LITTLE STEVEN ON
HILLY KRISTAL, RIP

NAVIGATING
AMAZON'S
MARKETPLACE
JUNGLE

ZEPPELIN, SHAKIRA
CHOOSE HIGH-DEF

THE AFTER LIFE
→ U.K. TV Post-‘Pops’
→ EMI Post-Nicoli
→ Elvis Post-Copyright

YUNG BERG
BLOWS BIG

SMALL EPs, BIG
OPPORTUNITY

COUNTRY LIVING

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REGIONAL MEXICAN Dedicated to the top-selling genre, this summit features artist showcases, educational sessions and the “Women of Regional Mexican Music” panel with Jenni Rivera, D.Ana Reyes and Horoscopos. More at billboardevents.com.

MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT LIVE Hosted by Quincy Jones, the mobile entertainment event of CTIA-The Wireless Assn. features a full exhibit floor, networking opportunities and a live set by Josh Kelley. More at billboardevents.com.

Blogs
JADED INSIDER Kanye West’s new album, “Graduation,” isn’t out until Sept. 11, but Billboard got in on an exclusive listening session hosted by West himself. How’s it sound? What did he have to say about it? Find out at jadedinsider.com.
Labor Days
The Hit Parade Swings Into Q4 Gear

I know, I know, I know, I know. I can already hear our retail reporter Ed Christian—and every retailer he calls to a source—hollering: “For the love of all that is holy you need to keep hammering at the major labels to stop releasing everything they have in the fourth quarter!”

It’s a sentiment that rationally, I entirely support. But after a long, hard summer for the biz, am I the only one who feels excitement at the first big hits of the Q4 season—and the prospect of a few months of plenty? Like this year’s first Jonagolds, huge hits were nowhere for months, and suddenly now they are falling off trees—perfect little harbingers of a harves-t season coming!

Clearly, though, I am not alone. This week’s charts and reporting show the exten to which some factions of the biz have been craving change, perhaps now more than ever—at least in a long, long while.

Our cover feature, “Carrie Enjoys the Ride” (page 26), shines a spotlight on Carrie Underwood—by all accounts one of the most genuine and appreciative people ever to sell a buzzardic records. The first single from her soon-to-be-released sophomore album resulted in the highest debut on the Hot Country Songs chart by a female in more than 40 years when it hit three issues ago.

That sort of clairvoy is turning out to be an exception this season. In this issue, the second single from Kenny Chesney’s Sept. 11 release netted the highest bow on Hot Country Songs since the chart began using Nielsen BDS-based airplay tracking in 1990. And as our story on the occasion, “Starting at the Top” (page 11), notes, early adds for Garth Brooks’ return to radio suggest the monumental record may stand only a week. This isn’t a Nashville-only phenomenon. As noted in the Charts section (“Only Takes a Day for Keys’ Debut,” page 61), Alicia Keys earned the Hot Shot Debut on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart—with a song that didn’t go to radio until 2 p.m. on the last day of the chart survey period. If that didn’t define a hunger for hits, I don’t know what does.

So, yes, it would take a string of Barry Bonds-type records to even get this year’s album sales decline to single digits. And yes, of that superstar release love needs to be spread around, taking more advantage of higher consumer opportunities in February, May and June. And yes, the industry needs to recast itself so it isn’t as dependent on blockbuster hits. But I’m going to go ahead and bank that the biz can indeed walk and chew gum—that it can develop its blockbusters and its Long Tails. And for one calm moment, as everyone returns from a holiday weekend and gears up for the mad rush of the coming months, I’ll appreciate this year’s humper crop.

ARRESTED RESPONSES
Editor’s Note: It was nice to see a tidal wave of feedback on last issue’s cover story, “Arrested Development,” in which we crunched more than 15 years of Nielsen SoundScan data to reveal trends in artist development. Keep those letters coming!

Billboard has provided an enormous amount of data concerning the industry trends for the launching and developing of artists. It’s always helpful and beneficial to have the hard data rather than to simply have the gut knowledge. However, I think that you have taken an unsubstantiated leap in logic. Just because it is far less common to “cultivate slower-starting rookie albums” does not mean that it is “more difficult” to accomplish that goal. Do you really think that it was “more diffic-ult” to grow the Fray or Hinder in 2006 than it was to grow Sheryl Crow in the early ‘90s? The significantly reduced number of eventually successful “slower-starting rookie albums” has been caused by various changes within record companies and their approach toward artist development (as well as changes within radio and retail, and elsewhere). Unfortunately, as Al Cacafaro’s quotes make abundantly clear, it cannot just be blamed upon “difficulty.”

Similarly, I don’t think that it’s “much easier” to launch an artist in the top half of the Billboard charts today than it was to launch an artist in that position 15 years ago. Rather, it’s where the mind-set and resources are being placed. Roy Lott Former Capitol Records president and former Arista Records executive VP

Your article was one of the best and most thorough in Billboard in a long time.

John Esposito President, WEA

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FEEDBACK

One retail chain had transmitted errant data when Nielsen SoundScan initially processed this issue’s sales charts. The charts were rerun with correct data late on Aug. 29 after some pages had already gone to press. The revised charts were released on billboard.biz and billboard.com.

In this issue, titles at Nos. 4-6 on Hot Singles Sales should be, respectively, the ones by Temerar Underwood, Bryce and Mandisa.

On Top Country Albums, Clay Walker’s “Fall” should be the Greatest Gainer. Please also note the adjusted ranks for the following titles: Tracie Adkins, “Dangerous Man” (No. 35); Alan Jackson, “Precious Memories” (No. 36); Joe Nichols, “Kill” (No. 64); and various artists, “Three Wooden Crosses” (No. 65).

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CONNECT MUSIC STORE TO SHUTTER
Sony Corp. will begin shuttering its Connect Music Store starting in March 2008. Rumors of the impending shutdown began in June after the company laid off 20 people and allocated remaining staff and resources to the PlayStation group. The Connect deactivation will take place on a phased basis in North America and Europe. Specific timing for each region was not disclosed.

MARLEY FAMILY TO SUE
Bob Marley’s estate is planning to file a lawsuit against Universal Music Group and Verizon Wireless over a deal for access to the reggae legend’s body of work. “We are offering Bob Marley ringtones through Verizon in accordance with the terms of a longstanding contract between Bob Marley and UMG,” UMG said in a statement. Verizon representatives were unavailable for comment at press time.

RCA, ZOMBA MERGE
RCA Music Group and Zomba Label Group are merging their international, sales and field staffs and forming BMG Label Group. John Fleckenstein has been named senior VP of international for the group. Bob Anderson and Kevin Twitchell will lead the new BMG Label Group sales department. As a result of the restructuring some staffers have exited their posts, according to a source.

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UPFRONT

SONG SANG BLU
As Paramount Jettisons Blu-Ray, High-Def Faces Fourth-Quarter Marketing Challenge

BY CHRIS M. WALSH

Paramount Home Studios’ revelation last month that it was dropping support of Blu-ray and exclusively siding with HD DVD is further evidence that the next generation high-definition format war won’t end anytime soon.

In this developing space where content is king—and ultimately drives consumer adoption—the news was huge. Now, two of the top eight studios exclusively support HD DVD, while four still sit exclusively with Blu-ray. In total, six of the top eight support Blu-ray, while HD DVD is supported by four of the top eight.

Ultimately the move means the high-definition consumer has more to contemplate in an inchoate space that’s already perplexing. “There’s a lot of consumer confusion about high-def,” says George Feltenstein, Warner Home Video senior VP of theatrical catalog marketing. “They’re confused by the competing formats, and that’s one thing we find disconcerting.”

As the format war continues, studios and labels are grappling with the challenges of bringing to market high-profile, high-definition music titles. “Dave Matthews and Tim Reynolds: Live at Radio City” on Blu-ray was released Sept. 4 and upcoming high-def titles from Queen, Tenacious D, David Gilmour and ones that certainly have the potential to appeal to new and broader audiences—from Led Zeppelin and Shakira—are hitting stores this fall.

Warner Home Video will release Led Zeppelin’s “The Song Remains the Same” on Blu-ray and HD DVD Nov. 20 for the first time with all 14 songs from the original 1976 concert film. Expectations for the title, which includes never-before-released performance footage of “Over the Hills and Far Away” and “Celebration Day,” are high. “The traditional DVD sold very well and by today’s standards it looks and sounds pretty awful. So we can make, with the new version, quite an impact,” Feltenstein says.

With Led Zeppelin, there’s an opportunity to seize the attention of a demographic that doesn’t have many titles aimed at them. “There’s not a lot of product for anyone over the age of 25. It’s very youth-oriented,” Zeppelin crosses a wide range of demo groups—including kids today,” Feltenstein says.

As such, Warner Home Video’s marketing plan aims to reach the core Zeppelin fan as well as kids just discovering classic rock. An extensive online campaign will utilize search marketing and viral marketing to reach the younger demo, and Warner will also target industry and music trades, fan sites, and sweepstakes and promotions.

Reaching multiple, distinct demographics is also a challenge for Epic in the run-up to the Nov. 12 release of Shakira’s “Live in Miami—The Oral Fixation Tour.”

“This is different than putting out a DVD when you’re targeting a fan base with a marketing message. [With Blu-ray] it’s a multidimensional message,” Epic senior VP of marketing Lee Stimmel says. “You’re targeting that artist’s fans and you’re targeting the high-end early adopters who’ve bought into this technology, and when it comes to Blu-ray, you have the install base of the [PlayStation 3], which is a whole different demographic.”

According to Stimmel, reaching the high-definition early adopter meant having proper messaging “in all the places where all the people who adopted this new format would try to find new software—like manuals from our parent company Sony.”

The Shakira Blu-ray will get a national splash the night before street date with screenings at theaters in the high-def format. The price of the Blu-ray release will be built into the ticket price for the screening, and fans will be able to take home a copy that night. Partners for the promotion are currently being worked on.

In terms of educating the consumer on the benefits of high-definition, Stimmel says Epic is looking to the hardware side for the lead. “At this point we’re letting the hardware people and the studios—the people with a lot vested in the platform—lead the way here and let the consumer figure out there are movies and music titles available,” he says.

Feltenstein says the education process is an important challenge facing the industry. “There isn’t a real organized industry-wide initiative,” he says. “A lot of times you’ll go in a store and you’ll see a promo for a HD DVD disc or a Blu-ray disc, and the disc they’re running half the time isn’t even a high-def disc.”

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Nokia Launches Music Service, iPhone Rival

Nokia has launched its much-anticipated digital music service, a move designed to expand the company's mobile entertainment footprint and turn up the heat on Apple's iTunes and iPhone. The service works on music-specialized mobile phones and PCs. Music purchased from the service will be protected in the Windows Media Audio format. The site is limited to the European market for now, and will expand to Asia later this year. No plans were disclosed for a U.S. rollout.

Paisley, Strait Lead CMA Nods

Brad Paisley and George Strait lead the field with five nominations each for the Country Music Assn. Awards, which take place in November in Nashville. Reigning entertainer of the year Kenny Chesney, LoCash and Martina McBride each received four nominations, and Big & Rich, Ross Band, Carrie Underwood and Keith Urban each scored three nods. The 44th Annual CMA Awards will take place Nov. 7 at the Sommet Center in Nashville. The show will air on ABC.

Guerra Leads Latin Grammy Nods

Juan Luis Guerra leads the nominations for the eighth annual Latin Grammy Awards with five nods. Following Guerra are Puerto Rican star Ricky Martin and Cuban duo Calle 13, with four nods each; artists up for three awards each include Miguel Bolívar and Venezuelan troubadour Franco de Vita. The Latin Grammy Awards will take place Nov. 8 in Las Vegas and will air live on the Univision network.

People Have The Power

Boost Mobile Rock Corps Rewards Community Service With Live Music

"Who’s ready to get dirty?" Vanessa Duney yells to 100-plus young New Yorkers, while a house six rows from the PA behind her, hooting everyone is game. This isn’t a club on Saturday night—it’s 9 a.m. on Sunday, and these kids will have gathered at Manhattan’s Inwood Hill Park to pull up weeds.

This invasive plant removal on Aug. 19 was a community service project organized by Boost Mobile Rock Corps (BMRC), where Duney is a program manager. The Corps is a centerpiece of Boost Mobile’s national branding strategy to boost the lifestyle and status of young people in ways that matter, according to VP/chief marketing officer Darrell Cobbin. After four hours of work, each volunteer will get lunch and a free ticket to an exclusive concert Oct. 6 at Radio City Music Hall featuring Ludacris and artists to be confirmed.

The New York show wraps an 11-city tour with the slogan “Got 2 Give 2 Get,” including performances at various stops by Taking Back Sunday, Young Jew, Korn, The Game and others. The program grew this year from eight cities in 2006, including the addition of Atlanta as an anchor stop.

In New York, Los Angeles and Atlanta, 3,000-5,000 volunteers participated in one of several dozens service projects that range from mural painting to park maintenance. Those payoff concerts are huge productions, and one each year is broadcast on MTV2. Smaller tours stop involve a weekend of projects, and either an exclusive club show or tickets to an existing concert will access to a BMRC VIP tent. "We really see the power in the exclusivity," BMRC co-founder/COO Grady Lee says. "We love that entire brand experience for Boost and the volunteers.

BMRC launched in 2005 when Boost Mobile partnered with Rock Corps, a fledging company that saw concert tickets as a way to attract young people to volunteer service. Rock Corps had evolved from the Greenbacks Foundation, a Telluride, Colo., nonprofit that became Rock Corps when the founders decided to change the funding model.

"We were very deliberate about Rock Corps not being a nonprofit, but rather a production company that benefitted our nonprofit partners and didn’t compete with their funding stream," BMRC co-founder/CEO Stephen Greene says. "We wanted it to be a marketing program for big brands, and what we thought was the way you can get big quickly and have a big impact.

Rock Corps connected with Boost Mobile just when Boost, a regional company going national, needed to build awareness with a focus on youth aged 14-24. "It seemed like a perfect marriage of vision," Cobbin says. "We thought that by partnering with nonprofits in the communities where we do business, folks would know us not only from our ads on the Web site, they would know us as the brand that actually helped them do something in their community.

According to a 2006 BMRC survey, 88% of 2005 volunteers did volunteer for a community organization within a year of their BMRC experience.

Participating artists aren’t in it for the money, although BMRC does pay at least enough to cover costs. But the biggest benefit is the vibe. "It’s cool because you’re playing a show that everyone had to work really hard to get into," Taking Back Sunday lead singer Adam Lazzara says. After playing at Radio City in 2006, the band signed on to do four BMRC shows this year, including an Aug. 27 gig in Philadelphia that felt like a private show for 300 friends. "We really feel like we earned the tickets," says Kate Adams, 19, a fan who helped clean Philadelphia’s Hunting Park in July. "We have a very glass-half-full view of 14- to 24-year-olds," Lee says. "They have so much energy, and our nonprofit partners tell us so much work gets done. The whole time they’re dancing, talking, giggling and working their butts off. And at the shows, they levitate. They just can’t stand it."
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Welcome To The Club

Touring

BY MITCHELL PETERS

 Indie Labels Experimenting With Their Own Venues

Traditionally, record companies stick to what they do best: selling and promoting albums. But some labels are taking their way into the concert venue business, the most high-profile being Saddle Creek's recently opened 470-capacity club Slowdown in Omaha, Neb.

Righteous Babe Records and Netwerk Music Group have also jumped into the live music space in hopes of driving revenue and creating a setting to showcase artists while potentially recruiting new ones.

"It's a way to break down the barrier between the public and the record label," says Netwerk CEO Terry McBride, who in 2006 opened Sync music lounges at Netwerk offices in Vancouver, Los Angeles and Nashville.

While regularly showcasing live performances from Netwerk artists, the 75-to-200-capacity Sync venues (which are connected to label offices) welcome local artists as well. As a benefit to those acts, the spaces offer built-in sound systems and recording facilities. "We've had artists take the audiovisual and put it up on their MySpace pages," McBride says. "And we don't charge for that ... they just have to give us a blank CD."

Although Netwerk hasn't yet signed an outside artist who has performed at a Sync location, McBride isn't losing hope. "Maybe someday the next Jimi Hendrix will play there and we'll see it recorded and be smart enough to sign them," he says.

Meanwhile, New York-based Righteous Babe this month will open Asbury Hall, a 1,200-capacity performance hall that sits inside a 19th-century Buffalo, N.Y., church, which the label bought from the city in 2000. The church, dubbed Babeville, launches with back-to-back concerts from label founder/artist Ani DiFranco Sept. 11-12. Righteous Babe president Scot Fisher, who also manages DiFranco, says owning a venue is a way to expand into different facets of the music business.

"It's more challenging out there," Fisher says, noting that labels are becoming more interested in touring artists. "There are a lot more revenue sources ... the traditional ones are disappearing.

In Omaha, Saddle Creek label manager and Slowdown co-owner Jason Kulbel says that having a roster of actively touring artists was a benefit when designing the all-ages venue. "You're opening a new club, the agents know that reputation will go over into the

FACTORY RENOVATION

A New Booker From Portland Sets Out To Revitalize New York Club

During the past 20 years, New York nightclub the Knitting Factory has grown into Knitting Factory Entertainment, which encompasses two clubs (the original and a Hollywood location), seven now-dormant record labels and the Pacific Northwest-based production company Bravo Entertainment. Since early this year, however, reports of the building being on the market and perceptions of unfocused booking have fueled speculation online that the Knit might succumb to competitive pressure and close its doors.

In an effort to revitalize and reinvent the club, assistant manager Tim Putnam reached out to Chantele Hylton, who spent seven years booking a variety of clubs in Portland, Ore., where she became known for two things: creative, quirky bills and being the last person to book three now-shuttered clubs. Still, Putnam and GM Shalynn Vishavadia liked Hylton's vision enough to bring her onboard as senior talent buyer.

"I definitely learned some lessons in Portland," Hylton says. "I finally embraced the idea that venues need to make money and pay the bills in order to stay open. With that said, my goal is to focus on booking thoughtful, innovative, quality music, and not spend all my time chasing the 'hot' band."

Hylton's vision for the club includes a number of partnerships, such as a Monday night series curated by local music bloggers and teaming up with other businesses that, in her words, "think about music and how they want to see music happen in a different way."

She is also planning on diversifying the type of shows the space hosts, with a stand-up comedy series and a number of Hip-hop shows in the works. Hylton also hopes to reach out to the local music community and showcase New York-based talent. "There really aren't any spaces here for home-grown music," she says. "We do a hundred shows a month and have three rooms with different capacities, so there are a lot of opportunities for different kinds of bands."

Whether this translates into profit or crowds remains to be seen. But, Hylton says, "One thing I've discovered is that people have a lot of affection and respect for the space. I really think it can only improve." -Courtney Harding
Hilly Kristal
1932-2007

Hilly Kristal, the godfather of punk rock, died Aug. 28 due to lung cancer complications. He was 75.

Kristal’s death comes less than a year after his landlord broke his heart and forced the closing of his legendary CBGB, the Bowery club in Manhattan that served as the launching pad for the Ramones, Television, Blondie, Talking Heads, the Patti Smith Group and dozens of others that would become synonymous with punk rock and its many offshoots.

“Hilly was our good shepherd; he opened up his house to us, and he was so supportive,” Patti Smith says. “He didn’t judge us or ask us for anything, except to be good people. Back then, there was no place for Television or Richard Hell or myself, because we didn’t fit in with the trends of the industry. We were disenfranchised, and he took a place on skid row and made it a home and shelter for us. It became a haven for poets and artists and musicians.”

Kristal was born in 1932 in Hightstown, N.J., and moved to New York to become a singer. He later worked in Greenwich Village as a folk singer before becoming the manager of the Village Vanguard. In the ’70s he opened his own club, Hilly’s, which would become CBGB in 1973.

CBGB opened at a time when the Bowery was still known for flophouses and homeless people. But Kristal’s club proved to be a haven that would help rebuild not only the Bowery but the entire East Village, as thousands of young adults from across America flocked to live in the area’s tenements to be a part of the burgeoning downtown music scene.

After punk hit the mainstream, Kristal helped bring a new underground form of it to the forefront when his all-ages hardcore Sunday night shows.

Ironically, the club had initially featured country bands and traditional Irish music. But soon it was the only place in New York championing “open booking”—no one else was doing it,” says Tom Verlaine, guitarist for Television, the band credited with relocating the club’s stage and with first performing original music at the club.

At the time, most small New York venues booked only cover bands. Max’s Kansas City and the Mercer Arts Center were occasional exceptions. But for a while, several other venues had switched over to unsigned, original bands, and New York had regained its status as the music industry’s hotspot.

But the only club that stood the test of time was CBGB. That is until the venue was derailed by its landlord, the Bowery Residents Committee, which, according to one report, wanted Kristal to pay anywhere from $40,000 to $65,000 per month for the club that he initially rented for $600 per month.

Despite a protracted legal battle and campaign to save the club, CBGB closed for good in October 2006 after a series of shows by many of the bands that called it home, including the Dictators, Bad Brains and a final show by Smith.

“I don’t know what life would have been like without CBGB or Hilly,” the Dictators’ Handsome Dick Manitoba says. “That’s because, for over 30 years, I played his club, watched others play his club and visited Hilly and the staff.

“There was a special chemistry that comes from sharing something important in life with another person,” Manitoba says. “It was a person, a time, a place and an experience that was powerful and symbolic.”

In Verlaine’s mind, Kristal’s character is distinctive in today’s industry. “He was a totally great guy and completely honest,” he says. “Those two things are kind of rare in the music business.”

Kristal is survived by his daughter, Lisa Kristal Burgma; and his son, Mark Dana Kristal. Contributions in Kristal’s honor may be made in his name to the American Cancer Society or to the Hilly Kristal Foundation for Musicians and Artists (168 Second Ave., PMB 207, New York, NY 10003).

Additional reporting by Jonathan Cohen and Corinna Harding.
Chile Today, Hot Tamale

Grass-Roots Mexican-American Rapper Chingo Bling Graduates From The Taco Circuit

Drive around Houston or Dallas and you're bound to see the strategically placed billboard: "They Can't Deport Us All," it says, over a caricature of a man jumping a fence.

