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PORTER

We will always love you
We know the mantra: Music consumption at an empirical level is at an all-time high; those younger than 24 years old don’t understand what a CD is [let alone how to record it]; they simply don’t pay for music; they trade tracks like baseball cards, they are the ratemen of today. The record business traditionally focused on its wholesale customers, without truly establishing relationships with the consumers. When the Internet empowered the consumer with myriad choices, the music industry was caught flat-footed. It’s been a decade since the Digital Millennium Copyright Act was enacted and the ubiquity of the Internet (which some said was a “passing fad” in 1996) is manifest. The concept embedded in the DMCA that copyright would protect works like music with alternative methods—such as timed-out licenses and temporary rights—and related concepts are now accepted reality.

With this as the backdrop, the industry still must focus on sustainable revenue. Is it the 360-degree model, where the record company shares ownership of the master but also takes a slice of publishing, touring, merchandising and even management in exchange for regular stipends? Is it using the masters as loss leaders in exchange for all the other revenue? Is it paid downloads only? Is it subscription revenue?

We just don’t know. It may be all of them, in one form or another. But ad-supported models seem quite promising. One friend of mine who is active in this end of the business says he’s seen three dozen separate, interesting ideas and variations on the ad-supported model. It’s a compelling model for many reasons. Americans are accustomed to paying for content by viewing ads. They do it daily on TV, on the over-the-air channels, on basic cable channels and even on premium channels, although those advertisements tend to promote the premium channel itself. They experience it daily when listening to the radio. They endure it when watching a musical artist perform on a tour that’s sponsored by a wireless phone company or a soft drink. It allows the tastemakers to continue consuming music with out cash payment. It protects the owners of copyright by generating revenue while we “promote the science of useful arts” as set out in the Constitution. It provides an incentive for owners of rights to make more music, to please more customers, to generate more revenue and to provide additional incentives for creators to create.

The challenges in building a business on this model are daunting. Determining the scope of rights to be granted and how the revenue will be generated and then allocated among owners is not an easy task. If the download is to be permanent, how can the owners of rights be paid a reasonable sum, when rates for ads (CPMs) are less than $50 per thousand? Will the owners of masters accept significantly less revenue per download but make it up in volume? If not, should minimums be applied? If no minimums can be applied, is an advance an appropriate resolution? What combination of these means can we use to create a viable business?

Then the publishing rights need to be addressed. In this country, that is a daunting challenge. Blanket licenses for these rights are not generally available. The larger issue of actually finding the owners with whom an agreement can be made is beyond the scope of this commentary, but it may loom large in any other issue in the digital music distribution era. Once they are identified, a rate must be negotiated, as the compulsory license may not apply or be acceptable to the user and the owner. There is no statutory rate under the current act, and the current proceedings before the Copyright Royalty Board will not be addressing rates for ad-supported models. The CRB decision will surely guide the parties seeking to make any proposed agreement. No one wants to be the creators of the new distribution models nor the owners of content should throw caution to the wind and ignore business realities to protect assets and minimize cost. The real challenge is the content owners’, to allow each of these models an opportunity for success. Allow the licenses, plant the seeds, nurture the garden, pull the weeds but allow the strong flowers to grow. Each of these models needs a chance of success. If we knew which model was the winner, we’d close it. Because we don’t know, we have to let them all grow and flourish.

The consumer demands choice. He demands content for no free and wants it immediately. Let’s embrace the reality of the early 21st century and give it to them. And with that, the garden is likely flourish.

Marc Jacobson is an attorney at Greenshine Trauring. He represents ad-supported Internet music distribution service companies including Spiralfrog, and was involved in the creation of the DMCA through lobbying, drafting and testimony before Congress. The views expressed in this article are his alone.
THE LATEST NEWS FROM

LATEST subscription
Charts
The distribution to video, concert
that the company.

GLOUD My Music App Launches
After a three-
month trial on Facebook, online music service
Gloud has
officially launched. Gloud offers the My
Music application that was built for Facebook, which
allows users to stream their entire
iTunes libraries and playlists from
various social networking sites.
The application has registered 1
million users, generating more
than 120 million streams in the past
three months, according to the
company.

THE CHARLATANS' 'FREE' EXPERIMENT
The Charlatans are continuing their experiment with
free digital content by launching an internet site
that allows fans to download
ringtones, full
songs, photos, video, news and
concert updates to their mobile
phones at no charge. The site is
the first step of a broad mobile
distribution and marketing plan,
according to the group's
management.

TOP CHART SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
The Official U.K. Charts Co.
will launch a new
weekly chart later this year which will
rank the tracks streamed and
downloaded most
often by online
users of U.K. music subscription
services. MSN's
MusicBox, MusicStation and
Napster U K and
among the
subscription services that will supply data.

FAMILY JEWEL
Scott Borchetta
launches another label

NONTOXIC
Britney's travails
don't hurt her sales

A SATISFIED MIND
Porter Wagoner,
1927-2007

MOZ-EL TOY
Morrissey winds down
his world tour

TREN'T'S TRIAL RUN
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As 'Guitar Hero III' And 'Rock Band' Face Off, The Labels Are The Winners

L
et the music play.

The Oct. 28 release of "Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock" struck the first chord in a highly anticipated battle of the bands between music-based videogames that will only get louder when rival "Rock Band" arrives Nov. 20.

Both games have captured the imagination of a music industry desperate for not only new sources of revenue but also for products that make music fans excited again. The games’ on-disc soundtracks (license 125 tracks between them) and music itself is treated as the star of each game—fans virtually play along using a variety of different instrument-based controllers and in-game prompts.

What’s more, both titles allow fans to buy and download additional tracks not included in the original game via an online store accessible directly from the game console, with record labels getting a cut of each. Prices and availability have not yet been announced for either game, but the downloadable songs for "Guitar Hero II" cost $5 for a pack of three—and moved more than 600,000 units (earning more than 2 million songs), according to Activision.

"Guitar Hero" is the incumbent here, sort of. The first two installments of the franchise sold a total of 6 million units, a bona fide blockbuster for any genre but particularly eyebrow-raising, considering the game’s publisher (RedOctane) and developer (Harmonix) were relatively niche players in the videogame industry.

Shortly after, Activision acquired RedOctane specifically to retain the rights to the franchise and has since put out an Xbox 360 version of "Guitar Hero II" as well as the newly launched "Guitar Hero III." Meanwhile, MTV Networks bought Harmonix and together developed "Rock Band," tapping Electronic Arts as the publisher.

Game industry analysts almost uniformly predict that "Guitar Hero" will sell more copies, due to its earlier release date and established franchise as well as its lower price (about $70). "Rock Band" costs $79.99 and broader availability. ("Rock Band" is limited to PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360, while "Guitar Hero" includes both platforms plus the popular Wii and older PlayStation 2.) But "Rock Band" isn’t making it easy. The same weekend that "Guitar Hero" launched, the backers of "Rock Band" set up demo stations in Best Buy stores nationwide, allowing shoppers to demo the game in-store well in advance of the release, and similar stations will appear in Wal-Mart soon. Just days later, MTV Networks finally announced the full list of songs to shop with the game.

Expect additional announcements in the coming weeks, from the unveiling of its music advisory board members—led by Billboard contributor "Little Steven" Van Zandt—to a series of TV ads aimed at MTV Networks’ various channels.

Meanwhile, Activision has given "Guitar Hero" the kind of prelaunch treatment expected from only the biggest blockbusters. It established an online community site where fans could preview tracks and get behind-the-scenes footage of rockers such as Slash and Tom Morello filming the motion capture for their in-game appearances. It placed all the music ever licensed for the entire franchise on iTunes in a special "Guitar Hero Essentials" section. It even commissioned the Sex Pistols to record a new version of "Anarchy in the U.K." exclusively for the game.

But no matter which sells the most this holiday season, the music industry will emerge as the biggest winner. Both games represent new platforms for how music is sold to fans. Labels can coordinate with the games’ developers so that the latter also release new music on a new album’s street date—or even in advance of it.

"We view this as not just a game title but a new entertainment platform," Harmonix CEO Alex Rigopulos says. "We’re already actively in discussions with record companies about releasing new game content day-and-date with major new releases."

"Rock Band" and "Guitar Hero" "give our artists’ music to a new generation of fans and offer longtime fans a whole new way to interact," says George White, senior VP of strategy and product development at Warner Music Group. "This is more than a way for us to promote our artists; it’s a promising new channel for the distribution of music."

If the platform proves successful, expect other game developers to get involved as well.

"I wouldn’t be surprised if some of the bigger names try to jump in some way," IGN analyst Nick Williams says. "I’m sure they’ll all be looking into developing their own spin on it."

And while rock has led the way so far, expect hip-hop, country and other genres to receive their own versions of these games, complete with controllers specific to each, as early as next year. If the current versions sell as well as expected...

"This is the beginning of music and film and TV becoming interactive versus linear forms of entertainment," EA head of music Steve Schnur says. "Interactive media is the only way media is going to be delivered in the future."
UPFRONT

TOURING BY MITCHELL PETERS

AFTER THE FIRE
As California Live Biz Gets Back On Track, Artists Pitch In To Help Relief Efforts

As firefighters have worked to contain the remaining wildfires in Southern California, concert promoters and venues are returning to business as usual. And a number of artists are already stepping up to assist in relief efforts.

"We've had two or three artist representatives call us about the possibility of some sort of benefit show," says Nick Masters, president of Southern California music for Live Nation. "But I prefer they wait until we have a clearer picture of what's going on down there, just so we're not in the way."

At press time, Gwen Stefani had announced she would donate more than $160,000 of her proceeds from her Oct. 30 concert at San Diego's Cox Arena to local charity the San Diego Foundation. The Eagles said they would give $50,000 to a fund for firefighters, which Los Angeles-based sports and entertainment presenter AEG would match. And rock act Linkin Park said it would contribute $50,000 to five victims, to be matched by flash memory card producer Sandisk. MovieStars has also pledged to aid victims. Other relief efforts are expected to follow.

More than a dozen wind-driven blazes broke out approximately two weeks ago, burning from the Mexican border to Los Angeles, forcing a reported half-million people to evacuate their homes. Los Angeles-based concert promoters AEG Live (and subsidiary Goldenvoice) and Nederland Concerts didn't report any concert cancellations or postponements, but most Live Nation shows in San Diego were affected.

A Jennifer Lopez/Marc Anthony concert, originally scheduled for Oct. 24 at Cox Arena, was moved to Nov. 10, while an Oct. 24 Jesus and Mary Chain show at San Diego's 4th & B was canceled. House of Blues San Diego gig by the Pink (Oct. 24) and Peter Frampton (Oct. 26) were canceled and/or postponed. A Velvet Revolver concert at Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Irvine, Calif., originally scheduled for Oct. 26, was rescheduled for Dec. 12 at Los Angeles' Gibson Amphitheatre.

Other San Diego venues affected by the fires included the Casbah, Belly Up Tavern and Soma. Though no venues reported any physical damage, promoters felt the financial blow from canceling and/or postponing a week's worth of concert dates. "It obviously hurt business," Masters says. "But only time will tell what the long term impact will be."

Masters says things could take a month to entirely return to normal, given traffic flow and clean-up needs. But Beth Bennett, director of marketing at events at Solana Beach's 600-capacity Belly Up Tavern, says that despite lost revenue from several concert postponements, the club is now "back on track and moving forward."

While many San Diego venues were evacuating and cancelling shows during the wildfires, Qualcomm Stadium, home to the NFL's San Diego Chargers, was welcoming people in. The approximately 70,000-capacity open-air stadium, owned and operated by the city of San Diego, served as a hub for evacuees, providing food and shelter.

"The fires were moving so fast that (city officials) felt they needed a site that could hold as many people as possible," Qualcomm Stadium GM Eric Stover says. "At our real, we had somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 per day."

Similarly, in May, when a brush fire broke out near Los Angeles' Greek Theatre, the 5,800-seat venue served as a command center for the Los Angeles County Fire Department. "It shows you the value of having structures like these," says Alex Hodges, COO of Nederlander Concerts, operator and manager of the Greek Theatre. "There are many days when [larger facilities] don't have actual events, so they become quick and good choices for command center purposes."

Meanwhile, as a concert promoter, Live Nation's Masters says there's no real way to prepare for such natural disasters at these. "It's like trying to prepare for an earthquake," he says. "You never know when they're going to break out or where ... I don't see any way to prepare other than using common sense."

LABELS BY KEN TUCKER

Valory Unveiled
Scott Borchetta Launches New Label: Jewel Leads Roster

Scott Borchetta, the president/CEO for Nashville-based independent Big Machine Records, is launching a second imprint, the Valory Music Co., and has signed Jewel to a multi-album deal. The label's name is a variation on the late June Carter Cash's birth name, Valerie June Carter.

Along with Jewel, whose album was produced by Big & Rich's John Rich and is expected in the spring, Valory is also home to Justin Moore and Jimmy Wayne. Moore has been in development, and Wayne moves over from the Big Machine roster. Like Big Machine, Valory will be distributed by Universal. Jewel, who previously recorded for Atlantic Records, has sold 14.8 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. She has scored seven top 10s on Billboard's Adult Top-40 chart, including two No. 1s, "Foolish Games" and "You Were Meant for Me."

A veteran promotion man, Borchetta launched Big Machine in September 2005. The label is home to rising star Taylor Swift, Trisha Yearwood and Jack Ingram, among others. It also handles promotion for Garth Brooks, whose current single "More Than a Memory" is one of four new tracks on his forthcoming "The Ultimate Hits" (Pearl). While the two labels will share marketing, publicity, creative and back-room services, Valory will have its own promotion department, which will be headed by veteran promoter Jon Loba, who exited Broken Bow Records in August.

Jewel, who has cut five of her six albums in Nashville, says country has always been in her plans. "If I had been discovered now, living in my car in San Diego, I think I would have been signed as a country act," she says. "I like a beginning, middle and end to my songs. That's pretty much just country radio now."

Though she lives in Texas with bull-riding star boyfriend Ty Murray, Jewel has spent a good bit of time in Nashville during the last few years. Earlier this year she hosted the country reality show "Nashville Star," and she has made a number of appearances at Muzik Mafia events.

After Surveying the label landscape, and even considering releasing her album directly to retail, she met with Borchetta. "Radio is still the best way to sell records, and I heard that he was a great radio promoter and tenacious," she says.

"She's just one of the best singer/songwriters in any genre," Borchetta says, adding that a move to country is "a natural progression for her."

Valory plans to have all three artists' music to radio in first-quarter 2008.
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Koch Records has signed a new licensing deal with Sesame Workshop for its Sesame Street audiobooks in the United States and Canada. Koch will release new and back catalog titles, including hits like "Rubber Duckie" and "Elmo's Song," that are associated with the long-running hit children's show.

Hear Music, the label started by Concord Music Group and Starbucks, has signed Hilary McRae as the company's first developing artist. While the full album will not be available until spring 2008, Starbucks customers were able to download McRae's song "Consider Me Gone" Nov. 1 as part of Starbucks Download of the Day program. The 21-year-old McRae is a graduate of Berklee School of Music and an accomplished songwriter/pianist.

Voodoo attendees at All-Time High
This year's ninth annual Voodoo Music Experience, held Oct. 26-28 at New Orleans' City Park, drew approximately 150,000 concertgoers, again breaking past attendance records, according to Stephen Rehage, the festival's founder and producer. Rehage tells Billboard that last year's event drew about 93,000 fans.

Questions
With Andrew Lack
By Ayala Ben-Yehuda

During a keynote Q&A at Billboard's Music & Money Symposium in March 2005, Sony BMG's then-CEO Andrew Lack proposed a solution to offset his company's declining music sales. "One of the great blessings of this [Sony-BMG] merger is that we have the resources and the talent and the artist roster to go after interesting ideas for television or for film that employ our artists," the former TV executive, and now Sony BMG chairman, told the industry.

Within months, Sony BMG launched a film and TV unit intended to make small starring vehicles for its artists that it can finance with or without a partner. The label began with such projects as "Ghosts of Cité Soleil," a documentary produced by and starring Wyclef Jean and released by ThinkFilm. "Feel the Noise," Sony BMG's first feature film, hit theaters nationwide Oct. 5. The movie stars Columbia artist Omari Hardwick as the surviving rapper from New York who ends up re-uniting with his father in Puerto Rico, where he becomes part of the reggaetoon scene and falls in love.

Also appearing in the movie are Sony artists Pras and reggaetooners Voliolo and Alexis & Fido. They are also on the Columbia/Sony Norte soundtrack, along with Calle 13, Wyclef Jean and Omari, whose single "Cut Off Time" features Epic artist Kat Deuna.

Lack spoke to Billboard in advance of the release of "Feel the Noise." The label is Sony BMG Music Entertainment, a division of Sony Pictures Entertainment.

1. What is your role with Sony BMG Film? I just try to be helpful. I see a lot of stuff, work closely with Sofia (Sondervan, Sony BMG senior VP of feature films). Our artists, because they know we have this unit, send me material; send me ideas and ask if we'd be interested.

2. Where does "Feel the Noise" fit in? The mission of the unit was to do just what this film has provided for us: deepen our relationship with some of our artists, find projects for them that give them another outlet, that build on their talents, and at the same time make a few dollars for the company. That simple. I hope we can achieve that with this film.

3. Is there a better return on investment from making music-oriented films as opposed to just selling music? I don't know that that's a rule of thumb you can apply ... We're in the small-picture business. That's very important to understand. We're not trying to get a big movie studio doing here ... We are what they would call a specialty division. We're a modest enterprise whose desire is to deepen our relationship with our new artists and our established roster and also use the tremendous catalog that Sony BMG is home to. So we look at ways to find opportunities for movies that might employ that music.

4. Is it the sub-label that puts out the soundtrack, or is it Sony BMG, the parent company, that sees the revenue from the films? That's the proposition.

5. Is the idea for the financing that it comes 100% from the parent company? So far, we are self-financing. We may reach out for partners as we go along. In this case for "Feel the Noise," we did it ourselves. We put up the money to make the movie, either alone or with a partner, and once we've covered those costs, whatever profits come in from the enterprise, we go back to the label group of the artist or whoever was most directly involved inside the record company.

6. So is it an incentive for the sub-labels to come up with projects? Yes, exactly right.

GET THE PICTURE
Labels Find Their Way Into The Film Business

Sony BMG chairman Andrew Lack says his label is in the "small-picture business. "It is our core business as a music entertainment company to work with our artists and expand their careers as best we can in all sorts of areas," Lack says.

Other labels have entered the film business in different ways. Interscope's Jimmy Iovine partnered with Eminem's manager Paul Rosenberg of Shady Records to produce the 2002 Universal Pictures-distributed "8 Mile," the duo later signed a three-year first-look feature deal with an outside company, Paramount Pictures/MTV Films. The latter deal produced the 50 Cent movie "Get Rich or Die Tryin';" the theatrical run of which grossed slightly less than $31 million domestically, according to Nielsen EDI. Its soundtrack sold 1.4 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Plans are now in the works for "Have Gun, Will Travel," starring Eminem; Interscope Television's projects have included the CBS series "Cane" and the "Pussycat Dolls" reality show from earlier this year.

Also in 2007, Warner Music Group launched Den of Thieves, a production unit to develop and create original programs for TV, DVD and mobile. It produced two episodes of "Diary," starring Gretchen Wilson and Martina McBride, for CMT this summer. The premieres of those shows reached a combined total of 188,000 homes and 247,000 viewers, according to Nielsen.

Ideally, labels expand into films, the label says should be "indebted for their first film or TV projects," veteran producer/music supervisor Jonathan McHugh says. Otherwise, McHugh adds, "any studio could just pick them off the line." McHugh, who produced the 2002 animated movie "Crossroads" with Zomba, Paramount and MTV Films, says international distributors for the film were selected "not based on who [gave] us the most money, but on who would give us the best promotion for [Speech]." referring to Speech's self-titled album, which has sold 1.3 million copies since its 2001 release, according to SoundScan. The "Crossroads" soundtrack has shifted 109,000 units.

Sony Music executive VP Lisa Ellis, who helped cast Omari in Sony BMG's first feature film, "Feel the Noise," says that a model wherein the label produces the film results in "less isolated agendas because we're the same company. ... It's less about doing something different [than] doing it with the right intentions and having the same interest level in the success of the project.

Sony BMG senior VP of feature films Sofia Sondervan says, "I identify a project, then I go to the labels and the managers of the artists that I know, and I ask, 'Do you have anyone that would be interested in this project?' Sometimes the artists come to us with projects too.

"Feel the Noise" was co-produced by Sony artist Jennifer Lopez's Nuyorican Productions, which brought the script to the label. It is distributed by Sony Pictures' TriStar. (The film and soundtrack did include key reggaetoon figures not signed to Sony, Vico C and Tego Calderon.)

At press time, "Feel the Noise" had grossed slightly less than $6 million domestically and was showing on 167 screens, though it opened on more than 1,000 screens, according to Nielsen EDI. Through Oct. 25, the soundtrack has sold 200,000 copies, according to SoundScan, and the single "Cut Off Time" had moved 6,000 downloads. The movie will come out on DVD in the States in first-quarter 2008.

