FOO FIGHTERS

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ADWEEK MAGAZINES
UPFRONT
5 A BAND A WEEK
MTV's 52/52 campaign shines all-encompassing spotlight on established and unsigned acts.
10 Global
12 On The Road

FEATURES
24 ROCK STEADY For five albums, Foo Fighters have been a model of consistency. What's in store for their most ambitious album yet?
27 A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CHRIS HICKS
A publisher, a label executive, a manager, and more, Hicks may also be a model for tomorrow's biz.
31 LIVE! FROM TOKYO Billboard and Hanshin open clubs in Japan as part of a comprehensive licensing deal.
35 JAPAN'S NEW DIGITAL EQUATION
New revenue channels offset sales downturn.

MUSIC
41 PUTTIN' ON THE HITS
Manilow covers '70s favorites, own songs on third "Greatest" album.
42 Higher Ground
43 Rhythm & Blues
44 Nashville Scene, Global Pulse
45 Classical Score
47 Reviews

IN EVERY ISSUE
4 Opinion
49 Over The Counter
49 Market Watch
50 Charts
67 Marketplace
68 Mileposts
69 Executive Turntable, Backbeat, Inside Track

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Events
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because it discounted the importance of the brand's stature in popular culture. As I said before, in many cases, not just with McDonald's, the brand's position in pop culture is more powerful than the music or the artist. So the right brand and music in partnership would provide better and faster exposure for the music and the brand.

The old cliché that the artist "sold out" doesn't apply in this situation, because it is a harmonious relationship that is built on the truth of popular culture's perception of the music and the brand. The music is cool. The brand is cool. And both can become part of the DNA of how a person defines him or herself. Now, the brand doesn't become a trend and the music won't be a one-hit wonder. I don't know if the agency handling McDonald's had anything to do with this, but it is a great example of the rules being broken, in any case.

The formulas and rules on how to gain exposure and become part of popular culture are forever changing. These are exciting times. The Internet has created the democratization of distribution and allowed independent music to resurface and not be constrained by the barriers erected by the music labels. The smart independent labels realize this. They know that in an era where exposure is king, a smart partner, like an advertising agency, must understand audience culture and grasp unique and relevant ways to converse with them.

That's the science. What that partner also needs is the mojo that makes pop culture thrive. This kind of partnership fosters and protects the brand's band and doesn't ask to alter its personas a la "selling out," because good agencies understand brands (bands) only succeed based on the truth of the brand.

Again, this is an unfamiliar concept to the artists, because the perception about advertising is that it manipulating and benedic our careers. In my career, I have always been in search of the truth behind a brand because it created the best communication, causing a visceral reaction in popular culture.

I will end my bias as to why an agency makes for a great partner if you are an independent band: creatives. Most agency creatives are artists at heart. And in some agencies, they actually get to be more artist than marketer. Creative spend a lot of time making ideas that take on a bit of their own personality. So the work becomes personal and not commercial. Or, as I like to say, a lot of care has gone into the work. The creatives share the same understanding that any artist has: your work is precious and it is personal and must always be respected. —

Peter Nicholson is partner/chief creative officer at Deutsch New York.

OPINION

EDITORIALS | COMMENTARY | LETTERS

McDonald's, Others Reveal Agency World Club When It Comes To Music

BY PETER NICHOLSON

The music industry has no one to blame but itself for the continuing downward spiral it finds itself in. It used to be the voice of popular culture until it killed radio and independent records, which essentially wiped out the dreams of garage bands, coffee-bar-playing singles acts, state fair sensations, small-town favorites, Sunset Boulevard dreamers, cabaret throwbacks and the indie poster children—basically anyone with talent.

The music industry gave up supporting these types of bands because they fell in love with a formula for monetary success that did not include real emerging artists. By not providing these artists with the support and exposure that their talents deserved, the industry ended up alienating audiences, killing its credibility and losing the pulse of popular culture. This may sound dramatic, but from my point of view, it sums up the outcome.

However, the pulse of pop culture isn't dead; it's very much alive and being nurtured in advertising agencies (wait for obligatory laugh and chuckle). Seriously, advertising has always been in touch with popular culture, but now, more than ever, advertising agencies have become more in tune with the beat of pop culture and how that applies to the bands. And, all bands have a role in popular culture. Some have niche roles; others have a broader, more significant reach.

I recently read that McDonald's is sponsoring a 10-city concert tour to be played exclusively in the restaurants' parking lots. This tour is breaking the traditional role of music sponsorship, because McDonald's is managing and producing the tour. McDonald's is using its vast popularity and its ability to connect directly to fans of the emerging artist to provide the exposure the artist needs to succeed—a partnership, sort of to speak.

And, yes, McDonald's is a pop culture icon unto itself, but up until now, most of its association with music was done in the traditional relationship with the music industry, where music was the starlet and sponsorship was the groupie that got a prime photo op to flaunt around.

That old model always annoyed me.

A brand's position in popular culture can be more powerful than that of music or a band.

反馈

McDonald's, Others Reveal Agency World Club When It Comes To Music

Brand for Success

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That old model always annoyed me.
A BAND A WEEK

MTV's 52/52 Campaign Shines All-Encompassing Spotlight On Established And Unsigned Acts

Unsigned New York trio Team Facelift—consisting of Fat Jew, Machine and Fonda—was featured in several colorful, in-your-face on-air promotional spots on MTV in early August. But these weren't sporadically placed appearances: The band—with its frat-house antics, cheeky humor and Fat Jew's out-to-there hair gloriously in—showed up in more than 11 hours of reprises geared toward such MTV shows as "The Hills," "The Real World: Sydney" and "My Super Sweet 16."

Equal parts rap, goth and hard house, Team Facelift is the first of 52 acts to be spotlighted in MTV's new 52/52 campaign, which showcases one act per week in all of MTV's on-air promotions, Billboard has learned—and which extends to MTV's online and wireless platforms.

For the week of Aug. 6, Team Facelift was also MTV.com's artist of the week. With 52/52, MTV gives all of its on-air promo time to one act for a given week—followed by long tail opportunities online as participating acts are archived, along with exclusive content, for up to one year.

"MTV is giving us the opportunity to reach a demographic we can't reach on our own," Fat Jew says. "Cool 20-somethings in the U.S. may have heard of us, but a 15-year-old girl in Nebraska has likely not heard of us. But that's changing."

The week preceding Team Facelift's debut on MTV, the trio's four songs had been collectively streamed 100 times on its MySpace page. On Aug. 7, one day after 52/52 launched, this number jumped to 4,000, according to Fonda.

That's the sort of effect that 52/52 mastermind Tina Beahos, MTV executive VP of marketing and multiplatform creative, and her team are aiming for. "Do I expect to break a band every week?" Beahos asks. "No, that's not the goal. We want to expose music in new, rich ways to the viewer."

"We are always looking to grow and evolve with our audience—and to adapt to how they're listening to music," says Amy Doyle, senior VP of music and talent at MTV. "And today, our audience is savvier than ever."

At press time, MTV was in the process of scheduling artists—the signed and unsigned—for upcoming 52/52 campaigns. For the week of Aug. 13, Paramore will take the 52/52 spotlight. Also confirmed are Rodrigo y Gabriela (for the week of Aug. 20), Nelly Furtado (Aug. 27), Mark Ronson (Sept. 3), Kanye West (Sept. 10), Oh My God (Sept. 17) and Foo Fighters (Sept. 24).

Lou Robinson, senior VP of video promotion and artist development at RCA Music Group, calls 52/52 a boon for artist development. "MTV is taking chances by not just featuring the tried and true, but unsigned acts," he says. "How would they otherwise get this kind of exposure?"

In the 52/52 model, each featured artist collaborates with MTV on creative direction. The act is filmed, appears and is identified in numerous weekly spots, ranging from performance footage and comedy skits to interviews and behind-the-scenes downtime. The spots range from 15 to 60 seconds.

While the Team Facelift promotes itself, the trio's in- your-face humor, Rodrigo y Gabriela's aggressiveness and the opposite direction, with the act offering its own version of a guitar trial, while sitting on apple boxes in a winery. Paramore, meanwhile, was filmed at a campout in Queens, N.Y., and dressed the spoons as mini-TVs.
Soul Mates
Sony BMG Licenses Gamble And Huff Catalog

Sony BMG Music Entertainment has licensed the complete catalog of music from Philadelphia International Records, the label founded by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff in 1971. Billboard has learned this marks the first time that the entire PIR catalog—which includes hits by MFSL's Patti LaBelle, Billy Paul and others—is under one roof.

Under the terms of the multiyear arrangement, Sony BMG Music Entertainment's Commercial Music Group and Legacy Recordings will issue physical and digital recordings of PIR material. The deal also extends to ringtones (another PIR first), PDA applications, synch licenses and branded entertainment.

This ambitious partnership launches in October with two double-disc compilations: "The Essential Lou Rawls" and "The Essential Teddy Pendergrass." Additionally, 50 digital releases (original albums and collections) will be ready for download by the end of the year.

Some previously unreleased recordings, including a live set from Patti LaBelle and a Philly Hyman album, will also make their commercial debut in the future.

"The sounds of PIR are a vital and indispensable part of American pop music history," Sony BMG Music Entertainment president John Ingram says.

In past years, the PIR repertoire was split between Epic/CBS and EMI. Now that it's "tuck together again, we can promote and market it on a global level," Huff says.

Between synch licenses, sampling and reunions, the catalog has received a tremendous amount of exposure over the years. Gamble says, "Now it's time to build upon that and grow the PIR brand."

In Sony BMG, PIR appears to have found the right partner to do precisely that. "The scope of the PIR catalog becomes our entire platform," Legacy Recordings GM Adam Block says. "We can conceive of, with Kenny and Leon, virtually anything. There are no restrictions, as we have access to all the pieces."

Carrie Carries On
New Underwood Single Sets Chart Record

The rapidly rising star of Carrie Underwood is shining a little brighter this week as she becomes the highest-debuting female artist on Hot Country Songs since the chart expanded from 30 to 50 positions in January 1964. (The chart currently carries 60 positions.) Underwood's "So Small," the first single from her as-yet-untitled Oct. 23 sophomore release, debuts at No. 20.

Underwood's introduction to the music world came two years ago when she won the 2005 season of "American Idol." Since then she has scored three midweek No. 1 country singles: "Jesus, Take the Wheel," "Wasted" and "Before He Cheats." Another single, "Don't Forget to Remember Me," reached No. 2.

Chris Huff, music director for country outlets KSCS and KYYS Dallas, which played Underwood's song 31 and 45 times, respectively, in the first week of its release, says that such significant airplay is usually reserved for established superstars. "It usually takes an album or two of solid hits before you reach the kind of critical mass with the audience that Carrie reached with a single or two," he says. "When you think about where Kelly Clarkson and Rascal Flatts and Keith Urban were on their second album, this is really phenomenal."

Country KMPS Seattle spun "So Small" 37 times between July 30 and Aug. 5, making it one of the most-played songs on the station. PD Becky Brenner says the rapid support is warranted for two reasons. "Carrie Underwood is an American idol in more ways than one. She is the people's choice. They have a vested interest in her success, and they want to know what she is up to. When a brand-new song by a superstar is not available anywhere else but on the radio, we want credit for being the first to bring it to the people."

The song, which is about investing time and energy into things that aren't really important, was written by Underwood with Luke Laird and Hillary Lindsey.

Underwood's first album, "Some Hearts" (Arista/Arista Nashville), has sold 5.8 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Ad supported free digital music service SpiralFrog is leading closer to going live.

The company has initiated a private beta launch in Canada and the United States, inviting select media and other outlets to test the service and provide feedback.

The move puts to rest many questions about the company's viability. When original CEO Robin Kent and a number of directors left in the spring, rampant speculation suggested the service would never see the light of day.

SpiralFrog founder Joe Molen says he expects to emerge from the private beta for a public launch by the end of the summer. However, the company has missed launch dates before. An initial launch date last December was pushed to this spring.

Based on the feedback of the beta site, however, it's clear SpiralFrog has kept busy in the meantime. While many music industry analysts and insiders express optimism at the potential for ad-supported free music, it's far too early to declare this frog a prince.

Selection: The service has close to 770,000 tracks available, with more than 3,500 music videos, that users can stream or download for free of charge. Competing fee-based services like Rhapsody and iTunes have catalogs with more than 2.5 million songs. SpiralFrog's video library, however, is on par, despite having fewer licensing deals.

Functionality: The service requires users to download a small software package prior to using, but is fully accessible via an Internet browser. It's not like iTunes, which is a separate application. Downloads take place relatively quickly, with "Z's Pride (In the Name of Love)" finishing in less than a minute and its high-resolution video in about 90 seconds. Users can also e-mail selections to friends, regardless of whether they're members.

Ads: The ad-supported aspects of the service, at least for now, are relatively unobtrusive. Users are not forced to watch an ad as their song or video downloads, but rather can continue to browse and sample other music while they wait. But ads are very prevalent on the site, with "The Simpsons Movie" and the U.S. Navy taking center stage.

DRM: All music and video acquired on the site is protected in Windows Media Audio digital rights management, meaning it cannot play on the iPod. Users' computers must be running either Windows XP or Vista, and use Windows Media Player v.9 or older.

Partnerships: Its only major label deal is with Universal Music Group, and the company will need others on board quickly to make an immediate impact. Other deals include EMI Music Publishing, BMG, SESAC, Canadian publishing society SOCAN and various independent label deals with such companies as Koch and aggregator the Orchard.

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UPFRONT

COUNTRY BY ED CHRISTMAN, RAY WADDELL and KEN TUCKER

What He’s Doing Now

Garth Brooks To Return To Retail, Radio, Maybe The Stage

The Garth Brooks juggernaut is setting the table for a new release. And this time, Billboard has learned, you won’t find it only at Wal-Mart.

After exclusively selling his music through that big-box merchant for the last two years, Brooks will once again make it available to all retailers. But in a surprise move, his Pearl Records imprint will apparently be self-distributed.

Meanwhile, speculation regarding a live performance aspect to Brooks’ resurfacing has been centered around an extended run in one market.

According to retail sources, the country star will issue a three-disc boxed set, “The Ultimate Garth Brooks,” that will street either Nov. 6 or 13. The set will contain a 34-track, two-CD greatest hits retrospective with four new songs, and a DVD with videos, many of them recently filmed, for all tracks on the CDs. In addition, Brooks is rereleasing his catalog titles, some of which have been on moratorium at general retail since 1998.

Nashville-based Big Machine Records is involved with promoting the new cuts to radio; the first single is expected in September. One of the new cuts is reportedly a remake of Huey Lewis’ 1982 hit “Working For A Livin’,” on which Lewis plays harmonica.

Programmers from across the country, who have been given few details, have been invited to an Aug. 17-18 event in Nashville. Brooks has also scheduled an Aug. 18 press conference there.

Two-year-old Big Machine, headed by veteran promotion man Scott Borchetta, recently signed Brooks’ wife, Trisha Yearwood, and is working her new single, “Heaven, Heartache and the Power of Love,” to radio. Borchetta declined to comment to Billboard. (Disney’s Nashville-based Lyric Street Records promoted three singles to radio from Brooks’ Wal-Mart set.)

In an interesting move, the new box will carry a $12 wholesale cost, the typical major label wholesale price of a front-line single-disc album, while catalog titles will carry a $7.85 wholesale cost, sources say.

In 2005, Brooks split from Capitol Records and left with ownership of his catalog. Later that year, he issued a “Limited Series” boxed set exclusively through Wal-Mart, which contained three of his prior albums, a previously unreleased DVD and a disc of never-before-heard songs. In early 2006, Brooks rereleased his catalog exclusively at Wal-Mart and then, in time for Christmas 2006, he issued “The Entertainer,” a five-disc DVD package, solely at the giant merchant.

It remains to be seen how retail will react to the new releases after being cut out of the loop on Brooks product for so long, says one merchant who is still considering whether to stock the artist’s albums.

On the live front, standing offers from promoters have apparently been on the table for Brooks since his retirement in 2000.

Last time out, Brooks shuttered country touring records with an outing centered around his 1998 Capitol release “Sevens.” The three-year extravaganza grossed more than $105 million (country’s first $100 million run) and drew close to 5.5 million people. Notably, Brooks charged a relatively paltry $20 per ticket when he likely could have demanded three times that amount.

Since retiring, Brooks has made sporadic live appearances, including a Hurricane Katrina benefit, a Grand Ole Opry appearance in 2005 and a more recent performance at a Live Earth concert in Washington, D.C. He previously said he would not embark on a full-blown tour until his youngest daughter graduates from high school in 2015.

INDIES BY SUSAN VISAKOWITZ

INTRODUCING INDIE

ADA Spearheads Compilation For ‘Casual Buyers’

A compilation comprising 15 of the most prominent acts in indie rock—the opening salvo in what the Alternative Distribution Alliance, which spearheaded the project, hopes will be an ongoing, biannual series—is now being aimed at major and indie retail accounts, says Vice Records manager Adam Shore and ADA head of sales Michael Black. But indie stores may not be making it a priority.

“This Is Next Volume 1”—set for release Aug. 21 on Vice, and including such acts as the Shins, Spoon and Clap Your Hands Say Yeah—is geared toward introducing to a mainstream audience bands that “don’t get a lot of support at radio or other mainstream outlets,” Shore says.

The project was dreamed up two years ago following the unexpected success of the indie-heavy “Garden State” film soundtrack, which featured several ADA-family bands. Using the consistently strong-selling “Now! That’s What I Call Music” pop-hit compilations as a model, ADA aims to have each release in the series A&R’d and marketed by a different ADA-distributed label, with a goal of reaching “beyond the core album consumer and toward the casual buyer,” according to ADA’s promo materials.

In April, Shore told Entertainment Weekly that the focus for “This Is Next” would be “Wal-Mart, big-box stores, red states and TV advertising.” He now says, though, that “we want all record stores to carry it. It’s attractive to large mass-merchant retailers because it can introduce them to new artists, but it’s a great tool for indie retail, too.”

But Eric Levin, owner of Atlanta’s indie-Criminal Records and head of the Alliance of Independent Media Stores, says he hasn’t even discussed positioning strategy for the albums with AIMS’ 29 member stores because there’s still no “firm plan in place with Vice and ADA. “We have a lot of fourth-quarter initiatives that are important to us, so while this is huge for Vice and ADA, it’s just another one of our projects.”

Further, Levin believes most of the songs on “This Is Next” can already be found in the hands of his store’s consumers. “I might have loved to see this two years ago. But at least it gives us a chance to end-cap our catalog, which we’ll have at great prices.”

“If we will not be one of the most hardcore indie consumer has heard, all 15 of these artists,” Shore counters. “This is an unprecedented gathering of artists from some of the greatest indie labels that have ever existed.”

TV advertising remains a major component of the marketing campaign. “We’re in a partnership with MTV on this, so most of the consumer advertising will be through MTV,” Black says. In addition to traditional spots, MTV’s alternative music show “Suburban Teen” will dedicate an episode to the collection, and banners will run across several MTV-related Web sites.

Billboard’s Indies column is on hiatus, but will return to the magazine shortly. In the meantime, Indies coverage will continue in the magazine and online.
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LONGER CHART 

Rihanna’s recent record-breaking stay at the top of the U.K. singles charts might suggest the glory days of the format have returned. But behind the celebration there is more evidence that the days of multiplatinum chart-toppers are over.

In late July, “Umbrella” (Def Jam/Universal) became the United Kingdom’s longest-running No. 1 single in 13 years with a 10th week at the top. It did so with total sales of just 354,000, of which chart compiler the Official U.K. Charts Co. (OCC) says 29% were physical.

The tally pales when compared with Gnarl’s Barkley’s “Crazy.” After that track’s ninth and final week at the U.K. peak in spring 2006, its sales were 660,000, compared with Rihanna’s 332,000 at that stage.

“It’s been decades since singles have been a reliable revenue stream,” EMI Records U.K. director of national accounts Derek Allen says. “They’ve always been, and will continue to be, an integral part of an overall marketing strategy, whether it’s a clarion call [for] an established artist’s new album or the launch of a new act.”

U.K. singles sales across all formats continued their upward in the first half of 2007, improving 29% year on year, according to trade body the BPI. Individual downloads have soared 49.9% year on year to 36.4 million units, and accounted for 89.4% of all U.K. singles sales, compared with 63% during 2006. The digital boom means that individual track sales now reach way beyond the chart. Between January and June, songs in the top 40 accounted for only 12.6% of digital track sales.

While the figures show more people are downloading more tracks than ever, the digital net is cast so widely that some observers are wondering how—if a song can be No. 1 for 10 weeks without even reaching gold certification (400,000 shipments)—the singles market can remain viable.

“We would still like a shorter release window between download and physical.”

—PAUL QUIRK, QUIRKS RECORDS

Mercury head of radio Mark Rankin says the speed of modern music consumption is undermining physical singles.