A political statement, to be sure, but also the tale of the new album by Houston rapper Chingo Bling (real name José Herrera III). Regardless, the message has become fodder for conservative talk shows—whose debate has helped put Chingo Bling, who raps in English to Latin audiences, in the mainstream spotlight like never before.

"They Can't Deport Us All," released Aug. 14, debuted at No. 11 on Billboard's Top Rap Albums chart and at No. 4 on the Heatseekers chart, selling 6,000 units in its opening week, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The numbers aren't monumental—but consider that Chingo Bling is mostly a local, underground phenomenon, who has always been promoted and released his albums independently. Although his past solo effort, 2004's "Tamale Kingpin," sold 17,000 copies, according to SoundScan, "They Can't" marks his first appearance on the Billboard charts.

As tempting as it may be to attribute this showing to the controversy, there is much else behind it. For years now, Chingo Bling has been releasing mixtapes out of the back of his truck, touting himself with the braggadocio of the infinitely self-confident, in keeping with his 10-gallon hat and Nike ostrich boots.

From his Big Chile Enterprises offices in Houston, he presides over his own record label and a distribution company that sells his music and other indie releases along with a slew of merchandise, from bobblehead dolls to T-shirts and chili sauce. His major outlets are the Internet, swap meets and mom-and-pop stores that for years he has served personally.

"We like to call it the underground," Chingo Bling says. "And the underground is very big." Chingo Bling's core circuit is Texas, but nationally he does what he calls "the Taco circuit," playing wherever there are Mexicans.

"Someone who goes by SoundScan and radio, they'll say, 'Chingo, he's nobody,' " Chingo Bling says. "But if you go to a market and you see me open for someone or headline, you'll see, 'Man, this guy is big.' It's under the radar. It's like an immigrant without papers. You know we're there, but you can't face it.'"

With "They Can't," however, Chingo Bling is facing it head-on. The album was released under a new distribution deal with Warner/Asylum, which is also putting money into marketing and promotion. Now, for the first time, a Chingo album can be found in outlets like Best Buy.

"I always felt a lot of people didn't take us seriously because we didn't have SoundScan," he says. "I wanted a bigger platform as an artist and entertainer, so I could turn around and get a better movie deal, endorsement or merchandising." Chingo Bling retains ownership of his masters and has final say on all marketing. He's also negotiating with Warner to be allowed to manufacture separate copies of his album for distribution at a lower price to the indie retailers with which he has long done business.

And, despite his major deal, don't expect Chingo Bling to put aside his entrepreneurial spirit.

"It's very fundamental," he says with a laugh. "My theory is, you can't worry about the finish line. It's like basketball. Instead of worrying about winning, you should worry about dribbling the basketball. A lot of kids worry about getting signed instead of worrying about posting your blog, getting on YouTube, putting up posters on poles, passing out fliers. I'm not above that. I have no shame."

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NOT JUST MARIACHI

A Festival In San Jose Broadens Its Base

The San Jose International Mariachi Festival, celebrating a niche subgenre of Latin music, is looking to expand into a signature event with broad appeal.

The 16th edition of the fest, taking place Sept. 26-30 in San Jose, Calif., should see a surge in its attendance thanks to a widening of the festival and to three major headliners: Linda Ronstadt, Los Lobos and Marco Antonio Solís, none specifically a mariachi act.

"We want to establish a broader audience for the traditional music and we want to reach a younger generation," says Marcela Davidson, president/CEO of Mexican Heritage Plaza and executive producer of the event. Typically, the festival attracts 20,000 over three days. This year, festivities include three days of workshops and seminars followed by two days of performances by roughly a dozen mariachi artists, student groups and a dozen acts that fall into the pop/world music realm, including Ozomatli.

It's a change from when Davidson took over the small, local event linked to mariachi education programs three years ago.

In 2006, the fest expanded by bringing in Mexican pop/ranchera icon Juan Gabriel as headliner, which led Marquez Brothers Entertainment GM Tim Luce says. "This could be a solid destination event that builds year after year."

As part of its sponsorship, Marquez brought in Solís to perform. The singer will play the festival as part of his current U.S. tour.

Davidson has already seen the festival's gross income jump, from $200,000 in 2005 to $1 million last year. Net profits also went from $50,000 in 2004 to more than $200,000 last year. The money is reinvested in educational programs.

"The more net profit I have, the more capacity to hire more instructors," Davidson says. "-LC
STARTING AT THE TOP

Chesney Debuts High On Hot Country Songs Chart, Garth To Go Higher?

New singles from country superstars Kenny Chesney and Garth Brooks are experiencing unprecedented early success at radio.

Chesney shatters the Nielsen BDS-era benchmark for the top debut on Hot Country Songs in this week’s issue, and matches the all-time record, as “Don’t Blink” (BNA) scores Hot Shot Debut at No. 16. The second single from Chesney’s Sept. 11 release, “Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates,” tallied 12.7 million audience impressions out of the box.

The quick start marks the highest bow since the chart began using BDS-based airplay tracking in 1990. Keith Urban’s “Once in a Lifetime” debuted at No. 17 a year ago. Prior to the advent of BDS, the highest opener was a No. 16 start by Buck Owens’ “My Heart Skips a Beat” in 1964.

Meanwhile, the first single from Chesney’s new album, “Never Wanted Nothing More,” falls 1-3 after spending five weeks in the top spot.

Like a number of other stations, country WBCT Grand Rapids, Mich., played Chesney’s new single in a significant rotation—in this case 35 times per week—while still spinning his previous single a good hit—25 times per week. WBCT PD Doug Montgomery says two factors came into play.

“It was based on both who he is as an artist—he’s the top-testing artist for us—and because he delivers a bull’s-eye shot right to the heart of every parent who is taking their kids back to school, or even maybe more pointedly, to school for the first time this fall.” The song deals with living life to its fullest and not taking anything for granted.

“We had a dad call in the other morning bawling because his daughter was starting high school that day and he related directly to ‘Don’t Blink.’” Montgomery says.

But Chesney’s new record may be short-lived now that radio is overwhelmingly receiving Brooks’ new single, “More Than a Memory.” Part of the forthcoming “The Ultimate Hits” package on Brooks’ own Pearl Records, the single is promoted by Nashville-based Big Machine Records.

Digitally delivered to radio at midnight ET Aug. 17, the single has already garnered enough airplay in three days to place it at No. 1 on a Nielsen BDS country airplay building chart. (A building chart ranks airplay based on the number of days in a given week that BDS has data for.)

Country WDXB Birmingham, Ala., is among the stations that have played the new single—in some cases, more than any other record on their respective playlists. “We played it every hour from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday,” OM Tom Hanrahan says. “The reason was simple: It was Garth, and the song has the classic Garth sound.”

There’s another reason cited by Hanrahan and other programmers: nostalgia. “Hearing new music from him reminds me of good times in the format—the early ‘90s during the boom time of country.”

Country KMPS Seattle PD Becky Brenner says the fact that both Chesney’s and Brooks’ singles were available for consumption only at country radio was also a factor. “A majority of music consumers still say that they find out about new music from their favorite radio station,” she says. “In the case of Garth’s new single, it is also a huge plus that he sticks by his ‘only available on the radio’ promise. It gives us something exclusive that we rarely get anymore.”

Additional reporting by Wade Jessen in Nashville.
Subscription Prescription

How To Cure The Ills Of The All-You-Can-Eat Digital Approach

My, how the subscription music landscape has changed. At this time last year, Virgin Digital, AOL and MTV were still offering service. Sure, MTV’s Urge is still active, but it’s being folded into RealNetworks’ Rhapsody service. Virgin Digital and AOL got out of the game altogether and migrated their customers to Napster.

But as much as the view has changed, the subscription music market has a lot more evolving to do before it can play a significant role in the digital music space. It may look different, but the challenges remain the same.

MARKETING

Most people just don’t understand the subscription model. Educating customers on the value proposition takes extensive (and expensive) advertising, which no subscription music provider has done to date. They’ve jabbed at a few print ads here and there, or the occasional short-term TV campaign (remember Napster’s Super Bowl ad?), but nothing has even come close to the marketing muscle and creative supporting Apple’s iTunes service.

MTV never pulled the trigger on the promised marketing campaign behind the Urge service, which it was to be fair never officially emerged from beta. Though its deal with Rhapsody, however, the company is contractually obligated to spending $230 million during the next five years on "hard advertising"—meaning print, TV and other campaigns—in addition to its own on-air and online programming. Additionally, the involvement of Verizon Wireless as a mobile partner adds another strong marketing presence to the effort. Even if Napster’s more market innovating the earlier initiative became much less of a priority, Rhapsody is doing so through partnerships with Circuit City, AOL and such wireless operators as Japan’s NTT DoCoMo and AT&T.

The pool of users is going to increase immensely when we bring subscription music to the Web.

—IAN ROGERS, YAHOO

Rhapsody had the funds to launch a full advertising assault, most consumers haven’t heard of either RealNetworks or Rhapsody, while MTV and Verizon are household names.

"The level of marketing commitment is well beyond anything we’ve ever done in the past," RealNetworks CEO Rob Glaser says. "The notion of combining these two marketing behemoths is very, very exciting."

DISTRIBUTION

Few people seek out subscription music services. The way to get around this is to strike distribution deals with more popular and recognizable brands to add subscription capabilities to their services. MTV tried just this by bundling Urge with Windows Media Player 11, but Microsoft proved a fickle partner, as it left the zone strategy soon after and supplied Rhapsody teams with Comcast, Verizon and others.

But why stop there? The best thing these companies can do is team up with a social networking service, such as a Facebook, MySpace, Last.fm or MOG. Facebook, for example, lets members show their favorite music in their profiles, but doesn’t allow other members to stream those songs directly. It requires some kind of widget (like Last.fm’s application), but in many cases even those are limited to 30-second samples.

Adding full-song streaming from a subscription music provider could work wonders.

The pool of users is going to increase immensely when we bring this to the Web,

—YAHOO MUSIC GM IAN ROGERS

During the next six months, Yahoo will be streaming music from its subscription service to other Yahoo services like blog profiles, news and reviews, and search results.

Napster and Rhapsody will have to pair with a social networking service to do the same. The challenge is providing users a free, ad-supported version of their service that everyone can use, but also offering an incentive to migrate to paying customers.

And a robust advertising system is crucial. For each song they let users stream for free, RIAs and Napster will have to sell an ad that supports the fee they must pay the music industry. At the relatively low level of use that their free services experience now, it’s easy to do. But launching on Facebook would generate a great deal more traffic and place greater burdens on compensation.

MOTO-ROLL WITH IT

Perhaps responding to the iPhone onslaught, Motorola is positioning the new version of the O smart phone as a mobile entertainment device. The Moto Q music 9m doesn’t have the same ring to it as the iPhone, but it does heavily emphasize the multimedia capabilities of today’s high-end phones.

For an extra $50, buyers can get a 2 GB miniSD card and stereo headset.

—Antony Bruno

BITS & BRIEFS

FACE THE MUSIC TASTES

Social networking giant Facebook reportedly is working on a new advertising system designed to let advertisers target specific users based on age, gender and musical tastes, among other things. Facebook confirmed it is designing a system, but did not provide details. The site’s existing ad platform requires company staff to sell and create the ads, while the proposed new system would be automated. Key to the system are predictive algorithms that will learn Facebook users’ preferences and make suggestions on potential ad topics.

MOORE MOBILE, MOORE BLOGGING

Mandy Moore will be blogging her thoughts and behind-the-scenes photos and videos, as well as hold contests and give away prizes on her upcoming tour in support of her new album "Wild Hope" and her new film "Dedication," through the Buzznet social network. She will upload most of the photos and videos—as well as share a list of her favorite music, fashion, makeup and travel discoveries each week—from a mobile phone provided by Buzznet. As part of the effort, fans will be invited to enter a contest for "Best (Worst) Break-Up" story for a chance to meet Moore during the tour.

ORCHARD GROWTH

Digital distributor the Orchard has licensed its catalog of indie and world music to eCast, a provider of touchscreen, Internet-connected jukeboxes. eCast has sold 10,000 jukeboxes in distribution, as well as content deals with all the major labels and the independent Online Distribution Alliance. Users can search for specific songs and download them to each jukebox for subsequent play. Additionally, users can store personal playlists with the eCast system that they can access from multiple locations.
Like most of the music industry, award-winning record producer Don Was is struggling to make sense of the Internet. His foray takes the form of a syndicated Web video series on the newly launched My Damn Channel, where he interviews such rock stars as Ozzy Osbourne and films studio sessions with artists like Jill Sobule.

Any music recorded for the site can be downloaded for free, subsidized by Internet advertising. In addition, content created for the site can be found on YouTube, and soon will spread to other digital platforms.

Was also has added a podcast series, and hints at additional innovations down the line. His method is to let the outlet—the Web site—drive the content creation, rather than create content first and then find a Web outlet for distribution.

Was chatted with Billboard about the new Web service, why he’s doing it and what the industry might learn.

What are you trying to accomplish with the My Damn Channel portal? In general, people are looking for a way to continue to make music in an ever-changing business frontier. The old model, which I hoped would last forever, needs a shot of...something. So everything I’m doing represents new ways to do the thing I love to do, which is make music, but in a context that addresses reality.

Who are you trying to reach? I have no idea. There’s not enough precedent. I approach it the same way I approach making records. I think that’s what a good record producer does—make a record you’d like to own and assume that if you enjoy it that others will too. Everybody won’t, but there will be enough people to justify the action.

Why My Damn Channel? Why not just make your own Web site? They’re doing something that’s really different, particularly when you apply it to music rather than comedy videos. There’s a real excitement to it. It’s just something new to do, and there’s something electrifying about doing something for the first time.

You’re subsidizing free downloads with advertising. Why? That seemed like something worth pursuing. It basically uses network TV as the business model. To look at an ad on a page while you’re downloading a song for free doesn’t seem like it’s asking too much for people. And if it works, it’s the end of the piracy issue. It just goes away. Think of the billions being spent in R&D to fight piracy, and it just goes away. You can get back to making records. I’m not looking to replace the music biz; I’m looking to help it.

Is the music industry taking advantage of the online tools available? No. I think the fact that the music industry, which should really be leading the charge on technology and putting it to good use, are like a bunch of grandmas trying to figure out e-mail. 20 years after the fact. It’s so slow to apply it creatively; it’s probably the leading cause of the woes they’re experiencing right now.

You’re using a mix of podcasts, free downloads, video. What was the inspiration for how you’ve put all this together? When I wanted to explain the layout of the page, I couldn’t find a good way to describe it. The closest thing I can come to is art galleries online. Galleries and the hipper museums have great Web sites. They offer all this stuff from being able to walk through the museum and see the work they have, to music, to lectures. And I thought, "This is what I want to do with music."
Retailer theories and arguments aside (see last issue's Retail Track), six weeks after the Supreme Court decided that minimum pricing is no longer by definition illegal, it can be proved to enhance competition. Lawyers at three of the majors appear to have decided that the ruling changes nothing. Consequently, sources say, those labels won't implement any new pricing strategies.

The lawyers' stance is no surprise. After all, lawyers at the majors already had their chance to stand up and be counted when the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) challenged them at the turn of the century on minimum-advertising pricing policies. A little history is needed to explain that challenge. In the early to mid-'90s, five of the six majors implemented what is termed a "soft" MAP policy. In that scenario, any retailer advertising specific designated titles below a vendor's MAP prices—which ranged from $11.99 to $15.99, depending on the major—was ineligible to access cooperative advertising funds, which manufacturers describe as a privilege, not a condition of doing business with them. Since vendors said retailers could sell for any price, governmental agencies viewed that form of MAP, which the video industry still uses to this day, as legal.

But back then, discounters found loopholes by requesting pricing-and-position funds for one album and then advertising another new superstar album for less than MAP in Sunday circulars. So eventually the majors adopted "hard" MAP policies that said retailers advertising "any" product below MAP aren't eligible for cooperative advertising funds whatsoever. That policy triggered two lengthy investigations, ending with the FTC threatening to charge the majors with using those policies as price-fixing mechanisms.

Instead of defending the MAP policies like Leegin Creative Leather Products did in the antitrust suit that resulted in the recent Supreme Court ruling, the major labels signed a consent decree in early 2000 that did away with MAP policies for seven years. A price war ensued that now plants a $9.99 price point firmly in consumers' minds.

Although the major-label corporate lawyers are again urging the cautious approach that makes their jobs easier, at least this time other factors play into why the majors still won't take a stand on minimum-pricing restraints.

If the Supreme Court ruling opens the door to argue that minimum-pricing restraints can foster competition, it also ensures that lawsuits involving the issue will be very costly, one lawyer familiar with the ruling says. For example, the Supreme Court ruling only affects federal law, but 37 state attorneys general filed briefs arguing for the court's decision to maintain the status quo. So if minimum-pricing restraints are instituted, labels could still find themselves facing state prosecutors and trying to convince state supreme courts to follow federal thinking.

Another consideration: The music industry is a special case in that its copyright laws include the first-sale doctrine, which says that once you buy a creative work like a CD, you have the right to resell it without the copyright holder's permission. So if discounters decided to legally fight minimum pricing, the labels could find themselves in a costly legal quagmire with another spin beside antitrust violations.

Also muddying the situation: Many labels sell direct and are, in effect, competitors with their retail accounts. So if such a label implements minimum pricing, a legal argument might arise as to whether such restraints are vertical or horizontal. That's a complex issue that—you guessed it—could also mean expensive litigation.

And don't forget that each major has a contingent of executives who believe that not only is the business going totally digital, but it can't happen too soon. So why pursue a strategy that might result in a costly legal battle, when, in that viewpoint, what happens at brick-and-mortar retail won't matter in a few years anyway.

Legal and technological arguments aside, there is a more practical consideration to ponder. Even if labels can legally implement minimum-pricing restraints, they also have to enforce them, which means cutting off selling accounts not in compliance. Ask yourself: Can you foresee any label cutting off Wal-Mart, Target or Best Buy?

Finally, there is one more reason why most labels won't do anything. The Supreme Court ruling might have meant something five years ago, before the retail bloodbath. But choose whatever cliché you like—the cow has left the barn, the car has left the garage, the ship has sailed from port—it's simply too late to matter.
MAMA's Houses
Acquisitions Put Group At Forefront Of British Live Market

LONDON—British music group MAMA is stepping up to the big leagues with the acquisition of several key London venues and some aggressive expansion plans.

The £6 million ($12 million) deal to buy the brand, Web site and six further venues from British live music power house Mean Fiddler Music Group—after MAMA had previously purchased the London Forum—is just the start, according to co-CEO Dean James. He says the group has a further £2 million, ($14 million) to invest.

“We have 18 venues now, and we've got two brands—Jazz Cafe and G-A-Y (both part of the MFMG deal)—for which we'd like to open more venues,” he says. “In the mid-term, we'd like to have 30 venues at maximum [capacity of 2,000].”

That would strengthen what already looks like a dominant position in the under-2,000-capacity sector. Since floating on the Alternate Investment Market segment of the London Stock Exchange in 2002, MAMA has largely operated underneath the radar of the wider business, emerging briefly last year when it launched a bid for Sanctuary Group, subsequently sold to Universal Music Group.

James says 60% of Sanctuary shareholders approved the bid but it ultimately foundered because “Sanctuary's management didn't want to do it. We would have liked to see its management voted in.”

MAMA consists of three divisions. Live Music gathers the existing Barfly network with those newly acquired venues and has interests in several events. The Consumer division features magazine The Fly and specialist media and marketing agency Campus Group, while the Artist Services arm encompasses artist and producer management, music publishing and merchandising.

This includes Supervision Management's roster of acts that contains Franz Ferdinand, Kaiser Chiefs and rising acts the Cribs and Howling Bells.

"Because we find bands at a very early stage through the Barfly network we get good lead indicators,” James says. “We can see how many tickets they sell, how many pints of beer are sold across the counter when they are at our venues. It all fits together.”

MAMA's latest purchase will beef up the business considerably. The six venues brought in reported combined sales of nearly £8 million ($16 million) for 2006, with a before-tax profit of £466,000 ($932,000).

For the six months ending Jan. 31, MAMA reported group revenue of £3.48 million ($10.9 million), up 4.5% from the corresponding period in the previous year.

“Obviously, they're a serious contender, having taken on those venues,” says Bob Angus, managing director of leading independent promoter Metropolitan Music and director of Live Nation/Gaiety-owned venues group Academy Music Group. “Dean really seems to be the mover and shaker.”

Others in the live industry privately wonder whether MAMA might be over-reaching, but James says he has no such worries. “We are ready to make the big step up,” says the former MFMG CEO who joined the business with Adam Driscoll, co-founder of MAMA's Channelfly subsidiary. "My background is in £1 billion ($2 billion) PLCs, so this is still quite small for me."

MFMG has now rebranded as Festival Republic, with managing director Melvin Benn dismissive of the impact of MAMA's acquisition.

“Anything that was worthwhile is with the new Festival Republic company,” he says. “Anything that we considered not of great value to us, we sold.”

"It's disappointing to hear those comments,” James says. “If they were a part of the Mean Fiddler group which weren't valuable, they were certainly with the company for a long time. The Jazz Cafe is one of the best venues in London.”
PAST ITS PRIME?

U.K. Music TV Flourishes In Late-Night Margins

LONDON—A year after the demise of “Top of the Pops,” the window to U.K. music TV is still open—but it’s a difficult one to climb through these days.

With the BBC ending the legendary chart show’s 42-year run last year, and the likes of “CD: UK” (ITV) and “Popworld” (Channel 4) also axed, TV “pluggers” have more hope than expectation that the industry will again have a prime-time, music-only show to call its own. Meanwhile, the scramble for popular slots has become ultra-competitive.

“All of us think it’s tougher than it’s ever been,” one promotions executive says.

But there remain plenty of programs with music content on British TV, even if the only mass-audience programs to book music guests are essentially reality or contest-driven series such as ITV’s “The X Factor” or BBC’s “Strictly Come Dancing,” both of which command audiences of some 10 million.

They also sell records: Classical crossover quartet Il Divo’s performance on “The X Factor” last November helped its third album “Siempre” (Syco) achieve the group’s best first-week U.K. sales (166,000).

