AT&T is proud to be part of the release of Gloria Estefan's latest song "No Llores", a tribute to her Latin roots and part of her upcoming CD "90 Millas", to be released Sept. 18, 2007.

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More bars in more places. The network you can trust.
EXCLUSIVE:
SPIRALFROG
LAUNCH DATE
Amazon And Qtrax
To Follow

KANYE, 50, KENNY
Was The Week
Good For
The Business? >P.9

SOULJA BOY
YOUTUBE
DANCE CRAZE
BREAKS OUT >P.70

CHART HEAT
BRITNEY, CHIODOS,
FERGIE, RASCAL
FLATTS >P.75

WATERMARK WATERLOO
3 WAYS TO
STOP LEAKS >P.20

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Congratulations from your MCA Nashville family on being named Billboard's first ever Woman Of The Year
FEATURES

REBA
She's delivered 30-plus years of hits, and success in film, TV and fashion. Her influence on a new generation is clear, with a song from her upcoming duets album already charting. It's easy to see why Reba McEntire is Billboard's Woman of the Year. Plus: Her album reviewed, page 73.

ONE MAN, ONE SOUNDTRACK
Years ago, Simon & Garfunkel and Prince set the model for single-artist movie soundtracks. Now, a new crop of films is employing a solitary voice to bring the on-screen action to life.

SHEDDING THEIR BURDENS
After a lackluster period, amphitheaters are sharpening strategies and regaining business health.

KANSAS CITY'S NEW DIGS
The Spring Center brings state-of-the-art entertainment hub to the Midwest.

MUSIC

HOW FAR THEY'VE COME
Matchbox Twenty strikes a new creative flame.

Rhythm & Blues

Global Pulse

Beatbox

Real Talk, Jazz Notes

6 Questions

Emmylou Harris

Happening Now

Reviews

IN EVERY ISSUE

Opinion

Over The Counter

Market Watch

Charts

Marketplace

Executive Turntable, Backbeat, Inside Track

ON THE COVER: Reba McEntire photographed by Marc Baptiste.

EVENTS

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, Diana Reyes and Horoscopos. More at billboardevents.com.

DANCE MUSIC SUMMIT
Returning to Las Vegas, this year's summit features panels, DJs and the Vegas Music Experience, with the world's best DJs and can't-miss pool parties. Info at billboardevents.com.

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

BLOGS

JADEN INSIDER

www.americanradiohistory.com
Back To Black
Why The U.K. Biz Needs More Minority Execs

BY KAYA KING

The MOBO (Music of Black Origin) Awards—this year’s take place Sept. 19 in London—have been the leading black music event in the United Kingdom and Europe for more than 10 years. We have certainly helped urban music make the transition from niche music to mainstream.

We’ve gone from celebrating musical achievements in the downtown area of my house to filling the Royal Albert Hall and, this year, the O2 Arena (formerly the Millennium Dome), with the great, centage of BMES working in the music industry has dropped from 9% to 6% between 1996 and 2006. More surprising still is that BMES make up nearly one-quarter of the overall London workforce, and that figure has risen sharply during the same 10-year period. Not only is the music industry employing far fewer BMES candidates than the national average, it is the only industry in London to have shown a drop in such numbers in this period.

When people ask about the relative lack of U.K.-based black music successes, figures like this may well explain a lot. If there aren’t enough people from those musical backgrounds working in the industry then, it’s no surprise that the U.K. industry doesn’t show enough understanding of the genres to promote them successfully—at home and abroad.

These figures come at a time when recent research has shown that young black males are having a hard time making a success of their lives. Reach, a U.K. government advisory panel, says that a lack of inspirational role models is having a devastating effect on such young men, who are far more likely to be excluded from school, drawn into criminality or fail in business and employment. The report concludes that the effect on the U.K. economy of failing to deal with these issues may cost in the region of $48 billion during the next 50 years.

MOBO was always about trying things that no one else would. When we started the awards in 1996, it was because there was an obvious upsurgence in mainstream interest in black music in the United Kingdom, but credit wasn’t being given. It wasn’t that the music didn’t exist or wasn’t selling, or that there weren’t great people working in the industry; it just seemed like it had all been overlooked. So, we just thought, “Someone should do something.” Now, it’s time to start again.

Everyone’s polite to us: trade associations and other industry organizations, government bodies. They say they want to help, but they aren’t always exactly proactive. While these bodies often have some sort of “diversity remit,” it’s always a minor part of their overall strategy. We think the time is right for U.K. BMES to have their own voice in the form of a separate black music trade association.

We’re also at an early stage in plans for the MOBO Academy, focusing on education and skills in the music industry. Black youth have a high dropout rate from college courses—as much as 60% in some parts of the United Kingdom—and many think this is because the institutions delivering skills training are simply failing to support these young people in a way that they can understand. A MOBO Academy would give us a chance to dictate the agenda. There’s a lot of support for creating a place where we can say, “We understand the community’s challenges, and we know how to deal with them.” We want to help young entrepreneurs and candidates for employment alike. The first step is to commission research into the measures that have shown success in the parts of the world, including the United States, and see how they can be applied in Britain.

At this stage, we have no idea how it’s going to work or who’s going to fund it or partner with us. But, just like 12 years ago, it needs doing and no one else is going to do it for us. So we roll up our sleeves.

I suppose people are still going to just think we’re about the bling, but someone has to make a start, right?

Kaya King is founder/CEO of the MOBO Organization.
"I think a life in music is a life beautifully spent..."

Luciano Pavarotti
12 October 1935 - 6 September 2007
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR TOP 25 DEBUT WITH AFTERWORDS

BILLBOARD COMPREHENSIVE CHART – WEEK ENDING 09/02/07

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AFTERWORDS DEBUTS AT #5 ON BILLBOARD DIGITAL ALBUM CHART
IN CANADA AFTERWORDS DEBUTS AT #23 ON SOUNDSCAN AND #8 ON DIGITAL ALBUM CHART
"HOLLYWOOD" CURRENTLY TOP 30 AT HOT AC AND TOP 10 AT AAA
"HOLLYWOOD" VIDEO ADDED TO VH1 AND AOL
TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO 8/30
ON TOUR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER WITH LIVE

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The Kanye West/50 Cent/Kenny Chesney shootout brought new release excitement back into the business for a week, but left chain buyers waiting for more of a good thing—and not all of them agreeing it helped sales in the long run.

By midweek, experts in sales departments of the four majors had projected West's "Graduation" as the clear-cut winner, with their projections ranging from 750,000 units to 850,000 units, and averaging out to about 781,000 units.

In fact, West's sales are so strong that some Best Buy and Target stores were already experiencing outages by the day after the Sept. 11 release date, according to sources. That predicament left Universal Music Group Distribution scrambling to keep up with demand, mainly due to the special packaging used for the West album, in which CDs cannot be loaded into the package through automation, but instead must be assembled by hand.

UMGD had shipped 1.3 million units by street date. But with reorders, the warehouse was down to 50,000 units on the morning of Sept. 12, with 150,000 expected to be assembled that day. UMG president Jim Urie reports the 70,000 digital copies of the West album sold by iTunes on street date also caught UMG by surprise.

Meanwhile 50 Cent's "Curtis" projections range from 575,000 scans to 650,000 scans, with the average falling at about 603,000 units. And projections for Kenny Chesney's "Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates" range from 400,000 to 500,000, averaging around 456,000.

If sales meet the high end of the projections, the three titles combined would hit a whopping 2 million units.

EMI Music Marketing president Ronn Wolfe cheers the strength of his competitor's releases. "We have a shot of three titles, each doing 500,000 units in one week. These are great numbers and a great day for the industry."

"It feels like the old days," Sony BMG U.S. Sales president Jordan Katz says. "How fantastic is it to have a handful of powerful releases driving traffic into the stores in early September?"

The excitement was so palpable that Trans World music divisional merchandise manager Jerry Kamiler says he "couldn't sleep. I couldn't wait to get here this morning to push the buttons and see what the numbers were." Indeed, retailers are already hoping for more of the same.

'This race is over, we know who won —it's move on to the next one," Newbury head of purchasing Carl Mello says. "We should have more of these ahead; we should only be so lucky."

Kamiler notes that while the upcoming release schedule may not be as strong as the Sept. 11 week, it's still solid for the next six weeks. He's concerned about November, though—particularly from the rock music side, where bands the only notable release that month is a live Police album.

Meanwhile, a debate is shaping up on whether releasing all three records simultaneously was a smart idea. "It's good to have new releases doing as well or even slightly better than expected," says Dave [name redacted], VP of product management at Troy, Mich.-based Han-delman. "But I am an advocate of spreading the release schedule out."

Certainly, the West/50 competition played well in the media—feeding a fan frenzy, some in the industry say, that drove consumers to the store to vote for their favorite.

"It worked out to be a really good thing that they both came out on the same day," Urie says. "But it was kind of accidental."

For one thing, the previous week had begun with Labor Day—and, Urie says, labels are reluctant to release records on Mondays following Monday holidays, since the latter can disrupt the timeliness of shipments.

Also, West and 50 were performing Sept. 9 in Las Vegas on MTV's Video Music Awards show, and their labels wanted to capitalize on that by releasing their records the following Tuesday. So why didn't BNA move Chesney's record up to Sept. 4, when the artist could have owned the week, instead of coming in at what now looks like will be No. 3? "He was finishing up his tour, which ended on [Sept. 8] and is set up to do a great round of media this week," Sony BMG Nashville senior director David Fitzgerald says. "It's kind of hard to do both at the same time."

Kamiler, though, still questions the wisdom of having three big records in the same week. "The 50 Cent vs. Kanye [competition] may have created more excitement," he says, "but I think we would up with less sales than if one of them came out in August."

"I understand you want to go fishing when the fish are biting," he adds. "But it's better to stretch releases out."

By midweek, experts at major labels had declared the new album by KANYE WEST, left, the clear-cut winner over 50 CENT, above top, and KENNY CHESNEY.
Spiralfrog Goes Live
U.S. Launch Will Test Ad-Sponsored Service Model

By Antony Bruno

Following months of delays, executive upheaval and more than $10 million spent, the Spiralfrog ad-supported free digital music service plans to go live Sept. 17 in the United States, Billboard has learned.

The U.S. launch is an important step in determining whether offering free music in return for watching advertising is a viable business model for the still-struggling digital music space.

The service operates much like any other music subscription service. In exchange, we have a great opportunity to sample and download an unlimited number of songs, but are required to register with the site once a month—free of charge—to refresh their licenses. The idea is to lure users of free, pirate peer-to-peer networks to a free, authorized service, and make money through ads on the site.

But major questions remain over whether Spiralfrog, or other ad-based services for that matter, can attract enough regular users to generate revenue needed to pay for its music licensing costs.

The company outlined its strategy to address this issue in a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing last week. The document details a unique licensing scheme that focuses on royalty payments paid upfront, in addition to a split of advertising revenue.

For instance, Spiralfrog paid Universal Music Group—the only major label supporting the service to date—an upfront fee of $2.2 million for its catalog. Additional payments will be due after Nov. 15.

This model means Spiralfrog is not paying a per-download or per-stream fee, like other services must—a critical distinction. If it had to pay labels per song, ad-supported services would run out of money long before they could generate enough traffic to justify raising advertising rates to the level needed to cover the licensing fee. That’s why Napster stopped hosting its free, ad-supported service tier on its main site and instead hides it in a non-linked page—it was starting to cost too much.

“‘It’s a bit of a Catch-22,” Napster COO Christopher Allen says. “You scale the audience to where you can generate the advertising (rates), but have a difficult time paying the financial obligations. But until you get to that scale, you can’t charge the (rates).”

During the private beta, Spiralfrog says the average user downloaded 16 songs and viewed 15 pages on the service per day. It has 700,000 songs and 1,500 videos available. According to the SEC filing, Spiralfrog hopes to finalize licensing deals with at least two other major labels and launch service in the United Kingdom by the end of the year. A mobile service is also in the works.

At launch, Spiralfrog is in a precarious financial position. It has generated only $3,000 in advertising revenue as of the end of June through its beta phase and Canadian live launch in May, and has lost less than $1 million in cash on hand. The company says it needs another $18 million in funding for the next year or won’t survive, and will initiate a $25 million private placement funding round for the fourth quarter to sustain operations.

Let’s Do Launch

Like it’s going to be a big week for new digital music services. In addition to Spiralfrog, new services from Amazon and G-trax may see the light of day as well.

Amazon’s service could go live as early as Sept. 18. According to one well-placed source, it’s just awaiting final approval by CEO Jeff Bezos. The service could be delayed a couple weeks if he is not satisfied.

Meanwhile, G-trax reportedly will unveil its ad-supported peer-to-peer-based service by mid-month. The company has hired J. Christopher Roe as its chief technology officer. —AB

Questions:

With Neil Portnow

by Susan Butler

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Grammy Award, the Recording Academy is gearing up this fall with “My Night at the Grammys,” a primetime TV special with an interactive element.

Billboard caught up with the academy’s leader, the recently promoted Neil Portnow, to hear about the latest and other academy happenings.

When the academy’s 50th-anniversary celebration is over, what is the most important message that you hope you've successfully conveyed? The relevance and importance of this organization (and its) key missions: membership and awards; philanthropy and charity for our own; music education, archiving and preservation; and advocacy. In each, we have a great opportunity for growth and development. It’s important that people realize and recognize that the academy is far beyond a once a year, three- and four-hour [Grammy Awards] telecast.

How do you determine which advocacy position to take as an organization on an issue? An obvious source for input and discussion is our national officers, who are all very capable, savvy, well-informed individuals from the industry selected by the board of trustees. We have an advocacy committee, and the chapters have their own local advocacy representatives. Then we have our Washington, D.C., staff and lobbying team who are helping us in the day-to-day looking at policy from a pragmatic standpoint.

How do you measure your success in advocacy? You can measure in specific, tangible results, which might be legislative action. Many of these things are very long-term projects that can’t always be measured in a tangible way, but have to be measured over time in terms of the influence tipping the scales in favor of the issues we advocate. That’s also about building relationships. We just came back from Recording Arts Day in D.C., which is something the academy initiated based on my hearing repeatedly from leaders of Congress that the industry needs to show up in a unified fashion. We expanded Grammys on the Hill, an evening event to honor a congressional, senator, and music individual, to this entire day of all of our collective industry groups coming together.

How do your responsibilities change by adding CEO to your title of president? It means more about an official quantifying the big picture and the research and development element, looking into the future more than just the past. At first, we made operational and organizational changes. Now, the mandate is to go beyond the day to day in a more significant fashion and dream a bit, strategize a bit and develop a game plan.

What’s coming up in the next six months? In November, we have the Latin Grammy Awards in Las Vegas. Next up will be our CBS prime-time special, “My Night at the Grammys,” on Nov. 30. This is a combination of a retrospective, behind-the-scenes and an interactive look at the Grammys over the years. Of critical importance is that there never be any confusion about voting for Grammys as a peer process, which gives us our luster and status. On the other hand, there’s an expectation from anybody sitting in front of a screen to be able to have some role in what’s going on. For this show, since it’s not about giving Grammys, it’s looking back and giving the public the ability to weigh in [online and vote] on which one was their favorite. On Dec. 6, we have Grammy nominations. Then we’re in the home stretch for the Feb. 10 Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

Will the Grammy Awards show ever be in New York again? I’m committed to coming back to New York. It’s just a matter of getting the [right] business [deal] and scheduling at Madison Square Garden.

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For information regarding sponsorship and table sales, please contact the Chicago Chapter office at 312.786.1121. Individual tickets go on sale September 4, 2007, pending availability.
Sony BMG Enters Multifaceted Music Partnership With Starwood Chain

Sony BMG Entertainment has entered into an exclusive partnership with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide to develop uniquely branded music and entertainment-based programming for hotels that fall under the Starwood banner. Under the long-term deal, Sony BMG will work closely with Starwood to create in-house song playlists, digital music stores, in-room TV offerings, customized compilation albums, live entertainment experiences and more. The program will be implemented in such U.S. Starwood hotels as Sheraton, W Hotels, Westin, Four Points, Le Méridien, St. Regis and Luxury Collection brands. A global expansion is planned for later this year. “The appealing thing for Sony BMG is that we can help expose our guests to their different artists,” says Rod Maio, senior director of entertainment strategy for Starwood. “People can be in a hotel for several days at a time, so they have more time to explore new music.”

The first part of the initiative is to create custom song playlists that cater to the vibe of each hotel. The playlists, which include but are not limited to Sony BMG artists, will be heard throughout each Starwood hotel property. “The sound of Sheraton will be very different from the sound at St. Regis,” says Jill Rosen, executive VP of Sony BMG Music Entertainment’s Commercial Music Group. “A Hotel visitor, Mano says, will more likely hear such artists as Images Heap, whereas Sheraton patrons will be exposed to the more ‘familiar’ sounds of Bruce Springsteen.”

Another goal is to create compilation CDs that will be sold at each hotel. At a price of $25, a compilation for W Hotel—including such acts as Goldfrapp, Nina Simone, DJ Kool and Dirty Vegas—has already been developed. Sony BMG and Starwood will share revenue on each CD sold. Starwood is also giving Sony BMG a free-in-room TV channel that will be looped with approximately 60 minutes of artist interviews, short-form music videos and other exclusive programming. “We’ll also have snippets of our long-form concert videos that are sold on DVD,” Rosen says, noting that viewers will be given the option to purchase the full concerts via pay-per-view.

Finally, the program calls for live music at each hotel. “When they open new hotels, for example, they often have press events and parties,” Rosen says. The first concert under the agreement is a Sept. 19 performance from Train’s Pat Monahan at Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers.

10 From The Tenor

In the wake of Luciano Pavarotti’s death Sept. 6, a number of releases in the artist’s catalog experienced significant sales leaps this week. Two Pavarotti titles re-enter The Billboard 200—“The Best: Farewell Tour” at No. 76 and “The Greatest Tenor of All Time” at No. 156. Pavarotti releases wound up dominating the Top Classical Catalog chart, where 12 out of 20 titles this week are Pavarotti-related. On the Midline Classical chart, seven out of 15 titles are Pavarotti-related. On Classical Budget, the tally is six out of 15.

As always when an artist of this stature dies, we have an immediate spike in sales and then because there is not enough product in the market, sales slow down. Then when they refill the orders weeks later, we get another spike,” says Jerry Kamler, music divisional merchandiser manager for Trans World Entertainment. “This year I expect Pavarotti titles to be a huge gift-giving item.” Below, the week’s top 10 selling Pavarotti titles:

1. Luciano Pavarotti — “The Best: Farewell Tour” (Bravado, $25.45)
2. Luciano Pavarotti — “Luciano Pavarotti: The Greatest Tenor of All Time” (Sony Classical, $25.45)
4. Luciano Pavarotti/Jose Carreras/Plácido Domingo — “Three Tenors” (Bravado, $25.45)
5. Luciano Pavarotti — “Pavarotti: The Legend” (Bravado, $25.45)
6. Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti — “In Concert” (Bravado, $25.45)
7. Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti — “The Best of the 3 Tenors” (Bravado, $25.45)
8. Luciano Pavarotti — “Golden Classics” (Bravado, $25.45)
9. Luciano Pavarotti — “The Best of Pavarotti” (Bravado, $25.45)
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Satellite radio companies Sirius and XM invested billions in infrastructure and millions more in marketing to differentiate themselves from one another. Now, they're spending millions more in an attempt to merge.

Already, they have put up $13 million—$5 million by Sirius, $8 million by XM—trying to convince Washington, D.C., regulators that their union "will bring unprecedented benefits to consumers and significantly enhance, rather than harm, competition," according to the companies.

But with a decision from the regulators expected in less than four months—before year's end—there's plenty of money pushing against the merger as well. For its part, a disclosure that the National Assn. of Broadcasters filed with the Senate Office of Public Records states that broadcasters spent $4.28 million during the first half of 2007 for lobbying against such issues as the Sirius-XM merger, resurrection of the Fairness Doctrine and the RIAA's proposed performance royalties.

Why is the NAB so up in arms, and where does the proposed merger currently stand?

A LA CARTE PRICING

At the forefront of the companies' pitch to become one entity is a la carte pricing, a programming plan that, if the merger is approved, lowers the satellite radio subscriber entry price from $12.95 per month to $6.99 with a base of 50 channels that the consumer chooses. Other plans feature more options, but freedom of choice also costs more, up to $16.99 per month. When Sirius CEO Mel Karmazin unveiled the plan July 23 during an address at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., he said the new rates would take effect only if the merger was approved.

"The reason we've not offered it in the past is very simple: Last year, Sirius lost $1 billion. Our company has not made a profit in the years since it started," he said. XM, for its part, lost $7.19 million last year; the two satcasters' combined revenues for the year totaled $1.57 billion.

"The idea of offering this a la carte service," Karmazin said, "is made possible by the synergies connected with the merger."

But surprisingly, persistent satellite radio nemesis the NAB isn't buying it. The organization has called the a la carte menu "a sham" and says consumers will be hurt because the average price of channels will cost more per month. After completing analysis of the satcasters' new menu offering, NAB senior VP of legal and regulatory affairs Jane Mago led a party of NAB lawyers and "in-the-know" staffers to the FCC to convince commissioners and associates that the satcasters' numbers don't add up.

The observation garnered an immediate reaction—but not necessarily from expected parties. The million-member-strong Parents Television Council, a generally conservative lobbying group that defines itself as "pro-family" and often tangles with the NAB over sexual and violent programming on TV, took on the broadcasters.

The PTC, in a statement, said the a la carte pricing plans "will offer more affordable packages, including an option for families to block adult-themed channels and receive a price credit for the unwanted programming."

"There is no question that greater control of graphic content, combined with the ability for consumers to have control over packages and pricing, is in the public interest and certainly in the interest of parents and families," PTC president Tim Winter says.

The FCC has not officially commented on the merger or the a la carte proposal, but, at a recent briefing with reporters, FCC chairman Kevin Martin said he is "pleased any time companies come forward with proposals that give consumers more control over what they pay for."

MONOPOLY MONEY

The NAB, meanwhile, hopes to convince regulators that a merger would create a monopoly that "inevitably result in increased prices, fewer programming choices, less local programming for radio listeners and other public interest harms." Sirius and XM face enormous obstacles to get their deal cleared. The Department of Justice is reviewing the plan for possible anti-competitive violations and the FCC, which will wait for the DOJ's decision, will also re-examine its decades-old rule that prevents one operator from holding both satellite licenses.

Ultimately, a decision on the merger could set a precedent in how federal regulators view the media marketplace. In 2002, when EchoStar's Dish Network and satellite TV competitor DirecTV proposed a similar marriage, the FCC took less than four months—speedy by Washington, D.C., standards—to reject the plan as anti-competitive and not in the public interest.