"It performed as we had hoped and exceeded our distribution plan, with 1,000-plus opening screens, which is remarkable for a low-budget picture," Sondervan says. "We feel that we will probably make our return on our first project, so we are off to a good start."

Sony BMG is currently casting its artists in "Cadillac Records," directed by Danzel Martin, a film about Leonard Chess and the 1950s Chicago blues scene.
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SELL ME MORE

Britney's First-Week Sales On Track To Exceed Expectations

Things are looking up for Britney Spears—at least on the retail front.

In what could signal a reversal of fortune, the pop singer's "Blackout" album, which bowed Oct. 30, is living up to expectations and then some.

Based on first-day sales, "Blackout" is on track to sell between 125,000-150,000 units in its first week, estimates sales and distribution executives at three majors whose responsibilities include making such projections. That’s better than the 300,000 units that Zomba Records executives projected when they took orders for the album from retailers in October. Meanwhile, Nielsen SoundScan’s Building the Charts feature showed first-day sales at 124,000 units as of 5 p.m. Wednesday (see Over The Counter, page 55).

Spears’ latest album, "In the Zone," released in 2002, spawned 2.9 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. At Best Buy, senior entertainment officer Gary Arnold says, “Britney is doing better than we thought. Her first-day sales are at about 135% of our forecast,” which means 35% higher than expected.

Newbury Comics head of purchasing Carl Mello, meanwhile, says her album is doing “slightly better than I expected. I think the notoriety is helping sales because it is creating awareness about the album. The only instance I can think of when notoriety hurt is [with] Michael Jackson, but has Britney been as devilish as Michael?”

The question for Britney, he says, is whether sales hold up. Zomba senior VP of sales Bob Anderson says that, based on first-day sales, the album may outperform the label’s first-week expectations. What’s more, first-week sales might have been even better had the label not moved the release date up from Nov. 13 to thwart bootleggers and digital pirates. That date change caused Spears to miss out on a couple of major Sunday circulars, Anderson says.

The label has revised its sales projection upward to 330,000-350,000 units. “We have seen a major turn of the tide,” Anderson says. “The focus is on her personal life and on the music, and that’s where it is supposed to be.”

Sentiment within the music industry indeed seems to be swinging that way. “All of her agita, issues and notoriety have provided Spears with some executives thinking that people are feeling sorry for her and that she is going to have a big record,” one senior executive at a competing label says.

Trans World distribution manager for music Jerry Kanieler says he expected the album to do well, and that based on first-day sales, it is “The single, ‘Gimme More,’” is performing extremely well; she still has a fan base and they say the quality of the music is good; and she is getting a tremendous amount of press, not all of it good.” All of that, he says, could add up to a big record.

Between Spears’ album and the Backstreet Boys’ "Unbreakable" album, which also came out Oct. 30, “I feel like I am in a time warp,” Kanieler says. “But if this was 10 years ago,” he adds, “I would be looking up to sell a million units apiece in the first week.”

RADIO WANTS A ‘PIECE’ OF BRITNEY

Although “Gimme More,” the first single from Britney Spears’ new album “Blackout,” got off to a strong start at top 40 radio, the track ultimately stalled at No. 14 on the format’s chart, Pop 100 Airplay, and now stands at No. 25 after nine weeks.

Though speculation had swirled that Spears might be facing backlash for her now infamous performance at MTV’s Video Music Awards, PDs surveyed by Billboard are now offering consensus that the new album deserves radio’s support.

“I can’t understand how some stations waited and waited to play ‘Gimme More,’ ” top 40 WEZB New Orleans OM/PD Mike Kaplan says. “She’s by far the No. 1 most talked-about celebrity in the biz right now, [and she] continues to evolve her sound and hit the mark.”

Kaplan says, “Radio seems to want to write her off, but the smart programmers that stuck with ‘Gimme More’ got a hit record.”

Kaplan notes that the personal demons Spears seems to be struggling with only strengthen her appeal.

“Listeners are consuming media in new and different ways,” Peake adds. "Smart programmers are in tune to this and will use the relevance and celebrity of Britney as a competitive advantage."

Both the national and local radio campaigns for "Blackout" were planned to showcase “Blackout” as a strong album with multiple single-worth tracks. While Jive has not yet announced a second single, Peake and Kaplan are particularly enthusiastic about the potential of "Piece of Me," whose confrontational lyrics address the tabloid fascination with Spears’ every move.

Kaplan basks in the buzz, saying, “We’re all about pop culture and good music, and Britney is delivering.”

—SUSAN VISALKOWITZ

MILEPOSTS

BY WADE JESSEN and KEN TUCKER

Porter Wagoner, 80

The Grand Ole Opry Legend And Master Showman Was Also A Country Innovator

Porter Wagoner—TV pioneer, record producer, talent scout, enduring Grand Ole Opry icon and one of country music’s master showmen—died Oct. 28 of lung cancer while under hospice care in Nashville. He was 80.

With his hiseton-encrusted Nudie and Manuel stage suits and unpretentious country baritone singing style, Wagoner is perhaps best-known for his elevation of duet partner Dolly Parton to international stardom and his 50-year membership in the Opry. But Wagoner was also an agent of change. Early in his career, he was influential among his contemporaries, urging them to adopt TV-ready stage outfits and top-notch backing bands. In the ’70s he released the “psychdelic country” song “The Rubber Room.” He also raised eyebrows in Nashville when he escorted James Brown onto the Opry stage for a performance in 1979.

Grand Ole Opry V.P. Pete Fisher, who is charged with keeping the decades-old institution relevant, says he frequently turned to Wagoner for advice. "No idea was too outside the box for Porter," he says. "His musical career clearly shows that he was a person who understood the need to evolve and change with the times." After Wagoner was hospitalized and underwent surgery for an abdominal aneurysm in 2006, he emerged from the experience with a new lease on life, according to Fisher. “He wanted to use his time to make great music and solidify great relationships. He sure did make the best of it.”

In June, Wagoner released the critically acclaimed, Marty Stuart-produced "Wagonmaster" on Los Angeles-based Anti-Records, a label best-known for alternative artists Tom Waits and Neko Case.

Touring in support of the album, he opened for the White Stripes, who were fans of his music, in July at Madison Square Garden. "It was an honor," Wagoner says. "Not only was he a great singer, but a great presenter of so many other important country artists.


With a lanky frame comparable to Hank Williams’ but with decidedly more homespun songwriting sensibilities, Wagoner was cast by RCA as a more stable, yet similar version of the singer. Wagoner’s first taste of success came as a songwriter when Carl Smith struck pay dirt with "Trademark" in 1953. After no measurable success as an artist, RCA dropped Wagoner in 1954. Finishing the recordings himself, he quickly cut his first two top 10 hits, "Company’s Comin’" and "A Satisfied Mind." RCA scrambled to re-sign Wagoner, and he remained with the label until 1980.

He joined the WSM Grand Ole Opry cast in 1957 and became the show’s senior spokesman in his later years. “He was one of our leaders,” Fisher says. “He expected the best out of himself, out of me and out of others.”

His syndicated “The Porter Wagoner Show,” where he helped launch the careers of female stars including Parton, Jeanie Seely and Norma Jean, ran from 1960 to 1981. Wagoner eventually purchased his own records, as well as many for his female co-stars, and produced an R&B album for Joe Simon in 1980.

Wagoner was as well-known for such heartfelt (and often religious) recitations as “What Would You Do?” (If Jesus Came to Your House)” and "Old Doe Brown" and was famous for his roll in the mega-hits as "The Carroll County Accident," "Misery Loves Company" and his long string of duets with Parton. His hit output includes 81 singles on Hot Country Songs and 38 titles on Top Country Albums.

WAGONER at his Nashville home, inset, PARTON and WAGONER, circa 1970.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Warner Bros. Pictures acknowledges and regrets that a number of the music cues for the score of “300” were derived from music composed by Academy Award®-winning composer Elliot Goldenthal for the motion picture “Titus.”

Warner Bros. Pictures has great respect for Elliot, our longtime collaborator, and is pleased to have amicably resolved this matter.
Vincent Herbert Launches Streamline With Five New Acts

Interscope Records has signed a joint-venture agreement with a new imprint called Streamline Records, Billboard has learned. Under the terms of the agreement, Interscope will provide promotion, marketing and distribution for the multigenre label. Established and headed by producer/songwriter Vincent Herbert, Streamline has already signed five new acts.

Universal Music Group chairman/CEO Doug Morris says he first met Herbert through Universal Motown senior VP of A&R Jolene Cherry about four years ago. "Vincent has a tremendous eye for talent," Morris says. "He's going to be one of this industry's major A&R executives."

Herbert, a North Jersey native, signed and produced pop singer JoJo under the Da Family/Background/Universal banner. Still in his 20s, he has remixed and produced tracks for Aaliyah, Toni Braxton, Destiny's Child and Whitney Houston. He will continue collaborating with JoJo, who is slated to start work on her next album in January.

Herbert, who will sign, develop, produce and executive-produce Streamline's acts, is the label's sole staffer at this time.

“Creativity without barriers” is how he describes his operating philosophy for the imprint.

“People always want good music,” Herbert adds. “They want something they can play and live with beyond one or two songs.”

Based in Interscope's Santa Monica, Calif., headquarters, Streamline Records sports a diverse roster:

MISHON
The 14-year-old R&B singer/dancer/actor (last name Ratcliff) is familiar to teen viewers as Tay Sutton on ABC Family drama “Lincoln Heights.” He’s also in the Ben Stiller movie “The Heartbreak Kid.” Currently in the studio with producers the Underdogs, Mike City and London newcomer A.C., Los Angeles-based Mishon is represented on the YouTube/Myspace and mixtape circuit by the song “Excuse Me Mama.”

Mishon is the first artist that Streamline will roll out next year. His album is slated for first-quarter 2008.

LADY GAGA
Described as Gwen Stefani, Madonna and Fergie rolled into one, this 21-year-old alternative pop singer was also named one of BMI's most promising songwriters and performed on the Lollapalooza tour. Of Italian heritage, Lady Gaga is based in New York.

AMERICAN PIE
Think Spice Girls of the 21st century. Quintet members Preppy Pie, Wild Pie, Dixie Pie, Fashion Pie and Seforita Pie symbolize various ethnic backgrounds (African-American, Caucasian, Mexican-American and Filippino). Also based in Los Angeles, American Pie is prepping to enter the studio.

MADRIGAL
This 20-something quartet of singer/musicians (two females, two males) fuses classical with R&B, hip-hop, jazz and pop. The group's debut album is being helmed by well-known Latin industry producer Rudy Perez, who oversaw Christina Aguilera's and Beyoncé's Spanish-language albums. Collaborating songwriter/producers include the Underdogs and Babyface.

CLIQUE
Two sisters and their best friend (who are 10, 11 and 12 years old) make up this pop female trio, based in Atlantic City, N.J. One of the act's tracks was featured on the “Bratz” soundtrack.

Vincent Herbert, above, is starting the Streamline stable with five acts, including Clique, right.

MORRISSEY performing Oct. 22 at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York.

MORRISSEY's Marathon
Creatively Priced U.S. Dates Wrap

When it comes to enthusiasm for an artist, few fan bases are as steadfast as Morrissey's. To reward their loyalty, the former Smiths frontman has been on a nationwide tour that, when it wraps Nov. 8 in Miami, will have totaled 177 shows since March 13, 2006. Launched in Tulsa, Okla., the tour heralded the April 2006 release of “Ringleader of the Tormeniers” and was Morrissey’s first outing since 2004. It was initially set to end in the United Kingdom the following December. But from the start, the routing philosophy was to “take it to the people instead of having the people come to us,” according to Morrissey’s manager, Merck Mercuriadis.

Since U.S. stops accounted for only five of the first 97 shows, this principle guided the addition of 80 Live Nation-produced U.S. dates for 2007. Even in New York and Los Angeles, Morrissey’s camp opted for multiple nights at mid-size rooms, with an option custom-made for the obsessive nature of Morrissey fandom: a limited number of deep-discount “season tickets” for customers attending all nights. The two markets alone accounted for 90,000 tickets sold, according to booking agent Rick Roskin of Creative Artists Agency.

For 36 U.S. shows in other markets that were reported to Billboard, the highest gross was Oct. 1, Morrissey sold 89,676 tickets and grossed $4,888,731.

“We created a separate entrance line so [multipack holders] could get in early right up next to the stage, and they got a free poster,” says Kevin Morrow, president of Live Nation New York, which produced the five nights at Manhattan’s Hammerstein Ballroom in late October.

“We started out with 100 available, but they sold out so fast, we added another 100.” Multipacks included entrance to all five shows for $200, compared with $125 for five individual tickets.

The Hammerstein stint replaced a June 30 show at Madison Square Garden, one of six dates canceled this summer due to an illness that Mercuriadis says Morrissey developed in David Letterman’s infamous freezing studio during a June 25 taping.

When MSG wasn’t available for a makeup date, tour organizers brainstormed ways to do right by disappointed New York fans, and multiple nights in a smaller venue complemented the tour’s predominant strategy.

“He loves to play off the beaten track,” Mercuriadis says. “Playing Merriville, Ind., is at least as important to him as playing the major markets. It’s also what allows him to continue going for 18 months. Everything is a fresh experience.”

Mercuriadis says Morrissey, who was last signed to Sanctuary, will sign a new record deal to be announced soon. He will release two albums next year: a greatest-hits collection with two new songs and a new studio record produced by Jerry Finn, who was behind the boards for 2004’s “You Are the Quarry.”

And while Morrissey has tended to stay off the road for long periods, the upcoming break will last only a few months, given the high demand to see the man in person.

“He’ll be back out in January,” Mercuriadis says. “We’ll take a short break and then start again in March.”
Routing The Doubters

An Initiative Makes Inroads Despite The Scorn

The deeper the music industry's problems, the more gleeful and ridicule are directed at it. Légions of digerati, hipper-than-thou indie snobs and all-around know-it-alls seemingly have nothing better to do than opine on every single initiative—digital and physical—launched by a major label nowadays. After all, what else can they do? It's either that or count yet again the millions and millions of dollars each and every one of them has undoubtedly made by capitalizing on their keen foresight on how music's digitalization would unfold.

No matter what the majors try—digital rights management, MV1, ringles, download kiosks—rest assured they will soon be made aware of how idiotic their efforts are. But even beyond that, these virtual visionaries reserve their deepest scorn for any new strategy employed in the brick-and-mortar world.

Imagine how those nasty naysayers would react if the majors said they were going to sell digital-download cards dedicated to specific artists at retail stores. The first question the digerati would incredulously ask is: What kind of a maroon would buy a Maroon 5 digital album download card in a brick-and-mortar store when they can already buy an album download from any online store, and for a cheaper price, too?

Of course, such an initiative just happened, but it was engineered by Apple—the one company that the digerati would never doubt. Apple has placed iTunes Digital Release cards in Safe- way and at Starbucks, and early indications suggest that the move is working. Sony BMG Music Entertainment senior VP/MGM of U.S. digital sales Adam Mirabella reports that the iCard accounted for almost 6%, or nearly 6,000, of 95,000 in overall scans for Eddie Vedder's soundtrack to "Into the Wild."

Clearly, the reason why early results point to success is because "It's a nice entry point to purchase music digitally," says Mirabella, who adds that music consumers don't just live in the digital or the physical world, they move back and forth.

Mirabella knows what he is talking about, but since he works for a major, the doubting Thomases probably don't even hear him. But the young moderns clearly think well of Starbucks—and lo and behold, that chain's president of entertainment Ken Lombard says the iTunes Digital Release card is one aspect of the company's overall digital plan, which includes Song of the Day cards and Starbucks Plus Two gift cards. The former is given away daily to Starbucks customers to be redeemed at iTunes. The latter is a combination prepaid gift card/ frequent buyer card, which when registered with Starbucks triggers an e-mail to buyers with a code that allows them access two free track downloads of their choice at iTunes. "The beauty of the cards is it not only attracts those already involved with digital music but those just starting," Lombard says.

The iTunes Digital Release cards allow iTunes to leverage brick-and-mortar to drive traffic to its store. iTunes VP Eddy Cue says the cards are designed to be "cool and eye-catching," and iTunes works with retail to ensure in-store placement in strategic locations so that they can attract consumers, particularly when people are walking into stores not normally associated with music and they are not thinking about music. "We also designed the cards so that music fans will regard them as a collectible," Cue adds. "That's asking a lot, but it's a good thing to strive for."

The cards have more going for them than looks. Even traditional music merchandisers see the Digital Release album cards as a good gamble, if they prove to have legs. "What could be wrong? There's no cost, hardly any freight, you can merchandise a crapload of them in a small area, no shrinkage and no returns," one wholesale executive says. "Those ingredients will play well with retailers."

What's more, Cue points out that the iTunes Digital Release cards are "not limited to just music. We can do video, concerts, behind the scenes and even PDF files with text," he says.

Lest the digerati feel betrayed by Apple for thinking in a brick-and-mortar context, take heart in Cue's opening comments to Retail Track when interviewed about the album cards. "We certainly believe that everyone will be buying music digitally," Cue says. "It's only a matter of time," he says. "And we want it to happen faster."

For 24/7 retail news and analysis, see billboard.biz/retail.
Bola Cristalina

Reading The Latin Grammy Tea Leaves

Now that voting is closed for the Latin Grammy Awards, it's time for our annual predictions on who will win big this year. For those new to this column, our predictions are educated guesses, based on past voting behavior and industry trends. Write down your own, enjoy and let me know how we both do after Nov 8.

**RECORD OF THE YEAR**

For the first time in years, this will be a hotly contested award. Ricky Martin has gained respect with his "MTV Unplugged" set and "Tu Recuerdo" is a little jewel. "Bello Embustero" is a huge hit with two huge names (although, as a translated version of an English hit, it loses major points in my eyes). Juan Luis Guerra is this year's darling, and Miguel Bosé is this year's guru. Given its MTV format, the fact that it's a new song and its multilingual, national presence, Martin's "Tu Recuerdo" is favored.

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

If we're looking for all new material, perennial Latin Grammy favorite Alejandro Sanz will get it for "El Tren de los Momentos." But even he should be bested this year by labelmate Bosé's "Papito," whose new look at 30 years of hits gathered 30 superstars and earned him critical acclaim and commercial success. Glaringly absent from this mix, by the way, is Maná's "Amor Es Combatir."

**SONG OF THE YEAR**

A contest between Maná's "Labios Compartidos" and Guerra's "La Llave de Mi Corazon." The former's musical and lyrical complexity make it a standout in any crowd.

**BEST NEW ARTIST**

What, most of you don't know any of the contenders? Makes you wonder how these nominees made the cut. Within it, the only ones with an pan-regional name recognition are the very fine sibling duo Jesse & Joy. But Maná-based singer/songwriter Alejandro Alberti may be the surprise victor, thanks to a tireless marketing team that has done an excellent job on a shoestring budget.

**BEST FEMALE POP VOCAL ALBUM**

Although Ana Belén and Laura Pausini share stage, Pausini is an extraordinary singer and Latin Grammy favorite going through a particularly strong phase. She'll win for "Yo Canto," her set of Italian standards.

**BEST MALE POP VOCAL ALBUM**

Five fantastic albums, but the nod will go to Bosé for reasons already explained. Kudos to Colombia's Andres Cepeda for sneaking in here with the lovely "Para Amarte Mejor," out on indie FM.

**BEST URBAN MUSIC ALBUM**

Given that Grammy voters are allergic to huge commercial success (unless it's Shakira or Juanes), it seems unlikely Daddy Yankee will take this category with his newest one. Although Orishas could present an upset, the winner will be Calle 13's "Residente o Viscante," especially after nabbing best new artist last year.

**BEST ROCK SONG**

The winner should be Cuarteto de Nos' terrific and quirky "Yendo a Casa de Damían." But Gustavo Cerati's "La Exception" will win by default in a category of little-known contenders.

**PRODUCER OF THE YEAR**

These Grammy voters shunned Paulina Rubio this year, but also thumbed their noses at producer, composer, and arranger Cachorro Lopez. Go figure. This alone makes us think the vote will go to Bosé's producer, Carlos Jean, or Sebastian Krys for an eclectic year.
Canadian Royalties

Are Legal Rulings Consistent?

If anyone is expecting copyright tribunals around the world to make consistent rulings on digital rights and royalty rates, lay that thought to rest. While copyright laws are similar in many countries, there are enough nuances to throw any company's forecast of digital revenue and expenses off kilter once a tribunal actually sets rates. The latest example of this is the Copyright Board of Canada's decision on certain "communication" rights and rates.

In setting some rates earlier this month, the board also made a couple of legal rulings of significance. It held that: 1) transmitting a download from one computer to another is a communication to the public; and 2) offering 10-second and "previews" of music is "fair dealing" that does not require a license under certain circumstances.