“The consumer wants things quicker,” he says. “They don’t want to be dictated to, to wait for a specific date to buy the physical product.”

With the introduction this year of digital sales data, songs tend to be staying on the chart longer. In late July 2004, before the eligibility of digital sales, that week’s top 20 singles had spent an average of 3.75 weeks on the chart. For the same period this year, it was 4.25 weeks.

“The slower chart is a good thing,” says Paul Quirk, co-owner of independent store Quirks Records in Ormskirk, Lancashire, and co-chairman of retail trade body ERA. “But we would still like a shorter release window between download and physical. Many retailers aren’t happy about downloading singles, as they make them seem ridiculous in the eyes of the customer, who expects everything they hear to be available.”

Allen says, “We’ve always made decisions about singles formats on a case-by-case basis. Physical formats may no longer be appropriate for some releases. In others, 7-inch vinyl may be the most critical element.”

The continuing decline of the CD singles sector recently prompted members of the OCC board to lobby for a change in the physical release date from Monday to Friday.

“We’re not convinced the Friday release date will in any way reinvigorate the physical singles market,” Allen says. “It creates huge logistical headaches for retail, not to mention replenishment and excess inventory issues.”

But Quirk is more positive.

“It would add impetus to weekend buying,” he says. “If we do nothing, physical single sales will continue to diminish. I would prefer to try everything and then at least we can say there was no stone left unturned.”

GlobaLine

> EMI REVENUE DOWN 5.1% Just days after it was acquired by private equity firm Terra Firma, EMI Group said its first-quarter revenue shrank by 5.1 over constant currency, compared with the corresponding period last year. The decline, covering the 18-week period to Aug. 6, reflected “the tough market conditions experienced in the recorded music market,” EMI said in a statement.

The company’s recorded music division—home to Robbie Williams, Norah Jones and Corinne Bailey Rae—was responsible for the shortfall, with EMI Music revenue plummeting by 13.4%.

The statement also blamed “EMI’s light release schedule when the restructuring program was being implemented.” On the flip side, EMI Music Publishing revenue improved 11.9%, partly as a result of litigation settlements.

EMI’s digital revenue continues to shine, the company added.

—Lars Brandle

> JACK WHITE PRODUCTIONS FOUNDER SPLITS Composer/producer Jack White has parted ways with the German music company he founded, Jack White Productions, following a dispute.

White was dismissed after making a “massive breach of trust,” JWP chairman Thomas Stein says. “We have knowledge that Jack White has been building up a parallel business, which is in direct competition with the business of JWP.”

White has exited as managing director of JWP’s White Records in Berlin, and his consulting agreement has been terminated. He rejects the accusation as untrue and is threatening to sue for damages.


—Wolfgang Spahr

> AUSSIE AIR HEADS SOUTH The Australian Independent Record Labels Assn. (AIR) is relocating its Brisbane headquarters of three years to Melbourne, effective Sept. 3.

“It’s a strategic decision by the board to be where the indie power brokers are,” AIR CEO Stuart Watters says. “Melbourne has a number of burgeoning indie businesses who are clearly going to be major players down the track, so it makes sense.”

Watters and chart manager Dominic Fagan will move south with the association. Label services manager Stephen Foster and communications manager Raynee Dewar remain in Brisbane as consultants.

AIR represents the interests of 350 Australian labels and 5,000 domestic acts. The trade body has recently partnered with drinks manufacturer V Energy for its Australian Independent Music Chart and is producing the Australian Independent Label Summit Oct. 3-5 in Brisbane.

—Christie Eliezer

> MAJORS SELECT SENA The four music majors have appointed Dutch collecting society SENA to advise them in the collection of public performance income in Italy.

Public performance royalties in Italy are currently collected by Societa Consortile Fonografi, an organization set up in 2000. SCF generated €32.5 million ($44.5 million) for labels in Italy last year.

“IfPI for some years promoted the idea of twinning and sharing good practices among the record industry societies,” says London-based Lauri Rechardt, an IFPI consultant. “This project is a natural continuation to that and the cooperation will benefit equally all the societies involved in it.”

Should SENA’s consultancy role be successful, the four majors are said to be considering a similar move in Spain.

—Mark Worden
THE PARTY'S OVER

Australian Nightclubs Rage At Soaring Licensing Rate

MELBOURNE—Australian nightclub owners are warning of imminent meltdown in the sector, after the Copyright Tribunal approved a massive hike in licensing costs for sound recordings.

The Tribunal increased the rate nightclubs will pay to the Phonographic Performance Co. of Australia (PPCA), from 7 cents Australian ($0.00105 Australian) per person per night of operation (billboard.biz, July 11). Dance parties (large, rave-type events usually held in warehouses) will be hit even harder, with the rate rocketing from 20 cents Australian (17 cents) to $3.07 Australian ($2.60).

"We're just halfway through this fight," says Bill Healy, director of rational affairs at the Australian Hotels Assn., which represents 1,600 nightclubs nationwide. The AHA has launched a Federal Court appeal against the new rates, with the case due to be heard in late September.

"What worries us the most is that the fee applies to the capacity of the venue, not the number of people who attend," Healy says. "That's grossly unfair. Some nights a venue can be just half capacity, but still have to pay the full fee." Healy says the nightclub sector pays $1.4 million Australian ($1.2 million) per year to the PPCA at the current rate—an amount that could potentially increase to as much as $15 million Australian ($12.9 million) under the new system. According to the AHA, nightclubs that pay an average $30,000-$40,000 Australian ($26,000-$34,000) will now have to stump up an extra $100,000-$200,000 Australian ($86,000-$172,000) each.

"People will go out of business or close down their venues on certain nights," says Kevin Attwood, owner of the Exchange Hotel in Sydney.

"We could see discos and dance nights disappear from suburban and regional areas," says Anthony Ball, chief executive of Sydney-based nightclubs representative body Clubs Australia.

Conrad Palmer, GM of Brisbane's the Empire, warns that costs may be passed on to the consumer: "We charge $10 (Australian [$8.60]) at the door," he says. "Will people pay more? If they do, presumably they'll cut down on what they spend inside."

"Music is integral to their operations, yet it becomes valueless when they have to pay a bit more," PPCA chief executive Stephen Peach says. "We're asked to believe this is the difference between a profitable, successful nightclub and one about to close its doors. That defies all rational analysis."

Lindy Morrison, former drummer with Australian alternative rock-influenced classics like Nightclubs, says. "Music is the lowest income earners in the rock industry, most of them are non-composers, and this income is an important way to augment their earnings." The PPCA estimates artists currently receiving $200-$300 Australian ($170-$260) per gig, will now get $2,000-$3,000 Australian ($1,700-$2,600) annually.

"No one is retiring to the south of France on that," Peach says.

The nightclub sector is now hoping for a lifeline from the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission, which is investigating, at the PPCA's invitation, whether the PPCA's jurisdiction might be anti-competitive. The ACCC's decision, due in a few months, will shape the clubs and raves' strategy, potentially clearing the way for them to bypass the PPCA and negotiate rates directly with single record companies. Other options include spinning non-copyright-protected tracks only.

"That seems a bit fanciful," Peach says. "Nightclubs and DJs play what punters want to hear and get them into clubs. It is not determined by some list of which tracks are deemed playable."

But Attwood remains defiant. "If the charges do go through, we'll stop playing Australian tracks," he says. "If the Australian music industry tries to push us out of business, then we'll retaliate."
Food For Thought
Buyout Will Help SMG Focus On Concessions Business

If American Capital Strategies’ $631 million acquisition of Philadelphia-based private facility management firm SMG means anything, it’s that SMG will row more aggressively in the food and beverage arena.

American Capital bought out primary stakeholders Aramark (itself a hugely successful concessionaire) and the Pritzker family of Hyatt Corp. fame in acquiring SMG.

That food and the concessions business would be a focus for SMG going forward was evident with a stop by the SMG booths during the recent International Arena, of Assembly Managers conference and trade show in Salt Lake City. Chefs from the company’s Savo ... Catering by SMG concessionaire division were dishing out some pretty tasty barbecued, smoked salmon, cheese and what I’m told was some-quality wine.

other promoters and producing tours, one-off and legs of tours by acts including Jamie Foxx, Tool and Joe Walsh this summer. SMG also produced and bought talent for the California Mid-State Fair in Paso Robles, which this year included Aerosmith, Rascal Flatts, Stevie Nicks, Bob Dylan, Martina McBride, Diers Bentley, Godsmack, Chris Botti and Daughtry.

In addition, SMG has national booking deals with Bentley, Blue Man Group, the Wiggles and comic Carlos Mencia.

In terms of growth, the major market North American facility business is pretty mature, with most major markets boasting modern arenas a decade or less old. Secondaries are catching up as well, and the international facility market is booming. “Secondary markets and alternative venues are where we see our growth in the U.S.”

‘The American Capital guys are really smart and really friendly with all the SMG management team and are eager to see SMG go to the next level.’—WES WESTLEY, SMG

I’m more of a beer guy, myself.

SMG was founded in 1977 with the management of its first facility, the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans. Through a series of acquisitions and mergers, the company grew to manage convention centers, exhibition halls and trade centers, arenas, stadiums, performing arts centers, theaters and specific-use venues worldwide. In a rare sitdown, Wes Westley, SMG president/CEO since 1994, talked with On The Road about the acquisition and life with American Capital.

Calling Aramark “really good owners,” Westley says of the American Capital deal, “This really breathes some fresh air into SMG. The American Capital guys are really smart and really friendly with all the SMG management team, not just me, and are eager to see SMG go to the next level.”

Westley says that in the past, SMG had non-competitive restrictions with Hyatt and Aramark that allowed the company only to handle food service in accounts that SMG managed. “We had 34 accounts we did food service in, but most people don’t know that because we were very quiet about it, for obvious reasons,” Westley says. “We do about $150 million in food service at a year at SMG. And with American Capital taking over and Aramark and Hyatt partnering ownership, we’ve freed all of the restrictions, so we’re going to try to grow the company strategically in other ways.”

Under the direction of senior VP of sports and entertainment Mike Evans, SMG has been proactive in the touring world, partnering with Westley says, “Internationally, we’ve branched out into Latin America, and John Sutherland, who runs our European division, has identified a lot of key markets over there.”

Asked if clients and the industry would be able to see a difference in how SMG operates under new ownership, Westley says SMG will be “totally transparent. American Capital is really hands off. They’re more of an investor, with a portfolio of over 100 companies. Really, there’s no change in management—we just have a new owner that is providing us capital and encouraging growth.”

Westley admits it had been stressful running such a-flourishing company while it was for sale and speculation was rampant. Industry scuttlebutt had a lot of companies kicking SMG’s tires, including mega promoters Live Nation and AEG Live. “I read a lot in the press, which I kind of chucked at because there were a lot of rumors and speculation by people, all of it, I think,” he says. “American Capital was the winner, but it was not a one-horse race by any stretch of the imagination.”

A $611 million price tag indeed seems to be a vote of confidence in what SMG has accomplished. “For me personally and I think for all of us, it was a real endorsement for all of the hard work we’ve been doing over the last few years,” Westley says. “Is business is all comes down to money, right? This was someone voting with money, not just talking about it.”

Note: For 24/7 touring news and analytics, see billboardbiz/touring.
Soda Stereo’s Stadium Comeback
Leading Latin-American Rock Band Returns To The Road

BUENOS AIRES—A reunion tour scheduled for this fall by Argentine rock band Soda Stereo will be a jumping-off point for reviving the influential act’s catalog and overall visibility.

Almost exactly 10 years since its last concert, Soda Stereo will hit stadium and arena stages across Latin America, where it enjoyed one of the longest-running and most consistently successful careers of the ‘80s and ‘90s.

The tour kicks off Oct. 19-20 with two shows at the 60,000-seat River Plate stadium in Buenos Aires, which sold out in 48 hours, establishing a record for the amount of tickets sold in such a short period. Three additional shows have now been booked for the stadium, with Soda Stereo poised to break the attendance record established for River Plate by the Rolling Stones, who were seen by 300,000 people in five days.

After negotiating since October 2005, concert promoters Triple Producciones (led by band manager Daniel Kori) and Pop Art (led by Robert Costa) signed a contract last December. The tour’s main sponsors are cell phone carrier Personal and Sony Ericsson, which has quickly become a major music event sponsor in the region.

Soda is slated to play 13 shows, including Nov. 15-16 at Mexico City’s Foro Sol and Nov. 21 at Los Angeles’ Home Depot Center—its only U.S. show so far.

While the number of shows is not remarkable, the size of the venues (Foro Sol fits 50,000, for example) is.

Taking advantage of the reunion buzz, Sony BMG, which owns the Soda Stereo catalog, released a greatest hits compilation in July called “Me Verás Volver,” which has sold 65,000 copies in Argentina and was already certified platinum for sales of 40,000 units. The title is a play on words from a line in the band’s 1988 hit “En la Ciudad de la Furia” and is also the title of the band’s reunion tour. The hits package includes a password to the band’s Web site (sodastereo.com), where buyers will be able to download songs from the kickoff reunion concert in October, plus videos and photos. Sony BMG Argentina president Afo Verde says the band’s catalog will be remastered and reissued, along with three DVDs, one of which will document an “MTV Unplugged” show.

Soda Stereo’s discography includes seven studio albums, three live recordings, two EPs and a compilation of rarities, recorded between 1983 and 1999.

The group—which comprises singers/guitarists Gustavo Cerati, bassist Zeta Bosio and drummer Charly Alberti—became a point of reference for hundreds of artists across South America, who discovered the infinite possibilities of composing rock in Spanish thanks to Soda’s hits: Songs that evolved from catchy pop tunes to sophisticated doses of alternative rock and electronica. In recent years, Soda Stereo has denied any intention of a reunion, but rumors and speculation were rampant until the tour was officially announced in June. Still, all three members have vowed to keep silent until a press conference in September. Rehearsals will begin in August and plans call for a documentary of the entire tour, plus a deluxe photo book and tour diary.

The Soda member with the most successful solo career has been Cerati, a triple Latin Grammy Award winner who recently performed at Live Earth in Hamburg with Shakira. Most recently, Bosio toured Latin America and the United States as a DJ in June, and Alberti has just released a new video for the debut album of his band Mole. Cerati has referred to this reunion as “a jump back in the timeline,” but promises, “We will all resume our solo careers in January 2008.”
Selling In Spanish

Is Latino Culture Defined By A Language?

In a recent column (Billboard, July 28) that was inspired by a panel at July’s Latin Alternative Music Conference (LAMC), Latin Notes contrasted the effectiveness of using Spanish and English on Web sites and at digital stores that sell Latin music or cater to Latin consumers.

But the Spanish vs. English debate is not just about driving sales.

The issue of language has always been a thorny and conflicted one for Latin culture in this country. Should marketers and advertisers use English, Spanish or both? Is Latino culture intrinsically tied to Spanish? Or is language irrelevant in a society where the Hispanic population is dramatically and rapidly changing?

I believe language is a primary driver of culture, and those who seek to profit from Latin culture in general and Latin music in particular should have, at the very least, rudimentary knowledge of, and respect for, the language that drives the content they sell.

In the music realm, this discussion is relatively new. After all, the broad definition of Latin music is that it is in Spanish. Naturally, this can be debated to death. But the facts, for the purpose of qualification and measurement, Nielsen SoundScan, Nielsen BDS and both the mainstream and Latin Grammy Awards, among others, define Latin music as music that’s at least 51% Spanish.

It is natural to assume that the majority of Latin music consumers understand the language of the music they consume.

However, with a Latin population that is increasingly bilingual or English-speaking, the parameters get blurry. If a band like the DeY qualifies itself as Latin, yet sings predominantly in English, how should its music be marketed?

Labels often rely on both languages, particularly if an act sings only occasionally in Spanish—say, Beyonce with her Spanish-language version of “Irreplaceable.”

However, there are other acts, such as Los Lobos, that are marketed predominately in English, even though their identity—down to their name—is unabashedly Latin.

In an effort to better define what constitutes “Latin,” or not the Assn. of Hispanic Advertising Agencies recently launched its Latino Identity Project, whose objective was to define what makes Latinos Latinos.

In a recent speech, AHAA media task chairman Carl Kravetz said, “Latino cultural identity is not confined to language and acculturation. Rather, at the heart of Latino cultural identity is a set of complex, adaptable, intricate and interrelated values.”

Kravetz was quick point out that the Latino Identity Project was not heralding the death of Spanish usage or Spanish-language media. Quite the contrary, both are flourishing.

But if marketers are not connecting with Latino consumers, he added, it’s because “we are not speaking their language,” nor in the linguistic sense, but in a more sophisticated and useful way of communicating and connecting with Latino consumers today.

What is “the” language then? AHAA says quantitative research is the next step in its Latino Identity Project, in order to determine what makes this new Latin consumer tick.

Meanwhile, there is one language that binds Argentine Jews, African Americans from Colombia’s Pacific coast and bilingual U.S. Latins. It isn’t food or heritage or the much-touted ability to dance.

It is, quite simply, Spanish.

THE DEY

Andres Levin likes to stretch the definition of Latin music, fusing dance, urban and traditional sounds. After producing albums for acts as diverse as Los Amigos Invisibles and Miguel Bose, he has composed the scores for four new films: horror-thriller “Borderland,” caper flick “Ladrón Que Roba a Ladrón,” reggaetón-themed “Feel the Noise” and “El Cantante,” the Hector Lavoe biopic released Aug. 3.

The “El Cantante” score doesn’t stick to salsa. How do you explain the stylistic departures?

More than styles, the movie has very extreme dramatic points of success and happiness where they are on top of the world, and other times when Hector is crumbling and self-destructive. I didn’t want the score to have a very unique voice and interesting instrumentation so it wouldn’t sound like necessarily a typical Hollywood drama score, but have elements of Latin instrumentation and folklore.

Did you have to do a lot of research before composing?

On the more Latin side of the score, I used a lot of the cats that actually played with Fania and Hector back in the day. Not only would we record the score, but the room, every time a scene would come on, would be full of anecdotes.

So you guys watched the film while recording?

Yeah, the traditional film-score scenario is a composer or conductor with an 80-piece orchestra and a huge screen. And everybody is watching and following along. It gets very interesting with musicians. Some people are much more sensitive to it than others, and really interpret it. There are some trombone solos and violin solos and things like that, but a fair amount of improvisation on the score.

Is there more of a demand these days for Latin sounds in film and TV?

Film scores are not like records; a Latin sound could just mean one instrument on top of an orchestra. As a genre, it’s much more open and experimental, for me at least. The score of “Borderland” is not really Latin. There is Afro-Cuban stuff in there, but it’s very orchestral and horror-thriller type music. [Levin’s band] Yerba Buena showed up on a lot of shows from “Entourage” to “CSI” to “Third Watch.” This was already a couple years ago. And obviously Gustavo [Santovala’s] success is making people lean towards a certain kind of sound as well.

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THE BILLBOARD Q&A?

En La Red: For 24/7 coverage of the Latin music world, Billboard has partnered with MSN. For a complete roundup in Spanish, go to BillboardLatino.MSN.com.

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www.americanradiohistory.com
Imagine the reaction at retail when Universal Republic told store owners to stop selling Amy Winehouse’s “Frank” album, which is only available as an import. The initial response was: What?! It’s the same reaction you’d get from a label salesman if you told him to stop selling to Wal-Mart. 

But eventually merchants began to see the label’s side. Retailers say they are willing to abide by Universal’s edict, even if the label’s thinking is outdated in a digital world (Billboard, Aug. 11).

The import/export issue, in general, waxes and wanes. Sometimes it depends on currency fluctuations, sometimes it depends on business conditions. When parallel imports (foreign versions of domestic releases that are often exactly the same except for price) come into play, label folk get up in arms, and rightly so. I remember when the big boxes first started pouncing the $9.99 price point, and some chains, one-stops and independent merchants thought they could compete by buying cheaper Canadian product. The economics of imports from that country were enhanced by currency fluctuations that left the U.S. dollar strong against Canada’s.

The majors can control product from flowing across borders by enforcing copyright laws, and some majors came down hard on Canadian imports while others held back.

On the other hand, I also recall the early 1990s when some U.S. one-stops were ringing up huge sales by exporting product to Japan and Europe, which have higher pricing structures than the United States. Of course, the Japanese and European labels went ballistic trying to stop the importers, and Billboard’s U.K. office, which covers the international music business, persuaded me to write a story about the dastardly U.S. villains engaging in this nefarious practice.

At the time, the U.S. major labels made a big show of trying to stop the practice by putting out policy letters threatening to cut off any one-stop caught exporting their albums. I was younger then, and even though I had seven years’ experience working at record stores and one-stops, I was still naive about the extent of the duplicity within the record industry. So I feverishly wrote story after story about the U.S. label crackdown on exports.