BBC TV creative head of music entertainment Mark Cooper takes a positive view.

“Music on television is in a better state than it was five years ago,” he says, describing a particularly busy period for his department involving coverage of June’s Glastonbury and August’s Reading/Leeds festivals, concerts on BBC1 and digital channel BBC4, and BBC2’s venerable performance show “Later . . . With Jools Holland.” The last of which continues to be hugely sought-after, punching well above the weight of its Friday 11.35 p.m. slot. He also enthuses about the new BBC iPlayer, downloadable software that allows viewers to access BBC TV output for a week after broadcast.

“Generally our shows are on late at night,” Cooper says. “Will it always be that way? Probably, but it doesn’t bother me.”

Bookings on chat shows “Friday Night: With Jonathan Ross” (BBC1) and ITV1’s “Parkinson” are also much desired. Veteran British vocalist Joe Cocker’s May “Parkinson” performance fueled a top 10 debut for his “Hymn for My Soul” album (Parlophone/EMI). Parlophone head of TV Helena McGeeough says the label delayed the album release to accommodate the booking.

HMV rock/pop buyer John Hirst says that while televised award ceremonies can be a powerful sales tool, “live appearances on shows such as ‘Later’ can be equally impactful, particularly when they introduce a new artist to a wider audience.”

“When Corinne Bailey Rae first appeared on the show a couple of years back,” he adds, “it prompted huge demand at HMV stores even though she hadn’t yet been signed.

Other shows like Channel 4’s “The Friday Night Project” and “Transmission” may rarely exceed 2 million viewers, but

THE SHOWS (YOU) MUST GO ON Six Essential U.K. TV Appearances For Your Artists

‘PARKINSON’ (TV1, SATURDAYS)
Hosted by Michael Parkinson, a chat show mainstay since 1971. This fall’s 12-week run is his last. Most recent program, in June, pulled 3.5 million viewers. Best-known for championing AC-leaning artists such as Katie Melua and Michael Buble.

‘FRIDAY NIGHT WITH JONATHAN ROSS’ (BBC1, FRIDAYS)
Chat show presented by popular U.K. broadcaster. New season starts Sept. 7, and in 2008 will extend to run 40 weeks of the year. Last series peaked with audience of 4.7 million. Widening music policy, with alternative rock emphasis. First guests on new series: the Polyphonic Spree.

‘LATER . . . WITH JOOLS HOLLAND’ (BBC2, FRIDAYS)
Bedrock of performance music TV since 1992. “Later” completed its 29th season in June with typically eclectic lineup including Paul McCartney and New York electro dance act Shy Child, and returns in November. Average audience of 700,000—a significant number for the show’s channel and time slot—belies mere “tastemaker” status.

‘THE NATIONAL LOTTERY DRAW’ (BBC1, WEDNESDAYS)
Five-minute slot featuring what executives call a “straight pluging platform” for chart-friendly acts like pop quintet Girls Aloud. Draws around 4.5 million viewers.

‘THE X FACTOR’ (TV1, SATURDAYS)
Began new series Aug. 18 with average audience of 9.5 million. Will feature music guests from start of live contest phase in October. Specializes in mainstream pop acts—Il Divo and

NEEDLETIME’ BREAKTHROUGH AT SA’S MOSHITO CONFERENCE

South Africa has a new royalty collecting society. Labels body RISA used the platform of the Aug. 22-25 Moshito Music Conference and Exhibition to unveil details of the South African Music Performance Rights Assn. (SAMPRA), which has been established to collect “Needletime” royalties from music users.

Legislation covering Needletime, the practice of “paying for play time,” was added to the Copyright Amendment Bill in 2001 after a decade of lobbying by the recording industry and performers.

SAMPRA focuses the minister of trade and industry’s, June 2006 publication of regulations for creating collecting societies. Sony BMG managing director Keith Lister
"Generally our shows are on late at night. Will it always be that way? Probably, but it doesn’t bother me."

—MARK COOPER, BBC TV

can also perform an effective promotional job.

"You want to go for all the shows," says Nonstop Promotions managing director Niki Sanderson, who represents artists including Joss Stone. "But if you’ve got a cool band and you get ‘Jonathan Ross,’ ‘Friday Night Project’ and ‘Transmission’, that’s a fantastic campaign."

"The Friday Night Project," with an echo of "Saturday Night Live," has a guest host each week, and was fronted Aug. 17 by Kanye West.

"When we were looking at the promo plot," Mercury head of TV promotion Holly Davies says, "we wanted Kanye to do a TV [show] where people would talk about, a water-cooler moment. And he likes doing different things." West also performed Aug. 20 for Vodafone’s "TIA" series. Other sponsored series include ITV1’s "Orange Playlist" and the aforementioned "Transmission," branded by T-Mobile. Channel 4 also introduced performance/interview series "Live From Abbey Road" this year.

The current crop of shows "are all successful in their own right, and each has completely individual musical formats," Davies says. "It’s difficult to say whether any of them will enjoy the longevity ‘Later’ has, with its respected host (Hol-land] and eclectic style, but we hope so.”

MVPD-Rubicon promotions executive Chris Page is working with Carbon/Silicon, featuring punk vets Mick Jones and Tony James.

"It never was a band crusing out for ‘proper TV, it’s them,’" he says. "Before it would have been kids TV or Top of the Pops, but now there’s a choice; be it ‘Later’, ‘Jonathan Ross’ or ‘Transmission’.

Among daytime vehicles, Parlophone’s McGeough enthuses about "The New Paul O’Grady Show" (C4), GMTV (ITV1) and "Sunday A.M." (BBC1), while Mercury’s Davies acknowledges Channel 4’s "Richard and Judy" and ITV1’s "This Morning.”

Coverage of summer festivals has also been widespread, with Glastonbury coverage spread across BBC1 and the digital BBC3 and BBC4, with "red-button" access to further multiscreen viewing options. A dedicated web site offered a library of complete performances for seven days afterward. Similar one-off programming is now a major plank of the BBC’s TV strategy.

"Music programming is transforming," Cooper says. "We can give a more rounded view of what we’re covering and the audience has much more choice. If we can then make it more available because of the seven-day window, the audience can enjoy more music on their own terms." Cooper also oversees "The BBC1 Sessions," which has showcased Elton John and Bryan Ferry, and concerts for BBC4, the most recent with Proper Records’ Nick Lowe.

"BBC4 music programs are watched by serious fans of a certain age group," says Proper managing director Malcolm Mills, who adds that Lowe enjoyed "a noticeable (sales) spike on Amazon" the day after broadcast.

Despite such developments, executives still hold out hope of a return to prime-time access.

"It might come back in another guise," McGeough says. "These things always go in cycles."

Davies adds, "With the lack of prime-time music shows, we’ve just had to use our imagination and creativity and work harder." ...
Pirate Pairing
Production House, Creative Agency Join Forces

Pirate is one of Canada’s more innovative TV and radio audio production houses. New York-based McHale (formerly McHale/Barone, meanwhile, is a leading audio for video creative agency. The two companies are coming together to form Pirate McHale. Billboard has learned the newly created hybrid company—equal parts agency creative and music production specialists—is helmed by McHale founder Chris McHale and Pirate partners Terry O’Reilly and Tom Eymundson.

With this business marriage, Pirate and McHale are blurring the lines among ad agency, music production house and artist management. In doing so, they are pooling their resources to create an arrangement where one plus one equals three.

Collectively, the two global companies have worked with a wide range of brands, including Toyota, Molsen, Hyundai, Ford, Budweiser, T-Mobile, Volkswagen and McDonald’s. Along the way, they’ve picked up awards from the Clios, Cannes Lions and other advertising organizations.

Pirate New York will work with brands and agencies, with a focus on pushing the boundaries of new media. But there is more to the company’s inner workings. Earlier this year, artist manager Ian Zaider and others formed touring-festival production company Festival Network, which acquired George Wein’s Festival Network. Zaider’s IZ Management company has since been integrated into Festival Network, and Zaider—who manages the careers of Junior Senior and Zap Mama—now heads up Festival Network Media.

Last year, McHale established ties with Ludorum Animation and Festival Network. Though there is no formal relationship or connection between Pirate New York and these two entities, there is a synergy. Indeed, Pirate New York will be seeking branding opportunities for Junior Senior and Zap Mama, Zaider says. McHale, a producer/writer on Zap Mama’s new album, “Supernoon (Heads Up),” says one goal is to expose Zap Mama to “a chalice-drinking demographic.” Zap Mama “doesn’t sell lots of records, but people know her name,” Zaider says. “It’s time to build on that.”

TIME OF OUR LIVES: A couple of weeks ago, on a Friday evening, we went to see Paul Van Dyk at an outdoor concert in New York. Sure, the rain was pouring down, but that didn’t stop the 5,000 or so fans from coming into Central Park SummerStage. It was the first of Van Dyk’s two sold-out SummerStage shows. And it was, in a word, thriving. The four-hour set spotlighted Van Dyk’s skills as a laptop DJ—and saw him playing numerous jams from his new Mute studio album, “In Between.” But all hell broke loose when he played his last song, “Time of Our Lives.” Sauntering onto the stage was Vega4 frontman Johnny McDaid, whose Irish vocals adorn the global smash from Van Dyk’s last album, 2003’s “Reflections.” The anthemic jam is now also featured in an omnipresent Jeep campaign.

Unlike Dirty Vegas’ “Days Go By,” which became a pop hit a few years ago because of a Mitsubishi campaign, “Time of Our Lives” is not crossing over to radio. This needs to change. Perhaps it simply needs a little TLC—a promotional push, perhaps—from Mute parent company Capitol Music Group. Such assistance could potentially turn the now-classic club hit into a very current pop hit.

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Small Stakes

Are EPs Worth The Risk?

Since the start of 2005, 22 EPs have appeared on The Billboard 200 or the Heatseekers chart. In 2007 alone, eight EPs—defined by Billboard as releases priced less than $9.99, with five to nine different songs (or fewer than five, if the release is not named after one of the songs)—have entered one of those charts, and six of them came out.

When Beirut released its debut album in spring 2006, its immediate success came as something of a shock to the band’s label, Ba Da Bing. Label head Ben Goldberg realized that the band wouldn’t be able to quickly turn around a full-length, but that there were a few songs in the can that would not really fit in with the sound of the next album. "We had a collection of live songs we wanted to record, and we wanted to give people a taste of the live show, so we went ahead and put out the EP," Goldberg says. The risk paid off; the "Lonely Island" EP charted and has since sold 14,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Goldberg says, "EPs are an opportunity to experiment with things, to test the water and to open up a band’s sound. EPs are also more quickly forgotten than full-lengths, so the risk is lower." Despite this, Goldberg still sees major problems with the format. "They’re honestly not my favorite things, because they’re not cost-effective. They cost as much to make as a regular CD, even though the sale price is lower.

Victory Records head Tony Brummel echoes this viewpoint. Despite releasing Straight Run’s "Prepare to Be Wrong" EP, which has sold 58,000 copies, and Aiden’s 24,000-selling "Rain in Hell," Brummel says, “I’m totally not interested in the EP. They’re not financially feasible and often tend to lose money. Major retailers charge the same to stock a record, be it an EP, a CD or a single. We’ve released EPs thinking they would help a band’s other albums, and they’ve done nothing. I think people really want full-lengths.”

But Eric Levin, Atlanta-based head of indie retail coalition Alliance of Independent Media Stores, says he’s seen a resurgence in 7-inch and vinyl EP sales, and that putting them out is smart from an A&R standpoint.

"The consumer is OK with paying four or five dollars for an EP," he says. "It keeps the band’s name out there, and because music production and recording has become so much easier, they make more sense to produce now than ever before.

Steven Peterson, of Long Beach, Calif., band Run Doris Run, may be a case in point. "An A&R guy we worked with told us releasing a few EPs was a better move than releasing one full-length, because the more music out there with your name on it, the better," he says. "Besides, we’d rather release five great songs than a full-length with five great songs and five mediocre ones.

In some cases, consumers will also purchase EPs with minimal promotion from the record label—and catering to completists can result in decent numbers. Sub Pop’s Steve Manning says that he purchased almost no ads and didn’t push interviews for Iron and Wine’s 2005 EP "Woman King." Yet it moved 94,000 units, according to SoundScan.

The Yeah Yeah Yeahs’ "It is," released last month, has moved 25,000 units and peaked at No. 72 on The Billboard 200 by offering live recordings of previously unreleased fan favorites.

"When a band has a rabid fan base," says Mike Fratt of six-store Nebraska-based chain Homer’s Records, "an EP is a great way for us to keep them coming back and have fresh product on the shelves.”
The quartet headlining a recent week at New York's Village Vanguard, jazz's most prestigious room, got there with no help from a record label. Nor did it rely on a crowd-pleasing concept. As trumpeter John McNeil wryly explains from the stage on closing night, the band's repertoire consists of non-standards, with an emphasis on "obscure tunes by people who are obscure."

McNeil should know. While a New York jazz veteran of more than 30 years, he has been a rather obscure figure himself. These days he's a bit more widely known thanks to some critically favored albums and the quartet, which he leads with tenor saxophonist Bill McHenry.

For the past year and a half, that group, with Joe Martin on bass and Jochen Rueckert on drums, has held a weekly gig at a barbecue restaurant in Brooklyn. There it reliably attracts a neighborhood audience and a corps of fellow musicians.

It was McHenry, a former student of McNeil's, who campaigned for the booking at the Vanguard. Lorraine Gordon, the club's owner, consented to a weeklong, late August engagement after reading a New York Times profile of McNeil.

That marked a big step for the McNeil-McHenry band, which still doesn't have an album out. (McNeil's last effort for OmniTone was "East Coast Cool," with a similar repertoire but a different saxophonist. McHenry's "Roses" is due Sept. 11 on Sunnyside.)

Their case may also illustrate just how working jazz groups progress in an era largely devoid of label support. "It's a brave new world in terms of how this dynamic is going to operate," says long-time Vanguard manager Jed Eisenman, who first heard the group in Brooklyn. "This is a terrific model."

After their sharp and focused set, McNeil and McHenry agree that the engagement will have a lasting musical impact on the band's improvisations. "We're more on the same page than ever," McNeil says. ...
BamboozleBuzzOut

Live Nation Buys Multiday Fest, Plans Expansion

Live Nation’s acquisition of a majority stake in Bamboozle, a multiday music festival held each year in the New York metropolitan area, represents a critical U.S. property for the company. Whether festivals continue to be a priority for Live Nation remains to be seen. But what the move does mean is a bigger stage for the self-described “kids from Jersey” who founded Bamboozle five years ago, led by fest creator John D’Esposito.

D’Esposito started Bamboozle in 2003 at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park, N.J. “The first year we weren’t very successful at the Stone Pony, so we decided to change the philosophy and move it to Convention Hall and basically incorporate the town of Asbury Park with multiple venues,” D’Esposito says. “We grew Asbury Park and had to move to a new venue. We looked at a bunch of options and chose the Meadowlands.”

The 2007 Bamboozle Festival last May at Giant’s Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., featured 187 bands on eight stages, drawing more than 85,000 fans and grossing in excess of $2.6 million. Among the acts were Linkin Park, My Chemical Romance and Lord!

Asked about the booking philosophy for Bamboozle, D’Esposito says it’s all about artist development. “We don’t usually go out and get a big headliner. We usually try to develop within as they grow,” he says. “Fall Out Boy started on the small stage and eventually headlined to over 30,000 people. Same thing with My Chem. Hopefully this year we’ll have another one like Paramore or the Jonas Brothers”

Bamboozle is also one of the more affordably priced multi-act festivals, which D’Esposito says has been a priority, “as long as the bands are willing to work with us and we don’t have to pay extravagant guarantees. It’s a philosophy: Bamboozle’s not your payday, it’s your credibility.”

Live Nation has booked Bamboozle since it moved out of Asbury Park, but now it owns the entire event. Why sell a successful property? “They do this every day, and we’ve just had some kids from Point Pleasant, N.J., D’Esposito says. “We got over our heads. There was a point where as an entrepreneur you have to look at something and say, ‘Can I do it myself and fail, or can I go and get someone with the experience and the resources.’”

As part of the deal, D’Esposito will maintain creative control of booking Bamboozle and will also join Live Nation’s New York-based team, which already includes president Kevin Morrow and talent buyers Phil Ernst, Jason Miller, Jason Stone and Steven Striegel. Joining D’Esposito will be Bamboozle marketing director Rob D’Esposito and production manager Anthony Baldwin.

In terms of what Live Nation brings to the Bamboozle party, Morrow says most of the impact will be at the “back room” level, including production, marketing clout “and one of the greatest sponsorship teams in the world.”

But the brand will grow under Live Nation, beginning with Bamboozle West in Los Angeles in April at a venue TBA. “From there we will tour across the country with a property called the Bamboozle Road Show,” D’Esposito says. “We’ll take the best young (acts), put them on a package and tour them from L.A. to New Jersey. We’re also looking at a Bamboozle in London next October.”

D’Esposito seems stoked to be part of the Live Nation Northeast team, and will split his time between Jersey and New York. He’ll continue to book the Stone Pony and also such Live Nation rooms as the Blender Theatre at Gramercy and other smaller venues.

Live Nation already produces successful festivals in the United Kingdom and Europe, including such prestigious multi-day events as Reading, Leeds and Download in the United Kingdom, Werchter in Belgium and Lowlands in Holland. So it’s not surprising the company would look to strengthen its position in this space, given the boom market for festivals in the United States.

Rival international promoter AEG Live subsidiary GoldenVoice produces Coachella in Indio, Calif., and has a producer’s stake in the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which grossed an estimated $20 million this year, as well as Seattle’s Bumbershoot. C3-produced Lollapalooza in Chicago took in nearly $30 million in tickets, and Bonnaroo last June in Manchester, Tenn., grossed an estimated $17 million in its six-year. Newer festivals like the Virgin Mobile Festival at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore are also gaining traction; V-Fest grossed $5.4 million from $5.66 paid attendance in August.

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For "Saturday Night Live" music director Katreese Barnes, being nominated for an Emmy for the hilarious skit "Dick in a Box" was something she almost foresaw.

The boy band spoof featuring Justin Timberlake was a viral video sensation last year. "As soon as they brought the song to me, I thought, "If the video matches the song, it’s a hit,"" says Barnes, who has been part of the show since 2000. "When you hear something that’s catchy, you can feel it. And when NBC released the uncensored version online the next day, it just exploded."

Barnes, Timberlake, Jorma Taccone, Asa Taccone, Akiva Schaffer and Andy Samberg are all co-nominated for an Emmy for outstanding original music and lyrics for their contributions to "Dick in a Box," which will vie for the honor at the Sept. 16 ceremony.

Barnes' road to "SNL" began as half of North Carolina R&B duo J.U.I.C.Y. (Joint United Incredible Creative Youth), with her brother, Jerry. Signed to Epic Records as a "young, up-and-coming" woman, Barnes made two albums with J.U.I.C.Y. and eventually joined Roberta Flack's band, helping write and produce songs for her Grammy Award-nominated album "Set the Night to Music." She talked with Billboard about the "Dick" phenomenon, how "SNL" stays musically fresh and the art of composing.

**Did you expect such a huge response?**

I thought the fans would like it but I didn't know it was going to be an Internet hit. NBC thought the short was so funny that it deserved to be released uncensored because "SNL" doesn't usually release uncensored shorts. NBC is so careful with their censorship laws.

*The Emmys wanted the guys to perform "Dick in a Box" at the award show but they wanted to change the lyrics. It would just be retarded to do anything but perform it the way it is. But I doubt that’s going to happen unless they just bleeped the expletives each time.***

**How did the "Dick in a Box" skit come about?**

It was thrown together really fast because the Lonely Island Boys [Andy Samberg, Jorma Taccone and Akiva Schaffer] do all the digital shorts for the show. They were a group before they were hired as "SNL" writers. They'd presented Justin Timberlake with three different ideas that he wasn't into, so they didn't have a concept nailed down until Thursday. I did the music before they even came up with the idea. I'm not sure who exactly hatched the idea but Justin had a big band in coming up with the melody and writing the lyrics. They spent a lot of time perfecting that, which in our world is almost three hours.

**Where does "Saturday Night Live" draw the line on which material is too risqué?**

We have a censor who sits there and goes through each script and makes those decisions.

**What's the musical creative process for a comedy show like "SNL"?**

This is a really talented cast. Guys like Fred Armisen and Will Forte play the guitar and sometimes compose their own music too. Usually, on Tuesday night, the writers sing us ideas or give us examples of music they want us to mimic. Sometimes we get the liberty of coming up with something on our own. With "Dick in a Box," the writers just said, "We're doing a '90s thing."

**How do you compose personally?**

Prior to "SNL," I was a song-writer, and I think there's just a way to hone into what people want. It's almost like being a psychic in a way. I am really fortunate that I have good chemistry with the "SNL" writers and we can come up with things pretty quickly without too many glitches. It's really hard to be funny. You have to be patient with comedic talent because they're under so much pressure to be funny. As a musician prior to this, if I performed somewhere, I'd get a clap. They depend on a laugh. So it's a balance of allowing them to come up with material, not getting in the way of being funny and working with them to make the material funny.

**Are there certain musical keys that spark a laugh easier?**

Every now and then if something is too low, it might be funnier in a higher key or vice versa. It all depends. Sometimes a composition could be funnier if we just changed a key or if we just changed a key for an actor's comfort level. That way they won't have to think too hard about singing and can simply focus on performing well.

**How do you keep your material timely?**

At each year passes, of course the newer generations are going to relate more to newer musicals like "Hairspray" instead of "South Pacific." They're also going to relate more to Justin Timberlake rather than Tom Jones. If we did a spoof on Tom Jones now, people would ask, "Who's that?" But unfortunately Tom Jones is still alive, so no dis, Tom. You're still hot, baby! I actually sang backup for Tom Jones five years ago for the rain forest gig at Carnegie Hall. String, Billy Joel and Elton John hosted it and Tom Jones was one of the performers. He's like 109 and just so adorable. He really thinks he's still got it.

