porter. His style is decidedly retro, Cantone concedes, but adds, "as with Michael Bublé, if you re-present music of the past to a generation that has never heard it, you find it goes down really well." The album was released in France in February, licensed to EMI-distributed Bonsai, and Cantone says shipments have passed 10,000 units. He adds that license deals have been struck for Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Japan, with negotiations for other territories under way.

Biondi is published by Itahar Edizioni; live shows are booked by Milan-based Live Tour.

— Mark Worden

PLANETAS SWEET: Some 15 years after pioneering flamenco singer Camarón de la Isla died of cancer at 41, Spanish alternative rock outfit Los Planetas has been paying tribute to him on the charts.

The band is currently touring Spain, with dates running through the summer, promoting seventh album "La Leyenda del Espacio." (Sony BMG), which peaked at the Media Control top 10 in April and remains in the top 50. The title nods to de la Isla's 1979 flamenco-pop/rock fusion album "La Leyenda del Tiempo" (PolyGram), long acclaimed by music critics for opening up the traditional world of flamenco to a entire generation of emerging rock fans following the culturally stifling dictatorship of Francisco Franco, which ended in 1975.

Los Planetas, published by Música Solar, hail's from the same southern region of Andalucia as de la Isla, and released its first album on BMG-Ariola in 1994. Widely regarded as one of the key alt-rock outfits to emerge in Spain during the '90s, it takes de la Isla's approach a stage further on "La Leyenda del Espacio," adding dense elements of electronics and psychedelic rock to traditional flamenco themes.

"Spanish rock needs albums like this to establish its own identity in a [genre] that is so Anglo-Saxon," Sony BMG product manager Ernesto Muñoz says. However, Sony BMG does not have any plans for releases outside Spain.

— Howell Longthyn
ALBUMS

ROCK

PERRY FARRELL'S SATELLITE PARTY

Ultra Payloaded
Producers: Perry Farrell, Nuno Bettencourt, Steve Lillywhite
Columbia
Release Date: May 29

There's something very likable about "Ultra Payloaded," maybe nothing more so than the fact that it's not trying to be cool. In some sense, frontman Perry Farrell dispensed with any perceived notions of "cool" when he formed the bands as well. "Rules-E-Ets!"

R. KELLY

Double Up
Producers: various
Jive/Comba
Release Date: May 29

Side from radio-pumped singles.

I'm a flirt remix and "same girl," it's a very, very explicitly R. Kelly who gains fans on this outing. Opening with the short posturing track "The Champ," "I've been through hell in the belly of the beast. You can hate me, I don't care.

Kelly isn't shy about quickly getting down to boudoir business. The title track with Snoop Dogg outlines a tryst with two females, while additional variations on sexual interplay abound on such cuts as "Tryin' to Get a Number." If "Kanye" and "Freaky in the Club," one desiring a looove making with two radically different moods—of the jungle ("The Zoo") and outer space ("Sex Planet")—Kelly downsifts into traditional mode on the heartfelt ballad "Havin' a Baby" and the Virginia Tech anthem, "Rock Up." This jarring juxtaposition only underscores Kelly's Marvin Gaye-reminiscent struggle between the carnal and the spiritual.

GLEN DANZIG

The Lost Tracks of Danzig
Producers: Glenn Danzig
evileve
Release Date: May 29

The Lost Tracks of Danzig is a dark, dark affair for followers of the lonewolf icon who was speaking parents when Marilyn Manson was just a pup. Listening to the romantic whispers and minimal guitar in a newly found track like "Bound by Blood," you hear the bloodline pulsing through other influential acts like Type O Negative. The set works well as a history lesson, although it's dirge-dwelling atmospheres make the double album extremely linear.

Funeral for a Friend

Tales Don't Tell Themselves
Producers: Gil Norton
Atlantic
Release Date: May 15

Tales Don't Tell Themselves is a complete, clearly the emo boundary marker. This has fans already twittering online that the band's gone radio-friendly. The concept record of a fisherman lost at sea offers metaphors aplenty (longing, loss, fear, passing the time) that directly apply to the lives of musicians. But aside from grand moments like "All Hands on Deck"—Part I: Raise the Sails!" and the orchestral wall that builds on "The Sweetest Wave," you don't get the feeling that a continuous story binds the album together. Still, "Into Oblivion [Reunion]" "Out of Reach," and "Walk Away" charge onward with such optimism and hope there's little doubt of a happy ending at the end of this "Tale."—CLT

LATIN

SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA

United We Swing
Producers: Oscar Hernandez
Six Degrees Records
Release Date: May 15

In the late '60s and early '70s, before there were a half-dozen Latin charts and twice as many subgenres, the essence of Latin music, at least on the East Coast, was salsa. With musicians and ideas traveling back and forth on a kind of San Juan/New York shuttle, the heart of salsa was Spanish Harlem, where Afro-Caribbean rhythms blended with the beat of the streets and the call of the dancehall. Oscar Hernandez brings that sound and spirit back and without kneeling to nostalgia or compromising with current trends. The fundamentals are all here: clearly enunciated piano vamps, chant-and-response vocals, trumpets and trombones blaring up front and the rhythms of congas, bongos, timbales and maracas. The SHO's elegant yet muscular ensemble playing makes this classic style sound as vivid and magnetic as ever.—WR

continued on >>p44

ROCK

DREAM THEATER

Systematic Chaos
Producers: John Petrucci, Mike Portnoy
Roadrunner Records
Release Date: June 5

Prog is taking a long road to making a comeback.