But what I later learned is that, while the distribution sales reps were hand-delivering letters banning exports to one-stops, they were winkling and telling them to export as much as they wanted. After all, such exports helped the labels meet unrealistic sales goals back in the day, when front-loading initial album shipments was a common practice. Moreover, executives’ annual bonuses were at risk, and those exports also helped reach overall company sales goals.

Now, in the case of the Winehouse record, retailers are complaining again about how labels want it both ways. As the story in last week’s issue pointed out, U.S. labels often give short shrift to international A&R, forcing their foreign counterparts to depend on importers to provide incremental sales and maybe even help demonstrate why some albums merit a domestic release statewide.

Universal plans to release “Frank” in November, but that will represent an interesting marketing dilemma for the label. That’s because Winehouse’s very successful “Back to Black” is in fact her second album, and its old-school R&B stylings are now established as her trademark sound in the minds of consumers. After a successful album, follow-up efforts that showcase a change in an artist’s musical direction can be tricky. But in this case it’s preordained, since “Frank” came out first in 2003 and had songs that are more jazz-tinged.

The import sales—18,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan—clearly show demand exists. So Universal would be foolish not to issue the album domestically. But without the proper setup, positioning—and, in this case, explanation—the album could come as a surprise to fans who expect a certain sound from the singer. If that anticipation isn’t met and it hurts sales, then fierce fans might perceive “Frank” as a sophomore flop and could move on to the next big thing. So when it comes time to issue “Frank,” Universal Republic has a fine line to walk.
Visitors to Blue Note's Web site will be in for a surprise later this month. The label is in the process of revamping the site to become an online aggregator, social network and digital music store for fans of jazz and blues—the staples of the Blue Note catalog—rather than a simple promotional Web site for its artists. It's a bold move for a label whose core age demographics is 35-54—far older than the typical 18-34 age group that virtually all other digital music services target these days.

But Blue Note GM Zach Hochkeppel thinks the digital music market has overlooked older music fans for far too long and that the time has come to start teaching old dogs new tricks.

"They need to be brought into the fold," he says. "No marketing and no attention is usually paid to an older demographic. They're sort of ignored and neglected by media in general. Youth is always the first and foremost target, which sends the message to the older consumer that 'This isn't for you.'"

Although the assumption is that digital music is a format for young adults, studies show older users are in fact quite active with new media. A December Ipsos TEMPO survey found 35-54-year-olds make up nearly one-third (31%) of those users who paid for music downloads. When you include those 55 and over, adults beyond the age of 34 make up about 40% of all paid a la carte downloaders—twice the proportion that constitutes teens. They also download more songs than average: nine per month compared with the average five across all generations.

The generation gap is similar for music subscription services, where 35- to 54-year-olds represent nearly half (45%) of those who exclusively use paid streaming or subscription-based music services. Meanwhile, an April study by the same company found only 10% of 25- to 34-year-olds admitted to downloading music from peer-to-peer networks, compared with 21% of the 24-34 group and 27% of the 18-24 bracket.

So here's an age group that is more willing to pay for music than younger fans and has more money to do so. Why has it been left out of the picture?

For starters, the older demographic in general is less interested in new music. An April Ipsos survey found that 67% of music downloaders aged 34-54 say they look for older music not easily found in record stores, while 41% pointed to current hits. But those figures can increase dramatically when focused on niche genres like jazz or classical.

Some of Blue Note's front-line releases that don't get much placement in record stores experience 30% or more digital sales, far above the industry average—for Robert Glasper's "In My Element," released in March, 49% of its first-week sales, and 31% of its total sales to date, have been digital.

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma's Sony Classics release "Appassionato" sold more digital copies than physical ones upon its release in January. It peaked at No. 2 on the iTunes sales chart and finished the first week with 57.1% of its sales digital, to date, 10% of its sales have been digital.

"It's a tiny fraction of digital music buyers, but they're people who buy a massive amount of music," Hochkeppel says. Ipsos analyst Matt Kleinenschmidt says other digital music services, particularly those based on a subscription model, would do well to establish a niche themselves—and when it comes to age, aim higher rather than lower.

"A lot of the services are using a one-size-fits-all approach to their marketing," he says. "They think it's geared towards youth, and they market in that direction. But the reality is these services need to pick who their market is and then supervise that niche. That's the only way they're going to grow."

Look at eMusic. It doesn't have any major-label music in its catalog, focusing instead on independent and rather obscure fare targeting a more mature "music aficionado." The average subscriber is 37.

Meanwhile the subscription music service aimed at the youngest demographic—MTV's Urge—is also the one that label sources say is struggling the most, despite having what critics call the best editorial content of all the services and a bundled integration into Windows Media Player.

"All of these services are sort of targeting his younger user who historically hasn't been the user that's adopted them," Kleinenschmidt says. "That's primarily due to a lack of understanding of the market. Most of these companies don't do any kind of market research before they launch."

"We're slowly starting to see more digital music services aimed at the older user with niche music tastes. Blue Note's pending Web site is just the latest. Universal Music Group opened a digital jazz and classical music service in the United Kingdom in January, and last December a social networking site aimed at the 35-and-up crowd called Urban Boomer (UBTunes) went live."

So the question is, is this digital age, what is the age of the digital?"

Whether it's the mobile space or the (online) community space, it seems to be targeting to the point where it's not just teenagers who are focused on [that are] participating," Hochkeppel says. "It's becoming ingrained in the culture to the point where folks like us can be very involved in the marketing and retail aspect."
What Would Elvis Think?

Reaction Is Mixed For Viagra Ad Set To Famed Presley Tune

The spot opens simply enough. A handful of healthy-looking, 40-something guys are jamming in a roadside bar, performing an upbeat song that sounds familiar. Sure, the opening lyric, "Gonna set my soul on fire," is recognizable to Elvis Presley fans. But lyrics like "Can't wait to go home" had us scratching our head.

As the spot runs through its 30- and 60-second versions, you know you've heard the song somewhere before. But when the "band" delivers the song's chorus, it becomes incredibly clear what is going on.

Instead of singing "Viva Las Vegas," as Presley did in 1964 (in the film of the same name), the happy-go-lucky guys in the womenless spots sing, "Viva Viagra."

Creative brilliance or creative train wreck?

"My first reaction was, 'Whoa,'" says one music publishing executive, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "I totally get it. The publisher is there to exploit the copyright, not necessarily the artist that made a particular song famous. [But despite other factors, my first emotional reaction was to cringe."

In 2004, an agency tried licensing Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" for a Preparation H campaign. The Cash family denied the request. "Viva Las Vegas" was written by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman. McCann Erickson, which created the Viva Viagra spots, licensed the composition from Warner/Chappell Music. The music publishing exec who cringed is far from alone. Most people contacted for this column had no comment or spoke off the record. It appears that the Presley oeuvre is sacred ground for many.

Visits to numerous blogs uncovered comments like "This commercial just walks over any idea of good taste" and "I'm sure Elvis is rolling over in his grave."

Perhaps one of the foremost authorities on Presley — with nearly 30 Elvis books under his belt — finds the spot quite worthwhile. "It makes me cringe," says Joseph A. Tunzi, executive director of the National Council on Laughter and Humor Research. "But perhaps not."

Weinstein continued, "Unfortunately, as far as Viagra is concerned, what happens in Vegas may not stay in Vegas when the use of Viagra as a party drug is encouraged with irresponsible ads like this."

Which begs the question: What would Presley himself — who was known to use a pharmaceutical or two — think about this campaign? "Would he be dealing with this medical condition?" Tunzi wonders. "Would he find the ad humorous — or not so funny?"

Either way, people will draw their own conclusions. Some may even wonder if Elvis Presley Enterprises is endorsing the product or making money off the spot. This remains unknown, as EPE was unavailable for comment by press time. The same is true of Warner/Chappell. McCann Erickson, meanwhile, declined comment. 

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The greatest, most important, most successful oldies station in history, WCBS-FM, is back in New York, and that should be cause for a big celebration. So why am I not exactly thrilled? After all, wasn't I the wise-ass who called placing the New York institution of WCBS-FM with the Jack format the equivalent of replacing the Statue of Liberty with a blow-up doll? Well, yeah. But I also said at the time that even though this was one of the world's worst business decisions in history (aside from breaking every music freak's heart, it was billing more than $30 million), the oldies format had gotten into serious disrepair because of one tragic decision that spread like wildfire through the format. They replaced the '50s with the '70s because they "wanted to reach a younger demographic," and they thought that was the answer. The problems with that answer deserve a list:

1. The '50s produced the most extraordinary, most fun and important rock 'n' roll music that will ever be made, and those two decades will forever be considered America's pop music renaissance.
2. Making half of our renaissance inaccessible to the general public should be a criminal act.
3. Replacing Eddie Cochran, Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis Presley with the Carpenters.
4. 1980: oldies are back," you might say. What's the deal? It's not true. Oldies are history. History suggests that if you want to reach a younger demographic, you've got to consider the Carpenters, the Spinners and disco, and thinking you'll appeal to a younger audience is a conclusion made by lazy, mindless, spineless, tasteless bureaucrats who have forgotten that successful radio formats have never been created by the public in the form of a marketing survey, but were created by creators, visionaries and men with an emotional investment who then found and created an audience.

4. Good salesmen in all fields have become harder to find, and you can throw in marketing and promotion guys too. That's because they're not being taught how to do their job, which would start with the motivation of an infusion of positive energy from the visionary/creator/ boss—who doesn't exist because the world is now run by talentless bean counters.

So when I hear "the best of the '60s, '70s and '80s," you must forgive me for not being overly enthusiastic. The implication of "we're back" suggests "oldies are back," and that doesn't seem to be what they have in mind.

I've got nothing whatsoever against the Spinners, Duran Duran, disco or any of that other '70s and '80s mindless, emotionless, meaningless crap. It just belongs in a top 40-type format, not oldies. Oldies are history. History is sacred. Doo-wop is oldies, therefore doo-wop is sacred, and any so-called oldies format with doo-wop is a fraud. So don't tell us WCBS is back, implying that it's back the way we remember it—we being the demographic that you decided meant nothing when you blew it up and now you're playing is still there.

Don't imply this is the same content that made it a nationally influential powerhouse, an economic juggernaut. Be honest and say it's back the way it was two years ago, when you drove the final nail into the coffin of the amazing format you invented and then assassinated. Still a money maker but musically irrelevant. See you on the radio.
Now in its 6th year, this two-day conference provides a dynamic forum for the exchange of ideas among film/TV and music professionals.

This year's event will dedicate one full day of programming to music supervision featuring live song critiques from experts and audience picks.

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- Jon Ernst, Music Supervisor, MTV's "Laguna Beach" & "The Hills"
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Harry Fox Agency Synching Up?

Mechanical Rights Agency Eyes New Opportunities

In the three years since I began covering Billboard’s publishing beat—and monitoring Harry Fox Agency activities—my, how things have changed.

In my pre-Billboard life as an attorney, one of the services I performed for indie label clients was securing mechanical licenses for their releases from HFA. At that time, HFA seemed like a mechanical rights agency stuck in the past: My options to request a license were to fill out a paper form and mail it to HFA (and wait months for a license) or to use an antiquated online system called SirNet, as clunky as a Fred Flintstone invention.

But now, besides drastically improving its online licensing process, the mechanical rights agency is eyeing the synchronization licensing market it once served. Even a so-called collecting society can change to better-reflect the current market of growing sync revenue and diminishing mechanical returns.

As digital distribution and user-generated content increase, the variety of audio-visual products that include music, HFA president/CEO Gary Churgin is envisioning a more prominent role for HFA in sync licensing.

HFA stopped handling sync rights in 2002 because they were “a very labor-intensive, inefficient and costly configuration to license,” Churgin says. But since completing a major two-year tech initiative last year, HFA no longer relies on so much manual labor to handle licensing requests, add and update titles in its database and track income. And the HFA team has actively explored new business opportunities, setting up digital distribution deals for its publisher affiliates. So a potential re-entry into the sync space seems logical.

After all, mechanical revenue, tied to the falling CD market, keeps dropping. HFA 2004-2006 mechanical collections dipped 4.5% from $366 million in 2004 to $349.2 million in 2006. This comes despite a gradual increase in statutory mechanical rates from 8 cents per track in 2003 to 9.1 cents in 2006. When HFA makes licensing deals with users (i.e., licensees), it’s acting as a conduit rather than making decisions about rates, Churgin says. While HFA may negotiate certain terms, like when and how the user must account for and pay royalties, HFA simply passes along the license fee offer to its publisher affiliates. HFA reports that it represents U.S. mechanical rights interests of about 33,000 publishers worldwide.

In the past four years or so, HFA has made deals with a variety of digital distributors of music, including several ringtone and mobile entertainment providers as well as lyric providers (LyricFind) and guitar tabulation sites (Musicnotes). When deals are finalized, HFA publishers may opt to license all or part of their repertoire to that user under the deal terms. HFA then administers the licenses—sometimes on a commission-free basis to publishers whenever HFA can negotiate for the user to pay that admin cost, Churgin says.

Churgin believes HFA can provide a service for publishers and users by doing the same for sync licensing. “Sometimes

Sometimes users prefer to address a deal in one place.”

—GARY CHURGIN, HARRY FOX AGENCY

users would much prefer to try and address a deal in one place,” he says. “We can provide access to our publisher affiliates.”

In the HFA deal with LyricFind, for example, the publisher or user would opt into the deal provided about 350,000 songs that generated roughly 1.8 million HFA licenses.

“The idea [for sync licensing] is for users to come up with a menu of different conditions, uses, maybe time parameters, and say, ‘Under these sets of circumstances, I would pay the publisher X,’” Churgin says. “We’d love to be able to bring that to publishers.” HFA is in early talks with some large companies about the prospect of handling such deals, he says.

In addition to administering licenses, Churgin says, HFA has its compliance exam team that can benefit the publishers. HFA checks the books and records of licensees to evaluate the accuracy of their royalty statements and payments, and then enters settlements if additional amounts are owed. HFA collected more than $88 million for the last three years as a result of its compliance exams.

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Barney Wragg

The man believes in the power of a DRM-free society. He also believes in the iPhone. Join Barney Wragg as he levels the digital retail playing field.

What was the core selling point that helped greenlight the DRM-free initiative with EMI?

As a tech geek and audiophile, I have a degree in acoustics, worked for a microprocessor firm and am an unabashed iPhone fanboy. This eclectic background is the foundation of Wragg's role at EMI Music, where he leads the label's global digital strategy. He is the key figure behind EMI's bold and controversial decision to begin selling higher-quality MP3 files without digital rights management protection—a strategy launched first via Apple's iTunes stores and increasingly making its way to such competing services as Amazon.

But Wragg is no anti-DRM anarchist. He believes abandoning DRM opens the door to a host of new digital music business models that are otherwise hampered by today's restrictive technologies. He has a plan: First level the digital retail playing field, then expand sales into the viral world of social networking, and finally incorporate digital music into various brand campaigns and loyalty reward programs.

The move heralds either the beginning of a digital music renaissance or the end of the modern record label as we know it. To be sure, all eyes are watching where Wragg, as well as EMI, go from here.

So what are you doing with brands?

Brands have been trying to get into digital music. They've done some things, but they're always concerned that if they work with retailer X the track won't be compatible with device Y. Any brand that comes to us now and wants to do a competition or wants to [use] music as a prize or a loyalty reward program, we can do that with them and the brand doesn't have to be concerned that we can only attract people with a certain kind of music player.

What is the best single problem?

Social networking sites attract a spread of demographics, there's a group of very tech-savvy users who were very vividly opposed to DRM, even if they owned an iPod. So while this resolved it for those people, the biggest single issue was just the fact that it's a confusing proposition—if you have a Windows device click here and an iPod device click here.

What is the basic problem with DRM?

What about the risks?

The principal risk was whether there would be more piracy. The vast majority of the product we put out is an unprotected digital file. I think that's what made it so interesting and compelling. You look at it and ask, "What does this do to the existing retail environment? What does it do for the new distributed Web-centric retail environment? And what does it do in terms of the way you're now able to engage with brands and campaigns?" You're looking at three enormously positive attributes and aspects to this move.

Such as?

The first dimension is that in one move, we were able to ignite the whole digital retail space [by] allowing all retailers to compete on a level playing field. From a consumer point of view, they can go to any store and buy a file that will work with any device and any computer. From the retailer point of view, any retailer can sell a file to any music player. It's good for the consumer and good for the retailer. The second dimension is one we're just starting to explore now. It meant that we could embrace and enable all the Web 2.0 distributed channels on the Web. The third is that there are a lot of interesting associations between brands and music. But brands that we could be doing deals with needed to have digital music in a form that was going to work regardless of player or place.

What about the risks?

The principal risk was whether there would be more piracy. The vast majority of the product we put out is an unprotected digital file. I think it was a no-brainer.

You've seen an early bump in sales at iTunes as a result. Do you expect that to last?

I'm incredibly pleased with the sales rate so far. We're still learning about what's happening. It's an evolving story. We're acutely sensitive to the fact that everybody wants to hear more results, but we're being purposely coy. I don't want to go on the record with any numbers because we're still finding out more and more.

Are there any trends or lessons learned at this stage that you can share?

The biggest single trend is that people are buying complete albums. There are two reasons. One is that the albums represent good value for money because we kept the price points the same and, for the first time, this allows you to buy a full album [digitally] that gives you the same quality as a 

context against the upside, we felt it was a no-brainer.

Has the higher-quality music portion of this been overlooked with all the focus on DRM-free?

I think so. One of the things we weren't expecting was the torrent of mail from consumers coming in from random EMI addresses focused around the quality. Record companies are not the most popular consumer companies in the world, and to get a torrent of really positive consumer e-mails coming in was really unexpected and, for me personally, quite an interesting and enlightening thing to have happen. I've never had anything like that happen before.

Please explain your interest in selling music via the Snocap MyStore program on MySpace and personal Web sites. What does it accomplish that you can't get from dedicated digital music stores like iTunes?

The beauty about Web 2.0 is that people can put a "buy" button everywhere. It just completely decentralized it to be wherever the music is. Wherever there's a picture of the artist, a link to the artist, somebody writing about the artist—you can just put a "buy" button there.

What does it take to successfully accomplish that, other than eliminating DRM?

That was the biggest single problem, social networking sites attract a spread of demographics. Clearly, there's a group of very tech-savvy users who were very vividly opposed to DRM, even if they owned an iPod. So while this resolved it for those people, the biggest single issue was just the fact that it's a confusing proposition—"If you have a Windows device click here and an iPod device click here.

What are your thoughts on the iPhone?

It's cool as fuck. It's the user interface to mobile computers that changes everything. I worked on the first generation of PDAs that were Web-enabled and the first generation of mobile phones that had [wireless application protocol] in them, and the interface was just a crap. You couldn't get to the data. To me, it's as big a step forward as the mouse was.

The vast majority of the product we put out is an unprotected digital file. We just ship it on a plastic carrier rather than an electronic carrier.
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FOR FIVE ALBUMS, FOO FIGHTERS HAVE BEEN A MODEL OF CONSISTENCY. WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THEIR MOST AMBITIOUS ALBUM YET?

BY JONATHAN COHEN /// PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS RABSCHE

Instead of all-night throwdowns in the studio, the four Foo Fighters competed in a beard-growing contest this spring while making “Echoes, Silence, Patience and Grace,” due Sept. 25 via Roswell/RCA. And instead of boozing it up with record company execs, frontman Dave Grohl greeted guests for a recent album playback while swinging his baby daughter Violet in his arms. Drummer Taylor Hawkins admits he’s in bed by 10 p.m. these days too. (“My wife and I watch a ‘48 Hours Mystery’ and I never see the end,” he says.)
But if the Foo Fighters have dispensed with the rock 'n' roll lifestyle offstage, they're more committed to the music's possibilities than ever on "Echoes," their sixth studio effort. The album finds the Foos once again teamed with producer Gil Norton, who was behind the boards for 1997's "The Colour and the Shape" (their best seller to date, at 2.13 million U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan).

"We've been a band for 13 years. Album after album, we've tried to redesign what we do," Grohl says. "Not reinvent, but just make it a little prettier. We wanted to experiment and go deeper melodically. The first record to me sounds like it could have been a garage hardcore band. The idea now is to step it up and make the Zoobombs' "Odyssey and Oracle.""

The band's music began heading down a more nuanced route on 2004's "In Your Honor," which featured a disc each of rock and acoustic songs. Then in 2006, the Foos took an expanded band out on an acoustic tour, a jaunt chronicled on the live CD/DVD "Skin and Bones."

"After that tour, I finally realized the melodic possibilities hidden in a lot of our songs," Grohl says. "We had been kind of caged by the fact we were just a four-piece band. With additional instrumentation, which we'd never really experimented with before the last album, we could take songs from ground level to soaring heights."