And while rumors of a merger between Sirius and XM began almost as soon as their birds were flying, chatter in Washington, D.C., communications lawyer circles grew louder in spring 2006. Radio wasn't just radio anymore, but a whole new world of audio entertainment. Satellite radio didn't just compete with terrestrial radio, but with every other product and medium that delivered sound to ears.

And that is exactly the point the satcasters are making today. In a recent filing with the FCC, they point out, "All available evidence shows that consumers have a variety of reasonable substitutes for satellite radio, including, of course, terrestrial radio, but also [high-definition] radio, wireless phones, iPods and other MP3 players—and new technologies are appearing by the day. With all of these alternatives, it is abundantly clear that a combined Sirius and XM would lose subscribers if it attempted to raise prices without providing greater content or quality of service."

"Yet with all this change and competition, one fact remains pretty much the same," Karmazin said during his Press Club address. "Terrestrial radio is still the 800-pound gorilla in the audio entertainment market, with 230 million weekly listeners and radios capable of receiving broadcasts in virtually every home and automobile in America. By contrast, [satellite radio] has 300 channels and accounts for just 3.4% of the national radio audience as measured by Arbitron."

While the NAB rejects the satcasters' claim that both industries do business as part of one big competitive audio landscape, the lobbying group's president, David Rehr, recognized new technology in his April 24, 2006, keynote address at the NAB spring convention in Las Vegas, and encouraged members to adapt to a new way of thinking. But he also pooh-poohed competition from satellite radio—"not because it is so fierce, but because it is so lame."

"Satellite radio supposedly has 10 million subscribers total, but 260 million people listened to broadcast radio last week alone. Furthermore, satellite radio lost about a billion dollars last year. Its business model is bankrupt," Rehr said.

WHY THE WAR?

So what changed in this competitive landscape and to satellite radio's "bankrupt business model" that now has the NAB spending millions of dollars to try to block the merger? And if the NAB's theory that a monopolistic satcaster would mean fewer programming choices and higher rates, wouldn't that be a huge benefit to free radio broadcasters?

NAB executive VP of media relations Dennis Whitson says no. "When the FCC authorized satellite radio in 1997, it specifically issued more than one license, citing the fact that competition serves consumers better than a monopoly," he says. "Nothing has changed to suggest that consumers would benefit from turning two holy competitive companies in the finite area of satellite radio into one." In addition, he says, government should not reward two companies that have made bad business decisions (i.e., paying Howard Stern $500 million) with a monopoly.

In early July, the NAB filed a petition to delay the merger with the FCC, and it continues to lodge similar briefs every few days with the commission, members of Congress or anyone who will listen. At the NAB's urging, the National Assn. of Black-Owned Broadcasters, the Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union and various state broadcasters' associations filed petitions against the proposal. Even NPR, which supplies news channels and information programming to Sirius and XM, filed a 21-page petition, stating, "We fear a satellite radio monopoly might reduce the amount and quality of public radio programming offered via the [satellite] platform."

Ultimately, it is not the NAB that satcasters have to please. They must first pass muster with the DOJ, whose review of the FCC's approval group should hold two satellite licenses. Sirius and XM will also have to convince the FCC that the deal is not anti-competitive, though the commission will likely take that direction from the DOJ...
Changing The Chain

Trans World's Transition Could Begin To Pay Off

After a bumpy 18-month transition, Trans World's reinvention as an all-around entertainment retailer could see dividends soon, and there's a plan at work to get there. That was the message that senior management delivered at the company's annual convention, held Sept. 5-7 in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Trans World chairman/CEO Bob Higgins is banking on stronger sales due to better release schedules in music and video; new formats in movies and music; more digital sales as the majors abandon the bundling of digital rights management (DRM) software with their music; and a product diversification strategy that is attracting a new customer base.

Vendors who had feared doom and gloom heard the message loud and clear from the company's field staff and came away with renewed confidence in the chain, record label and video executives privately told Billboard.

"This conference comes at a time that is critical in our turnaround," Higgins said in his opening address, a copy of which was made available to Billboard. "We've just finished a difficult first half.

For the quarter ended Aug. 4, the chain lost $10.1 million, or 32 cents per diluted share, on revenue of $267.3 million. That compares with a net loss of $7.7 million, or 33 cents per share, on sales of $298.3 million in the corresponding period last year. But there have been bright spots. In movies, Trans World already outperformed most DVD sellers during the first half due to the deep inventory in its 110 Suncoast stores. And with pricing reductions coming for HD DVD and Blu-ray players and hundreds of new titles coming to market in these movie formats, Higgins predicted that this Christmas will see the emergence of customers shopping for high-definition products.

Electronics and accessories are another key growth area for Trans World, with strong comparable-store sales in the first half. "What's impressive about this growth is that we are doing it in new categories and product lines that are pulling in new customers," Higgins said.

Higgins also foresees the company's Web business picking up. "The DRM model that the industry spent the last five years supporting has failed to drive any material sales to anyone other than Apple," he said. "We are playing an active role in pushing for removal of DRM protection on downloads."

With Universal Music Group now joining EMI in making DRM-free content available to such retailers as Best Buy, Amazon, Wal-Mart and Trans World, Higgins said, the industry is finally acknowledged that iTunes' dominance has significantly restricted the growth of the digital channel.

Trans World has continued to upgrade its listening and viewing station systems and its investment in Mix & Burn CD-burning kiosks. "We now have over 35 stores that offer an on-demand burn or download experience with a catalog of over 1 million tracks and 100,000 albums," Higgins said. That test, he said, is already turning out positive results. After the holiday shopping season, he anticipates expanding the test or maybe even beginning a kiosk rollout chainwide.

By next year, Trans World hopes to be able to offer digital downloads that are compatible with iPods through its Mix & Burn system. Meanwhile, Higgins pointed out that Trans World

'"We are playing an active role in pushing for removal of DRM protection on downloads."

--BOB HIGGINS, TRANS WORLD
The Host With The Most

Wacky Morning Man Don Cheto Driving Listenership In L.A.

The quickest rising star in Los Angeles morning radio isn’t cute or hip or young or remotely trendy. He’s Don Cheto (aka Mr. Cheto), a 63-year-old hillbilly from the town of La Sucesa in Michoacan, Mexico, who crossed the border more than 30 years ago, speaks accented English, bickers with his daughters over their boyfriends and complains about the loss of morals.

And yet, Don Cheto has managed to drive listenership of his station, regional Mexican KBUÉ (La Que Bueta), taking it from No. 14 in share for audiences age 12 plus to No. 4 in less than a year, according to Arbitron.

Don Cheto, who in promotional appearances sports a mustache, white hat and colorful sarape, is actually 27-year-old programmer/DJ Juan Rezo, who created the character four years ago as a sidekick on KBUÉ’s previous morning show.

Named down to the cow- eted 18- to 35-year-old audience, KBUÉ ranks second in morning drive listenership with a 9.6 share, according to Arbitron, almost triple the 3.8 it had in Arbitron’s fall 2006 book. In that demographic, the only station in Los Angeles that beats Don Cheto is the similarly Spanish-language KSCA, whose morning drive is manned by liber-popular and politically conscious host Eddie “Pi- colín” Sotelo.

Don Cheto

The unsophisticated, low-profile Don Cheto couldn’t be more different. “I think he reminds everybody of some- one,” KBUÉ PD Pepe Garza says. “He’s not some bumptkin fool. No. Don Cheto speaks broken Eng- lish. But he speaks it. He has papers. He’s intelligent and gives good ad- vice. He likes to gossip, and he’s great company. He’s like a friend.”

A busboy who always had an opinion, Don Cheto gained traction among L.A. area listeners thanks to his irrevent comments and on-target portrayal of the generational and cultural chasm that divides many Latin immigrants.

Beyond Los Angeles, he scored a coup when, in 2003, he recorded a duet, “Estoy En Amoruda,” with new band singer Yolanda Perez. The bilingual, hysterically funny track, which featured Don Cheto as the pissed-off dad scolding Perez in Spanish (“I kick his cholo ass!” he cries exasperatedly), hit No. 7 on Billboard’s Regional Mexican chart in January 2004 and led Don Cheto himself to plead on-air with Garza for his own album.

The secret of his success, Razó says, lies in being natural. “It’s not a very produced show,” he says. “What you hear is what comes out at the moment—that the rest is high, memories of home, im- migration issues.” The character of Don Cheto, Razó says, is inspired by a real person from his hometown in Mexico, where—as is the case with many small towns there—there was no radio.

“He was a guy with a loud- speaker, and if there was an event, you would pay for him to go and announce it,” he says.

The image immediately resonated with listeners, and Don Cheto’s popular- ity on the morning show grew steadily until Garza decided to turn the entire program over to him last year.

Don Cheto’s character is in stark contrast to the raunchiness that often marked KBUÉ’s previous morning show. It also is counterintuitive to KBUÉ’s image as a youth-appealing regional Mexican station known for breaking new music.

The contrast, however, illustrates the dichotomy of new immigrants and second- and third-generation Latinos.

“I get calls from young and old listeners,” Razó says. “Many young peo- ple who barely speak Spanish call Don Cheto. Most of them have a rel- ative who reminds them of him. Also, Don Cheto may be old, but he’s a cool guy.”

MEGA IN THE MIX

Miami-based MEGA TV has signed a contract to become an exclusive channel on DirecTV. Beginning Oct. 17, MEGA’s programming will be available on the satellite TV service provider via its DirecTV Más platform.

MEGA TV is owned by media company Spanish Broadcasting System, which also owns the SBS Spanish-language radio network. The station launched a year and a half ago as a local Miami station and features shows by well- known personalities as author Jaime Bayly and journalist Maria Elvira Salazar, as well as several music-driven programs.

MEGA’s move to DirecTV is part of its overall strategy for expansion and integration of its several media properties. SBS also owns music-themed Website Lamusica.com and airs a TV show of the same name via Mega. Now, several other original productions will be incorporated into the channel’s concept of “Radio en Televisión,” including hit SBS radio shows like “El Cucuy” from Los Angeles’ KALI (La Raza) and “El Vació de la Mañana” from New York’s WSKQ (Mega 97.9).

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda

THE RIGHST STUFF

The second annual Antidoto festival comes to Los Angeles’ Greek Theatre Sept. 15 with big bands, a new-and-improved second stage, major sponsors and some heavy competition. The eight- hourLatin rock concert, timed to celebrate Mexico’s independence, will feature Julieta Venegas, Allison, Los Amigos Invisibles, Jumbo, Lucybell, Upground, Volumen Cero, Inbox and DJ Alex Fino. Event sponsors include Aeromexico, Johnnie Walker, Jose Cuervo Tradicional tequila, MTV Tr3s, rockero.com and La Vibe magazine.

Producer Ayelet Corona of Corona Jones Entertainment says the event aims to pro- vide live music throughout the day. Corona hopes local radio, TV and print promo- tion will help fill the 6,100- seat outdoor theater.

The goal, Corona says, is to grow slowly and eventually take the event to two days.

—Ayala Ben-Yehuda
Congressional Priorities

Webcasters, Artists, Publishers Unlikely To See Changes Soon

With Congress back in full swing after its August recess, among the first questions I posed to my Capitol Hill sources covered webcaster royalty rates, a sound recording performance right for terrestrial radio broadcasts and reform of the compulsory license provision for compositions (section 115 of the Copyright Act).

WEBCAST RATES

Webcasters and simulcasters that haven’t struck a deal with SoundExchange to adjust royalty rates have the opportunity to negotiate with the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) earlier this year. The CRB has already reached terms that certain companies that didn’t present the necessary evidence, neither the CRB nor an appellate court can simply create that evidence. Third, it is detrimental to the integrity of the new CRB to show that parties may simply replace decisions at their discretion.

As for the appeal to a federal court, those judges would probably not be able to overturn the decision unless they find an abuse of judicial discretion. That may be difficult; the 115-page decision seems well-reasoned.

PERFORMANCE RIGHT

On another front, the movement by artist and label groups to extend a performance right in sound recordings to terrestrial radio broadcasts is also not expected to be resolved during this Congress. The next year will be a time to fully explore the issues, my sources say. But they add that, when it comes time to examine the issues closely, the pending Perform Act (S. 256) will likely be considered hand-in-hand with the performance right to ensure competitive equality between analog and digital platforms. The Perform Act would harmonize rate-setting standards for certain copyright licenses among digital music distribution platforms.

COMPULSORY LICENSE REFORM

Finally, publishers, digital music services and others are expected to come up with another proposed bill in the next few months to reform the section 115 compulsory license, i.e., the license to copy and distribute songs previously recorded and released in the United States. They want to streamline the licensing process, especially for digital services. In the last Congress, the parties tried unsuccessfully to get the Section 115 Reform Act passed. That bill set up a new blanket-licensing system for digital uses of compositions. Since 2008 is a major election year, my government sources say it’s unlikely that any such bill will pass. The issue just isn’t sexy enough to tout on the campaign trail. Still, stay tuned. You never know.
CLOSEST GARAGE SONGS

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<td>DO THE ROBOT</td>
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Bridge Over Troubled Watermarks

Labels Weigh Alternatives For Plugging The Promo Leak

When the new Weigh album, "The Flying Cup Club," started popping up on file-sharing networks and blogs several weeks before its official Oct. 30 release date, Ba Da Bing Records label head Ben Greenburg decided not to stew in silence. He tracked down the source of the leak, through a watermark on the original disc and called the writer out in a number of online forums, calling for editors to stop publishing his work and publicists to stop sending him records. The accused source, Bay Area writer Erik Davis, countered with an explanation that his CD had been accidentally donated to Goodwill and he was guilty of nothing more than carelessness. While the leaking of advance copies of CDs affects all labels, indies can be hit especially hard. "The main concern for us is watermark is sales," one manager of a small label says. "We rely on each and every single sale, and illegal downloads really mess with our projections for both revenue and CDs shipped." For many indies, the cost of watermarking numerous discs at $4 each is prohibitive, and, as Sub Pop's Steve Manning points out, smaller labels have limited resources to devote to plugging leaks.

Guzardo, North American press manager for Earache Records. Other labels use scare tactics in the form of warnings that playing a disc in a computer will cause the machine to break. While the warnings aren't necessarily meant to be taken literally, "they do serve as a great deterrent," says Betsey Cichoracki, who handles media relations for Relapse Records.

Minuses: Voice-overs that force journalists to hear, "Hi, this is such and such and you're listening to . . . about 100,000 times an album," Guzardo says, "can put a sour note on possible reviews."
DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

Online And Mobile Services Advance In South Africa

JOHANNESBURG—South Africa's digital market is finally set for liftoff as online and mobile companies ready new music services. South Africa has low broadband penetration levels—the latest IFPI figures list just 300,000 lines for a population of 47.4 million. But now Telkom South Africa—whose largest shareholder is the South African government—has announced plans to spend 30 billion rand ($4.2 billion) over five years on its next-generation network upgrade in an attempt to drive up broadband customers. Telkom also owns 66% of Telkom Media, formed in January 2006 to explore commercial digital opportunities in information, communications and entertainment.

Telkom Media began trials for an Internet protocol TV service—distributing TV/video signals through broadband connections—in April and plans a mid-2008 launch of a raft of services, including music downloads. The company's brand manager of music Julian Von Platoo says he is "confident of being able to offer content from all the majors" as downloads across "IPTV, satellite, online and mobile" platforms at launch.

Warner Music Gallo Africa head of business development for digital Tshio Moraba welcomes Telkom's multiphatform approach at a time when "major mobile players are either refreshing their music offerings or starting up new [music services]." That activity, he says, shows the telcos' confidence in the development of the South African market.

IFPI figures say digital music accounted for around 2% of the $154.1 million trade value of music sales in South Africa during 2006; most of that $2 million was on mobile formats. Johannesburg-based technology market research company World Wide Worx estimates the country has more than 30 million cell phone subscribers. "Many consumers [will] bypass the online experience and go straight to mobile," managing director Arthur Goldstuck predicts.

Already, U.K.-based mobile music company Omnitone is preparing to roll out "all-you-can-eat" full-track mobile music service MusicStation to Vodacom South Africa network sub-scribers by November. "With no iTunes store plus low levels of computer ownership and broadband penetration, accessing legal digital music is almost impossible for much of the population," London-based Omnitone CEO Rob Lewis says. "The only digital device virtually all South Africans use every day is a mobile phone."

Vodacom South Africa mobile media content manager Karen Liebenberg reports current month-on-month sales increases on existing services of around 15% for master ringtone/full track downloads and around 20% for ringback tones. Smaller players also stand to benefit from the new digital market. Cape Town-based indie label Rhythm Records owns a 25% stake in online store rhythmrecords.co.za. The site's co-owner/content manager Brian Curnin reports interest from rural consumers unhappy with the current long wait for physical product to become available in their area. "Those artists who really work their fan bases see the impact," Curnin says, citing as examples rocker Karen Zoid, Afrikaans post-punk act Fokopopsiekar and pop artist Chris Chameleon.

"It's essential to have our music available online," says Alex Fourie of Rhythm-signed prog-rock act Foto Na Dans. "Many record shops wouldn't even consider stocking our CD."

But although Apple declined to comment, sources indicate there are no plans for an imminent iTunes launch. That may be welcome news for brick-and-mortar retailers in one of the world's few markets still enjoying physical sales growth—according to IFPI figures, shipments rose 4.3% to 24.2 million units in 2006.

"We're certainly not at the stage where CDs sales will be dramatically impacted," Goldstuck says. "But the [physical] growth is being driven by consumers switching from tape—the very people that will move to mobile rather than online when they're ready to move into the digital environment."

Additional reporting by Tom Ferguson.
LONDON—Is the Nationwide Mercury Prize losing its luster? Klaxons’ unexpected win at the 2007 edition of the U.K. album-of-the-year award (billboard.biz, Sept. 4) generated headlines and industry surprise in nearly equal measure. But this year’s shortest list failed to generate a substantial summer sales lift for its 12 nominees.

"Being nominated sold no records for us," says London-based Big Life’s Tony Beard, who manages Klaxons. "We may (now) sell an extra 20,000-40,000 records. But after being nominated?... Fuck all."

The London “nu-rave” quartet’s debut album, “Myths of the Near Future” (Rinse/Universal), beat out the likes of Amy Winehouse, Arctic Monkeys and oddsmakers’ favorite Bat for Lashes to take the critics’ award and its accompanying £20,000 ($33.8 million) check at London’s Grosvenor House hotel. The ceremony was broadcast live nationally by digital TV channel BBC4 and top-40 station Radio 1, then on Sept. 7 by terrestrial channel BBC2. Beard’s postnoms sales prediction looks safe, as within 24 hours of the band’s win, market-leading music retailer HMV reported a 486% chain-wide increase in sales of the set.

Retailers confirm strong post-noms sales for all nominees, but industry execs note that the July 17 announcement of this year’s more-leaf-litter-than-usual shortlist generated less media buzz than previously. "The ceremony just seemed to creep up on [the business]," says Warner Bros. U.K. managing director Korda Marshall. "And when it airs on TV, you see the sales pick up. But preshow, there’s not been much difference."

HMV music product manager Mel Armstrong confirms an “immediate and beneficial” post-Sept. 4 sales impact for all nominees, but OCC data for July confirms the nominated Klaxons, Arctic Monkeys, New Young Pony Club and the View all actually saw sales declines in the week after their slots were revealed.

In 2006, though Arctic Monkeys won, Sheffield, England-based singer/songwriter Richard Hawley was the main artist to benefit from a nomination. Hugely increased media attention saw HMV register a 365% sales rise on Hawley’s “Coles Corner” (Mute) in the two months between shortlist announcement and awards show. The OCC says Hawley’s album has now sold 95,000 units.

This year, Bat for Lashes’ “Fur and Gold” (Echo) and Fionn Regan’s “The End of History” (Lost Highway) were the main left-of-center nominees to accrue media interest, although hefty sales spikes failed to result until after the ceremony.

Broadcaster Jo Whiley, who fronted BBC TV coverage of the event, says that a nomination is not a sales guarantee, but adds: “Certainly, more people now know about Bat for Lashes than six months ago.”

Sales of “Fur and Gold” leapt 185% in the 24 hours after Bat for Lashes performed at the gala, guaranteeing the album its first top 75 chart entry Sept. 9.

24 million people were hearing about the record after it was nominated and there’s been some great coverage in the newspapers,” bandleader Natasha Khan says. That reporting included a lengthy piece on national newspaper the Guardian on the Saturday before the ceremony. “We wouldn’t have had that kind of coverage otherwise,” Khan says, “because it’s not really a radio record.”

A winner in 2003 with his debut album, “Da Corazon,” rapper Dizzee Rascal was nominated again this year for his third album, “Maths + English” (XL). “First time round,” he recalls, “it blew my mind to win.”

But while acknowledging that a nomination boosts exposure and “might help sales sometimes,” Rascal adds, “In truth, my second [non-nominated] album, ’Showtime,’ sold the same as my first.”

GLOBAL NEWSLINE

FRENCH MARKET SLUMPS

The wholesale value of the French market fell 17% to €317.0 million ($438.37 million) in the first six months of 2007, according to labels body SNEP. Local repertoire accounted for 69.1% of value, although SNEP says the actual number of album releases by domestic artists dropped 37% compared with the same period in 2006. Digital sales rose 13.7% to €2.3 million ($3.12 million), with downloads accounting for €9.4 million ($12.96 million) and ringtone sales representing €6.4 million ($8.82 million). Revenue from streaming and subscription services represented 4% of digital sales, which SNEP director general Hervé Romy says is “the first time that they have reached a significant level.” SNEP has called for government to take immediate measures to help the industry sustain its investments in local repertoire, most notably by pressing the European Commission to approve the extension of a tax credit scheme to help labels invest in new talent. —Yvonne Pichelin

UNIVERSAL LAUNCHES GERMAN ARTIST AGENCY

Universal Music Germany has launched a new division, Universal Music Artist Agency, offering businesses and event organizers access to Universal-signed artists. UMAA will advise clients on the choice of artists suited to be linked with a particular brand, product or event, then check availability and establish contact with the acts. "More and more companies are approaching us to put them in touch with artists," Berlin-based Universal Music Germany president/CEO Frank Bieggemann says. "The agency will fulfill that need." The new division is headed by artist manager Holger Kurschat as managing director, reporting to Bieggemann. Kurschat continues to manage Universal-signed German pop vocalist Jeanette Biedermann. —Wolfgang Spahr

SALES UP AT HMV

Entertainment retail giant HMV Group is claiming that “they have reached a significant level.” SNEP has called for government to take immediate measures to help the industry sustain its investments in local repertoire, most notably by pressing the European Commission to approve the extension of a tax credit scheme to help labels invest in new talent. —Yvonne Pichelin

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AUSIE MARKET DOWN

Recorded-music sales in Australia fell 13.6% in trade value to $185.9 million Australian ($153.5 million) during the first half of 2007, despite continuing strong sales of domestic repertoire and digital music. According to Australian Recording Industry Assn. figures, combined digital and physical sales totaled 36.6 million units, up 11.2%. Physical-sales volumes totaled 20.7 million units, down 15.7% from 24.6 million in the first six months of 2006; value fell 17.3% to $167.8 million Australian ($138.6 million). Digital sales, including downloads and ringtones, rose 89.7% in volume to 15.9 million units; digital value rose 47.5% to $181.3 million Australian ($149.57 million). Domestic repertoire accounted for 34.8% of sales in the Top 100 albums chart for the period, up from 31.8%.