JASON ALDEAN

Relentless
Producer: Michael Knox
Broken Bow
Release Date: May 29

Jason Aldean and producer Michael Knox set the bar high on Aldean's self-titled, platinum 2005 debut. Thankfully, Aldean's second album delivers as well. "Reckless," which never loses its spasmic singer-songwriter atmosphere, cut features full, guitar-driven production. The first single, the attitude-laden "Johnny Cash," is already a hit, sitting at No. 15 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart. Other standout include "My Memory Ain't What It Used To Be," which finds the singer wondering about why he thought the grass would be greener on the other side and "Back in This Cigarette," about trying to rekindle love in a relationship("It's like trying to put smoke back in this cigarette."). And with instrumentation reminiscent of "Poor, Poor Pitiful Me," "Break Everything I Touch" is a cautionary tale of the singer's propensity for messing up the important things.—KT
from >p.43

**PAMBO**

**Pop Rocks**

**Producer:** Aurino Baquero

**Song:** BANG

**Release Date:** May 8

Pambo is part of Mexico’s new generation of singer/songwriters. On her debut album, produced by Aurino Baquero (of Sin Bandera and Reik fame), she contributes poppy, radio-friendly tracks with rock edges, reminiscent of Avril Lavigne and decidedly youth-friendly. Pambo co-wrote all of the tracks she heard and penned all of the lyrics, not attempting to be deep or clever like, say, Natalia Lafourcade. She sings about love in simple, colloquial terms, but the melodies are just the right mix of catchy and well-crafted. This is most certainly not R&B, but it has the same kind of appeal. It all goes down easy, but a little something more is needed to really cut through the crowd. Still, this is an auspicious debut that is making waves in Mexico and may dent radio in the United States.—LC

**ELECTRONIC**

**ULTRA NATÉ**

Grime, Silk and Thunder

**Producers:** various

**BlurFire/Silver Label/Tommy Boy

**Release Date:** May 22

Unlike rock/electronic or DJ-branded artists, dance music artists—and singers of songs—rarely get the mainstream respect they deserve. Ultra Naté may reverse this with “Grime, Silk and Thunder.” Working with an armful of producers and artists, including StoneBridge and Chris Willis, Naté manages to temper her rhythm of the night with sturdy pop sensibilities. A glittering, technosoul cover of the Pointer Sisters’ “Automatic” has already topped Billboard’s Hot Dance Club Play chart, while its visually arresting video is a YouTube sensation. Songs like “Give It All You Got” and “Feel Love” are as gossamery uplifting and anemic as Naté’s 10-year-old international hit, “Free.” In a clever and smart move, Naté reinterprets two of her early club hits ("It’s Over Now" and “Scandal!”) to winning effect. At the center of it all are Naté’s sublime blues tinged vocals.—MP

**CHRISTIAN**

**THE BELLAMY BROTHERS**

Jesus Is Coming

**Producers:** Howard Bellamy, David Bellamy, Randy Hiebert

**Bellamy Brothers Records/Curb

**Release Date:** May 8

Whereas most country acts that have recorded gospel projects latterly have covered classic hymns, Howard and David Bellamy see up a collection of new songs that are heartfelt yet infused with the wit and wry humor that has propelled their 30-year career ("Lord Help Me Be the Kind of Person [My Dog Thinks I Am]") boasts a humorous hook combined with a solid message. The same can be said for the title track, a thoughtful look at Jesus’ reaction to the chaos in the world that has an unusual punch in the chorus. There’s a reggae version of the gospel standard “A Child’s Prayer” and a gospel mix of the duo’s 1976 hit “Let Your Love Flow,” as well as a terrific new version of their country hit “Old Hippie.” Country fans will love this record, and although it’s not your typical gospel release, the Christian market should embrace it, too.—DEP

**MUSE**

**Starlight (4:00)

**Producer:** Rich Costey

**Writer:** Muse

**Publisher:** not listed

**Warner Bros.

**With 2006 fifth effort I’ve been thinking that perhaps that’s a bedrock of the beginning. Muse delivers an onslaught of progressive stadium rock hits, earning the Brit trio a lofty top 10 view on the U.S. album chart and second consecutive No. 1 U.K. album. On “Starlight,” lead Matthew Bellamy’s vocals effortlessly rip through an introductory barrage of percussion, bass and their seething glee atop heavily synthesized arpeggios and glimmering scales. Having already nearly toppled the modern rock playlists, “Starlight” is primed for mainstream acceptance, with its wave of refreshment. Muse has hit its intergalactic stride—SH

**SINGLES**

**POPPY**

**NE-YO**

**Do You (3:50)

**Producers:** Star gate, Ne-Yo

**Writers:** T.E. Hermansen, M.S. Erik sen

**Publisher:** not listed

**Def Jam

**The follow-up to Ne-Yo’s top 10 Billboard Hot 100 and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs single “Because of You” is being branded as part two of 2006 No. 1 single “So Sick.” The Star gate production on “Do You” creates a powerful tag team duet, where Ne-Yo asks a past love interest if she’s still in the game. In the first verse, Ne-Yo concedes some pain for making her cry, hoping she’ll offer another chance. The plot thickens when we discover that Ne-Yo’s love interest is not only currently involved but expecting a daughter. What seems to be a common topic on trash TV results in a clever story line showing Ne-Yo’s depthful songwriting skills. Stargate adds an ideal combo of hip-hop drum riffs and piano play to certify another hit in Ne-Yo’s growing hit catalog.—CP

**COUNTRY**

**JASON MICHAEL CARROLL**

**Live My Love Song (3:46)

**Producer:** Don Gehman

**Writers:** J. M. Carroll, T. Galloway, C. Mitchell

**Publisher:** various

**Anista Nashville

**Jason Michael Carroll’s** hit debut “Alyssa Lied” dealt with the serious subject of child abuse. Here, he offers lightweight fare in the engaging “Livin’ Our Love Song,” with its sweet, sticky melody and upbeat romantic lyric about “a backwoods boy and fairytale princess.” This North Carolina native has a strong voice and an edge to his delivery that sets him apart from other male newcomers. Combined with his songwriting prowess—“Love Song” is penned by Carroll with Tim Galloway and Glen Mitchell—signals a bright future for this talented young artist.—DEP