As such, "Echoes" sports songs that shift from fingerpicked acoustic guitar intros to speaker-shredding rock riffs in a matter of seconds. Hardcore Foo Fighters fans will feel most at home with explosive tracks like first single "The Pretender" and "Erase/Replace," which front-load the album. But what stands out most are the true departures, like the instrumental "Battle of the Beaconsfield Miners" (a guitar duel with Kiki King), the acoustic "Stranger Things Have Happened" (recorded in a hallway with a metronome audibly clicking in the background) and the closer "Home" (primarily Grohl alone at the piano in the grand tradition of Freddie Mercury and Queen).

"Gil is heavy on preproduction," Grohl says. "The first two weeks I just sat with him around the table and talked to him about arrangements, harmony and melody. Once we narrowed it down from 40 songs to 20, we went and sat in a rehearsal space for about four weeks. We got deep. We'd play a song a day, and I mean a song a day, from noon to midnight. By the time we got to tracking, we were like fucking Bad Brains—the tightest band in the world."

Norton was also a crucial sounding board when Grohl needed help untangling his disparate song sections. "I came in with ideas that seemed totally discombobulated but he sat with me and helped me piece it together like a little LEGO firetruck," he says.

Grohl's willingness to have his feelings on record is another sign of his evolution as a songwriter, but at times he hits nerves a little too close to home. "'Stranger Things Have Happened,' I don't even listen to that song," Hawkins says. "I'm one of his best friends, and the last thing I want to do is read a love letter to his wife or whoever it is. But at the same time, if it was someone I didn't know, I might internalize it deeply, and it might be part of my life and something that I think about when I think of my wife."

Throughout the album, there are numerous left-field musical references to "Band on the Run"-era Paul McCartney, the Eagles and other softer-rocking relics of the '70s.
“There will be times when you hear it and you’ll go, ‘Wait a second. Was that Bread?’ It’s a trip,” Grohl says. “I don’t mean to sound lame or pretentious, but it was so fun to go through these sort of long musical journeys and incorporate all these different dynamics,” Hawkins adds.

And if you believe the band, the beard-growing was fun, too. “I kept mine, but I trimmed it down a little bit. I was looking like Dennis Wilson in his homeless period, hitchhiking on the Pacific Coast Highway with a bottle of orange juice and vodka in his hand,” Hawkins says. Grohl adds, “I look like Billy Gibbons now. My wife is a saint.”

**NOT JUST A ONE MAN BAND**

The Foo’s embrace of complex songwriting is a far cry from the band’s 1995 self-titled debut, which Grohl recorded completely by himself in the months after Kurt Cobain’s suicide brought a sudden end to Nirvana. After surrounding himself with the former rhythm section of Sunny Day Real Estate as well as guitarist Pat Smear, he slowly returned to the live scene by opening for Mike Watt on a celebrated 1995 club tour.

Commercial success was nearly instantaneous, with the debut going platinum-plus and spawning three top 10 Modern Rock chart hits. But the band was constantly changing personnel and didn’t settle on its present incarnation—Grohl, Hawkins, guitarist Chris Shiflett and bassist Nate Mendel—until 1999’s “There Is Nothing Left to Lose.”

By then, the Foes were a juggernaut at retail and radio, and an arena-level draw in most territories. Their album sales have been almost steadily consistent, with “Nothing Left” having shifted 1.269 million; 2002’s “One by One” at 1.273 million and “In Your Honor” even better at 1.34 million.

The Foes are thus one of only five other bands in the Nielsen SoundScan era whose first five major-label studio albums have all exceeded platinum. Dave Matthews Band, Pearl Jam, Green Day, System of a Down and Korn are the others (see chart, this page).

And their song catalog features some of the most enduring recurrents at rock radio (“Everlong,” “My Hero,” “Learn to Fly,” “All My Life,” “Times Like These”), where they’ve scored 13 top 10 hits and four No. 1s.

To top it off, the exceedingly good natured Grohl has become one of the most sought after pinch-hitter drummers in the biz, filling the stool and boosting sales for projects by Nine Inch Nails, Queens of the Stone Age, Tenacious D and Killing Joke, among others (see story, below). Even his metal-ob-}

### HAPPY TO HELP

In between Foo Fighters albums and tours, Dave Grohl has enriched a host of high-profile releases with his musicianship. Here are a few of the most notable:

**MIKE WATT**

Grohl, who grew up in the ‘80s Washington, D.C., punk scene, joined Minutemen bassist Mike Watt for his 1995 solo set, “Ball-Hog Or Tugboat,” and the spring tour that followed. With watt’s grunge at its pinnacle, the album and club trek featuring Nirvana’s drummer (and Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder) caused a clamor, especially since Grohls nascent Foo Fighters were the opening act. The band is Watt’s career best seller at 90,000 copies.

**TENACIOUS D**

The self-described “greatest band in the world” turned to Grohl to drum on its self-titled 2001 Epic debut, which shocked most observers by selling 1.1 million copies. Grohl shined while backing out Jack Black’s and Kyle Gass’ tongue-in-cheek pomposity, and even appeared as the devil in the hilarious video for “Titubate.”

**QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE**

During a 2002 Foes hiatus, Grohl manned the QOTSA drum kit for a warm-up tour for “Songs for the Deaf!” The inspired pairing amped up the Queens’ already powerful live act, and Grohl’s signature muscularity elevated the album—particularly on the drum-soo-centric title cut. “Deaf” is easily QOTSA’s best-selling album, with 992,000 copies.

**CAT POWER**

Before Grohl’s busy 2002 was out, he had also lent his drumming talents to Cat Power’s “You Are Free,” released the following year. As on Watt’s album, Grohl again found himself alongside Vedder. The pair, both fans, were recruited by their mutual producer Adam Kasper, who was also helming “Free.” The set has shifted 163,000 copies.

**NINE INCH NAILS**

When it came time to craft Nine Inch Nails’ 2003 comeback album, “With Teeth,” Trent Reznor brought in Grohl to play drums. “Teeth” spawned three No. 1 Modern Rock chart singles and also debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200; sales are at 11 million.

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:**

Grohl has also guested onstage and in the studio with Nine Inch Nails’ Trent Reznor, Killing Joke, David Bowie, Garbage, Diddy and MXPX, among others. —Jessica Letkemann

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**BEST OF FOO**

Foo Fighters’ first five major-label studio albums have all gone platinum. Below, the other rock bands since 1991 who’ve pulled off the feat.

- **Dave Matthews Band**
- **Pearl Jam**
- **Green Day**
- **Korn**
- **System Of A Down**

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**FOO FOR ALL**

Indeed, you’d be hard pressed to find anyone in the industry who has a bad thing to say about the Foo Fighters, so it was no surprise “The Pretender” was already winning PIDs over well ahead of its Aug. 6, 2002 debut. The track, which premiered Aug. 3 on ESPN’s broadcast of the Summer X Games, debuted this week at No. 16 on the Modern Rock chart, the third-best opening frame of the Foes’ career.

“Not only have they evolved into a band that crosses all rock boundaries—considering they started out as an alt outfit with a frontman who was a drummer with a revolutionary band and thus had every card stacked against him—but they have every ‘pop’ sensibility without being a rock sellout.” WHTG Monmouth Ocean, N.J., PD Terrie Carr says.

RCA’s Oldham capitalized on radio’s good will with a text-messaging initiative that began in late July. Fans were able to text “FF” and the call letters for more than 30 modern rock stations to a special short code that would text back a phone number. When called, the number played 40 seconds of “The Pretender” well ahead of the radio air date.

“The stations are really digging this because it brands their stations with one of the biggest rock releases of the year,” Oldham says. “It’s the perfect way to market in the new mobile era.”

While the label finalizes promotions with iTunes and Target, the Foes are preparing to return to the road. After some one-off shows this summer in the United Kingdom, where the band has grown exponentially more popular in the past five years, the Foes will play U.S. gigs in September and October, followed by arenas in the United Kingdom in November and Australia in December. Another U.S. run is on tap for early spring.

On tour, the four extra musicians utilized for the “Skin and Bones” trek will be rejoining their roles. “At first we decided to try everything with them and see what goes and what’s needed and what’s not really that necessary,” Hawkins says. “A song like ‘Come Alive,’ we’ll need all eight of us, and it sounds really amazing. On some things we’ll want to reproduce, but on others we’ll just do the more conventional rock version.”

“On the first four records, there was an economic approach,” he continues. “We didn’t use any keyboards or any outsider musicians. We never would have thought that we would have taken it this far. I mean, we all know we’re not reinventing the wheel in any way, shape or form. But we’re definitely reinventing the wheel as far as the Foo Fighters go.”
A few months after Johnson walked into Cohen’s office, Warner/Chappell and Atlantic Records chief executives announced a new deal with Hicks. In April, he became Warner/Chappell senior VP of A&R and head of urban music, reporting to CEO Dave Johnson, and Atlantic Records senior VP of urban A&R, reporting to chairman/CEO Craig Kallman.

But there was more. In a deal unprecedented in the history of the music industry, Hicks isn’t only holding the dual role of major label executive and major publishing executive. WMG also agreed that Hicks could continue operating his label imprint Beaufactory, his Noontime publishing joint venture with Warner/Chappell, and his management consulting partnership Contest Music Group.

Billboard jumped on a plane to Hicks’ home base of Atlanta to see firsthand just how he keeps all those jobs straight. Hicks offered a glimpse inside the singular, exclusive urban music network he works with in Atlanta—he and others, locally, actually refer to it as “The Network.” And he provided insight into what may well become a template for the music executive of tomorrow: influence and partnerships in almost every corner of the music business, regardless of existing label boundaries.

Welcome To Atlanta

“I challenge anyone to produce a hit artist in R&B that does not involve someone from Atlanta,” Hicks says as he drives his sport utility vehicle along I-75. “For the past three years, there have been no hit artists or albums in R&B that have not made their way through Atlanta, from Beyoncé to Usher, Mary J. Blige to Mariah Carey. This is where the goods are.”

We arrive at the OK Café in the middle of a crowded parking lot alongside a strip mall. The place is soon filled with senior citizens flocking from a tour bus. It’s a convenient spot for Hicks to have a breakfast meeting with Todd Rubenstein, a New York-based lawyer who represents producer/songwriter “Lil’ Ronnie” Jackson. Rubenstein, like so many others, hopes to prove himself worthy of becoming part of Hicks’ tight-knit network.

Rubenstein says that, particularly in Atlanta, there is a large group of people with long relationships who work with different companies but all do business together. There are rivalries between various camps, which are made up of entrepreneurs, producers, songwriters and artists. But despite the competition, everyone has a chance to work on a couple of songs on one another’s records, everyone keeps working—and everyone has an opportunity to make money. “When you come to Atlanta, that’s how it works,” Rubenstein says.

Hicks laughs, saying that the immediate business payoffs are just part of it. As he explains it, the goal is that a growing network of people will still be working with one another in the music business 20 years from now regardless of which labels and publishing companies merge or fold through the years. In the short term, the network helps everyone get their jobs done, i.e., to make creative, hit records cost-effectively and more quickly than in the past. The long-term goal is for this network to develop creative and business talent to build a strong music industry that can give back to their communities—Hicks refers to this as “the Plan.”

“One thing that wasn’t here,” Hicks says, “and that we’re establishing, are building blocks for our communities and for the kids that come up behind us — where you can do business, where you’re not signing away all your assets, where there’s room to grow.”

A half-hour drive from the OK Café is another strip mall, but this one was mostly deserted long ago by customers and storekeepers. On the corner sits...
Hicks' Hits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songwriter</th>
<th>Charting Titles Co-Written (Not Listed As R&amp;B/Hip-Hop Songs)</th>
<th>Of Those Songs Produced (Co-Produced)</th>
<th>Tracks Certified Gold/Platinum</th>
<th>No. 1 (Hot 100, R&amp;B/Hip-Hop Songs)</th>
<th>Foreexample</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brion Hick (Scratch and producer)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Heat 100, R&amp;B</td>
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<td>Phrae &quot;Lauren&quot; Deaton (Noontime joint venture)</td>
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<td>Heat 100, R&amp;B</td>
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<td>Okie &quot;Kanye&quot;</td>
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<td>Jamar &quot;Kanye&quot; Wiltson (Fluffy Beats joint venture)</td>
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<td>&quot;Airhead&quot;</td>
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Clockwise from above: CHRIS HICKS, left, with producers COREY WILLIAMS, center, and writer/producers JAZZE PHA; Hicks with lawyer TODD RUBENSTEIN; Hicks with JOHNATA AUSTIN, two-time Grammy Award winner for best R&B song

"Burn", Mariah Carey's "Don't Forget About Us", and Jagged Edge's "Let's Get Married.

Noontime found acceptance in Atlanta when its product started to hit records consistently. "We also used to throw great parties," Hicks adds.

In 2000, Noontime signed a publishing joint venture with Warner/Chappell. In 2003, the Noontime production company disbanded. But the former partners still do business together, and the producer/songwriters and artists they work with also work with each other.

Want a taste of just how interconnected Hicks' network is? Ronnie and Jazze Pha (born Phalon Antone Alexander, signed to Hicks' Noontime publishing) formed Sho'nuff, signing Ciara, Clevish and Lloyd (the latter signed by Hicks to Warner/Chappell). Glover started a clothing company and works with new media and digital content for Turner Network. Hicks sends celebrity talent Glover's way for Turner shows and sets up an Atlantic distribution deal for imnotsigned.com, an online record label.

Early Days
Hicks and two childhood friends from the San Francisco Bay Area—Ryan Glover and Henry "Noonie" Lee—began promoting R&B and hip-hop concerts when they first moved to Atlanta in 1995. Later, they built a tiny recording studio and began signing producers, songwriters and artists to Noontime, later adding Terrence Ross as a partner. They beat the streets of New York trying to make deals, forming a co-management arrangement with Cymbio for a couple of artists.

"We weren't embraced by Atlanta initially," Hicks says. "We were out-towners. For a long time, it seemed like it was so unpopular to be us because none of us did anything creative. We were just a bunch of business guys. We had to build relationships by signing guys like Bryan-Michael Cox, Jazze Pha and Teddy Bishop."

As a college student, Cox chased Hicks for a job intern-ning for Noontime. "I had always been producing and writing," Cox says. "But I wanted to learn how to do it the correct way from everyone at everyone."

Hicks has since co-written and co-produced 10 songs that hit No. 1 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, including "Be Without You," the Grammy Award-winning R&B song performed by Mary J. Blige. Usher's

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When Redzone moved team art to Warner/Chappell) and which Innersound Entertainment company owned by Glover and Jazze Pha. Ross formed Innersound Entertainment with Damon Thompson, which co-manages LeToya Luckett (signed to Warner/Chappell) and Dave Young (signed to Noontime). As part of Content Music Group, Hicks co-manages Cox with J Records senior VP of A&R Jaha Johnson and co-manages Johna Austin with Rosalind Harrell. He also owns label imprint Beatfactory with Cox, which signed Luckett.

"In addition to being a great talent finder, a great song finder and a hitmaker, Chris has the capacity to do multiple jobs well and has the entrepreneurial spirit," Atlantic's Killman says. "That's a very rare gift. That's why I can entrust such an important position to someone who is bifurcated in a dual role" as label and publishing executive.

### The Strategy

Nowhere is the network's reach more obvious than one evening at Redzone Entertainment's private studio, where Rihanna's No. 1 hit "Umbrella" was born.

Jazze Pha is writing and producing a duet, which he has in mind for Blige and Usher. Chris "Tricky" Stewart and Terious "Dream" Nash—part of the "Umbrella" team—are finishing postproduction on a record that Blige recorded the previous week. Redzone principal Mark Stewart, J Records' Johnson, producer/songwriter Don Vito and a dozen others are milling around.

Earlier this year, old creative rivalries between the Noontime and Redzone camps were set aside after a softball game brought Hicks and Mark Stewart together. When Redzone moved to Atlanta from Los Angeles in 1995, Stewart says it was bombarded by Noontime's promotional gaze—which weren't appreciated. Stewart questioned whether Noontime had the music to back up the hype. Hicks says he saw Redzone as an outside competitor. Now, Atlanta has a deal with Redzone's Dream and Tricky for them to produce and deliver a certain number of tracks in the future.

"I make a commitment to Mark's building to help him grow his business," Hicks says. "He makes a commitment to me to help me grow Atlantic. After all, he has hitmakers in his back pocket."

Stewart, who is now a partner with Hicks in Content Music Group, says, "We've been here forever, but we hit a resurgence. Chris identified that early and began to make strategic investments with us. He was here before (Mary J. Blige, Chris Brown and Janet Jackson were here). He's a new kind of executive—he does everything."

At least one key suit—Hicks' boss—says he agrees. Hicks easily won over Warner/Chappell CEO Dave Johnson when they first met in January. "What was apparent in the first 10 minutes talking with him were all the reasons we ought to extend and expand our relationship with him," Johnson says.

Within the network in Atlanta, this "new kind of executive" also works with rival record company executives to a certain extent.

"You rarely find reason for anybody in a major record company cooperating with somebody at another major record company," says Paul Russell, former chairman/CEO of Sony Music International and Sony/ATV Music, during a later interview. "The only time you really cooperate is in a hits-compilation world."

But with the drastic and continuing decline in record sales, "the network" wants to break this mold.

"Obviously we're highly competitive with one another," J Records' Johnson says. "Chris wants to win, I want to win. But we also want to build a network so we can assist each other and give ourselves the best opportunity to win in our systems."

Johnson explains that as Noontime grew, they all realized that there was a huge lack of unity in the urban music landscape. Once there were tours with major artists from different labels supporting each other. "That came from executive or managerial support," he says.

"We don't have that anymore," Johnson adds. "If I've only got one superstar and he has a superstar, there's more money if they can go out [on tour] together. There will always be competition, but there has to be some grey area where we can help sell more records for everyone."

### Landing The Deals

Minutes after entering yet another studio, the new 11th Street Studios, a group crowds into one of the smaller rooms to listen to music and talk.

"I've done three really wildly competitive deals, and two of those deals are standing in this room," Hicks says, referring to Lil' Ronnie and Eric Hudson (the third is Dream).

"Everybody was coming in like sharks, putting money on the table," Lil' Ronnie's manager Rocky Biven says. "But everything's about energy. Chris Hicks' right now, he's on fire, is making the moves that Berry Gordy and L.A. Reid made. The energy of where he wants to go, just to be a part of potential history with a guy who has vision is fascinating to me."

Lil' Ronnie adds, "The industry will just use you up for records and say, 'Give me a hit record,' and you get a couple of songs. But back in the day, they used to believe in producers and give you a whole project. That's what I love about Chris. He said, 'I want to be in the Lil' Ronnie business.'"

But it doesn't seem to be only a vision or a vibe that attracts producers and songwriters to Hicks. Repeatedly people in Atlanta talk about how hard he works. In fact, the first words that crossed Hudson's lips when describing his reasons for signing with Warner were "work ethic." They're willing to work hard, and they appreciate that Hicks is as well.

### The Communicator

As Billboard's time with Hicks approaches the 20th hour, a storm moves in, flooding the streets of Atlanta. Johnta Austin, two-time Grammy winner for best R&B song (Carey's "We Belong Together," Blige's "Be Without You") arrives at a steakhouse for dinner. Austin was just 16 when he began working with Hicks. He's now 26.

While they've had their disagreements, Austin says, "One thing that we've always prided ourselves on is that we try to expand the other one's mind—not just the two of us, but everyone who's in our family—try to see the bigger picture."

Producers, songwriters and artists look to Hicks to be one of their voices in the corporate world. Austin says, He's their interpreter, communicating their creative visions and thoughts.

"We know that he can bridge the gap between the artists and the suit," Tip "T.I." Harris says via a later phone interview. "T.I., too, is signed to Warner/Chappell. "If I tell the suits how I really feel, they might call me a fool. Whereas if I say it to Chris, he can translate it to the suits so it can benefit us both."

It's that kind of mutually beneficial approach that Hicks and the Atlanta network are all about. "We're competition from one sense," Def Jam senior VP of A&R Shakes Stewart says. "But Chris represents a lot of writers and producers who I work with. Since Hicks has been an entrepreneur for so many years while Stewart has worked in corporations for the last decade, Stewart adds the two often give advice to each other out of friendship.

"Warner Music Group employs me to bring in as much business and opportunity as possible," Hicks adds. "I can just walk right into Def Jam and say 'hey' to everybody and sit in everybody's office, instead of fighting to get on their projects, then obviously that makes the opportunity for business easier."

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AUGUST 19, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 29

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Billboard Congratulates Hanshin on the Opening of Billboard Live!

World Class Clubs Opening in Osaka, Fukuoka and Tokyo Starting August 18
FROM TOKYO
Billboard and Hanshin open clubs in Japan as part of a comprehensive licensing deal BY FRED VARCOE
Japan boasts a vital music scene and thousands of live venues. But among music capitals of the world, Tokyo has not offered a state-of-the-art nightclub focused on adult fans—until now. On Aug. 18, Billboard Live Tokyo will open its doors in the prestigious Tokyo Midtown complex, with Steely Dan as its debut act. Billboard Live also will open clubs in Osaka on Aug. 26 and in Fukuoka on Sept. 3, and Steely Dan’s Walter Becker and Donald Fagen will play those rooms as well.