—Christie Eliezer

PIAS BUYS INTO INDIE MOBILE

Brussels-based independent music group PIAS is acquiring a 50% stake in U.K. mobile music marketing/distribution agency Indie Mobile for an undisclosed sum that PIAS says calls a “significant investment.” PIAS says the partners will pool their know-how to craft a one-stop, international mobile service for independent labels and artists. Brighton, England-based Indie Mobile will continue to be headed by managing director Seth Jackson. He says the involvement of PIAS positions Indie Mobile as a conduit better able to serve the 400-plus indie labels it represents.“The deal will allow us to do what we already do, just better and on a larger scale,” he says. “We’re hugely excited by the first-class resources and fabulous roster that [the] PIAS group provides.” The group’s businesses include PIAS Recordings and Wall of Sound, the label that established such acts as Royskopp, Propellerheads and Les Rythmes Digitales. —Lars Brandle

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The X Factor
With Its Playlist Reigned In, U.K. Modern Rock Station Expands Regionally

LONDON—Tastemaking modern rock station Xfm is celebrating its 10th anniversary with an expansion into new regional licenses, a series of celebration concerts—and a controversial scheme to ditch DJs during the day.

Xfm’s 1997 launch as a London-only FM service was marred when it hit the airwaves the day after Princess Diana died. The station initially struggled for listeners and advertisers, prompting shareholders to sell out to radio group Capital in May 1998. But Xfm is now owned by radio conglomerate GCap, formed after Capital merged with GWR in 2004. And the latest Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR) figures show a record total weekly reach of 11.9 million listeners.

“We’ve shaped the current musical landscape of guitar bands,” says managing director Nick Davidson, who notes that Xfm’s 10th-anniversary shows will feature the Fratellis, Stereophonics, Kaiser Chiefs and CSS. “I’m sure the people who launched Xfm would be very proud of what we’ve done.”

Whether they would recognize it as the alternative niche station they launched, however, is less certain. Xfm’s daytime playlist unashamedly concentrates on the hit guitar bands of the day, while an evening playlist showcases new artists and less mainstream releases.

“Much as we admire the pioneers of the station, the way in which it was programmed was alternative in the extreme.” Manchester, England-based Xfm network head of music Mike Walsh says. Even so, Walsh still rigorously checks acts for “authenticity.”

“It would be easy to play Mika or Newton Faulkner,” he says. “But, as potentially useful as those artists may be to help us shake hands with a new set of mainstream listeners, we’d be disrupting our core values.”

Instead, Xfm is growing its audience with additional regional services, with Davidson targeting 1.4 million listeners by 2009. Additional FM services in Manchester (launched in March 2006) and Scotland (where GCap’s existing Beat 106 station was rebranded in January 2006), plus the rise of digital audio broadcasting have given the network near-national coverage; in November, a new franchise is due to launch in South Wales.

But Xfm Scotland’s audience was down 13% year on year in second-quarter 2007, according to RAJAR, while the Manchester station has just a 1.5% share of the region, eclipsed by BBC Radio Manchester (5.5%), Galaxy Manchester (5.8%) and Key 103 (7.7%). Xfm “missed a big opportunity,” Radio Manchester DJ Terry Christian says. “The problem is, their playlist is put together down in London, so you get a lot of music for students.” Davidson admits Manchester is “a tough nut to crack,” but adds: “There’s a really big music scene there that’s untapped and [DJs like] Clint Boon are proving big tastemakers for that scene.”

Since May, however, there’s no longer room for such influential DJs in daytime. Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., listener dedications and computer-generated track announcements now replace traditional DJ links as part of the “Xfm” network pro-
Hello? It’s Radio Calling

Stations Getting Big Response For Text-Message Promotions

It’s happened to everyone. You’re cruising in your car, cranking the tunes, when the radio DJ announces a promotion awarding tickets for a sold-out show to the first fan that correctly answers some obscure trivia question.

Answer in hand, you call in, only to get a busy signal—again, again and again.

Soon, that scenario will be as antiquated as dial knobs on TVs. Radio stations nationwide are incorporating mobile text-messaging systems that let listeners respond to promotional campaigns, request songs and interact with advertisers from the keypad of their mobile phone. For radio station operators, it’s not only an evolution in how they communicate with their listeners, it’s adding new revenue to the bottom line.

Active rock WRAT Monmouth-Ocean, N.J., first tested the text-messaging wavers this past Memorial Day weekend with a rather mild trial. At 6:30 a.m., the DJ offered a prize to the ninth person to text in using a new short code the station acquired from technology partner Gold Mobile. Within an hour, 400 messages came in.

“We didn’t have to spell it out for them,” says WRAT director of interactive marketing Billy Clanton, who admitted to being skeptical at first. “Once I saw how quickly they adopted it, that opened my eyes a bit.”

Since then, the Greater Media station has made text messaging a standard part of its communication with its listeners, something radio research and consulting firm Jacobs Media encourages others to do as well. The company conducted a survey of rock radio listeners this spring that found 76% of those who own a mobile phone use texting services. Of them, 44% text messaging services to about 90 radio stations, says text campaigns on the whole get about a 40% response rate, which increases to 70% when a prize is offered. HipCricket and Gold Mobile provide the back-end technology and the short-code numbers, and also work with radio stations regularly to implement custom campaigns, all for a monthly fee.

The goal is to eventually develop a text-messaging database where the station can send alerts to listeners updating them about new promotions, playlists and other methods to get the audience to listen longer.

“By staying better connected with your current base and being able to get them to listen longer, that drives your time spent listening, and that becomes a very critical factor to increasing your ratings,” HipCricket CEO Ivan Braiker says. However, that’s still a slow-going effort. The Jacobs Media study found only 17% of listeners would opt in to receive text-message alerts from a radio station. WRAT has signed up about 3,000 listeners to its text-message database, which is only about 3% of its total base.

So radio stations have focused more heavily on text messaging as a benefit to advertisers. Stations can offer sponsors access to their text-messaging system as a means to push coupons or other information directly to listeners as a way of responding to on-air ads. For instance, WRAT did a campaign with a local grocery store chain that offered discounts on certain products to listeners who responded to the ad via their mobile phone.

Advertisers could always register a text-message short code and conduct their own mobile campaigns, but it’s an expensive proposition. Black codes cost between $500 and $1,000 per month to register, plus a $510 initial setup fee, not mentioning the costs associated with hiring a company to conduct the campaign.

Instead, radio stations with their own system simply let advertisers use the same short-code number used for their other promotions, but with a different keyword unique to the advertiser. The station can charge more for on-air ads that utilize the service, while paying little extra in return.

“We’ve had sponsors coming to us asking specifically for texting campaigns a year ago, and we didn’t have it,” Clanton says. “It’s great for us because we can up our capability and the advertiser still has to go through us.”

Clanton can’t quantify exactly how much the texting capability has contributed to his bottom line, but says interactive advertising revenue represents about 20% of the station’s income. He credits a large part of that figure to the text-messaging capabilities.

Neither radio stations nor the companies providing the text-message propositions can predict where the format will go from here. The radio and mobile industries are at their earliest stage of convergence, but all agree that more innovation is on the near horizon.

“Whatever I tell you today will have changed by tomorrow,” Braiker says. “It’s really a business that is moving that quickly.”

For 24/7 digital news and analysis, see billboard.biz/digital.
6 QUESTIONS
with AARON GROSKY
by RAY WADDELL

Control Room has produced and delivered high-quality productions of some 80 concerts via TV, broadband and wireless platforms. On July 7, Control Room produced the largest entertainment event in history, Live Earth, and the company recently inked a deal with MyNetworkTV for the weekly TV show "Control Room Presents," which beginning in October will present high-definition concert performances from major artists at venues from around the world. Aaron Grosky is the newly appointed president of the company.

What's the post-mortem on Live Earth? We achieved exactly what we wanted to, which was massive amounts of awareness. Now what it comes down to is, how do we keep it going and make sure that we live up to the promise that this wasn't just a one-time, one-day event that the next day disappears, rather than kick off a two-year-plus campaign.

How did the partnership with MyNetworkTV come about? Through being very active in the marketplace, we are constantly sifting through and seeking new opportunities, and MyNetworkTV was one of the most interesting opportunities that came about. It gives us the opportunity to expand our television reach to a national audience through a network television partner that broadcasts every week in prime time over the air through 75-plus affiliates into 90 million homes. I think we both saw opportunities to support each other's end goal, which is to create and bring to audiences amazing music content on a regular basis.

How has Control Room Presents been received by the artist community? They definitely have seen the value. When you look at network TV now, there is no home for live music programming, no home for really live music or music programming period. What this presented as we see it is really an opportunity to showcase what this world is coming to when it comes to new music and an artist's ability to perform it live. We all know that the road is the most important place for an artist to be able to establish themselves, and the ability for an audience to see them creates demand to buy product.

What has Control Room learned about digital delivery from doing 80 shows? What we've learned is you have to give the best experience once they're there, which means the highest bit-rate and coding, the biggest back-end you could possibly provide because nobody wants to have a stuttered experience. It means to have intuitive navigation so that once you're there you know exactly how to get to with lower-quality content and poor viewing experiences that turn an audience off and keep an audience from being receptive to something before they even have a chance to enjoy it. However, as we look out there now, there isn't really that much in terms of high-quality programming online, on television, radio and wireless that has the approach and spends the kind of money that we spend.

Where you're going, exactly what it is you can do and how you can do it and really how to take this and deliver it globally and localize the content so that it is relevant in the United States as it is in Japan and it is in Norway.

Is there a saturation point with too much delivery of music content in too many places? You could saturate a market by going into and filling it with lower-quality content and poor viewing experiences that turn an audience off and keep an audience from being receptive to something before they even have a chance to enjoy it. However, as we look out there now, there isn't really that much in terms of high-quality programming online, on television, radio and wireless that has the approach and spends the kind of money that we spend.
Young And Classic

Josh Stone Performance Gives Chanel Campaign A Fresh Edge

In the new spot for Chanel's Coco Mademoiselle fragrance, Keira Knightley plays a modern-day Coco Chanel. The actress is first seen replacing a man's shirt she's wearing with a red dress. In a mischievous mood, she makes her way to the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, before ending up at Place Vendome. Like Coco Chanel, Knightley's spirit remains strong and daring throughout—with a cheeky hint of irreverence.

These sensual visuals are accompanied by the sounds of Grammy Award winner Josh Stone singing "L-O-V-E," a song made famous by Nat "King" Cole in the mid-'60s. The spot marks the first time that Chanel has used its ubiquitous brand. "I've been working with Chanel for some time, and each campaign gets more beautiful than the last," Stone said. "When they gave me the part, I was thrilled. I've always been a fan of Coco Chanel, and I'm excited to be a part of this campaign." Stone's renditions of "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Take Five," and "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" have been hits with audiences around the world. Stone's voice is reminiscent of the great queens of soul with an original and contemporary sound, Chiquet says. "When she sings 'L-O-V-E,' you hear a vocal declaration of love in the largest sense of the word. In the 'short film,' the song blends beautifully as Keira expresses her love of her freedom and independence."

"I get lots of offers from brands and turn down most of them," the self-managed Stone says. "With Chanel, I like that I get to play 'pretend,' and that the ad is more like a short film. The campaign feels posh, which I'm not. But every once in a while, it's nice to play dress-up."

Sure, that's one reason why Stone agreed to record the sensual chestnut for Chanel. Another is the global reach of a worldwide campaign. "Yes, I want to make people aware of me and my music," she says. "Like the work I did with Gap, which was one day of my life, this campaign has the potential to put me in front of new audiences."

Initially, Stone's label, Virgin Records, was not too keen on having its artist cover a classic—especially since she wrote/co-wrote all the songs on her latest album, "Introducing Josh Stone." But Capitol Music Group COO Jeff Kempler says, "Coco is a classy and ubiquitous brand. We'd like such words to someday describe Joss."

"The level of media exposure this campaign will bring is huge," he says, since it "gets her in front of millions of people around the world." According to Kempler, "L-O-V-E" as well as Stone's duet with Angelique Kidjo (a remake of the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter") are included on a deluxe edition of "Introducing Josh Stone," due internationally in time for the holidays.

Virgin will do its part to make viewers aware of who is singing: There will be viral leaks to fan sites and YouTube, Google ad buys, an iTunes program to raise awareness. Beyond that, Kempler says all options are open. "The TV ad is in the driver's seat and will determine what we do with the song, and how we grow it."

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They're on opposite sides of the political spectrum, but these two politicians are united in their efforts to protect intellectual property and keep an open dialogue with the industry.

During its annual Grammys on the Hill event earlier this month, the Recording Academy honored Sen. Edward Kennedy and Rep. Marsha Blackburn for their legislative support of the arts and music creators. Kennedy is the second most senior member of the Senate, elected in 1962 to finish the term of his brother, John F. Kennedy, after he was elected president in 1960. Since then, Kennedy has been re-elected to serve his state of Massachusetts for seven full terms.

As chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Kennedy fights for improving the nation’s schools and arts education. He is also the most senior Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, serving under chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt. Since music is an industry built upon intellectual-property rights that fall under the Judiciary Committee’s jurisdiction, Kennedy’s influence makes him a strong ally for the business side as well as the creative side of the industry.

Blackburn was elected in 2002 to represent Tennessee’s 7th District, which includes a portion of metropolitan Nashville and the suburbs of Memphis. As a pianist who also once taught ukelele lessons, the Republican congresswoman has strong ties to some of the top songwriters and performers.

She founded the Congressional Songwriters Caucus in 2003 to ensure that the creative community has access to representatives on Capitol Hill. The caucus focuses on the protection of intellectual property and tax policy.

Blackburn serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee and its Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection. This Subcommittee deals with interstate and foreign commerce, including trade matters and Federal Trade Commission practices.

Do you see any specific priorities within the Judiciary Committee for the music industry in the next year?

Kennedy: I'm sure the committee will continue to act on the problem of piracy in the creative community. Our priority has always been to see that creative artists find realistic support for their work in our legal system. We need to strike the right balance between encouraging artistic innovation and protecting the legitimate financial interests in that creativity.

What are the chances of artists eventually securing a performance right for recordings broadcast over terrestrial radio?

Blackburn: We are working on that one. We're getting different groups to the table and having them hash it out. I think we have to focus on end use. The day has come when everyone is well-advised to stop talking specific technology and instead talk end use—to begin to look at how the consumer would use a product. If you are going to have a delivery system that people and companies can avail themselves of, that contains and uses a library of music for others to use, you need to compensate the creator of that work. You have to have a bigger pie of royalties. They can't pay the songwriter less.

Local broadcasters are influential in their communities, especially during an election year. When you return to Tennessee and broadcasters say they don't want to spend more money, what can you say to them?

Blackburn: Look at the changes of technologies. There are going to be opportunities for broadcasters. You go back and look at what happened when AM radio had FM coming [and] at television with the advent of cable. People survive because they have a product that the American public wants. We've got this product that the entire world wants. We are the world's leading producer of quality entertainment product, and it behooves us to develop an understanding of how best to protect that.

What can the music industry realistically expect from Russia and China in terms of intellectual-property rights protection or enforcement in the next 12 months, given the efforts of the U.S. government to date?

Kennedy: It's impossible to predict the direction that Russia and China will take on intellectual property in the coming year, but they're certainly on notice that we're increasingly concerned over their lax approach.

You're a pianist from Tennessee, so you've been around the music industry. When you speak to your colleagues on the Hill, what is the biggest challenge to gain their support for music industry issues?

Blackburn: One of the biggest challenges—and also a wonderful opportunity—is having them realize that intellectual-property issues are private-property issues, constitutional issues. So many times we have a tendency to think of music and the creative arts as the joy and the spice of life. I always say to read the U.S. Constitution, article 1, section 8 [which gives Congress the right to provide copyright protection for the arts]. Also, we're supposed to protect against piracy on the high seas, but today those piracies are on the high waves. It is a challenge to have them realize that just as a widget needs to be protected or a publication or an auto-mobile, the same goes for our creative work.

What is the general perception of the music industry by members of Congress?

Blackburn: Many times people assume that everyone involved in film, television and music are big companies and very wealthy. Having colleagues come to Tennessee and introducing them to our industries in Memphis and Nashville is something I truly enjoy doing. When they drive down Music Row, they're surprised that many of the businesses are in converted homes. When they see the grips, gaffers, keyboard artists, engineers, studio owners and equipment guys, they have a different insight.

Is there something that the music industry trade groups could do better on Capitol Hill?

Blackburn: I think they do a good job because they're consistent in talking about what they do as a commodity, as a sector in the U.S. economy. I think that's wise.

Do you have a sense that Congress realizes that intellectual property needs to be protected?

Blackburn: Every single day people become more aware. Part of that is due to the good work, consistent education and awareness that [enterertainment-related congressional] caucuses build, and groups coming onto Capitol Hill, taking the time to sit down and tell you what they've got—intellectual property.

What are your most recent international dealings in connection with intellectual-property issues?

Blackburn: I was in Europe over the Memorial Day break with other representatives on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which was energy-focused. We met with some of our European allies. They mentioned their work on energy issues with China, which wants to protect its intellectual-property rights in energy technologies. [China wants its energy technology to be the international standard rather than the current Western technology standard.]

When I work on educating and building awareness on IP issues, [discussing energy issues] provides me with an opportunity to expand [that work to protect music]. We have to be very diligent in using this as an opportunity to work with China.

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We are the world's leading producer of quality entertainment product, and it behooves us to develop an understanding of how best to protect that.

—Rep. Marsha Blackburn
She's Delivered 30-Plus Years Of Hits, And Success In Film, TV And Fashion. Her Influence On A New Generation Is Clear; With A Song From Her Upcoming Duets Album Already Charting, It's Easy To See Why REBA McENTIRE is Billboard's WOMAN OF THE YEAR.

BY KEN TUCKER
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC BAPTISTE

Sitting in the kitchen of a bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel, Reba McEntire is comfortable—comfortable to talk about her successful and long-running multimedia career, comfortable to talk about her upcoming album of duets and comfortable in her jeans. That's "her jeans" as in the jeans she designs and wears, not the jeans she owns, although on this early September afternoon they are one and the same. —
The dark blue, slim-fitting jeans with a slightly flared leg are part of her Reba clothing line, which she launched in 2005 with Dillard's department stores. And while we're here to discuss her successful balance of career and family life, and her new duets album—on Sept. 18 she will
release "Reba Duets," featuring Kenny Chesney, Kelly Clarkson, Justin Timberlake, Don Henley and other artists—it’s clear she is as passionate for design as she is for music, acting and family.

Indeed, McEntire has a lot of passions. Whether it was her highly choreographed shows replete with multiple costume changes, or her 2001 foray onto Broadway as Annie Oakley in "Annie Get Your Gun," or her "aw, shucks" job as frequent host of the Academy of Country Music Awards, or her six-year role as single mom Reba Hart on Twentieth Century Fox-produced "Reba" that finally came to a close in February, McEntire’s career has spanned many peaks.

Fashion is only one of the most current, but in McEntire’s rise to mastering that world lies a key to understanding her career. "It was a quick education," McEntire says. "All my life I’d worn hand-me-downs. When I was in Annie Get Your Gun in 2001, I went to one of those fashion shows and a reporter [asked me], ‘Who’s your favorite designer?’ I said, ‘Levi’? Now I can spout off the designers. I know who’s hot and who’s had trouble and who’s had a comeback and they turned their business around and why.”

Humility, and hard work: Through the years the Oklahoma-born McEntire has transformed herself from a rodeo singer to a song to an actress to a star of stage and screen, all the while anchoring her multifaceted career with her music and her family (see story, page 31). One does not attain single-name status in the music world by happenstance. It takes hard focus, consistency and, oh, hits. Just ask Dolly, Madonna and Cher.

At 52, McEntire’s career spans 31 years. Her first Mercury single, "I Don’t Want To Be A One Night Stand," peaked at No. 88 in 1976. And today, McEntire is right back in territory atop the charts (see graphic, below). The first single from her upcoming album, a duet with Clarkson on the latter’s 2006 AC hit "Because of You," recently peaked at No. 2 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart.

SMART PAIRINGS

While recorded in Nashville and Los Angeles earlier this year, McEntire says she started calling her duet partners more than a year ago. The idea for the album came from her husband and manager Narvel Blackstock. "We wanted to do something special because this is the last album on this MCA contract," she says. "I’m not saying it’s the last album I’ll do for MCA. It’s just the last album on this contract.”

A duets album means more work, McEntire says. "It was harder because of the scheduling, getting people to do it, finding people who could take time to do it. I asked all my buddies and they said, ‘Yeah.’ A few couldn’t do it because of scheduling and I understand that, but I’m thrilled you did at the folks that said it.

The song selection process was a mix of suggestions by McEntire, input from her duet partners and, in some cases, songs that were specifically written for the project. Brooks & Dunn’s Ronnie Dunn, for example, agreed to record with her only if the two could co-write the song together. The resulting "Does The Wind Still Blow In Oklahoma?" fits the fellow Okies to a “T.”

Fellow Oklahoman Vince Gill, who has twice before sung duets with McEntire—1990’s "Oklahoma Swing" and 1993’s "It’s Your Call"—also guests and contributed a song, "These Broken Hearts.”

Rascal Flatts’ Jay DeMarcus, Joe Don Rooney and Gary LeVox wrote and recorded "Faith In Love" for the record. Meanwhile, Carole King joins McEntire on "Everyday People,” a song about looking out for your fellow man that McEntire says reminds her of her association with Habitat for Humanity.

Of Timbalander, who co-wrote a song for the project and actually co-produced the track with McEntire, she says, "He’s a Memphis boy, and he loves country music. He’s very down to earth and so talented and versatile.”

The Clarkson duet was not what the pair had originally charted for the project. Rehearsing for a CMT "Crossovers” special, Blackstock noticed a spark between the two on Clarkson’s song, “Narvel came up to the stage and said, ‘Reba, you’ve got to record this for the duet project,’” McEntire recalls. "I talked to Kelly and she said, ‘Right on. Let’s do it.’ So we went back into the studio and recorded it.”

McEntire says she’s not sure what the next single from the album will be. "We’ve got to find what their release dates are on their singles,” she says of her partners. "Everybody’s got a career that’s going strong. It’s a very tough situation sometimes, but I’m very flat-tired that we’re going along with me. I’m very grateful.”