The first ruling peaked my interest. At first glance, it seemed that the board was holding that downloading involves a performance of the composition. After all, this proceeding was brought by a performing rights organization, SOCAN, which administers performance rights for compositions from around the world that are protected by copyright in Canada. SOCAN pays royalties to its songwriter and publisher members and to performing rights organizations in other countries, like ASCAP, BMI and SESAC, which then pay their members.

Just last April, a U.S. federal judge in an ASCAP rate-setting proceeding held that transmitting a download is not a performance (Billboard.biz, April 25).

Specifically, the Canadian board held that transmission of a download over the Internet communicates the content of the download once the end user possesses the music, even if it is not used or heard.

"Attempts to distinguish streams from downloads are based on technical and legal assumptions that are incorrect," wrote the board, chaired by Justice William Vancise. "Both are broken down into packets and transmitted, on request, to each end user individually, in separate transmissions and at different times. Neither is audible during the communication. Both must be stored, even if only temporarily, before they can be played. The only difference is that a stream is programmed to appear to be erased as it is played, while a permanent download is not."

But here is where legal nuances come into play. Under U.S. copyright law, a mechanical or digital phonorecord delivery license covers the right to "reproduce" and "distribute" a composition. A performance license covers the right to "publicly perform" the recorded composition (e.g., streaming). Canadian law has reproduction and communication rights, but does not have a separate distribution right.

One could argue that the Canadian decision does not mean that a composition is performed during a download, but that the communication is instead akin to a distribution. Another could argue that Canada recognizes, in essence, a performance during a download. The ASCAP case was still in progress at press time.

The second ruling in Canada involves fair dealing, which is a legal concept similar (but not identical in definition) to fair use in the United States. In Canada, using copyrighted work for research or private study is not an infringement if certain conditions are met. If offering 10-second previews of music on Web sites is not considered copyright infringement, then the services would not have to license or pay royalties for previews.

In applying fair dealing to previews, the board decided that, in general, users who listen to previews are not infringing copyrights. It is also not an infringement for services to allow users to listen to previews to verify that they have purchased, or will purchase, the track or album; or for services to permit users to view and sample what is available online. Even though there may be users who use previews in some ways that would not be fair dealing (e.g., rip them to share with others), the services won't be liable for infringement as long as they can show that their own practices and policies for providing the previews were based in fair use.

Transmitting a download, the Canadian board ruled, is communication.

On allowing users to research the music and were deemed "fair."

The board then set royalties for the 1996-2006 period. That's right, for the last decade—not now or for the future. It's apparently taken more than a decade to sort out legal issues. And the decision only covers permanent downloads, temporary downloads and on-demand streams provided by services that charge a fee.

Incorporating a decision from March on reproduction rates, the board set rates for reproduction and communication rights combined at 12.2% of the price paid by the consumer or of revenue generated from a subscription price—less 10% of that 12.2% as a new format discount.

There's no news yet what past rates will be for podcasters, non-on-demand services like webcasters or ad-supported services. Also, there's no indication when current and future rates will be set for any digital use. So for anyone who hopes to generate revenue over the Internet in Canada, hold off on those forecasts. Companies still aren't able to forecast future digital revenue or expenses.

Knowledge is power, and contacts are all about how you can get that knowledge and use that power.

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**Rock Of Ages**

**Genre Continues To Dominate Top 50 Tours**

Through the end of September, the ranking of the top 50 tours shows a healthy and diverse mix of genres. Classic rock still dominates with 12 of the top 50 tours, and other genres are making a solid showing.

Eight country acts sit among the top 50. “Country music congregates to grow, and keeps ticket prices reasonable so many of the middle-American fans can go enjoy the live concert experience,” says Rob Beckham of the William Morris Agency, agent for Rascal Flatts and Brad Paisley. “I think ticket prices play a pivotal role in the success or the lack of success of all tours, not just country music tours.”

There are seven pop tours among the top 50, five Latin tours and five tours of TV show properties in the American Idol vein. Straight-up rock, however, checks in with nine, including packages like the Van Warped tour and Linkin Park’s Projekt Revolution, perennial country acts like Dave Matthews Band and Red Hot Chili Peppers, and hard-chargers like Nickelback, Tool and Incubus. Had Ozzfest charged for tickets, rock tours would have reached double digits amid the top 50.

Per usual, R&B/top-hop tours rank last in number, with Beyoncé (also included in the pop ranks for our purposes) and Rock and the Bells among the top 50. Depending on how strict one’s definitions would be, Justin Timberlake and Christina Aguilera could arguably be moved into the R&B category, but, outside of Rock and the Bells, rap is a no-show in the top 50.

So it’s good news for country, Latin, rock and pop; same old, same old for urban music. But one can’t blame a soft urban record-selling market for the lack of successful tours in the genre. At its peak, rap has never been a strong ticket-selling force, and the arguments as to why could fill the pages of this magazine.

Overall, touring is holding its own dollar-wise, no mean feat following a year in which the Rolling Stones, U2, Madonna, Bon Jovi and Barbra Streisand were spinning turnstiles. In fact, gross dollars reported to Billboard Boxscore through Sep. 30 are up $5,565,146,040 worldwide, compared with $2,504,061,919 at this point a year ago. Volume is up as well, with 12,262 shows reported worldwide, compared with 12,027 this time last year, lending credence to talk that touring traffic is up.

Not good is the ongoing trend of dollars out- pacing attendance. A year ago, attendance was at 46.5 million, compared with 46.2 million so far this year. That breaks down to 3,767 per show, compared with 3,865 in 2006.

**ROCKING THE ROCK:** At this writing, Bon Jovi is midway through a 10-night stand at the new Prudential Center in Newark, N.J., dubbed the Rock. Local press seemed unduly focused on the fact that the shows weren’t sold out in advance, but promoter AEG Live says they miss the point. “There were more than 140,000 tickets sold going into the 10-show run based on a 120-degree package that was first set up in the Rock on the Tuesday before the first show on Oct. 25,” says Randy Phillips, CEO of AEG Live, promoter for the shows and Bon Jovi’s world tour in 2008.

“Since there was not enough time for full-scale production rehearsals, we needed to be very conservative when we first built the available ticket profile for the new arena in terms of production kills, sightline obstructions and the facility holds for their chair level,” Phillips says. “We knew we were going to be releasing [seats] very late in the run. However, the results of Bon Jovi’s 10-show grand opening were beyond expectations.”

Phillips says the “real story” of the band’s run in Newark is much more important. “Jon and the band had 10 nights on hold at Madison Square Garden [in New York] and chose to open the Prudential Center in Newark instead.”

“He did it out of a sense of civic pride for his state and because of the economic impact the arena will have on downtown Newark, both in terms of jobs and attracting other investment. He is a social activist who puts his money where his mouth is. Incidentally, he would have made more money at the Garden and probably not had any reporters sniping at him.”

**BOXSCORE Concert Grosses**

- **GROSS/ARTIST(S)/Attindace/Promoter**
  - **6** $2,115,450 / U2 / Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Oct. 3 / 18,677 / Live Nation.
  - **7** $2,002,164 / Barbra Streisand / Prudential Center, Newark, N.J., Oct. 5 / 17,905 / The Next Adventure (A Live Nation Company).
  - **8** $1,852,912 / THE POLICE, FICTION PLANES / Prudential Center, Newark, N.J., Oct. 9 / 17,640 / Live Nation.
  - **9** $1,656,391 / BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND / WaMu Theatre, Seattle, Oct. 14 / 17,026 / Live Nation.
  - **10** $1,309,622 / TINA TURNER / Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Oct. 26 / 15,754 / House of Blues.
  - **12** $1,197,300 / TREASURE ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL: MODEST MOUSE & OTHERS / Treasure Island, San Francisco, Oct. 21 / 15,103 / Another Planet Entertainment.
  - **13** $973,305 / RASCAL FLATTS, JASON ALDEAN / Key Arena, Seattle, Oct. 19 / 14,877 / Live Nation.
  - **14** $892,900 / RASCAL FLATTS, JASON ALDEAN / Drover Center, Kansas City Mo., Oct. 25 / 14,496 / Live Nation.
  - **15** $800,553 / VENICE, FERNANDO, MARIBEL GUARDIA / Akister Arenas, Rosendal, Mexico, Oct. 21 / 13,916 / Live Nation.

**For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see billboard.biz/touring.**
T he mobile industry is looking for a new savior. With music, games and video flourishing as more niche applications, wireless operators now hope that mobile social networking services will convince users to spend more time on their phones—money on something other than just phone calls, and that they'll do so on a mass scale.

At the same time, content providers like record labels are looking to mobile social networking services to provide the spark needed to gouge the consumption of their mobile-specific products, much like how online networking has done for digital content.

On the surface, it seems like a no-brainer. Social networks are all about making and keeping connections with friends. Their ability to connect like-minded individuals and viral content discovery capabilities are well-documented promotional tools that the music industry now uses as a matter of course.

Mobile phones seem like a natural extension. Friends use them to talk, text, message, send photos and so on. "If there's one thing we know these devices do, it's they connect people," says Mark Donovan, VP at mobile tracking firm M:Metrics.

It's important to note that there are two applications of mobile social networking. One type allows users to post messages and view profiles on existing social networking services like MySpace and Facebook. The other is an entirely new social network made specifically for and limited to the mobile phone, such as Interacting, AirG and Bluepulse.

Creating a mobile interface for a site designed for PC access has long been a challenge for any Web site, and social networking sites are no exception. There is hope, however. More than 85% of the Web traffic on T-Mobile's popular Sidekick device is MySpace profiles. Meanwhile, this month, Facebook introduced a mobile version of its site designed with BlackBerry devices in mind.

The latter holds great potential as well. Mobile is a new format, and there is room for one company with the right mix of functionality and marketing to be the "MySpace of mobile," as those chasing that brass ring call it. Bluepulse, for instance, has achieved surprising success, considering that it has no carrier partnerships. Its mobile social networking application has been downloaded more than 40 million times, and this month, the company introduced a new version of the service that no longer requires a download at all. It has active users in more than 160 countries, and is getting more than 100 million page views per month.

But mobile social networking applications are nowhere near as popular as their online counterparts. According to M:Metrics data, only 3% of mobile subscribers use mobile social networking services. By way of comparison, 19% regularly send photos to others via their mobile phones.

Why? The limitations placed on mobile social networking activity. For the most part, mobile social networking services allow users to only share content they created themselves—such as camera phone photos and videos. Unlike online social networking services, mobile services don't let users share content like streaming music or TV clips. That kind of content generally is locked inside each carrier's content vaults, and even users on the same network won't see it.

So what are the differences? For instance, Sprint's music store is powered by technology from Groove Mobile, which includes a sharing feature that allows users to send other Sprint subscribers a link to sample a song they like, and even to buy it for them. But for some reason, Sprint has not activated that feature, letting alone made it available for third-party social networking services.

Which is too bad, because according to an Ipsos Insight study, social network users (aka "social networkers") are voracious consumers of digital media. Social networkers are significantly more likely to own technology, consume more digital entertainment and own more mobile devices," says Brian Cruckshank, executive VP/managing director of the company's technology and communications practice.

Using mobile social networks to recommend and promote content could result in a significant spike in mobile content sales. Record labels certainly seem to think so. Sony BMG worked with Bluepulse earlier this year to promote the new Avril Lavigne album. The singer made available various mobile assets, mostly photos and videos, to anyone who listed her as a "friend" on the service. Like MySpace, when one friend added Lavigne to his list, all other friends of that person could see the same.

T-Mobile, the only major national wireless operator lacking a full-song download service, says it won't roll one out until it can do so in a way that matches the social networking interface found on its other services.

"Downloading a song and just listening to it isn't that interesting to us," T-Mobile marketing manager David Sholokovs says. "Downloading it and sharing it with your friends is. It's about connecting.

You can call it a social network and dress it up like a social network, but unless it acts like a social network, it won't enjoy the same success as one.
Global

BY CHRISTIE ELIEZER

Mercury And Island Rising

Universal Oz Teams Famous Label Names With Local Talent

MELBOURNE—The latest additions to Universal Music Australia's label roster are a 60-year-old American and a 45-year-old Brit of Jamaican extraction.

The venerable Mercury and Island labels have been reinvented Down Under as domestic A&R sources.

Universal Australia has had some recent success in breaking domestic acts internationally, most notably with Wolfmother's 2005 self-titled debut album, which went top 30 in the United Kingdom and the United States. Announcing the new structure, Universal Music Group International Asia-Pacific president Max Hole said the company was confident it could develop and export "world-beaters" from Australia. "We already have the basis of a very strong artist roster there that we can expand upon," he said.

Following the success of such acts as Keith Urban, Jet and Wolfmother beyond Australia's shores, local execs are being driven to break more artists abroad. "Universal is looking at Australia to be a breeding ground for world-wide talent," says Sydney-based Peter Karpin, newly appointed head of Mercury Australia. Mercury and Island—headed by Michael Taylor—face the challenge of signing acts suitable for plugging into Universal's global network while boosting the local repertoire's share of sales domestically. Local talent claimed 35% of domestic sales in 2006, according to IFPI trade figures, up from 26% in 2005 and a hefty hike from the 10-year low of 18% in 1996. However, Universal depends more on international repertoire than other Aussie majors. Managing director George Ash, to whom Taylor and Karpin report, says local talent provides 15%-20% of Universal's sales, but he wants that doubled in the next few years. "Domestic acts have driven this market for the past three years," Ash says.

Other Aussie majors' domestic market share has increased directly on Universal's sales, but Sony BMG and EMI executives estimate their own domestic rosters will make up 40%-45% of their 2007 sales. Warner Music Australia president and chief executive Michael Parisi says the equivalent current figure is 44%. In recent years, Universal has augmented such successful direct signings as Grinspoon, Spiderbait and Vanessa Amorossi by taking equity stakes in such local labels as Modular Recordings and Wolfmother, the Avalanches and Dew Process (Powderfinger, Sarah Blasko).

Having individual label teams within a larger unit makes sense in a relatively small market like Australia. Wolfmother's Sydney-based manager John Watson says, "it allows the majors 'each to have smaller, more focused teams surrounding each release.' That, he says, "leads to more breakthroughs than in a sprawling setup where it's harder to tightly coordinate everyone's efforts." Australian-born Karpin signed such acts as Men at Work, Basia, Tina Arena and Powderfinger in a 29-year A&R career in Australia and the United Kingdom, including spells at Sony, EMI and Mushroom. He joined Universal in September from BMG Music Publishing Australia, where he was managing director.
LONDON—British music creators are proving they can synch and swim. Having identified opportunities for music spots in TV/film, advertising and computer games, U.K. labels body the BPI launched its first synch-based trade mission in 2005. This year, its third synch mission to Los Angeles (Oct. 30-Nov. 2), saw 30 U.K. independent music sector representatives hitting the world’s film and TV capital in search of transatlantic business.

Synch deals are becoming “crucial” revenue streams, says Matt Glover, international manager at the BPI, which estimates that it accounts for 18% of U.K. labels’ annual ancillary income. Synch is “a way for labels to get hard cash upfront for catalog or new artists,” Glover says.

“It’s been a big part of our business for the past two or three years,” says Steve Satterswaite, co-founder of Bristol, England-based dance label Hope Recordings, a participant in all three BPI missions. “It’s helped with the struggles in selling physical products.”

Satterswaite says that contacts made during previous BPI trips facilitated U.S. placements for Hope Recording acts in “CSI,” “Nip/Tuck,” a Nikon commercial and a trailer for “Borat.” He adds that while there are huge opportunities in the United States, he’s also enjoyed success internationally with placements on computer games and TV. Hope’s management division handles electronic artist Hyper, whose 2006 debut album “We Control”—a U.K. release on KIkwatt Records—has soundtracked U.K. and Japanese movie trailers, TV shows and ads.

“It was never going to be a big radio record,” Satterswaite says, “but it certainly overperformed for us. Synch was a major part of that.”

The BPI’s Glover cites the synched U.S. success of Sony BMG singer/songwriter Imogen Heap as “a textbook example” of a U.K. artist achieving revenue and real U.S. profile as “a direct result of placing the right synch.”

**TELEVISION GENERATION**

“Synchs are revenue earners in their own right,” IFPI chairman/CEO John Kennedy says, “but they tend to leverage record sales.” Snow Patrol’s “Chasing Cars” has been the highest-profile example of that, but a string of relatively unknown U.K. acts has also been taking advantage of music’s enduring symbolic relationship with the visual world. Billboard offers three names that you may not know, but whose music millions have already heard.

**UNKLE BOB**

Unsigned Scottish alternative rock act UNKLE BOB’s “Swans” was synched in a season-three episode of “Grey’s Anatomy.” The quintet has gone on to sell more than 25,000 downloads of the track, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It followed that up by placing “One by One” on “CSI: Miami,” airing Oct. 1 this year.

**BRANDLE BOY**

British singer/songwriter KATE WALSH’S “Your Song” appeared in a season-three episode of “Grey’s Anatomy.” The artist, who released her “Tim’s House” on her own Blueberry Pie label, subsequently attracted major-label attention; Verve is expected to handle a U.S. release in 2008.

**THE HEDRONS**

Scottish female hard rockers THE HEDRONS’ “Couldn’t Leave Her Alone” was placed in an episode of “The L Word.” The show aired in March, and the band’s U.K. label Measured Records licensed the band’s debut album, “One More Won’t Kill Us,” to U.S. indie 4 West on the back of the exposure. The Hedrons have since toured the U.S. three times.—LB

**GLOBAL NEWSLINE**

**MIT HONORS MINOGUE**

Kylie Minogue received the annual Music Industry Trust’s Award at a gala dinner on Oct. 29 at London’s Grosvenor House Hotel. The Australian is the first woman to be honored in the U.K. music business event’s 16-year history, and, at 39, is also the youngest recipient. Organizations said the event was the most heavily attended MIT dinner to date. The award recognizes outstanding contribution to the British music industry. In her citation, the Paroliphone artist was praised for “her universally acclaimed status as an icon of pop and style achieved over a 20-year career, which has seen her reinvent, experiment and inspire.” Previous MIT recipients include George Michael, Sir Elton John and the late Ahmet Ertegun. To date, the event has raised more than £3 million ($6 million) for its nominated charities Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy and the BRIT Trust.—Lars Brandle

**MTV’S ARABIAN NIGHTS**

MTV will launch what it claims is the first free-to-air youth entertainment and lifestyle channel serving the Middle East when MTV Arabia goes live Nov. 17. The service is available through the popular MTV Networks Middle East and international and Tecom Investments/Arab Media Group. The satellite-delivered channel will combine international and local productions with a 60/40 blend of international and Arabic music videos. It will operate under the umbrella of AMG’s TV broadcasting arm Arabian Television Network and will be available to a potential audience of 190 million viewers across the Arabic region.—Lars Brandle

Additional reporting by Tom Ferguson.

New Yorker Taylor held A&R posts at Maverick and Sony in the United States and Australia before becoming a freelance A&R exec. His résumé includes such names as Tim Easton, Inner Course, Delta Goodrem and CeCe Winans.

Retailers suggest recognition for the two famous labels’ new incarnations will depend on their signings, despite their heritage. Geoff Beson, owner of Sydney independent retailer Mall Music says, “In modern times, a brand name is only relevant with dance or metal labels where the music is specifically part of a lifestyle.”

Taylor’s first signing is 21-year-old Sydney-based singer/songwriter Gin Wigmore, with a debut release planned for 2008. Karpin says Mercury will sign four artists in its first year and two more in each of the next two years. His initial signing is 18-year-old Melbourne folk-punk singer/songwriter duo Dash & Will, whose debut EP is due in the first half of 2008. Dash & Will’s Melbourne-based producer and manager Barry Palmer says a number of labels showed interest, but the act opted for Mercury’s three-album deal because it offered greater artistic control.

Any added kudos of the Mercury name was “never an issue,” Taylor says. “Let’s face it,” he says with a grin, “every label with any heritage has its share of train wrecks as well as highs.”
Online Sites Excel In Harnessing Street Team Power

The last time I visited my parents, I came across a box of stickers, posters and T-shirts collecting dust in the basement. Bearing the names of long-forgotten mid-'90s indie bands, the goods were left over from my stint as a street teamer. Back in the day, there was no way to keep track of street teams and no real strategy to guide their work, hence, the pile of fliers gathering dust in Clackamas, Ore., rather than posted on a coffee shop wall in 1996.

In the last 10 years, street teams have evolved from an afterthought and a way to get some posters up for free to highly regimented system that demands accountability from young recruits. While indie bands and majors have jumped on the bandwagon, the limited marketing budgets that many indies have make the work of their unpaid fan army much more crucial.

Two Web sites, Reverbnation.com and Fancorps.com, seek to help emerging artists and independent labels manage their grassroots outreach efforts. Both sites are doing well, it seems.

Reverbnation announced two weeks ago that it is expanding to offer a new suite of services, and Fancorps inked a deal last month with MySpace Records to manage the street teams for its roster.

The sites take pains to set themselves apart from traditional guerrilla marketing firms like BeAGeek, which has volunteers shill sausage one week and novels the next. While fans who sign up through Reverbnation and Fancorps can choose to work with more than one act, both sites make it clear that volunteers will never be asked to work for bands they don't like.