**How did your musical theater show "Rocket Man" come about?**

I created "Rocket Man" two years ago and I perform it maybe every two months at the Triad Theater in New York. The show is based on Elton John songs but it's a musical comedy. There's more information at muspace.com/rocketmanshow. It's basically my funk arrangements of Elton John songs. The next one is Oct. 22.

It's my answer to performing without having a hit record. I said, "I'm at 'SNL,' and I'm doing comedy, so I'll write a musical comedy and incorporate my style of funk, like I used to do with J.U.I.C.Y." It's not the kind of stuff that gets played on the radio now, but I just felt like, "Are we musicians supposed to just pack up and die? No!"

**How do you feel about being nominated for an Emmy?**

I love that we can have an award for a song like "Dick in a Box." Sometimes I cringe at what award shows have become. Sometimes they're too commercial or too political, so after years of being a disgruntled award show watcher, I love the idea of being nominated for a song like this.
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in a pale blue BCBG Max Azria designer dress and impressively high heels, Carrie Underwood is the picture-perfect hostess as she graciously chats with the throng of well-wishers gathered at the Country Music Hall of Fame to celebrate the multimillion-dollar success of her debut album, “Some Hearts.” Unlike some artists who might remain cloistered in a velvet-rolled side room during such events, Underwood seems happy to mingle with the crowd, thanking radio personnel, retailers, journalists and anyone else who has played a role in her fairy tale rise to superstardom. As the 24-year-old pride of Checotah, Okla., poses for pictures and shakes hands, her mother, Carole—a retired schoolteacher who still lives in Checotah with Underwood’s retired paper mill-worker dad, Steve—beams proudly.

Everyone loves the girl next door. And when you’re noting the factors that spurred Underwood’s groundbreaking success, her fresh-faced enthusiasm and accessible demeanor—visibly on display that night last year—have proved as beneficial as her powerhouse vocals. Such qualities were a magnet to the “American Idol” crowd, and they’ve continued to serve Underwood well as her career has shifted into high gear.

Now, with the Oct. 23 release of her 19 Recordings/Arista Nashville album “Carnival Ride,” the whirlwind that has become Underwood’s life is about to accelerate even more. Since winning “American Idol” in 2005, Underwood has sold nearly 6 million copies of “Some Hearts.” But her new album, she feels, is an even stronger reflection of who she is.

“My favorite line on the whole album pretty much sums up everything that I’ve been through, and I think everybody could find something in this particular line: ‘God put us here on this carnival ride. We close our eyes never knowing where it will take us next’ “ Underwood says of the tune, which was penned by Hillary Lindsey, Chris Lindsey and Aimee Mayo. “It’s beautiful and so true. We don’t know what we’re doing or where we’re headed. We just kind of trust and hope that whatever ride we’re on in life takes us where we need to go.”

On this particular late August day, Underwood knows where she’s headed—to Paris for a much-needed vacation. The previous night, she’d performed a private show for Target in Minneapolis; after chatting with Billboard about her new disc, she’ll embark on her French adventure.

“I have never been anywhere in that direction before, so I just had a little bit of time and I figured I better take a vacation before things get really crazy. I consider myself a pretty uncul- tured person,” she says. “If you want to get a taste of culture, I hear France is pretty nice.”

IT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE . . .

In two short years, her sweet down-home charm has combined with a killer set of pipes to transform Underwood into a phe- nomenon—and one with a lengthy list of accolades. She’s the Country Music Assn.’s reigning female vocalist of the year. “Some Hearts” was named the Academy of Country Music’s 2007 album of the year, and she netted Grammy Awards for best new artist and best female country vocal performance for “Jesus, Take the Wheel,” which won best country song. It also won the Gospel Music Assn.’s country recorded song of the year, and was designated ASCAP and the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International’s song of the year.

Meanwhile, she’s become a core artist at country radio, and ascended to superstardom in the eyes of radio and fans, more quickly than perhaps anyone since fellow Oklahoman Garth Brooks. “Jesus, Take the Wheel” spent six weeks at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart. Its success, “Before He Cheats,” topped the chart for five weeks, followed by “Don’t Forget to Remember Me,” which peaked at No. 2, and “Wasted,” which hit No. 1 for three weeks. “So Small,” the lead single from her new album, made Underwood the first female to debut in Hot Country Songs’ top 20 in 43 years. The single is No. 10 only four weeks after release.

She’s even had luck at AC radio, where four singles have scored, and “Before He Cheats” peaked at No. 7 (see chart, this page). Its video helped propel the success of the single and showed a more aggressive and heretofore unseen side of Underwood’s persona, as she lashed out against an unfaithful boyfriend’s personal property with a Louisville Slugger. But unlike some artists who more openly court airplay in another format by altering the music’s sound, Underwood refused play that game.

“We started out thinking that ["Before He Cheats"] might be cool on other radio stations than country music, but were told flat out that it was too country—and I’m not willing to change it,” she says. “Just because it has some fiddle on it, I don’t understand why other people wouldn’t like it. I didn’t want to take that out and make it something else.”

Such convictions did nothing to slow down sales. “Some Hearts” sold 315,000 units its first week, making Underwood the highest-debuting new artist in the country genre since Nielsen SoundScan began tracking sales. The album spent 27 weeks at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Country Albums chart, and has sold 5.9 million units, according to SoundScan. In one album, Underwood has reached the level of success it took other superstard perfects several years and albums to achieve.

Underwood credits her impressive jump-start to that little singing competition on Fox. “Coming off ‘American Idol,’ people already knew who I was,” she says. “Most people spend years trying to get fans to recognize who they are. I already had that massive recognition factor.”

Country KMPS Seattle-OM/PD Becky Brenner agrees that “I Idol” was a major component in Underwood’s launch: “I wasn’t surprised by it,” she says. “Underwood’s success. She was America’s sweetheart, so it was clear that she was going to be huge. When they announced that she was going to be country, I thought, ‘This is awesome for us,’ because she already had a huge built-in fan base. Those people are so active and so passionate, and the reason is they take ownership in her success. They feel like they made her.”

Simon Fuller—Underwood’s manager, creator of “American Idol” and founder/chief executive of 19 Entertainment—obviously acknowledges the power of the show, but doesn’t view it as the lone reason for her current popularity. “I knew she was going to do well, but I think what she’s achieved is quite remarkable. It’s exceeded all expectations,” he says, phoning in from his holiday in the south of France. “Kelly Clarkson’s [debut] album sold—if I remember right—about 2.6 million and Ruben [Studdard’s] sold about 1.8 million. So I would say between a million and two [$in sales] is ‘Idol.’ Anything over two million is down to Carrie and her amazing voice.”

In the wake of a debut album that sold nearly 6 million, what can she expect next? Any other artist would seem extremely fortunate to sell 2 or 3 million on a sophomore record, but would that look like a slip for Underwood? “It’s always a problem when you set the bar high—you’ve got to beat it,” country WQYK Tampa Bay, Fla., OM Mike Culotta says. “I think she can. She’s bringing people into our format and exposing them to it. They may not have believed that it’s country. I’m very proud that when she goes out and does stuff, she makes it known she’s country.”

Executives in Underwood’s camp are optimistic and realistic when it comes to repeating her sales figures. “Trying to match that in a marketplace that is declining is going to be difficult,” Sony BMG Nashville chair Joe Galante says. “None of us is under the illusion we’re going to do 7 million.

“We focus on the growth from the musical standpoint, and that’s really what it’s about,” he continues. “If we can do better in making this next album so that Carrie’s fans buy into her on the second time around and people get to see her as somebody who’s not one-off on ‘American Idol’ but is going to have a good 20-year career, then we’ve accomplished our job.”

Retailers, meanwhile, are understandably anxious to get the new Underwood disc. “While it will be a daunting task to even try to exceed the sales of the debut given the evolving physical sales patterns seen today, with the right songs and continued fabulous videos it is not impossible,” says Brian Smith, VP of store operations for Marietta, Ga.-based Value Music Concepts. “Her career has been expertly managed, and her label has done a masterful job at selecting the right songs in the right sequence to showcase her diversity.

“Speaking as a retailer dependent on foot traffic, we appreciate that fact that her album was so deep with viable content,” Smith continues. “So often the records today have one, maybe two commercially successful singles. Not since Shania [Twain] can I remember a country female artist having so many great songs that target so many demographics, and it took Shania several years to get to that point.”

I’M FLYING HIGH THEN I’M WONDERING WHY . . .

The pressure to follow up such as successful debut could creatively paralyze an artist, but Underwood has worked her way through it. “Is there really anywhere to go but down?” There was that fear in my head,” Underwood says. “Then we started picking songs and I realized it was [about] making an album that I love and I know I have a huge hand in making. Whatever happens, it’s icing on the cake.”

On “Carnival Ride,” Underwood was more involved in the songwriting process than on the debut. She set a writers
Carrie,

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retreat at Nashville's famed Ryman Auditorium to collaborate with such Music Row tunemasters as Hillary Lindsey, Craig Wiseman, Rivers Rutherford and Gordie Sampson. "On the first album, we started picking out songs and making it on May 25, and it came out Nov. 15, so that's really not much time," Underwood says. "On the new album, I took a lot of time writing with a lot of great people."

After co-writing "So Small," "the next day we wrote another one that is called 'Last Name,' which is pretty much a complete opposite," she says. "'So Small' is very thoughtful and has a really great message. 'Last Name' is just fun and it's kind of gritty. It's more like a 'Before He Cheats' kind of song.

One of the most poignant tracks, "Just a Dream," is about a soldier dying and the emotions his fiancée experiences as she comes to terms with the tragedy. "It's a pretty heavy lyric," Galante says, "and Carrie makes you feel every single emotion that this girl is going through."

Underwood says, "It's such a haunting song. Then what [producer] Mark Bright did with it, he used these different licks on it that really made it come to life.

"I don't think I've ever done a sad song," she continues. "'Jesus, Take the Wheel' was serious, but ['Just a Dream'] shows a different side, and it was very vocally challenging."

Underwood includes only one cover on the set, a remake of the Randy Travis hit "I Told You So." The rest are new tunes, some by Hillary Lindsey, who she sings out as one of her favorite writers. "It's very hard for me to find writers that really get kind of young female [artists]. There are all these male writers and they are great at what they do," she says, "but I'm a 24-year-old girl, and I imagine it would be hard for these guys to think like a 24-year-old girl. So it's really awesome that I've been able to get together with her.

IT NEVER EVEN SLOWS DOWN . . .

When it comes to the Ferris wheel that is Underwood's life, creating music and seeing it succeed is the obvious high. But Underwood admit there are certain aspects of celebrity that have taking some getting used to, especially the tabloid rumors and constant scrutiny. "It's really awkward to think, 'Oh, gosh, somebody is going to snap a picture of me dancing and then they'll say I'm a party girl,' which I'm not," she says. "You have to think about everything you do, and if you decide to go ahead and do it, it's really to make sure that everybody is going to talk about it.

The next day, if I have a glass of wine in my hand and somebody takes a picture of it, somebody somewhere is going to go mad because I'm 'a bad role model.' It's a fine line, and you have to realize that I'm a human too."

And according to Underwood, her alleged romance with Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo is just a media fantasy. "We're really good friends and support each other, but we're not together, nor have we ever been together," she says, wanting to set the record straight. "I understand because we went to the [Academy of Country Music Awards] together and I go watch him play football that people might get the wrong impression, but hardly any people ever ask me. They just kind of run with the story anyway. I read stuff now that one of us is trying to get the other back and that I spend the night crying by myself. It's awful." Galante is impressed with how Underwood has handled fame. "She grew up in a small town. She knows what it is to work hard. She realizes how blessed she is to be where she's at, and she continues to work very hard," he says. "She's respectful of the things she needs to be respectful of, and she's playful when she needs to be playful. As a person, she really is great. She's honest and open, and she has a great sense of humor. I think people will discover more and more about her as she goes through this."

Following Up A Phenomenon

Despite the fact that her debut album, "Some Hearts," has sold 5.8 million copies, Carrie Underwood's best sales days may be behind her. As jarring as it may be to admit it, history is not on the 24-year-old's side. If past follow-ups to huge country debuts are any indication, Underwood's forthcoming album "Carnival Ride" probably won't sell more copies than her first.

Forget that album sales are off by double-digit figures in 2007—in the 16 years since Nielsen SoundScan became the currency of record for the music industry, no country act that sold 3 million or more albums on its major-label debut topped that number on its next release.

More simply put, incredible sales success on an act's first major-label release doesn't ensure comparable results thereafter. Think about some of the biggest debut albums of the last 15 years: Billy Ray Cyrus' "Some Gave All," LeAnn Rimes' "Blue" and Gretchen Wilson's "Here for the Party." Cyrus went from 7.5 million copies sold on his 1992 Mercury debut to 1.3 million on the follow-up "It Won't Be the Last." Likewise, Rimes' 1996 Curb debut tallied nearly 6 million in sales, while the subsequent "Unchained Melody" scored a still impressive 2.4 million, according to SoundScan. Ditto with Wilson, who sold 4.5 million on 2002's "Here for the Party" and 1.2 million on "All Jacked Up.

If Underwood and her label have something to shoot for, it's the almost neck-and-neck performance of the Dixie Chicks. The band's 1998 breakthrough, "Wide Open Spaces," has sold 8.6 million units, and its sophomore release, "Fly," has notched nearly 8.3 million. —Ken Tucker

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield and Wade Jessen.

IT'S THE WHEEL OF THE WORLD TURNING AROUND AND AROUND . . .

Arista Nashville VP of marketing and artist development Jon Eliot says the thrust of the label's marketing campaign for "Carnival Ride" is to "keep her visible, put her in the right places and try to get out of the way. It's pretty much 'Roll up your sleeves and let people know the album is out.'"

Eliot says a strong Internet presence will be key to the project. "She appeals [more] to a younger demo than most country artists," he says. "Obviously, the Web is a big part of what we do in terms of marketing to a younger audience. Her MySpace page is very active. Her sales on iTunes have been fantastic. Our ability to use her Web site to help promote single releases and the album is a part of what we do. She's very Web-friendly across all platforms, including mobile.

Underwood has sold more than 4.5 million digital songs, according to Nielsen SoundScan—including 1.7 million copies of "Before He Cheats" and 1 million of "Jesus, Take the Wheel." All five of her singles have been available as ringtones, and her mobile sales, according to Nielsen RingScan, are more than 1.3 million. "Before He Cheats" alone is at 851,000. (See chart this page.) Her MySpace page lists more than 370,000 'friends' and has more than 12 million profile views.

"This past year we've started a fan club and a blog to keep everybody informed on what's going on," Underwood says. "That's when I get to talk to the fans and have direct contact with people."

Underwood toured extensively in 2006 on the first record. "The first thing we did was open for Kenny Chesney early on in the record cycle," says Jeff Frasco, Underwood's responsible agent at Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles and booker of the American IRL tours. Last year she played fair dates in the summer and also headlined small theaters in secondary and tertiary markets. "She sold all those out, and she did extremely well on all of the fair dates," Frasco says. "Then we came back and special-guested with Brad Paisley in the fall."

Underwood's tour development "went from level to level to level," Frasco says. By December, he says, she had played more than 100 dates, and "I don't think we repeated more than three markets."

Frasco andCAA hope to continue the process on the new album, though Underwood probably won't undertake a full-blown tour until 2008. She's now a legitimate headliner, and plans for her next tour will find her either headlining or co-headlining with another artist. "When the album comes out in October, she is going to do a bunch of promotion and probably start touring somewhere around February or March," Frasco says.

Given her track record, it's hard to believe Underwood would have any concerns about filling venues. But perhaps it's her Oklahoma naiveté that prompts her to say, "I don't feel I'm ready to headline. What if nobody shows up? It would be absolutely horrifying if nobody showed up.

That seems unlikely. After all, Underwood has become America's sweetheart. She's the girl who showed everyone a country singer could take the "American Idol" prize, then proceeded to jump start the format with her groundbreaking success. Yes, life has been a crazy carnival ride for Underwood, and she's about to take another upward twist.

Additional reporting by Ray Waddell in Nashville.
Creative Artists Agency

salutes our client

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
The amazing “Carnival Ride” continues...

www.americanradiohistory.com
New Releases Can Be Had For Rock-Bottom Prices At The AMAZON MARKETPLACE. But Exactly Who Is Doing The Selling?

By Ed Christman
Illustrations by Wesley Bedrosian

Amazon is used daily by millions of people to find information about or buy practically every commodity available for purchasing. But many of them seem unaware that a whole other world lurks underneath its surface: the Amazon Marketplace. ¶ To travel there, visit the Amazon store and perform a search for an artist or title. When it comes up, look for Amazon's price for the item. Right next to it, you will see a link for, say, 74 used and new copies available. If you click on that link, you will be whisked away to another sphere, populated by 1.1 million sellers other than Amazon, dozens of whom compete with Amazon and are offering the very same item either used or new at prices that seem to defy economic reality. ¶ After helping industry executives gain entrance to the Marketplace, one after another told Billboard, "I had no idea." ¶ But after a little exploration, they began to understand why many sellers are up in arms about the Marketplace, which is turning into a veritable Wild West of music retail. ¶ The out-of-control element revolves around low pricing, but it's an issue that comes from different angles, depending on which seller is complaining. ¶ The venue needs sheriffs, sellers insist, but the only times the host plays that role is when it comes to protecting customers. When policing is needed to enforce music industry rules and ensure a level playing field among sellers, both Amazon and eBay, which owns the Marketplace-esque Half.com, are missing in action, some sellers charge.
How big is the Amazon Marketplace? According to Amazon VP of music and movies Peter Faricy, it generates 30% of the company’s total music sales, which he declines to specify.

Unlike most other music accounts, it’s hard to determine exactly how large a player Amazon is in the music sector. Billboard estimates that Amazon’s purchases from labels total 4% market share, but the company also buys daily from wholesalers like Alliance Entertainment Corp., Baker & Taylor and Super D. And then there are Marketplace sales, which are not reported to Nielsen SoundScan, at least not by Amazon. Thus, Billboard estimates Amazon’s overall music market share at just above 6% and its annual music revenue at about $500 million. That would place the Marketplace’s annual volume at about $150 million, but neither dollar volume estimate includes shipping and handling charges.

With those kind of numbers, the Marketplace naturally has some supporters.

“Whatever we are finding is the Amazon Marketplace is becoming a giant source of revenue and is really integral to our stores’ success,” says Don Van Cleave, who heads up the Coalition of Independent Music Stores. It’s also good for customers because the dwindling retail scene leaves many towns without decent record stores, he adds.

In Rochester, N.Y., Record Archive co-owner Alaya Hill says the Marketplace now accounts for 20% of the store’s business. And on Long Island, Karl Groeger, co-owner of indie store Looney Tunes in West Babylon, N.Y., says he is doing phenomenally well selling on the Amazon Marketplace and other online markets.

“Our online sales total about 10% of our business,” he says. “Our brick-and-mortar store sales are up 3% so far this year, but overall we are up 16%, thanks to our online sales.” On the day Groeger talked to Billboard, Looney Tunes shipped out 411 parcels. He employs three full-time staffers and two part-timers devoted to handling the store’s direct marketing operation.

What’s more, with retail stores closing and surviving stores reducing inventory, labels are turning to the Amazon Marketplace to ensure that their slow-moving titles are at least commercially available somewhere.

But that leaves indie merchants annoyed that not only are their suppliers competing against them, but that some vendors are hiding behind storefront aliases and selling product directly to consumers at prices lower than they sell to stores.

**HOW IT WORKS**

Amazon was thinking about more than additional sales volume when it launched the Marketplace.

“We want to create the best shopping experience for our customers,” Faricy says. “The three pillars that we focus on are selection, value and discovery, and the Marketplace really enables the customer (in those areas). So it’s a critical part of our strategy.”

With 1.3 million music titles available, super low pricing and robust editorial content, it certainly appears as if Amazon has fulfilled that mission.

How does the Marketplace really work? It’s simple. Customers enter the Marketplace and can place orders from many sellers. Each order is billed separately, and shipped by the seller, but Amazon collects the money from the customer’s charge card and then disbursements payment to sellers twice a month.

On each sale, Amazon takes a 15% commission. In addition, the seller and Amazon make money off the shipping. Two CDs Billboard bought from Innundo Entertainment may have cost $14.73, but they also carried a $5.36 shipping and handling charge for standard shipping. However, Billboard’s mailbox room says the package cost only $3.26 to ship. That means Innundo made $2.40 in shipping, while Amazon made $1.40 in shipping and $2.21 in commission for a total of $3.61.

Half.com has a similar structure, says a wholesaler who sells there but not in the Amazon Marketplace. eBay gets 15%, and 60% of the $2.99 charged for shipping and handling per CD. The difference is the seller actually completes the sale, not eBay.

Making money from shipping and handling charges is a typical direct-marketing profit strategy, industry experts say.

“A lot of these sellers are bedroom distributors,” says one wholesaler who supplies services to Amazon Marketplace sellers. “They negotiate pick, pack and ship from us, figure in Amazon’s take and then sell at that price, and never touch the product, just pocketing the profit from shipping.”

In addition to pricing and selection, Amazon provides other information to help customers make Marketplace purchases. For each sale, it encourages customers to rate sellers and shows approval ratings in increments of 30 days, 90 days, 1 year and lifetime.

The ratings allow customers to see who is trustworthy and who are the biggest sellers. The main sellers, based on the number of customer-approval rating surveys filled out, appear to be Caiman, with 394,000 customer ratings in the last 12 months; Super D, which operates under the name importcds, with 185,000 customer ratings; smokinmbks, with 155,000 customer ratings during the 12-month period; warehousedeals, with 142,000 customer ratings; moviemarscom, with 125,000 customers rating them; and Hastings Entertainment, with more than 89,000 ratings.

If approval ratings drop too low, or if too many orders aren’t fulfilled, Amazon will remove the seller from the marketplace. “It doesn’t seem to work, unless a seller refunded monies immediately and whether the seller can prove how mishaps innocently occurred, Marketplace sellers complain. If caught off selling on the marketplace, the only way back in is to buy a new computer with a new address, get a new bank and use a different name and mailing address.