**AYLA BROWN**

**Forward (3:42)

**Producer:** Jim McGregor

**Writer:** not listed

**Publisher:** not listed

**Double Deal

**Ayla Brown may be a dip on last season’s “American Idol,” finishing at No. 13, but she has paralyzed her nanosecond in the spotlight into numerous public appearances and indie release “Forward.” Ironically, the track demonstrates a more soulful vocal stamp than the pageant’s top two finalists from 2006, with an AC-ready signature that checks off all variables of a hit: an anthemic display of emotion, production and power ballad triumph, with a chilling, rafter-rousing chorus and inspiring lyric of taking forward steps. The beautiful 18-year-old Brown is an artist AC has opportunity to own. Katherine McPhee could have learned a lot about aligning ability with apropos material from this lady.—CT

**RAZORLIGHT**

**TRIPLE E-A**

**America (3:26)

**Producer:** Razorlight

**Writers:** K. Deluna, RedOne, J. Sewell-Ulpic, O. O’Brien, T. Edmond

**Publisher:** AIO, ASCAP, Greensleeve/GMB/Epic

**Talk about a summertime sure thing. Nineteen-year-old Dominican Kat Deluna is prepped to combat with a platinum-plated debut so certain you can practically smell the smoke emanating from its juicy one-spin hook and manic tempo. Accompanied by dancehall staple Elephant Man, aka the Energy God, and reggaeton queen Ivy Queen, the bilingual crossover beauty—who grew up in poverty in the Dominican Republic and the Bronx before studying music at the New School—combines Caribbean cadence with a novel mesh of hip-hop, R&B and merengue, as she offers a simple call to “Hold me tight to your body/Whine your body up.” Deluna’s launch single offers ultimate seasonal sizzle over the airwaves, on the beach, down the highway and across dancefloors. A “Whine” to be heard loud and proud the world over. Look for full-length “9 Lives” in August.—CT

**KAT DELUNA FEATURING ELEPHANT MAN**

**Whine Up (3:23)

**Producer:** RedOne

**Writers:** K. Deluna, RedOne, J. Sewell-Ulpic, O. O’Brien, T. Edmond

**Publisher:** AIO, ASCAP, Greensleeve/GMB/Epic

**Talk about a summertime sure thing. Nineteen-year-old Dominican Kat Deluna is prepped to combat with a platinum-plated debut so certain you can practically smell the smoke emanating from its juicy one-spin hook and manic tempo. Accompanied by dancehall staple Elephant Man, aka the Energy God, and reggaeton queen Ivy Queen, the bilingual crossover beauty—who grew up in poverty in the Dominican Republic and the Bronx before studying music at the New School—combines Caribbean cadence with a novel mesh of hip-hop, R&B and merengue, as she offers a simple call to “Hold me tight to your body/Whine your body up.” Deluna’s launch single offers ultimate seasonal sizzle over the airwaves, on the beach, down the highway and across dancefloors. A “Whine” to be heard loud and proud the world over. Look for full-length “9 Lives” in August.—CT

**FAITH HILL**

**Lost (4:09)

**Writers:** K. DioGuardi, H. Allan

**Producer:** Byron Gallimore

**Faith Hill

**Publisher:** not listed

**Warner Nashville

**Launch single “Lost” from Faith Hill’s upcoming “The Hits” is as vintage a ballad as the long-lived songstress has ever served. As melodically entrancing as “Breathe,” as mesmerizing a vocal as “Let Me Let Go” and as tailor-made for Hill as “It Matters to Me,” she delivers a clever, consummate message of steadfast devotion: “You found me when I wasn’t looking/I wanna stay lost forever with you.” While Hill remains among the leading ladies of country music, her chart footing has slipped a bit this decade. This is the one to remind the masses that Hill had her first No. 1 when Carrie Underwood was barely out of her Underoos.—CT

**EDITIONS BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS) AND CHUCK STENGE (SINGLES)**

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Leila Cobb, Hillary Costley, Gary Graft, Stevie JoYoung, Ken House, Gail Mitchell, Wes Orshoski, Michael Paciella, Sven Philip, Deborah Evans Price, Wayne Robinson, Chuck Taylor, Christine L. Titus, Ken Tucker

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

**CRITIC’S CHOICE:** A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for music merit.

**ALL ARTISTS:** All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Sixth Floor New York, NY 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.
Linkin Park Puts MV1 On The Map; ACMs Spur Sales

With an opening week large enough to remind us of the good old days, Linkin Park steps into the future. Its "Minutes to Midnight" is not only the first album to be sold in the new Music Video Interactive configuration, it becomes the first MV1-available title to reach No. 1 on The Billboard 200.

The album begins with 623,000 copies sold, the largest frame by any record since Thanksgiving week when Jay-Z’s "Kingdom Come" opened with 680,000. The Warner Bros. label estimates that 60,000 of Linkin Park’s U.S. units (almost 10%) were sold in the MV1 format, which plays on DVD players but unbundles such goodies as ringtones, wallpaper and other bonus features when plugged into a computer. In the album’s first eight days on the market, about 6,000 fans went online to receive bonus content from the MV1, but we cannot declare that 10% "re-depuration rate because that number could include copies bought outside the United States.

Nielsen SoundScan has MV1 copies linked with those sold on CD.

Digital downloads accounted for 13% of the album’s U.S. opener, as 83,500 safely places the title at No. 1 on Top Digital Albums. A total 12,000 copies make it No. 1 on Top Internet Albums.

As for the combined total, the tally "Minutes" rang up stands tall in any year, even if it falls shy of Linkin Park’s peak week, set when second studio album "Meteora" fetched 810,000 in 2003. Still, the new album’s start stands 69% ahead of the first week notch by the band’s second No. 1 album, "MTV Ultimate Mash-Ups Presents: Collision Course," its 2004 collaboration—coincidentally—Jay-Z.