McEntire sings with another person comes naturally. "When I was growing up I was part of the Singing McEntires, with my older brother Jake and my little sister Sue. I’m very comfortable singing with people. I’d rather sing harmony than lead. It’s just a lot of fun to be collaborative and see what you can do together.”

Producer Tony Brown, who hasn’t worked on a full-blown album with McEntire since "Read My Mind” in 1994, was happily reminded about what’s it’s like to work with her. "I had forgotten how great she is in the studio. If every artist came as prepared as she does, it’d be a lot more easier," she says. "She’s a great singer and a stylist. When you hear Reba’s voice, you know exactly who it is.”

And while he works with a variety of acts, including superstar George Strait, Brown says going back in the studio reminded him of her talent. "I had taken for granted how good she really is. She’s actually gotten better, and her voice is in great shape.”

Her talent forced her duet partners to bring their "A” game. “They had to pony up and do it on the spot,” Brown says. When Don Henley stepped into the vocal booth with McEntire to record "Break Each Other’s Hearts Again,” he said, "Hey, guys, I’m used to doing my part for her. I can do that”.

LIKE A MOTHER

Brown says the artists were clearly thrilled to be recording with her. "I started noticing how each artist adores Reba and how she’s had an effect on people in this business,” he says. "It was fun watching the respect on their faces.”

The versatile McEntire loves the challenge of having tons of balls in the air. "If I just go sing songs that I’ve been singing for 30 years and doing concerts, I don’t get a little bored. I like to mix it up, it’s good for the concerts, it’s good for the TV show when I’m doing different things. I come back to that next challenge or..."
Reba's Tips For Women In Business

No matter how you slice it, Reba McEntire is a successful businesswoman. Whether it's recording, touring, acting or designing clothing, she works hard to do things the right way and she has succeeded. In the spirit of our upcoming Women in Music event, Billboard offers these 10 lessons learned from McEntire's career for women in the business. But really, what follows is great advice for anyone.

**Challenge yourself:** The versatile McEntire loves having lots of balls in the air. "If I just go sing songs that I've been singing for 30 years, I do get a little bored. I like to mix it up; it's good for the concerts, it's good for the TV show when I'm doing different things. I come back to that next challenge or after that next challenge more refreshed and excited about doing what I'm doing."

**Keep your options open:** "Reba Duet" is McEntire's last album on her current contract with MCA, and she'll wait and see how it does before she makes a decision about continuing with the label. "If it's a huge success, that could determine where we go, what we do, if we can stay," she says. "We really haven't talked that much about what we're going to do after this contract."

**Reinvent yourself:** McEntire's career has lasted because she's been willing to change with the times and stretch to different platforms. Reba was recently in a national commercial with Jaye Albright. Rocking Out is a wonderful example for any brand manager who wants to learn how to masterfully ride the inevitable product life cycle in the marketplace.

**Convey Music Assn. COO Tammy Genoveese agrees.** "She has reinvented herself in so many ways and that gives us all a goal and motivation to do the very best we can."

**Work with good people.** "I don't work with buttholes or egotistical people. I have no time for that. I surround myself with nice, great people who have those wonderful attitudes. I'm like Billie Nunn: negative people are like a cancer. You just don't need them in your life."

**And then listen to them:** The duet with Kelly Clarkson that recently beat the pop chart king was not the song the pair had originally recorded for the project. While rehearsing for a CMT "Crossroads" special, McEntire's husband and manager Narvel Blackstock noticed a spark between the two on Clarkson's show. "Narvel came up and said, 'Reba, you've got to record this for the duet project.' McEntire recalls. 'I talked to Kelly and she says, 'Right on. Let's do it.' So we went back into the studio and recorded it.""

**Know your target audience:** When McEntire began designing clothes for Dillard's department stores, she took what she knew from her touring career and refined it. "I've seen people from 2 to 82 come to my concerts," she says. "I'm seeing younger ladies buying my clothes. We're skewing now to where all ages can wear it, but I'd say 35 and up is the most popular."

**Plan ahead:** Once McEntire decided to record an album of duets, she started calling potential partners six months before she went into the studio.

Big Machine Records president/CEO Scott Borchetta, who worked with McEntire during two stints at MCA, says McEntire and Blackstock work hard to get it right. "When I went to MCA in 1991, I didn't know it at the time, but I learned later that I was really going to 'Reba' school." With Reba and Narvel, every detail has been discussed, addressed, improved and continues to be discussed, addressed and improved.

**ON FASHION**

*I wonder she meets with Dillard's,* ["I let the designer do the talking, but I'm there. If my name is on it, I want to be there to see what's going on. If they say, 'I don't like bed No. 3,' my people will look at me and say, 'That's my favorite. I'm going to fight you on that one.']."

**ON ACTING OPPORTUNITIES**

*I'm open to projects in television or movies or on Broadway. I'm looking for great scripts and great material (the way) I've always looked for great songs. That's the No. 1 thing."* -RT and ABY

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**Additional reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda.**

Billboard's annual Women in Music awards and presentation will occur at a private breakfast Oct. 5 in New York. Watch for the Oct. 13 issue for an in-depth look at those honored.

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**Balance is key:** McEntire, who in the past few years has juggled family, a TV show, a clothing line, recording and touring, among other things, credits Blackstock with affixing a balance. "Narvel is great at time management, the scheduling, making sure we have plenty of time for vacations and family. That relieves the stress that you have to deal with when you are working so hard."

**Know your priorities:** Soon after McEntire had her now-17-year-old son Shelby, she came on the road with her. "It took him every chance I could. I had to leave him a lot, but the times I did have with Shelby, that was quality time. Now Shelby is probably going to be a part of the music business. He chose the music business for his internship in school. He is very involved with my business and on our tour; he helps tear down and set up the show." McEntire's parents are her inspiration for incorporating health and happiness into her life. "I work on those two things as hard as I do my career. For the family to be able to spend as much time together as possible and still have a very active life and successful career, I think that's the meaning of success."

**Learn from role models:** "I take pointers and notes from Barbara Mandrell. She always had the elaborate stage and the costumes and dancers, so I learned from her. If anybody took any notes from me, that's great."

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Ken Tucker, with additional reporting by Ayala Ben-Yehuda. SEPTEMBER 22, 2007 | www.billboard.biz | 31
Years Ago, Simon & Garfunkel And Prince Set The Model For Single-Artist Movie Soundtracks. Now, A New Crop Of Films Is Employing A Solitary Voice To Bring The On-Screen Action To Life

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

n the hit 2004 film “Garden State,” Natalie Portman promises Zach Braff that the Shins will change his life. According to Sub Pop licensing VP Jen Ceizler, there’s no question the Shins’ inclusion on Epic’s “Garden State” soundtrack did just that for the Portland, Ore.-based indie rock act. “That was definitely a turning point,” Ceizler says. “Sometimes you license something to a soundtrack and you don’t really see an effect on sales. In this case, sales of ‘Oh, Inverted World’—a record that at that time was already 3 or 4 years old—went through the roof.” According to Nielsen SoundScan, “Oh, Inverted World” has sold 30,000 copies, while the “Garden State” soundtrack has sold 1.3 million. Now, Ceizler says, music supervision and licensing seem to be moving one step beyond the “Garden State” model when it comes to championing the individual artist: the single-act soundtrack.

“There is certainly a simplicity to embracing one artist and bringing them in early,” Walt Disney Studios president of music and soundtracks Mitchell Leib says. “You only have to give one person access to the director and the set. It makes the communication much simpler for creating a body of work.”

Indeed, in the years since “Garden State,” an increasing number of film directors have begun tapping a single artist to provide the soundtracks for their movies—a likely byproduct, some music supervisors say, of the way the Shins’ music became inextricably linked to that project. This fall, three films are hitting theaters accompanied by single-artist soundtracks: “Into The Wild,” with original songs by Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder; “Dan in Real Life,” with songs by Norwegian popster Sondre Lerche; and “The Hottest State,” which features an expansive cast of musicians performing songs by Jesse Harris. They arrive on the heels of “Once,” the Irish street musical built around the music of Frames frontman Glen Hansard.

It’s a trend that’s beneficial to musicians and filmmakers, parties involved on both sides say. “Hottest State” director Ethan Hawke felt that if everything was by one composer, it’d provide a thorough continuity in the film, even if the songs are sung by different performers,” says Harris, who adds that he imagined his material functioning “almost like a Greek chorus” in Hawke’s movie. Matt Shae, VP of A&R and marketing at RCA Music Group (whose J Records re-releases the “Into the Wild” soundtrack Sept. 18), points out that a film placement can bring an artist attention; it might otherwise take years to cultivate. As Epic marketing VP Scott Carter says, “‘Garden State’ was almost like an hour-and-a-half-long commercial for the soundtrack.”

Braff, who also directed “Garden State,” was an early champion of the Shins and was responsible for weaving the band into the film’s plot. And with all these films, the directors were acknowledged fans of the given artist. That combination turns into a “creative partnership,” says Shae. “We have such a long-standing friendship that they’re in it to help each other as much as they are to help the film or the record.”

20th Century Fox president of music Robert Kraft sounds a note of caution by noting that marketing and promotion of a soundtrack featuring an artist signed to a different label isn’t always a dream. (Though Fox Searchlight released “Once,” Sony Music Group’s Columbia issued the soundtrack.) “When the movie company and the soundtrack company are two absolutely different entities, you hope that you work together,” he says. “But, frankly, the road has never diverged faster these days.” Kraft calls “High School Musical” the ideal situation. The film “is made by the same entertainment company that releases the record,” so “they go hand-in-hand into the marketplace.”

Here, Billboard takes a closer look at how the soundtracks to “Into the Wild,” “Dan in Real Life,” “The Hottest State” and “Once” came to life, and what the companies behind them are doing to get the word out.

THE RIGHT VOICE

“INTO THE WILD” (Paramount Vantage and River Road Entertainment): Although he’s recorded a handful of soundtrack exclusives in the past, Pearl Jam’s Vedder had never dell-ed head-long into writing multiple pieces strictly for a film before “Into the Wild,” which Penn adapted from Jon Krakauer’s 1996 nonfiction book of the same name. “It is not a move on Eddie’s part to do soundtracks,” J Records VP of marketing, Mark Flaherty says. “He was moved by the content of the film, which called for his musicianship. It is a project that found him.”

Penn says, “It was during the shooting of the film that Vedder’s voice as singer and songwriter came to mind as the right voice for this movie. Within a month of his accepting the request, these great and moving songs poured out of him.” In downtime from Pearl Jam activity, Vedder wound up writing nine original songs for “Wild” and for the most part played all the instruments on the recordings.

The contemplative, acoustic-driven music is a perfect match for the intense narrative on screen, which tracks a recent college graduate’s tragic cross-country journey to the Alaskan wilderness. Two tracks are covers: first single “Hard Sun,” which features vocals by former Skaters-Kinney principal Corin Tucker and debuts this week at No. 29 on R&R’s Triple A chart, and “Society,” which was written by Penn’s friend Jerry Hannan.

Vedder’s superstar stature gave an easy fan base to target. On Sept. 4, pearljam.com began a soundtrack presale with a limited-edition T-shirt, and the site is giving away a trip to the Sept. 18 Los Angeles premiere. The album is also helping launch Starbucks’ digital download card program (Billboard, Sept. 1), in conjunction with iTunes. To give the film an extra boost, Vedder made a surprise appearance Sept. 10 during the film’s premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival.
SPREADING THE WORD

"ONCE" (Fox Searchlight): The little film that could, which has been in theaters since May 16, has earned more than $8 million at the box office. But its male star, Glen Hansard of veteran Irish band the Frames, almost didn’t appear in the movie at all.

Director John Carney had already chosen to use Hansard’s songs in "Once" before casting, but after the intended star dropped out, he turned to the singer/songwriter, who previously appeared in the film "The Commitments," to fill the role. "I actually recommended Damien Rice," Hansard recalls. "But John said, ‘Then I’d have to use his songs, and I really like these ones I’ve already chosen.’ A few days later, Carney had an epiphany. ‘It’s as plain as the nose on my face that you should be the guy in this film,’ he told Hansard, who reluctantly agreed.

Hansard plays a busker in the movie, which also stars his bandmate in the Swell Season, Czech singer/pianist Marketa Irglova. The Frames are superstars at home but little-known in the United States, but thanks to strong word-of-mouth, Columbia’s "Once" soundtrack has sold 127,000 U.S. copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, five times that of any Frames record. "If people like the music enough to want to hear it again, they’ll draw a line between me and the band," he says. "All they have to do is Google my name and the Frames come up."

Hansard and Irglova recently launched a seven-city tour that included appearances on "The Tonight Show With Jay Lenno" and a live performance on Nic Harcourt’s influential KCRW Los Angeles radio show, "Morning Becomes Eclectic," and Hansard has taken to playing the soundtrack’s "Falling Slowly" solo acoustic during the Frames’ ongoing North American tour. With "Once" having exceeded everyone’s expectations, could another film be in the works? "John’s talking about making another one at some point," called "Twice," Hansard says. "Then the third one would be called ‘Three Times a Lady.’"

ON THE SET

"DAN IN REAL LIFE" (Touchstone Pictures): Norwegian singer/songwriter Sondre Lerche wrote and/or produced the songs on the Capitol Music Group soundtrack to this film starring Steve Carell, which opens Oct. 26. (The album is due Oct. 2 via Capitol Music Group.) Director Peter Hedges says he listened to 50 different artists while in preproduction for the movie but found himself continually drawn to Lerche’s music.

"Having never done this before, it was a big risk on the director’s part," Lerche says. But it seems to have worked out well for both of us." For Lerche, writing music for a film allowed him to "step outside of my own character and perspective. With a film, you are one small part of a much larger process that involves telling characters’ stories on the screen."

According to Walt Disney Studios’ Leib, a key to the process was John’s band being able to easily visit the Rhode Island set. "We could hang out and watch Peter direct and rewrite scenes right then and there. That carried back to the recording studio and when we went back to his hotel with the acoustic guitar," he says. Besides Lerche’s originals, which include a duet with singer/songwriter Regina Spektor on the song "Hell No," the soundtrack also includes Lerche’s cover of Pete Townshend’s "Let My Love Open the Door," a previously released take on Elvis Costello’s "Human Hands" and Capitol labelmate A Fine Frenzy’s version of the Peggy Lee classic "Fever."

The final product, Leib says, wound up being a "rarity" in the soundtrack world: "When we got into postproduction, we never had a stitch of music in this movie that was not Sondre’s original score, original song or his existing three or four masters. This movie feels the way it does because of the creative process that began with the hiring of this single voice. That is an amazing, amazing thing."

SOUNDTRACK SYNERGY

"THE HOTTEST STATE" (THINKFilm): Jesse Harris says he is writing music specifically for a film like "The Hottest State." adapted from Ethan Hawke’s 10-year-old novel, because it offers additional ways to be creative. Additionally, "with the way the music industry is today, films offer new opportunities to get my music heard—and the potential is there to reach new fans."

On the album, released Aug. 24 via Hickory, the Black Keys, Willie Nelson, Norah Jones and others supply the vocals. Somewhat in the vein of "Once," the main character in "State" falls in love with a female singer/songwriter and follows her across North America. Hawke gave Harris the screenplay, said it needed music "and to please read it and if I was interested to let him know," Harris says. "He said, ‘You can do a little bit or a lot—it’s up to you.’ So I read the script and said, ‘I’ll do as much as you’ll let me do.’"

The marketing for "State" points to a symbiotic relationship among film studio (THINKFilm), record label (RED-distributed Hickory) and book publishing company (Vintage/Random House). The cover artwork of the soundtrack and the reissued trade paperback features the same image as the film studio’s movie poster. THINKFilm also provides the soundtrack with a plug on the poster, says Kim Kaiman, president of Strategic Marketing and Management, the marketing consultant to Sony/ATV Music Publishing, which owns Hickory Records.

Leading up to the film’s Aug. 24 release, the studio and label seeded film and music bloggers with video and music snippets to create online awareness. As the movie opens in more theaters in late September/early October, Hawke and Harris will hit the road together, with Hawke reading from his book and Harris performing songs from the film. And those purchasing the reissued book receive two free music downloads of songs not on the soundtrack.

Additional reporting by Jonathan Cohen, Gary Graff and Michael Weed.
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After A Lackluster Period, Amphitheatres Are Sharpening Strategies And Regaining Business Health

BY RAY WADDELL

BRAD PAISLEY brings the twang July 27 to the Bethel Woods Center for Performing Arts in Bethel, N.Y.
Amphitheaters have taken a number of negative shots in recent years, ranging from saturating the market by buying anything that moves to, perhaps most hurtfully, damaging the concert experience for consumers. But efforts by Live Nation, owner/operator of the overwhelming majority of North American sheds, to make these venues profitable and more customer-friendly seem to have led to a bit of a resurgence among these outdoor music venues. “We’re really pleased with the amphitheater season,” says Jason Garner, president of North American music for Live Nation. “In a year where show count was lighter than last year, we really have seen a quality summer come together.” Garner says most amphitheaters are averaging 20-22 shows this summer, compared with the turn of the millennium when it was not uncommon for even a smaller-market shed to host 30 or more shows. In those days, before Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino’s regime, the booking strategy seemed to be more about market control than prudent talent buying, and many in the industry felt that the approach harmed the overall concert business. “In the past there may have been a bit of, ‘Let’s put everything in the amphitheaters’ approach,” Garner says. “This year we started out with the mentality that a lot of things that sell under 7,000 tickets don’t belong in the amphitheaters. We really focused on trying to find the right venue for each act.”
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As a result, Live Nation maintains that profitability is up for the sheds. The company’s second-quarter earnings report says it reduced the number of amphitheater events with fewer than 7,500 attendees by 47 from Q2 2006 while improving concessions revenue and reducing costs.

“It sounds simple but we really set out this year to try to book great shows, to buy those shows at the right price and then to produce them in the most efficient way possible,” Garner says. “The combination of those three things—the absolutely tremendous artists we’ve had in the amphitheaters this year, the way that our team went out and acquired those shows and then the incredible job our operations, production and marketing staff have done in producing them—has really led to a season that we’re proud of.”

PRICE AND PROMOTION

Live Nation indeed seems to have focused on providing value to fans, and not just for the lower tier of artists it books. The physical nature of sheds, with one-third reserved seats and two-thirds general-admission lawn, lends itself to pricing promotions. The biggest such promotion in summer ’07 was the four-pack, which admits four fans for the price of three.

“We really went out and tried to get [the four-pack] activated on as many shows as possible, from the lesser-caliber acts all the way up to the ‘A’ acts,” Garner says. “In some cases it was an act selling out on 18 shows, and on the five shows where the market was not quite as strong we’d offer the four-pack.”

Artists seem to...
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“Every market is different, every artist is different, and we’ve really tried this year to take a local-market approach to each one of our amphitheaters and [find out] what’s the pricing strategy or promotion that works best in this market, and within that market to look at each show and come up with innovative ideas for each individual show,” Garner says.

That means empowering the local offices. “We have a great central support team, both in marketing operations and data analysis, but the decisions are made locally,” Garner says. “We try to provide the local presidents, promoters, marketers and promotions people with a great amount of data and tools and support from the central office, but allow them the flexibility to implement in a way that best suits the local market.”

Asked if local presidents have the option to pass on a national

continued on >>p42

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Live Nation tour, Garner says, “Every deal is different, but we operate from the premise that we have the best promoter team in the world and we’re blessed to be able to manage guys who were founders of this business and guys who have rich, deep histories of success in relationships with artists. The last thing you want to do is not utilize those relationships and those talents to the utmost ability of the guys.”

In summer ’07, Garner says the breakdown of shed concerts is 40% national Live Nation tours versus 60% locally booked shows. That’s a far cry from previous Live Nation incarnations Clear Channel Entertainment and SFX Entertainment, when the breakdown could be more like 80% nationally booked tours vs. 20% local.

WHAT’S WORKING
Garner cites Kenny Chesney, Brad Paisley, Gwen Stefani, Rascal Flatts, John Mayer, Rush, Def Leppard, Dave Matthews Band, Jimmy Buffett, Toby Keith, Nickelback and the Fray as highlights of the 2007 amphitheater season.

“We’re very happy with Brad Paisley’s breakout year. This guy’s a bona fide superstar who is going out and filling venues night after night this summer,” Garner says. “The festival shows have all been great, from Family Values to Warped to Linkin Park Projekt Revolution to Ozzfest.”

The Live Nation talent buyers did a good job of "weeding out the shows that didn’t belong in the amphitheaters and booking a really solid season of winners," Garner says. It helps that Live Nation has also focused on building a deeper portfolio of venues that give artists more options of where to play.

“We get labeled ‘the amphitheater company’ because we own a bunch of them,” Garner says. “This year in North America we’re going to do 9,000 shows, and only 1,000 of those will be amphitheater shows. It really is a small percentage of shows that our guys are booking day in and day out.”
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Above, JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE is a good fit for the MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Inset: The Rupp Arena in Lexington, Ky., seats 23,500.

VENUE COALITION'S HELPING HAND
Smaller-Market Venues Join Forces To Fill Calendars

For arenas not located in one of the 40-50 major North American markets, attracting quality content and avoiding dark nights can be a challenge. Even so, there are plenty of quality arenas in smaller markets that are willing to take a risk on shows and offer marketing assistance.

The Venue Coalition, a consortium of 30 arenas in the United States and Canada, strives to keep these venues on the radar of agents and promoters. "Every venue of every size wants the same things: more content and fewer dark nights," says veteran promoter Jeff Apregan, president of Apregan Group and co-founder of the Venue Coalition. "We've seen people try to get a group of small or midsized market arenas together, and it never got traction. So we really felt there was a need for these venues to have some representation to try and help them book some incremental events."

The coalition began in 2005 as the brainchild of Apregan, his partner Gilles Paquin and Kevin Donnelly, VP of the MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. "Really it was just a conversation about how there was a need to try and help find content to play some of these smaller markets that don't always get shows," says Apregan, who also serves in a similar capacity with the Gridiron Stadium Network.

Andrew Prince is VP of operations for the Venue Coalition. He says venue members are not required to take a financial risk on shows, but that helps. "Really, the main requirement is an interest in sharing information and working with peers to collectively identify shows that are out there, to give them the best possible chance at securing content," he says.

"We have venues that have the latitude to take on risks and produce shows, continued on >>p46

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and we have venues that aren’t able to do that but are able to either co-promote shows or provide promoters with protection,” Apregan says. “The primary function of the coalition is to identify opportunities that are either good for everybody or good for certain members. That, of course, is on a case-by-case basis, based on market, routing and different situations.”

There is no strict capacity minimum for member buildings, though Apregan says the coalition likes to stay at 5,000 seats and above. Current members range from 4,500 seats at the Greater Vernon (British Columbia) Multiplex to the 23,500-seat Rupp Arena in Lexington, Ky.

Many of these markets are untapped fertile grounds. “Some are smaller markets off the radar, and some are markets where certain acts that tour year after year will drive right by four times in a year,” Apregan says. “It’s really a mix.”