**WHO’S SELLING TO WHO?**

With 1.1 million sellers participating in the Amazon Marketplace on the company’s Web sites around the globe, and most identified only by their e-mail handles and addresses, it’s hard to figure out who exactly is selling there. While Amazon allows buyers to rate sellers, it won’t provide any other seller information.

“It has a lot of gray and shady areas, and it has created a level of competition that is intense,” says one wholesaler who watches the Marketplace to monitor how retailers are pricing his goods. “But what happens if you create a perfect marketplace? The price will drop and drop.”

Besides the customer, who wins in that kind of environment? Amazon, most Marketplace participants and observers agree. Sure, it gets a cut of each transaction, but it also can brand the company as a low-cost seller. Most shoppers will remember that they initially went to Amazon and got a super low price. Making the merchant the destination of choice, regardless of who consumers ultimately buy from once there.

But traditional music merchandisers are alarmed because many independent bookstores’ sales are finding their way online. “They are finding from wholesalers, like John Mayer’s ‘Continuum,’ bought via the Marketplace, remain a problem.”

UMG president JIM URIE (top) says his company is keeping an eye on the Marketplace, and Amazon VP of music and movies PETER FARICY (bottom) says the company will monitor any ‘issues’ brought to its attention. But sellers say parallel imports from Argentina, like John Mayer’s ‘Continuum,’ bought via the Marketplace, remain a problem.

**The White Stripes’ ‘Icky Thump’ and Norah Jones’ ‘Come Away With Me’ cost $12 wholesale, but could be had new for less than $7 on the Marketplace.**

For example, on July 11 the White Stripes’ “Icky Thump,” which is an $18.98 list-price CD and carries a $12.05 wholesale boxlot cost, could be purchased brand-new from the Amazon Marketplace for less than $9, from six different sellers, each with a $2.98 shipping charge. Two of the sellers are less than $7: dav-euris2002, which ships from California, was offering a new copy at $6.94, while Doplywla1, which ships from New York, was offering it at $6.95.

A similar pricing environment exists on eBay’s Half.com. On Aug. 2, Norah Jones’ “Come Away With Me,” which has an $18.98 list price with a $12.02 boxlot cost, could be purchased for less than from nine different sellers, the lowest at $5.79.

But eBay and Half.com are not griped about as loudly because eBay itself doesn’t buy direct or have relationships with labels the way Amazon does. Also, Amazon may not have been able to match eBay’s auction business, but the Amazon Marketplace generates a much larger sales volume than Half.com, according to sellers operating in both venues.

Still, how can some Marketplace sellers price music below cost? Some suggest loss leaders, while others say it’s the last remnant of the Internet funny-money economy.

“I just assumed it’s because it’s Internet thing,” says a one-stop executive whose company doesn’t sell on Amazon. “You remember how back during the Internet bubble, people were handing out money on the street corners to anybody just for customer acquisition? I just figured it’s that mentality all over again.”

But the loss leader explanation sometimes falls flat when probing deeper. First off, while one can shop particular sellers in the Amazon Marketplace, it’s not easy. Amazon doesn’t provide a directory of sellers nor does it highlight the Marketplace with its own page, so the loss leader strategy will hardly drive traffic to Marketplace sellers.

On July 11, Billboard searched through Amazon’s top 100, and found 42 $18.98 list-price albums, which means a boxlot cost of about $12, but 18 of them were selling for $8 or less.

“We can’t compete on price on the Marketplace, while it’s a kind of practice since we buy direct from the labels,” one music merchandiser says. Even more ironic, Amazon itself often fails to beat the lowball pricing for new product in its own marketplace, even though the online merchant has supplanted the big-box retailers as the music industry’s price leader in recent years.

A music seller also allows sellers to charge prices almost instantaneously. During a phone conversation where both sides sat in front of computers logged on to the Amazon site, one Marketplace seller showed Billboard
a record he was selling at what appeared to be the fifth-lowest price there. A minute later, that seller instructed Billboard to refresh the page, which revealed that his company now had the lowest price.

In fact, more sophisticated sellers have created their own software programs or used readily available ones like Monsoon to actively monitor and adjust pricing on all titles. Such programs allow sellers to set collars for low and high price on each title, and respond automatically to pricing adjustments made by competitors. As a result, Marketplace pricing is continually shifting throughout the day.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT . . .

And Wrong
A look at two albums bought via the Amazon Marketplace might offer some insight into how some Amazon and eBay sellers can operate with albums priced below cost.

On May 17, Billboard ordered John Mayer's "Continuum," which has a $11.86 boxlot cost, for $7.74; and Norah Jones' "Not Too Late," which has a $12.02 boxlot cost, for $6.99 from Innuendo Entertainment, each with a $2.98 shipping charge for a total of $10.69.

When those titles were delivered, the back-tray card revealed they were parallel imports from Argentina, where the major labels sell to local retailers and wholesalers at a boxlot cost about 30% cheaper than the U.S. price. A U.S. wholesaler reported that "Not Too Late" could be purchased from an Argentina wholesaler for $6.27, while the Mayer album went for $7.32 on July 10. Innuendo didn't respond to e-mails seeking comment.

"The main problem in the Marketplace is all the low-priced parallel imports and Amazon's unwillingness to clean it up," because it benefits from customer perception that it's the cheapest site, one seller says. Another seller adds that Half.com is even worse.

"That's where the parallel import sellers really flourish," that source says.

Those sellers call for Amazon to police the Marketplace better, or failing that, wish that the labels would step up to pressure Amazon to deal with the issue.

When Billboard relayed its experience with parallel imports, Amazon executives declined to provide the identity, phone number or any contact information whatsoever for those sellers beyond the e-mails addressing those that are subject to customers at the time of purchase. Billboard tried contacting Innuendo Entertainment by e-mail, but never heard back. Faricy says that if sellers or labels complained about any Marketplace issue, Amazon would investigate and take appropriate action if needed.

Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese says parallel imports are a "huge issue," but he says it's not just in the Amazon Marketplace. "The importation of parallel product at a lower price is a great concern for sellers who want a level playing field," he says. "It should be a concern for all rights holders, who should be paying attention to all mail-order platforms."

Billboard contacted senior executives at all four major label distribution companies as well as the head of sales at one of the labels owned by each major, and all were astounded by the low pricing. But they said they were unaware of parallel imports being available on eBay and the Amazon Marketplace.

Universal Music Group Distribution president Jim Urie says that about 15 months ago, the company investigated the Marketplace and didn't find any parallel imports. But he says the company will do another spot check. The other label executives declined comment for this story.

Amazon's Faricy says he is unaware of parallel imports being offered for sale in the Marketplace. He suggests that whatever below-cost prices can be found there are due to the desire by sellers to be price leaders. "There are a lot of folks who provide great value in the Marketplace who do nothing illegal," Faricy insists.

For instance, some companies buy pallets of CDs and other goods lost in transit from the trucking carriers and overnight delivery companies at extremely low prices, and those goods often wind up for sale in the Amazon Marketplace. Like Urie, Billboard also discovered some legitimate low-priced new titles moving through the Marketplace.

Billboard purchased a new copy of the Turtles' Howard Kaylan's solo album, "Dust Bunnies," for 99 cents from jukeboxonline@gmail.com. When it arrived, it was shrinkwrapped and carried a Tower Records price tag.

THE JURY'S STILL OUT

Not everyone sees the Marketplace as an insidious force. A few sources say Amazon at least has addressed some seller issues, even if some big problems still remain. And others praise Amazon, saying the creation of its Marketplace more closely resembles the cavalry coming to the rescue of traditional merchandisers. Whether sellers be retailers, wholesalers or labels, the Amazon Marketplace provides a revenue windfall in a brick-and-mortar environment suffering a precipitous decline in CD sales.

While Amazon has no qualms about how Marketplace sellers price their products there, it does not allow sellers to list a title before street date; only Amazon gets to collect pre-orders. Also, Amazon gives itself the home-court advantage by ranking other sellers with shipping costs included while allowing itself to be ranked without that cost included in its price, since customers buying from Amazon can qualify for free shipping when making purchases totaling more than $25.

Other sellers say Amazon has shown it can move quickly when it comes to protecting its customers. "They do a very good job of spotting scammers," one Marketplace seller says. "They really have cleaned the Marketplace up."

Two years ago, plenty of rogue sellers could be found on the Marketplace peddling bootlegged product priced at $3 from places like China, but Amazon took "great action in pursuing a cleanup," Newbury's Dreese says. As a result, the Marketplace is very clean compared with Half.com, he says. Dreese adds that he is confident that Amazon will address the imports issue eventually.

But there's no doubt some merchants are feeling the Marketplace's sting, and some wonder why any retailers or one-stops would sell there at all. "Amazon is the biggest threat to other retailers," says Rob Roth at Vintage Vinyl in Fords, N.J. "Why sell your product to an Amazon customer instead of your own? I don't do any business there. You vote with your dollars, and I don't want to help the guys who are looking to put me down. Yet, wholesalers and merchants are feeding the Amazon beast."
la evolución
de reggaetón

Optimism Amid Growing Pains As The Young Genre Refines Its Place In Latin Music

BY LEILA CObD

For a while, reggaetón was the new wunderkind on the musical block. A new genre so different and powerful that it made the mainstream sit up and listen even if the music was in another language.

Now, for the first time since 2005, reggaetón has seen its fortunes decline, although not nearly as dramatically as detractors would have you think.

Instead, reggaetón has remained a relatively stable niche within the Latin music marketplace. But a niche it is, with a market share far more modest than that commanded by regional Mexican music or Latin pop.

On the other hand, reggaetón is undergoing a musical change, from its straight-ahead street beat and raw production values into more hip-hop, pop and R&B realms. It is a mix that can no longer simply be called reggaetón.

In the process, it has opened the door for a fledgling Latin urban music movement that simply wasn’t commercially viable before.

"What I see is an evolution of reggaetón, and those who stayed behind stayed behind," says Edgar Andino, who handles Wisin & Yandel, one of the top acts in the market. The duo has recently recorded singles with the likes of David Bisbal and Gloria Estefan, among other mainstream acts, and is readying to release a new studio album in November.

While labels aren’t signing reggaetón acts or re-releasing reggaetón albums in the sheer numbers they were doing before, those acts that have remained in the market, Andino says, are doing better than ever when it comes to performance fees and ancillary revenue. "Our world is expanding," Andino says.

ASCAP senior VP of membership Alexandra Lioutikoff agrees. "The urban market is smaller than other Latin genres, but the urban act that is established makes more money because he gets play in mainstream radio, sells ringtones, gets synch licenses," she says. "What I see, more than a rise or a decline, is stability. Those that are still around are as strong as they were three years ago."

Today, the Latin Rhythm airplay and sales charts feature reggaetón heavily, of course, along with a sprinkling of urban bachata names as well as some West Coast urban acts like Akwad and Kinto Sol.

But while in its heyday reggaetón produced dozens and dozens of artists and releases, in the past three years, it’s clear that its glory lies in less than a dozen acts.

And, with the exception of Zion—who was already established as part of the duo Zion & Lennox—and Casa de León, the newly released group produced by reggaetón maven Elías de León and released on Warner, there are not a lot of new reggaetón names on the charts.

According to Nielsen SoundScan’s year-end sales figures for Latin music, the rhythmic genre, which encompasses reggaetón and Latin hip-hop, registered a small drop in sales, going from 4.87 million units sold in its heyday in 2005 to 4.74 million sold in 2006. It’s a tiny drop—only 2.8%—but then again, it was the only Latin music genre to register a drop.

More telling, rhythm accounted for 12.5% of all Latin music sold in the United States in 2006, moving a total of 4.7 million units. But for the week ending July 29, rhythmic’s share had dropped slightly, to 10.7%.

Looking back at the top-selling Latin albums of the past two years, we find five reggaetón titles among the top 10 of 2006 and four for 2005.

Indeed, there are only two reggaetón albums—Wisin & Yandel’s "El Cartel: The Big Boss" and Wisin & Yandel’s "Wisin & Yandel Presenta: Los Vaqueros, Vol. 2"—in the top 10 of Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart.

For Machete Music, the urban music label whose...
Es Tu Género, Tu Mundo, Tu Casa
acts include Wisin & Yandel and Don Omar, it's been more of a "maintenance" year, president Gustavo López says, as none of its major acts have yet released a new studio set.

But production is underway for the new Wisin & Yandel album, and for the new Don Omar release, due early next year (although a live album will be released by year's end).

"The focus for me is taking our artists and making them even bigger, whether that means through pure reggaetón or a fusion of styles," López says. "We need to be creative and look for sounds that have mass appeal, although always maintaining the street credibility and the creativity of reggaetón," he adds.

More than ever, López says, there is renewed focus on the entire A&R process, a thought echoed again and again in several interviews. While at one point reggaetón acts could get away with going into a home studio, using a cheap computer program and cranking out an album, now a more discerning audience, coupled with more limited options at radio, has forced these acts to really take note of production values and of making music that stands out in the reggaetón crowd.

"There's just enough quality music out there that justifies keeping the format," says Alfredo Alonso, senior VP of Hispanic radio for Clear Channel. Alonso was the first to give broad radio airplay on a massive scale to reggaetón when, in 2006, he flipped several Clear Channel stations to a "urbano" format that heavily featured reggaetón. Today, all his urban stations have slowly but surely evolved toward a more pop-based format, with reggaetón tracks playing, at best, once an hour.

"If there is a hit hit, we'll play it. But today, it's hard to find a hit hit that's new," he says. From a purely radio perspective, Alonso says, reggaetón was also hurt by the youth of the movement.

"It's very difficult to sell a radio station where the age that sells the largest portion of the audience are teens," Alonso says, echoing thoughts repeated throughout the year by multiple station owners and programmers. "A lot of the advertisers are not interested." In addition, he says, part of the lure of reggaetón was that it was regarded as a format that could reach English-speaking Latinos.

"The reality was, that never materialized," Alonso says. "Seventy percent of our audience was primarily Spanish-speaking. That tells you [English-speaking] Americans aren't listening. Maybe a few are, but that's not enough to build a radio station."

Nor, apparently, is it enough to build a longstanding purist movement.

Instead, reggaetón is increasingly mixing its beat with other beats. Daddy Yankee's recent single, "Impacto," for example, features Fergie. Other tracks are straight-ahead rap, while still others have a salsa beat stronger than the reggaetón beat. Rakim & Ken-Y, one of the top-selling acts in the market, are ostensibly reggaetón, but their sound is equal parts R&B, with soulful melodies driving their hit "Down."

And, although scarce, new reggaetón talent does pop up from time to time. The most notable in recent months is Casa de Leones, a quartet put together by De León, who originally signed Calle 13 and Tego Calderón. All its members are planning solo projects, including lead singer Randy. De León is also planning to release an album by Arcangel (of Arcangel and De La Ghetto), already known to listeners for the single "Noche de Entierro."

"Things are amazingly promising," De León says. "This music doesn't just stay with reggaetón. The genre is evolving. You won't hear the same sound forever."
One-time chef Luis Francisco Cortés Torres of Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico, was signed to Wisin & Yandel’s WY Records in 2005. Since then, Cortés Torres (aka Franco el Gorila) has appeared on several albums, including the duo’s “Pa’l Mundo” and most recently the “Los Vaqueros: Wild Wild Mixes” compilation, with tracks including “Dame Un Kiss” and “Encaje.” WY/Machete is planning to release Franco El Gorila’s debut, “Welcome to the Jungle,” in either November or February with guest appearances from Arcangel, Toby Love, Wisin, Tony Dize, Don Omar and Jayko. His aggressive rap style was heard on Wisin & Yandel’s hit “Atrevete,” which hit No. 8 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart last year.

For its second reggaetón release, Warner Music Latina partnered with Black Lion Records and producer Elias de Leon—known for his work with up-and-coming talent like Calle 13 on Sony BMG. The result is a double-disc from reggaetón quintet Casa de Leones and popular duo Jowell & Randy, who are also part of Casa de Leones. Jowell & Randy collaborated with Arcangel on “Agresivo” last year, and have recorded with such artists as Daddy Yankee and Voltio. Miguel De Jesus, Jaime Borge, Hector Padilla, Randy Ortiz and Jowell Munoz all pinch-hit for each other on such melodic tracks as “No Te Veo,” which hit No. 4 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart. The self-titled album from Casa de Leones debuted at No. 3 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart in June.
# The Big Boss World Tour

**DADDY YANKEE**

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As the Reggaetón blogosphere grows, so do the track leaks

As a genre with Web-savvy fans and an endless supply of remixes, reggaetón has a strong presence on Internet forums and fan Web sites. But while online buzz can get radio programmers’ attention and sell tickets to shows, some industry insiders say the attendant piracy and premature track leaks do little to advance the music. Weeks before its release, “Los Vaqueros: Wild Wild Mixes” was available in its entirety on an MP3 forum at malianteo.com, a site that carries news, photos and downloads. Andy Martinez, who manages blockbuster duo Wisin & Yandel, says such leaks are a mixed blessing: remixes that aren’t intended for sale are one thing, but the whole album downloads hurt.

“They’re fans. They’re not trying to sell the album,” Martinez says. “It means that you’re hot, and maybe you are going to win with the booking. . . . Maybe you win with merchandise.”

Junior Marrero, VP of artist booking company JM Entertainment, agrees in part. “We don’t depend on [music] sales, but if they don’t sell, we’ll just disappear,” says Marrero, who is also a programmer at tropical WCGM (Radio Cumbré) Bridgeport, Conn.

As to how unreleased music makes it online, suspects range from workers at CD-printing companies that receive the masters, to retail workers with access to product for pre-sales, to artists and producers trying to promote themselves.

Quïnle Butler, CEO of reggaetonline.net and reggaetonline.tv, says “well-known” artists and producers have approached her to put their tracks on her site—requests that she turns down because “it’s hurting them in the long run.”

“They tell me, ‘It’s not mastered, it’s not going to be the final version,’” says Butler, whose site links instead to retailer CD Universe. Listeners are unlikely to buy a CD after getting low-quality tracks for free, says Butler, who adds that her site gets about 30,000 visitors per day. “It doesn’t matter what version it is. Once you have one version of the song and it’s barely different from the version you’ve heard on the CD, you’ve heard it all.”

Still, radio programmers do take note when listeners call requesting airplay of songs they heard online, says Ronny Gallart, PD of Puerto Rico’s WODA/WMOD (Reggaetón 94).

“A lot of times we call the label and ask, ‘Is it a problem if we play it?’” Gallart says. “Most people say there’s no problem.”

Record labels are well aware of what music has made it online, and rarely complain about it, Malaienteo administrator Julio Cantres says.

“What we do is give people a preview of what’s new, but there’s always someone who gets the whole CD and puts it up there,” says Cantres, who is also a police officer.

“The moment a label complaints, we remove it from our page,” adds Cantres, who says his site gets 50,000 daily visitors. “We can’t have complete control.”

Without sites like Malaienteo, many artists would never be able to get mainstream exposure, Cantres says, citing Jowell & Randy as an act that put up tracks on his site well before they became famous.

Ronny Franzisidak, owner of Blinblineo.net, says he rarely gets content directly from labels—culling stories and articles instead from fan postings and online news sources. He says there’s “not much” piracy on his site, and he took down a link once after a record company complained.

“It’s not really the sites, but the users who are the ones doing the piracy,” says Franzisidak, who claims 70,000-80,000 daily visitors.

Max Flow CEO Ines Rooney says many of the newcomers that he labels features on compilations leak their own material, causing Max Flow to have to alter everything from track listings to cover art prior to release.

Rooney hopes to channel the aspirations of those hoping to break their music by founding TulndustriaMusical.com, an online community where members can get their music heard and critiqued by music industry professionals.

“A lot of these sites don’t provide anything except for the top 10 songs,” says Rooney, who adds that customer reviews on Amazon are more useful. “We take into account what they say when we make our next compilation.”

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda
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with ELÍAS DE LEÓN

BY LEILA COBO

He is the Lion who gives maverick urban labels White Lion and now, Black Lion, their names. But Elías de León is a man who likes to operate largely behind the scenes. As founder of Puerto Rico’s White Lion Records, he was the first to bet on Tego Calderón, paving the way for Calderón’s joint venture with Atlantic. Later, he signed and developed Calle 13, then partnered with Sony BMG to release the duo’s Latin Grammy Award-winning debut.

Right now, De León is behind the most recent reggaetón chart success, Casa de Leones, which he signed and produced. And, he’s back to working with Calderón, acting as executive producer for his most recent album, “El Abayarde Contra-Ataca.” On a break from working on new albums by Voltio and Arcangel, De León answered six questions for Billboard.

Reggaetón’s sales numbers are down. Does this worry you?

We are going through a process that’s affecting both labels and artists, but at the same time, the business is changing to digital formats. And because many of us are linked to the majors, we are not seeing that new influx of money. Music is still selling, but it’s selling as ringtones. When I sell independently, I realize business isn’t dying out, it’s simply changing. But many people have stopped producing because they don’t get a cut from that revenue stream. [Distributing labels] tell you you’ve sold only 20,000 copies, but they fail to mention you’ve also sold 50,000 ringtones.

Still, you’ve felt an impact from what’s happening today compared with a couple of years ago, when you had carte blanche with budgets, for example. For me, compilations are dead, which makes me happy. And whereas before we could get $200,000 for an album, now we get maybe $50,000. At the same time, I’m working the solo debut by Arcangel and it’s very promising. It’s very world beat. It mixes R&B with reggaetón. The music didn’t just stay in reggaetón. The genre is evolving, and you won’t hear the same sound forever.

Casa de Leones is a brand-new act that has hit the charts in a big way. Talk about it.

It’s five artists. One day they told me, “Listen to these songs we did together.” And I really liked the mix of voices. I saw Atlantic Records chairman/CEO Craig Kallman in New York and told him about it, and I flew the guys out to audition for him in his hotel room and he signed them right off the bat. Later, he suggested I work with Inigo Zabala at Warner Music Latina.

What is the biggest change you see from three years ago to today?

Artists are working better now. They take their careers far more seriously. I deeply respect acts like Don Omar and Daddy Yankee, and also think we will continue to see new talent. But that new talent is better prepared.

You have a reputation for listening to every demo you get. Is that true?