Linkin Park also overtook Ne-Yah Jones’ "Not Too Late" for the largest sales week of 2007, set in February when it began with 405,000. In fact, "Minutes" would even have been a standout seller in the halcyon year that was 2000, when six different albums enjoyed million-plus weeks.

The No. 1 album averaged 517,882 during that calendar year, compared with 191,046 through the first 20 weeks of this year, yet Linkin Park’s 623,000 would have been large enough to top The Billboard 200 in all but a dozen weeks of 2000.

"Minutes" also becomes Linkin Park’s second No. 1 on Billboard’s Eurochart Albums list, a feat it first accomplished with "Meteora." The new one makes that claim thanks to No. 1 standings in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland.

Beyond the United States and Europe, the album claims the No. 1 spot in Japan, New Zealand, Canada and Australia.

JINGLE, JANGLE, JINGLE: The Academy of Country Music Awards, which aired May 14 on CBS, deliver an annual wave of sales spikes. Among the show’s beneficiaries are George Strait, who wins the Pacesetter on The Billboard 200 (106-67, up 32%) and Top Country Albums (25-13), and Taylor Swift, who wins the Country list's Greatest Gainer (4-3, while moving 15-13 on the big chart).

Another ACM participant, Gretchen Wilson, chalks her third No. 1 in as many tries on Top Country Albums (see Between the Bullets, page 54), while The Billboard 200 also packs show-related bullets at Nos. 19, 84, 96, 109 and 119.

Although digital sales don’t mean as much in country yet as they do in other genres, the ACMs do significantly affect Hot Digital Songs, where Big & Rich’s "Lost in This Moment" has the chart’s second-largest percentage increase (re-entry at No. 42, up 64%). Swift sees a 30% gain for “Teardrops on My Guitar” (43-36), and sales more than double for "Tim McGraw" (70-17). Digital Songs also registers ACM-related bullets at Nos. 12, 47, 52 and 58.

On another network, an appearance during the second-to-last week of "American Idol" elevens 2006 finalist Elliott Yamin. His self-titled album grabs The Billboard 200’s Greatest Gain as it romps 67-20 (up 136%), while "Wait for You," the song he delivered on the show, enters Hot Digital Songs at No. 36 as its sales more than triple (up 276%).
### The Billboard 200 Chart Analysis

#### Chart Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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#### Soundtrack Placement

- **The Departed**: Soundtrack Track 1, 2006 release.
  - Title: "The Departed" Theme Song by Hans Zimmer
  - Soundtrack: The Departed (2006)

#### Charts Legend

- The Billboard 200 chart reflects sales data from retail music stores across the United States.
- Charts are generated based on sales data reported to Billboard SoundScan.

### Chart Notes

- The chart includes a variety of music genres, including rock, pop, country, and hip-hop.
- New entries and reentries are indicated in bold text.
- The chart also highlights the previous week's top sellers, providing a comprehensive view of the music industry's sales trends.

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At No. 25, Timberlake is back on the chart for the third time this year (his first time was in November 2006 with "Immeasurable Love," which also topped the chart in June 2007 and November 2007, respectively). In 2007, the song featured on his album "FutureSex/LoveSounds" reached No. 4 on the Hot 100 and was certified platinum.

The song features some of Timberlake's signature elements, such as his falsetto vocals and catchy melodies, which have helped him maintain his popularity over the years.

Timberlake has had a successful career spanning two decades, with hits like "Cry Me a River," "auld Lang Syne," and "Dirt Benzine" that have charted prominently on the Hot 100.

The song's presence on the chart is a testament to Timberlake's continued relevance in the music industry and his ability to consistently produce hit songs.
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Make You (Blink 182) (Epitaph)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Hey There Delilah (D�)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>I'm a Flirt (Atlantic)</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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### MODERN ROCK

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<tr>
<td>MAKES ME WONDER</td>
<td>NICKI MINAJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIVE IT TO ME</td>
<td>KACEY MUSGRAVES</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUY U A DRANK (SHAVITY SNAPPING)</td>
<td>LL COOL J</td>
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<td>U + UR HAND</td>
<td>JOSIE ALLEN &amp; THE ROZAY</td>
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<td>BEFORE WE CHEATS</td>
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<td>GLAMOROUS</td>
<td>SOPHIE ELLIS BEXTOR</td>
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<td>SEVENTEEN</td>
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<td>LAST DOLLAR (FLY AWAY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE WAY I AM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIKE THIS</td>
<td>SEVENTEEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEEP HOLDING ON</td>
<td>SEVENTEEN</td>
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| 4 IN THE MORNING      | SEV
**TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
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<td>TANK</td>
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<td>NE-YO</td>
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<td>Strength &amp; Loyalty</td>
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<td>BOBBY V</td>
<td>Special Occasion</td>
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<td>JOE</td>
<td>Ain't No Like I've</td>
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<td>Rob Thicke</td>
<td>The Evolution Of Robin Thicke</td>
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<td>AKON</td>
<td>Konvicted</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>AMY WINEHOUSE</td>
<td>Back To Black</td>
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<td>LOYD</td>
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<td>BEYONCE</td>
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<td>Young Buck</td>
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<td>Timbaland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Timberlake</td>
<td>FutureSex/LoveSounds</td>
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<td>Corinne Bailey Rae</td>
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<td>PAUL WALL</td>
<td>Get Money Stay True</td>
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<td>Rick James</td>
<td>Deeper Still</td>
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<td>Elliott Yamin</td>
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**TOP BLUES ALBUMS**

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<td>10 Days Out: Blues From The Backroads</td>
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<td>The Real Deal: Greatest Hits Vol. 1</td>
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<td>JOE BONAMASSA</td>
<td>You &amp; Me</td>
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<td>THE DEREK TRUCKS BAND</td>
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<td>MARIA MULDAUR</td>
<td>Naughty Babyd &amp; Blue</td>
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<td>KOKO TAYLOR</td>
<td>Old School</td>
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<td>JOHN MAYALL AND THE BLUESBREAKERS</td>
<td>In The Palace Of The King</td>
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<td>TOMMY CASTRO</td>
<td>Panama Red</td>
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<td>KEV' MO'</td>
<td>Sings The Righteous Brothers/Greatful Dead</td>
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<td>ETTA JAMES</td>
<td>The Definitive Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENISE LASALLE</td>
<td>Pay Before You Pump</td>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

"Sex Love & Pain," Tank's first album in five years, rolls to No. 2 on The Billboard 200 and No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. The bow marks his best Nielsen Soundscan week ever for a No. 2 start on the big board and a No. 4 peak on R&B Albums.