"We want to involve the hardcore fan and create an exclusive community for our street teamers," says Gi Sanders, head of marketing and client relations at Fancorps.

The base level fans who sign up through the sites can expect to be given a variety of "missions"—anything from posting banners on social networking sites to giving CDs to their friends.

"The vast majority of the stuff we do through Reverbnation is online," says Jay Covino, head of Internet marketing for Florida-based Team Rock and Fancorps rock band Manchester Orchestra and uses Fancorps to coordinate his street team, says the site's emphasis on accountability has allowed him to assign more in-depth and quirky missions. "We do the usual MySpace banner stuff," he says, "but we've also been able to do things like get kids to organize screenings of our new tour documentary in local venues."

On the Fancorps site, street teamers communicate via message boards and upload photos of themselves hanging posters and maps of locations they've already hit.

"Aside from a sense of camaraderie and some nominal prizes, the fans don't get much else in the way of compensation for their time. What they do get is the ability to be seen as a tastemaker, according to Reverbnation president Lou Piazza. "They really dig the fact that they can turn people on to a band they love," he says.

All good feelings about spreading the love aside, do street teams have any real effect on the success of an indie band? Fancorps and Reverbnation offer metrics to measure click-throughs and listeners.

An open letter to Doug Morris:
It's been a while, Dougie—how you doing? I know this is not the place we would normally choose for a conversation, but I thought it might give you a chance to explain your idea of creating an alternative to the Apple iTunes Music Store for music distribution.

I know I'm a little slow, but I really don't get this subscription thing, and I don't think I'm alone with this. I guess it's based on the concept of "renting" music rather than buying it, right? A distinction I already got a problem with, but let's look at it.

As I understand it—granted, from what's been published in the media—a service called Total Music would require consumers to purchase a device that would then supply, at no additional cost, an unlimited amount of music for as long as the device lasts.

Every month, from every device purchased, $5 would be contributed from the purchase price to a fund to pay everybody who produced, performed and wrote the songs, and everyone subscribing to Total Music would get all their music for "free.

Now everybody agrees that Apple taking one-third of the 99 cents it charges per song is too high, but that does leave 70 cents for the record company, artist, writer, producer and publisher.

And yes, those songs are being sold, not rented.

Your way, if I've got this right, is if a consumer downloads 50 songs in a month (less than two per day), and my math is correct, that would mean 10 cents would be paid out per song for everybody involved in creating that record as opposed to Apple's 70 cents.

Big difference. Yeah, I know one's rented, one's bought. But assuming the device lasts a few years, what's the real difference?

I can see the Big Four record companies making money from this, but the price of the $5 per going to indexes will be infinitesimal.

And independent artists and songwriters? Forget about it! What am I missing here?

And maybe the thing that concerns me most about the idea of a subscription service is the psychological effect of people not directly paying for music.

Alright, call me hopeless old school, but I'm sorry, our music is the fruit of our labor, and until carpenters start giving away houses and Chery starts giving away Corvettes, I will expect and deserve to be paid.

And if people love the music, shouldn't they be happy to pay for it? And what about the psychological effect of "renting" music? Like it's not important enough to own? What gives?
Trent Reznor is tired of waiting to share new music with the rest of the world. Now, he's taking Saul Williams along for the wild ride of Internet-only distribution.

Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor has spent the last few years utilizing new methods to disseminate his music to fans. Past experiments have included hidden messages on T-shirts, "forgotten" USB drives in bathrooms containing copies of his last record, "Year Zero," and cryptic websites, all culminating in a prerelease free stream on the band's MySpace page.

Having just fulfilled his contract with longtime label Interscope, Reznor is upping the digital ante in tandem with activist/musician Saul Williams. Williams' Reznor-produced concept album, "The Fall of Niggy Tardust," which went live Oct. 31 via the Fader label, can be obtained in three download formats: 192 kbit/s MP3, 320 kbit/s MP3 and free Lossless audio codec.

The lower-quality MP3 is free, while the high-quality MP3 and FLAC cost $5. In a twist on the "name your own price" scheme that Radiohead employed for "In Rainbows," fans will not be allowed to pay more than $5 for "Niggy Tardust."

Billboard spoke to Reznor and Williams about the implications of their sales model, what this might mean for future Nine Inch Nails releases and why people should be willing to pay the same amount for music as they do for a good cup of coffee.

How did you decide to collaborate? What sort of time line was involved?

Trent Reznor: A couple of years ago, I came across a video from Saul's last record, and it was like a breath of fresh air. At the time, I was looking for tour support and hand-picked him to join us on the road. We became friends and decided to try recording a couple of tracks. It turned out to be an incredibly engrossing back-and-forth experience: I think there was a lot of mutual respect, and Saul really gave me a lot of confidence.

Saul Williams: The record started on the road, in hotels. We ended up doing three drafts. We did 14 tracks, and I sat with those for a few months. We came back, revisited them, did some more work and took another four months off, and then we got around to the final mixing.

Where in the process did you make the decision to pursue the "free or $5" distribution model?

Williams: Trent is very tech-savvy, and we both wanted to find a new model that would work for us. We'd been saying that it would be cool to give it away for free, but when Radiohead made their announcement, we decided to try something close to their model.

Reznor: Radiohead is one of my favorite bands, and if I were sitting on a finished Nine Inch Nails record right now, I would do exactly the same thing they’re doing. I think that right now, the music industry is between business models. I don’t know if this is the wave of the future.

I’m someone who spends a lot of time online, and I’d like to be sharing stolen music off the Web before. My main goal is to get my music out to as many people as possible in a way that feels pure and allows me to maintain my integrity [laughs].

How did you arrive at the $5 price for the higher-quality download?

Williams: Five bucks seemed pretty fair. It’s the cost of a good latte, so you’d hope people would pay that much for a good record.

Reznor: There was a lot of debate about it, especially after Radiohead happened. ‘Should we do the ‘pay what you wish’ model, or should we give it away outright?’ In the end, we decided to give people an opportunity to support the artist. In my mind, $5 is insultingly cheap for this album.

Trent, is this a trial run for a distribution model that you might pursue with forthcoming Nine Inch Nails records?

Reznor: I’m just going to wait and see how it goes with Saul’s record. Six months from now, who knows what kinds of models will be out there and what will have happened. I have tried a bunch of different things in the past and will continue to try out new strategies.

Saul, the album title is a play on David Bowie’s “The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust.” Is this record also a concept album?

And Trent, having worked with Bowie in the past, did you talk to him about this?

Reznor: I didn’t talk to Bowie about it. I was going to send him a copy of the record this morning, then the phone rang and I got distracted [laughs].

Williams: The name came about as a joke, but there is definitely a strong concept running through the record. I created the character because I felt like there was nothing that was speaking to my experience as an African-American. In the end, Niggy Tardust realizes that his only enemy is himself, and that he has to overcome the boundaries set before him in order to become liberated.

Do you have any indication of how many preorders have been placed for the album? And when you decided to use this sales model, did you consider the fact that it would mean the record wouldn’t be included on Billboard’s charts?

Reznor: We do know the pre-sale numbers, but we are keeping them a secret. As for [Nielsen] SoundScan, when I looked at the chart numbers for my last record, I was pretty positive that far more people heard it than actually bought it. I think chart positions are irrelevant; they’re not an accurate number of how many people are listening to a given artist.

Look, when file sharing started to proliferate, I was upset about it. I had worked so hard to make music and was pissed that people thought it was OK to just steal it. But at a certain point, I just accepted that this is the way things are, and kids aren’t going to spend money on an inferior product when they can just get it for free.

I just wanted to get the record out. I figure there are other revenue streams, and while I like being compensated for my work, I think it’s more important to get it out to the public. It was not my intention to try to start some campaign to destroy record labels—they’re doing a good enough job of it themselves. We’re not tasting the experience with ads or corporate tie-ins, and we’re letting the songs speak for themselves.

Trent, what are your plans for Nine Inch Nails in the next year?

Reznor: I have started working on new Nine Inch Nails material, and when it comes time to release it, I’ll do some careful analysis of how this model worked and go from there. Interscope will be putting out a Nine Inch Nails greatest-hits album and a remix record, both of which I hope to be involved in putting together. 

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KEYS TO SUCCESS
The Making Of A Career Artist
BY GAIL MITCHELL
PHOTOGRAPH BY THEIRRY LEGOUES
Tucked away within a bucolic Burbank, Calif., neighborhood is a maze of bungalows known as Glenwood Place Studios. It’s one of the front bungalows that I encounter Alicia Keys on a late afternoon in mid-September. She is in town to film an episode of the new CBS series “Cane” and put the finishing touches on her third studio album, “As I Am.” Seated on a soft fabric sofa, the jeans-clad singer is intently tapping away on a laptop computer. The quiet, calm setting belies the multitask-filled evening ahead. Once she wraps this Billboard interview, she’ll change clothes, don makeup and start prepping to film on-camera drops for BET. Right after that, Keys will conduct a private rehearsal with her band for the upcoming appearance on “Cane.”

It’s another day in the making of a career artist. Given an industry beset by downloading and diminished sales, tight radio playlists and one-hit ringtone wonders, a career artist is becoming a rare commodity. But never since Keys hit the ground running in 2001 with her first No. 1 J Records debut, “Songs in A Minor,” industry observers predicted the talented ingénue had staying power. The 27-year-old has definitely made a good head start. Within the last six years, Keys has scored two more No. 1 album debuts, 2003’s “The Diary of Alicia Keys” and 2005’s “Unplugged.” And expectations are high that “As I Am,” her third studio album (Nov. 13) will echo the success of its predecessors. Already, the first single, “No One,” has reached the top of the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop songs chart and has cracked the top five of The Billboard Hot 100.

And yet Keys, known for all-nighters in the studio or hopping from a film set by day to recording music at night, knows she needs to keep the promotion cycle under control. These days, Keys’ biggest challenge may be the volume of work it takes to reach her fans in international markets and on every platform. “We haven’t even crossed over to top 40 yet and even now, a month before the album, she’s been to Hong Kong, Paris, and London,” J Records executive VP Tom Corson says.

Indeed, Keys was run down a bit prior to the recording of “As I Am.” “It was a tough time over the past 12 months,” the singer says. “From the start, I’d been going nonstop [between touring, performing, awards shows, etc.] and it got to the point where I felt I was losing touch with my own feelings... I wouldn’t say no to anything. It wore me down, and I got depressed. I was smiling and going through the motions but inside I was becoming too guarded and closed.”

Sitting at her keyboard, the picture of calm, such troubles seem far away, however. “I’m feeling really excited because I can’t believe this music,” Keys says of “As I Am.” “I’m excited for other people to be connected to it.”

A STEP BACK

It took a tragedy to help Keys refocus her energies for this album. A close family member became ill, she says, and it put her career in perspective. “It helped me get back in touch with my real emotions,” Keys says. “I decided to take some time away from this... to spend time and visit with my relative, and from that I began to understand what had been troubling me, understanding life and God’s will... That and other experiences over the past year left me with music bursting out from me. That’s when I knew it was time to record.”

Keys says J Records never once pressured her to work. She began on her own time, and by June of this year she had roughly half-a-dozen songs that her label previewed for journalists, buyers and tastemakers.

As the title implies, “As I Am” offers more insight into Keys the artist. Deeper and more diverse in terms of its influences, the album, which reunited her with J Records A&R president Peter Edge, was born out of a period of self-reflection.

Songwriter Linda Perry, who worked with Keys on “As I Am,” says that she was told the growth from when she met Keys early in her career. “She was extremely guarded, and I though, ‘How sad that that had happened so fast.’ I reminded her of that when we talked this time and she told me, ‘I’ve worked that out.’”

Keys recently shot the video for her Prince-vibed second single, “Like You’ll Never See Me Again,” written and produced by Keys and her Krucial Keys Entertainment partner, Kerry “Krucial” Brothers. That ballad is set to bow in mid-October.

And she collaborated with Floetry’s Ambrosius on “Go Ahead,” a female empowerment anthem about remaining true to yourself despite what others do or think. “It’ll have you standing up and throwing a fist into the air,” Ambrosius says.

Keys becomes animated and a throaty laugh erupts when asked about “No One,” currently No. 4 on the Hot 100.

“This is one song that just wrote itself,” says Keys, who breaks into singing a snippet of the song. “A lot of the songs didn’t happen like that. It was one of the last songs I wrote. I needed to say this. It’s full force, classical yet vintage, desperate yet triumphant. I want people to feel my soul.”

The central idea of the song—that no one will shake Keys’ confidence in her feelings—is eminently relatable to music fans of every stripe. And that relatability, says those closest to the singer, has been key to the timeless appeal of her music. “Alicia speaks to the disenfranchised, those who don’t conform to the norm and whom no one understands,” Keys’ man-

IN THE STUDIO

Four Songwriters On Working With Alicia

It’s become a tradition: Alicia Keys’ latest project, “As I Am,” once again finds her working with longtime collaborator Kerry “Krucial” Brothers. Also back for a return engagement is fellow songwriter/producer Harold Lilly. But onboarding this time to help bring additional R&B/hip-hop, rock and funk fervor to Keys’ soul/pop/classical mix are Marsha Ambrosius, the songstress half of the duo Floetry; scribe Linda Perry (Gwen Stefani, Christina Aguilera, etc.), and message man John Mayer; Sean "the Pen" Garrett; A-list songwriter Mark Batson; and beat master Swizz Beatz.

So what’s it like to write with Keys? Perry, Ambrosius, Garrett and Batson share their experiences.

PERRY wrote three songs with Keys, including the album cuts “Thing About Love” and “Sure Looks Good To Me”: “We would talk for a while about what was going on in her head, about her travels overseas; I wanted to find out her mind-set. What you hope for is that your personalities connect. That’s where the best collaborations come from. Even if I’m a big fan, I can’t work with an artist if we don’t vibe well. With Alicia, it was like hanging with my sister. She was so comfortable and cool. When making music can be easy like that, you know you’re going in the right direction. Yet she’s also kind of a wild card. At any moment she could take a turn, and that’s what I like about her.”

AMBROSIUS also wrote three songs, with “Go Ahead” making it onto the album: “It’s inspiring to see how she gets down. Alicia has a message and is very methodical in her [songwriting] process. She thinks it through and doesn’t sleep until it’s right. That’s rare in this industry where many people are accustomed to things handed to them on a platter. She listens and is respectful of the art, I’m happy to work with someone who respects music as much as I do.”

BATSON co-wrote/co-produced “Go Ahead” and “I Need You”: “I’ve hung with her in the past but this was our first working experience together. It was an anomaly: two people who grew up in New York during early hip-hop but with this expensive classical piano background. We’re both big Wu Tang Clan fans, so we’d be singing one of their songs, then break into Chopin. It was unreal and fantastic at the same time. We’d walk into the room at 4 p.m. and still be making music at 9 a.m. the next morning. On ‘Go Ahead’ she broke out with something new on the keyboards: It’s kind of rock but still urban and real soulful. It goes great with her voice right now. And the horn arrangement on ‘I Need You’ is like wow. She used some nice, soft-sounding brass. Alicia is a perfectionist who’s willing to take those kinds of chances. I love it.”

—GM
BIG PLANS

Those closest to Keys have enjoyed watching the singer grow and cement her status as a transcendent star.

"When we started off, the focus used to be on me," says Robinson, who's known Keys since she was 14. "She wanted me to do all the talking. I've watched her grow from being a bit unsure into a confident, swaggering and knowledgeable woman who loves to learn and absorb."

Keys' style has transitioned over the years, from cornrows, scarves and blue jeans to a more sophisticated look: flowing, unfiltered trees and designer dresses. It's this more mature Keys that will be adorning newswires via covers of Las Vegas magazine, Ebony, Jet, Trace and others.

Those covers are part of a broad marketing strategy that is a team effort among Keys, manager Robinson, J Records VP of urban marketing Carolyn Williams and J Records' Corson.

"You can't rest on what's happened before," Corson says. "You have to work more strategically. When you have an artist dedicated to supporting her creative, you have to do the right thing versus everything."

Keys will benefit from the usual campaign components; in addition to her promotional travel, she will have a robust online presence, including Clear Channel's "Striped" and AOL album listening parties, as well as a series of webisodes being posted regularly on Keys' Web site, tracking the artist's activities leading up to the album's Nov. 13 release date.

"Yes, some of this is tried, true and efficient," Corson says. "But we're also trying to upgrade and make everything special."

This time around, for example, the Keys camp worked an unprecedented (for them) relationship with Conde Nast that came about because of Alicia's involvement with Fashion Rocks. In exchange for performances on CBS, artists received advertising packages in Conde Nast publications. "We've done this deal in the past, but this year was unprecedented in the value of the media package exceeding over $1 million for Alicia," Williams says.

Keys also has a relationship with Target that includes a customized TV spot and a premium edition of "As I Am," packaged with a special DVD. The half-hour DVD features three songs from a Keys concert at the Hollywood Bowl as well as other in-studio and exclusive content. A special fan pack, whose purchase automatically signs the buyer up to Keys' fan club, is also being serviced. The retailer has "been a big account for Alicia with respect to album sales percentages," Williams says.

The setup for "As I Am" actually got under way back in June with the start of sneak previews and a performance of the Perry co-written track "Thing About Love" in July on the Live Earth telecast. Subsequent TV appearances will include the "Tonight Show With Jay Leno," "The Jimmy Kimmel Show," BET's "Blueprint" and "The American Music Awards."

Significant linchpins in the TV campaign, however, are a guest spot on ABC's upcoming "Sasame Street" holiday special with Sheryl Crow and Jennifer Hudson, and a Nov. 1 appearance on Sundance's "iconoclasts" with Ruby Dee. On the latter, the young singer/songwriter/actress/activist bridges the generation gap in a one-on-one with actress/civil rights activist Dee, who spoke to some of the at-risk youth with whom Keys works as a board member of Frum Tha Ground Up and Teens in Motion. (Keys is also involved in Keep A Child Alive, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing anti-retroviral treatment to children and adults with HIV/AIDS in Africa. The organization's annual Black Ball fund-raiser was held in October, with Keys serving as co-host/musical director.)

There is also a Nov. 12 guest spot on the CBS show "Cane," which stars Jimmy Smits. "In "Cane," Keys says, she plays "good old me." Her "Cane" gig follows on the heels of film roles in two major releases this year: "The Nanny Diaries" and "Smokin' Aces," which she filmed while recording "As I Am." Noting that the "acting bug came from my mother, a theater actor," Keys says she was only 4 years old when she appeared on "The Cosby Show" as a friend of Rudy Huxtable.

She and Robinson are developing other film projects under their producing banner, Big Pita, LP Dita. "Pita, Robinson dryly notes that Pita is the acronym for "pain in the ass." Their projects include "Zora," a dramedy about a biracial 15-year-old whose coming-of-age issues were inspired by Keys' childhood. (The network is to be determined.) Also in the works is a show for MTV, a film with director F. Gary Gray ("Set It Off") and a remake of the 1958 comedy "Bell, Book & Candle." This last project is part of a BPL's multi-year production deal with Disney.

"Acting is a cool way to bring in multiple worlds the way others have," Keys notes. "Barbra Streisand, Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones; That's my mix."

And, the singer says, acting hasn't interfered with her music, though it has sometimes kept her working close to around the clock. "I prefer to keep them separate after "Smoking Aces, " Keys says. "While doing 'Smoking Aces,' I was [recording]. It was a 5 a.m. on the set, done by 4.5 p.m. Then it was on to the studio between 7 and 8 p.m. to do music. I'd tell myself, 'I've got to leave by 12 a.m. and get some sleep.' But I'd end up leaving by 1-1:30 a.m. It was hard." One of her biggest ambitions currently on the cinematic front is to make music for films.

"I am dying to do some scoring," Keys says. "When the right things come along, I'll do that for film and theater. I don't like to do what everybody else does [costume, perfume, etc.]. It has to be something I can do with a twist, something special. If it's something average, I don't want to do it." It's this approach that keeps Keys in a league of her own. And it's an approach Keys and those around her say will stay rooted in her singing.

"Twenty years from now, I see her still singing. I can't imagine her not singing," says Robinson, laughing but serious at the same time. "I can see her at 60 years old in Las Vegas with a champagne glass on top of her piano."

Keys echoes her manager's vision. "Years from now I'll still be doing something with music," she says. "I still believe that's my destiny. I see it as something that will be in my life forever. I hope to be remembered as someone who respects and loves music, who brought something fresh and inspiring. I want to be remembered as a person of the people who had a voice and used it like a Marvin Gaye or Curtis Mayfield."

WINNING NOTES

Nine-time Grammy Award winner Alicia Keys' three previous albums debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Singles-wise, the singer/songwriter has now placed nine top 10 titles on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and eight top 10s on The Billboard Hot 100, courtesy of her latest single, "No One."