Yes. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t have found Calle 13. I’m very careful about finding acts that are completely different from one another. I always have to listen to those demos.

Why does the industry need indies like yourself?

First of all, you have a bunch of older guys sitting behind the desks at the majors. What reggaetón act have they discovered here [in Puerto Rico]? They don’t see things on time. I do invest in uncertainty. At the beginning I made mistakes, but once I started to produce those projects I truly believed in, they’ve worked.

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TEGO gets BIGGER on mun2

CUATRO SEMANAS CON TEGO NEVER FELT SO BIG

All month long Tego dominates mun2 with exclusive live performances from his new album on "Vivo." We also get the inside scoop on “One Nation Under Hip Hop” as Tego dishes about his new album El Abayarde Contra-Ataca and his acting debut in "Illegal Tender." Tego also sits down with Yasmin and Renato to answer his fans’ questions on "mun2 Talks2." Plus we get inside Tego’s head as he plays VJ for a day on "2RSIVJ.”

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DISPONIBLE PRONTO EN TODAS LAS DISCOTIENDAS
Music

Yung Berg Initiates Epic's EP Format, JV With Koch

After an initial botched attempt at rap stardom via DMX's Bloodline Records, 21-year-old Chicago native Yung Berg finally hit gold with one of 2007's biggest summer jams: "Sexy Lady," which peaked at No. 17 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and No. 18 on the Billboard Hot 100. Now Berg is Epic Records' first EP artist and the first project for the label's joint marketing deal with Koch Records. So "Sexy Lady" has come a ways from its backroom origins.

"I made 'Sexy Lady' in the back of my manager's car," Berg says. "Los Angeles' Power 106 KPWR really broke my record. It had 1,500 spins before I had my deal."

Power 106 mixer DJ Reflex says, "I thought it was a really good radio record. The best thing I heard from an independent. We have a daily feature, New at 2, where we play an hour of new music and get feedback from listeners. After a week or two, the listener feedback was huge." Berg, born Christian Ward, originally signed to DMX's Bloodline Records as a teen. After meeting the backing rapper at his "What These Bitches Want" video shoot in 1993, Berg moved to New Jersey to record and picked up DMX's law-breaking tendencies. Not long after, Berg's past sent him to a Montana military school to see him straight.

"I was 'little DMX,'" Berg says. "Running red lights and just causing trouble."

In 2002, Berg left Montana for L.A. After learning the music business while working in Eve's camp, he continued to rhyme, and eventually recorded "Sexy Lady" on July 4, 2006. The song, which Berg produced, features a catchy horn-driven introduction and a smooth hook sung by new crooner Junior. It samples a bit of Doug E. Fresh's "The Show."

By September 2006, radio had started a buzz with the record, and Epic signed Berg to following March. Now, "Sexy Lady" has racked up 261,000 downloads and 389,000 mastercopies sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan.


"The EP is our response to what we've been hearing from both retailers and consumers," Epic GM Adam Granite says. (For more on EP strategy, see The Indies, page 19.) "Not that Berg is our guinea pig, but if everything is aligned and we hear positive feedback, then we can look forward to amazing opportunities with this idea."

So far, retailers seem to approve of the EP strategy. "We didn't expect anything giant because it's a new artist and 'Sexy Lady' has been out for quite some time," Trans World director of urban music Violet Brown says. "But we were able to sell some units. We're excited that Sony is thinking of new ways to sell their product."

Kelvin Anderson, owner of Long Beach, Calif.-based World Famous V.I.P. Records, adds, "The price point worked well because most people recognized the EP as a CD. People don't listen beyond two or three cuts anyway, and the hit song on it definitely helped the project out. I think the industry should embrace the EP price point."

So far, Epic says no other EPs have been scheduled. But the label is looking into initiating a format called "ingles"—which feature two or three songs and codes for ringtones and mobile wallpaper—possibly beginning around October.

While strengthening its own urban department, Epic has also recruited Koch Records to handle Berg's promotion.

"We approached us because we're a very street-driven company on the urban side," Koch senior VP of marketing John Franck says. "They felt the marriage of the two companies would work, and we're extremely excited. We're also doing Sean Kingston's project, helping out with radio promotion and marketing support whenever we can."

Meanwhile, Berg has just finished up a slot on the Screamfest tour and released a second single, "Where Do We Go?" featuring Twista.

"I want people to grow with me as an artist," Berg says. "For anybody knowing me, and my video to peak at No. 2 on BET's '106 & Park,' that's a good look."

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No Average Joe

Henry Strips Down On First Album In Four Years

Last fall, Joe Henry not only got to work with his childhood hero Louden Wainwright III on "Strange Weirdos," the soundtrack for the comedy "Knocked Up," he also found the drive to write the bulk of his next album.

"The last couple records I've made have been sprawling production ideas driven by ambitious band concepts," Henry says. "With Louden, I found myself stripping away more and more [and] challenging myself to live within the same constraints. The idea was not to be softer or quieter, but to clear out the clutter [and] let things be bold in their simplicity."

It's been four years since Henry's last album, "Tiny Voices." ""Civilians," his second record on Anti- that streets Sept. 11, is a different affair—guests, including jazz guitarist Bill Frisell and Van Dyke Parks on piano, provide a sparse yet rich background that showcases some of Henry's sharpest writing yet. Recorded in just three days, the songs are all captured in live performances. "It's all about being a smart casting director, about having the right people in the room," Henry says. "All those people know how to listen to a song."

Collaboration is nothing new for Henry. In addition to Wainwright, he's worked with Allen Toussaint and Elvis Costello on 2006's "The River in Reverse" and Solomon Burke's Grammy-winning "Don't Give Up on Me," which was released in 2002. "I'd never introduce myself as a record producer. I'm an artist who records songs at times," Henry says. "But I don't find it any less satisfying to work with other artists, realising a musical moment if I'm doing it on my own behalf. You are completely invested in the process, but your ego is not in the way."

Henry's own material has stayed mostly under the mainstream radar. His best-selling album is 2007's "Scar," with 33,000 copies sold in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Anti-hopes "Civilians" will resonate with discriminating listeners. The record will stream on Rhapsody the week before its release, and the label will also target retail outlets, focusing buyer effort to the new "Strange Weirdos" through Amazon and plugging it in Borders e-mail. Anti- will also market it in movie theaters, independent bookstores and cafes.

"You have to treat it as a developing artist to an extent, but also capitalising on people who have become familiar with him through things like 'Strange Weirdos' and a lot of big production credits, working with Ani DiFranco, Solomon Burke, Elvis Costello, et al." Epitaph/Anti- VP of sales Jon Strickland says. "We want to get those fans of those artists."}


Mr Popular

German 'Idol' Winner Ears Fanz Home And Abroad

Since the release of his debut album "Mr. Lonely," German 'Pop Idol' winner Mark Medlock has made many friends. The Sony BMG set is certified platinum in Germany, having shifted more than 200,000 units since its No. 1 bow in June. Opening single "Now or Never" was issued May 11 and reached No. 1 in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. It's now platinum at home, having pushed past 300,000 units. Follow-up track "You Can Get It"—a duet between Medlock and the album's producer: Dieter Bohlen—also topped the German singles chart. Pop singer Medlock, the son of an African-American father and a German mother, won the fourth edition of TV channel ZDF's "Deutschland Sucht Den Superstar."

He now plans to expand his sales base across Europe. "You Can Get It" has already been distributed to radio in a dozen European markets, and in several of them, Sony BMG is planning digital teaks, Columbia German senior product manager Patrick von Stroh says. Album releases in those countries are being considered as well.

Medlock is published by Blue Obsession Music/Arabella and BMG Music Publishing. Berlin's 113 Music handles his booking. — Wolfgang Spahr

AYERS ROCKS: Kevin Ayers has come out of his shell with a new album, "Unfairground." A founding member of influential '60s psychedelic outfit Soft Machine, Ayers was until recently living as a recluse in France. But after a set of his new demos caught the ear of London Records head of A&R Bernard MacMahon, the label got behind Ayers and released the project Sept. 3 in the United Kingdom.

Recorded in Tuscous, Ariz., and Glasgow, Scotland, the album features collaborations with an array of young admirers—including members of Gorky's Zygotic Mynci, Teenage Fanclub and The Trashcan Sinatras—plus some old friends in Robert Wyatt and Phil Manzanera.

MacMahon believes a younger audience will be just as enthralled. "When 1 played the [album] loud, the kids in the park next to our office would come over and ask what it was." "Unfairground" will be released across Europe via Schott Music, Australia on Shock Records and Japan on JVC/Victor, with a U.S. release pending, MacMahon says.

Promotional activity—largely focusing on press and radio—is under way in Europe and the United Kingdom, and tour dates will follow. Ayers is booked by X-Ray Touring for the rest of the United States. Warner/Chappell publishes Ayers's catalog, but the artist retains copyright for "Unfairground." —Steve Adams

TV STAR: South African artist Watkin Tudor-Jones is something of a chameleon in the country's hip-hop scene. Having plied his craft under various guises, including Yang Weapan and MC Totally Rad, for which he self-released his 2005 album "The Fantastic Kill," Tudor-Jones has resurrected an earlier incarnation to power a new hip-hop concept. He describes MaxNormal.TV as "a high-energy hip-hop PowerPoint presentation," combining a strong audiovisual element and lyrics that are an incisive commentary on contemporary South Africa. His five-member crew performed wearing three-piece suits at the Amplifi festival dates in August in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

A full MaxNormal release is planned for later in 2007. Tudor-Jones has yet to confirm a label deal for the album, but signed a worldwide publishing deal with Sony ATV in July.

Tudor-Jones, who handles his own live bookings and created the "masco" and other visual elements for August's OpiKoppi festival in South Africa, is exploring avenues for taking his venture into cinema. "Movies are my umbrella," Tudor-Jones says. —Dian Coetzee
Luck Be A ‘Lady’

Hawley’s Profile Is Rising, Whether He Likes It Or Not

U.K. crooner Richard Hawley has a fast-growing reputation as a musician’s musician. When Arctic Monkeys received the 2006 Nationwide Mercury Prize, Monkeys frontman Alex Turner famously declared, “Someone call 999—Richard Hawley’s been robbed.” But the self-effacing singer/songwriter/guitarist insists he was grateful not to have won.

“I was more nervous about winning than not winning,” he says. “I was with the Arctics all night—we sat together like a Sheffield enclave and got drunk. But I’m still surprised anyone’s interested in my music. I have to re-evaluate my opinion of the human race every time I release a record.”

Despite not taking top prize, the Mercury nomination for Hawley’s fourth album, “Coles Corner,” turned out to be more than a “great night out” for the Sheffield-born, -bred and -based artist. According to market-leading retailer HMV, U.K. sales of the album increased 136% in the aftermath of its nomination—more than any other record on the Mercury shortlist. It’s now certified gold (100,000 shipments), with over-the-counter sales of 95,000, according to the Official U.K. Charts Co. Hawley’s star has been rising ever since.

“Richard’s visibility in the U.S. increased as a result of his nomination, which is a real credibility indicator,” says Hawley’s U.S. marketing consultant Bruce Kirkland of Los Angeles-based Tsunami Entertainment. “It was after the fact in terms of influencing the last album, so it’s having a very positive effect” setting up the new “Lady’s Bridge”—which Mute released Aug. 20 in the United Kingdom and will put out Oct. 2 in the United States.

Hawley isshrugging off any notion of pressure. “Once the album’s recorded, my job’s done,” he says. “I’m really pleased with it but I’m not going to shit myself if it doesn’t go in the charts.”

It would seem the artist has little reason to worry. “Lady’s Bridge”—named, like its predecessor, after a Sheffield landmark—is another delightful record that Mute North America director of marketing Nicole Blonder says is likely to find favor with U.S. audiences, despite just 5,300 sales of “Coles Corner.”

“We’re targeting key noncommercial and triple-A radio for airplay and promotions [and] aggressively going after fall television synchs via [licensing division] EMF Film and TV,” she says. “Given the quality of Richard’s music, we’ll be focusing heavily on retail accounts like Borders, Barnes & Noble, and programs like Paste Recommends with the indie stations.”

At home, lead single “Tonight the Streets Are Ours” (released Aug. 6) became the most-played record on BBC Radio 2, the United Kingdom’s most-listened-to radio station.

“The single has been picked up across the board,” says Dave Chase, London-based product manager at Mute U.K. “From launch, ‘Lady’s Bridge’ will be a much bigger deal.”

Chase reports a “much higher” shipment than for the previous album, but says much of the marketing will reflect Hawley’s down-to-earth northern roots, with Sheffield-based companies Henderson’s Relish producing a special brand of sauce named after the album (as it did for “Coles Corner”) and Kelham Island Brewery launching four Richard Hawley ales.

Hawley will undertake a fall U.S. tour, booked by Big Shot Touring, after 17 U.K. shows booked (by X-Ray Touring) that kicked off Aug. 30. The length of the American trek will depend on Hawley, who freely admits he lacks ambition—he recently turned down an offer to write with Robbie Williams.

“If I probably upset the record company [but] I’m just not greedy—infact I don’t want to be a millionaire,” he says. “Too many artists pick up a guitar as a career move. For me, it’s all about the music.”

X-PRESS 2

Beatbox

Return Of The Unknown DJ

Made-Up Character Vying For Top DJ Billing

Who is Clive Rudloe? The buttoned-up Brit in spectacles and a tie looks more like an insurance salesman than a DJ. But in a two-minute YouTube video that’s already logged more than 4,000 views, he declares himself “the world’s No. 1 DJ,” as selected by the infamous Top 100 annual poll in U.K. magazine DJs. The poll affects booking fees and album sales throughout the subsequent year and sends usually aloof jocks into a vote-getting PR frenzy.

“I always knew that I was the No. 1 wedding DJ in the world; that was clear to me in the early ’80s,” a puffy Rudloe says, sans sarcasm. “At some weddings I could get up to 75 people on the floor.”

While nothing would please some folks more than an uncool outsider topping the Top 100, Rudloe is a viral creation of Above & Beyond, a trance duo that has parlayed increasingly high chart placements into more and better gigs during the last five years.

“The idea came out of a discussion that the whole team was having about the poll and whether we could do something to inject a bit of fun into proceedings, to stand out from all the ‘vote for me’ stuff that goes on,” A&B’s Tony McGuiness says. “We had the idea of a film about a wedding DJ, and it kind of mushroomed from there.”

Rudloe is actually Alex MacQueen, an actor friend of the duo’s manager.

While the clip ends with a slide that reads, “Should’ve voted for Above & Beyond,” and footage from one of their bigger gigs, some YouTube commentators are convinced that Rudloe is real.

“One guy has angrily challenged Clive to a DJ face-off,” McGuiness says. “Clive’s not ruling anything out at this stage.”

NECESSARY WORDS: “I think we danced ourselves to death,” Ashley Beedle says with a laugh from his London studio. “This album’s a bit more cerebral.”

Beedle is part of X-PRESS 2, a U.K. production trio rounded out by Darren “Rocky” Rock and Darren “Diesel” House. The group is responsible for some of the most widely used dancefloor instrumentals in the history of the genre. (Some—where right now, a DJ is playing 1993’s “Muzik X-Press,” while a producer on the far side of the globe is sampling it.) But second album “Makeshift Feelgood” (Tommy Boy) diverges from the strobe-ist path.

“The group first dabbled with full vocals in 2002 with "Lazzy," a sore thumb on debut full-length "Muzikizm" (Columbia). The album was primarily a collection of clubby singles, with such eight-minute-plus bombs as “Smoke Machine” (an ode to the hazy black boxes) and “AC/DC” (as explosive as the band). But "Lazzy" was ambling, slow and funky, and featured David Byrne singing about the virtues of doing nothing. It hit No. 2 on the U.K. pop charts.

The success of "Lazzy" was "a bolt out of the blue, really," Beedle says. "That had a lot to do with the direction we went on this album."

Some tracks sound like self-aware "Lazy" sequels, but the bulk of "Makeshift" confidence struts through other doors. Opener "Give It" wraps Lambchop frontman Kurt Wagner’s protest-style spoken word in kitschy gospel, complete with strings-plucked guitar and a choir "ooh-oohing" in ominous "Rocky Horror" style. "Kid 100" unifies the Giorgio Moroder riff of Donna Summer’s "I Feel Love" and the black mood of Depeche Mode’s "I Feel Loved." And a remake of Peaches Boys’ classic "Don’t Make Me Wait" with original vocalist Bernard Fowler replaces its groove with today’s electro thump, without sacrificing its sensuality.

The rich combinations make "Makeshift" one of the year’s best.
Rhythm & Blues

GAIL MITCHELL gmitchell@billboard.com

Where My Execs At?

Industry Bigwigs Rubbing Elbows At New York Showcase

There's a new urban industry hang that aims to quell laments about the lack of artist development, become a national platform for live soul music and provide a no-pressure zone for industry execs and other tastemakers to enjoy R&B music.

That's a pretty lofty mission statement. But Tuesday nights at R&B Live New York has been steadily gaining devotees since June, when opening-night performers Jaguar Wright, Blackground/Universal's Tank and Atlantic newcomer Deemi christened the venture.

Since then, performers who've hit the R&B Live stage—at Times Square venue Spotlight—include Chrise Michele, Mya, Claudette Ortiz (formerly of City High), Lyfe Jennings, Kedar Massenburg protégé Algebra and So-lange Knowles, as part of Mathew Knowles' Music Word Entertainment showcase. And on any given Tuesday evening, you'll have no doubt see Universal Motown's Sylvia Rhone, Island Def Jam's Antonio "L.A." Reid, BET's Stephen Hill, Bad Boy's Sean Combs, songwriter/producers Swizz Beatz and Bryan-Michael Cox, and Warner Music Group's Kevin Liles drop in for a listen.

Universal Motown executives and R&B Live co-principals Shanti Das and Eric Nicks say this is exactly what they envisioned when they conceived the idea and set up shop as 1st Class Entertainment. Their concept is patterned after now-defunct New York establishment Chaz and Wilson's, which hosted a popular music soiree on Sunday nights.

"We thought there was a void in the music industry and in New York City to showcase live talent," says Das, whose day gig is executive VP of urban marketing and artist development for Universal Motown. "There aren't many opportunities for R&B artists to get out and gain exposure."
“Late Registration” bowed with $60,000, and its total is now at 2.8 million. It’s important to remember that the consumer market in 2003 was much different from this in 2005. Folks still willingly went to Best Buy for CDs, where now it’s a veritable struggle to try to kids away from iTunes and file-sharing applications.

50 Cent has been more successful on the Billboard singles charts, with seven top 10 hits to West’s four on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and five top 10 Whitacre to West’s three on The Billboard Hot 100. I only counted the songs each artist has as a solo performer, so “Hit It or Leave It” by the Game featuring 50 Cent isn’t included, and neither is Twista’s “Slow Jamz” featuring West.

Contextually, it’s obvious that 50 may be through with rapping. After a questionable BET Awards performance, which left his audience staring blankly as he walked around, and releasing several singles/videos (“Follow My Lead,” “Ayo Technology,” “Assumptions Park”) that didn’t garner the immediate and significant chart response he’s accustomed to, he just doesn’t seem excited. In fact, he appears to be.groaningly reassessing this year’s con-

sumers.

“Generally, I can be a little more complex than where we are right now,” 50 Cent told onamash.com in a video interview. “So I got to simmer down, so [my music] actually ac-

ceptable to the public. You got artists whose records are working like ‘Ay Bay Bay’ . . . it
doesn’t take a lot of lyrical ability to make those records. But this is just the cli-

timate of what’s going on now in the art form. I’ll go straight toward making the

choren. I’ve got a hit record where I don’t even say the choruses.”

But then again, 50’s reliable marketing formula casts him as the underdog and now that he’s an international superstar, it’s not working well. So perhaps all the

jiggered release dates, squelched sing-

es and destroyed office TVs will give

hip-hop fans the angry 50 they miss.

And maybe, just maybe, life’s giving

50 his best marketing play yet: im-

provisation. Perhaps this will force

the Queens, N.Y., rapper to reharpen

this tools while fans holler that he’s past his ex-

pation date.

Genre-wise, this is one of your most di-

verse albums yet. Was this all waiting to

come out?

I felt more freedom making this album more than anything else in the past. I was al-

ways fine making a country record for a coun-

try label because you’re sort of obligated to give that, but I fought my whole career as being pegged as just this one thing. Then the pres-

dent of Category 5 gave me a carte blanche. He said, “Look, whatever record you end up doing for this label, it should be that one that lets people know something about you that they don’t already know.”

After you left Columbia, were you look-

ing for a specific label situation, indie or

otherwise?

I wasn’t even looking for a record deal after it was over. I just knew I needed a situation where I didn’t need to compromise or rely on some-

one else’s opinions or ideas of who I was.

How do you feel Randy Jackson affected the way this album was made?

A lot of people have told me over the years that they like my music and want to work in the stu-

dio with me. While they may be really good producers and make big hits, the fact is that if someone doesn’t get me and doesn’t get my background and what I love, then it’s just not going to be a good relationship in the studio. Randy is someone who gets me and who put me in the head of this album. While they may be.

All right, let’s talk about the truth and the facts behind the track.

It’s one of those songs that took a strange turn. (Co-writer) Casey [Beard’s] demo version was very country, but I picked up on this R&B nuance in it. I just took that to the max and then a step beyond and got these girls singing backup. Very Motown-style. This was just the time for a song like that.

How was recording with Kenny Wayne Shepherd?

Normally, session guitar players come in, bring-

ing in racks and racks of gear, with 10-15 gui-

tars. Kenny Wayne walked in that day with a Fender amp in one hand and a Strat in the other and a small pedal. That’s it. Everything else is done with the magic of the hands. We would be sit-

ting there twisting our brains, hating this kid because we loved what he did so much.

Why did you write with Richard Marx and Rob Thomas?

Richard and I had been mean-

ing to write together for about four years. When we worked on “Never Take Me Dancing,” Richard and I were laughing about the bits of [Stevie Wonder’s] “Superstition” in it, with all that funky bass. Randy piped up and said that he played bass on the original demo version of “Dancing,” and we just took it as a sign that this was all meant to be. Richard has an innate sense of melody. Rob has the same thing. We could bond as lead vo-

calists, and also being their own songwriters. He had an appreci-

ation for a great melody.