The late Rick James lands R&B Albums' next highest debut with "Deeper Still" at No. 19. About three months after his death, this offering of new material is his first entry since "Urban Rapso" in 1997 and best chart position since "Wonderful" debuted at No. 12 in 1988.

—Raphael George
### Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Buy U a Drink (Shawty Snappin')</td>
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<td>Sony BMG Music Entertainment (Columbia)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bobby V</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>She Dope</td>
<td>R. Kelly</td>
<td>Jive / BMG Nashville (Interscope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Get Lucky</td>
<td>Daft Punk feat. Nile Rodgers</td>
<td>Capitol Music Group (Capitol)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pump</td>
<td>The Black Eyed Peas</td>
<td>Interscope / Elektra (Interscope)</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>What I Need</td>
<td>Hank Williams Jr.</td>
<td>Cracker Barrel Corporation (Sony BMG Music Entertainment)</td>
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### R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales

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### HitPredictor

See chart legend for rules and explanations. Follow indicates currently tested title, **follow** indicates Recommended Release.

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### R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay Chart Rank

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### R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales Chart Rank

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</table>

Data for week of JUNE 2, 2007 | CHARTS LEGEND On Page 60

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
It's Fantasia's third top 10 hit. Her first top ten from the album was "It's About You" and "I Still Believe." Fantasia was on "American Idol" as a contestant and went on to win the series. The song was produced by Timbaland, who is known for his work with Missy Elliott, illustrate, and other top artists.

**LEVERET REVERED AT ADULT R&B**

Gerald Levert's chart history continues as his posthumous

"In My Songs" yields its second top 10 at Adult R&B, extending his lead on the chart with 21.

The album's second single, "DJ Do N)," climbs 14-10, following the title track, which was held at bay at No. 2 for six weeks earlier this year.

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Raphael George

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Data for week of JUNE 2, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646-654-4633

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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 53
### Top Country Albums

<table>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<td>Some Hearts</td>
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<td>TIM McGRAW</td>
<td>Let It Go</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>RASCAL FLATTS</td>
<td>50 Years of Laughter</td>
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<td>MARTINA McBride</td>
<td>Up in Smoke</td>
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<td>BLAKE SHELTON</td>
<td>Pure BS</td>
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<td>GEORGE STRAIT</td>
<td>The Road To Here</td>
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<td>KELLIE PICKLER</td>
<td>Small Town Girl</td>
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<td>For The Love Of</td>
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<td>DIXIE CHICKS</td>
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<td>Hillbilly Deluxe</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>CLAY WALKER</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>KENNY CHESSY</td>
<td>The Road And The Radio</td>
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<td>THE WRECKERS</td>
<td>Stand Still, Look Pretty</td>
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<td>TRACE ADKINS</td>
<td>Dangerously</td>
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<td>JOHN ANDERSON</td>
<td>Easy Money</td>
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<td>HANK WILLIAMS JR.</td>
<td>That's How They Do It In Dixie: The Essential Collection</td>
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<td>TYLER BRYCE</td>
<td>Three Wooden Crosses</td>
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<td>Wastin' In The Country</td>
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<td>ERIK CROCHETTA</td>
<td>Sinners Like Me</td>
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<td>MONTGOMERY GENTRY</td>
<td>Some People Change</td>
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<td>JOE NICHOLS</td>
<td>Can't Get It Off My Mind</td>
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<td>RODNEY CARRINGTON</td>
<td>King Of The Mountains</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>BIG &amp; RICH</td>
<td>Comin' To Your City</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>JAKE OWEN</td>
<td>Stuck With Me</td>
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<td>JACK INGRAM</td>
<td>This Is It</td>
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<td>KENNY CHESSY</td>
<td>Live: Those Songs Again</td>
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<td>The Very Best Of Travis Tritt</td>
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<td>The Legend Of Johnny Cash</td>
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<td>SOUNDTRACK</td>
<td>Walk The Line</td>
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<td>Broken Bridges</td>
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<td>TOBY KEITH</td>
<td>White Trash With Money</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>CRAIG MORGAN</td>
<td>Little Bit Of Life</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Gloryland: 30 Bluegrass Gospel Classics</td>
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### Top Bluegrass Albums

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<td>1</td>
<td>RICKY SKAGGS &amp; BRUCE HORNBY</td>
<td>How Country Goes</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NICKEL CREEK</td>
<td>Reasons Why</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW</td>
<td>Big Iron World</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>DOYLE LAWSON &amp; QUICKSILVER</td>
<td>More Behind The Picture Than The Wall</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>THE GREGGARDS</td>
<td>Virdian</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>NICKEL CREEK</td>
<td>Why Should The Fire Die?</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>THE WAILIN' JENNYs</td>
<td>Firecracker</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Do You Remember: Pickin' On Carrie Underwood: The Bluegrass Tribute</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>STEVE RUSSELL</td>
<td>Best Of Bluegrass</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>UNCLE EARL</td>
<td>How To Grow A Woman From The Ground</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>TONY TRISCHKA</td>
<td>Double Banjo Bluegrass Spectacular</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>THE GRASCALS</td>
<td>Long List Of Heartaches</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Ultimate Bluegrass</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Up Yonder</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Billboard Country Chart Sales

For complete chart data, go to: www.billboard.biz

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**WILSON'S 'ONE' HER Third NO. 1**

Gretchen Wilson logs her third straight No. 1 bow on Top Country Albums—and her third straight top five start on The Billboard 200—as "One of the Boys" opens with 73,000 scans. Wilson's arrival weighs significantly less than her first two opening weeks. "Here For The Party" debuted with 227,000 copies (May 2004) and "All Jacked Up" popped on with 264,000 (September 2005). Although her debut single "Redneck Woman" ignited a firestorm of fan and critical interest, Wilson's country radio success since then has been sporadic. Of 13 solo or collaborative singles on Hot Country Songs, only four reached the top 10, "Redneck Woman" being her sole No. 1.