THE TOP 10s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>HOT R&amp;B/HIP-HOP SONGS PEAK DATE</th>
<th>THE BILLBOARD 200 PEAK DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Fallin'&quot;</td>
<td>1 (weeks)</td>
<td>6,072,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A Woman's Worth&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,479,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Gangsta Lovin'&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>862,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You Don't Know My Name&quot;</td>
<td>1 (weeks)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;If I Ain't Got You&quot;</td>
<td>1 (weeks)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Diary&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My Boo&quot; (featuring Usher)</td>
<td>1 (weeks)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Unbreakable&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No One&quot;</td>
<td>10 (weeks)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: The Billboard 200 through Oct. 13, 2007; Nielsen SoundScan; Through the week ending Oct. 13, 2007; Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and The Billboard Hot 100 through the chart dated Nov. 10, 2007; The chart chart dated Nov. 10, 2007; www.americanradiohistory.com

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www.americanradiohistory.com
Once Again, The CMA Awards Bring Nashville's Music To A National Stage
By Ken Tucker

At the 2005 Country Music Assn. Awards in New York, when blue jean-wearing, blond-haired Horizon Award nominee Miranda Lambert literally heated up the stage and the audience with gas-powered flames, she was also kick-starting her career. A week after her fiery performance of "Kerosene" warmed those in the first few rows of Madison Square Garden, sales of her album of the same name jumped 103%—from 7,000 units prior to the awards to 14,000 units the week after the show. Despite only one top 15 hit at radio, she went on to sell 891,000 copies of her debut.

That same night, Lee Ann Womack, whose "There's More Where That Came From" album had gotten only a tepid reception at country radio, won in the CMAs' musical event, album and single of the year categories. In the next week, her sales increased 356%, from 2,000 per week before the show to 9,000 after she took home her statuette.

So on Nov. 7, when the 2007 CMAs air on ABC, there is more at stake than just the crystal trophies themselves.

Witnessed by tens of millions of viewers, winners and performers usually benefit from an album sales increase (see story, page 30) after appearing on the almost invariably high-rated show. Last year's installment, the first on ABC after more than three decades on CBS, placed first among households, total viewers and adults 18-49 for the night, according to Nielsen. It generated the network's largest audience and highest ratings for adults 18-49 since May 2006.

The show also regularly placed first for its night when it aired on CBS. The show's largest audience in recent years came in 2003, when 40 million people tuned in.

Viewership numbers have dipped a bit in recent years, along with network TV ratings in general—an estimated 32.3 million viewers watched at least some portion of the show in 2006, down from approximately 36 million viewers in 2005. But by bringing country music to the national stage—and especially to casual country fans, and during the critical fourth quarter—the show is still indispensable to Nashville's music industry.

"We are right and scratch and claw for those opportunities because there just aren't enough of them for our format," Equity Music Group president Mike Kraski says.

The show reaches a much broader audience than just the hardcore country listeners, Kraski believes. "You're dealing with once- and twice-a-year country music fans," he adds. "This is how they catch up on their music and you certainly want your act to be a part of that."

In 2007, for the first time in recent history, executive producer Walter Miller and producer Robert Deaton selected the acts that will appear on the show. In past years, a TV committee comprised of CMA board members made the decision. "We're paying Walter Miller and Robert Deaton to be the producers of the show," CMA COO Tommy Genovese says. "We felt that they needed more liberty to make the decisions that they felt would make the very best show." Genovese says the decision will be revisited after this year's event.

**2007's LINEUP**

In all, this year's edition will feature more than 20 performers. Acted up at press time include Jason Aldean, Rodney Atkins, Big & Rich, Brooks & Dunn, Kenny Chesney, Alison Kraus, Miranda Lambert, Little Big Town, Martina McBride, Brad Paisley, Kellie Pickler, George Strait, Sugarland, Taylor Swift, Josh Turner, Carrie Underwood and Keith Urban.

A couple of scheduled performers have fan bases that extend far beyond the country audience. Namely, the Eagles and Jamie Foxx. The Eagles have a single on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart, "How Long." And though the members are not generally known for awards show appearances, the band's Don Henley says the act is excited about playing.

"We don't normally do awards shows," Henley recently told Billboard. "But we're making an exception because we're honored and thrilled to have been accepted by country radio."

While acts best-known for success outside of country aren't included every time the

continued on >>p30
LOEB & LOEB
is honored to congratulate
our longtime friend and client

Vince Gill

on his induction into the
Country Music Hall of Fame.

We also congratulate all of our clients on their
2007 CMA Awards Nominations.

Vince Gill
Album of the Year, These Days
Musical Event of the Year, The Reason Why
with Alison Krauss

Carrie Underwood
Female Vocalist of the Year
Single of the Year, Before He Cheats
Music Video of the Year, Before He Cheats

The Dixie Chicks
Vocal Group of the Year

Mark Bright
Single of the Year, Producer; Before He Cheats

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from >>p28 show airs, the move also isn’t unprecedented. Bon Jovi performed its hit duet “Who Says You Can’t Go Home” with Sugarland’s Jennifer Nettles in 2005, for instance, and Jimmy Buffett was joined by a gaggle of country stars on “Hey, Good Lookin’” a year earlier. Last year, Sheryl Crow and Amy Grant joined Grant’s husband, Vince Gill for separate songs.

The fact that the Eagles decided to perform on the CMAs speaks volumes about the health and vitality of the country format as it’s perceived by people outside of it.” Universal Music Group Nashville (UMGN) chairman Luke Lewis says. “There’s no way it doesn’t help spike the ratings and shine a light on everyone else participating.” Genovese hopes Lewis is right. “We think they’ll provide a viewer that might not have tuned in if the Eagles hadn’t been on to tune in,” she says. “We try to build opportunities like that throughout the show.”

Fox, meanwhile, is a longtime friend of Rascal Flatts lead singer Gary LeVox. He will perform “She Goes All the Way” with the band, reprising his appearance on Rascal Flatts “Still Feels Good” album. The band will also perform

Taking a Leap

CMA Awards Exposure Almost Invariably Results in More Sales

In nearly every instance during the past 10 years, winning a major Country Music Assn. (CMA) Award—entertainer, male vocalist, female vocalist, album of the year, Horizon Award—means a sales increase the following week.

Some gains are huge—Lee Ann Womack’s win for album, musical event and single of the year in 2005 resulted in a 556% increase in sales one week later for her “There’s More Where That Came From” release. And some are more modest—sales of Trisha Yearwood’s “Songbook (A Collection of Hits)” increased 10% week to week when she picked up female vocalist honors in 1997.

Based on Nielsen SoundScan data from the last 10 years, winners can generally expect a mid-double-digit sales increase. Among recent Horizon Award winners, Brad Paisley had the biggest percentage increase when he won in 2000. “Who Needs Pictures,” which came out a year earlier, notched a 155% increase the week after he won. A Horizon Award nomination frequently results in an emerging act’s first nationwide prime-time TV exposure.

In those rare cases when an artist’s sales didn’t increase on the heels of a CMA Award victory, it could usually be attributed to the timing of a new release. For example, when LeAnn Rimes won the Horizon Award in 1997, her post-awards sales dropped 2% the next week. But since her “You Light Up My Life” collection had come out two weeks earlier, it’s likely that she would have suffered in the show’s much coveted opening slot. While two performances by one act is rare, it’s not unheard of, as last year’s pair of Gill performances—first with Crow and Brooks & Dunn, then later in the show with wife Grant and daughter Jett—best illustrate.

Another on-stage collaboration this year will feature Reba McEntire and LeAnn Rimes singing “When You Love Someone Like That,” a song that appears on both of their recent albums.

Garth Brooks—who is taking a brief respite from his self-imposed retirement and who will headline a series of shows with wife Trisha Yearwood at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, Mo.—will presumably be missing from this year’s show. He last appeared in 2005, performing a tribute to his late friend and major influence Chris LeDoux from Times Square. Meanwhile, Kid Rock—who recently signed with Nashville-based Vector Management and who charmed “Picture” on Hot Country Songs with Crow in 2003—will appear as a presenter. Jewel, whose next record was produced by Big & Rich’s John Rich, and her rodeo star boyfriend Ty Murray will also present, as will Crow. Other presenters include Dierks Bentley, Luke Bryan, Jason Michael Carroll, Bucky Covington, Montgomery Gentry, Blake Shelton, Gretchen Wilson and Dwight Yoakam.

In a first-time move, the show will feature multiple hosters. Sara Evans and Rimes, along with ACM stars James Denton, Kate Walsh and Kimberly Williams Paisley (Brad Paisley’s wife), will host segments of the three-hour broadcast. Brooks & Dunn have hosted the CMAs for the last three years following Gill’s unprecedented 12-year run as host. Genovese says the move is temporary and that the show will go back to its traditional hosting format soon. “We felt like we needed a break from having a host,” Genovese says. “It will be fun for us to have something different.”

As far as award nominations go, Brad Paisley and Strait lead the field with five each. Meanwhile, reigning entertainer of the year Chesney, Krauss and McBride each received four nominations. Rich, reigning female vocalist Underwood and three-time male vocalist Strait each scored three nods.

ABSENCE-MINDED

At least some of the talk leading into the awards show, however, is not about who is nominated, but rather who is not. Despite a record-breaking turn, for instance, Faith Hill and Tim McGraw are conspicuously absent. The second year of the McGraw/Hill Soul2Soul tour grossed more than $52 million, taking the two-summer total for the husband-and-wife co-headliners to more than $141 million, according to Billboard Boxscore. That’s enough to make it the top-grossing country tour ever.

RETAIL REACTION

Both performing on the CMA Awards and taking home trophies tends to boost sales. Below, performers whose sales showed the highest percentage gains one week after the 2006 show; and increases by 2006 winners of five major awards.

2006 PERFORMERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SALES WEEK BEFORE</th>
<th>SALES WEEK AFTER</th>
<th>% INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooks &amp; Dunn*</td>
<td>&quot;Hillbilly Deluxe&quot;</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>222%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Big Town</td>
<td>&quot;The Road to Here&quot;</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad Paisley*</td>
<td>&quot;Time Well Wasted&quot;</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gretchen Wilson</td>
<td>&quot;All Jacked Up&quot;</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
<td>&quot;Your Man&quot;</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2006 AWARD WINNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AWARD</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SALES WEEK BEFORE</th>
<th>SALES WEEK AFTER</th>
<th>% INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertainer of the Year</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood</td>
<td>&quot;Some Hearts&quot;</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Vocalist of the Year</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>&quot;Love, Pain &amp; the Whole Crazy Thing&quot;</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Album of the Year</td>
<td>Brad Paisley</td>
<td>&quot;Time Well Wasted&quot;</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Albums debuting this week, could also benefit from the exposure.

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WE PROUDLY CONGRATULATE OUR COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION AWARD NOMINEES

Entertainer of the Year
BRAD PAISLEY
RASCAL FLATTS

Vocal Group of the Year
RASCAL FLATTS

Vocal Duo of the Year
BIG & RICH
BROOKS & DUNN

Single of the Year
“Lost In This Moment”
BIG & RICH
“Ticks”
BRAD PAISLEY

Male Vocalist of the Year
BRAD PAISLEY
JOSH TURNER

Large Market Radio Personality
GERRY HOUSE
WSIX/NASHVILLE

Album of the Year
5TH GEAR
BRAD PAISLEY
LONG TRIP ALONE
DIERKS BENTLEY
THESE DAYS
VINCE GILL

Song of the Year
“Give It Away”
JAMEY JOHNSON
“Lost In This Moment”
JOHN RICH

Music Video of the Year
“Anyway”
ROBERT DEATON
GEORGE J. FLANIGEN IV
“Online”
BRAD PAISLEY

Musical Event of the Year
TRACY LAWRENCE
“Find Out Who Your Friends Are”
VINCE GILL
“The Reason Why”

NEW YORK BEVERLY HILLS LONDON NASHVILLE MIAMI BEACH SHANGHAI
While Hill's mixed success on the airplay charts—she scored one top 10 during the eligibility period, which ran from July 1, 2006, to June 30, 2007—probably kept her out of the CMAs' female vocalist category, McGraw scored two top fives during the period, including the No. 1 "Lust Dollar (Fly Away)." Hill isn't up for any awards this year while McGraw shares a nomination with Tracy Lawrence and Chesney in the musical event category for Lawrence's "Find Out Who Your Friends Are."

Toby Keith, who also had a strong year on the charts—two top fives and a top 15 during the eligibility period—and has one of the top 10 country tours so far this year, wasn't nominated. In fact, he hasn't had any nominations since 2005 and has won just twice.

Nominees and award winners are chosen during a three-part voting process that involves the 5,000-plus professional members of the CMA. The CMA staff does not participate in the voting.

A few feathers in Nashville's industry have been ruffled by another decision as well. 2007 is the first year that the Country Music Hall of Fame inductions will not take place on the awards show, although the inductees will attend and be acknowledged. Instead, the CMA inducted Gill, Mel Tillis and DJ/TV personality Ralph Emery Oct. 28.

CMT.com editorial director and former Billboard Nashville bureau chief Chet Flippo is among those who feel that the inductees deserve more. "Don't get me wrong. I love the Eagles' music and Fox is a marvelous talent, but... Fox and the Eagles did not build country music," he recently wrote in his Nashville Skyline column.

Tillis, Gill and Emery were hugely important in the rise of country. Dance with who brung you." But Genovese says that the CMA did not make the decision lightly. "Over the last few years we have felt that our Hall of Fame inductees have not gotten equal time on the CMA Awards and that's because, on a lot of levels, the CMA Awards are driven by ratings," she says. "Unfortunately, sometimes the business side of things gets intertwined with the heritage and the tradition and everything we're about."

Part of the move to move a ABC was fueled by a desire to attract a younger demographic for the show. "It became more apparent to us that the situation was not going to get any better in terms of getting equal and fair time for the inductees," Genovese says. A solution came from the CMA's artist relations committee, which is headed up by Brooks & Dunn's Kix Brooks. "They all felt strongly that this is a tremendous honor," she says, "and for it to be getting caught up in the TV world is just not fair."

With the CMA board's approval, the decision was made to combine the induction with the annual medal ceremony for Hall of Fame inductees. "It was the right thing to do," Genovese says. The medal ceremony is "so intimate and the inductees have the opportunity to thank their families, their friends and their industry colleagues who have helped them to get to that point in their careers." The medal ceremony and induction will air on cable channel GAC at a future date.

**SETTING THE STAGE**

Even if the Hall of Fame inductees aren't inducted on TV, the CMA Awards stage itself will aim for a classic country feel. An overhead space connecting both sides of the stage "looks like an old vintage train bridge," says production designer Bruce Rodgers of Tribe Inc., while the stage has the appearance of the wooden floor of an old church. The organic design of this setup, though, is anchored in huge video surfaces. "We've mixed video elements into the set," Rodgers says.

George Strait, above, and Brad Paisley, left, lead the CMA Awards field with five nominations each.

Rodgers, who has worked with Rascal Flatts and Madonna, among others, says this year's stage will be stage for the art. "Video imagery is driving everything these days," he says, noting that "pretty much everything about where the world of lighting and video is going is LED-driven."

Meanwhile, ABC Digital Media is producing a daily five-minute show that will be available on ABC.com and CMAWorld.com for the nine days prior to the CMA Awards. The show is hosted by former Miss Tennessee Ashley Etcher and artist Luke Bryan. "Countdown to Country Music's Biggest Night" will cover the events that take place during the days leading up to the awards (see story, this page). It will also feature interviews with artists and coverage of the events surrounding the awards.

On the day of the show, ABC.com will stream a three-hour live "Red Carpet" show leading up to show time. "Red Carpet" will also be simulcast live on ABC Mobile, a network first.

American Airlines, Chevrolet and Mary Kay Cosmetics are among the brands involved with the awards and the events surrounding them.

The CMA will also hold a marketing summit in the days leading up the awards that will allow representatives from Walt Disney Studios, Yankee Candle and Procter & Gamble, among other companies, to learn more about country music and the branding opportunities associated with the genre and lifestyle. 2007, meanwhile, will mark the third straight year the event will take place in a arena setting. After years at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House, which seats roughly 4,400, the CMA took the show to New York's Madison Square Garden in 2005 and then last year to what was then known as the Gaylord Entertainment Center and is now called the Sommet Center in downtown Nashville. Both arena venues, Nashville and New York, seat approximately 10,500 for the show.

The set will feature two performance areas separated by what Rodgers calls "the winners' area" in the middle. The stage will also feature a "thrust" that will allow performers to walk out and be surrounded on three sides by the audience. And when they do, they'll be setting the stage for future sales.

"I don't know any artist, manager or label that doesn't try go out of their ways to obtain an opportunity to perform on the show," UMGN's Lewis says. "Everybody wants to get one of those slots."

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield.

**MUSIC CITY'S BUSY WEEK**

In Nashville, The Awards Are Only The Tip Of The Iceberg

Beginning Nov. 5, the Country Music Assn. starts ramping up to the CMA Awards. The public events and concerts are designed to expand the CMAs' footprint beyond the industry to the fans.

- No. 1 Nov. 5, Rodney Crowell, songwriter Bob DiPiero, Vince Gill, Jimi Hendrix, late publisher/songwriter Buddy Killen and Barbara Mandrell will be inducted into the Music City Walk of Fame.

- Later that day, American Airlines and Dr Pepper will sponsor Music on the Horizon, a ticketed concert featuring newcomers Laura Bryna, Crossin Dixon, Jennifer Hanson, Jypsy, Lady Antebellum, James Otto and Chuck Wicks.

- SESAC (Nov. 5) and BMI (Nov. 6) will also host their annual Nashville Music Awards and Country Awards, respectively, in the days leading up to the CMAs.

- Major sponsor Chevy will present a free concert with Emerson Drive and Phil Vassar Nov. 6 outside the Sommet Center.

- Later that night Clay Walker and Colin Raye are among those who will appear at the Grand Ole Opry at the historic Ryman Auditorium.

- Also on Nov. 6, Jo Dee Messina will headline the Habitat for Humanity Concert of Appreciation presented by Greased Lightning.

- Another ticketed event, the CMA Songwriters Series, will be held at the Hard Rock Cafe. Performers will include Brett James, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Rivers Rutherford and Victoria Shaw.

- On Nov. 7, ABC's "Good Morning America" will be in Nashville and feature a performance by Big & Rich outside the Sommet Center.

- During the hours leading up to the CMAs themselves, contest winners will wait for the arrival of their favorite stars while sitting in the Gibson Guitar Red Carpet Bleachers.

- KT
Few artists have left a more creative footprint on America’s musical landscape than Charlie Daniels. During his 50-year career, he’s scored hits on the rock, country and Christian charts, and counts Grammy Awards, Country Music Assn. (CMA) honors and Dove Awards from the Gospel Music Assn. (GMA) among his many accolades. He was one of the first artists to launch his own label, Blue Hat Records, and he pioneered an exclusive agreement with Wal-Mart well before Garth Brooks or the Eagles.

He turned 71 Oct. 28 and tours more than artists half his age. As a recording artist, he continues exploring a variety of musical terrain, from gospel to bluegrass to country to blues, and he’s a primary architect of the Southern rock sound.

Earlier this year, he issued “Live From Iraq,” and his Oct. 9 release, “Deuces,” is his 17th project on Blue Hat since the label bowed in 1997. “Deuces” features Daniels and his famed Charlie Daniels Band duetting with Gretchen Wilson, Vince Gill, Travis Tritt, Brenda Lee, Brooks & Dunn, Brad Paisley, Dolly Parton, the Del McCoury Band and Hootie & the Blowfish’s Darius Rucker, among others.

“When I got the call from Charlie to be a part of ‘Deuces,’ I was ecstatic because I am a fan of Charlie’s—not just his music but of him as a person,” says Paisley, who created an instrumental with Daniels, “Jammin’ for Stevie,” in honor of the late Stevie Ray Vaughan. “I try to pattern myself after him in some ways. He comes at his career from a totally musical standpoint, always wanting to just play music. It doesn’t matter the genre or how many people are in a room— he just wants to play. He’s a true artist and a living legend.”

Unfortunately, I’ve been around Charlie Daniels. I feel like I’m hanging out with family,” says Wilson, who recorded the song “Jackson” with Daniels. “I’ve loved this song ever since I heard Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash’s original version, and I immediately said yes when Charlie asked me to sing it with him. Charlie has had some sort of influence on every country act and probably a lot of rock acts on the charts right now—both on- and offstage. He’s always given back to the people.”

Daniels’ list of accomplishments is long and varied. As a songwriter, his tunes have been cut by such names as Elvis Presley, and as a musician, he was a session player for Bob Dylan in the late ’60s.

“I grew up listening to Charlie. He is just a living legend,” says Eddie Montgomery, one-half of the duo Montgomery Gentry, which joins Daniels on “Deuces” to revive the Charlie Daniels Band hit “Drinkin’ My Baby Goodbye.”

“He is one of the inventors of what is now called ‘Southern rock.’ I think he wrote ‘Simple Man’ a few years too early, because with the way the world is right now, I think we need a simple man.”

Montgomery adds: “He is an artist I try to model myself after, one of my biggest heroes, and I am honored to call him a friend.”