“Let’s take the trouble in the 50’s reliable

recordings), arrived August 21, and

sports everything from Diane Warren-penned ballads to a funk-inflected take on Richard Marx’s “You Never Take Me Dancing” to Hank Williams Jr.’s “The Pressure Is On.”

It’s not your traditional Tritt fare, though his trademark baritone lords over each track. The

decidedly soulful set was produced by veteran engineer, musician and “American Idol”

umpire Randy Jackson. Tritt, 44, took time to discuss “The Storm,” life after Columbia and co-writing with other hitmakers like Rob Thomas.

“Rub Off on Me” is pretty raunchy com-

pared with the rest of your musical history.

What’s the story behind that track?

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ELVIS: OUT OF U.K. COPYRIGHT, BACK IN THE CHARTS

Elvis Presley is now the first artist to make the U.K. top 40 with an out-of-copyright recording released by a label other than his official record company. But the label releasing the single denies it’s cashing in on the 30th anniversary of Elvis’ death.

“My Baby Left Me” (Memphis Recording Service) entered the Aug. 26 Official U.K. Charts Co. list at No. 19, after selling more than 6,500 copies on CD and vinyl. Presley originally recorded the song in 1956, so it entered the public domain Jan. 1, 2007.

“I’m an Elvis fan,” Memphis managing director Joseph Pizziadis says. “I’m trying to get the best [qual- ity music] I can out there. It’s not for a quick buck, it’s for the love of what I’m doing.”

“My Baby Left Me” is distributed by Cargo and sold exclusively through HMV. Presley’s U.K. recordings were originally released on the HMV label. On the same chart, RCA’s official reissue of “Blue Suede Shoes” hit No. 13. RCA could not be reached for comment at press time.

Despite furious lobbying from the music industry, the U.K. government recently backed the Gowers Review, which recommended the copyright term for sound recordings should remain at 50 years (Billboard, Aug. 4).

—Andre Paine

Acoustic Acceleration

MTV’s 52/52 Initiative Spurs Sales For Rodrigo y Gabriela

With festival tours, late-night TV and public radio support, guitar-slinging duo Rodrigo y Gabriela has steadily built an audience of tastemakers following the release last October of its self-titled debut onATO Records. But thanks to MTV’s 52/52 promo campaign and an aggressive online push, the instrumental act posted a 290% sales increase last week.

Rodrigo y Gabriela notched their highest rank on The Billboard 200 at No. 98, graduating from the Top Heatseekers chart and hitting No. 1 for the first time on the World Albums chart. The set sold 7,000 copies last week, bringing its U.S. total to 148,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The 52/52 initiative features a different act for every week of the year in all of MTV’s on-air promo spots. The week before Rodrigo y Gabriela, the 52/52 exposure worked its magic for Paramore, whose "RIOT!" album zoomed from No. 43 to No. 15 with a 127% sales gain.

"We were able to go and mine out new fans that have no idea who [Rodrigo y Gabriela] are," ATO marketing director Jon Saler says. The duo’s MTV spots featured a guitar tutorial and footage from Mexico, the group’s birth country. Rodrigo Sanchez and Gabriela Quintero are now based in Dublin, where they met Damien Rice while busking on the street and were invited to open shows for him before recording their album.

The acoustic twosome cover Metallica and Led Zeppelin but also compose music inspired by its world travels.

“You have no rules to follow, and we develop a way to create different sounds,” Sanchez told billboard.com last year. “We didn’t get into that classical training, and I’m happy now [that] we didn’t.”

ATO also placed banner ads on 1,500 Web sites and partnered with MTV for online marketing last week.

Rodrigo y Gabriela experienced their highest sales spike during Christmas week 2006, when an appearance on “Late Show With David Letterman,” along with select TV advertising in markets with radio support, moved 10,000 units, more than doubling what they did the week before. Their sales also spiked in the run-up to their Coachella appearance in April, when they played “Jimmy Kimmel Live” and New York’s Webster Hall.

The duo kicked off its fall U.S. tour this week, and will play “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno” Sept. 4.

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield in Los Angeles.

World Music

By Ayala Ben-Yehuda

Drumming Up Sales

Creative Web Campaign Boosts Kweli’s Chart Entry

After nearly a decade in the music industry, Talib Kweli has scored his first top 10 entry on The Billboard 200 with “Eardrum,” which enters at No. 9 this week—and he reaches that mark without the album’s first single, “Hoo Thing,” cracking the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

Boosted by touring and a creative new-media campaign, “Eardrum”—which also checks in at No. 2 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart—sold 60,000 units, 9,000 of which were digital, in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Kweli attributes his chart success to playing live and perfecting his craft.

“Radio and street buzz are important but they don’t entirely determine sales,” Kweli says. “I do almost 200 hip-hop shows per year.”

He admits, though, that he was nervous about promoting “Eardrum” via the Internet. “I hadn’t used my laptop until a year ago,” Kweli says. “Now, I’ve taught myself how to use the Internet and crack my laptop open every morning.”

In January, the MC released “ Liberation,” a free, Internet-only Madlib-produced EP, on a whim. Once the release had catalyzed a significant buzz with hip-hop consumers on the Web, it was Warner Bros. new-media sen-ior VP Jeremy Weit’s turn to digitally promote “Eardrum.”

“We developed cool new things in wire- less, Web and video,” Weit says. “But we made sure all of the new media tied into the theme of the album and fed into the record with the messaging and art.”

Weit’s department created a widget for Kweli’s Web site, which allowed fans to learn more about “Eardrum” through key words. Fans could also embed the widget onto their own MySpace page or blog. Kweli wrote long “text message novelas” that were distributed to his mobile listerv and which shared more personal information on the album. Weit also set up and listed a phone number that fans could call to hear voice messages from Kweli. "Blacksmith TV," a reality show tracking Kweli and labelmates (Jean Grae and Strongarm Stedy), was de-veloped into a 10-part series distributed on YouTube. Kweli’s DJ Chaps also taped their performances and the pair posted the content on Kweli’s Web site in real time.

But what Weit is most excited about is Warner’s partnership with Meebo.com, an online chatting conduit whose recent “Eardrum” promotion partnership is the site’s first music-related tie-in. Warner banked on Meebo’s 2 million unique daily visitors and 750,000 registered members to virally promote “Eardrum” while expanding Kweli’s consumer base. Together, these on-line campaigns increased Kweli’s Web site traffic by 3,000%.

“We started his campaign more tradi- tionally but we weren’t happy with the buzz we garnered,” Weit says. “So we went back to the drawing board and came up with every crazy idea we could think of and put it into action.”

——

KEYSIA COLE’S URBAN CHART THREE-PEAT UNPRECEDENTED

Keysia Cole’s lucky number must be three. The Oakland, Calif., native’s gritty mix of sass and soul didn’t fully click until her third single (“I Should Have Cheated”) from her 2005 debut, “The Way It Is.”

And now, with “Let It Go” featuring Missy Elliott and Lil’ Kim, Cole has clinched a three-peat on Billboard sister publication Radio & Records’ Urban chart. She is the first female in the Nielsen BDS-based chart’s history to score three consecutive No. 1s as a lead artist (“Let It Go”, “I Should Have Cheated” and “Love”). As Elliott sensuously draws on “Let It Go,” now enjoying a second week at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, she asks, “Damn, that’s hot.”

Currently on tour with Gefen labelmate Ray Lavender and Capitol’s J. Holiday, Cole will take time out to sing the national anthem live during NBC’s NFL season kickoff (Sept. 6), release her second Gefen album, “Just Like You” (Sept. 25), and start the second season of her BET reality show, “The Way It Is” (Oct. 30).

“She’s just got this thing,” says Gefen chair- man Ron Fair, who signed Cole. “Earnthiness, grit and the most soulful voice. People just relate to her.”

Gay Mitchell
Like Any Woman Would," the "Sally Go Round the Roses" snippet in "The Word" and the Janis Ian "Society's Child" nod in "Town Called Heartbreak," while "Play Around" sounds like a lost Lieber & Stoller tune for the Drifters.—GG

**CHIODOS**
Bone Palace Ballet
Producer: Casey Bates
Equal Vision
Release Date: Sept. 4

Vans Warped tour darlings back in a big way. Never mind the ridiculously massive pre-order campaign surrounding the Equal Vision act’s latest effort, "Bone Palace Ballet"—the beefed-up production harnesses the raw, unrestrained energy of the group’s breakout release, 2005's "All's Well That Ends Well," into a grander, more substantive affair. The album still packs the hardcore punch of the band’s previous work, with plenty of heavy, blistering guitar riffs and frontman Craig Owens’ rough growls and shrieks. But there’s a newfound orchestral and melodic touch, with livelier, piano-driven jaunts that nod to Queen—see "Lexington (Joey Pea Pot With a Monkey Face)"—and stripped-down, string-backed ballads ("Intensity in Ten Cities"). A mature step up for a band on the rise.—JM

**COUNTRY**

**CLEDUS T. JUDD**

Boogity, Boogity: A Tribute to the Comic Genius of Ray Stevens
Producers: Cledus T. Judd, Chris Clark
Curb
Release Date: Aug. 28

Cledus T. Judd will be the first one to tell you he didn’t set out to reinvent the music of Ray Stevens. What he did do is enlist the help of country stars to record a fitting tribute. Keith Urban plays guitar on "Gitarzan," Charlie Daniels duets on "Shriners Convention," and Stevens himself guest on "The Streak." While "Ahab the Arab" (with Phil Vassar) and "It’s Me Again Margaret" (with Trace Adkins) come across as dated, the best cut far and away is Vince Gill’s and Sonya Isaacs’ version of the Enroll Gamer/Johnny Burke classic "Misty" that Stevens released in 1975. "Everything’s Beautiful," with vocals from such names as Michael Eng, Wyonna and Rascal Flatts, is another highlight. Tribute records can go horrifically wrong, but this one’s right on track.—KT

**SUZY BOGGUS**

Sweet Danger
Producers: Jason Mills, Suzy Boggus
Loyal Dutches Records
Release Date: Sept. 4

There’s always been a depth and diversity to Suzy Boggus that signaled she was more than a country singer, so her collaboration with jazz producer Jason Mills isn’t surprising. While some of Nashville’s top songwriters contributed (Gary Burr, Beth Nielsen-Chapman and Doug Crider—Boggus’ husband—among others), it’s her pairing with Mills, a mix of Nashville and New York musicians that set the project apart. One of music’s purest vocalists, Boggus changes things up on "No Good Way to Go," which finds her analyzing her options for leaving her lover, poetry-slam style. Her turn on Chicago’s "If You Leave Me Now" is familiar and fresh. It’s fitting the album starts with "The Bus Ride," a tale about making new friends on a journey, because with "Sweet Danger," Boggus is likely to do just that.—KT

**LIL’ MO**

Poln & Paper
Producers: various
Honey Child/Koch
Release Date: Aug. 28

On her indie debut, much like her previous albums, Long Island, N.Y.-bred and emotionally weighted around-the-way tales of love and lust, heartache and heartbreak. On the Donny Ross-assisted "Heartbeat," she regrettfully chants over the thud of a heart monitor about not saying goodbye to a lover killed during a club brawl. Meanwhile, the self-proclaimed godmother of R&B seeks the help of a love doctor on the aptly titled "Broken Heart," requesting everything from an ambulance and medical intervention to therapy and surgery to mend her shattered heart. Even when belting about simple-minded matters like dating a much younger man on "Youngin'" and sending naughty flicks of herself to a man on the flirty "Sexy Pictures," "Mo’s vocals and creative arrangements soar, overshadowing the ho-hum topics."—MC

**PINBACK**

Autumn of the Seraphs
Producer: Pinback
Touch & Go
Release Date: Sept. 4

The unassuming lads in Pinback earned some TV airtime and commercial radio play for songs from 2004’s masterpiece "Summer in Abaddon," but there are no overt lunes for the mainstream on their fourth full-length. If anything, save for the frenetic opener “From Nothing to Nowhere," "Autumn" is noticeably less immediate than its predecessors. But it’s also less inward-looking, particularly on the downright jolly "Good to Sea," a perfect blend of vintage synth beeps, sturdy basslines and rhythmic guitar figures that keep creeping in and out of the mix, and the "Message in a Bottle"-style riff and gleeful lyrics of "Blue Harvest" ("Goodie for me, my favorite part"). Several songs near the end go on too long, content to just keep repeating riffs over and over. Still, when "Autumn" is on point, it offers some of Pinback’s best tunes yet.—JC

**HYBRID**

AESOP ROCK
None Shall Pass
Producers: Aesop Rock, Blockhead, El-P: Rob Sonic
Definitive Jux
Release Date: Aug. 28

Aesop Rock’s most song-sized hip-hop is probably most like that of "Raining in Paridize," "El Hoyo" and "El Kitapena." More than just an anti-establishment figure in his politics, Aesop’s songwriting lives by its own rules too; similar arrangements are repeated throughout, but their beautiful textures—reggae, flamenco, horns and guitar-picking that’s banjo-like in its precision—are involving and enjoyable in every time. The simple, humanizing beauty of "Me Llanam Calle" does for prostitutes what "Clandestino" did for immigrants in 1998. With poetic melancholy, absentminded whimsy and direct-shootouts to a world no more than it was just on his last album, there’s enough time to carry fans until Aesop’s next one.—ABY
The following text is from the Billboard magazine, featuring reviews of albums and singles.

**Singles**

**Rihanna Featuring Ne-Yo**

* Hate Me I Love You (3:39)

Producers: StarGate; Ne-Yo
Writers: S. Smith, T.E. Herman, R.S. Enikosi
Publishers: various
DefJam/IDJMG

The year's pre-eminent female artist bonds with today's most in-demand young producer/male vocalist for a can't-miss track that further fuels reinvention of contemporary pop/R&B in the best possible way. A durable melody, proud vocal prowess and guaranteed value beyond the typical six-week cycle—you know, instant saturation; clichéd, gimmicky production; and hasty burnout—never to be heard again—that has marked so much of top 40's output this decade. Rihanna and Ne-Yo are trailblazers for modern popular music. A lofty obligation, but "Hate Me I Love You" will prove its merit at the top of the charts in short order. Bravo-rama.—CT

**Eagles**

* How Long (3:12)

Producers: Eagles
Writer: J.D. Souther
Publishers: EMI April/Apple, ASCAP
Eagles Recording Co.

Comebacks are tricky business. An act must sound familiar enough not to alienate enduring fans, yet fresh enough to remain viable. The Eagles pull it off beautifully on the launch single from highly anticipated "Long Road out of Eden," their first album of all-new studio material in 28 years. "How Long" is a vintage gem culled from J.D. Souther's 1973 debut solo effort. (He had a hand in the Eagles classics "Best of My Love," "Heartache Tonight" and "New Kid In Town.") With clever, literate lyrics ("Like a bluebird with his heart removed, lonely as a train") and instantaneous singalong melody, the song is commanded by lead vocalist Don Henley and Glenn Frey, who deliver a signature sound as novel and warm as 30 years ago. Joe Walsh contributes a searing guitar solo, and Timothy B. Schmit's distinctive voice bolsters memorable Eagles harmonies. If it took this long for the band to create something this good, "How Long" was worth the wait. Already a Hot Shot debut at No. 44 at country radio and Most Added at AC, the Eagles' return proves to be more than a fond reminiscence. These guys are simply poised to soar all over again.—DEP

**FABULOUS FEATURING T-PAIN**

* Baby Don't Go (3:36)

Producer: J. Dunip
Writers: J. Jackson, J. Dunip, F. Najm, V. Bell
Publishers: various

DefJam

Fabels returned to the scene with hit album "From Nothin' to Somethin' " being certified gold and top 10 single "Make Me Better," featuring labelmate Ne-Yo. For follow-up "Baby Don't Go," Looe connected with island Urban president Jermaine Dupri and the hottest R&B singer of the moment, T-Pain, to concoct the perfect formula for a big hit. "Baby Don't Go" brings the street spirit of his time rapping about relationships. This tale tells of a sorrowful Fabulous asking his woman not to leave after an argument, complete with the humble wish to make the relationship work. It shows listeners that real rappers have feelings...or at least it's a great gimmick to please the ladies. Either way, Fabulous' genius lyric matched with T-Pain's harmonies on the hook will have radio and clubs spinning this song until the disc wears out. Dunip's touch proves that boardroom meetings and expense reports haven't gotten in the way of his 16 years of production glory. The hit parade continues.—CP

**Kid Rock**

* So Hott (4:07)

Producers: Kid Rock, Rob Cavallo
Writers: R.J. Ritchie, M. Young
Publishers: RJR Publishing/Jo Ray Dean Music (BMI)
Atlantic

All right, we'll cop the cliché: Kid Rock is indeed "So Hott." The trail blaze's blaring up the charts at rock, active rock and alternative proves the heat that lead single from "Rock N Roll Jesus" (Oct. 9) is generating. In some quarters, it's a slap-inducing insult for a man to use "You've got a body like the devil and you smell like sex" for an opening line. But when coupled with Rock's cut-rate pimp routine, it's white-trash charisma. Detroit's working-class hero wrote the mantra for anyone on the hunt: "I don't wanna be your friend, I'm blue-eyed, blue-eyed like me I'm never gonna see you again." He goes Black Label Society at the chorus and Soundgarden at the verse, doing a credible Chris Cornell right down to the "ye-eh-ah-ah." Fuzzed-out guitars and foot-stomping drum booms eke out an instant anthem for every pickup joint in town. Caveman crude. Unapologetically sweaty. Completely irresistible.—CLT

**KIMBERLEY LOCKE**

Band of Gold (3:01)

Producers: Michael Lloyd, Mike Curb
Writers: R. Durbin, E. Wayne
Publishers: Gold Forever/Songs of Universal, BMI
Curb

Freda Payne's 1970 No. 3 hit "Band of Gold" may have been done to death, but a refreshing cover with ignition control of Kimberly Locke turns "Gold" green again. As with every song she has delivered, the "American Idol" alumna—an earned high marks with her performance on this track of season two of the series—has commanded an enduring love affair at AC radio, with six hits and two No. 1s, including previous No. 6 "Change" from current CD "Based on a True Story." With a firm base in the gay community, the Bimbo Jones remix will only extend Locke's reach. So many songs into the show, fewer original victors maintain relevance. (That's the way of the pop world.) But Locke has drop-kicked Ruben Studdard and Clay Aiken as the season's real winner.—CT
Even with a second-week decline of 40%, the soundtrack to "High School Musical 2" remains the big man on The Billboard 200's campus, leading the runner-up by a margin of 307,000 copies. Fact is, "HSM 2" has become the second-best-selling soundtrack of 2007 in just two short weeks, with 982,000 sold. And, with Walt Disney, the new soundtrack of 2007's ten best-selling soundtracks on Nielsen SoundScan's year-to-date logs. That compares with three for the label at this same time last year, when the first "HSM," "Cars" and "The Cheetah Girls 2" represented the label.

Its recent showing stands in stark contrast to 2005, when Walt Disney's best seller in the category, "Cheetah Girls EP," ranked 21st among soundtracks on SoundScan's year-end list. Aside from "Montana 2" and "HSM 2," the other top 10 Disney soundtracks this year include the original "Hannah Montana" (810,000 copies in 2007), "Jump In!" (469,000), the first "HSM" (408,000) and "Cars" (170,000). Meanwhile, the label's alliance with sister company Disney Channel has shifted the balance of power in soundtracks from the big screen to the small screen. Five of this year's top seven soundtracks come from either TV series or made-for-TV movies.

In 2006, four of the 10 best-selling soundtracks came from TV projects while just one was among the top 10 soundtracks of 2005.

**Market Watch**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Unit Sales</th>
<th>Year-To-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This Week</strong></td>
<td>8,054,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last Week</strong></td>
<td>6,474,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td>-4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Last Year</strong></td>
<td>9,545,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td>-15.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)**

**2006**  | **2007**  | **Change**
---|---|---
344,609,000 | 295,812,000 | -14.2%
364,950,000 | 538,406,000 | 47.5%
3,672,000 | 1,555,000 | -54.4%
712,310,000 | 835,769,000 | 17.7%
418,104,000 | 349,652,000 | -19.3%

**Album Sales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th><strong>2006</strong></th>
<th><strong>2007</strong></th>
<th><strong>Change</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>324,063,000</td>
<td>264,135,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>19,108,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
<td>840,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>657,000</td>
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**Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th><strong>2006</strong></th>
<th><strong>2007</strong></th>
<th><strong>Change</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indies</td>
<td>49,123,000</td>
<td>36,737,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
<td>121,870,000</td>
<td>124,125,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>214,088,000</td>
<td>210,405,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chain</td>
<td>11,300,000</td>
<td>11,473,000</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Indie Invasion**

- There are seven new entries in the top ten of Top Independent Albums, including one by the new Pornographers at No. 4. The debuts hold each slot from Nov. 25. That's the most top 10 debuts the indie chart has seen since it joine Billboard's pages in 2000.

**Fast Crowd**

- Alanis Morissette's latest, "Flavors of Ozone," bows on Hot 100/R&B/Hip-Hop Songs (Ex Between the Bullets, page 81). And, with the top two weeks at radio, Earth, Wind and Fire "More Than a Memory" debuts at No. 1 Hot Airplay (see story, page 11).

**Hey, Joe**

- "Shout It Out" holds SoundScan week. Joe Bonamassa not only plates his third No. 1 on Top Blues Albums, he also makes his first appearance on The Billboard 200. His "Sloe Gin" enters at No. 184 with 4,000 first-week sales.

**Cover Photo**

- The cast of "High School Musical 2." Records placing four titles in The Billboard 200's top 50 in each of the last two issues, you needn't think too hard about which label owns the year's top-selling soundtrack.

- The best-selling film or TV album of 2007 remains "Hannah Montana 2: Meet Miley Cyrus," with 1.1 million, now No. 3 on The Billboard 200.