All coalition members contribute to a collective marketing fund, or a “cookie jar,” as Apregan calls it. Those funds provide for Internet marketing, the Venue Coalition Web site and trade advertising. The coalition is proactive in reaching out to the agent community. Prince says, “We send [agents] information on a pretty regular basis. We update them and let them know who our newest members are,” Prince says. “We sit down with them to identify our markets and our buildings and look at what artists or attractions they have that we can either pitch to the group or take a look at on a market-by-market basis.”

Members are interested in everything from one-offs for a single venue to legs of tours to entire tours. “We can fill in gaps on the routing or look at doing a string of dates,” Prince says. “The opportunities are endless.”

The Venue Coalition successfully worked with promoter Paul Emery to bring Blue Man Group to coalition buildings in Western Canada, and is now looking at other opportunities for BMG in Eastern Canada and the States. It can also help an act get another play in during an off date. “Say there’s a window of time and we’re trying to help the band get from point A to point B, and we have some buildings that may actually be able to promote in-house and do some shows in between markets,” Apregan says. “We had a situation where there was a hole in the routing of Pussycat Dolls, who were out supporting Christina Aguilera, and they had an off night going through Canada. We noticed they weren’t going to play the Saskatoon [Saskatchewan] market, so we were able to get them to do a headline show at the [Credit Union Centre in Saskatoon] and it turned out to be a big success on a relatively short promotion.”

The MTS Centre is the only building that’s a member of both ArenaNetwork and the Venue Coalition. “We have a very friendly working relationship with ArenaNetwork,” says Apregan, who adds that it’s possible the two consortiums could combine efforts on a given project.

“ArenaNetwork has a lot of venues that are cut down to get in that 6,000- to 7,000-seat range, and that might be an opportunity at some point in time where something could play our smaller arenas full house and maybe play cut-down ArenaNetwork arenas as well,” Apregan says.

Denny Gann, executive director of the Tyson Events Center in Sioux City, Iowa, sees many benefits to his Venue Coalition membership, primarily “information, routing and reasonable guarantees for acts,” he says. “It also keeps our name in front of selected agents and promoters, and provides formats for peer input from similar buildings and markets.”

—Jeff Apregan
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JAMIE FOXX, here in Charlotte, N.C., had great success with his arena-theater trek.

Arena Theaters Offer Flexibility For Custom Touring Strategies
BY MITCHELL PETERS

While showcasing his multiple talents during this year’s lengthy Unpredictable tour, actor/comedian/singer Jamie Foxx joked and crooned his way into pulling off the most successful arena-theater configuration trek since Bruce Springsteen’s Devils & Dust acoustic outing in 2005. Foxx’s 57-date tour, produced by Another Planet Entertainment and Bay Area Productions, visited theaters and arenas with full curtain setups from December 2006 through late spring. Ticket prices were approximately $80, with Foxx doing 35 minutes of comedy followed by more than an hour of music, including his own material and songs from the film “Ray.” “To me, that was the perfect arena-theater tour,” says Mike Evans, senior VP of sports and entertainment at Philadelphia-based venue management firm SMG, which hosted 17 of Foxx’s theater-in-arena performances.

continued on >>p50

Scale Down

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Another Planet Entertainment CEO Gregg Perloff says the decision to play reduced-capacity arenas was an easy one. "We had to find the venues that made the most sense for somebody doing between 5,500 and 7,500 seats," he says. Foxx "wanted to put on a big show, and we knew how much business we could do but couldn't fit it into a lot of theaters."

The strategy paid off. For arena-theater dates that had better-than-expected ticket sales, the scaled-down setups allowed for expanded seating. "There were many shows where we were good for 3,000-3,500 seats and ended up selling 5,000 or 6,000 seats," Evans says. "We were able to add those seats in a manner that was fair to the public while keeping the intimacy of a reduced-capacity arena."

Perloff says the tour was initially routed for 30 dates but quickly grew. "One of the reasons we extended it is because we kept doing great business," he says, noting that most of the concerts were sellouts. Evans adds that Fox's arena-theater dates didn't go unnoticed by concert industry observers. "I got more phone calls from agents saying, 'Tell me how this is working. How are they setting up the show?'" Evans recalls.

Foxx isn't the only artist taking advantage of theater-in-arena configurations. The ArenaNetwork, a consortium of 50 arenas that seeks to create live opportunities for member venues, has done well with its subgroup, the ArenaNetwork Theatre Group. In 2007, such acts as Celtic Woman, Sugarland and Little Big Town (CMT on Tour), Blue Man Group, Dierks Bentley, Young Jeezy, Poison, Alison Krauss & Union Station and Daddy Yankee, among others, have (or are scheduled to) play 3,000- to 8,000-seat ANTG modes, according to the organization. Past performers have included Springsteen, Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Dolly Parton, Alicia Keys, Matchbox Twenty, Dave Matthews & Tim Reynolds and Sheryl Crow.

ArenaNetwork executive director Brad Parsons says the ANTG, which started five years ago with nine members and now has 31, keeps growing because of a changing touring climate. "There are less attractions these days who can do 15,000 people," Parsons says. "Whereas there are a lot of shows that can do 6,000 people."

Parsons says that two ArenaNetwork members—Washington state's Tacoma Dome and Dallas' American Airlines Center—will install theater configurations in the near future. Tacoma Dome director Rob Henson has already begun construction on a $4.1 million theater configuration project (3,500-7,000 capacity) that will hopefully give the 23,000-seat facility an edge in the marketplace. "There are a limited amount of acts touring," Henson says. "It's sad to have to pass on a show or not get considered because you can't offer them the configuration they're looking for."

Along with concerts, some ANTG members are using their reduced-capacity settings for other purposes. At the University of Illinois Assembly Hall Star Theatre in Champaign, "we use it from the full perspective of doing national touring shows to touring musicals," director Kevin Ulleststad says. "It can also be utilized for guest lecture speakers and conferences."

This fall the approximately 3,600- to 5,900-seat theater setup will host productions of "Gypsy," "Annie" and "Hairspray," along with performances from Steven Curtis Chapman and comedian "Weird Al" Yankovic. "This theater configuration allows us to do anything," Ulleststad says. "It opens up the door and expands us, and makes..."
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Since fall 2006, the Assembly Hall Star Theatre has hosted performances from James Blunt, the Nintendo Fusion tour, MercyMe, Taste of Chaos and comedian Carlos Mencia, along with musicals “Rent” and “Jesus Christ Superstar.” During that period, 17 of 27 national touring events at the venue were held in its theater configuration—about 65% of total programming, according to Ulleststad.

“We’ve been doing more of those shows in this theater configuration,” he says. “Some of these shows you obviously wouldn’t put in the capacity of 12,000-14,000.”

One of the main challenges with theater-in-arena setups is convincing artists that they’re not simply playing cut-down facilities. “It’s all of our jobs to get over the misconception about cut-down arenas,” says Tim Ryan, president/CEO of the Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif. “That’s simply not what this was ever meant to be. It’s meant to provide another option for the artists who can sell 6,000-7,000 seats.”

But old perceptions are difficult to overcome. “I think there are a lot of bands that still view it as a half-house versus a theater,” says Bill Reid, president of Norfolk, Va.-based Rising Tide Productions, which promotes concerts throughout the Southeast. “It’s a challenge.”

As a way to overcome these negative perceptions, Evans suggests giving the theater setups specific names. “If I say ‘Sinatra Theatre,’ everybody knows that’s the theater setup at the BankAtlantic Center” in Sunrise, Fla., he says. “And they run ads under the Sinatra Theatre.”

And while arenas continue to find creative ways to draw theater-sized touring acts for scaled-down capacities, traditional theaters don’t seem to be losing any business. Allan Vella, GM at Atlanta’s 4,600-seat Fox Theatre, says he doesn’t lose shows to the nearby 3,500- to 8,000-seat Theatre at Phillips Arena. “The majority of time the artist is making the decision about what the right play is for them,” Vella says. “A cut-down facility is a cut-down facility and doesn’t have the same intimacy as a traditional theater.”

Vella points to Fox’s recent outing, which chose to play the Fox instead of an arena theater. Three back-to-back performances grossed $907,000 and drew nearly 12,000 fans, according to Billboard Boxscore. “That speaks to the artist,” Vella says. Fox “could’ve played an arena without a problem in this market, but he chose the theater for the environment.”

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The ArenaNetwork Consortium Leverages Business, Info For Members

From Dolly to dinosaurs, the ArenaNetwork is still bringing content to its member arenas. The consortium, now in its eighth year, can point to a wide range of tours and events that it has provided its members, and its efforts seem to be gaining momentum. The ArenaNetwork is a group of major North American arenas working together to increase the volume of business at each of its 50-odd participating venues. The basic goal is to interface with agents to streamline the booking process, keep member arenas on the radar of agents and promoters, and to find unique content.

Arena content bookers are quick to sing the praises of the group. “ArenaNetwork gives us another tool to stay on top of industry happenings and allows us to be ‘timely aggressive,’“ says Trey Feazell, VP of booking for the Philips Arena in Atlanta. “Being aggressive in pursuing events is worthless if you are late to the party. ArenaNetwork gives us more eyes and ears to be in the loop.”

The ArenaNetwork helps a large arena find ways to utilize its space. Feazell says, “Being a large facility sometimes has its disadvantages when you are dealing with shows that will draw less than 10,000 people,” he continues. “The work that ArenaNetwork has done in educating our industry on the flexibility for capacities in arenas has been very beneficial. We can do from 1,500 to 20,000 fans and be able to create, in each case, an intimate setting with exceptional acoustics and all the benefits of playing a major venue.”

Many arena managers cite information as the key component of ArenaNetwork membership. “The information on who is touring, where they are routing, who is representing the artist and who is likely to be the promoter has great value to us,” says Kevin Twoght, executive director of the Spokane (Wash.) Arena. “I also appreciate having a small, focused group to communicate with on topics specific to arenas who promote events.”

Large-market arenas can still use the help in drawing content in an era when many second- ary markets boast large, modern venues. “ArenaNetwork is extremely beneficial, even for buildings in major markets,” says Doug Hall, VP/GM of the Toyota Center in Houston. “This is a great network of facilities that stays current on trends, deals and upcoming issues. While many buildings use it as a resource for taking risks and booking shows, others use it for information and updates. So it really fits whatever your needs are.”

Hall cites Walking With Dinosaurs, the U.S. Gymnastics Tour, the CMT tour with Rascal Flatts, and Dolly Parton as Toyota Center events he can specifically attribute to the ArenaNetwork. “Keep in mind, because of our market size, we do not have to be as aggressive about booking as some other buildings,” he adds.
A secondary market like Memphis, however, has to be aggressive in booking or risk being passed up by competitive markets and buildings. "The networking and the gathering of information about tours and events is very important in our planning process," says Steve Zito, senior VP of operations at Memphis' FedEx Arena, which will host Walking With Dinosaurs in October.

**DINOMATIC**
The ArenaNetwork-originated tour that has the industry abuzz is Walking With Dinosaurs—The Live Experience. "In fact, the Dinosaurs show, which originated in Australia, is in the U.S. because of ArenaNetwork," says Twohig, whose building notched a $1.5 million gross with the show.

ArenaNetwork executive director Brad Parsons worked with producer Bruce McTaggart's Immersion Entertainment to bring Dinosaurs to North America after the innovative show had a sterling run in Australia that drew more than 300,000 people. The tour is based on the award-winning BBC production "Walking With Dinosaurs," and U.S. audiences are responding. These are, after all, dinosaurs, and responsive dinosaurs at that. "We sold every single ticket for every single show," Twohig says. "It is a spectacular event with spectacular demand."

Walking With Dinosaurs—The Live Experience, produced in the States by McTaggart, is slated for Houston's Toyota Center in April 2008. "This is exactly the type of event that can use the ArenaNetwork group for a win/win," Hall says. "We have a group of facilities that know how to co-promote and market events, and the tour has a great product. They were able to marry the two strengths and put together what looks like is going to be a fantastic U.S. run."

—Ray Waddell

![Image of Walking With Dinosaurs at the Dome](image-url)
Kevin Lyman's Touring Fest Finishes Up A Hot Summer

Think Kevin Lyman has this Warped thing down yet? The 2007 Vans Warped tour grossed about $18.6 million and sold 622,467 tickets to 45 shows, according to tour founder/producer Lyman, president of 45th Productions.


“We had a great summer,” Lyman says. “Every one with a couple days off, would have been willing to go another couple of months with it. That’s what I really walked away with; the bands were genuinely overall kind of bummed that the tour was over.”

Lyman says a “well-rounded, diverse lineup” helped drive the success of Warped in 2007. Both the talent and the budget and the advertising budget were increased by about $1 million from 2006. When there were five fewer shows, Lyman says—but ticket prices increased by only about 75 cents each. The range was from $19.99 to $27 day-of-show, all fees included.

“We had less stages but the quality of the talent was a lot better, Lyman says. "It made it kind of special to be on Warped again.”

In years past, Warped has had some dates with as many as 110 bands on the bill. This year we averaged 70-75 bands,” he says. “The kids were not overwhelmed but there was still a lot going on.”

Promoter Seth Hurwitz, talent buyer at the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Md., sums up his Warped date nicely. “The vibe from that event comes from the top.” Hurwitz says. “There’s Kevin Lyman with his smoker backrange and many pounds of pork, happily distributing his grand handiwork to anyone whose face he can put a smile on. He is having a blast, and that kind of attitude trickles down to every last band, employee and, most importantly, the fans.

“My kids, ages 14 and 15, said it was the best show of the year,” Hurwitz says. “Not because of any bands, specifically. In fact, they’re not even sure exactly why. But I know why. It was because they just had fun. And they had fun because everybody else was having fun.”

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The Sprint Center Brings State-Of-The-Art Entertainment Hub To The Midwest

BY MITCHELL PETERS

When the Sprint Center goes live Oct. 13 with a sold-out performance from Elton John, the new Kansas City, Mo.-based arena will take its first step to becoming a must-play destination for live entertainment in the Midwest region. The Sprint Center, part of Kansas City’s $4.5 million downtown redevelopment project, sits adjacent to the $850 million Power & Light District. The mixed-use entertainment complex will boast eight blocks of retail, residential and office space, with a completion date set for March 2008.

Sprint Center senior VP/GM Brenda Tinnen, a native of Kansas City, has high hopes for the 18,500-seat building, which can accommodate hockey, basketball, concerts, family shows and other special events. "A lot of people who haven't been through Kansas City over the past 30 years are excited to hear that there's a new facility, a new downtown and a new energy here," Tinnen says. "There's such a positive vibe." So far, from October through December, the Kansas City-owned Sprint Center is scheduled to host concerts from Van Halen, "So You Think You Can Dance," Blue Man Group, High School Musical: The Ice Tour, "Hannah Montana" and Trans-Siberian Orchestra, among others. Future sporting events include the Phillips 66 Big 12 Men’s Basketball Championship in 2008 and the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Championship opening rounds in 2009. It will also be an official regional site for the NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Championships in 2010.

With nearly 2 million people living in the Kansas City metropolitan area and another 8 million located within a four-hour drive, the arena plans to become "the regional destination." Sprint Center senior VP of business operations Mark Faber says, "When we open the doors in mid-October, we think people will be pleasantly surprised with what they see."

At press time, the arena had approximately 90 events on the books through July 2008, according to Faber. "We project an attendance of a little over 890,000 fans and guests through next July," he says. "We have 21 concerts and 32 family shows booked."

The idea to build a new arena came about three years ago when city representatives felt that the 33-year-old Kemper Arena (situated less than three miles away from Sprint Center) was losing its edge and miss...
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“People are going to need our downtown,” Faber says. “They need the arena to be competitive. We have the hotel and the arena and the ability to use our technology to get them there is what we have in mind.”

In addition to Sprint, the arena wants to secure 12 category-exclusive “founding partners.” The facility has locked down eight such partners but announced only four: UMB, Farmland Foods, University of Kansas Hospital and Olivevia. “We’re trying to develop relationships with as many Kansas City or Midwest-based companies as we can,” Faber says. “We’ve had a tremendous amount of support from the business community.”

Since its groundbreaking in 2005, Sprint Center has helped generate local business to the downtown area. “There has been a lot of organic development outside of the arena,” Cauthen says. “We have a lot of people opening up restaurants and galleries, which will bring additional traffic into the downtown area.”

Although Sprint Center has yet to secure an anchor sports tenant, AEG president/CEO Tim Leiweke has ongoing conversations with National Hockey League commissioner Gary Bettman and National Basketball Assn. commissioner David Stern to help further the process, according to

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ing out on events. “There’s been a sentiment for the last 10-15 years that Kemper was getting a little antiquated,” Tinnen says. Wayne Cauthen, city manager for Kansas City, adds, “We felt that having a [new] arena downtown would bring the type of vibrancy we wanted.”

In May 2004, Kansas City entered an agreement with Los Angeles-based sports/entertainment firm AEG and the National Assn. of Basketball Coaches to develop the $256 million facility. The City of Kansas City pitched in $184 million (and up to $16 million more, if needed), AEG contributed up to $54 million, and the NBA gave $10 million, according to Faber.

Although city voters passed a hotel and a car rental tax to fund the Sprint Center in August 2004, citizens were initially apprehensive to greenlight the building. “The fact that we didn’t have a [professional sports team] anchor tenant gave people reservations,” Cauthen says. “But we felt this was something we needed to do to bring back our downtown.”

Faber says the arena’s 25-year naming rights deal with Sprint, which has the wireless company paying $2.5 million annually, gave voters the confidence they needed. “That helped in the initial phases of planning and taking the project to voters, because they knew Sprint would be here long term,” Faber says.

Sprint VP of experiential marketing Tom Murphy says there are two reasons the company aligned itself with the venue. “We got involved... because it can be a big marketing impact item and because it will really help change the fortune of downtown Kansas City,” Murphy says. “We have our operational headquarters here with about 15,000 employees locally.”

Along with signage, Sprint products and technology will have a large presence in the arena. “We went into it with the idea that we can use our technology, products and services to enhance the fan experience,” Murphy says.

The company is also toasting around an idea that involves a Global Positioning System technology tie-in with events at the arena. “With your phone, you buy tickets to concert ‘X’ in November. And if you’re driving to the Sprint Center, the application on your phone will give you turn-by-turn directions to the venue, tell you where the best place to park is and offer you a preview of what you’re going to see that night,” he says. “People are going to come to the Sprint Center from all over the place, so the ability to use our technology to get them there is what we have in mind.”

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Welcome Home Brenda!
from >>p62 Faber, "We've always said that it needs to be the right team at the right time," Faber says. "It's neither going to be through relocation of an existing franchise that can't make it in their own market, or there has been talk of an expansion team in the NHL. That doesn't mean we're not talking to the NBA."

On a positive note, the Arena Football League's Kansas City Brigade has agreed to a five-year partnership. The Brigade will begin playing at Sprint Center in March, Faber says.

Meanwhile, the Sprint Center's design, referred to as the "Crystal Ball" by its architects, is a see-through building with 2,024 glass panels and a curtain- ing system for shading. "If you're on the [upper] concourse and the drapes are up, you can look out over all of downtown Kansas City," Tinnen says. "We have a sort of fieldhouse look." In an unusual move during the 2004 bidding process, Kansas City-based firms Ellerbe Becket, HOK Sport + Venue + Event, 360 Architecture and Rafael Architects collectively formed the Downtown Arena Design Team in an effort to bid against architects Frank Gehry. "We didn't want to compete against one another and potentially lose the project," says Ben Barnert, a senior principal at HOK. "So we pulled together our resources, went after it and won the project."

Barnert says the DADT's 15 years of combined experience working on various facility projects was a tremendous benefit to Kansas City. "Many of us have worked together or been at the same firm at one point in time, so you learn different things from each organization and different types of projects," he says. Faber agrees, saying, "They were able to devote a great deal of time to the project because Kansas City is where they live. It's one of the reasons why we're on budget and on schedule.

"Live" stage performances at the Sprint Center can seat approximately 15,000 concertgoers, while NBA events accommodate up to 18,500 fans. NHL games will hold a capacity of 17,300 fans. In addition, the arena is equipped with a movable stage and theatrical draping, allowing for a 7,500- to 10,000-seat theater setup. "It's a very flexible and versatile facility," Tinnen says.

The arena also features six bays for load-in/load-out, which are covered by canopies for weather purposes. A command center with a large glass window overlooks the loading dock. Inside, Daktronics LED technology is featured throughout the building, along with a state-of-the-art rigging system that includes a full arrest system. The facility also boasts a grid capable of supporting 425,000 pounds and a center-hung scoreboard.

The interior of the Sprint Center features terrazzo floors, numerous locker rooms for NBA, NHL and college basketball and five artist dressing rooms. The arena will not house full-service restaurants, but Tinnen says, "We're fully equipped to do catering of any kind." Levy Restaurants will serve as concessionaires.

The Sprint Center features 72 stadium-style executive suites, stacked on two levels between the lower and upper bowl. "There are 18 on each level and 36 on each side," Faber says. "Our standard suite is 12 fixed seats." Up to 350 memberships to the arena's Founders Club will be sold for a "low, four-figure investment," he adds. Two-thirds of the memberships have already been committed to, giving buyers premium seating and parking, along with access to the VIP arena club.

Another unique aspect of the arena is the NABC's 60,000-square-foot College Basketball Experience, which features the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame and an interactive fan area. The CBE is connected to the Sprint Center by a common lobby and could be open year-around. "It's not a traditional museum where you walk around and look at various photos or statues," says Faber, who expects a minimum of 150,000 visitors in year one. "It's a total immersion of fans being able to pick up a basketball and play."

As part of its agreement, AEG has a 30-year contract with Kansas City to manage the arena. Although AEG will not exclusively book Sprint Center, the St. Louis regional office for AEG Live, the concert promotions arm of AEG, will assist in one-off bookings at the arena, according to AEG Live senior VP of national booking Larry Vallon. "We're excited about this particular arena," he says. "It's changing the scope of the Midwest and the routing of tours." Along with St. Louis, Vallon notes that tours can be routed from facilities in Tulsa, Okla.; Oklahoma City; Omaha, Neb.; and Des Moines, Iowa. "They're all routable into Kansas City," he says. Sprint Center "will be a humongous magnet for acts who want to make that run. It hasn't been there in the past."

As far as competition goes, Vallon isn't too concerned. "There are plenty of good promoters around there, and that's what we deal with on a day-to-day basis," he says. "On the other hand, not all promoters have a brand-new arena."