Daniels’ music and as his generosity of spirit has endeared him to other musicians and a devoted legion of fans, including such world leaders as former President Jimmy Carter and evangelist Billy Graham.

“When you see him perform, you feel how much he loves what he does. It just kind of radiates from him,” Koch Records president Bob Frank says. “He’s one of those people that whenever you see him, you always feel like he’s so happy to see you. He makes everybody feel special and I think that’s a real gift that not many people have, let alone an artist.”

Daniels’ love affair with music began as a boy, growing up in North Carolina. “There were very few places to play, a few beer joints and that was about it,” he says.

“I just took advantage of them and once I got to playing music, it became my passion.”

In the early ’50s, Daniels was playing in a bluegrass band and began writing songs. He later began performing with a group called the Jaguars, and in 1959 they recorded an instrumental single in Fort Worth, Texas. “At first, I just wanted to make a living playing music,” he says of those early years. “That was all I wanted to do. Once I had achieved that, I started recording. I made my first record in 1959. That part of my career started pretty early. I didn’t make hit records, but I was in the recording world.”

He moved to Nashville in 1967, encouraged by producer Bob Johnston to try his hand in Music City. He began playing fiddle on sessions, most notably on Dylan’s “Nashville Skyline.” Daniels also tried his hand at producing, helming two projects for the Youngbloods—“Elephant Mountain” and “Ride the Wind.”

In 1970, he formed the Charlie Daniels Band. Three years later, the group scored its first hit with “Uneasy Rider.” It was a hit record, but it was not a real career builder. “It was a hit record, but it wasn’t a real career thing. I had liked an album that could really go deep on its own,” he explains.

What followed was a creative bonanza. In 1974, Daniels and his band recorded “Fire on the Mountain,” which spawned “The South’s Gonna Do It Again” and “Long-Haired Country Boy.” That was the same year Daniels held the first Volunteer Jam, a multi-artist concert that became a much-loved tradition. Through the years, the jam has brought together a diverse array of acts including Willie Nelson, Amy Grant, Little Richard, James Brown, the Oak Ridge Boys, Tammy Wynette, the Allman Brothers, the Marshall Tucker Band, Emmylou Harris and Ted Nugent.

Daniels continued cutting hits, including his signature song, “The Devil Went Down To Georgia,” which earned him the 1979 Grammy for best country vocal performance by a duo or group and was named the CMA’s single of the year. The song remains a favorite and has charted recently on Billboard’s Hot Ringtones chart. In 1980, Daniels’ profile was further boosted with an appearance in the John Travolta film “Urban Cowboy.”

As the decade rolled by, Daniels kept recording such hits as “In America,” “Still in Saigon” and “Simple Man,” and he earned a reputation for his patriotism and willingness to serve up songs that unflinchingly looked at society and its ills.

These days, country acts from Alabama to Jackson have recorded Christian albums, but Daniels pioneered the move in 1994 when he recorded his first such album, “The Door,” on Sparrow Records. The project won a CMA Dove Award for country album of the year, and the Christian Country Music Assn. named the clip for “Two Out of Three” video of the year.

Daniels and his manager David Cowles launched Blue Hat Records in 1997. “We were kind of the pioneers with the Wal-Mart deal. We were pre-Garth in doing an exclusive deal with the retailers,” says Cowles, who began working with Daniels’ group in 1997 and has been with Daniels’ organization for 15 years, working his way up to management and partner in the record label.

Daniels loves the creative freedom of having his own label. “When I go into a studio, if I wanted to do ‘Mary Had A Little Lamb,’ there’s nobody who tells me no.”

continued on p34
"They are the real easy model," Frank expects "Deuces" to sell well because it will appeal to Daniels' fan base as well as a new audience. "We're also going to appeal to the fans of the artists that he has on the record who maybe will just be learning about Charlie," Frank says. "So we're looking to open him up a little bit, because if you like Gretchen Wilson, you're going to like Charlie Daniels." So one thing we are doing differently on this record is a much bigger media campaign.”

Daniels also is one of a handful of artists to have exclusive product released through Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, which began selling his “Country Stars 'N' Stripes” CD in 2005. “Charlie understands the record business,” Corlew says. “That’s why he’s such a wonderful partner at Blue Hat—[it’s] because he’s the artist, but he also understands marketing and what we have to do, what it takes to sell records.”

Frank agrees. “He’s always promoting something, whether it be his latest book or his latest CD. He’s a great partner for that. So many artists don’t get that and they just hurt themselves. He hasn’t survived this long without figuring that stuff out.”

That work ethic makes Daniels one of the busiest artists on the road, whether or not he has current hits. “We increase our revenue every year, so his touring business is very, very healthy,” says Steve Hauser, senior VP at the William Morris Agency, who has been Daniels’ agent for 10 years. He says Daniels generally takes off January through March and tours the remainder of the year doing between 112 and 130 shows.

"His show is spectacular," Hauser says. "At 71 years old, it's like you're seeing a young kid out there onstage." Hauser says Daniels plays every type of venue, including fairs, festivals, sheds and smaller theaters. This year Daniels has been touring a Volunteer Jam package with the Marshall Tucker Band and the Outlaws. Next year, 38 Special will join his band on the Jam tour.

Daniels’ life and career still inspires those around him. After all, who wouldn’t want to still be touring and making great records after 50 years in the business? "For an artist to still be able to entertain a crowd the way Charlie does after all these years is really impressive," Troy Gentry of Montgomery Gentry says. "I have learned from him that not only does your showmanship onstage count, your showmanship as a person offstage really matters too. He is a wonderful example of a great humanitarian as well as an entertainer. His love for his family and patriotism for his country is immesurable, and his relationships on and off the stage are equally important to him. All of this together makes a man that I greatly respect and admire—someone I strive to emulate in both my professional and private life. There is no other like him."
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CHARLIE DANIELS TALKS TO BILLBOARD ABOUT LESSONS AND BLESSINGS OF A LONG CAREER

At 71 years old, Charlie Daniels still sets a blistering creative pace few can match. Whether touring, authoring a book or churn ing out another great album, he approaches each project with a sense of creative vision and passion that remains undimmed after 50 years in the industry.

One of the most versatile and prolific artists in American music, Daniels has released 50 albums, 17 of those just since launching his own Blue Hat label a decade ago. Those projects reflect the broad scope of his artistry, as they’ve encompassed a variety of genres, from the blues of 1997’s "Blues Hat" to the bluegrass gospel of 2005’s "Songs of the Longleaf Pines" to the rocking country represented on 2007’s two new releases, "Live From Iraq" and duet project "Deuces."

Daniels has always had a gift for forging a sense of community and bringing together artists from all musical styles. Whether welcoming an eclectic lineup to the stage during one of his famed Volunteer Jam concerts or mentoring some of today’s young country acts during the making of "Deuces," Daniels has always encouraged others to defy boundaries and just create great music.

When you started, did you think you still love playing music this much 50 years later?
I had no idea. You do one day at a time. People ask me what would I have done if I had not been a musician. I’m not a “What if?” thinker. It’s been a long road and a good road and a tough road. I’ve learned a lot of lessons in the many years that I’ve been doing this that I wouldn’t have learned anywhere else.

I’ve learned about adversity. When everyone else gets tired and disgusted, that’s when you have to go for it. If you don’t have it in your heart to do it that way, you should have never taken the first step.

What did your parents think of your decision to be a musician?
My dad wanted me to go to college and get a degree in forestry because he was a timberman. But I didn’t carry that gene or whatever it is to have the same love for it that he had.

I can see my parents being very frustrated when I first started trying to play music because music was thought of very much as a hobby. There were horror stories about people trying to make a living playing music and how their families would suffer. My parents had apprehensions about me getting into this business, but once I started, it was all I wanted to do. I had no desire to do anything else.

Your first radio hit was "Uneasy Rider" in 1973. It could easily have been pegged as a novelty hit and that tag could have tainted your career. How did you overcome that? I just refused to be pushed into that category. I did other records and did what needed to be done to overcome it. It’s like, "Gosh, here we are. We’ve got a hit record!" It’s a blessing, but you’ve got to break out of that mold. By no means was that very close to what in the Charlie Daniels Band was all about when you hear "Uneasy Rider." You’ve just got to stay with it until the world realizes, "Hey, they are serious. They are capable of doing more than that."

What was it like recording with Bob Dylan on "Nashville Skyline?"
I am not a great session player. I don’t play other people’s music as well. What goes into being a good session player is developing somebody else’s idea of what a song should be. I’m so much better off doing my stuff and doing what I do other than trying to interpret other people’s music, unless it’s the kind of thing like Dylan did.

Dylan was like, "Hey, let’s go in and make a
When you held the first Volunteer Jam in 1974, did you have any idea it would become such a long-running and successful event? I had no idea. It was supposed to be a one-time thing. It was a live recording session. Sometimes things take [on] a life of their own. The name Volunteer Jam was a natural. All the elements fell together.

The first year was an incredible musical event. It sold out. Lots of people didn’t get to come to it and lots of people heard about it. People wondered, “What’s a Volunteer Jam? What’s this thing everybody’s talking about?” It became very obvious that this was something that we should do again, and we did. That first night was like magic. Here we are talking about it 30 years or so after.

Why did you decide to launch your own label when you started Blue Hat in 1997? There are a lot of reasons. Of course, we aren’t in demand by the big labels. Rather than go around and give away the creative abilities, I’d rather have a little record company and just do what we do and sell what records we sell. There are very talented people in Nashville, but most of the people are involved in the music business from another point of view than I am. Everybody wants to sell records, but I want to play music too. I want to play what I write and what I am. I don’t want to sound like everybody else.

I had a producer some years ago when we did a record for a compilation album [say], “You don’t sound like everybody else.” I said, “I work very, very hard to keep from sounding like everybody else. I don’t want to sound like everybody else.” So I just rather have Blue Hat Records. I do what I do and everybody else does what they do, and we’re all real happy.

What is it about Koch Distribution that makes it such a good partner for Blue Hat? They treat us good and honestly. We enjoy working with them. They are just a good match for us. They are good people for us to be involved with. We’ve built a relationship over the years and we’re happy with it and they seem to be happy with it, so I see no reason to change.

Some people, including Wyclef Jean, credit “The Devil Went Down to Georgia” with being one of the pioneering rap songs. Do you think of it that way? That goes way back to an old form of music called “talking blues” that had been around forever. Instead of singing the lyrics, people talk them. I’ve been hearing it all my life. There was a guy, Robert Lunn, on the Grand Ole Opry that used to do that. He would be using some comedy sort of thing, something he’d sing, and there was a little punch line involved. It’s an old form of music.

In recording your new duets album, “Deuces,” how did you determine who would record each song? It was a mutual consent. It was a song that we both liked. Darius Rucker is a big Bob Dylan fan and ["Like a Rolling Stone"] was a good tune for us to do, and Vince [Gill] loved the one we did [“The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down”]. I could not 100% read what somebody likes to do by any means, but I’m pretty good at picking a song that would be compatible for both people and most of the time it worked out.

Dolly [Parton] wanted to do something she wrote, which is a standard policy with her. She’s constantly being asked to do something like she says, if she took everything that came down the pike, she’d be going all the time. So what she does is she wants to sing a song that she wrote, which I have no problem with. She’s a great writer. We did “Daddy’s Old Fiddle.” You just kind of go along and find something that works for everybody.

Your manager and Blue Hat partner David Corlew has worked with you for 35 years. Paula Szerig, your director of advertising, promotion and publicity, has been with your organization more than 30 years. Most of your band and staff have been with you a long time. To what do you attribute that? I attribute it to blessings of God. I’ve been blessed to do what I want to do for a living with the people that I dearly love. You have to find the people who want to do the same thing and go out and do it.

What keeps you out there still doing it? I love what I do. People say, “Why don’t you retire?” For what? I’m doing what I want to do. You’re supposed to retire to do something you want to do and I’m doing what I want to do. So I would be kind of silly for me to retire.

I love my fellow musicians. I love being able to get up in the morning and think, “I’m going to do something today that I thoroughly enjoy.” I’m thankful to God for all of these years that I have been able to make a living at something that I enjoy so very much.

What goals do you have left? There’s always something to do. There’s always another record to cut. There’s constantly something. You never run out of things to do or things to accomplish. You’re just never going to do that. There’s always another cluster of notes to put together to make a song out of it.
BELUGA HEIGHTS CELEBRATES THE REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF J.R. ROTEM
Producer, songwriter, record company president, Jonathan "JR" Rotem's three music industry hats only hint at his incredible creative versatility.

In a very short time—since 2005, in fact—Rotem has worked with the varied likes of 50 Cent, Dr. Dre, the Game, Snoop Dogg, Rihanna, Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, Mario, Lil Scrappy, J-So, Mya, Mobb Deep, Jennifer Lopez, Natasha Bedingfield, Rick Ross, Sean Kingston, Chamillionare, AshTylee, Fergie, Mike Jones, Baby Bash, Plies, Blake Lewis and the Cheetah Girls. He's landed more than 200 recording placements in this brief period, making a name for himself in hip-hop, R&B and pop. What makes this feat all the more striking is that his roots are in jazz piano.

Topping it off is Belinda Heights—his joint-venture label deal with Epic Records that has already yielded Sean Kingston and his No. 1 hit "Beautiful Girls," and a new worldwide publishing deal with Sony/ATV Music Publishing.

"In addition to being an extraordinary talent in his own right, his discovery of Sean Kingston and other chart-topping artists makes him an incredible talent finder," Sony/ATV chairman/CEO Martin Bandier says. "We look forward to more great things from this sophisticated and extraordinarily successful talent."

To Kingston, Rotem is "like a brother."

"He's a musical genius," Kingston says, referring to his producer/songwriter and label head's range. "He's classically trained, plays jazz, comes up with beats in like 20 minutes. Usually when I go in [the studio], I have a hook idea and he builds around it. Or I go in there and he has a beat already made and tells me an idea for the hook. So we play off each other and have a great chemistry. He's a humble guy. He's that dude—funny and with a nice personality."

Rotem was born in Johannesburg. His parents were Israelis who relocated there so his father, a computer scientist and mathematician, could complete his Ph.D.

"My dad was always a guitarist," Rotem says. "He was a little more into classical and flamenco music, but both he and my mother [now a therapist] were strong music lovers of all sorts—jazz, classical, the Beatles. I definitely grew up to music and they saw my love of it at an early age and supported it."

When he was 12, he moved with his family to Canada, where he began piano lessons at age 5. When Rotem was in junior high they moved to Moraga, Calif., in the Bay Area, where he continued studying music and decided he wanted to go to Berklee College of Music in Boston.

He had already discovered pop influences like the Beatles, Sting and Queen, and had been captivated by Run-D.M.C.'s "Raising Hell" album. Majoring in piano performance at Berklee, his intention was to become a film composer. But he also immersed himself in jazz, practicing 12 hours a day. Upon graduating, he moved back to the Bay Area and played piano jazz solo, in trios and in quartets.

I was building a name as a jazz pianist, playing seven nights a week in San Francisco," Rotem says. "I always had the goal to be the absolute best at anything I do and be innovative, so I took the summer off and practiced nonstop, very intensely, and developed my own style. But the ironic thing was at the end of summer, when I was on the verge of coming out with some-thing new, I basically lost interest in the whole lifestyle of playing small venues and bars and clubs and reaching small audiences. I would rather be in the studio composing and producing as opposed to performing."

Rotem became interested in production after hearing Dr. Dre's "The Chronic" and Snoop Dogg's "DoggyStyle" at Berklee.

"I wanted to produce in a more contemporary genre, so I switched into production of pop, R&B and hip-hop," Rotem says. "I started making beat tracks and got them into the hands of Tony! Toni! Tone! [member] Dwayne Wiggins, and he took them to Beyoncé."

Rotem's co-written "Fancy" made it onto Destiny's Child's 2001 album "Survivor," while "My Song" landed on the group's special-issue CD "Love: Destiny." This encouraged him to make the move to Los Angeles to further his budding mainstream music career.

His big break came when he met Zach Katz, a former music industry attorney who gave up his law practice to pursue artist management.

'I met JR three-and-a-half years ago when I was working closely with Aftermath Entertainment, Shady Records and G-Unit, and managing most of the producers making records for those guys," Katz says. "People were talking about him at that point, that he was an amazing musician and aspiring producer, and I finally heard his stuff and was impressed with his ideas and felt they needed a little tweaking because he was coming at it more as a musician than producer, which are two different things. So I did everything I could to get him more on the production end and make it sound more from a producer standpoint than a musician standpoint."

It started with hip-hop placements with artists like Snoop ["Bang Out"], Lil Kim ["Whoo!" and 50 Cent ("Position of Power").] [50 Cent] said, 'You really have your finger on the sound we're doing and we want you to work with the whole camp of G-Unit,' and gave me a song deal," Rotem says. But as Katz notes, "The goal was always to get to more than rap."

The breakthrough came with Rihanna's "S.O.S." "It opened up all the pop doors, to Beyoncé and J.Lo and pretty much everyone else," Katz says.

One of the doors belonged to Hollywood Records senior VP of A&R Jon Lind, himself a major songwriter.

"I met him when he had S.O.S. out," Lind recalls. "What I liked about him is that he was extremely intense and focused, and took feedback really well."

Atlantic Records executive VP of A&R Mike Caren also goes back with Rotem. "He's a phenomenal keyboard player first of all, and knows how to layer and texture things," says Caren, who recently used Rotem on projects for Kele Palmer and Trick Daddy. "You can really tell how talented and charismatic an artist is when he brings something new to a record you're already familiar with, like the way he completely reinvented 'Stand By Me' with Sean Kingston. But he's really just tipping the iceberg now, and he's become an amazing vocal producer. My artists love working for him and want him to produce vocals, even on songs he didn't do the beats for. There are so few producers who are able to produce something from soup to nuts."

Current Rotem projects include "everything from Jordin Sparks to Blake Lewis to the Game's new album, Rick Ross and Dr. Dre," Katz says.

Of course, all this activity begs the question, Does Rotem still harbor his own recording desires?

"I can see that down the road," Rotem says from Orlando, Fla., where he's cutting songs with Menedo. "I'm a pianist obviously not a vocalist—and jazz piano is something I still do. But to be great takes a lot of focus, and I don't want to spread myself too thin."

Not to worry, suggest Epic Records head Charlie Walk, who found an ideal partner in Rotem for the joint-label venture.

"I think he's focused to the point where there are no distractions in his life," Walk says. "I can tell you what he's doing today. Going to the gym, eating a healthy breakfast, then going to the studio—and when he's done, going to sleep and waking up and going to the gym. That's what you get from him: Nothing but that commitment, and we have the same commitment, and that's why it works."
CATCH FIRE

JONATHAN "JR" ROTEM

BELUGA HEIGHTS AND EPIC
A RED-HOT PARTNERSHIP.

www.americanradiohistory.com
With a strong work ethic that keeps him constantly busy cranking out hits for a remarkable variety of artists, it's hardly easy for JR Rotem to find time to talk about himself. But he did take a break from producing Menudo in Orlando, Fla., to share some of his thoughts on the music industry and his own lofty place in it.

**What are your feelings about the music industry in general?**

Truthfully, I'm very blessed to be working in it and doing what I'm doing, so I don't mean to sound negative. But I will say we're in a very challenging time. Record sales are at an all-time low and get lower and lower every year because of the technology of the Internet and how easy piracy is. It used to be if a consumer liked a single, they had no choice but to spend $15 or $20 for an entire album, and acts were selling trillions of albums every week without much drop-off the next week.

But now people are a lot more savvy. They can see something for free on YouTube, or buy a ringtone or one or two songs for a dollar each. You have to be a hardcore fan to buy a whole CD. And piracy is so easy and rampant, so you notice a huge decrease in sales in the second week, because people buy the first week and then share with their friends the next week. It's affecting every part of the industry: There's way less artists, way less money for production and promotion budgets.

**Where do you fit?**

I thought I was always paying dues, but paying dues is something everybody does at every different level. Even in my jazz days, and when I first moved to L.A. just getting a manager seemed the biggest thing in the world. "When I have a manager, that's when I've made it." But then you still have to climb the ladder: "Let me get a name in the industry. Let me be known for being a producer. Let me produce my own sessions." Now I want to be known for making singles and hits. Getting respect is its own challenge.

**What kinds of challenges in particular have you had to face in getting that respect?**

A lot of times there's a mind-set that has to be overcome. You get a certain reputation as a producer, so the label sends an artist to you to get singles, say, rather than album cuts. It takes a lot of time to cross those lines. Same with having success in the urban world. You have to struggle to get to produce pop stuff. Then I have to separate myself as not just a beat-maker that only produces tracks, but as someone who can produce vocals and whole records. Instead of taking my track and putting the artist with a vocal producer without me, I need them to trust me to produce vocals. I'm finally crossing those barriers, but it's just infinite. There are always challenges trying to prove yourself. Also, there's a very short memory in this industry. You might have had success a year or two ago, but what about today? What now? I don't say I'm on top, because once you get to the highest level there's staying there. You just can't treat water, because music changes so fast that two months later there's a new sound on the radio. It's hard to stay current.