The opening of the three new clubs is part of a broad-based agreement announced in September 2006 between Billboard and Japan’s Hanshin Contents Link. The wide-reaching agreement spans live entertainment, publishing, TV and radio programs, Web sites, digital products and other marquee music properties.

The Tokyo club is located in the expansive Tokyo Midtown development in Roppongi, the international heart of Japan’s capital. With the completion of two redevelopment projects (Tokyo Midtown and Roppongi Hills) in recent years, the area has been transformed with new homes, shops, art galleries and restaurants.

Tokyo Midtown opened March 30 and features apartments, a multistory shopping mall, a park, and an 815-foot-tall office and hotel complex—Tokyo’s tallest building—and is next to the new National Art Center. Billboard Live is situated on the fourth floor of the Garden Terrace/Galleria section and features a spectacular glass wall overlooking Midtown’s beautiful green park and the spectacular Tokyo skyline.

“We thought it was a perfect setting for a club,” says Ryota Kosuga, director of Hanshin Contents and GM of Billboard Live. “Especially with the huge glass window behind the stage. Two years ago while working with a different branded jazz club, we had been contacted by Tokyo Midtown, which was being developed by Mitsui Real Estate, one of the biggest property companies in Japan,” Kosuga says. “They were looking for a tenant in Tokyo Midtown, so we linked up and started thinking about operating a venue there.”

At the same time, Billboard was hoping to expand its operations in Japan and all three elements came together at the right moment.

“It was great synergy,” Kosuga says. “Hanshin Contents, Billboard and Mitsui all wanted something at the same time. “What we needed was a brand, a music brand that would enable us to attract the same qual-
The concept of Billboard Live Osaka was to create a jazz club that would be appealing to a broader audience, including those who are not typically jazz fans. This was achieved by transforming the concept of a jazz club into something more versatile, incorporating elements of pop, reggae, and rock into the performances. The club was designed to provide an intimate and unimpeded view of the stage, with sound and lighting arranged to enhance the performance experience. The club was also equipped with a state-of-the-art digital system, allowing for the maximum use of space and ensuring that the performance and the audience experience were optimal.

Sakamoto notes that the combination of a night view through the glass barrier and the sound and lighting arrangements provide a unique effect during shows. In addition, a 200-inch video screen allows the type of presentation normally available at a concert hall to be experienced from the comfort of the audience, creating an equally intimate view of the stage.

The quality of sound and lighting needed to accommodate the wide variety of acts that will appear at the club. "We will provide all genres of music," says Sakamoto. "Jazz, hip-hop, Brazilian, French, rock crossover — basically, all kinds of musicians.

Thus, Billboard Live Tokyo will feature such acts as Michael Franks, Larry Carlton, Babyface, Air Supply, Rickie Lee Jones and Allen Toussaint. "We're aiming to provide high-quality music for a mature audience, to enhance the arts in Japan through the presentation of live performances, with good food and a quality atmosphere," Sakamoto says. "So we have to find the kind of artists that fit this concept."

Sakamoto is keen on the concept of "unplugged" concerts, normally presented in larger venues but possible in the unique setting of Billboard Live. "It would be great to see those types of artists playing in a different kind of atmosphere," he says.

Sakamoto is excited to have Steely Dan opening the clubs. "The great thing about them is that their sound is so sophisticated," he says. "It's a great aural experience, and having them play will enable people to quickly understand the Billboard Live concept."

The three Billboard Live clubs in Japan will have their own free: "After Billboard Live is established in Osaka and Fukuoka, we hope to expand the concept to other cities," Sakamoto says. "The club will be open in Osaka on Aug. 26 and the Fukuoka club on Sept. 3. Unlike the all-new Tokyo space, the Osaka and Fukuoka venues are being transformed from jazz-branded clubs, so the transition hasn't been difficult. The Osaka club has a capacity of 300, while the Fukuoka club accommodates 180.

"We have to create a market in each area," Sakamoto says. "We have [clubs with] three different characters in three different cities, where the way of thinking and musical tastes are anything but the same. We want to take that and reflect it in our booking policy. "We've booked many Japanese acts into the Osaka and Fukuoka clubs" when they were jazz-branded clubs, he adds, "and we don't want to disappoint the Japanese fans who love these artists."
Establishing a business relationship abroad is often a risky business. In Japan, not only can cultures collide, but communication can be difficult on many levels. Not so for Nielsen Business Media, the corporate parent of Billboard, when it found a company to represent and market the Billboard brand in Japan.

In September 2006, Nielsen and Hanshin Contents Link announced a master licensing agreement that includes the opening of Billboard Live clubs in Tokyo (Aug. 18), Osaka (Aug. 26) and Fukuoka (Sept. 3). But the clubs, conceived by Hanshin president Tsuneaki Miyazaki, are just a starting point for this deal.

"We anticipate creating new print properties, charts, Web sites, digital download services, TV and radio programs and even apparel" through a comprehensive and exclusive deal with Hanshin, Nielsen Business Media VP Howard Appelbaum says. He notes that in early 2005 Nielsen and Hanshin began their business relationship on a smaller scale with a licensing agreement for the Billboard Mobile ringtone download service.

"We are now in a great position to develop the Billboard brand in Japan," Hanshin director Ryota Kosuga says.

"The Hanshin name is a long and distinguished history in Japan, most notably in association with the Hanshin Tigers baseball team, for which American slugger Cecil Fielder played in 1989. Hanshin's history goes back more than 100 years, when it was established as a railroad company. Since then, it has bloomed into a $5 billion conglomerate that covers railways, buses, hotels, travel and freight companies, real estate, baseball and entertainment.

Hanshin Contents was formed in 1989 and is a 100%-owned subsidiary of Hanshin Electric Railway, which owns $2 million in capital. The company is involved in the music business through the operation of two jazz clubs in Osaka and Fukuoka, which it will now open as Billboard Live venues, as well as the provision of mobile phone content, music copyright, CD and video production, advertising, signage and displays.

The companies have complementary strengths, Appelbaum says.

"The most important thing that Billboard brings to the table is a world-class brand that stands for integrity and music," he says, combined with the data and charts information expertise of Nielsen. "We also have been in the licensing and product development business for quite a while and can bring expertise in terms of deal structures and what deals to pursue." The Billboard brand will provide Hanshin with solid credibility when it develops new products in Japan, he notes.

And Hanshin is "a Tiffany-quality company in the Japanese market, well-established and well-respected," Appelbaum adds. Noting that Hanshin has operated music venues in Japan for several years, he says, "They are world-class in their ability to operate in that arena. They're on the ground and they have a real entertainment sensibility in creating new products. They're also very aggressive and have a shared vision of what this business in Japan could look like in five or 10 years."

Kosuga adds, "The fact that both companies had such solid backgrounds and reputations helped everything go very smoothly." He says with a laugh, "Our biggest problem was dealing with the time difference every time we wanted to call New York.

Hanshin Contents president Tsuneaki Miyazaki brought the idea of a Billboard music club to the table.

"Two years ago, while working with a jazz-branded club, we had contact with Tokyo Midtown, which had a club space in its plans," Kosuga says of the huge development project in the Roppongi district of Tokyo. "Mitsui Real Estate was looking for a tenant, so we started to think about setting up a venue there."

"We had a license for another brand, but we couldn't open up in Tokyo because there was already a club with the same brand there; we only had a license for the Kansai area [of western Japan]."

At the same time, Hanshin was changing the nature of its clubs in Osaka and Fukuoka, putting on a broader range of musical acts in line with the demands of the club's customers.

"We needed a new brand, a music brand that would attract the same quality of artists," Kosuga says. "Billboard represents reliability for chart and music information—in many ways, we look up to them—so they were perfect for us, and we started to negotiate with Nielsen to get a license to operate a club."

Hanshin invited Nielsen representatives to see their existing clubs and the Tokyo club under construction. It also kept the U.S. company informed of the club's progress with regular reports. With Billboard Live ready to open Aug. 18, Kosuga offers his perspective of this symbiotic relationship.

"We've taken the initiative in organizing the club, as we have more knowledge in the club business," Kosuga says. "But for booking artists, we have had big support from Billboard in the United States. They suggest artists, offer advice and support us, and help with their network of agents and management companies."

In the future, Hanshin is looking at the possibility of opening more clubs—Nagoya and Sapporo are possibilities—while expanding other areas of the relationship. "The company has launched a Japanese Web site and offers mobile phone contents, and is planning to use the Billboard Live club to record performances for TV broadcast and possible CD releases."

—FV
JAPAN'S NEW DIGITAL EQUATION

New Revenue Channels Offset Sales Downturn

BY STEVE MCCLORE

Reports of the Japanese music industry's demise are greatly exaggerated, executives in the world's second-largest music market say. They point to a booming digital-distribution sector, a steady stream of new and promising artists and a willingness to challenge traditional ways of doing business as signs that the Japanese industry is in better shape than many people realize.

"Japan is one of the only major music markets that is holding fairly steady when both physical and digital are taken into account," BMG Japan president Daniel DiCicco says. He says that in Japan, annual digital growth matches the gradual drop in physical sales, which is unique among major music markets.

According to local labels body the Recording Industry Assn. of Japan, shipments of physical product (CDs, music videos and other media) by its 43 member companies in 2006 totaled 347 million units, down 2% from 2005. For a wholesale value of 408.4 billion yen ($3.4 billion), down 3%.

Digital music delivery, meanwhile, totaled 368 million units, up 37%, for a value of 33.5 billion yen ($450 million), up 56%, meaning that the overall value of all music—physical and digital—shipped by RIJA member companies was up 13% in 2006.

"Production of package products is drastically shrinking under current market conditions," a Warner Music Japan spokesman says. "On the other hand, digital products such as chaku-uta [master ringtones] and chaku-uta full [mobile-based full-song downloads] are expanding rapidly."

He says WMJ believes Japanese consumers will buy music that appeals to them regardless of whether it is sold physically or digitally.

A Universal Music Japan spokesman says the key trend in Japan's music market is a diversification of sound carriers and distribution channels available to consumers. "We still see many business opportunities in Japan's music industry," he says.

EMI Music Japan (formerly Toshiba-EMI) cites the extraordinary success of superstar female vocalist Utada Hikaru's single "Flavor of Life" as an example of the Japanese music market's new digital paradigm.

Since its Feb. 18 release, "Flavor of Life" has sold 730,000 copies as a conventional CD single—but more than 6.9 million units in digital form, mainly comprising master ringtones and full-song downloads, according to the label.

"Flavor of Life" is the first single by Hikaru to be used as the theme song for a TV drama series—"Hana Yori Dango," broadcast on the TBS network—since her May 2002 single "Haru no Hibi." A master-ringtone version of the song was released Jan. 5, the same day as the series' initial episode, followed by three more in the lead-up to the physical single's release.

"It's just like how singles used to be released before an album," says Nozomu Kaji, associate GM of the marketing group at EMI Music Japan's Foozay Music division.

Kaji says mobile-based downloads comprised 90% of the track's digital sales, the same ratio as the overall Japanese digital music market. "People downloaded 'Flavor of Life' via their keitai [mobile phones] while watching 'Hana Yori Dango' on TV," he says.

WMJ recently enjoyed similar success with male pop duo Kobukuro's single "Tsubomi" (Bud), which was used as the theme song to the Fuji TV drama series "Tokyo Tower—Okan to Boku to, Tokidoki, Otoko." As with "Flavor of Life," the master-ringtone and mobile-based full-length download versions of the song went on sale the same day (Jun. 8) as the show's first episode, and went on to sell a combined 2.9 million units, according to the label.

The physical single was released March 21—two days after the program's last episode was broadcast—and has sold more than 500,000 copies.

Universal Music Japan, meanwhile, says pop group GReeeeN's single "Aiuta (Love Song)" has sold 1.5 million digital downloads (full-length tracks and master ringtones) since they were made available via digital channels. Continued...
“In recent times the music has been broadening in scope beyond simply J-pop.”

—MAX HOLE, UMG ASIA PACIFIC

available in mid-April, as well as 300,000 copies of the physical single.

To generate as many business opportunities as possible, we believe it is important to promote synergy between the package- and digital-music business and create further demand to boost the music business,” Universal Music Group Japan chairman/CEO Keiichi Ishizaka says.

And it’s not just domestic acts that are benefiting from Japan’s digital singles boom. BMG Japan says it has sold 2 million copies of Avril Lavigne’s single “Girlfriend” via mobile, evenly split between master ringtones and full-song downloads, while the physical single has moved 200,000 copies—unusually high for an international artist. Lavigne’s latest album, “The Best Damn Thing,” has sold more than 1 million units in Japan since its April 18 release, the label says.

“The singles business is back with a bang in Japan,” Universal Music Group International Asia Pacific region president Max Hole says. “It’s exciting like the singles business was in the ‘60s. I am extremely optimistic about the Japanese music market.” Hole continues. “There is a rich vein of creativity in Japanese music at the moment. We’re seeing a lot of new artists break through, and in recent times the music has been broadening in scope beyond simply J-pop.”

Tokyo-based music business consultant Alex Abramoff says companies for which digital technology is not merely a new distribution arm but a new way to market their artists are coping better with the challenges facing the Japanese music industry.

“Online sales and digital marketing of music will allow catalog owners to accurately and efficiently approach such segmented markets,” Abramoff says. “Such activities coupled with the basic principle of our business—continuous discovery, development and establishment of new talent—will ensure the future growth of the industry.”

But Ichiro Asatsuma, chairman of leading Tokyo-based music publisher Fujipacific Music, sounds a cautious note about digital distribution.

“We have to bring every new digital technology which we can use to protect (our rights),” he says, noting that the advance of digital technology has mainly benefited consumers as opposed to rights holders.

“I think—tide will turn before too long,” Asatsuma says.

His concern is supported by RIAJ data showing a rise in mobile piracy. The association estimates that nearly 290 million full-length songs and master ringtones were illegally downloaded to mobile phones in Japan during 2006, compared with 344.1 million legal files sold.

Meanwhile, as in other major music markets, social networking services (SNS) are getting increased attention from the industry here, although Japan has not yet seen an act use SNS to create a buzz a la Arctic Monkeys or Lily Allen. Maxi, Japan’s popular SNS, earlier this year launched a video file-sharing service that it says will “revitalize” communication among its 8 million users. Music is the most popular category on Mixi, with some 132,000 music “communities” registered on the service, which claims to be approaching 10 billion page views per month.

Mobile-based SNS sites such as Maho no Island are also rapidly becoming popular. Like PC-based SNS, they usually have music sections where people can exchange music info and upload music. In December 2006, Maho no Island introduced a feature called Island Music Factory that gives indie acts a chance to promote their music among members of the site’s community.

Some 3,000 songs have been uploaded to the site as streaming-audio files, and many indie labels are starting to realize the promotional potential of mobile-based SNS. Maho no Island president/CEO Akira Tanii says.

Japan’s indie community is also the focus, along with action sports, of a new Internet-based TV channel called Havoc TV.

“We have close to 400 Japanese and international music labels signed up, and we are providing music content and hundreds of hours of programming from a wide variety of sources,” says Simon Godden, CEO of Tokyo-based Gotcha Media, which operates Havoc TV and other broadband TV channels.

Japanese record companies aren’t sitting still while the market rapidly changes around them.

Axe head of international Haji Taniguchi says, “Axe is no longer just a record company. It is a multiplex organization consisting of a record company, music production, visual production, artist management, copyright owner and so on.”

BMG Japan’s DiCicco says, “The market is evolving dynamically, and all record companies here have taken a hard look anew at exactly how we allocate resources.”

That has become particularly important after Japan’s giant cell phone company, NTT DoCoMo, launched its new High-Speed Downlink Packet Access service in August 2006 to support its new multimedia music service.

“Coming advances like HSDPA mean convergence between online and mobile is inevitable, and likely to begin as early as next year,” DiCicco says. “This will significantly shuffle the cards, presenting downsize pressure on prices and other difficult challenges to our existing mobile business, while conversely easing access to our content and thus opening the door to new opportunities for growth.”
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FEATURE STORY

FACES TO WATCH
New Talent In The Land Of The Rising Artists

GREETEN
Creating an air of mystery about an act is a tried-and-true promotional tactic. But Japanese pop-rap male vocal quartet GREETEN (Universal Music Japan) has taken that concept to an extreme, refusing to allow public and media appearances as well as not allowing their faces to be shown in photos or videos. Their desire for anonymity stems from the concern that too much media attention could interfere with their studies—all four members of GREETEN are medical students in the northern Japanese city of Sendai. Universal, which in January released the group’s debut single, “Michimu,” (Road) built a buzz around the group’s fourth single, “Aiuta,” (Love Song) by releasing it as a master ringtone a month before the full-length single arrived May 16 and spreading word about the single via social networking sites and mobile-based music web sites. Since then “Aiuta” has sold 1.5 million digital downloads (full-length tracks and master ringtones) and 300,000 CDs, according to its label, and GREETEN has become one of the hottest new acts on the Japanese music scene.

MIDORI
Like the members of GREETEN, Mariko Goto, vocalist/guitarist with Tokyo-based punk trio MIDORI, prefers a bit of anonymity. In publicity photos of the band, Goto’s eyes are blacked out, which clashes somewhat with the high school girl’s sailor-suit uniform that is her usual stage attire. MIDORI formed in 2003 in Osaka when Goto teamed with keyboardist Hajime and drummer Yoshitake Kozeni, and they immediately gained attention because of Goto’s over-the-top performance style. In 2005 the band made its recording debut with a self-distributed mini-album titled “Midori First.” Since then MIDORI has steadily built a reputation as one of the Japanese indie scene’s most interesting new bands and is steadily augmenting its fan base through such viral media as Goto’s blog and the m247 “music forecast” Web site.

MITSUKI
One of the most promising new artists to have recently emerged in Japan is 15-year-old female singer Mitsuki, who’s been gaining attention thanks to her powerful emotional vocal style. As it is becoming increasingly common in Japan, Mitsuki’s label Warner Music Japan created momentum in advance of the June 20 release of her debut single, “Taisetsu na Mono,” (An Important Thing) by releasing master ringtone, ringback and “melody calls” (music a caller hears while waiting for the other party to answer) versions of the song, kicking off the promo campaign March 27-29 by offering free downloads of the master ringtone. “Taisetsu na Mono” is used in the domestic film “Dolphin Blue” and its B-side, “Hitosuke Dake” (Only One), is the theme song for weekly TV drama series “Sexy Voice and Robo,” further boosting Mitsuki’s profile. “Taisetsu na Mono” only made it to No. 18 on Oricon magazine’s July 2 singles chart, but; Mitsuki looks like an artist to keep an eye on in the future.

JYONGRI
Singer/songwriter Jyongri discovered gospel music when she saw the Whoopi Goldberg movie “Sister Act 2” at age 8 in her hometown of Osaka. Until then her musical studies had been confined to classical piano, but gospel struck the proverbial chord with Jyongri, and when she was 14 she started taking gospel singing lessons. Jyongri’s emotive singing style and strong songwriting skills caught the attention of Japanese labels, and she eventually signed with Toshiba-EMI (now EMI Music Japan), making her debut with the single “Possession” last December. Jyongri’s debut album, “Close to Fantasy,” arrived March 21 and peaked at No. 25 on the Oricon chart.

ANGELA AKI
Singer/songwriter Angela Aki isn’t exactly a newcomer—she released her major-label debut single, “Home,” in September 2005 on Epic Sony. Since then Aki has established herself as one of Japan’s brightest new talents thanks to her passionately intense musical persona. Aki is one of several up-and-coming J-pop artists with a bi-cultural background (Aki’s mother is American, her father Japanese) and thus a better-than-average chance of breaking internationally. In May 2006 Aki signed with Los Angeles-based Tofu Records in an effort to establish herself as an English-language artist in the United States.

TAMURAPAN
The MySpace page of singer/songwriter Ayumi Tamura, aka Tamurapan, has attracted much attention from Japanese and overseas music fans because of her arresting original songs and vocal style, but also because of her colorful, deceptively childlike paintings. Like an increasing number of new Japanese artists, Tamura is trying to work outside the conventional music business, working with Tokyo-based mail-order specialist Music Posca and using such new media as MySpace to reach out to fans directly. Music Posca released Tamura’s second full-length album, “Hellow,” April 4.

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"Barry offers a lot to his fans," says Arista Records senior VP of marketing and artist development Scott Seward. "He really is his own brand. It's exciting to see such consistent support surrounding these concept albums."