In addition, starting Jan. 1, 2008, AEG will take over management of Kemper Arena and use it in conjunction with Sprint Center. "There are certain events that belong and will stay in Kemper," Vallon says. "In some instances, there may be a young band that prefers having no seats on the floor... that would be another usage for it." Tinnen, who is looking events alongside Sprint Center director of event services Michael Chaffee, says that simply being a new arena will help keep the calendar full. "People will hear about the building and come and play in it," she says. "When they get here, we want to make sure they have a great experience and see how excited the fans of Kansas City are. Then they'll come back."
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How Far They’ve Come

Matchbox Twenty Strikes A New Creative Flame

High above New York’s bustling midtown, not long before waiting around singing a few lines from Coldplay’s “Yellow” to celebrate the sun breaking outside Atlantic’s office window, Matchbox Twenty’s Rob Thomas proclaims that “these are the most pop-sounding songs we’ve ever done.”

He’s describing the six new songs his group just recorded with producer Steve Lillywhite (U2, the Rolling Stones, Talking Heads).

And he’s right. The tracks, which will accompany the band’s first greatest-hits set, “Exit on Mainstream” (due Oct. 2), are mostly bright and buoyant, perhaps marking a final transition away from Matchbox Twenty’s post-grunge roots. They also reflect what Thomas and drummate Paul Doucette describe as a “fresh start.”

“It’s like we’ve closed one chapter and are starting to write another,” Doucette says, curled up on the corner suite’s couch—suit, sandals and all. Thomas—looking more rock’n’roll in jeans and a T-shirt—nods in agreement while sucking down a cigarette.

“We don’t have to do anything we don’t want to do at this point,” Thomas says, “so we’re only going to make music that gets our juices flowing. It was time to do something different.”

The band took its first step in that direction when original rhythm guitarist Adam Gavort departed in early 2005. “It wasn’t done with a phone call or an e-mail,” Thomas recalls. “We all sat down and had this incredibly intense talk. It was one of the hardest things we’ve done.”

“But,” Doucette interjects, “it was necessary. I’m not sure the band could have gone on if we didn’t come to the decision we did. It just wasn’t working anymore.”

With Gavort out, Doucette switched from drums to guitar. Then he, Thomas, lead guitarist Kyle Cook and bassist Brian “Pookie” Yale began knocking around song ideas.

“This is the first time we’ve really written as a group,” Thomas says. “On the last album a few of the songs were collaborations, but this time they all were.”

Perhaps the biggest change, though, was bringing Lillywhite onboard to lead the recording sessions. “Matt [Sevleta, who produced the band’s first three albums] is amazing, but we’d done everything we could with the sound we created together,” Thomas says.

The band members describe Lillywhite’s process as being a lot more “in the moment,” with songs captured in a limited number of takes.

“This could easily be the debut album of a band no one’s ever heard,” Atlantic chairman Craig Kallman says. “For Matchbox Twenty to do that so far into their career is a statement about what they’re capable of. We had only looked to do a couple of extra songs and the process was so creatively fertile, it just kept expanding.”

Atlantic GM/executive VP of marketing and creative media Livia Tortella says that at least three of the six new songs will be singles. “These guys are still writing hits,” Tortella says. “That’s just what they do.”

Indeed. First single “How Far We’ve Come,” an infectious pop stomper, is only the second single this year, following Maroon 5’s “Makes Me Wonder,” to reach the Adult Top 40 top 10 in just three weeks. Only five other songs in the Nielsen BDS-fed chart’s 11-year existence have accomplished the same feat. It is Matchbox Twenty’s 11th top 10 at the format; the band trails only Goo Goo Dolls for most Adult Top 40 top 10s. And in total, the band’s first three discs have shifted more than 14 million copies domestically, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“Exile” will be a two-disc set—one for the new songs, one for the retrospective. A music video interactive limited-edition package will also be available. And iTunes is offering a preorder for the new collection—the first time iTunes has ever done so for a greatest-hits package in the United States.

Tortella promises an “aggressive” TV advertising campaign; in stores and appearances on “The Tonight Show With Jay Lenos,” “The Ellen DeGeneres Show,” “Jimmy Kimmel Live” and “Today” are set for release week. The band will tour the States from the last week of January until mid-March, with a ticket on-sale slated for Nov. 1. International dates are likely to follow.

The group reveals that a complete album of original material is already in the works and that Lillywhite will remain behind the boards. “We’ve got a bunch of other songs already done,” Thomas says, “but we’re not in a rush. We can take our time and still work on solo projects while keeping the band’s songwriting process going.”

Kallman concurs: “Expect both another Thomas solo album and a Matchbox Twenty full-length in the near future.”
**Rhythm & Blues**

**GAIL MITCHELL** gmitchell@billboard.com

![Image](https://example.com/rhythmblues.jpg)

**SCOTT**

**BUZZ**

**TAKE A CHANCE ON CELINE**

Celine Dion is already calling “Taking Chances” her favorite English-language album. Due Nov. 13 via Columbia, the set is led by its title track, which is headed to radio imminently. The song was written by Kara DioGuardi and Eurythmics’ Dave Stewart and produced by John Shanks. Other collaborators on the disc include former Evanescence guitarist Ben Moody, Kristian Lundin, Anders Bagge, Peer Astrom, Linda Perry, Ne-Yo and Aldo Nova.

—Chuck Taylor

**DAVID DIGS DEEPER**

Depeche Mode frontman David Gahan will unveil his second solo album, “Hourglass,” Oct. 23 via Mute/Virgin. Material was penned with the band’s touring drummer Christian Eigner and programmer Andrew Phipps. “With the use of electronics and technology, you can quickly produce something very different by twisting it around,” Gahan says. “It’s a lot more difficult to do that when you sit down with a traditional band.”

—Jonathan Cohen

**JC’S FREE**

JC Chazez has cut ties with longtime label Jive Records, which released his lone solo album, 2004’s “Schizophrenic.” His follow-up tentatively titled “Kate,” was intended for release by Jive earlier this year but will now appear on a new label to be announced. Of late, Chazez has worked as a songwriter on projects for Backstreet Boys, Sugababes and Leona Lewis.

—Jonathan Cohen

**SIGN HERE**

Babyface Records has signed rapper J.R. Writer to a seven-figure, multi-album deal. Writer will release his first Babyface album, “Writer’s Block,” Nov. 20. The 23-year-old Harlem native’s 2006 debut album, “History in the Making,” was issued by Koch. In addition, “TV” has inked Chicago rap duo Dude N’ Nem, whose debut is due next year. The first single is the X-Cel-produced “Watch It!”

—Marilyn Concepcion

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**SEEING STARS**

**ROCK**

BY ROBERT THOMPSON

**Seeing Stars**

**Canadian Band Gets A Jump On Album Leak With Digital Release**

TORONTO—Stars singer/guitarist Torquil Campbell knew there was a strong chance that within days of turning in the band’s fourth album to its label, the music would find its way illegally onto the Internet. To avoid the seemingly in- evitable, Stars and its Toronto-based label Arts & Crafts Records issued the album, “In Our Bedroom After the War,” July 10 to North American online retailers, just four days after taking delivery of the finished master (Billboard, July 28). For other strategies indie labels are using to counter leaks, see The Indies, page 20.

“A record leaking to the Internet has almost become ubiquitous,” Campbell says. “Everyone wants to hear [it] when they know it is out there. We just wanted to do something different—we were looking for a way to allow people to support us if they wanted.”

Although the final verdict isn’t in, the move appears to have been a success. Stars sold 78,000 copies of its last album, 2004’s “Set Yourself On Fire,” across physical and digital formats in the United States and 43,000 in Canada, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “Bedroom” has already sold 12,000 digital copies in the United States, and made iTunes’ top 20 most-downloaded albums chart during its first week of release.

Arts & Crafts president Jeff Remmels admits to some trepidation about issuing the record early, but says the band seriously considered the possibility it would leak. “They’d seen it happen to bands of friends and knew it would happen to them,” he says. “For Stars it was about giving their fans the choice to buy the album.”

Stars has a “360-degree” deal including publishing and management with Arts & Crafts, which was able to swiftly put the album online without waiting for a string of

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**STILL JILL SCOTT**

Singer/Songwriter Puts Her Whole Life Into Her Acting Career And New Album

One of the more subtle yet effective new-artist marketing campaigns in recent memory involved Hidden Beach Recordings singer/songwriter Jill Scott. The plan was simple: Pique curiosity with a question tied to the title of her 2000 debut—“Who is Jill Scott?”—and build from there. It worked. The hooky tag line and mounting word-of-mouth about her refreshing music and lyrics helped “Who is Jill Scott? Words & Sounds Vol. 1?” ring up double-platinum sales (2.4 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan). It also earned four Grammy Award nods for Scott, including best new artist.

So seven years and three more albums later, who is Jill Scott?

That question will be answered Sept. 25 when Scott’s fifth (and third studio) album, “The Real Thing,” is released. Edgy single “Hat On My Head” provides the first clue. It’s Scott’s response to people—including family and friends—jeal- ous of her life and accomplishments. “Hat” is one of several autobiographical tracks on an album marked by honest passion and jazz-influenced R&B/hip-hop reminiscent of her first outing. A sassier, more nuanced se- quel to her last studio album, 2004’s “Beautifully Human: Words & Sounds, Vol. 2,” Scott’s new set finds her on the other side of divorce: a self-described “freer, bolder, guttier” woman who is dealing with—and enjoying—life.

“I’m still Joyce’s daughter, still Blu’s granddaughter,” Scott says. “Everything that goes on in my life goes into the music.”

Her gentle, music-box laugh floats over the phone line from South Africa, where she was in the last days of an 11-week shoot for director Anthony Minghella’s “Cold Mountain” (Weinstein Co./HBO Films project “No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency.”

Scott is enjoying her “full-throttle” shift into acting. In addition to the Minghella film, she appeared in the Dakota Fanning film “Hounddog” and has a spot in the forthcoming Tyler Perry/Lions Gate en- semble drama “Why Did I Get Married?,” co-starring Janet Jackson as well as Tyler Perry.

“Acting isn’t about myself,” she says. “I’m interested in the whole human experience. Choosing between acting and music would be impossible.”

Hidden Beach president Steve McKeever recalls, “At her first audition, Jill said she wanted to sing and act. Given the life-changing experience of filming in South Africa, I know she’ll make amazing music out of it.”

Learning that the “Agency” shooting schedule would con- flict with the label’s prerelease promotion plans for “The Real Thing,” McKeever filmed videos for “Hate” and the arrestingly raw second single “My Love” in ad- vance. Upon her return, Scott will begin an artist-in-residence series with House of Blues, including a four-night stint at its Los An- geles outpost in October, once again playing up what who Jill Scott is: an engaging live performer.

She’ll next fan out to smaller gigs along the East- ern seaboard and do a Euro- pean tour before moving to larger venues and stadiums at the top of 2008 and into the summer. In between, Scott will be sketching designs for a lingerie line through Ashley Stewart, which she expects to launch in 2008.

A limited-edition deluxe version of “The Real Thing” boasts two bonus tracks, an up-close and personal inter- view with Scott and five videos (including those for the two new singles and Grammy winner “Cross My Mind”). The standard version carries 15 tracks.

“The music is still very Jill,” she says. “It’s real, it’s ma- turity; very grown folks stuff: sexy, erotic, angry, cocky, yearning.”

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**REWIVING MURPHY’S LAW**

**Moloko Alumnus’ Music Returns To The Dance Club**

Three years after exiting internationally successful U.K. electronica act Moloko, vocalist Roisin Murphy returns to her club roots on her sophomore solo album “Over- powered” (EMI), set for international release Oct. 15. While 2005 solo debut “Ruby Blue” nodded toward alterna- tive rock pop, her new set places her firmly back on the dancefloor, EMI U.K. interna- tional project manager Caitlin

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One-Stop Shopping

New Company Brings Touring, Sponsorships, Distro Under One Roof

"In the superstar space, you can't control the artist; it's less a partnership and more about linking to what they're doing already," Michael Aiken says. "The space below, where the [Tommy] Motola's and [Creative Artists Agencies] aren't, that's where we play."

That bubbling-under-strata is the home of electronic music artists, and Aiken's company, Spring, is aiming squarely at them. "Dance has always been the bastard child of music," he says.

The new record label is more like a new business model: a single entity that will control its artist's releases, merchandising, touring and sponsorships. After staging the successful BMW Pop-Jazz Live Tour with jazz saxophonist Mike Phillips in 2006, Spring is repeating the formula this year for dance. The Nikon Four-to-the-Floor tour will feature four undiscovered DJs and hit five cities, starting off Sept. 19 in house music capital Chicago.

"I really was attracted to this because it's obvious that the majors are trying to do what Michael is doing, but they have an established business model and will take forever to change," says longtime dance soldier Hosh Gureli, who is consulting with Spring on the tour and hand-picked the participating artists. "He is starting from scratch with the new model in place. There's no impediment to growth, and artists go in knowing what the deal is. It's a huge advantage."

Gureli's chosen quartet of DJ/producers is Exacta, Rami DJ, Joe Maze and Lorne. Each will contribute original tracks to a compilation bearing the name of the tour, set for an early '08 release. "We're looking for a diamond in the rough—the next Mark Ronson, Paul Okenfold or Moby," he says.

Spring is already building new bridges, bringing on formidable sponsors Nikon and Volvo, which are not known for their support of the dance genre. "Coke told me, 'You speak like no other music property, but you have to be tighter. You're competing against NASCAR here.'" Aiken says.

THE CAT'S MEOW: When Felix Da Housecat was just a kitten, he played first chair clarinet in his Chicago high school's marching band. "I hated it. Right when 'Purple Rain' came out, I quit. I just didn't think it was cool anymore," he says.

His destiny thereafter was definitely more Prince than pompoms. The DJ/producers' 2001 album "Kittenz and The Geizz" (Emperor Norton), with its sniff-film soundtrack vibe and chilly Euro cool, kick-started the electro revival, and made Felix a hot property as a touring DJ and remixer. But that was just one phase in a 20-year, genre-hopping career that started in 1987 with acid house club hit "Phantasy Gay."

"From the time I was 19, they tried to label me: house, Wild Pitch, tech-house, electro-crash," Felix says. "And the more they labeled me, the more I was like, 'This trend's going to die, [and] I'm not going to die with it.'"

Out Oct. 2, Felix's new album, "Virgo Blaktro & The Movie Disco" (Netwerk), is a "late-'70s take on electronic disco music," he says. "After 'Kittenz,' my father said, 'You should make a black record, with your black influences.' I laughed at him but it stuck in my head. Black electro: Blaktro."

Felix says the moniker is more about style than race, and points to the shifting cultural tide in music as more proof that color lines are blurring.

"Cool kids are going indie and electronic—that's the new cutting-edge thing," he says. "Hip-hop is just not cool anymore. It was cool in the beginning, with N.W.A. and all that, but after awhile, it's like, who wants to hear how big your house is, or how much money you got? You're just making poor kids go wild."

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Global Pulse

TOM FERGUSON tferguson@eu.billboard.com

Gibbons says, "It's pop-dance with an edge," Gibbons adds, "and while our campaigns will initially focus on the dance/specialty market we expect her to cross over to the mainstream very quickly."

The Kylie Minogue audience is "a close fit" for the Chrysalis Music-published Murphy. EMI senior product manager Matt Dixon says, "We released the title track as a [U.K.] single in July to introduce [Murphy] to her fan base, and they loved it. 'Overpowered' bridges the gap between Moloko and 'Ruby Blue.'"

EMI is looking at TV to play a key role in Murphy's campaign—in addition to promo videos, several synch deals are being considered. Tracks from "Ruby Blue" appeared in such U.S. shows as "Grey's Anatomy" and "So You Think You Can Dance." "We definitely be looking to do some things there once we've worked the U.K. and Europe," says U.S. Japan release dates are not yet firmly up.

Murphy will tour extensively this fall in Europe, booked by ITB. "She's a great live act with a really strong band and we want her out on the road as much as possible," Gibbons says. "Steve Adams" WAKE-UP CALL: Youssou N'Dour has reaped the collaboration with Neneh Cherry that gave him his biggest international hit with "7 Seconds" in 1994. The Senegalese star, who made his Hollywood acting debut last year in the movie "Amazing Grace," reunites with the Swedish-born RB singer on "Wake Up (It's Africa Calling)," the lead single from his forthcoming album "Rokku Mi Rokka." (Nonesuch/Warner). The new single, combining traditional African instrumentation, RB beats and a rapped vocal from Cherry, drops Oct. 22 in Europe. The album arrives internationally one week later and hits U.S. stores Oct. 30.

N'Dour, signed as a writer to EMI Music Publishing, says, "7 Seconds" opened so many doors for my music and I've always wanted to sing with Neneh again, but we didn't want to make another 7 Seconds. This is much more African-sounding, and it's got a strong message that the continent is not just war, poverty and AIDS; we are trying to move forward."

The album is N'Dour's first since 2004's Grammy Award-winning "Egypt." "We're going to do more African-sounding things, making a real statement," he says. "We're going to do more world music and bring people together, wherever they are."
News You Can Use

Allhiphop.com Celebrates Relaunch With Weeklong Event

There are more hip-hop Web sites than I can count, but none quite like the format’s originating allhiphop.com. Partners Chuck “Jigsaw” Creekmur and “Grouchy” Greg Watkins launched the site nine years ago and have since made it the premier destination for hip-hop happenings. In 2003, the pair launched the celebratory and brand re-enforcing “Allhiphop Week,” featuring concerts, art shows, discussion panels, showcases and a much-anticipated MC battle. This 2007 event is set for Sept. 15-21 in New York, and the theme is rebirth.

“Rebirth represents so many different things to the hip-hop community,” Creekmur says. “No subculture polices itself [and] analyzes itself the way hip-hop does, so we are always evolving and always growing. This rebirth comes in several forms, but it’s always positive.”

Although they began in divergent fields (Watkins ran his own independent hip-hop label, Oblique Recordings, and Creekmur worked in a bank), the Delaware natives banded together to cover hip-hop’s news void.

“I started planning a magazine but realized that the cost was very expensive,” Creekmur says. “I’m a self-starter so I never tried to get funded, and I decided that the Internet was a better fit. Greg also realized that selling his records via the Internet was also more successful—they were already selling MP3s at the time.”

At first, allhiphop.com was launched out of necessity.

“There were hip-hop sites but nobody was focused on daily hip-hop news in late 1998,” Watkins says. “So we’d update with something every day, and the site’s traffic expanded from there. And with Chuck being the great college-educated writer that he is, he gave allhiphop.com immense credibility.”

Aware of branding early on, the pair kept the accented exclamation point logo that Creekmur had developed for his magazine, Tantrum: The Journal of Aggressive Lifestyle.

In addition to daily updates, the duo also sent out an e-mail news blast. Comically, Creekmur says that now if readers don’t get their e-mail, “they will curse you out like nobody’s business. It’s like if you’re trash doesn’t get picked up every week, you’re going to curse somebody out.” And since Delaware isn’t exactly a hip-hop hotbed, the site’s popularity eventually gave its founders forced entry into the hip-hop industry, which had excluded them before.

“Soon, we began to get an industry-wide level of respect,” Watkins says. “We started to get on Russell Simmons’ radar. He actually mentioned us in his new book, ‘Do You!’ Laws to Access the Power in You to Achieve Happiness and Success,’ saying our site sparked his idea to start the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network.”

Allhiphop.com has sparked a lot of other competitive ideas too.

“Some of the journalism industry’s technology and reporting changes, like the speed of the news items that are posted, we’ve caused ourselves,” Creekmur says. “Some sites saw our success and consequently it has created a more competitive atmosphere. But we want to make sure that our readership base remains.”

Most recently, allhiphop.com relaunched with a more contemporary look.

“Now that we have the relaunch out of the way, we’re focusing on making the site more user-friendly,” Watkins says. “We have plans to expand the site’s most popular sections, including the rumors, features, lifestyle and technology pages. ‘We’re also launching different brand extensions including mobile and publishing (both music and magazines).’

A TV deal with some “pretty big” partners is also cooking, but Watkins says, “We can’t announce our deal just yet.”

Dancin’ With Denson

San Diego Saxophonist Helps Jazz Get Its Funk Back

At its deepest root, jazz intertwines with dance, says Karl Denson, the San Diego-based tenor saxophonist/flautist whose new album, “Lunar Orbit,” streets Sept. 18 on his own Bobby Ace Records.

“I believe you can play something that’s both intellectually stimulating and danceable,” Denson, who within his new keyboard/drum trio format delivers an instrumental powerhouse of grooves. “When I think of the whole history of jazz, and how it developed into funk and hip-hop, I see the strength of its connection to dance.”

A thumbnail sketch of the age-old jazz-dance link is in order. In its genesis, jazz was integral to the success of dance halls and clubs of ill repute as its rhythms induced people to move their feet—and other body parts. As the music evolved, it inspired dancing with its hot-club rhythms of the ‘20s and big-band swing of the ‘30s. Then portents of impending divorce entered.

If the bebop of the ‘40s, deemed too speedy and crazy for commingling couples, signaled the first note of separation, the cubist rhythms of ‘60s avant-garde and pyrotechnics of ‘70s jazz-rock fusion cleansed the dancefloors for good—while helping perpetuate jazz album-sale underachievement.

While ‘80s neoclassicists like Wynton Marsalis tried to restore the order of accustoming swing, it wasn’t until the ‘90s underground acid jazz movement of beats, loops, samples and DJ scratching that the dance connect was firmly re-established. One of the pioneer acid-jazz purveyors was the Greyboy Allstars, founded in San Diego by DJ Greyboy and Denson, who labeled the group’s soul-jazz redux concoction “boogaloo.”

“We started coming out of the tunnel of jazz...”
having nothing to do with dancing 15 years ago with DJs sampling jazz," Denson says. But he's quick to distance himself from the Marsalis swing mandate. "That mentality ismeaningless," he says. "Those guys can't seem to grasp onto what's new.

The Greyboys, which includes keyboardist Robert Walker, still sporadically perform (they played Seattle's Rumbleshock festival in early September) and record the group broke a decade-long fast with the funk-leaning "What Happened to Television?" CD released earlier this year on Sci Fidelity Records).

Denson, who produced the Greyboy experience, Denson spun off a successful sextet, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe, and for his most recent outing, a trio. "I wanted to do something a lot jazzier," the leader says. "It was a challenge writing for such a small group, but I like the setting because I get to play more.

The tunes on "Lunar Orbit" range vibrantly from organ-trio funk to smoother stuff, with ample hip-hop inflections and occasional slashes of psychedelic color. As might be expected, Denson emphasizes the dance focus. "I love beats," he says. "But I also love the jazz tradition. So I'm trying to make what I do an extension of the things that musicians like Eddie Harris, Lonnie Smith and Wayne Shorter played.

"Lunar Orbit" marks Denson's launch into his own records out on Bobby Ace, which is a partnership project with his manager Jody White (son of roots singer/songwriter Tony Joe White). "I'm finally to a point in my career where I don't want to talk to a record label about what I want to do," Denson says. The CD will be fully serviced by Nashville-based physical and digital distribution service Thirty Tigers, which has an exclusive relationship with Sony BMG's RED.