**How do you maintain a career?**

Everyone has different goals—to be in the game, to be on top. I like to produce records now, but maybe it's just a cool thing now and I'll parlay it into something else.

But I see myself as a David Foster or Quincy Jones. Not that they've had very long careers. For me, music is my life. It's not my career or job, but it's been my life as long as I can remember, so I'm not looking to do this a little while and make money and get out. I'm doing exactly what I want to be doing and can't see doing anything else—to go as far as I can and make records and expand.

**What are your thoughts on pop songwriting?**

I look at it as truly a very deep art. To write a very big pop song one has to be successful on a lot of levels. You have to get a common denominator of people, so there has to be a simplicity to it. In my own experience, coming from the jazz world and going into hip-hop and then breaking free of that to be as mainstream as possible was a process of learning how to simplify. That's something I had to learn, and I'm still learning the art of that.

Listen to a song like "Billie Jean" or "Yesterday," or something contemporary like Justin Timberlake's "My Love." There really is a reason when a song goes No. 1.

**What can you point to as the best thing about the music business today?**

That depends on who you are and what you're trying to do. For me, the best part is that I'm
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ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS BUILDING THE FUTURE

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from p.40 | living my dream—to be working with major-label people who are so talented, and to do what I'm doing and be respected and work with other respected people. And then have a very successful song and people responding to it. Doing something that came from my heart and is personal and people connecting with it.

But it's all about connecting with people at the end of the day—your way of connecting with other humans. So that's the amazing thing about the music industry, and especially today, with the technology and Internet, you can do something one day and have it heard the next day—or even in an hour—and make a great living. I'm living my life.

And the worst thing? That depends on how deeply you take it, but like I said, this is my life, and it's a very stressful kind of thing. Like anything else there's a lot of blood, sweat and tears— and rejection. You're personally connected to a song and think it's great and others don't feel it. You're dealing with a lot of politics and power of certain people, and you have to play those games, which is the reason why a lot of creative people have to have a manager and lawyer, because there's no time to create if you're playing those games.

Is there anything you know now that you wish you knew when you started out in the business? I always think like that! Every day I try to refine my ears to recognize what would be a hit in my own music and others'. But hindsight is always 20-20. I had to learn not only what was ultimately a more personal song—which I was good at doing because I come from jazz—but how you make it a hit. How you make it digestible by others. I'm still learning that process, but I wasn't even thinking about it when I first started in the industry. I just wanted to get [song placements] on albums.

Anything else you want to add? It's good to not get too emotionally attached to something. Some people can wait for years, but I like to keep it moving and put everything into it, and if people feel it's good or not, move on to the next thing. And it's good to not be greedy: It's better to have 10% of a hit than 50% of nothing. Be open to collaboration if it makes sense. A small piece of something that's very successful is worth more than a huge piece of something that's not successful or mildly successful.

—Jim Beamsan

'BUILDING OUR EMPIRE'

JR ROTEM EXPANDS HIS INFLUENCE AT THE HELM OF BELUGA HEIGHTS LABEL

With "everything starting to blow up," as producer/songwriter JR Rotem describes the state of his career, a joint-venture deal with Epic Records for his Beluga Heights label was a natural. The collaboration with Rotem and his manager/business partner Zach Katz fit Epic's goals, according to Epic head Charlie Walk. "We're not just trying to make urban, hip-hop or pop-sounding records, but important records," Walk says. "And he's a producer who carries all those traits and is thus able to work with all types of artists."

According to Rotem, artist Sean Kingston was the perfect catalyst.

"We're now at the point where Beluga Heights has been proven successful with Sean being a No. 1 artist, and we've just signed off. It was the perfect moment for us: Beluga Heights focusing on the blood, sweat and tears it takes to make it in this industry, and other shows. We're really building our empire."

It's an empire involving such satellites as Interscope/Geffen/A&M senior VP of A&R Shawn Holiday, who previously worked with Rotem at Windswept Pacific Music Publishing. "Every time you need something," Holiday says, "he's always there, coming up with a hook idea and more, which most producers don't do."
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THEIR KIND OF TOWN
Country Outfit Looks To Build On Breakout Indie Success

The mood is light and upbeat at producer Wayne Kirkpatrick's studio 25 miles south of Nashville, and well it should be.

In this remote location in the midst of the Williamson County farming community, Little Big Town has been busy cultivating an exceptional crop. Due Oct. 30 via Equity, "A Place to Land" is a stellar collection of fresh but familiar sounds. Does one hear echoes of Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles while listening? Absolutely. But it's clear that this band, which features four lead singers and family-like harmonies, is blazing its own path.

Little Big Town, a band that sold slightly more than 40,000 copies of its 2002 self-titled debut on Sony Nashville's Monument imprint and failed to make inroads at country radio, surprised many on Music Row when 2005's "The Road to Here," released on its fledgling independent Equity, became a commercial and critical success. The album has sold 1.13 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and spawned the top 10 Hot Country Songs hits "Boondocks" and "Bring It On Home."

Label president Mike Kraski says Little Big Town has a rare quality. "This is a band that can bring fans in from outside of the format," he says, comparing the act to Mary Chapin Carpenter and Dixie Chicks, two talents he worked with at Sony Nashville.

And while the band will always be true to the country genre, "they do transcend it," Kraski adds.

Kraski was a senior executive at Sony Nashville when Little Big Town signed there. "The band also spent time on Mercury Nashville, but no music was released. The band didn't have success at Sony, he says now, because "there were too many people meddling in the creative process." When Little Big Town signed with Equity, "We said, 'Let's let them be who they are and leave them alone creatively.'"

Country KXKX Lafayette, La., PD Casey Carter sees a difference. "They blew me away live but the recorded product didn't match," she says. "Once they got on Equity, they were able to transfer their greatness onto recorded product."

Live performance has always been one of the band's strengths, and it has toured constantly. Currently out with Sugarland and Jake Owen on the CMT tour, Little Big Town has opened for Keith Urban, Kenny Chesney and Martina McBride, among others. Last year the band toured with John Mellencamp, who asked the members to sing backing vocals on eight songs on his album "Freedom's Road."

"The collaborations we've done in the last year definitely changed us," the band's Karen Fairchild says, citing its CMT "Crossroads" appearance with Lindsey Buckingham and the tour with Mellencamp. "They stretched us, and we want to do more of that."

Between marriages, pregnancies and touring, Little Big Town didn't have much time to record the new album. The result is "we were a lot more focused," group member Jimi Westbrook says.

The band co-wrote 10 of the album's 12 cuts with Kirkpatrick. The two outside songs—"Lonely Enough" and "Firebird Fly"—came from Jon Randall and Jesi Alexander, along with co-writers Darrell Brown and Jon Mabe.

Current single "I'm With the Band," which is No. 39 on Hot Country Songs and features Westbrook on lead, is what the title suggests—a song about the brother-sister-
MUSIC

LATEST BUZZ

DON’T ‘HATE’

Former Capitol rapper Chingy returns to the Disturbing Tha Peace fold this winter with “Hate Me or Love It.” Due Dec. 11, the set features guest appearances from Amerie, Ludacris, Bobby Valentino, Anthony Hamilton, Rick Ross and Huey, among others. Amerie appears on first single “Fly Like Me,” which will hit radio early this month in tandem with a music video. Ludacris and Valentino team up on “Gimmie Dat,” while Hamilton guests on “They Don’t Know.”

DOUBLE DUTY

Bow Wow and Omari’s collaborative album will be out before the end of the year. “Face Off” will arrive Dec. 11 via Columbia as a standard 12-track CD or as a CD/DVD combo featuring behind-the-scenes footage and videos from the artists’ prior albums. Album track “Hood Star” has been making the rounds online since last month, and another song, “Girlfriend,” is at radio now.

‘TREE’ GROWS

Goldfrapp will release its next effort, “Seventh Tree,” Feb. 26 via Mute, but warns that it may surprise fans of the group’s previous studio set. “It’s very different to [2005’s] ‘Supernature,’ so it might come as a bit of a shock to some of you,” group members Alison Goldfrapp and Will Gregory say, declining to reveal further details.

HOT CUP OF JOE

Joe Jackson’s first album in five years, “Rain,” will arrive Jan. 29 via Rykodisc. The project features two of the three other original members of Jackson’s longitude band, bassist Graham Maby and drummer Dave Houghton. Jackson produced “Rain” at Planet Roc Studios in Berlin, with mixing assistance from Sean Slade and Paul Kolderie. A tour will follow next spring.

REPORTING

by Jonathan Cohen and Katie Hasty

No Waiting Necessary

Simultaneous DVD, Theatrical Release Power Petty Film

With the American music marketplace in its current depressed state, East End Management principal Tony Dimitrades knew a different kind of marketing plan was in order for Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers’ four-disc CD/DVD boxed set, “Rummin’ Down A Dream.” So he went to Warner Bros. with a triple-pronged plan to boost sales of the project, which encompasses Peter Bogdanovich’s band documentary, a 30th-anniversary show in Gainesville, Fla., and a disc of rare and unreleased tracks.

First, he harangued the marketing might of Best Buy by giving the merchant an exclusive period that began Oct. 16 and runs into 2008. Then, he set up one-off theatrical screenings in 27 North American markets the night prior to street date. The final element was a four-hour, commercial-free airing Oct. 29 on the Sundance Channel. “Dream” has sold 29,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“Five years ago, I wouldn’t have done it this way,” Dimitrades says. “But the fact that Warner Bros. was prepared to work with artists that are important to them shows that they are trying to step up and find different ways to put out music.”

Best Buy also has the boxed set exclusively for Canada, where it is carrying it in its FutureShop chain. Outside the United States, where “Dream” will be sold on a nonexclusive basis, Dimitrades is licensing the boxed set from Warner Bros. to third parties. The package will be available in Europe in late November via SPV and in Japan next year.

Putting out records as an exclusive with one retailer often alienates other merchants. “It’s very hard to wholeheartedly support those acts who halfheartedly support Trans World,” Trans World Entertainment divisional merchant manager Jerry Kamilers says. But Dimitrades says the state of the industry warranted this step. “Best Buy is providing a substantial part of the marketing budget and they agreed to the nuances and other things important to Tom,” he says, adding that the partnership came together after he met Best Buy senior entertainment officer Gary Arnold at a party.

Ardon, who pioneered retail exclusives a decade ago, says the Petty project works well for the store’s customers. What’s more, he says, “it’s a great story of guys who found one another early on and remained together through the challenges that a music career can bring, and it gives an understanding of why they are in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.”

This marks the fourth year out of the last five holiday selling seasons where Best Buy had a music DVD exclusive.

When it was time to organize the screenings, East End capitalized on D&E Entertainment’s expertise in theatrical marketing to book the theaters, run trailers and hang posters in lobbies. Dimitrades also ran a pre-order campaign, offering free shipping and a two-month trial subscription to the Best Buy Digital Music Store, with members of Petty’s Highway Companion club. He says that promotion has generated 20% of sales.

In addition to what Dimitrades says was “a limited amount of television advertising,” radio contests were set up to award tickets to the screenings and copies of the boxed set and coffee-table book of the same name.

For the latter, which features hundreds of photos of Petty and the band, writer Warren Zanes worked from the documentary interview transcripts to create his own version of the Heartbreakers’ story. “It’s the same story, from a different perspective,” Dimitrades says.

“Sometimes, giving up your privacy is a little like going to the dentist, and we have let [Bogdanovich] have access to one that ever had,” Petty told Billboard in March 2006. “But I think it’s a worthwhile project.”

Chicks In Mint Condition

New Zealand Band Heading Stateside After Award Wins

Picking up three major trophies at the New Zealand Music Awards Oct. 18 in Auckland was “surreal,” Christchurch-based garage punk act Mint Chicks guitarist Ruben Nielson says. “We had no idea we’d win over acts who sold a lot more records than us.”

The act was named best group, while its Flying Nun record, “Crazy Yes, Dumb No,” topped the best album and rock album categories. “Not bad for an album that hasn’t even reached gold [7,500 units] at home,” Nielsen quips. Nielsen reckons the awards unforgettable experience in our lives.”

The band’s nomination in the best flamenco album category ahead of the Nov. 8 Las Vegas event is the latest milestone on the unconventional act’s 10-year career. “Techari” and its 2004 predecessor “Barri” have each shipped more than 100,000 units worldwide on the band’s own Diquela Records label.

The group is renowned for its live shows, which display its unique gypsy fusion, taking in Catalan rumba, Cuban percussion and didj drums—as captured on in-concert album “Techari Live” (Diquela Records), which arrived internationally Oct. 8. The band is currently on tour, taking in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Mexico before year’s end.

The independently minded Ojos handles its own publishing through its Ediciones Talita company and its own booking via Diquela Concerts.

—Howell Llewellyn

Global Pulse

TOM FERGUSON

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confirmed Mint Chicks had achieved all they could in New Zealand, and in January they will relocate to Portland, Ore. “It’s got a similarly slow pace of life to NZ,” he says. “We don’t want to hit the ground running.”

Formed in 2002, the self-managed act’s 2003 debut album on Flying Nun, “ Fuck The Golden Youth,” was a mesh of its cited inspirations, from Motorhead to At The Drive-In and Ornette Coleman.

Currently unsigned in the United States, the Mint Chicks paid their third visit stateside in March, playing 32 dates booked through Parachute Booking. Publishing worldwide is handled by Mushroom Music.
—Christie Leeser

OJOS ALIG‘IN: Gaining a Latin Grammy Award nomination for its 2006 album “Techari” is “a blessing and a recognition of our work,” Bangkok-based Ojos de Brujo percussionist Max Wright says. “It’s one more unforgetvable experience in our lives.”
Willie's World

Legendary Producer Relaunches Long-Dormant Label

Neither age (a youthful 79, thank you) nor health (cata- ract surgery a couple of days before this interview took place) can keep a good music man down. Just ask Willie Mitchell.

Yes, the same Willie Mitchell who wrote and produced Al Green’s 1972 hit “Let’s Stay Together.” He later went on to produce six more No. 1 R&B hits, an accomplishment shared by such illustrious colleagues as Marvin Gaye, Berry Gordy Jr. and Barry White.

Mitchell’s latest project: the relaunch of his Waylo Records label. Having secured distribution through Select-O-Hits, Mitchell is busy getting the word out about the label’s first release, “Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere.”

The Southern soul album marks the debut solo project for singer/songwriter Mashaá (pronounced “ma-shaw”). Initially discovered as a teen by Stax Records co-founder Estelle Axton, Mashaá (born Erma Shaw) segues from a background-vocalist career that lists gigs with B.B. King, Michael McDonald and Otis Rush (on Rush’s 1998 Grammy Award-winning album “Any Place I’m Going”).

Mitchell, who produced the album, also co-wrote several tracks with Mashaá. Their relationship dates back to when Mashaá was part of the session crew at Mitchell’s legendary Royal Recording Studios in Memphis.

“She’s been working around the studio with me for a long time,” Mitchell says while recuperating at home. “One day we wrote a song called ‘The Reason’ [featured on Mashaá’s album] and decided, ‘We’re going to put out a record.’”

Waylo—which is derived from the names of Mitchell’s two daughters and granddaughter—was established in 1982. The label’s most recognizable artist was singer Otis Clay. However, Mitchell’s busy production and recording schedules as the president of Hi Records caused him to shutter Waylo after seven years.

Unperturbed by the uphill battle he faces pushing a seasoned R&B/blues singer in a youth-driven music climate dominated by R&B/hip-hop and pop, Mitchell points to other vets who are still making an impact like Tony Bennett and Chaka Khan.

“I’m a firm believer that a good song will always have a place,” he says. “We’ve cut some good songs here that are worth giving a try.”

That’s not to say Mitchell is out of tune with the contemporary scene. His hands work as a horn arranger can be heard on “I’m Gonna Find Another You,” featured on John Mayer’s 2006 Grammy-winning pop album “Continuum.” Among other artists he’s eying for Waylo is a 19-year-old R&B singer from Memphis who goes by the moniker Ice.

“I work with all kinds of music,” he says with a laugh. It was Mitchell’s knowledge of chords and rhythms as a former jazz player that helped him transform Green from a relatively obscure blues/gospel singer into an R&B/pop crossover legend.

“There’s no telling what I might come up with: R&B, jazz, hip-hop, blues, pop, whatever,” Mitchell adds. “I don’t limit myself.”

With $450 gold and platinum records lining his walls, Mitchell—along with Booker T. of Booker T. & The MG’s—was recently honored for his career achievements by the Memphis chapter of the Recording Academy. As excited as he was about receiving that accolade as well as previous honors, Mitchell says it all boils down to what got him started as a session player and instrumentalist:

“I’ve been doing music since I was 8 years old. It’s music that keeps me going.”

Can’t Stop The Roc

Label Looks For Boost From Freeway, Sigel CDs

Roc-a-Fella elevated Jay-Z and Kanye West to platinum status, but the label has been unable to lift other artists to that level. More recent signings—such as Teairra Mari, DJ Clue, Uncle Murder and Tru-Life—have yet to go gold.

Clue’s “The Professional, Pt. 3” shifted 55,000 units its first week late last year, according to Nielsen SoundScan; Mari’s 2005 album, “Roc-a-Fella Records Presents Teairra Mari,” sold 69,000 units its debut week, but she was dropped soon after.

Meanwhile, Uncle Murder and Tru-Life have yet to release albums.

Now, Roc-a-Fella is hoping new releases from two of its key artists will hit bigger. First up is the sophomore album from Philadelphia rapper Freeway, “Free at Last,” due Nov. 20. A new Beanie Sigel album, “The Solution,” follows Dec. 11.

Freeway has spent the last year touring and releasing music online, garnering underground buzz with tracks like “Roc-a-Fella Billionaires.” But the biggest boost to his career may come from a co-branding agreement with 50 Cent’s G-Unit camp, which arrived with the blessing of Def Jam head Jay-Z. The two superstars co-produced “Free at Last,” which also boasts contributions from Lil Wayne, Jadakiss, Paul Wall, Busta Rhymes and Rick Ross.

“I definitely benefited from the partnership. 50 brought a lot of motivation,” Freeway says, adding that he “didn’t have much direction” after the original Roc-a-Fella partners split.

To spread the word, Freeway is posting studio and concert footage on freewayatl.com, and dropping a new freestyle every week on rocabella.com. Def Jam is also releasing three videos—“Still Got Love,” “It’s Over” and “Lights Get Low”—simultaneously via the latter site.

“We’re concentrating our attention online because that’s where his consumer lives,” Def Jam marketing VP Ashauna Ayars says.

“I didn’t fall into what people thought I was going to do or what everyone else is doing,” Freeway says of the new album.

Pushing himself to try new sounds was also a priority for Sigel, who spent nearly a year in jail on weapons charges in 2004-05.

“I told the producers, ‘Don’t make a track for me,’ ” says Sigel, who worked with Dre & Vidal as well as newcomers Harry and Alex.

“Make something I wouldn’t do—something you’d want to hear me on.”

Indeed, the live trumpets, saxophones and pianos are a significant departure from Sigel’s previously gritty beats.

Sigel acknowledges the once-familial climate at Roc-a-Fella has changed in the four years since Jay split with co-owners Damon Dash and Kareem Burke.

Roc-a-Fella “dropped the ball with my last album,” he says of 2005’s “The B. Coming,” which has sold 419,000 copies in the United States. “I shot seven videos. Did you see any of them?”

Sigel says that while he toyed with joining Dash’s Damon Dash Music Group, he decided to stay at Roc-a-Fella. “Money was promised to me that didn’t pan out,” he says. “So I had to back away.”

From working with Dash.

Insisting that “Roc-a-Fella still operates as one unit,” Ayars says the label is preparing posters for retailers featuring Sigel, Freeway and West. In addition, Sigel’s upcoming 25-market promo tour will be filmed and cut into six webisodes.

“He does wonderful things in his community,” Ayars says. “We’re focusing on showcasing his personality outside of the grimace.”

In the meantime, Sigel and Freeway may turn up during Jay-Z’s six-day promo tour to promote his new “American Gangster” album, and a 2008 tour with those three artists as well as West has been discussed, according to Freeway’s manager, Ryan Press.

Sigel is also in talks to join West’s own Glow in the Dark tour next spring or R. Kelly’s upcoming outing, according to his manager, Mark Byers.
Nashville Scene
KEN TUCKER ktucker@billboard.com

Par For The Course
Owen Trades Golf Dreams For Country Success

Have you heard the one about the guy who wanted to be a professional golfer but scored a top 10 country song instead? Meet Jake Owen, who but for a career-ending injury during his first year of college might be chasing hole-in-ones instead of No. 1s.

Raised in Vero Beach, Fla., Owen and his twin brother, Jarrod, excelled at sports. By the time he was 12, Owen had decided on his career path. "I couldn't wait to get out there and start playing with Tiger Woods," he says.