The second single and title track from "Boys" rises 41-39 this issue (2.9 million impressions). Lead single "Come To Bed" peaked at No. 32 in the Feb. 23 issue.
**MONITORED AIRPLAY**

**ALL the singles**

**Li¡**

**TICKS**

**A WOMAN'S LOVE**

**FIND OUT WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE**

**SETTLIN'**

**STARTIN' WITH ME**

**IS IT WORTH IT**

**I DON'T**

**GTOP**

**MY SHADOW**

**LITTLE LADY**

**From the HitPredictor chart legend for rules and explanations.**

**Don't miss another important R&R COUNTRY DAILY UPDATE**

Visit [www.radioandrecord.com](http://www.radioandrecord.com) to sign up for your free daily Country Radio Blast.

**BEHIND THE BULLETS**

Tim McGraw shocked a nerve with a grossly unheard war theme titled "If You're Reading This" at the May 15 Academy of Country Music Awards, which takes the hot spot on Hot Country Songs at No. 35 (3.3 million impressions). Programmers at 50 monitored stations scrambled to get the audio of that moving performance on the air, and sources at ABC say that a studio version of the song is not yet available. Label sources say their focus remains on McGraw's Next album "T.O.B.O." this fall.

**McGRAW, HILL MAKE CHART A FAMILY AFFAIR**

Faith Hill, "I Need You," which achieves Airpower (21-17) with 14.9 million impressions in its eighth chart week. Hill also premiered a new solo single on the ACM show, which arrived at radio during the tracking week. "Lost" opens at No. 48 with spins detected at 45 monitored stations (1.1 million impressions). The new song will be included on a forthcoming greatest-hits package that has not yet been assigned a street date.

>—Wide Jensen
The image contains a list of Latin songs and albums from Billboard magazine. The list includes artist names, song titles, and album details along with pricing information. The text is a catalog of music chart information, ranking songs and albums and providing details such as release years, formats, and labels.
### JAPAN

**SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hits of the week</td>
<td>practically unknown</td>
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</table>

**ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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### UNITED KINGDOM

**SINGLES**

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<tr>
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### GERMANY

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### FRANCE

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### ITALY

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### SWEDEN

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### IRELAND

**SINGLES**

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### NEW ZEALAND

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### ARGENTINA

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</table>
**Singles Charts**

**Album Airplay Singles Charts**

- Compiled from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems.
- Charts are ranked by radio airplay, based on research data from HitPredictor.

**Singles Sales Charts**

- The top selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail stores, mass merchants, and Internet sites.
- Sales are compiled from a national subset panel of retail stores.

**Singles Sales Charts**

- The top selling albums compiled from a national sample of retail stores, mass merchants, and Internet sites.
- Sales are compiled from a national subset panel of retail stores.

**Dance Club Play**

- Compiled from a national sample of reports from clubs.

**Award Defileys**

**Top Independent Albums**

- **Artists**
  - **#1 Artist**
  - **#2 Artist**
  - **#3 Artist**

**Top Soundtracks**

- **Artist**
  - **#1 Artist**
  - **#2 Artist**

**Tastemakers**

- **Artist**
  - **#1 Artist**
  - **#2 Artist**

**Chart Data**

- **Album Charts**
  - **Singles Charts**
  - **Soundtracks**

**Sales Data**

- **Billboard 200**
- **Taste Makers**
- **Dance Club Play**
- **Award Defileys**
- **Top Independent Albums**
- **Top Soundtracks**

**Data for week of June 2, 2007**
BDS

Data for week of JUNE 2, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646-654-4633

Data for week of JUNE 2, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646-654-4633
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Writer/Producer</th>
<th>Label/Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL GOOD THINGS</td>
<td>(COME AND GO)</td>
<td>Atlantic PolyGram/Atlantic Recording, BMG/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENDITA TU LUZ</td>
<td>Cipriano Chaverra/Handprints Music International, Sony BMG Music Publishing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COFFEE SHOP</td>
<td>Kenji Heino</td>
<td>BMVAP/BPM, BMVEMI Music, BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GET ME BODIED</td>
<td>Bucky Phillips</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVE ME THE GOOD LIFE</td>
<td>Dallas Austin</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRAND RESCUE</td>
<td>Jackie DeShannon</td>
<td>BMVEBM/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAY SOMEONE WANT ME</td>
<td>Benjie Davino</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I WANT TO BE A BOY</td>
<td>Niki &amp; Niko</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT SOUNDS LIKE A DREAM</td>
<td>Lee Roy</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<td>LET ME IN</td>
<td>Benjie Davino</td>
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<td>LEAVING TOWN</td>
<td>Jack Dell/Ember Music, BMI</td>
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<td>LET IT FALL IN SLOW MOTION</td>
<td>Tony Rich/All About Music, BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<td>LIKE A ROLL</td>
<td>Ian Kirk/ALL Systems, BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<td>MEAN MORE TO ME</td>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<td>NOBODY KNOWS</td>
<td>Benjie Davino</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<td>ON THE ROOFTOP</td>
<td>A. Marks</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROVIDE ME WITH SOME</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAY IT RIGHT</td>
<td>Alex乐队</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<td>SET ME FREE</td>
<td>Benjie Davino</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRANGERS</td>
<td>Joe Burt/Oh Yeah Ent, BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIS IS MY HONEY</td>
<td>Tim James</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
</tr>
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<td>THAT S TOPIA</td>
<td>Benjie Davino</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>THREE DREAMS</td>
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<td>TOTALLY IN LOVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUMBLING</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWO TIMES</td>
<td>Benjie Davino</td>
<td>BMVEMI Blackwood, BMVAngela Blackwood, BMI/EMI Music Publishing</td>
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</table>