Arista's extended marketing plan for the album demonstrates its belief in a long shelf life. On Sept. 9, Manilow will appear on QVC, transmitting a live performance from Boston. Robust TV advertising will surround the release date, as will daytime and evening show appearances, and a stop at ABC's "Dancing With the Stars." A PBS special will follow during Thanksgiving, along with a TV performance at the Rockefeller Center lighting of the Christmas tree and another on NBC's holiday TV special featuring skating champ Brian Boitano. After the new year, campaigns are earmarked for Valentine's Day, the Grammy Awards and Mother's Day.

Regarding his enduring 30-year career, Manilow says, "I'm fortunate that people are still interested in what I have to say. But most of all, I have something that nobody else has: the greatest manager, Garry Kief, and steadfast support from BMG's Group chairman/CEO Clive Davis, with whom he partnered at the beginning of his career and has continually reunited with over time, including the current projects."

"Year after year, decade after decade, I am in awe of Clive's ability to move forward, experiment, and be daring. We've made beautiful music together," Manilow says.

Manilow is still bursting with ideas. "I'm lucky to still feel so creative. I've got five projects ahead of me that I'm excited about," he says. "The well hasn't run dry yet."

Add to the challenge that Manilow decided to include unplugged renditions of some of his own best-loved hits from the decade. "It seemed like such an easy idea, but then, oh, my God, how do you redo 'Mandy' and 'Write the Songs?' I'm telling you, I stared at the piano for a good two weeks before I started."

Even so, Manilow says, "I think we did it. These covers retain the integrity and emotion of the originals."

Manilow recorded more than two dozen songs for consideration, with the final set list to be determined immediately. Contestants include Elton John's "Sorry Seems to Be the Hardest Word," Christopher Cross' "Sailing," "You've Got a Friend" (a duet with lifelong friend Melissa Manchester) and Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Manilow says the experience of reinventing the hits offered a newfound regard for their melodic mastery. "When they were out, frankly, they were competition for me—I was going up the charts, they were going up the charts—so I guess I didn't respect them as great songs," he says. "Recording them, I realized how beautifully written and well-crafted they are."

Revisiting his own catalog was downright cathartic, Manilow adds. As he returned to "Weekend in New England," singing the opening line "remember all my life" brought him full circle. "The first time I sang that, I was maybe 15 years into being an adult," says Manilow. "Now, I've actually lived. It comes from a more mature point of view."

And yes, "Copacabana" is slurred for a rereb, with a Gypsy Kings vibe. "I kept the feel of the original and stripped it down to bare bones," Manilow says. "All of the versions of my songs are more intimate than the big pop records, and yet they're still the songs we remember."

Two versions of "Seventies" will be released. One will offer around 13 covers and five Manilow renditions; a deluxe two-disc package that includes a DVD on the making of the album with Manilow reflecting on the music and the decade will likely sport 22 songs.

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DANCE  BY MIKAEL WOOD

D-D-Delayed Reaction

After Two Years As An Import, Junior Senior's Second Album Finally Gets A Stateside Release

"Hey Hey My My Yo Yo," the second studio album by Danish dance-pop duo Junior Senior, hit record stores in Scandinavia and Japan in 2005. Since then, it’s been readily available as an import—and, of course, as an illegal download—to American listeners curious to hear the follow-up to 2003’s "D-D-Dont Stop the Beat." That debut set, which spawned the international hit "Move Your Feet," has sold 81,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Nonetheless, Pyrokidic VP of label operations Billy Fields is confident that consumers will spring for Ryko’s new first pressing of the 2007 release. "It’s just a thing of the moment," says Fields. "The week of release, Junior Senior will hit the road for a five-date American tour that includes shows at New York’s Highline Ballroom and the Roxy in Los Angeles. (The band played Austin’s South By Southwest conference earlier this month.) Fields says he expects the band to return to the United States for a "full-on 40-date club tour in OctoberNovember." For his part, Laurens is happy to rev up the promotional machine in support of the album, which includes a full-on 40-date club tour in OctoberNovember. "I’m excited to bring the new music to our fans in America," he says. "The U.S. has always been a musical inspiration to us. It’s where we feel most at home." —Jonathan Cohen

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DANCE

REKONVICTED

Aug. 28 will bring a CD/DVD reissue for Akon’s Konvict/Upfront/SRC/Universal Motown album "Konvicted." The CD portion will include three new songs including "Sorry, Blame It on Me," which recently debuted at a career-best No.7 on The Billboard Hot 100. The new version also includes "Rush" featuring Kardinal Offishall, which will appear in the upcoming film "Rush Hour 3," as well as a third, as-yet-unnamed new song.

—Jonathan Cohen

PRESS PLAY

Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds is eying a Sept. 18 release date for "Playlist," his 11th album. Eight of the 10 songs on the Island project are covers of decidedly non-urban songs, including Eric Clapton’s "Wonderful Tonight." James Taylor’s "Fire and Rain" and Bread’s "Diary." Other songs include "Knickknack" on Heaven’s Door" (Bob Dylan), "Please Come to Boston" (Dave Loggins), "Longer" (Dan Fogelberg) and "Time in a Bottle" (Jim Croce).

—Mariel Conception

THRILL AIN’T GONE

Chicago indie label Thrill Jockey will celebrate its 15th birthday with a Nov. 11/12 series of shows at London’s Koko. The first day will run from early afternoon into the wee hours with performances by Trans Am, the Sea & Cake, the Fiery Furnaces, Califone and the Zincs. The next night, Tortoise, Bobby Conn, ADULT and new roster addition KTL will play.—Jonathan Cohen

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DANCE

JAZZ  BY MICHAEL D. AYERS

GROOVE CONSTRUCTION

Frisell, Chamberlain Commit Improvs To Blue Note Disc

For celebrated jazz guitarist Bill Frisell, improvising for hours upon hours in the studio with drummer Matt Chamberlain was never supposed to turn into a new album. But that’s exactly what is captured on the self-titled debut from Floratone, due Aug. 14 via Blue Note. "Matt and I were just goofing off, having fun," Frisell recalls. Yet the album, which also features bassist Jeff Jerusalem, and percussionist Tatsuya Nakamura, also includes "A Hard Man to Handle," a tune Frisell says he wanted to write "with a feeling of the blues" and "to take the next step in the blues tradition." Frisell says he was inspired by his recent gig with his solo "Quartet," which was recorded in late 2006. The album includes "Hey Hey My My Yo Yo," a song Frisell says he was inspired by after hearing the original recording by The Monkees. The track features Frisell’s signature "walking bass" line and Frisell says he was "drawn to the way it works." Frisell says he was also inspired by the way the video for the song "wasn’t really the music," which he says he wanted to capture on the album. Frisell says he and Chamberlain were "just hanging out and jamming," and that the album "just happened." —MIKAEL WOOD

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Of Point Of Return

Award-Winning Quartet Steps Back Into Multipart Harmony

Sometimes the best way for an act to move forward is to take a step back. That’s just what Point Of Grace does on "How You Live." Due Aug. 28 on Word Records, the new collection finds Shelley Breen, Denise Jones, Leigh Cappillino and Heather Payne returning to their signature vocal sound with shimmering harmonies and astringent harmonies. Payne says that most artists plugging a new release will tell you it’s the most cutting edge, progressive thing they ever done. "This new album isn’t," she says with a laugh, admitting "How You Live" is a return to the act’s classic sound. When the group recorded 2004’s "I Choose You," the popularity of harmony heavy vocal groups was waning, so the girls opted to change direction. "On the last record, vocally speaking, we did a little bit more solo singing with background vocals as opposed to a lot of three- and four-part harmony," Breen says. "On this record, we decided we really wanted to bring that back. I think people missed it. That’s who we are and what we are known for." On "How You Live," Point Of Grace returns to the sound that has earned it eight Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards, two platinum and five gold albums and 24 No.1 singles at Christian radio. "People love the fact that there’s a lot of harmony," Jones says of the new album. "You feel the unity between us." The songs on "How You Live" reflect where the women of Point of Grace are these days as artists, wives and mothers. The title cut is a soaring, beautiful ballad about the things that matter most in life. "The chorus says, ‘It’s not who you know. It’s not what you did. It’s how you live.’" says Payne, who sings lead on the song. "This song says, Take advantage of every single moment because we don’t get that time back." "It reminds me of advice that was given to me before I became a mother and it was to take your children’s detours." Cappillino says. "The common thread of this record is to celebrate life. We are not guaranteed anything. To sit outside on a pretty day, that’s a gift. Just being able to watch my little girl at her piano recital, that’s a gift. I hope this song will not just minister to moms, but to fathers and grandmothers and to granddaughters and aunts and uncles and sisters and brothers. When it’s all said and done, people are going to remember how we lived. Did we encourage others? Did we really believe that God wanted what is best for us and live that way?" Another of Cappillino’s favorite tracks is "Heal the Wound." "This song is very, very spe-
features contributions from producers Tucker Martine and Lee Townsend, sounds nothing like a playful, nonchalant meeting.

Townsend and Martine sifted through two days’ worth of material to reconstruct Frisell’s and Chamberlain’s improv sessions into lucid, atmospheric pieces with spa cy grooves.

“A lot of the choices we made reflected the aspects of their musical worlds—worlds that we shared that could be presented in a way that varied, but overall sounded cohesive,” Townsend says. Frisell and Chamberlain would do some overdubs at times, writing specific parts for strings and horns. “But the impetus was Bill and Matt improvising,” Townsend says.

“I actually never listened to what was all there,” Frisell admits with a laugh. “I don’t like to listen to myself after playing. I love letting things go, and judging myself is very tedious. The forms, shapes and pieces they came up with made a lot of sense.”

The result is a new, different direction for Frisell and Chamberlain. Frisell has spent the last several years steeped in Americana sounds and straightforward jazz trio work, while Chamberlain has remained a top session/touring drummer for the likes of Tori Amos and David Bowie.

“Matt is such an unmistakable, instantly identifiable groove player that it felt natural to focus on grooves more,” Townsend says of Chamberlain. “Bill was so good at functioning in that realm. This project reflected how they played together in a groove-oriented world, rather than open playing.”

When Townsend started pitching the record around, Blue Note salivated. Frisell has scored modest sales with Nonesuch, shifting 177,000 combined units with his last eight albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan. But Blue Note doesn’t view Frisell as the lone marketing focus here.

Fioratone “has a lot of atmosphere that depicts their ethereal tastes,” label product manager Perry Greenfield says. “From a marketing standpoint, one of our top priorities is reaching the various fan bases that the collection is associated with,” be it Martine’s work with the Decemberists or Frisell’s with Elvis Costello.

For Frisell, any commercial success is icing on the cake, since releasing these recordings was always secondary. “We didn’t have any deadlines, and no one was getting paid,” he says. “We’d rent the studio or do it in Tucker’s basement. There was no clock ticking all the time and the music just comes out in a different way.”

Eight months in, 2007 can be tagged as the year of the female. Sashaying in the chart-climbing heels of Mary J. Blige and Beyoncé are an umbrella-waving Rihanna and talked-about newcomers Amy Winehouse and Chrisette Michelle. Back on the upswing is former “American Idol” champ and “The Color Purple” chanteuse Fantasia. And that’s with- out factoring in anticipated releases by Alicia Keys, Keyshia Cole, Mariah Carey, Jennifer Hudson and Blige.

Bumped up to heavy rotation in my CD player is another qualified entry in the R&B sweepstakes: Ledisi’s “Lost and Found” (Verve, Aug. 28). Though Ledisi is an up-the-coast home girl from Oakland, Calif., I was first clued in to her soulful, jazz-inflected style by a radio programmer in London in 1999. Turns out I was on the late freight. Underground enthusiasts had been raving about her since 1996.

Finally making her major-label debut after 11 years of indie hustling, Ledisi delivers on the best bets nodded accorded her in Billboard (Jan. 6). The 16-track album hums along from start to finish. Lead single “Alright,” a mellow groove about staying positive, recently entered the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart at No. 66.

Among other songs logging repeat action: relationship-ending ballad “I Tried,” the rhythmic “Upside Down” (featuring Ledisi’s longtime producing/writing partner Sandra “Sun” Manning) and the anthem “We Are One” (with Rhasaan Patterson). Ledisi co-wrote and co-produced all the tracks, collaborating with Rex Rideout, Luther “Mano” Hanes, Rick Watford, Jamey Jas, Errol Cooney and Lorenzo Johnson.

The most haunting song is the title track, which elegantly showcases Ledisi’s nuanced vocals backed only by piano and violin. “The whole record is about my personal life and my career life,” she says. “About trying to find love, feeling love and being accepted.”

Weathering ups and downs on the long and winding road to Verve, Ledisi questioned her pursuit. “Should I stay, should I quit? I was just tired,” she remembers. “I’d played every nook and cranny. All these people [were] seeing my shows. But it seemed like nobody wanted to help push me further. What I was doing wrong?”

Picking up stakes and relocating to New York proved to be a rejuvenating jolt. Auditioning for Broadway’s “The Color Purple” and other shows, she hooked up with producer Rideout (“He helped me find myself again”). That relationship opened the door to Ledisi’s lively reworking of Luther Vandross’ “My Sensitivity.”

Her interpretation caught the attention of Verve president Ron Goldstein. Three years then passed between her signing in 2004 and finishing songs for the album she’d been working on before Verve stepped into the picture. Then Goldstein and other Verve executives were downsized out of jobs last year. But Ledisi says the changes didn’t alter what she’d been promised from the start and relished as an indie artist: the freedom to be herself artistically.

In addition to finally making her major-label debut, Ledisi is also sketching her theatrical itch. She was handpicked by director George Clooney for a small role in the film “Leatherheads” starring himself and Renee Zellweger. In the December flick, Ledisi portrays a blues singer in a speakeasy, doing a smoking version of “Loverman.”

“Girl, I’ve been on the loop a long time,” Ledisi says. “It was hard to keep going—I sacrificed a lot. But it was worth it.”
Country To The Core
Luke Bryan Takes A Down-Home Route To Nashville Stardom

Luke Bryan—whose Capitol Nashville debut, “I’ll Stay Me,” streets Aug. 14—comes with his traditional country sound and down-home lyrics firsthand. The son of a peanut farmer in rural Leesburg, Ga., Bryan worked on the family farm when he was young. “Every my friends in Nashville laugh sometimes at how country I am,” he says. “I’m still adjusting to (living in Nashville) because I can’t . . . just walk out my door and go fishing or hunting or do something outdoors.”

Bryan counts Brooks & Dunn, Alan Jackson, George Strait, Conway Twitty and Alabama among his influences. He built it a local following playing bars and fraternity parties in the Athens, Ga., area while in college.

After graduating, Bryan was ready to head to Nashville. But the death of his brother Christopher in a car accident caused him to postpone his plans and stay close to home. (Bryan’s older sister also died unexpectedly a few months ago, and his album is dedicated to both siblings.)

When Bryan finally made the move to Music City, acceptance did not come quickly. In fact, even Capitol Nashville, where he eventually landed, passed on signing him a few times.

Songwriter Jeff Stevens has scored with everyone from Strait to Alabama to Tim McGraw, and as an artist he recorded for Atlantic Records Nashville in the late ’80s. When he got a call from cousin Kerri Edwards, now Bryan’s manager, asking him to write with Bryan, Stevens begrudgingly agreed. But the unexpected happened: Stevens fell in love with Bryan’s songwriting and voice when they co-wrote their first song together, “Baby’s on the Way.” And even though Stevens had only one co-production to his credit, he agreed to become Bryan’s producer. “As long as I can let Luke Bryan be Luke Bryan, he’s going to be a star,” Stevens says.

“He’s a writer,” Stevens says. “That’s what’s scary about all this. Alan Jackson could have made a great living as a songwriter, and that’s not true of all artists. Luke’s that same way.”

Bryan recently scored his first No. 1 as a songwriter, having co-written Billy Currington’s “Good Directions” with Rachel Thibodaux.

While he leans on his own Southern upbringing, Bryan, who co-wrote 10 of his album’s 11 cuts, says, “The hardest thing is writing a country song using all the country things everybody knows but trying to make it different.”

“I’ll Stay Me” is solidly loaded with such fare. Though you can see the payoff coming a mile away, “The Car in Front of Me,” is a heartwrenching ballad in the vein of Doug Stone’s “I’d Be Better Off (in a Pine Box),” while “Country Man” provides the album’s most memorable lyric: “I can grow my own groceries and salt-cure a ham/Hey baby, I’m a country man.”

“We Rode in Trucks” is a tribute to growing up in rural America and “Over the River” is a playful tale of getting naughty and naked in the woods. The aforementioned “Baby’s on the Way” also made the cut.

First single “All My Friends Say” is a rollicking tale of a night spent partying after the singer sees his ox with a new man. “I felt it could turn into one of those fun, party-song anthems,” WCTK Providence, R.I., PD Steve Giuttari says. “From the first spin it sounded like a big hit song.”

Jay Thomas, music director for XM Satellite Radio’s Highway 16 country channel, agrees. “It’s a fun-sounding, singalong kind of song,” he says. “I’m not in college anymore, but let’s face it: We’ve all been there a time or two.”

After hearing the rest of Bryan’s album, Giuttari is further convinced about the artist’s future. “I firmly believe that Luke Bryan is one of the next great male country stars in the making,” he says. “He’s going to be around for a long time.”

If They Want Blood
Australian Rockers Get First Shot In The States

First, they conquered their native Australia. Now the members of rock combo Augie March are taking aim at the United States with third album “Moo, You Bloody Choir,” released Aug. 7 stateside via Jive/Zomba.

The album, a classic-sounding blend of dreamy, folk-influenced rock that is rich with imaginative lyricism, is the follow-up to the critically acclaimed “Strange Bird,” which BMG Australia released in 2001. Although “Moo” was originally slated for arrival in Australia in 2005, the merger between Sony and BMG put it on hold until March 2006.

Since then, the album has taken home two Australasian Performing Rights Assn. Awards. “One Crowded Hour” took song of the year, and frontman Glenn Richards won for breakthrough songwriter. Additionally, listeners of the Triple J radio network voted “One Crowded Hour” best track of 2006, and “Moo” has gone platinum (70,000) on the band’s home turf.

Richards says that initially the band was close to signing a U.S. deal with FireWire Records, but was approached by Jive/Zomba in March after president/CEO Barry Weiss gave “Moo” a spin. “Fortunately, [Weiss] actually listened to this stuff and fell in love with it,” Richards says. “The great thing about [signing with Jive/Zomba], though, is the head of FireWire, because he was so keen on the record, has offered to help in any way that he can as well. He’s got a real interest in seeing that the band does well in the States.

Compared with the more urban-leaning acts on Jive, Augie March stands a bit left of center. “They’re unique on our roster, let’s put it that way,” Zomba Label Group senior director of marketing Dan Mackta says. “But as part of the label group, there’s more diversity and various rock and non-urban things that have done very well. So in that, it fits in, and it’s just good music.”

“One Crowded Hour” impacted triple-A last month, and is now being worked to select modern rock stations. Mackta says a college radio campaign is soon to kick off as well. Augie March also made its U.S. TV
talize on the single's success. The album will be released internationally in September, except in the United States, where a street date will be confirmed shortly.


She attributes much of her popularity to MySpace, where she has more than 72,000 friends—25,000 of whom signed up before she had a record deal, after kindred spirit Lily Allen's wholehearted recommendation on the site.

"I'm a big fan," Allen says. "But I don't think she's anything like me—she's really great in her own right."

— Mark Sutherland

**BRAZZAVILLE JOURNEY:**

Brazzaville's eclectic mix of bossa nova and rock has found an unlikely spiritual home in Russia. A cult act in the West, Brazzaville enjoys mainstream popularity in Russia because of extensive touring in smaller cities and the nationwide reach of its label home, Russian major Soyuz. "Brazzaville is one of our top sellers," Soyuz A&R representative Alexei Alyayev says.

Brazzaville's sound reflects the elements encountered in the well-traveled life of American-born, Barcelona-based frontman David Brown. Russian entrepreneur/music critic Artemy Troitsky organized Brazzaville's first Russian concert in November 2003 in Moscow through promoter Caviar Lounge, which he co-owns. Troitsky has issued the band's five albums on his Soyuz imprint Zakat. The most recent release, "East L.A. Breeze," landed in June 2006. "Soyuz promotes us well and pays on time. If we had a label in the west like Soyuz, we would do really well," Brown says.

Brazzaville is published by South China Sea Music (BMI) and booked by Brown, except for Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, where the band is handled by Igor Preobrazhensky. A string of U.S. dates are booked beginning Sept. 13 in Madison, Wis. — Kirill Galecki

**PROKID'S MESSAGE:**

South African rapper Prokid is confident his song can help tackle the HIV/AIDS epidemic in his home province, Kwa-Zulu Natal. The South African Music Awards-nominated artist teamed with Swedish duo Triple & Touch to record "Aids Free, That's Me," released by Gallo Record Co. in May. "We all need to stand up and do what we can to fight HIV/AIDS," says Prokid, whose album "Heads and Tales" was nominated for the SAMA best rap album in 2006. "But as a Zulu man I feel compelled to play my part to help stop the spread of the disease in Kwa-Zulu Natal."