**Over the Counter**

GEOFF MAYFIELD gmayfield@billboard.com

**Take Two**

Early last year, when the original "High School Musical" first hit Disney Channel, songs from the first soundtrack took The Billboard Hot 100 by storm. Fueled almost solely by digital sales, nine different tracks from the first soundtrack invaded the Feb. 11, 2006, chart, more simultaneous entries than any single album had ever accomplished. That week saw 10 tunes reach Hot Digital Songs, which combined to move 329,000 downloads, while seven charted songs accounted for another 169,000 the following week.

There were six Hot 100 entries from "HSM 2" last issue, and I wasn't surprised to see total volume of songs placed on Hot Digital Songs was down 5% from last year's banner week. After all, with the "HSM" franchise becoming such a known commodity, I figured more kids would be eager to buy the whole album instead of individual tracks.

Time to conjure a new theory, because as the album hits its inevitable second-week slide, its digital tracks explode. All told, nine "HSM 2" entries on this issue's Hot Digital Songs combine to sell 535,000 units.

**Take Three**

Remember when a second-week decline of 40% sounded alarming? In the current environment, such a drop represents continuity. Of albums that have opened at 500,000 after a normal Tuesday release, the last one to experience a smaller percentage slide in its second week than "High School Musical 2" was Kenny Chesney's "When the Sun Goes Down," which had a modest 36% erosion after it began with 551,000 in February 2004.

Only two albums since had smaller second-week declines, and both of those were rushed to market with off-cycle street dates, when advertising was still targeted to the original release dates. Under such conditions, 50 Cent's "The Massacre" had a 32% dip in its second chart week after it began at 1.1 million in March 2005, while Eminem's "Encore" actually managed a 22% gain after its off-cycle street date counted a launch of 711,000 in late 2004.

From the start of 2006 until "HSM 2," each of the albums that started in the half-million club had declines of at least 48%. Larger erasures, like the 79% drop that Jay-Z's "Kingdom Come" suffered in its sophomore frame during last year's fourth quarter, have become more common.

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label/Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JASON ALDEAN</strong></td>
<td><strong>High School Musical 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Meet Miley Cyrus</strong></td>
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<td>Hollywood Records (18.98)</td>
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<td><strong>The Duchess</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AS I LAY DYING</strong></td>
<td><strong>An Ocean Between Us</strong></td>
<td>Sum 1</td>
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<td><strong>UGK</strong></td>
<td><strong>Underground Kingz</strong></td>
<td>Jive 1</td>
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<td><strong>JONAS BROTHERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kiss &amp; Tell</strong></td>
<td>Hollywood Records (18.98)</td>
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<td><strong>Fearless</strong></td>
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<td><strong>High School Musical</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Kala</strong></td>
<td>Interscope Records (9.98)</td>
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<td>Var 1</td>
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<td><strong>The Righteous</strong></td>
<td>Timbaland 1</td>
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<td><strong>Under The Blacklight</strong></td>
<td>EMI 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RIHANNA</strong></td>
<td><strong>It Won't Be Seen Before Long</strong></td>
<td>Def Jam 1</td>
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<td><strong>Riot!</strong></td>
<td>Volvo 1</td>
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<td><strong>Beautiful Girls</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Good Girl Gone Bad</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lost Highway</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Let Go</strong></td>
<td>Fue 1</td>
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<td><strong>PHILIP PEARL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Under The Blacklight</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Daughter</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Every Second Counts</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5th Gear</strong></td>
<td>Capitol 1</td>
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<td><strong>Let It Go</strong></td>
<td>RCA 1</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>FutureSex/LoveSounds</strong></td>
<td>Jive 1</td>
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<td><strong>Kidz Stop 12</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Coco</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tell Me A Story</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Because Of You</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BLAZE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psycodrama</strong></td>
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**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRINCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Planet Earth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RASCAL FLATS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Me And My Gang</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FABULOUS</strong></td>
<td><strong>From Nothin' To Somethin'</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AIDEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conviction</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MARQ ANTHONY</strong></td>
<td><strong>El Camino (Soundtrack)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LUKE BRYAN</strong></td>
<td><strong>I'll Stay Me</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Passed Away</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Awake</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rudi Gobel</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TIM MCDOWELL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tattoo</strong></td>
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**CHARTS LEGEND**

- **#1** (1) = No. 1 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#2** (1) = No. 2 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#3** (1) = No. 3 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#4** (1) = No. 4 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#5** (1) = No. 5 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#6** (1) = No. 6 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#7** (1) = No. 7 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#8** (1) = No. 8 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#9** (1) = No. 9 on the week of September 15, 2007.
- **#10** (1) = No. 10 on the week of September 15, 2007.

**Data for week of September 8, 2007**

**Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data**
### Hot 100 Airplay

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME ME ME</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE WAY I AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANK THAT</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>BARTENDER</td>
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<td>SEXY LADY</td>
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### Adult Top 40

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### Adult Contemporary

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### Hot Digital Songs

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### Modern Rock

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<td>TEARDROP</td>
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<td>ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>BARTENDER</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEXY LADY</td>
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Data for week of September 8, 2007. For chart reprints call 646-654-4633. Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### POP 100

#### Top 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist (Label)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. THE WAY I ARE</td>
<td>TIM MCGRAW WITH FAITH HILL (CURB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. KID IN THE RAIN</td>
<td>TIM TEBOW (ATLANTIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. WHO IS TEE</td>
<td>WILL SMITH (SONY BMG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CRANK THAT (Soulja Boy)</td>
<td>SOULJA BOY (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. LIONHEART</td>
<td>MAX SPENCER (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. THIS IS OUR NIGHT</td>
<td>PATRICK SWAYZE (DISNEY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. HONEY</td>
<td>JAMES PRESCOTT (Epic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. AMERICAN установлен</td>
<td>JASON ALDEAN (DECCA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. BREAK UP WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND, GENTLEMEN</td>
<td>THE BLACK KEYS (Epic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. WELCOME TO MY LIFE</td>
<td>JOURNEY (REPRISE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. WHAT I'VE DONE</td>
<td>DAUGHTRY (Capitol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. THROUGH THE YEARS</td>
<td>GEORGE STRAIT WITH NANCY RAY (Columbia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. BED</td>
<td>A TRIBE CALLED QUEST (INTERSCOPE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. APOLOGIZE</td>
<td>RUSTED ROOT (RED RIDGE RECORDS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. ICY</td>
<td>JADAKISS FEAT. NE-YO (ASAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. SHIT UP AND DRIVE</td>
<td>DAVID ARCHULETA (TOYO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. MAKE ME BETTER</td>
<td>JOSHDUB (LOGIC IMPACT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. WHEN YOU'RE GONE</td>
<td>TIM MCGRAW WITH FAITH HILL (CURB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. LOST IN THIS MOMENT</td>
<td>MIRANDA LAMBERT (VALORY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. LIKE A BOY</td>
<td>MARY J. BLIGE FEAT. NE-YO (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
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### POP 100 Airplay

#### Top 20

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SEXY LADY</td>
<td>WILL SMITH (SONY BMG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. GIVE IT TO ME</td>
<td>DR. DRE FEAT. SNOOP DOGG (SHADY / AFTERMATH)</td>
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<td>3. HEY THERE DELILAH</td>
<td>PAPA ROACH (ROW)</td>
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<td>4. PARANOIA</td>
<td>FLO RIDA (RCA/RMG)</td>
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<td>5. WAIT FOR YOU</td>
<td>JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE (JIVE / ZOMBA)</td>
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<td>6. CRANK THAT (SHAWTY SNAPPIN')</td>
<td>SOULJA BOY (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. THE GREAT ESCAPE</td>
<td>BEAUTIFUL GIRLS (ATLANTIC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. BECAUSE OF YOU</td>
<td>REBA Mcentire (MCA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. HOW I FEEL</td>
<td>TAYLOR SWIFT (REPUBLIC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. NEVER AGAIN</td>
<td>KELLY CLARKSON (RCA/RMG)</td>
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<td>11. FIRST TIME</td>
<td>TIM MCGRAW WITH FAITH HILL (CURB)</td>
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<td>12. BLEED IT OUT</td>
<td>LINKIN PARK (REPRISE)</td>
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<td>13. BETTER THAN ME</td>
<td>MIRANDA LAMBERT (VALORY)</td>
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<td>14. SWEETEST GIRL (DOLLAR BILL)</td>
<td>JAY-Z FEAT. KELLY ROWLAND (DEF JAM)</td>
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<td>15. INCONCEIVABLE</td>
<td>SANTA FE BAND (RED RIVER RECORDS)</td>
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<td>16. NOBODY'S PERFECT</td>
<td>JACOB WHITE (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
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<td>17. HATE THAT I LOVE YOU</td>
<td>KELLY CLARKSON (RCA/RMG)</td>
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<td>18. DO IT WELL</td>
<td>BAND OF HONOR (RCA/RMG)</td>
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<td>19. HOW FAR WE'VE COME</td>
<td>LADY ANTELLA (SHOWGIRL)</td>
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<td>20. UNDENIABLE</td>
<td>MAXOVA (RCA/RMG)</td>
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### Hot Singles Sales

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<td>2. BACK 2 U</td>
<td>TIM MCGRAW WITH FAITH HILL (CURB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG</td>
<td>TAYLOR SWIFT (REPUBLIC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. BECAUSE OF YOU</td>
<td>REBA Mcentire (MCA)</td>
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<td>5. GET ME BODIED</td>
<td>GAGA (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
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<td>6. AYO TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td>LIL WAYNE FEAT. BIRCH (BAD BOY RECORDS)</td>
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<td>7. I CAME TOGETHER</td>
<td>ASHLEY TISDALE AND LUCAS GRABEEL (WALT DISNEY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. SHE IS</td>
<td>MIRANDA LAMBERT (VALORY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. BEAUTIFUL Liar</td>
<td>GWEN STEFANI (ARISTA/RMG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. BOY WITH A COIN</td>
<td>WILLIAM JONAS BROTHERS (HOLLYWOOD)</td>
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<td>11. BECAUSE OF YOU</td>
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<td>12. OPEN YOUR EYES</td>
<td>TAYLOR SWIFT (REPUBLIC)</td>
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<td>13. YOU ARE TOMORROW</td>
<td>DAUGHTRY (Capitol)</td>
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<td>14. WELCOME TO MY LIFE</td>
<td>GEORGE STRAIT WITH NANCY RAY (Columbia)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ARTIST</td>
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<td>SWIZZ BEATZ</td>
<td>One Man Band Man</td>
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<td>TALIB KWELI</td>
<td>Black Star</td>
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<td>UGK</td>
<td>Underdog Kings</td>
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<td>PLIES</td>
<td>The Real Testament</td>
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<td>COMMON</td>
<td>Finding Forever</td>
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<td>D. J. LITVAT</td>
<td>TJ Vs TJ P</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANY WINEHOUSE</td>
<td>Back To Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEYO</td>
<td>Because Of You</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEAN KINGSTON</td>
<td>Good Girl Gone Bad</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. KELLY</td>
<td>Double Up</td>
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<td>SXSW</td>
<td>What Cha Starin' At?</td>
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<td>PROJECT PAT</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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<td>BEYONCE</td>
<td>B'Day</td>
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<td>2PAC</td>
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<td>YOUNG JEEZY PRESENTS U.S.D.A.</td>
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<td>DJ HAALED</td>
<td>We The Best</td>
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<td>BONE THUGS-OMNOMONY</td>
<td>Strength &amp; Loyalty</td>
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<td>CORINE BAILEY RAE</td>
<td>Corine Bailey Rae</td>
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<td>KELLY ROWLAND</td>
<td>Ms. Kelly</td>
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<td>YUNG BERT</td>
<td>Almost Famous: The Sexy Lady EP</td>
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<td>BLAZE</td>
<td>Clockwork Grey</td>
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<td>CHINGO BLING</td>
<td>They Can't Deport Us All</td>
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<td>YELLO</td>
<td>Street Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUNDFRACK</td>
<td>Black Snake Moon</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<td>TAB BENNET WITH LEO WALSEN</td>
<td>Power Of The Poncho</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN &amp; DOUBLE TROUBLE</td>
<td>The Real Deal: Greatest Hits Vol. 1</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>ROBBEN FORD</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Telarc</td>
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<td>OMAK DENTYK JIMMIE VAUGHAN</td>
<td>On The Jimmy Reed Highway</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<td>KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD</td>
<td>10 Days Out : Blues From The Backroads</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<td>KEEP MO</td>
<td>Suitcase</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUDGIE WATERS JOHNNY WINTER &amp; JAMES COTTON</td>
<td>Breakin' It Up, Breakin' It Down</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHRIS DUANIE GROUP</td>
<td>Blues From The Backroads</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<td>GARY MOORE</td>
<td>Close As You Get</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOE BONAMASSA</td>
<td>You &amp; Me</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<td>THE DEREK TRUCKS BAND</td>
<td>Southern Comfort</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOAN ARMSTRONG</td>
<td>In the Blues</td>
<td>Round Hand</td>
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# BEATZ PRODUCES HIS OWN NO. 1

The Beatfinger has started his career assisting DMX, Eve and Cassidy land chart-topping albums. Now producer Swiss Beatz scores his first as an artist, as "One Man Band Man" scores the Hot Shot Debut at No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. With 45,000 units, Swiss starts at No. 7 on The Billboard 200, behind Talib Kweli, who enters the chart at No. 2 on 60,000 copies. Their ranks differ on this page because Billboard's R&B/Hip-hop sales lists are compiled from a subset of stores that specialize in urban music.
**LATIN AIRPLAY**

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<td>TODO CAMBIO</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOY YA ME VOY</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>LO MEJOR DE TU VIDA</td>
<td>ARTIST (XINT / PROMOTION LABEL)</td>
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<td>ME DUELE AMARTE</td>
<td>ARTIST (XINT / PROMOTION LABEL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SI TE DIGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZUMA DADA</td>
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**LATIN ALBUMS**

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Data for week of SEPTEMBER 8, 2007 / For chart reprints call 646.564.4633

Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data
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<tr>
<th>JAPAN</th>
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<th>GERMANY</th>
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<td><strong>SINGLES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HITS OF THE WORLD</strong></td>
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| KAZU NO USA KIKASETE | STRONGER | HAMMA |}

**NEW**

- KAZU NO USA KIKASETE
- STRONGER
- HAMMA |
Singles Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan, sales data for RIAA-certified albums by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialize in those genres.

**ALBUMS**

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan, sales data for RIAA-certified albums by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialize in those genres.

**TASTEMAKERS**

**RECURRENT RULES**

Songs are removed from the Billboard Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Billboard Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed from the R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart from the Hot 100/Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 pop for more than 30 weeks and rank below No. 50. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 10 in detections or audience provided, that they are not DBI-gaining enough audience points. Songs are removed from the Hot 100 if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 20. Songs on Latin Airplay charts are removed after 20 weeks if they rank below No. 20 in audience detections. Descending songs are removed from Adult Contemporary if they have seen on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 15. If they have been on the chart for more than 26 weeks and rank below No. 10, or if they have been on the chart for 52 weeks and rank below No. 5. Songs are removed from the Adult Top 40, Adult R&B, and Hot Dance/Disco charts if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 15 (No. 20 for Rhythmic, and Modern Rock) or if they have been on the chart for more than 52 weeks and rank below No. 10.

**SINGLES SALES CHARTS**

The top-selling singles compiled from a national subset of core store: mass merchant, and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.

**DISCography**

Compiled from a national sample of reports of club DJs.

**MUSIC VIDEO SALES CHARTS**

**DVD SALES/VHS SALES/DVD RENTALS**

**AWARD CERTIFICATIONS**

**ALBUM CHARTS**

**TASTEMAKERS**

**TOP WORLD**

**TOP ROCK ALBUMS FROM: biz**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIVE AT RADIO CITY</td>
<td>Paul Van Dyk</td>
<td>Dave Matthews And Tim Reynolds</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELVIS: '68 COMEBACK SPECIAL</td>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
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<td>ELVIS: ALOHA FROM HAWAII MONITOR</td>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>Elvis</td>
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<td>Elvis</td>
<td>Ray Charles</td>
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<td>GREATEST HITS</td>
<td>Creed</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOT CHOICE OF THE WEEK</td>
<td>Bob Zombie</td>
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<td>Legends of Jazz with Ramsey Lewis Showcase</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<td>Farewell I Tour: Live From Melbourne</td>
<td>Eagles</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAST, PRESENT &amp; FUTURE</td>
<td>R. Kelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ready! The Definitive Performa Ices 1965-1972</td>
<td>The Temptations</td>
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<td>Bless The Rain Down My Face</td>
<td>Chris Botti</td>
<td>Chris Botti</td>
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<td>Chasing Sound</td>
<td>Les Paul</td>
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<td>Best of the Bar</td>
<td>Pantera</td>
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<td>A New Journey: Live at Slane Castle, Ireland</td>
<td>Celtic Woman</td>
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<td>KISSOLOGY: THE ULTIMATE KISS COLLECTION V. 1 1974-1977</td>
<td>Kiss</td>
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<td>Linea de Oro</td>
<td>Alejandro Musical</td>
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<td>Pulse</td>
<td>Pink Floyd</td>
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<td>Rocket Man: Number Ones</td>
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<td>Modern Hotel Live</td>
<td>Keith Sweat</td>
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<td>Live In Dublin</td>
<td>Bruce Springsteen With The Sessions Band</td>
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<td>Family Jewels</td>
<td>AC/DC</td>
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Data for week of September 8, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646-654-4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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RECORD COMPANIES: Koch Records in New York appoints Laurel Dann senior director of A&R administration. She was senior director of production at Virgin Records.

PUBLISHING: Universal Music Publishing Group Germany, the new company formed after Universal acquired BMG Publishing, taps Markus Wenzel as managing director. He previously served in the same role at Universal Music Publishing Germany in Berlin.

TOURING: Live Nation promotes Alan Ridgeway to CEO of its international music division. His previously role as CFO will be filled by Kathy Willard, who was executive VP/chief accounting officer.

Ruptus in Los Angeles names Aaron Simon VP of strategic marketing and business development. He was marketing director at Virgin Records.

Ticketmaster appoints Geoff Cains senior GM for the Southern California region. He served in the same role for the company’s Northwest region.

Venue management firm SMG names Tina Suca GM of the 18,600-seat Forum in Inglewood, Calif. She was GM at the Wiltern theater in Los Angeles.

Palace Sports & Entertainment names John O’Reilly executive VP/CFO and Peter M. Skorich executive VP of broadcast and multimedia. O’Reilly was senior VP/CFO and Skorich was senior VP of broadcasting and multimedia.

RELATED FIELDS: Online music community Music Nation appoints Matt Sternberg VP of business development. He was director of distribution sales at online video network ROO.

The Academy of Country Music names Michelle Goble director of membership events. She was director of media relations at ASCAP Nashville.

Integrated Copyright Group, a division of EverGreen Copyrights, appoints Rusty Reid director of copyright administration and Glenda Johnson audit manager. Reid was senior copyright analyst at Sony/ATV Music Publishing, and Johnson was mechanical royalty manager at Sanctuary Records.

The Latin Recording Academy names Betty del Rio membership manager. She was founder of public relations firm Top One Entertainment.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

Macy’s Raises Funds for Cancer and Art

SPEAKING UP FOR THOSE WHO CAN’T
Autism Speaks/Cure Autism Now received a $17,000 check from VH1 Classic and Razor & Tie Entertainment. The check represents the proceeds from sales of Twisted Sister’s holiday disc, “A Twisted Christmas.” A half-hour special about the album, “Hangin’ With Twisted Sister,” aired last December on VH1 Classic. On Sept. 25, R&T will issue the DVD “A Twisted Christmas Live.”

GO WORKS

Macy’s raises funds for cancer and art

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IN LUXE

Nikon, Volvo and spring take it Four-To-The-Floor
Track has learned that Nikon is partnering with Spring LLC as the title sponsor of the latter’s Four-To-The-Floor tour. The four-city trek kicks off Sept. 19 in Chicago and features up-and-coming DJs spinning alongside live musicians. Yo-Yo is also a sponsor.

“We’re breaking the stereotype for dance music,” tour consultant Hosh Gureli says. “Who usually sponsors dance music tours? Energy drinks or liquor. This isn’t typical.”

Gureli, a music industry vet who recently left a lengthy tenure in Sony BMG’s dance department to pursue independent projects, was brought on by Spring managing director Michael Aiken. Formerly in finance, Aiken founded Spring as an alternative to the traditional record label model. “He compny will maintain the whole pipe,” Aiken says. “We’ll control the complete property, not only CDs but sponsorship, merchandise, everything related to the artist. Because the way music sales are going, that’s the only way we can extract enough value and generate enough income to be successful.”

The tour features DJs from Aiken’s Springy’s DJ/Artists, hand-picked by Gureli, and culminate with the release of a digital EP in late September, and a full compilation in early 2008. “This is just trying to penetrate the consumer; the youthful audience that wants to capture their experience,” Aiken says.
The rumors are true: Danger Mouse is producing the new Black Keys album, which should be out early next spring via Nonesuch. In late April, Keys drummer Patrick Carney told Billboard the group had already recorded nine songs, and that R&B legend Ike Turner would be involved in some fashion, but all parties declined further comment about the current state of the project.

While finishing up the new Gnars Barkley album, Danger Mouse has also found time to helm Martina Topley-Bird’s latest, “The Blue God,” due early next year.

LILLYWHITE HELMS 2009 MATCHBOX ALBUM
Rob Thomas told billboard.com in June that a new Matchbox Twenty album should arrive in 2009. But now he tells Track to expect the one and only Steve Lillywhite to be at the helm. Lillywhite produced the six new Matchbox Twenty tracks that will come bundled with the band’s first greatest-hits package, “Exile on Mainstream,” due Oct. 2 via Atlantic. “We had a lot more than six songs, but the label wouldn’t let us include more than that on the retrospective,” Thomas says. “Honestly, we could have put out a whole new album now. We’ve got enough songs we’re happy with that it wouldn’t make sense not to do the next album with Steve.”

Nickelback celebrates its six-times-platinum disc, “All the Right Reasons,” as well as its band’s overall worldwide sales mark of 25 million copies. From left are WEAP president/CEO John Ertouto, Roadrunner Records president Jonas Nachbin, Atlantic Records Chairman/CEO Ciaf Kallman, Nickelback’s Chad K\n  
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