Data for week of JUNE 2, 2007 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 60
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF ASSETS OF
THE SONGWRITER COLLECTIVE, LLC

Notice is hereby given that Fortress Credit Opportunities I LP, a Delaware limited partnership, as a lender and as agent on behalf of the lenders (the "Agent") under that certain Loan Agreement, dated as of March 1, 2004, as amended (the "Loan Agreement"), among The Songwriter Collective, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, as borrower (the "Debtor"), the Agent and the lenders, having postponed the public sales scheduled for November 4, 2005, December 14, 2005, January 31, 2006, March 14, 2006, April 25, 2006, June 6, 2006, July 18, 2006, August 29, 2006, October 17, 2006, November 29, 2006, January 9, 2007, February 20, 2007, April 10, 2007, and May 22, 2007, intends to sell at public sale in accordance with the provisions of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, certain personal property assets of the Debtor, generally described as all of the Debtor's right, title and interest in and to all accounts, chattel paper, deposit accounts, documents, electronic chattel paper, equipment, general intangibles, goods, instruments, inventory, investment property, payment intangibles and software belonging to the Debtor, in each case whether tangible or intangible, wherever located or situated, including all rights to a portfolio of musical compositions, including, in some instances, copyrights of the musical compositions, the right to receive or receive from the sale in any and all revenues and licenses derived from such musical compositions, and all claims and causes of action related to the musical compositions accruing at any time and all other rights of the Debtor of any nature whatsoever in the musical compositions (the "Collateral"). A more detailed description of the Collateral will be provided to you upon execution of a confidentiality agreement.

The public sale will take place at the office of Sidley Austin LLP at 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019, on Tuesday, July 3rd, 2007 at 11:00 a.m., New York time. The Agent reserves the right to cancel the sale, without notice, in its entirety, or to adjourn the sale to a future date. The Agent may further adjourn the sale herein described to another date from time to time, before, during or after commencement of bidding, without written notice, by announcement at the time and place appointed for such auction, or any adjournment thereof, and, without further notice, such auction may be made at the time and place to which the auction may have been so adjourned. Interested persons should take notice that the Collateral will be sold on the following terms and conditions:

1. All bids must be given orally at the public sale.
2. The Agent reserves the right to bid for and purchase the Collateral and to credit the purchase price against the expenses of sale and principal, interest and any and all other amounts due and payable to the Agent pursuant to the terms of any and all indebtedness secured by the security interest in the Collateral.
3. The Agent has sole discretion to determine which offer is the highest or best offer, and to reject any offer which it deems to be insufficient.
4. Concurrently with the acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to execute and deliver to the Agent the Asset Purchase Agreement, a copy of which may be obtained by contacting one of the person's identified in the final paragraph of this notice, containing terms of sale and conditions precedent to the Agent's obligation to sell, in each case, in addition to the liquidation association herein, including, without limitation, the requirement that the sale of the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement be consummated no earlier than 30 days following consummation of same.
5. Upon acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to deposit (the "Deposit") with the Agent earnest money in an amount equal to ten percent of the purchase price. Such Deposit shall only be refunded to such prospective purchaser as, and to the extent, provided in the Asset Purchase Agreement. In all other cases, the Agent shall have the right to retain such Deposit. If such sale of the Collateral is consummated with such prospective purchaser, the full amount of such Deposit shall be applied to the purchase price. If such sale is not consummated, the Agent shall have the right, but shall have no obligation, to reoffer the Collateral for sale, without further notice. The prospective purchaser shall not be entitled to any interest on the Deposit held by the Agent, whether or not the Deposit is required to be refunded to such prospective purchaser by the Agent pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement.
6. No bids may be withdrawn once made, but no sale is final until accepted by the Agent.
7. Only cash or cashier's check or other immediately available funds will be accepted for the Deposit or for payment of the purchase price. The bid of any prospective purchaser who fails to tender proper payment may be rejected and the Agent may, subject to the other terms hereof, (i) accept any alternative bid made at the sale, in which case the acceptance shall have no obligation to reconvene the sale, accept additional bids, or notify any other bidders of the acceptance of such bid, or (ii) reoffer the Collateral for sale without further notice in each case, at the Agent's option. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the Agent shall not be obligated to make any sale of the Collateral pursuant to this notice.
8. In the event that the Agent is unable to consummate any sale and deliver the Collateral to a purchaser, then the sole liability of the Agent to such purchaser shall be to refund the purchase price, if any, previously paid to the Agent.
9. The Agent will announce at the outset of the public sale whether the Collateral will be sold in whole or in part, and whether the Collateral will be sold in one or more lots.
10. Subject to satisfaction of all of the conditions precedent to the Agent's obligation to sell the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement and the terms and conditions hereof, consummation of the sale of the Collateral will be made immediately upon receipt by the Agent of the purchase price and shall be evidenced by delivery of the Collateral to the purchaser thereof, BUT WITHOUT DELIVERY OF A BILL OF SALE, WITHOUT GUARANTEE OF SIGNATURES, WITHOUT PAYMENT OF ANY TRANSFER OR OTHER TAX, AND WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY BY THE AGENT, AND SUBJECT TO ALL DEFENSES.
11. The above terms and conditions of sale may be subject to additional or amended terms and conditions to be announced at the time of sale.
12. In the event of any dispute between two or more bidders, the Agent may decide the same or put the Collateral up for sale again and resell to the purchaser submitting the best bid, as determined by the Agent. In all cases, the Agent's decision shall be final.
13. All bidders and other persons attending this auction agree that they have full knowledge of the terms set forth above and contained in the Asset Purchase Agreement and agree to be bound by the terms hereof and thereof.
14. The Debtor shall have the right to redeem the Collateral in accordance with, and only to the extent provided for, under applicable law. Persons desiring further information as to the public sale of the Collateral, and the terms and condition relating thereto, and/or desiring to obtain copies of the confidentiality agreement or the Asset Purchase Agreement, may contact either Martin Jackman (212/639-8728) or Colleen McDonald (415/772-1207) of Sidley Austin LLP at 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019 or Colleen McDonald (415/772-1207) of Sidley Austin LLP at 555 California Street, San Francisco, California 94104, counsel for the Agent.