The song has emerged as the theme for the Star Schools program, aimed at empowering schoolchildren in the northern Zululand, and was inaugurated by Swedish artist Dan Olofsen, who owns the Thanda Private Game Reserve in the region. "Music is an incredibly powerful force amongst South Africa's youth, and Prokid's popularity is a great way of getting an empowerment message across," Olofsen says. Prokid performs the song at charity events and schools, organized through the Millionaire Models project. The artist is published by Gallo Music Publishers.

— Diane Coote

**Classical Score**

ANASTASIA TSIOLUCAS atsioulcas@billboard.com

**Fall Classics**

Bocelli, Sissel, Rieu Highlight Upcoming Crossover Releases

Fall is always a big time for classical crossover releases, and the incoming class of 2007 is no exception. Once again, labels are largely counting on the reliable combo of name recognition and prime PBS placement to drive sales and, they hope, shake such household names as Joshua Groban and Il Divo from their perches atop the chart. And once again, the aesthetic lines between the "traditional classical" and "classical crossover" categories are fairly blurry. It's all down to sales and marketing angles.

Colist Yo-Yo Ma's latest foray into global terrain with his Silk Road Ensemble (and joined this time by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya) is the sumptuous-sounding and teasingly titled "New Impossibilities" (Sony Classical, July 31). His new labelmate, American baritone/fan crush favorite Nathan Gunn, has a first Sony Classical disc, "Just Before Sunrise" (Aug. 7), that means to entice an audience that would probably never venture into an opera house. Selections include tunes by Sting, Tom Waits and Billy Joel.

The other heavyweight imprint at Sony BMG Masterworks, RCA Red Seal, sees the return of piano-playing quintet the 5 Browns Oct. 2 with "Browns in Blue." The album showcases the music of Gershwin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Chopin, Piazzolla and W.C. Handy, among others.

Film and TV tie-ins also loom large at Sony BMG Masterworks this season. Among them: "Songs Without Words," a Sept. 11 release linked to filmmaker Ken Burns' newest series, the World War I-focused "The War." Revisiting some of the industry's biggest soundtrack successes, Sony Classical is also issuing a set of "Star Wars" soundtracks featur

Baritone NATHAN GUNN

covers Sting, Billy Joel and others on his Sony debut.

AUGUST 18, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 45

www.americanradiohistory.com
### BDSCertified Spin Awards August 2007 Recipients:

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THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

ALBUMS

SOUNDTRACK

VARIOUS ARTISTS
High School Musical 2
Producers: Various
Walt Disney
Release Date: Aug. 14
If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try... whoops. Disney did succeed with "High School Musical," to the tune of 7 million albums sold worldwide, a catalog of DVDs, a concert tour, stage and ice shows, and lyrics that every teen on the planet knows by heart. "High School Musical 2" doesn't dance around the path. The full-cast opener, "What Time Is It," even references its predecessor's closing, "We're All in This Together" as it sends the kids of East High School off for a summer vacation filled with the requisite romantic tribulations, light class warfare and, yes, a Midsummer Night's Talent Show for everyone to strut their stuff. The music again skewers toward hip-hop beats and hokey pop melodies, and such tracks as "Work This Out," the sports-themed "I Don't Dance," "Bet on It" and "All for One" make you feel like Backstreet's not only back, but never left. —GG

POP

JUNIOR SENIOR
Hey My My Yo Yo
Producers: Jasper M., Thomas Troelsen

LINDA THOMPSON
Versatile Heart
Producers: Edward Haber, Teddy Thompson, Rounder
Release Date: Aug. 14
Linda Thompson's third solo album (five years after her last, "Fashionably Late") shines a spotlight on her children Teddy and Kamila, and their close friend Rufus and Martha, the similarly musical offspring of the Wainwright clan. The kids are all over the room, playing, singing, writing, co-producing in various combinations. With Thompson's deep roots in Anglo-American folk music as a given, the new generation gives her vitality and a sense of renewed purpose on such clever art songs as Rufus' "Beauty" and Kamila's strangely bewitching "Nice Cars." There are old folk tunes ("Katy Crue") and Thompson's originals that sound like old folk tunes ("Whisky, Bob Copper and Me"). The sparse but elastic settings enhance Thompson's honky-tonk originals like "Give Me A Sad Song" (written with Betsy Cook), and "Do Your Best for Rock 'n' Roll" (written with Teddy) is a subdued variation on a formula that belongs in the permanent jukebox at Graceland. —WR

BLAQK AUDIO
 CecCells
Producers: Jade Puget, Dave efferot

DANCE ELECTRONIC

PAUL VAN DYK
In Between
Producer: Paul Van Dyk

LINDA THOMPSON
Versatile Heart
Producers: Edward Haber, Teddy Thompson, Rounder

NATALIE WALKER
Urban Angel
Producers: Sturr, Ollie Buckwell

LORI MCKENNA
Unglammorous
Producers: Byron Gallimore, Tim McGraw

ROCK

DAVE MATTHEWS & TIM REYNOLDS
Live at Radio City
Producers: Brian Malouf, Steve Marcussen

DANCE ELECTRONIC

PAUL VAN DYK
In Between
Producer: Paul Van Dyk Mute

Release Date: Aug. 14

BLAQK AUDIO
CecCells
Producers: Jade Puget, Dave efferot

INTRO

SOUNDTRACK

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blaqk audio
ceccells
producers: jade puget, dave efferot

dance electronic

paul van dyk
in between
producer: paul van dyk mule

release date: aug. 14

being a trance dj/pro-
ducer is like being a politician. you can't be too underground, lest you alienate your pop-oriented, more mainstream majority, and you shouldn't lean too commercial, to avoid the wrath of the dance purists who make up your base. on the aptly named "in between," paul van dyk toes the line with cincinnati's paul van dyk's biggest find, and closest brush with cohesion, is ashley toomer, who appears on three tracks. toomer has the breathy in
génue voice of a typical trance queen, but turns a more thoughtful phrase in her lyrics, giving her tracks an honesty that makes them memorable. —km

natalie walker
urban angel
producers: sturr, ollie buckwell

lori mckenna
unglammorous
producers: byron gallimore, tim mcgraw
warners bros./stylesonic
release date: aug. 14
lori mckenna's major-label debut, which comes after four independent releases, may be one this year's hottest country albums. mckenna says her songs are a collision of autobiography, observation and a vivid imagination, and there's plenty of proof here to back her up. the rocking and insightful "i know you" name
checks d.h. lawrence and could only be written and sung by a woman who has been married for 19 years to the same man. likewise, "your next lover" is an interesting and odd look at the insight gained from a lifelong love affair. the title cut, which speaks of drinking wine from a jelly glass, faded curtains and tv dinners, is right of out blue-collar america. and co-producer mcgraw's wife faith hill recorded mckenna's song's on her "fireflies" album, proves to be a fine harmony partner on "drinking problem." —kt

www.americanradiohistory.com

augsaut 18, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 47
from p.47

explores lost love and the reconciliation of science and faith. Many of the songs deal with relationships and spirituality, including infectious standouts like "Crazy Bay" and "Sometimes I Can't Make It Alone." "Telescopes" and "Rocket" are respectable rock anthems, but they lack the inventiveness of other tracks. "Singularity" is at its best when Mae doesn't try to be something it's not. In this case, the band's earnestness and optimism are a refreshing alternative to the bombast of some of its emo contemporaries.—AC

**JAZZ**

**TERENCE BLANCHARD**
A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)
Producer: Terence Blanchard
Release Date: Aug. 7

What started as a gig scoring Spike Lee's HBO documentary "The Levees Broke" has been imaginatively expanded by trumpeter Terence Blanchard into this epic-length, orchestral-string masterpiece. As the two-year anniversary of the New Orleans deluge approaches, the Crescent City native delivers his compelling and poignant reflections on the catastrophe, with the support of his quintet and the 40-piece Northwest Sinfonia. In the tunes, there is anger and angst, lush melody and wailing wails, pockets of grace and flood waters of melancholy. Four "Levees" numbers are in the mix, with revitalized arrangements, including the prodding, ominous "The Water" and the painfully

**SINGLES**

**TRIPPLE A**

**BEN HARPER**
In the Colors (2:57)
Producer: Ben Harper
Writers: E. Harper, the Innocent Criminals
Publisher: not listed

Virgin

Only one year after the classic rock-leaning double-album "Both Sides of the Gun," Ben Harper returns with a laid-back, California sunset, natural fit for the gene-defying singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. "In the Colors," the deep-growing lead from studio set "Lifeline," due this month, is a simple, retro-styled beach ballad boasting lazy piano chords, crisp congas and sultry Tex-Mex guitar solo. Driven by a deep bass groove, courtesy of Harper's superb backing band the Innocent Criminals, the smooth track marks a return to vintage R&B grooves, a good move since Harper tried a little too hard to roll like the Stones on his last record. Here, he's not trying at all, which is why he succeeds.—SP

**GAUDI + NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN**
Dub Qawwali
Producer: Gaudi
Six Degrees
Release Date: Aug. 7

We have an unexpected pairing on "Dub Qawwali" — electro-dub savant Gaudi and the late, legendary Pacifican qawwali Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Working with recently discovered Khan vocal tracks, Gaudi has artfully crafted a surprisingly profound blend of Qawwali music and dub reggae. Qawwali is the music of Sufi mysticism, and Khan was surely one of the greatest of all Qawwali singers. Gaudi has shown a keen sensitivity to Khan's legacy and Sufism by creating the 10 tracks on this disc. Sometimes the reggae vibe is pronounced, as on "Chagmar Bare Ne" and "Eka Akiyan Noa," while others like "Bethe Beth Beke Kese" the dub component is more subtle, in this case anchoring the bottom of the track. The result is a brilliantly realized concept and a stirring world music album.—PVV

**CARRIE UNDERWOOD**
So Small (3:38)
Producer: Mark Bright
Writers: C. Underwood, R. Laird, H. Lindsey
Publisher: not listed

Arista Nashville

The half-dozen country and pop hits on Carrie Underwood's six-times-platinum debut, "Some Hearts," practically make it a greatest-hits package unto itself. Her sophomore album isn't due until Oct. 23, but with the cross-format momentum of "Before He Cheats," why take a break? "So Small" is going to be so big at country. Her performance scrapes the stratosphere, abounding with precisely spiningering notes, alongside a full-bodied ballad tempo and a lyric that she co-wrote. She quantitatively reflects, "That mountain you've been climbing is a grain of sand, what you've been searching for is in your hands/Love is all that matters, everything else seems so small" Strip away steel guitar and adult top, this is her millennium-era Shania Twain. Underwood is unstoppable, and "So Small" delivers on all previous collateral that she is here to stay.—CT

**THE DECEMBERISTS**
Perfect Crime #2 (5:33)
Producers: Tucker Martine, Chris Walla
Writer: C. Melay
Publisher: not listed

Capitol

After the Decemberists altered the signed contract to major label Capitol, fans were unsure what to expect. Would the twee rockers abandon hyper-literate tales of soldiers and swashbucklers?

As it turns out they simply refined their idiosyncratic sound with an album centered on a Japanese folk tale. Each of the group's records contains one standout unlike anything it previously released. (Example: "16 Military Wives" on 2005's "Picaresque"). Second single "Perfect Crime 2" from current album "The Crane Wife" fits the bill nicely. The track is perhaps the closest thing to a disco rave-up as the band ever conjure. Narrative describes the ultimate heist, with a backing of slinky, creeping bass, '70s style keyboards, and greatly appreciated cowbell: A rewarding, adventurous song from a band that never ceases to surprise.—TG

**DIVINITY DESTROYED**
Indigo (5:14)
Producers: Divinity Destroyed, Jeff Wallace
EntroLab Recording
Writer: Divinity Destroyed
Publisher: not listed

Independent release

Divinity Destroyed has notably evolved since Billboard gave it a "Now Hear This" spotlight in 2005. "Indigo" shows the experimental yet melodic band conjuring an increasingly accessible sound, where emotion propels the song more than driving metal riffs. Leading with AZI's keyboards, the verses alternate between singer Mark Ward and the rest of the band — guitarists Tom Ward and Rick Flanagan, bassist Jim Cowan and drummer Dan Leonard — taking the floor in a stop/start dynamic before all join in for a rousing chorus. Despite themes of loss and regret, the atmosphere of the second half until the finale crashes in is like a softly fading sunset, woven with gently sung words and twanging guitar harmonics. This balanced tension of soothing tones and powerful metal bursts is the gift of Divinity Destroyed's sound.—CLT

**KAT DeLUNA**
Am I Dreaming (3:45)
Producer: RedOne
Writers: K. DeLuna, RedOne, J. Sewell-Ulicic
Publisher: various

Epic

Kat DeLuna's debut, "Whine Up," is reminiscent of our introduction to Rihanna: an uptempo hip-hop-flavored anthem that gleefully connected but gave little indication of the artist's ultimate versatility. Follow-up "Am I Dreaming" validates that more than halfway through the decade, artists and their backers realize it takes songs — not vacuous singalong jams — to forge careers. "Dreaming" truly paints a completely different pic of the singer, with a festive melodic Caribbean tint, fluctuating guitars, hand claps and a lyric professing devotion to a lover, "I am a paramour kissing her under the moon." Vocally, DeLuna proves to be an inventive singer with some awfully clever riffs. Album "9 Lives" may be a more enlightened title than we ever expected.—CT

**EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS) AND CHUCK TAYLOR (SINGLES)**

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Alejandro Cahill, Gary Graff, Taylor Grimme, Kern Mason, Dan O'Connell, Michael Pagan, Ryan Phillips, Wayne Robins, Mark Sutherland, Chuck Taylor, Christa L. Titus, Ken Tucker, Philip Van Vlic, Jeff Vrabel

**PICT:** A new release previewed to hit in the top half of the chart.

**LEGEND & CREDITS**

Edited by Jonathan Cohen (albums) and Chuck Taylor (singles)

Contributors: Alexandra Cahill, Gary Graff, Taylor Grimme, Kern Mason, Dan O'Connell, Michael Pagan, Ryan Phillips, Wayne Robins, Mark Sutherland, Chuck Taylor, Christa L. Titus, Ken Tucker, Philip Van Vlic, Jeff Vrabel

Pick: A new release previewed to hit in the corresponding format.

Critics' Choice: A new release regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for music purists.

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, Seventh Floor, New York, NY 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.
Common ‘Finds’ Chart Summit; Billboard Rocks

The kid who saw his first Billboard chart ink 15 years ago as he grew up, as rapper Common claims his first No. 1 on The Billboard 200.

The new “Finding Forever,” which starts with 155,000 copies sold, also marks his second consecutive No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums.

This becomes Common’s fourth top 10 album on R&B/Hip-Hop Albums but only his second-top-13 on the big chart. His last album, “ listen,” entered The Billboard 200 with a career-best Nielsen SoundScan week of 185,000 in 2005, but was blocked from No. 1 by another act’s best-selling week as AudioSlave’s “Out of Exile” arrived with a 263,000-unit frame.

The rapper’s first chart appearance came in the Oct. 31, 1992, issue, when “Take It EZ” entered sales list Hot Rap Singles at No. 26.

BRIT’S GOT SALES: Here’s the headline for the folks behind NBC series “America’s Got Talent.” It’s bad enough that any talent show can only hope for a very distant second place in that category to TV ratings king “American Idol.” Now import sales for “Britain’s Got Talent” import Paul Potts suggest the U.K. incarnation of that show might have greater impact on U.S. music sales than the domestic show generates.

Import sales do not count toward Billboard’s charts, but Nielsen SoundScan measures 6,000 copies during this issue’s tracking week for the international edition of Potts’ “One Chance,” a number that would warrant No. 1 on Top Heatseekers and No. 129 on The Billboard 200. And, with 93% of the title’s sales coming from online orders, it would have bowed at No. 2 on Top Internet Albums.

Columbia delivers the U.S. version of the album Sept. 18.

ROCK ME, BABY: Starting this week, Billboard expands its menu of charts at billboard.biz with the addition of “op Modern Rock/Alternative Rock Albums and Top Hard Rock Albums. The Billboard charts team recently took over administration of these two Nielsen SoundScan charts from Concrete Marketing, which has managed those lists since their inception.

SoundScan began offering the hard rock chart, called “hard music,” in its system in 1991, the tracking service’s inaugural year. The other list, identified as “alternative2” in SoundScan, launched in 1994.

Veteran chart manager Anthony Colombo, who oversees all rock lists in Billboard and sister magazine Radio & Records, adds these album charts to his desk. The “alternative new artists” chart, which ranks alternative-flagged albums by Heatseeker-eligible acts, will continue to appear in SoundScan but will not move o Billboard’s Web sites at this time.

The Modern Rock and Hard Rock album charts are based on a core panel of about 180 music chains and independent stores. For now, that subset panel remains unchanged, but will be reviewed and revised by year’s end.

Folks who have tracked these charts regularly are aware that several titles overlap both rock lists. This week Korn’s “Untitled” is No. 1 on Hard Rock and Modern Rock/Alternative.

NEW RULES: With the enthusiastic support of Billboard’s charts department, Nielsen SoundScan implemented a new policy July 30 that enables data collection from chains that sell music on an occasional basis.

The revision will bolster SoundScan’s nontraditional segment to include promotions in which specific titles are sold at clothing stores, drug stores, fast food chains and other specialty merchants.

In order for such sales to be tabulated, the retailers must alert SoundScan with details of the promotion at least 30 days before that product is sold, and must be able to abide by established reporting protocol. Participating chains must also operate at least five stores, although in most cases, the kinds of merchants target for these kinds of in-and-out campaigns generally have hundreds, if not thousands, of locations.

The complete policy is available from SoundScan’s client services crew (client-services@soundscan.com or 1-818-684-5525).

Market Watch

Weekly Unit Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)</th>
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</thead>
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<td>ARTIST</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>KORN</td>
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<td>RON JOY</td>
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<td>MAROON 5</td>
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<td>T-PAIN</td>
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The chart's top 100 artists can be found on the Billboard chart's official website.
## HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BAY BAY</td>
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<td>MTM</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PARTY LIKE A ROCKSTAR</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>RCA</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>LAZER KASH</td>
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<td>8</td>
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## ADULT TOP 40

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<td>TITLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIP GLOSS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Chart Legend**

- Top 40
- Top 30
- Top 20
- Top 10
- Top 5
- Top 1

**Data for week of AUGUST 18, 2007**

**POP 100 AIRPLAY**

**POP 100 SINGLES**

**HITPREDICTOR**

- Pop
- Rock
- Rap
- R&B
- Dance

**See chart legend for notes and explanations**

**Source:** Billboard, August 18, 2007.
R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

1. **COMMON**
   - Title: Finding Forever
   - Label: Universal Motown (18.98)
   - Sales: 11.1
   - Peak: No. 1
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

2. **LIL' WAYE**
   - Title: The Carter II
   - Label: Cash Money/Epic/Stardom (18.98)
   - Sales: 10.7
   - Peak: No. 2
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

3. **MIMS**
   - Title: Music Is My Savior
   - Label: Def Jam/Sony BMG/Interscope (18.98)
   - Sales: 10.3
   - Peak: No. 3
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

4. **J. COLE**
   - Title: The E-Nergy
   - Label: Def Jam/Universal (18.98)
   - Sales: 10.3
   - Peak: No. 4
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

5. **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
   - Title: We're About the Business
   - Label: Cash Money/Atlantic/Sony (18.98)
   - Sales: 10.1
   - Peak: No. 5
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

6. **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
   - Title: Forever Soul R&B
   - Label: Cash Money/Atlantic/Sony (18.98)
   - Sales: 10.0
   - Peak: No. 6
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

7. **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
   - Title: The One and Only Singles Collection
   - Label: Cash Money/Atlantic/Sony (18.98)
   - Sales: 9.9
   - Peak: No. 7
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

8. **DEDE WILEY**
   - Title: Get Money Stay True
   - Label: Cash Money/Atlantic/Sony (18.98)
   - Sales: 9.8
   - Peak: No. 8
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

9. **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
   - Title: Time
   - Label: Cash Money/Atlantic/Sony (18.98)
   - Sales: 9.6
   - Peak: No. 9
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

10. **DEDE WILEY**
    - Title: Black Gold
    - Label: Cash Money/Atlantic/Sony (18.98)
    - Sales: 9.5
    - Peak: No. 10
    - Date: Aug 18, 2007


REGGAE ALBUMS

1. **CARRIE CARRIE**
   - Title: Collie Buddz
   - Label: Columbia/Universal Motown (18.98)
   - Sales: 16.0
   - Peak: No. 1
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

2. **CARRIE CARRIE**
   - Title: O.S.T. (18.98)
   - Label: Columbia/Universal Motown (18.98)
   - Sales: 15.8
   - Peak: No. 2
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

3. **CARRIE CARRIE**
   - Title: No. 1
   - Label: Columbia/Universal Motown (18.98)
   - Sales: 15.6
   - Peak: No. 3
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

4. **CARRIE CARRIE**
   - Title: No. 2
   - Label: Columbia/Universal Motown (18.98)
   - Sales: 15.4
   - Peak: No. 4
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007

5. **CARRIE CARRIE**
   - Title: No. 3
   - Label: Columbia/Universal Motown (18.98)
   - Sales: 15.2
   - Peak: No. 5
   - Date: Aug 18, 2007


R&B/HIP-HOP STARTS HIGH

as Common strikes pay dirt with his second consecutive No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums (see Over the Counter, page 49), chart rookie Sean Kingston bows at No. 2 and gives Epic its highest

R&B/hip-Hop Albums. check out www.billboard.com

BETWEEN THE BULLETS rereck@billboard.com

Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums also features Keith Murray’s first release in four years (July 31).