The distinguished career of Emmylou Harris has been anthologized in various retrospectives, but none as wide-ranging as "Songbird: Rare Tracks and Forgotten Gems," out Sept. 18 in the United States via Rhino.

The package, compiled with Harris' close involvement, is spread across four CDs and one DVD. "I've always been interested in the greatest hits," the label notes. "It's the only way to go..."

"Songbird" arrives at the 1999 Billboard Century Award winner continues work on her next studio solo album, her first since 2003's "Screamin' for Gracie." To follow last year's "All Time Various Running" collaboration with Mark Knopfler, Harris spoke with Billboard about the "Songbird" collection, life at home in Nashville and her long, varied career as an American original.

Was the new boxed set fundamentally a different undertaking than other packages that have carried your name?

I've had quite a lot of compilations and boxed sets. There was [1996's three-disc set "Portraits"] as well as "Profile" in 1978 and 1984 and "Songs of the West" in 1994, so a lot of the more obvious things have been picked over. We tend to [pick] stuff that hadn't been out before. With a couple of exceptions, it's all original, it's a different kind of grouping, but I wanted to make sure every album was represented.

Was the timing quite delicate, since you're well advanced with making the new album? ["Songbird"] was supposed to come out last fall. I must have been working on these choices for a couple of years. I took what I thought was going to be a year off — there's no such thing. But I'm not doing any big tours. I go out maybe one week in a month with one of three different musical groups I work with, just to put the rent. What's life like when you're not out on the road as much? [I've been] really wanting to stay at home with my mum, and I've gotten involved in dog rescue. I have a little thing called Bonaparte's Retreat, where I rescue dogs from the pound, foster them and find them homes. It's a small operation (and) extremely time-consuming, but I don't regret it at all. For the most part, I've spent the last 30 years on the road, and now I'm really ready to have time with my family. I've got one daughter that lives here and another in California. But my brother's family almost all lives here, and they're all having kids, so I'm like a great aunt, with all these wonderful babies around.

You're broadly known as a country artist. Does that classification seem too narrow? The category of country was something from my heart, when I first set out on the journey and had to go out on my own without Gram [Parsons]. It was country music that put me through that fire in understanding the direction. I wanted to go in. Genres and labels can be so deceiving. I do think putting that moniker on me helped to find myself early on, but it wasn't going to limit me, ever.

How's the new studio record shaping up? We've got all the tracks. We'll probably get it finished up and mixed in November and December, and it'll come out in April, hopefully. It's a combination of me as an interpreter and me as a writer. I have a few songs on there, a couple of things I wrote with Kate and Anna McGarrigle, then some older songs I went back and looked at.

Any current or future ambitions? I'm hoping at some point to do some writing for films. It would be good for me because it would force me to sit down and write, and it would be at home. But I'll always go on the road a little bit. I'm too much of a road dog.
HUTCHINSON POST
DEMONSTRATES POWER
OF POSITIVE BLOGGING
When September started, Eric Hutchinson was just another unsigned singer/songwriter. He had just self-released a new album called “Sounds Like This,” scored some solid opening spots and was getting kind mentions in a few media outlets. Then, as Hutchinson told billboard.com, “Perez Hilton changed everything.”

Since the gossip blogger, whose site is estimated to receive 3 million unique hits per day, wrote a post praising Hutchinson, his album has been firmly entrenched in iTunes’ top 10. This week, according to Nielsen SoundScan, it sold 4,500 copies—97% of them digitally, and the rest through Hutchinson’s Web site—and debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Heatseekers chart, No. 5 on Top Digital Albums and No. 134 on The Billboard 200. Though Hilton has blogged about musicians before, this is the first time he has chosen to feature an unsigned artist.

Now, his manager Dave Morris says, there’s a “feeding frenzy”: Hutchinson has been approached by a number of labels. But the artist himself is taking a longer-term view. “I’m going to keep touring and work on the new album,” he says. “I’ve been at this a long time, and I don’t feel like an overnight success.”

—Courtney Harding

WELL-ROUNDERED
Ween Gets Smooth, Lets New Label Drive Sales
Ween was always one of the more curious major label signings of the early ’90s alternative rock explosion. After all, the cult favorite Pennsylvania duo preferred to dabble in every genre imaginable (they even made a full-fledged country album in 1996) than attempt to court the favor of radio.

But somehow, Ween remained on Elektra Records for more than a decade before joining Sanctuary for the release of 2003’s “Quebec,” which has sold 91,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Now, the group has just inked with Rounder to handle its next project, “La Cucaracha,” which arrives Oct. 23. In an odd twist, guitarist Mickey “Dean Ween” Melchiondo grew up following area legend George Thorogood, whose back catalog is handled by Rounder.

“We have much of those pictures in his Rounder albums are taken at the bar I drink at every single night,” he says proudly.

Ween will continue to maintain its own Chocolatog label, on which it has released several live albums and efforts by like-minded bands. But the act didn’t consider going DIY for the “La Cucaracha.”

“At this stage, we want to make records and let somebody else try and sell them,” Melchiondo says. “We didn’t have any real specific needs, other than, get the record out in as many stores as you can, and we’ll go out and tour hard behind it.”

Indeed, Ween will embark on its most extensive roadwork in years beginning Oct. 16 in Bloomington, Ind., first hitting North America and then heading to Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

The shows will feature a wealth of “La Cucaracha” material. “We want to be able to play 80 or 90% of this album onstage,” says Melchiondo, who is joined in the band by lifelong friend Aaron “Gene Ween” Freeman. “Because we play a three-hour show, just for my own sanity, I need as many new songs as possible.”

Highlights include the back-porch country jam “Learnin’ to Love,” the gruff, Melchiodon-sung “My Own Bare Hands,” the nearly 11-minute rocker “Woman and Man” and “Spirit Walker,” a prog-rock homage with Ween’s trademark disorienting vocal effects and noises. But the band is most proud of “Your Party,” which boasts a guest turn from saxophonist David Sanborn.

“The demo kind of sounded like the Red Hot Chili Peppers or something,” Melchiondo says. “But then we decided to go the opposite way—instead of making it nasty, we thought, ‘Let’s make it smooth.’ And when I think of smooth, I think of David Sanborn.”

Another ‘Umbrella’
Controversy Hasn’t Put A Dent In Digby’s Digital Sales
In the week following the publication of a widely circulated Wall Street Journal article that raised questions about Hollywood Records’ role in the development of 24-year-old Marié Digby’s grass-roots YouTube following, digital sales of Digby’s cover of Rihanna’s “Umbrella” jumped up slightly—by 4%—to 5,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Airplay for Digby’s version of “Umbrella,” almost exclusively on adult top 40, has increased in each of the last five weeks. The song received 132 spins in the most recent tabulated week, compared with 496 spins at the format for Rihanna’s version.

On Sept. 13 at Los Angeles’ Hotel Cafe, where the L.A.-based Digby is midway through a monthlong Tuesday night residency, the folk-pop songstress celebrated the release of a four-song digital EP. The disc includes “Umbrella,” her version of Linkin Park’s “What I’ve Done” and an original titled “Unfold,” which Hollywood senior VP of marketing Ken Bunt says will be the title track to Digby’s Tom Rothrock-produced full-length debut, due for release early next year.

Digby—who had previously responded to the Wall Street Journal article on her MySpace page—addressed the controversy in her show, calling the article “whurfal and untrue” and reiterating her position that Hollywood had nothing to do with her decision to upload footage of herself singing “Umbrella” to YouTube. Since it was posted in late May, the video has been viewed more than 1 million times. “I just made the video on a normal day,” Digby said at the Hotel Cafe. “I’m still shocked when I play shows and people show up.” After performing “Umbrella,” Digby said she felt as though the song had new meaning. (The singer declined to comment directly to Billboard.)

“The plan now is to work ‘Umbrella’ as a single,” Bunt says, “and focus on developing Marie’s career.” On Sept. 24, MTV’s “The Hills” will feature Digby’s song “Stupid For You,” and she’ll open for Matchbox Twenty Oct. 26 at the Wiltern in L.A. “The best thing about this campaign is that it’s been totally organic,” Bunt says. “That’s something everyone always says, but this is one of those times where it’s really true. This is Wall Street Journal contacted us. We weren’t involved until someone wanted to book her. That’s when we stepped in.”

DIGBY

RADIO LISTENERS MAY WANT LESS OF ‘GIMME MORE’
Britney Spears’ new single, “Gimme More” came roaring out of the gates at CHR/top 40 radio, debuting at No. 25 on Billboard sister publication Radio & Records’ format chart for the week ending Sept. 2 and endorsing Spears with the second-best start of her career. But that was before MTV’s Video Music Awards (VMAs).

“Gimme” scored Most Increased Plays at the format its first week out, ranking up 1,062 spins. Day by day, the song climbed from 225 plays at CHR/top 40 on Sept. 5 to 269 on Sept. 7.

Then came Spears’ awkward and generally panned performance Sept. 9 on the VMAs. The following day, “Gimme” got a jail, jumping to 336 spins as talk of Spears’ VMAs showing made the water cooler rounds. But on Sept. 11, “Gimme” took its first spill at radio, falling to 331 spins. Will Spears’ VMAs rendition ultimately undermine any momentum that her first single in three years was building?

A Zomba label rep says radio is getting both negative and positive calls about the song following the telecast, but some programmers expect the latter won’t last. “After the hilarious performance at the VMAs, there has been even more buzz about the song,” KROQ Tucson, Ariz., DJ Seth O’Brien says. “But I think this performance will be the running joke of Britney’s attempt at a comeback. I bet we will see a drop in interest [in “Gimme”] after a few days.” —Susan Visakowitz
JAMES BLUNT
All the Lost Souls
Producer: Tom Rothrock
Custard/Atlantic
Release Date: Sept. 18
James Blunt can do a lot in less than four minutes. Worldwide 2005 No. 1 “You’re Beautiful” (3:55), a love song so plaintive that it worked for anyone in any stage of infatuation, made the shaggy crooner a superstar. On this sophomore effort, Blunt doesn’t repeat the feat in a single song, but does something even better: He shows the abandon and confidence of a long-term artist, not just a one-hit wonder. Singing like James Mayo channeling Jeff Buckley in the middle of Abbey Road, each of Blunt’s songs are infused with love, loss and confusion, but are rendered so elegantly that it sounds like he’s got everything figured out. He wraps his head around mortality on “I’ll Take Everything” (3:05), begs for a moment of relief on “Give Me Love” (3:36) and declares his heartbeat on hit-to-be “I Really Want You” (3:29). There’s not a misstep throughout.——KM
WINNER BROS.
Lush and lovely, Knopfler’s fifth solo record doesn’t deviate from the formula set forth on his solo efforts, proving that he’s taken the maximal “if it ain’t broken, don’t fix it” to heart. Knopfler continues to craft lyrics that provide snapshots of simple, small moments; a dance lesson in a school gym on “Secondary Waltz,” an artist craving a new color for a painting on “Let It All Go.” While Knopfler has mostly moved away from the type of song he wrote while fronting Dire Straits, “Punish the Monkey” would not be out of place on the band’s classic album “Money for Nothing.” There’s really not a weak track on “Kill to Get Crimson,” making Knopfler one of those rare artists who can deliver an album from start to finish.——CH
MARK KNOPFLER
Kill to Get Crimson
Producers: Mark Knopfler, Guy Fletcher, Chuck Ainley

REBA MCEntIRE
Reba Duets
Producers: Tony Brown, Reba McEntire, Justin Timberlake, Dann Huff
MCA Nashville
Release Date: Sept. 18
This wonderfully diverse collection finds Reba McEntire teaming with everyone from Faith Hill to Don Henley to Justin Timberlake and Rascal Flatts. Highlights include the stone country, longing-for-home “Does the Wind Still Blow in Oklahoma,” which McEntire co-wrote with fellow Okie and duet partner Ronnie Dunn. The moving “Every Other Weekend,” with Kenny Chesney, speaks to the heartbreak of broken families, while a duet with Henley on “Break Each Other’s Hearts Again” finds two former lovers hooking up. First single “Because of You” pairs McEntire with Kelly Clarkson on the latter’s 2006 hit, and “Everyday People” with Carole King is an uplifting testament to making a difference. The most unexpected cut is McEntire’s intertwining with Timberlake on “The Only Promise That Remains”, one could picture the pair singing it at a writer’s night somewhere.——KT
THE DONNAS
Bitchin’
Producers: The Donnas. Jay Ruston
Purple Feather Records
Release Date: Sept. 18
If it were 1997, “Bitchin’” would be a major label’s wet dream. It’d be supported with big-budget videos played endlessly on “Heartbreaker’s Ball,” and with it, the girls would score a key tour with Poison on route to their own headlining paint. It being 2007, the girls’ awesomely ridiculous Sunset Strip-era gang vocals and ham- mer-on-interludes sound aren’t exactly going to deliver them to the keys to Madison Square Gar- den. While superbly recorded and at times a hoot to crank (Gargely for the shameless rips of Kiss, Joan Jett and Def Lepp- ard), “Bitchin’” is too light on hooks. Instead of three or four great potential singles, we get one in “Here for the Party” and a bunch that really try hard but ultimately fail to balance irony, nasty shredding and big chor- uses—no matter how much we closuremetalheads want them to succeed.——W.O.
SHOUT OUT LOUDS
Our Ill Wilts
Producer: Bjorn Yttling
Merge
Release Date: Sept. 11
There’s an implied “you can’t go home again” when Abortion’s “Struggling” estranged lover “don’t come back to Stockholm no more” on Shout Out Louds’ second album. That doesn’t apply to the Swedish quintet, however, which clearly draws strength from the Scandinavian home base where it works with producer Bjorn Yttling, who brings in Peter Bjorn & John bandmate John Eriksson and, on many of these 12 tracks, a full string section to add a kind of lush power to the group’s melodic rock. Such tracks as “Tonight I Have to Leave It,” “Hard Rain” and the particularly nasty “You Are Dreaming” evoke prime period Cure in their defiant celebration of heartbreak. Sunnier touches include the sprightly African guitar flavor of “South America,” and “Normandise,” which recalls PBL’s “Young Folks,” without the whistling.——GG

NEED TO BREATHE
The Heat
Producers: Need to Breathe. Rick Beato, Ed Roland
Atlantic/Word Records
Release Date: Aug. 28
Need to Breathe’s Atlantic debut, “Daylight,” was a gem filled with memorable, well- crafted songs and solid music- ship, and this sophomore set is another great rock album. Brothers Bo and Bear Rhinehart have penned an impressive collection filled with grit and grace. These guys know how to write thoughtful, literate lyrics with traditional rock hooks and Bear has a compelling voice that breathes (pardon the pun) life into the material. Among the album’s many highlights are “Restless.” “We Could Run Away,” and “Streets of Gold.” Word Records is distributing this set to Christian retail and tracks like the shimmering “Signatures of the Divine (Yahweh)” should further bolster the band’s profile there. But Need to Breathe shouldn’t be pigeonholed in any one market. Great songs, well performed, need to be enjoyed by everyone.——DEP

TICKLah
Ticklah vs. Axelrod
Producer: Ticklah
Easy Star
Release Date: Sept. 18
Mixologist Ticklah (Victor Axelrod) has been continued on >>p74

KT TUNSTALL
Drastic Fantastic
Producer: Steve Osborne
Virgin
Release Date: Sept. 18
If KT Tunstall was at all intimidated by the prospect of following up her platinum debut 2006 album “Eye to the Telescope,” it’s certainly not audible on the 11 tracks of “Drastic Fantastic.” Tunstall crushes the sophomore jinx under the stillette heels of the white boots she wears on the album cover, delivering a confi- dent and assured set that’s fuller and a touch more elec- tric than its predecessor. Tunstall sings at one point that “there’s no sense in traveling if we’ve already been that way,” and while “Drastic Fantastic” doesn’t reinvent her sound—the hand-clapping first single “Hold On” certainly harks back toward earlier hit “Suddenly I See”—it does move things forward, charging out of the box with the buoyant “Little Favours” and thrusting a defiant, girl-power chin out on “Hopeless” and “I Don’t Want You Now.” No drastic changes here, but “Fantastic” results nonetheless.——GG
working some reggae magic in his Brooklyn basement studio. Known for his involvement in projects with legends Easy Star All-Stars and Lily Allen, Ticklah offers his analog-based meditation on roots reggae on “Ticklah vs. Axelrod.” The album is a tasty amalgam of a wild array of influences, anchored by Ticklah’s adoration of the work of Lee “Scratch” Perry and King Tubby. Let’s talk inventive for a moment—cue Ticklah’s reggae-infused take on Eddie Money’s “Two Tickets to Paradise.” Then move on to the shadowy track “Two Face” and the haunting vocal arrangement voiced by Tamar-kali. In more of a purely dub mood, note the beautiful intricacies of “Nine Years” and “Nature Lovers Dub.” Finally, for a vivid roots-reggae flashback, “Pork Eater” is your tune.—PVP

JAZZ

CHRISTIAN SCOTT

Anthem

Producers: Christian Scott, Chris Dunn

Concord Jazz

Release Date: Aug. 28

Tickled senior Turk: Christian Scott’s impressive sophomore outing stands mighty as another compelling artistic response to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. The Crescent City native, whose family home was obliterated by the floodwaters, colors his melancholic material with murky hues, often opting to blow the dark-toned cornet to emphasize the anguish and sorrow. Unlike his “Unwind That” debut, where Scott danced tunes into motion, here he largely broods on his horns of woe, as on the slowly soulful “Like That,” graced by his bandmates’ muted electric guitar and Rhodes textures. Scott also sounds like a man on a mission. On the finale, “Anthem (Post Diluvial Adaptation),” where he wails in righteous anger with high notes that complement the rap poetry of condemnation by guest Brother J of X Clan. Even though a sober mood prevails, Scott brightens the picture with the hip-hop-inflected “Re:” and the invigorating “The 9”–DO

VITAL REISSUES

EMMILY LOUIS

Songbird: Rare Tracks and Forgotten Gems

Producers: various

Rhino

Release Date: Sept. 18

It has been nearly 40 years since Harris released her first solo album, nearly three dozen since she contributed to Gram Parsons’ groundbreaking “Grievous Angel” and three decades since she scored her first Grammy Award. For a 60-year-old artist, Harris has a lot to cover in just four CDs (and one DVD). This Rhino collection takes its first two discs to cover the general, chronological scheme of her career while the latter two explore her most notable and personally treasured country collaborations with Linda Ronstadt/Dolly Parton, George Jones and Waylon Jennings. There are also more contemporary tracks with Beck, Sheryl Crow and Mark Knopfler, among others. With 13 unreleased, rare tracks, serious fans can look forward to some wonderful new songs from this “Songbird,” a bountiful, but satisfyingly complete, introduction to one of America’s greatest vocalists.—KH

SINGLES

TOP

JORDIN SPARKS

Tattoo (3:53)

Producer: Stargate

Writers: A. Ghost, J. Dench, M. Eriksen, T. Hermansen

Publishers: various

Jive

So many American idols who won favor with voters because of sheer vocal potency ultimately betray that trust by entering the studio and recording music aiming to fill up the hip factor—and in the process, hiding their gifts behind junk production and throwaway tracks. How refreshing that this season winner Jordin Sparks kick-starts her career with a genuine showcase of her beautiful voice. Midtempo melodic keeper “Tattoo,” about the indelible emotions that remain after a fated relationship, is an ideal fit for a first fall hit, with crisp, mature instrumentation and a vocal that is ironically reminiscent of fellow “AI” hitmaker Kimberley Locke (a supreme compliment). A sling-shot launch that, for once, should live up to “AI” voter expectations. At this stage, the show needs that kind of cred.—CT

MIKA

(Big Girl) You Are Beautiful (4:06)

Producer: Greg Wells, Mika

Writers: Mika

Publishers: Mika Punch/Irving, BMI

Casablanca/Universal Republic

On the U.S. charts, Euro superstar Mika’s career stalled before it left the starting gate. While debut “Grace Kelly” should have been a No. 1 song, FM programmers were apparently unglued by the unknown. Thanks to more than a million new media, Mika still proved his potential with a solid, state-of-the-art single. Third single “(Big Girl) You Are Beautiful” is already garnering awesome exposure, featuring a playful campaign for ABC-TV hit series “Ugly Betty.” complete with customized lyric. Good for Mika, but another hard lesson for FM radio. Its misses are becoming more common, more glaring and making the age-old medium persistently less relevant. Perhaps it’s time to let some younger stars program the nation’s top 40s so that deserving artists like Mika shine across all platforms.—CT

COUNTRY

LITTLE BIG TOWN

I’m With the Band (3:57)

Producers: Wayne Kirkpatrick, Little Big Town

Writers: K. Fairchild, W. Kirkpatrick, K. Roads, P. Sweet, J. Westbrook

Publishers: various

Nasty

There is so much to love about Little Big Town, starting with incredible harmonies, songwriting chops and stellar stage presence. These four guys are proof that an act can bounce around Music Row and struggle for years, then find platinum-selling success—and on an indie label, at that. This single demonstrates why they are so hot. Those gorgeous harmonies make this record an aural feast, and the well-written lyrics give the audience a taste of the gypsy life of a musician from an insider’s perspective. Wayne Kirkpatrick’s skilled production helps the song swing and soar. It’s an exciting preview to the group’s new Equity disc, due this fall.—DEP

ROCK

ANN WILSON

Immigrant Song (3:43)

Producer: Ben Mink

Nelly

Wadysaname (4:08)

Producer: Nelle-U

Writers: R. Fleemstar, C. Haynes, R. Bennett

Publishers: various

Denny/ForRee/Universal Molown

With heavy hitters Kanye West and 50 Cent releasing albums Sept. 11, Nelly also fearlessly enters the fray via his own “Brass Knuckles.” With 40 million records sold and a collection of hits brighter than the grill he dons, “Wadysaname” is another sure-fire hit. With pimp juice flowing, lyrically he hopes to maximize his final hours in the city with an attractive lady. But instead of the typical male approach towards T&A, he plays it up for his beauty, elegance and career drive. A pleasant surprise for the ladies and definitely a breath of fresh air for a commercial record that packs more content and less dance instruction.—CP

BRITNEY SPEARS

Gimme More (4:15)

Producer: Nate “Danja” Hills

Writers: Danja, K. Hilton, J. Washington, M. Aracía

Publisher: not listed

Jive

Given Britney Spears’ persistent high profile, it matters little what the former pop princess releases to mark her return to musical pop culture—radio will indulge on curiosity alone. “Gimme More” certainly scratches the itch. Opening spoken line “It’s Britney, bitch,” followed by a giggle, proves she has the last laugh, no matter how controversial her public behavior during the past year. The uptempo dance track is a cutiesy if redundant jam in which the title is repeated no fewer than three dozen times in four minutes. Instantly most added at top 40, Spears is destined for a lofty chart debut. But the question remains: Will her less-than-stellar performance at the MTV Video Music Awards cripple long-term interest in the song and Britney’s determination to be a performer instead of a punch line?—CT

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

THE DOLLYROTS

Because I’m Awesome (3:20)

Producer: John Fields

Writers: The Dollyrots

Publisher: Dollyrots, BMI

Blackheart

Punk-poppers the Dollyrots are gaining momentum via modern millennium tools: branding, baby. When launched in 2002, the song “Feed Me. Pet Me” found its way into an ad for Hewlett Packard. New song that Joan Jett’s BlackHeart Records, the title track from second album “Because I’m Awesome” leads Kohl’s back-to-school campaign. Lead singer Kelly Ogden, guitarist/keyboards Luis Cavazas and drummer Chris Back have plenty of star quality to seduce teens. Imagine Avril with a giggle sense of humor. Lyrically, “Awesome” professes a lengthy laundry list of self-aggrandizing character metrics, as its garganlian cascade of guitars and percussion embrace the frenzied track. A group with gusto on the verge of discovery.—CT

www.americanradiohistory.com

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

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PICKS: A new release predicted to hit the top two of the chart in the corresponding format.