May 26, 2007
RECORD COMPANIES: RCA Music Group appoints Tom Carson executive VP/GM. He previously held the same title at J/Arista Records.

Universal Music Enterprises, the U.S. catalog division of Universal Music Group, names Bill Waddell VP of business affairs. He was senior director.

Sony BMG Music Group names Richard Sanders head of global marketing. He was executive VP/GM at RCA Records.

EMI/Manhattan Records names Jason Fisher national director of promotion. He was VP of promotion at Cooking Vinyl.

ONO Records promotes Dan Michaels to senior VP of marketing and promotions. He was VP of promotions.

Sony BMG Entertainment’s Commercial Music Group names Chuck Fleckstein and Gil Aronow senior VPs of its newly formed business and legal affairs department. Fleckstein was VP of business affairs, and Aronow was VP of senior transactional counsel.

EMI Music North America names Lauren Berkowitz senior VP of digital for the North American region. She was VP of global digital business at Sony ATV Music Publishing.

Mercury Nashville appoints Mike Klein senior director of promotion for the Southeast region. He was executive VP/GM at the Griffin Agency.

Capitol Music Group names Mike Harris executive VP/CFO. He was senior VP/CFO at Virgin Records.

PUBLISHING: EMI Music Publishing Germany names Andreas Kiel and Markus Hedde executive VPs. Kiel was senior VP of creative, and Hedde was finance director.

Warner/Chappell Music names Dave Pettigrew senior VP of strategic marketing. He was VP at EMI Resources, a division of EMI Music Publishing.

Cherry Lane Music Publishing in New York promotes Paul Morgan to senior director of creative services. He was director.

TOURING: Global Spectrum appoints Curtis Webb GM of the South Okanagan Event Centre in Penticton, British Columbia. He was director of operations at the Budweiser Events Center in Loveland, Colo.

RELATED FIELDS: The Canadian Record Production Assn. appoints Duncan McBie president/executive director, effective June 4. He currently serves as vice chairman at Canadian research company Pollara.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

FATHER DOES NOT KNOW BEST

Dutch rock band Within Temptation is doing its part to raise awareness of family violence and abuse. The video for the act’s new continental Europe single, “Frozen,” spotlights a family at the turn of the 20th century—a family that is keeping too many secrets from the outside world. Within Temptation is donating all monies received from its record label, Sony BMG, for sales of the “Frozen” single to Child Helpline International, a global network of youth help phone lines in more than 150 countries. “Frozen” is included on the band’s new album “The Heart of Everything,” due July 24 from Roadrunner.
The 55th annual BMI Pop Awards were held May 16 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles as BMI saluted the legendary Bee Gees with BMI’s prestigious Icon Award. The Icon presentation to the Bee Gees was featured performances by Katherine McPhee, John Rzeznik and Bette Midler. In addition, Kara DioGuardi and Sean Garrett were named songwriters of the year. “Because of You,” was honored as song of the year and Warner-Chappell Music was named publisher of the year. BMI also recognized the performance achievements of two other songs: “Miss Murder,” which was honored as the most performed song on college radio, and “You’re Beautiful” as Internet song of the year. Taking home two awards in Fall 06 were Fall Out Boy, Andy Z, Andrew Haynes, Patrick Stump, Joe Trohman and Pete Wentz (“Kill Me”), and No Doubt’s “Rock Steady,” and No Doubt’s “LPT” (“One Way Ticket”).

The Warner/Chappell Music was named publisher of the year honors.

Artists, managers and producers grabbed the spotlight at the annual Music Biz luncheon held at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. BMI’s Tomato Internet, manager of James Blunt and recipient of the Compact Collections award of the year award, Compact Collections Performing Services director of operations and former BMI generalsssecretary James Seller, and Red Light Management’s Cara Capshaw, manager of Dave Matthews Band and recipient of the Compact Collections international manager award.

The Warner/Chappell Music was named publisher of the year honors.

JUNIOR SENIOR

BIG GIRLS DON’T CRY

It seems like only yesterday that “American idol!” contestant Mandisa became the first idol to make Simon Cowell apologize publicly for a televised comment. Cowell had praised Mandisa’s voice on air, but then as she left the room famously quipped, “We better get a bigger stage.” Indeed, he was referring to her full-figured proportions. The following week he was forced to apologize publicly on the show as he hugged a teary-eyed Mandisa.

In the true spirit of forgiveness, Mandisa has titled her debut album “True Beauty,” due July 31 from EMi CMG. And in a final gesture to the at-times-too-honest Cowell, Mandisa has been tapped to be the new face of Ashley Stewart, the retailer chain for women with full figures. So, does this mean Cowell was right after all? The things that make you go hmmm . . .

WHITEY FORD HELPS SAVE GRACE

From what Track hears, rapper and singer/songwriter Everlast wrote the theme song for new drama series “Saving Grace.” The program stars Holly Hunter and debuts this summer on TNT.
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