As Common strikes pay dirt with his second consecutive No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums (see Over the Counter, page 49), chart rookie Sean Kingston bows at No. 2 and gives Epic its highest sales standing since

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## R&B/HIP-HOP AIRPLAY

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Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data.
**HOT COUNTRY SONGS**

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<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>TEARDROPS ON MY GUITAR</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
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<td>THESE ARE MY PEOPLE</td>
<td>Reba McEntire</td>
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<td>I TOLD YOU SO</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>PROUD OF THE HOUSE</td>
<td>Brooks &amp; Dunn</td>
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<td>TOUCH</td>
<td>Craig Morgan</td>
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<td>EVERYDAY AMERICA</td>
<td>Sugarland</td>
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<td>LOVE ME IF YOU CAN</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>I WONDER</td>
<td>Little Big Town</td>
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<td>FREE AND EASY (DOWN THE ROAD I GO)</td>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>HOW DO I LIVE</td>
<td>Martina McBride</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>A LITTLE MORE VOL</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>LIVIN' OUR LOVE SONG</td>
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<td>FALL</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>MEASURE OF A MAN</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>JUST MIGHT HAVE HER RADIO ON</td>
<td>Trace Adkins</td>
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<td>FIRECRACKER</td>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
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<td>ANOTHER SIDE OF YOU</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>AS IF</td>
<td>Sara Evans</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>NOTHIN' BETTER TO DO</td>
<td>LeAnn Rimes</td>
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**HitPredictor**

See chart legend for rules and explanations. Yellow “X” indicates recently released title. "Promo" indicates new release.

**COUNTRY**

**Kenny Chesney**

"Never Wanted Nothing More" (69.5)

**Reba McEntire**

"These Are My People" (90.5)

**Trent Tomlinson**

"I Need You Now" (85.4)

**Jason Michael Carroll**

"Just Might Have Her Radio On" (95.4)

**Clay Walker**

"Firecracker" (98.8)

**Sara Evans**

"As If" (96.3)

**LeAnn Rimes**

"Notin' Better to Do" (98.3)

**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

www.billboard.com/biz

**CHESNEY SLOWS COUNTRY'S CHURN AT NO. 1**

Although Kenny Chesney digs his heels in for a third week atop Hot Country Songs with "Never Wanted Nothing More," it has been 11 years since this chart got to August without at least one title holding at the summit for more than four weeks in a year's first eight months.

By this time in 1996, Hot Country Songs sported 18 unique No. 1s, of which three each led for three weeks. Since ringing in 2007, 16 different No. 1s is the most to turn atop the chart since the like number of weeks in 1998, which saw 17 chart-toppers.

Since January 1996, the slowest turnover in this span was 11 different titles in 2000. The most recent song to hold for five weeks was Carrie Underwood's "Before He Cheats" last fall. The most consecutive weeks at No. 1 in the 17 since Billboard converted the chart to Nielsen BDS-based rankings belongs to the eight-week reign of Lonestar's " Amarized," starting in the July 17, 1999, issue.

So far this year, Rodney Atkins' four-week No. 1 "Watching You" has spent the most weeks inside the top box. That title peaked at the Jan. 27 issue.

— Wade Jesse
### Latin Airplay

#### Top 10

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Data for week of AUGUST 18, 2007. For chart reprints call 646-654-4633.
## HITS OF THE WORLD

### JAPAN

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - SUKIMASWITH
  - ORANGE RANGE
  - MONKEY MAJIK
  - KINKI KIDS
  - GREECE
  - COCOON
  - VARIOUS ARTISTS
  - FIRE BALL
- **REISSUE**
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS

**SOUNDTRACK**
- LOOSE
- CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
- MICA
- AMY WINEHOUSE
- TRAVELING WILBURYS
- MYNT
- NELLY FURTADO

### UNITED KINGDOM

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - PAUL POTTS
  - AMY MACDONALD
  - NEWTON FAULKNER
  - TIMBALAND
  - MIKA
  - LOOSE
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS
- **REISSUE**
  - BON JOVI
  - KORN
  - LAL
  - CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
  - MARK RONSON
  - VARIOUS ARTISTS

### GERMANY

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - THE ROLLING STONES
  - BEFOURS
  - KORN
  - LAFEE
  - TIMBALAND
  - MIKA
  - PRINCE
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS
  - NELLY FURTADO
  - HOSPITAL MUSIC
  - SUN 41
- **REISSUE**
  - MIDNIGHT MACHINE SHOP
  - CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
  - MICA
  - AMY WINEHOUSE
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS
  - VARIOUS ARTISTS

### FRANCE

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - FENGIE
  - GRAF
  - MIRACLE
  - KORN
  - CHRISSIE WILLEM
  - NELLY FURTADO
- **REISSUE**
  - MIKA
  - CHRISSIE WILLEM
  - MICA
  - AMY WINEHOUSE
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS
  - KORN

### AUSTRALIA

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - MIGUEL BOSE
  - MICHAEL BUBLE
  - AMY WINEHOUSE
  - ROSIE BOSCH
  - DAVID GUETTA
  - KORN
  - CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
- **REISSUE**
  - FENGIE
  - CURTIS MAYFIELD
  - MIKA
  - AMY WINEHOUSE
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS

### CANADA

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - MATTHEW GOOA
  - CONNIE DUNN
  - BON JOVI
  - CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
  - KORN
  - MICA
  - MIKA
  - FENGIE
  - NELLY FURTADO

### ITALY

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - MIGUEL BOSE
  - MICHAEL BUBLE
  - CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
  - LAURA PAUSINI
  - AVIR IAI
  - LAURENCE HARDY
- **REISSUE**
  - JOSHUA CHASE
  - MIGUEL BOSE
  - MIKA
  - CHRISTOPHE WILLEM
  - ZAKI

### SPAIN

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - LOS LUNATICS
  - MICHAEL BUBLE
  - ALEXANDRO FERNANDEZ
  - DAVID BISBAL
  - KIKO & SHARA
  - FITO Y LOS FITOFILAPS
  - LA QUINTA ESTACION
  - NELLY FURTADO
  - VARIOUS ARTISTS
- **REISSUE**
  - MIKA
  - MICHAEL BUBLE

### THE NETHERLANDS

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - ERIC BELLIZZI
  - TIMBALAND
  - MIKA
  - VARIOUS ARTISTS
- **REISSUE**
  - MIKA

### DENMARK

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - BETH HART
  - TIMBALAND
  - NELLY FURTADO
- **REISSUE**
  - BETH HART

### PORTUGAL

**ALBUMS**
- **NEW**
  - MIKA
  - THE ROLLING STONES
  - BON JOVI
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS
  - MIKA
- **REISSUE**
  - MIKA

### NORWAY

**SINGLES**
- **NEW**
  - JOHNNY LOGAN & FRIENDS
  - POSTGIRSBYGDET
  - TORSGERSEN TROND-VIGG
  - TRAVELING WILBURYS
  - LASSE STEFANZ
  - TORSGERSEN TROND-VIGG
- **REISSUE**
  - JOHNNY LOGAN & FRIENDS
  - POSTGIRSBYGDET

### GREECE

**SINGLES**
- **NEW**
  - AVI CANTIGAS
  - MAFALDA VEGAS
  - PEDRO PASELA
  - TIMBALAND
  - DO YOU KNOW (THE PENG PENG SONG)
  - MIKA
- **REISSUE**
  - TIMBALAND
  - NELLY FURTADO
  - SANTAMARIA

---

Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete chart data.
TOP POP CATALOG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>SONGS &amp; NUMBER / DISTRIBUTING LABEL / PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guns N' Roses</td>
<td>Street docs/Atlantic (11.98/11.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Buble</td>
<td>So Little Time/Atlantic (18.98/18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom McGraw</td>
<td>Stand By Your Girl/Columbia (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journey</td>
<td>Don't Stop Believin' / Epic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Longest Day/RTT (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Buble</td>
<td>Honey I'm Home/RCA (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back In Black/SonyBMG/EMI (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly Clarkson</td>
<td>A Moment Like This/Columbia (16.98/16.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim McGraw</td>
<td>Free / SonyBMG / RCA (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Pink Floyd</td>
<td>In The End/Capitol, 6021 (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Bob Segar &amp; The Silver Bullet Band</td>
<td>The Blues/Columbia (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Bon Jovi</td>
<td>Have A Gun Don't Know What To Do / Island (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Creedence Clearwater Revival</td>
<td>Have You Ever Seen The Rain / Capitol (17.98/17.98)</td>
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<td>The Beach Boys</td>
<td>That's The Way (I Like It) / MCA (17.98/17.98)</td>
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<td>Whitney Houston</td>
<td>Greatest Love Of All / Arista (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>System Of A Down</td>
<td>Hunted Down/Columbia (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Queen</td>
<td>Don't Stop Me Now / PolyGram (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Natalie &amp; Friends</td>
<td>I Want To Know What Love Is / Motown (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Led Zeppelin</td>
<td>Stairway To Heaven / Atlantic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Beatles</td>
<td>Help! / Capitol (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Eagles</td>
<td>On The Border / A&amp;M (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Petty &amp; the Heartbreakers</td>
<td>Free Fallin' / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Casting Crowne</td>
<td>All I Got Is Me / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Genesis</td>
<td>Jesus Culture - The Hits / Atlantic (17.98/17.98)</td>
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<td>Evanescence</td>
<td>Only The Young / Word (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Phil Vassar</td>
<td>Keep On Keeping On / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>John Aldean</td>
<td>Rattlesnake / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Creed</td>
<td>Let It Ride / Columbia (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Police</td>
<td>Turn The Page / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Baby Einstein Music Box Orchestra</td>
<td>The Best Of Baby Einstein (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Simple Plan</td>
<td>Breathe / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The All-American Rejects</td>
<td>The World Is A Beautiful Place To Live / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>Love And Getting Over It / Columbia (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Lynyrd Skynyrd</td>
<td>Sweet Home Alabama / Epic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Def Leppard</td>
<td>Photograph / Epic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Jeff Heidrich</td>
<td>One Less Car / Epic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Sugarland</td>
<td>Red Dirt Road / Epic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Martina McBride</td>
<td>This One's For You/Columbia (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Josh Groban</td>
<td>Remember When/Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Stevie Wonder</td>
<td>For All We Know / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>James Taylor</td>
<td>Breaking All The Rules / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Should I Stay Or Should I Go / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Back To You/RTT (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Brian Wilson</td>
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<td>Nelly</td>
<td>I'm Outta Love/Atlantic (18.98/18.98)</td>
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TOP DIGITAL

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<td>Dropping It Now / Hollywood Records (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Common</td>
<td>Feeling Over You / UMG (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>United We Stand / UMG (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Colbie Caillat</td>
<td>Real Good / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>John Legend</td>
<td>Back To Black / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The White Stripes</td>
<td>I'm Not The Only One / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>I'm Still Here / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Smashing Pumpkins</td>
<td>Between Dreams / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>John Mayer</td>
<td>Star / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>Once / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Amy Winehouse</td>
<td>For Once In My Life / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>If I Were A Boy / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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TOP INTERNET

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<td>Kidz Bop Kids</td>
<td>Just Keep Walking / Universal (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Singing Game / Universal (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Starting Line</td>
<td>Over The Line / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Prince</td>
<td>Earth / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Up With Wilburyn/Warner Bros. (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Maroon 5</td>
<td>Don't Stop Believin' / Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The White Stripes</td>
<td>I'm Not The Only One / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Common</td>
<td>No. 1 / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Michael Buble</td>
<td>God Help Me To Survive / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Last Kind Words</td>
<td>All The Way For You / Universal (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maroon 5</td>
<td>Breathe (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sean Kingston</td>
<td>Something's Wrong With Me / Interscope (18.98/18.98)</td>
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TOP HARD ROCK ALBUMS FROM: 

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<tr>
<td>All Time Low</td>
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<td>UMG (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>минуты(18.98/18.98)</td>
<td>Antiflag</td>
<td>Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>Minutes To Midnight</td>
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<td>The Last Rights</td>
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<td>The Last Kind Words</td>
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<td>Libertad</td>
<td>Antiflag</td>
<td>Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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<td>The Last Of Us</td>
<td>Antiflag</td>
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<td>Vans Warped Tour</td>
<td>Antiflag</td>
<td>Reprise (18.98/18.98)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Lee Hazlewood, 78


Born in Mannford, Okla., Hazlewood studied medicine at Southern Methodist University and went on to join the U.S. Army, where he first revealed his DJ skills on Armed Services Radio in Korea.

After serving in the army, Hazlewood began his music career as a DJ in Arizona, where he found early potential in artists like Elvis Presley. As a songwriter/producer, Hazlewood had success working with local guitarist Duane Eddy, producing "Rebel Rouser" and "Fifty Miles of Bad Road."

Hazlewood eventually moved to Los Angeles, and his incessant songwriting led him to create his own label, Vee. After he hired country singer Sanford Clark to record his song "The Fool," Hazlewood's inventive recording techniques made it a Midwestern hit and an eventual top 10 after it was picked up by Decca.

In 1963 Hazlewood released his solo album "Trouble Is a Lonesome Town," a compilation of music showcasing his keen observations of human behavior in a Western town and his ability to tell a story through his music.

Though the British Invasion of the U.S. charts led Hazlewood to his retirement in 1964, Reprise Records persuaded him to return to the music industry, where he teamed with Nancy Sinatra, whose career took off. In 1966, their signature hit "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" topped the charts and became Hazlewood's most famous work. Calling themselves Nancy & Lee, the pair further released three albums of duets that included such hits as "Some Velvet Morning" and "Sugar Town." Hazlewood also produced "Something Stupid," Sinatra's classic duet with her father Frank.

In the 1970s, when Hazlewood was at the height of his success, he left the United States for a more reclusive lifestyle, recording experimental solo albums in Sweden. He didn't resurface until the 1990s when he took up painting again, having become a cult figure for alternative rockers.

In 2006, after being diagnosed with kidney cancer, Hazlewood released his final album, "Cake or Death."

Hazlewood is survived by his wife, Jeanie; his son, Mark; and his daughters Debbie and Samantha.

---

BIRTHS

GIRL: Violet Sanders on to Neil Sanders and his wife, Janin, July 29 in Los Angeles. Father is drummer for Three Days Grace.

DEATHS

Bill Love, 60, former concert promoter and founder of the defunct Co-op Tapes and Records store chain, died June 23 in Peoria, Ill., according to the Peoria Journal Star. A cause of death was not listed.

Love founded the 27-store chain in Peoria in the 1970s, according to friends and former business partner Dave Calhoun, an executive with the defunct Rose Records chain.

While the 2007 Billboard Retail Directory lists six Co-op stores (four in Illinois and two in Iowa), an employee in the Peoria outlet says the stores are now all individually owned.

Prior to entering retail, Love, who served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, was a concert promoter in the late '60s and early '70s, according to Roger "Bill" was loved by record executives across the country, always popular at the (NARM) annual conventions and famous for his Wild Game Feeds, with Cheap Trick performing," Roger wrote in an e-mail to Billboard.
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Music Group promotes Aaron Harrison to senior VP of business and legal affairs at eLabs, the company’s digital strategy division. He was director.
Koch Records in New York names Deborah Rigaud director of business and legal affairs. She was director of business affairs at VP Music Group and its publishing arm, STB Music.
PUBLISHING: The National Music Publishers’ Assn. taps Kathryn Wagner as VP/counsel. She previously focused on intellectual property, corporate and securities litigation at litigation group Pryor and Cashman.
The Royalty Network promotes Lawson Higgins to senior administrator of creative. He was administrator.

TOURING: The Los Angeles Philharmonic Assn. promotes Arvind Manocha to COO. He will continue as VP/GM of the Hollywood Bowl, as well as help oversee the association’s marketing, production, strategic planning and community affairs, among other duties.
Steve Peters, president of facility management firm VenuWorks, becomes president of the International Assn. of Assembly Managers. He previously served as the IAAM’s second and first VP.
Live Nation New York names Kevin Morrow president and Jason Miller senior VP of bookings. Morrow was senior VP of club and theater programming, and Miller was senior VP of Live Nation Denver.
DIGITAL: Napster appoints Christopher Allen COO. He was VP of product strategy, design and marketing at Blockbuster Online.
MEDIA: Latino youth-oriented cable network mun2 names Sara Kantathavorn director of talent and artist relations. She was a freelance publicist at Platform PR.
RELATED FIELDS: London-based AIM ups Remi Harris to GM. She was project manager.
The United Kingdom’s Music Managers Forum appoints Jon Webster to the newly created position of CEO. He was director of independent services at BPI, where he was responsible for overseeing the needs of the organization’s independent-label members.
—Edited by Mitchell Peters

INSIDE TRACK
ACTOR TAKES ON NEW ROLE AS DJ, OFFERS ‘CAINED’

Michael Caine has played all manner of roles. In a career that kicked-started in the 1950s, the legendary British actor has chased double agents in spy film “The Ipcress File,” dodged killer bees in disaster flick “The Swarm” and swindled do-gooders in the comedy “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels.” Now, in his 70s, Caine is taking on a new role: DJ.
Caine has helmed a new compilation, “Cained,” that gathers such tasteeful chill-out classics as Chicane’s “No Ordinary Morning,” John Martyn’s “Sunshine’s Better” and Roy Budd’s “Hurry to Me” along with St. Germain’s “Rose Rouge,” Felix Da Housecat’s rerub of Nina Simone’s “Sinnerman” and Bent’s “Swoleman.” Universal Records will issue the set Sept. 3 in Br’tain.
“I’ve loved this type of music for years and have literally hundreds of CDs,” Caine says. “I’ve been buying them for about 15 years and really, from my way around.” He’s so inlaid into the music business came about through a fortuitous dinner at Elton John’s mansion in Nice, Italy, during which the dual Academy Award winner impressed his host with a sample of music knowledge. Caine also admitted to a long-time passion for making compilations. By his reckoning, he says he has assembled “literally thousands” of compilation tapes and CDs. “And with chill-out I suppose I finally found my forte.” Who would have thought?

GOOD WORKS

SWIZZ BEATZ OFFERS HOPE TO YOUTH
Entertainers 4 Education Alliance, Universal Records, Swizz Beatz, MTV VJ Sway and urban WQHT (Hot 97) New York presented “It’s Showtime: In Theatre Event Series” Aug. 9 at the AMC Lincoln Square Theatre in New York. Equal parts live performance and Q&A session, the event’s goal was to spread a message of hope and encouragement to tri-state high school students.
A COWBOY AND A SHARPME HELP SCHOOLS
Cowboy Troy and Sharpie team up Aug. 14 to donate school supplies to Pearl Cohn High School in Nashville. The school’s marching band appeared in Big & Rich’s “Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy),” which also featured Troy as the grand marshal.
INSIDE TRACK

THE WORDS OF KRAMER

Track hears that Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer is shopping an autobiography to New York publishing houses. The book documents his longtime struggle with drug addiction and the ups and downs of life with one of rock’n’roll’s most party-lovin’ bands. Aerosmith is on the road through late September. Afterwards it will finish its next studio album, due sometime next year.

SEAL, STUART PRICE DANCE TOGETHER

Stuart Price, who helmed Madonna’s last album, is handling production duties for Seal’s next album, which will likely arrive next year—finds the artist returning to his dancefloor roots. Songs like “The Right Life” and “Amazing” are deliciously upbeat.

PEPSI QUENCHES THIRST OF ‘HALO 3’ FANS

It appears that Pepsi will be heavily connected to one of the year’s most anticipated videogames, “Halo 3.” Developed by Bungie Studios for the Xbox 360, the third game in the “Halo” trilogy hits shelves Sept. 25. Track wouldn’t be surprised if Pepsi’s involvement includes product placement or branded interstitials.
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- Ultra Naté, Artist
- Josh Rabinowitz, Senior VP/Director of Music, Grey Worldwide
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