CRITICS’ CHOICE: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical fans. All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 798 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

LEGEND: * = A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical fans.
This week's Billboard 200 is a reminder of Labor Day weeks of the past. Once upon a time, labels tried to avoid putting out big releases on the Tuesday after a Monday holiday. Fearful that the holidays needed to get around the loss of Monday shipping, we did: a jam-packed street-date collision in the preceding weekend. In the past few years, record companies put such tradition aside, as recent Labor Day-week releases included the likes of Alan Jackson and Anita Baker in 2004 and the Rolling Stones in 2006, while last year’s No. 1, Beyoncé’s Audioslave and Iro Maidan. This year? Not so much, as the only bow in the top 10 belongs to rock band Chiodos, which had previously peaked at No. 164. The trio of new releases from A-list artists Kanye West, 50 Cent and Kenny Chesney has generated a lot of consumer interest press in the Sept. 11 release date, so that’s a positive (see story, page 9). But, one wonders if it might have been better for retail in the long run if one of those three had come to market a week earlier.

And, I’ll guarantee that some of the releases that will hit between Sept. 18 and the end of the year will have benefited from chart exposure this slow week would have yielded. Meanwhile, thank goodness for “High School Musical 2,” because without that soundtrack, the top 10 would have looked absolutely dreary.

Remember how freaked out music executives were when the “Dreamgirls” soundtrack scored No. 1 on weeks of fewer than 70,000? Imagine how those same folks would have reacted if the big chart’s crown went to an album with a week of fewer than 50,000.

Fact of the matter is, the holidays that symbolically signal the start and end of summer—Memorial Day and Labor Day—are never big weekends for music sales. Couple that natural tendency with a quiet release schedule, and you end up with Fergie in the runner-up chair with just 49,000 sold for “The Dutchess.” Good for Fergie, by the way, for being able to score her best Billboard 200 week almost a year after the album’s release. That’s what can happen if an album goes deeper than a couple of hits; she’s had four so far, including track No. 10 on The Billboard Hot 100 with another reaching No. 2.

That said, if she had reached the big chart’s summit with a number under 50,000, some executives would be in line for major therapy.

Meanwhile, the march of a traditionally slow week and a tepid release slate creates maximum chart heat for Chiodos, which grabs No. 2 with 39,000 sold. Even a week earlier, that same total would have left the band shy of the top 10.

**LET IT FLOW:** In part because Hastings Entertainment president John Maraventano and other NARM members clobbered them over the head at the trade group’s 2006 convention, when music sellers gathered at NARM’s May confab in Chicago, labels fell over each other to brag how freaked out each of them was spreading key releases throughout the year. So, 36 weeks into 2007, have record companies made good on that pledge? The answer: by a couple of measures, is yes—which might surprise you, since album sales are down by 14.5% this year.

Through the first sales frame of September, we have seen six albums by acts that had at least one prior platinum album on their resumes enter at No. 10 or better than last year’s same sales. Meanwhile, there have been 18 albums that have started at 200,000 or higher this year, compared with 17 in last year’s corresponding period. Before you pop open a bottle of the bubbly, here’s the downside. There were also half-million-plus starts in the same 2006 win low than we’ve seen this year. By this time last year, five albums had started at more than 500,000.

In chronological order, they were T.I.’s “King” (522,000), Rascal Flatts’ “Me and My Gang” (722,000), Tool’s “10,000 Days” (563,000), Dixie Chicks’ “Taking the Long Way” (526,000) and Beyoncé’s “B’Day” (541,000).

There should be two, maybe three more, to include in that group next week, but thus far only two have done so in 2007. Linkin Park’s “Minutes To Midnight” began at 623,000, while ‘Til High School Musical 2” opened at 6,500.
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**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**

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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.

www.americanradiohistory.com
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Data for week of SEPTEMBER 22, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 79

www.americanradiohistory.com
### Hot R&B/Pop Airplay Chart

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<td>2</td>
<td>Bonnie &amp; Clyde</td>
<td>DeBarge</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I Feel Love</td>
<td>Monica</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Birthday Song</td>
<td>Whitney Houston</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Tears in Heaven</td>
<td>George Michael</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood</td>
<td>Ciara</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The Power of Good Intent</td>
<td>Jennifer Hudson</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>My Heart Will Go On</td>
<td>Mariah Carey</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Come to Me</td>
<td>Whitney Houston</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>If I Were You</td>
<td>Jennifer Hudson</td>
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*Note: The chart includes the top 40 songs based on airplay data.*

### Adult R&B Chart

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<td>I'm Your Woman</td>
<td>John Legend</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Look Into Their Eyes</td>
<td>R. Kelly feat. Ashanti</td>
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<td>Kiss You Goodbye</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>I Feel Love</td>
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<td>Nelly feat. Enrique Iglesias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bonnie &amp; Clyde</td>
<td>DeBarge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I Feel Love</td>
<td>Monica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Birthday Song</td>
<td>Whitney Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tears in Heaven</td>
<td>George Michael</td>
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*Note: The chart includes the top 40 songs based on sales data.*

### Rhythm Airplay Chart

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shady</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Crank That (Soulja Boy)</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Got Money</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Can't Keep My Hands to Myself</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood</td>
<td>Ciara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Baby Don't Go</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Beautiful Girls</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Can't Let Her Go</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Me Love</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shady Is A 10</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
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*Note: The chart includes the top 40 songs based on airplay data.*

### HitPredictor

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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shady Is A 10</td>
<td>Lloyd feat. Sean Kingston</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Note: The chart includes the top 40 songs based on airplay data.*
BETWEEN THE BULLETS wiesen@billboard.com

Rascal Flatts makes its fastest trip to No. 1 on Hot Country Songs with "Take Me There," the lead single from the trio's "Still Feel Good" album, due Sept. 25. The track rises 3-1 in its 10th chart week, topping the 14 weeks it took "What Hurts the Most" to peak in April 2006. The new track is the eighth Rascal Flatts song to lead the list.

After bowing atop the chart last issue, Garth Brooks' "More Than a Memory" takes an expected tumble, falling to No. 4. As first-week airplay settles back to a more normal level, where the song goes from here depends on callout research and audience demand.

Still, the seven-spot decline is unusual for Hot Country Songs. "You Win My Love" by Shania Twain in May 1996 was the last No. 1 to make such a precipitous fall when it plummeted to No. 10. A little lower on the chart, unsolicited album play hurls a Kenny Chesney/George Strait duet onto the list at No. 47.

— Wade Jessen
Guerra's 20th entry on this chart shows ailing fans' own impressions from heavy local Coast airplay.

Shakira's entry at No. 48 with her 13th Hot Latin Songs entry and fourth No. 1 from her 2-mixed set "F;">7 music\Rt Vol. 1."
## Latin Airplay

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<td>TE VOY A PERDER</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<td>SI NOS QUEDARA POCO TIEMPO</td>
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<tr>
<td>OJALÁ PUDIERA BORRARSE</td>
<td>CORAZÓN</td>
<td>Universal Motown</td>
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<tr>
<td>TODO CAMBIO</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>OH LA LA (SONY BMG)</td>
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<td>NO ME QUERÍA</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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<td>QUE ME DES TU CARINO</td>
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<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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<td>LO MEJOR DE TU VIDA</td>
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<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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## Rhythm

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<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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<td>AYER LA V</td>
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## Regional Mexican

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<td>VINCENTE FERNANDEZ</td>
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<td>GRUPO MONTEZ DE DURANGO</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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<td>MANUEL MORALES &amp; LOS CANTINFLAS</td>
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<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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<td>BANDE ARRANGELA</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Focus/Columbia International, Latina, Chico</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOS CUATES DE SINALOA</td>
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<td>LOS HUMILDES VS. LA MIGRA</td>
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<td>EL CHAPO DE SINALOA</td>
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<td>LOS TERCEROS</td>
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Data for week of September 22, 2007 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data | 87
### Japan Singles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Song Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
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<tr>
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<td>CLAP &amp; LOVE WHY (FIRST VERSION)</td>
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### United Kingdom Singles

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<td>HEY THERE DELILAH</td>
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<td>HEY THERE I ARE</td>
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<td>SHE'S SO LOVELY</td>
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<td>THE WAY I ARE</td>
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### Germany Singles

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### France Singles

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<td>LOYD</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SHUT UP AND DRIVE</td>
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</tr>
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<td>LOVE TODAY</td>
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### Australia Singles

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### Canada Singles

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<td>EL SHOW MUST GO ON</td>
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<td>RELAX TAKING EASY</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>LEONARDO NO VIAJA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SHINE ON ME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>AL FINAL DE LA PALMERA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>AYO TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Mexico Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Song Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TIMBIRICHES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>RICARDO ARNO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ALEXANDER FERNANDEZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MIGUEL BOSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KARLA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LULLA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>EDITH MARQUEZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>NELLY FURTADO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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### Waloonia Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Song Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NELLY FURTADO</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Hungary Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Song Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PINOKKIO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BÉRÉCZKI ZOLTÁN &amp; SZINÉTÁR DORA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>VARIÁS ROMA CAFE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NELLY FURTADO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SOUNDS TRACK</td>
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### Billboard Canadian Hot 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist/Song Title</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE WAY I ARE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AYO TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>STRONGER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>LOYD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SHUT UP AND DRIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LOVE TODAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>WHEN YOU'RE GONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>AYO TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>WHEN YOU'RE GONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>STRONGER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>LOYD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>LOVE TODAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>WHEN YOU'RE GONE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>AYO TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>WHEN YOU'RE GONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Top Christian Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Week Released</th>
<th>Week On Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casting Crowns</td>
<td>Heart Of The Lion</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsong</td>
<td>Here I Am, Here I Stand</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Day</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Of Grace</td>
<td>Believe In Me</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

### Top Gospel Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Week Released</th>
<th>Week On Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darlene Zschech</td>
<td>Simple Worship</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark S anyone</td>
<td>When The World Falls Down</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel &amp; New Breed</td>
<td>The Very Best Of Praise &amp; Worship Volume 4</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Joel</td>
<td>Signs &amp; Miracles</td>
<td>Sparrow Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

### Top European Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Week Released</th>
<th>Week On Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marillion</td>
<td>Facia</td>
<td>Mch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Stripes</td>
<td>Live At Stubb's Austin, TX 1998</td>
<td>Domino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>Rubber Factory</td>
<td>Domino</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Light Orchestra</td>
<td>Out Of The Blue</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulp</td>
<td>Different Class</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Week Released</th>
<th>Week On Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marillion</td>
<td>Facia</td>
<td>Mch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Stripes</td>
<td>Live At Stubb's Austin, TX 1998</td>
<td>Domino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>Rubber Factory</td>
<td>Domino</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Light Orchestra</td>
<td>Out Of The Blue</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulp</td>
<td>Different Class</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Radio Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Week Released</th>
<th>Week On Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marillion</td>
<td>Facia</td>
<td>Mch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Stripes</td>
<td>Live At Stubb's Austin, TX 1998</td>
<td>Domino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>Rubber Factory</td>
<td>Domino</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Light Orchestra</td>
<td>Out Of The Blue</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulp</td>
<td>Different Class</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27/09/2007</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Earnings are exclusive to Nielsen SoundScan and are independently compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.

ALBUM CHARTS

Singles sales data compiled from a representative pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Singles data for R&B/hip-hop retail charts is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialize in those genres.

CHARTS LEGEND

- Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.
- Indicates album entered top 10 of The Billboard 200 and has been removed from No. 1 slot.

WHERE INCLUDED: This award indicates the title multi-platinum and/or gold by RIAA.

ALL SONGS: This award indicates the title multi-platinum and/or gold by RIAA.

- Indicates album included in Showtime's "The Road to El Dorado" release.
- Indicates album was released in 2007 and is "Holiday" eligible.

BALLADS: This award indicates the title was included in Showtime's "The Road to El Dorado" release.

- Indicates album included in Showtime's "The Road to El Dorado" release.
- Indicates album released in 2007 and is "Holiday" eligible.

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SINGLES SALES CHARTS

The top selling singles derived from a national sample of retail, mass merchant, and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/hip-hop Singles Sales, data is compiled from a national subset panel of core R&B/hip-hop retail stores.

SINGLES charting rules:
- Singles are included in the chart for 20 weeks and rank below No. 10. Titles are removed from the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 10 in audience, or provided that they have not yet played a single dance audience.

Singles are removed from Adult Contemporary if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 10. Singles are removed from the chart if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 10. In audience, or provided that they have not yet played a single dance audience.

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BROADCAST DATA SYSTEMS

Announcing This Month's Recipients of BDSCertified SPIN AWARDS

BDSCertified Spin Awards August 2007 Recipients:

800,000 SPINS
The Reason / Hoobastank / Island

700,000 SPINS
I'll Be / Edwin McCain / Atlantic
Name / Goo Goo Dolls / Warner Bros.

600,000 SPINS
All For You / Sister Hazel / Universal
Man! I Feel Like A Woman / Shania Twain / Mercury
My Maria / Brooks & Dunn / Arista Nashville

500,000 SPINS
Irreplaceable / Irreemplazable / Beyonce / Music World/Columbia
Live Like You Were Dying / Tim McGraw / Curb
You'll Think Of Me / Keith Urban / Capitol Nashville

400,000 SPINS
Ain't Nothing 'bout You / Brooks & Dunn / Arista Nashville
Carrying Your Love With Me / George Strait / MCA
Chasing Cars / Snow Patrol / Polydor/A4M/Interscope
Holiday / Green Day / Reprise

300,000 SPINS
Irreplaceable / Irreemplazable / Beyonce / Music World/Columbia
Live Like You Were Dying / Tim McGraw / Curb
You'll Think Of Me / Keith Urban / Capitol Nashville

200,000 SPINS
A Bay Bay / Hurricane Chris / Po' Grounder/RMG
Bartender / T-Pain Feat. Yung Joc / Konvict/Nappy Boy/Jive/Zomba
Breath / Breaking Benjamin / Hollywood

100,000 SPINS
Ain't Nothing 'bout You / Brooks & Dunn / Arista Nashville
Carrying Your Love With Me / George Strait / MCA
Chasing Cars / Snow Patrol / Polydor/A4M/Interscope
Irreplaceable / Irreemplazable / Beyonce / Music World/Columbia
Live Like You Were Dying / Tim McGraw / Curb
You'll Think Of Me / Keith Urban / Capitol Nashville

Beautiful Girls / Sean Kingston / Beluga Heights/Epic/Koch
Big Girls Don't Cry / Fergie / Will.I.Am/A&M/Interscope

Face Down / Red Jumpsuit Apparatus / Virgin
Falls On Me / Fuel / Epic
Hey There Delilah / Plain White T's / Fearless/Hollywood
Home / Daughtry / RCA/RMG
Party Like A Rockstar / Shop Boyz / On Deck/Universal Republic
Summer Love / Justin Timberlake / Jive/Zomba

Switch / Will Smith / Interscope

Tell Me Baby / Red Hot Chili Peppers / Warner Bros.
The Memory Remains / Metallica / Elektra/Atlantic
The Reason / Hoobastank / Island

Thanks Fr Th Mrrs / Fall Out Boy / Fuel By Ramen/Island/IDJMG
Vicarious / Tool / Tool Dissectional/Volcano/Zomba
Wait For You / Elliott Yamin / Hollywood
When I See U / Fantasia / J/IRMG
**GAMES/PRODUCTS**

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Board & Card Games, 2008 Calendar

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RECORD COMPANIES: Provident Label Group names Matt Ingle national promotions manager. He was a freelance music journalist.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment’s Commercial Music Group names Matti Raisinghani VP of business operations and special projects. She was VP of finance for the project management office of Sony BMG.

PUBLISHING: Classical music publisher Boosey & Hawkes promotes Ken Krasner to director of media licensing. He was manager of synchronization.

Cherry Lane Music Publishing in New York elevates Steve Cauchi to manager of catalog administration. He was team leader.

TOURING: AEG names Steve Eckerson GM of the 11,000-seat Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario, Calif. He was director of event sales and operations at Qwest Field in Seattle.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Assn. promotes Johanna Rees to senior program manager and Laura Connelly to director of presentations. Rees was program manager of presentations and special concerts, and Connelly was program manager of jazz and world music.

RETAIL: Bertelsmann names Fernando Carro, CEO of its Direct Group, as part of a reorganization of the division, which comprises book clubs, music clubs and e-commerce. Carro, who has held executive positions at Direct Group, will oversee the division’s European and Asian operations.

DIGITAL: The European Digital Media Assn. names Andrew Cecil president and Paloma Castedo secretary/acting VP. Cecil serves as head of public policy at Yahoo Europe, and Castro is director of public affairs at eBay.

RADIO: Country Radio Broadcasters names Kristen Dotson director of creative services. She most recently held a position in graphic design at Nashville-based Data Concepts. Dial Global ups Eileen Decker to president of sales. She was executive VP/director of sales.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM
Usher, Ludacris, Wyclef, Jean and Talib Kweli have joined a formidable lineup that also features Steve Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Carlos Santana, John Legend and Garth Brooks for the Viacom-sponsored Dream Concert Sept. 18 at New York’s Radio City Music Hall. Proceeds will benefit the building of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial in Washington, D.C. The King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation has already raised $82 million of the $100 million needed to erect the memorial.

THEY SHOOT, THEY SCORE
As part of the festivities surrounding this year’s VH1 Hip-Hop Honors, an “old school vs. new school” basketball game is set for Oct. 7 on the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University. Common, Lyfe Jennings, Missy, DJ Envy, DJ Unk, CL Smooth, Mathew Knowles, Saigon and Fatman Scoop are among the acts and executives set to hit the hardwood for the event, which will raise funds for the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club. Tickets are $10 and available via Ticketmaster.

INSIDE TRACK

PEN IS MIGHTIER
Sean “The Pen” Garrett may be in the studio with Usher (“We’ve been working in Canada and he’s in great spirits”), Mary J. Blige, Whitney Houston and Jennifer Hudson, but he’s equally excited about jetting to Europe this week to “insin his own album, on which the songwriter/producer will sing. “No body believes that I’m a singer,” he tells Tell with a laugh. “I can’t wait for people to hear my album. I’ve been taking the time to sculpture my little arms and get my ass off the thing.”

The album will be released before year’s end through Interscope on his B! Pencer Music label. He’s planning to develop new artists through his label as well, having signed two other acts he’s keeping under wraps for now. “I’m not planning to oversign and have too many artists,” Garrett says. “I just want to take my time and put great music out.”

LIFE IS ‘BEAUTIFUL’
In the wake of his hot collaboration with newcomer Sean Kingston (“Beautiful Girls”), songwriter/producer Jonathan “JR” Rotem is busy developing his Beluga Heights label and working on a reality show. “I’m about to sign two more acts to the label,” says Rotem, who de clined to divulge the acts’ identities as “it’s not official yet. I’m also develop ing a reality show based on me and the growing of the label. Sean’s record has been a really big thing for me. It’s a different kind of feel from when it’s your artist and you’ve put a lot of your blood, sweat and tears into it. To see that project come successful is really fulfilling.”

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**INSIDE TRACK**

**PRACTICE MAKES "PERFECT"**

Singer/songwriter and Timbaland protégé Keri Hilson (featured on the producer's R&B/pop crossover hit "The Way I Are"), says her Mosley Music Group solo debut album, "In a Perfect World," is coming soon. "That's all I can say. Nothing is printed in stone just yet. We're wrapping up the album [and] getting final touches on it from Timbaland and Polow Da Don," she tells Track. Noting that she is one of the writers of Britney Spears' comeback track "Gimme More," Hilson says it feels good to be on the other side after 10 years of penning songs. "I knew that if the right situation came my way, I would definitely take it," she says of releasing her own music. "It's a really humbling to know that people like my voice. It's a weird transition, but I like it."

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**Entertainment entertainment gathered for an intimate screening of "Into the Wild," directed by Sean Penn. Sept. 5 at Paramount's screening room in Times Square. Inspired by the true story of 24-year-old Chris McCandless, "Into the Wild" is about a man who chooses to leave behind a life of comfort and fame to explore the American wilderness. The film features a performance by actor Timothée Chalamet as Chris McCandless.**

**The latest of the breed tour featuring country-music icons Ray Price, Merle Haggard and Willie Nelson kicks off Aug. 29 at the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts in Bethel, N.Y., built on the site of the original Woodstock Music Festival. The venue is in the second season. It presented Nelson with a challenge to commemorate the performance. Nelson left a footbridge with Alan Seely, producer/chief of the venue and the Grey Foundation, who died in 2012 of leukemia.**

**The Country Music Hall of Fame's "Clever the French for the celebration featuring Garth Brooks' latest record-breaking accomplishment. The singer is the first artist to sell 500 million copies of a single.**

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**MTV Video Music Awards winner Gyms Clash celebrates after winning with co-hosts at the Belvedere Sky Villa at the Palms during the VMAs. From left are band members R&B singer Travis McCoy, Matt McGinley and Disasi Lummerto.**

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**Roll Out Boys' Pete Wentz poses with the star of Xbox's blockbuster video game "Halo." Sept. 8 in Las Vegas during "MTV's Video Music Awards weekend. The 3-D chest sculpture of the iconic hero Master Chief was unveiled at Madame Tussauds at the Venetian and is the "real" tile in the 25-year legacy of the franchise. A video game character was shimmered. Xbox launches the highly anticipated "Halo 3." Sept. 25. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MADAME TUSSAUDS.**

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**The County Music Hall of Fame's "Clever the French for the celebration featuring Garth Brooks' latest record-breaking accomplishment. The singer is the first artist to sell 500 million copies of a single.**

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**Recording Academy president/CEO Neil Portnow, left, and Recording Academy chairman of the board Jimmy Jam, right, flank honorees Quincy Jones and Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., at the annual Grammys on the Hill gala held Sept. 5 at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, D.C. The event lauds government officials and music leaders for their contributions to improving the music community.**

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**HILSON, left, and POLOW DA DON**
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