After high school, Owen and his brother went to Florida State University in Tallahassee, where Jarrod had been awarded a tennis scholarship and Owen would try to become a walk-on member of the golf team. But a waterskiing accident during his first semester on campus altered Owen's course. After reconstructive shoulder surgery, he was told to put down the golf clubs for at least a year. "Looking for an alternative to 'twiddling my thumbs,' Owen turned to music. "My neighbor had a guitar in his closet, so I kind of stole it from him," he recalls. "I had never played guitar or really sang, but I just started playing and singing and teaching myself to play."

Owen, who grew up listening to country, eventually landed a gig at a local bar and found his new passion, with benefits. "I got $75 and free beer," he says. Soon, he was playing at fraternity and sorority parties. While his local popularity grew, so did his resolve to follow his new dream. "I had nine hours of school left at Florida State and decided I would call home to Mom and Dad and tell them I was going to head to Nashville," he recalls. "Something just told me I needed to go, and I did."

As can happen only in Nashville, Owen was "discovered" his second day in town. "I started a bank account, and the teller asked me if I was new in town. I told her I played music, and she said, 'I would love to hear your music sometime.' " Owen had a CD in his pocket and gave it to the woman. Within hours, he got a call from an executive at Warner/Chappell Music. While that arrangement didn't work out, the quick attention helped Owen realize that he'd made the right decision.

Success, however, didn't come easily. Owen frequently drove back to Tallahassee to perform weekend gigs to make money. But when a song he wrote was placed on hold by Kenny Chesney, he started to draw attention. After making the rounds of Nashville labels, Owen signed with RCA.

Owen has released three singles to radio, the first of which, the party-hardy "Yee Haw," reached No. 16 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs slightly more than a year ago. The introspective ballad "Startin' With Me" made it to No. 6 in July of this year, and current single "Somethin' About A Woman" is No. 44 and rising after nine weeks on the chart.

His album, "Startin' With Me," produced with Jimmy Ritchie (Mark Chesnutt, Clay Walker), has sold 216,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Currently on the CMT Tour with Sugarland and Little Big Town, Owen has also opened for Chesney. And even though he didn't grow up with dreams of being a country star, Owen appreciates where he is now. "Four years ago, I was sitting on a barstool in college playing for my friends, playing Kenny Chesney songs," he says. "Fast-forward to today, stepping on a stage for the first time with him and opening a show—it was pretty cool."

Owen is also grateful for the fast track his career has taken so far. "I am definitely very aware and humbled by the fact that it didn't take as long as I know it does for a lot of people," he says. "My life has always worked out for a reason."

Owen Trades Golf Dreams For Country Success

Dinnerstein's Bach
Goldberg Recordings Prove A Polarizing Force

The big chart surprise this fall has been Simone Dinnerstein's traversal of the Bach Goldberg Variations, released on Telarc. (See billboard.com's Sept. 24 article for more on the pianist's rise to the top of Billboard's Classical chart.)

As Dinnerstein herself observes, "I knew when I made this recording that people would either love it or hate it. And that's what happened—I've received very strong reactions from both ends of the spectrum and very little in the middle."

When a professional athlete tries to launch a music career, the results aren't always pretty. However, Hunter Smith, punter for Super Bowl champions the Indianapolis Colts, is the exception. In partnership with longtime friend and fellow worship leader Chris Wilson in the group Connorsvine, Smith has helped fashion one of the most impressive debuts to hit the Christian format this year.

Wilson has long had a love affair with Christian music and began leading worship by the time he was in middle school. Smith and Wilson met in 2001 while leading worship for a young adult ministry at a church in Indianapolis. "We really didn't set out intending to start a group," Wilson says. "We were writing songs to use the next week in worship. People started coming up to us saying, 'You guys should start recording.' Then we started thinking maybe God had something in mind."

Smith had met manager Scott Brickell (Mercyme, Audio Adrenaline) years ago and when they reconnected, Brickell was impressed with the duo's music and steered the pair to a deal with INO Records. Connorsvine's self-titled debut debuted Oct. 23. "When we started this whole process, we knew it was going to be unorthodox. We knew the whole football thing would play a part," says Smith, acknowledging that the Super Bowl champion-turned-artist angle held press appeal, but that there would also be scheduling challenges. "We also knew it would be a hindrance as well. We knew a conventional record label might not be the best way to go. We needed people who were willing to think outside the box."

With Smith in the middle of football season, Connorsvine interviews and appearances have to be scheduled around his Colts duties. During street week, the duo held a record release party at an Indianapolis church as well as in-store events, signing autographs and doing acoustic sets at a

Higher Ground
DEBORAH EVANS PRICE dprice@billboard.com

A Different Kind Of Goal
Colts Punter Moonlights With Christian Band

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www.americanradiohistory.com
middle." Her artistic choices, especially in taking unusually slow and spacious tempos, have been heatedly discussed throughout the classical music industry. So what was the idea behind her interpretation?

"I really wanted the Goldberg Variations to have an organic sense of rhythm, not something motor-like, and that sort of affected the whole structure of the piece," the 34-year-old Brookylnite says. "And since I made the recording, I’ve been experimenting with making it even more rhythmically free. I have this idea that rigidity of rhythm, of pulse, is something very much belonging to the 19th and 20th century. I have a feeling that that strictness, that kind of rhythmic precision, has something to do with the development of the mechanical engine and the industrial revolution. To me, that’s a certain kind of improvisatory freedom to Bach’s writing that should be explored."

ESSENTIAL READING: If you know Alex Ross’ writing already from his work at the New Yorker, the pleasures of his first book, "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the 20th Century," (published last month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux) will be familiar. If not, you’re in for a great adventure. Highly readable and tautly written, Ross’ smart narrative laces together a fascinating range of musical personalities from Richard Strauss to Steve Reich and beyond. You don’t have to be a classical music fanatic to appreciate his work, although his remarks on individual pieces should have many readers running straight to iTunes. Instead, Ross uses classical music as a lens to observe larger arcs of modern history, politics and culture.

OUT OF PRINT NO MORE: Classical fans are used to frustrating searches for albums that have long gone out of print. However, ArkivMusic now has agreements with all four major-label groups—Universal Classics, EMI Classics, Sony BMG Masterworks and Warner Classics—as well as two dozen indie labels to produce discs on demand under the ArkivCD program. These titles include sets with major works, such as Beethoven’s "Missa Solemnis," Tchaikovsky’s "Pathétique" Symphony and Dvořák’s "New World." You can’t beat that.

NEW & NOTeworthy: Cellist Matt Haimovitz’s album "Vinylcello," with music by Tod Machover, Luna Pearl Woolf and David Sanford, along with Haimovitz’s reworking of Jimi Hendrix’s "Machine Gun" (Oxingale, available Nov. 6) ... The debut release from CMS Studio Recordings, the new in-house label of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. First up: pianist Wu Han, violinists Erin Keeffe and Arnaud Sussmann, and cellist David Finckel tackling the Beethoven and Dvorak piano quartets. The CMS albums are available online only (at chambermusicsociety.org) as well as at their concerts ... Violinist Gilad Kremers and his Kremerata Baltica pairing together an unusual and intense program of music by Mahler and Shostakovich on their newest release (ECM New Series, issued Oct. 23).

Following the recent death of Luciano Pavarotti, much attention has been paid to the search for a successor to the world’s best-known classical tenor. If sales history and crossover appeal can be used as guides, Turkish, Italy-born Andrea Bocelli—who sang at Pavarotti’s funeral—is surely the key contender.

Bocelli’s Italian label, Sugar, claims the singer has racked up career sales in excess of 60 million albums at home and abroad through a series of international licensing deals. That figure looks set to increase significantly following the rollout of Bocelli’s career retrospective "Vivere," which arrived Oct. 30 via Decca.

Bocelli’s route to international stardom was hardly a conventional one; blind since the age of 12, he financed his singing lessons through performing in piano bars in Pisa, while he attempted to launch a career as a lawyer. Ahead of the new release, the artist talked to Billboard about his remarkable career.

Does a "best of" release feel like a milestone to you?

I guess so. I see it almost as marking the end of one part of my career and the start of another. I wanted to do a "best of" before my 50th birthday (in September 2008) and moving onto other things. I’ve already got plenty of projects lined up for the next part of my career, such as a recording of "Carmen" and a couple of other things that I’ll talk about at a later date.

Luciano Pavarotti played an important role in discovering you—was he your mentor?

I wouldn’t say that, as I was already fairly mature when I met him, but he played a key role in my career. He was the first important person to believe in me and introduced me to other important people. He helped open a lot of doors that might otherwise have remained shut.

Do you see yourself as an heir to Pavarotti?

For me, the idea of "artistic inheritance" doesn’t exist—inherence can only apply to material things. For that reason, I don’t think there’s such a project for heirs to Pavarotti. He was unique. He touched people’s hearts the world over in a special way. The rest of us just try to do our best.

Why does the world love Italian tenors? Opera was born in Italy. We are at an advantage when it comes to singing opera, in the same way Americans are at an advantage when it comes to jazz and rock ‘n roll.

Speaking to Billboard in 2004, you said you wished opera could return to its historical role as "the music of the people." Is progress being made?

Opera is still largely confined to the opera houses. Part of the problem is that the mass media—radio, TV and the press—doesn’t take much interest, and part of the problem is the snobbery of the opera world, which puts a lot of people off. That’s a real pity. I’ve received negative reviews from opera critics, but that’s a slightly different issue—more to do with resentment of my commercial success and the assumption that I’ve made a lot of money. (But) negative criticism isn’t necessarily bad for a successful artist. It can help you keep your feet on the ground. For a young artist who has yet to make it, it’s completely different. It can destroy you.

You “made it” relatively late for a singer, in your mid-30s, but did you ever feel like giving up in the early days?

There were certainly times when it all seemed very difficult, but I don’t think I ever reached the point where I wanted to give up. And in retrospect, I have to admit that I’m grateful. I became a star in my 30s and not in my teens. I had already grown up, and I think I was able to handle it. For an 18-year-old, it must be terrible.

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BILLY CASSIDY

B.A.R.S.—The Barry Adrian Reese Story
Producers: various Full Surface
Release Date: Nov. 6
The album, which is expected to be a little early for a comeback, but Cassidy is positioned to make good on a series of bad circumstances. He’s an eight-month manslaughter conviction in 2005-06 and a subsequent car accident put the crimp on his “I’m A Hustla.” But “B.A.R.S.” finds him fit and focused with a revised worldview that’s not unlike the faith-restoring turn Kanye West took after his own auto mishap. Cassidy is lucky to be alive and free—and knows it, thanking the heavens on such tracks as “I Pray,” “Leatin’ on the Lord” and the Latin-flavored “Celebration.” His Da Hustla alter ego manages to get some pointed lyrics into the proceedings, while the single “My Drink N’ My 2 Step” has club hit written all over it. But it’s telling that Barry beats Da Hustla in the opening “Intro” face-off, while the rest of the album voices relatively high-minded ideals—GG

ROCK

ANGELS & AIRWAYS

I’m Every Woman
Producer: Tom DeLonge Geffen
Release Date: Nov. 6
Tom DeLonge isn’t the first rocker to conclude that love is all you need—but with Angels & Airwaves, it just takes him a little longer than others to actually say that. Like 2006’s “We Don’t Need to Whistle,” “I’m Every Woman” is a sweeping conceptual piece with a message as big as its sound and just a bit more enigmatic. If “Whistle” was about leaving one world and finding another, “I’m Every Woman” focuses on not only living in that new realm but also mastering it. Musically, the band demonstrates a better grip on dynamics, thanks partly to the locked-in rhythm section of drummer Adam “Atom” Williams and new bassist Matt Wachter. A&A also laces more techno and industrial sounds into the textured guitar drone that shimmer atop most songs, and it taps into the Brian Eno/Daniel Lanois phase of U2 on “Star of Bethlehem,” “True Love” and “Heaven”—GG

BLUE RODEO

Small Miracles
Producers: Blue Rodeo, Chris Shreenan-Dyck Telosoul Records
Release Date: Oct. 30
It’s been more than a decade since one review said “the best American band is from Canada,” but much has changed for Blue Rodeo since that proclamation. For better or worse, the Toronto group hasn’t deviated from its formula but it has started down more than 20 years ago. That’s the band’s strength and weakness, as withnessed with “Small Miracles.” Country-tinted songs like “Mystic River” and “Blue House” wear the Blue Rodeo trademark of twangy guitars and rootsy harmonies, and wouldn’t be out of place on any of the group’s 12 studio efforts. However, the band does mix it up on tracks like the jazzy “Together,” the early-’70s vibing “Summer Girls” and “C’mon,” which works out the inner Byrds. It’s a breezy listen that won’t likely convert many who haven’t already drank Blue Rodeo’s particular brand of Kool-Aid.—RT

DUST GALAXY

Dust Galaxy
Producer: Brendan Lynch ESL
Release Date: Nov. 6
Fans of Thievery Corporation’s lushly textured downtempo might be surprised to find the production duo’s Rob Garza sounding more crunchy than smooth on this, his solo release, and his first as a frontman. Handler of the production reins to Primal Scream’s Brendan Lynch, Garza erases almost all electronic marks from the album’s 11 songs, relying instead on a band with live instruments. “River of Ever Changing Forms” boasts a swirling sitar solo; “Sons of Washington” wags a finger at corrupt politicians with a reggae pulse.

WISEN & YANDEL

Los Extraterrestres
Producers: various Machete Music/Universal
Release Date: Nov. 6
After selling more than half a million copies in the United States of previous album “Pa’l Mundo,” reggaetón duo Wisen & Yandel needed to somehow evolve while preserving its fan base. The result is an album heavy on classic reggaetón dance tracks like first single “Sexy Movimiento” and “Ahora Es” (which quotes from Colombian dance classic “La Noche”), but also full of ear-catchin’ duets. Those include “Control,” featuring Eve rapping in English, and the romantic “Oye Donde Estás Amor” with balladeer Franco De Vita. There’s social conscience on “Ya Me Voy,” a plaintive tale of a life lost to gangs, and naturally, rhythmic fusions, like the quick merengue on “One Desire.” While this is well and good, “Los Extraterrestres” will be a success thanks to WY’s formidable ability to fuse rhythms without ever sounding contrived.—LC

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THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

LATIN

RICKY MARTIN
Black and White Tour
Producer: David Cabrera
Sony BMG Norte
Release Date: Oct. 30

Ricky Martin’s "MTV Unplugged" found him singing in an acoustic, pared-down format. But this second live set is less than a year features him backed by a large ensemble befitting his recently ended arena tour. The sheer energy is radically different from the spiritual uplift of the "MTV" set. Martin includes tracks like "Living La Vida Loca," but the underlying beat leans more sharply syncopated rock than Latin, with electric guitar lines subbing the trademark horns. It sounds like heresy, but it works, as does the rare intro of the danceable "Drop It On Me" and the more classic torch balladry of "Take Me." The set ends with Martin's latest single, "Tu Recuerdo," an acoustic ballad with Spanish singer La Mari that detours into lengthy instrumental improvisation. It's a sign that Martin can afford to take chances that go beyond just dancing.—LC

WORLD

YOUSSOU N'DOUR
Rokku Mi Rokka
Producer: Youssou N'Dour Norassouch
Release Date: Oct. 30

Senegalese world music icon Youssou N'Dour follows his Grammy Award-winning album "Egypt" (2004) with "Rokku Mi Rokka," a collection of songs every bit as compelling as its predecessor. This time out, however, N'Dour focuses on tunes from the north of Senegal, the region bordering Mali and Mauritania. N'Dour wrote all 11 songs, which is quite an accomplishment given that he's working with several regional styles. One constant is his sense of rhythmic groove, and a good place to pick out copies to Chaka Gammu," which features guest vocalist Ousmane Gannaye. Another winning number, "Pullo Arda," is a simple song about simple man, yet the rhythmic hooks will linger more pleasantly for days. In a more dramatic vein, cue "Xal," a powerful, quintessential slice of rock a la Senegal.—PJV

POP

SPICE GIRLS
Headlines (Friendship Never Ends) (3:29)
Producers: Richard Stannard, Matt Rowe
Writers: R. Stannard, M. Rowe, Spice Girls
Publishers: various

Reunions are a tenuous proposition. While Europe is guaranteed to lavish over the return of the Spice Girls—a band last year with the rejuvenated Take That—one never knows what to expect on these shores, particularly with a perfume industry that's almost inevitable, given that all five of the originals—Emma, Geri, Mel B, Melanie C and Victoria—mustered a group hug for first single "Headlines," a midtempo ballad that is familiar, melodic and oddly reminiscent of a near-decade ago, when pop hits were determined by hooks as much as looks. Here's hoping that new media—along with Spice Girls' sold-out tour that includes a half-dozen major U.S. cities—will convince FM programmers that yesterday's teen fans are eager to give "Headlines" front-page priority over the airwaves.—CT

ANGIE STONE
Happy Being Me (4:06)
Producers: Designated Father
Writers: A. Stone, D. Allen, S. Asad
Publishers: Soul Music Industry, Careers BGM, BMI, Lazyboy, Bass in the Face, SESAC

Soul songstress Angie Stone, lovingly crowned a modern-day Aretha Franklin, has already made her triumphant return to the No. 2 position on Adult R&B Airplay and top 25 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart with "Baby," the first single from fourth album "The Art of Love & War." On its heels is the resplendent "Happy Being Me," a cozy, dreamily layered anthem of self-acceptance. "I'm so happy being me, I'm regrettin'," Stone riffs with a sonic smile on her face—which she says is her favorite song on the set, marking mental and spiritual contentment. Co-written and co-produced by the singer, the gentle arrangement, complete with acoustic guitars and harmonica, queences like lemonade on a sunny day. The fact that the whole deal is delivered on the revitalized Stax label adds a finishing touch of enchantment.—CT

DANCE

DEBBIE HARRY
Two Times Blue (Stonebridge Radio Edit) (4:29)
Producer: Super Buddha
Writers: D. Harry, B. Morrison, C. Neildar
Publisher: not listed
Remix: Stonebridge Eleven Seven

Debbie Harry's fifth solo album, " Necessary Evil," offers a stew of the musical personas that have propelled the Blondie frontwoman to timeless stature, from new wave, rock, acoustic pop—and dance. Ah, the memory of such classics as "French Kissin' in the USA," "In Love With Love" and "I Want That Man." The set's launch single, "Two Times Blue" has already demonstrated the dance community's devotion, reaching the top 20 on Billboard's Club Play Chart, her highest position in 14 years. Now it's radio's turn. The Stonebridge radio edit maintains the original version's guitar-fueled-meets-beatbox template, though synthesizers muddy the mix and bury the vocal a bit too much. Harry's vocal is rough around the edges, but the joyous cloud-sweeping chorus ultimately possesses the movie to keep pimps twirling until dawn. The return of this giant talent is a moment to behold. Remember to bow in reverence as the "'Rocket Baby" notes fade.—CT

POETRY

SEAL
Amazing (3:04)
Producer: Stuart Price
Writer: Seal
Publisher: not listed
Warner Bros.

Before he became known as a consummate balladeer—a la "Kiss From a Rose," "Prayer for the Dying" and "Crazy!"—Seal was a staple in Britain's rave scene, gaining acclaim as the vocalist on Adamski's 1990 "Killler." His fifth album, "System," due Nov. 13, is a professed return to roots. Working with Jonathon Price, the musical mind behind Madonna's "Confessions on a Dancefloor," first single "Amazing" is a joyous, straight-ahead blur of beats: a timeless mesh of synthesizers, driving tempo and a melody so crisply executed that every damn note is a hook. How refreshing to hear a song whose robotic production, ballad, hip-hop anthem or rock sheapishly rebuilt and repackaged as a remix. The world will embrace "Amazing" with open arms—with one potential exception. Let's hope U.S. programmers get over their irritating aversion to dance music and hear one of the most obvious hits of the year.—CT

LEGEND & CREDITS

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CRITICS' CHOICE • A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles reviews to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, NY 10013) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

PICK • A new release predicted to hit the top half of the chart or the corresponding format

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SUCH GREAT HEIGHTS

Juanes Establishes Charting Bests With Latest Album

Buoyed by one of the most impressive marketing campaigns ever seen for a Spanish-language release, Colombian rocker Juanes debuts this week at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart with “La Vida... Es un Ranio” (Universal Music Latino) after selling 47,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. He also landed at No. 13 on the Billboard 200, his highest debut on that chart.

The sales continue Juanes’ growth trend: 2002’s “Un Dia Normal” debuted at No. 2 on the Latin chart with 5,000 copies sold, while 2004’s “Mi Sangre” scanned 34,000 copies the first week and topped the tally. “La Vida” established a record at a digital level, selling 8,000 copies in its first week, the biggest number for a Spanish-language album.

The digital response, Universal Music Latino president John Echevarria says, is a sign of the direction the market is taking. In marketing “La Vida,” meticulous attention was given to the digital realm, with iTunes promoting the album on its main page and offering the only exclusive track made available to buyers.

Digital sales were also aided by a massive Spanish campaign that included exclusive behind-the-scenes content, promoting mobile sales of the single “Me Enamoré and, this week, the full album. Original content was created for YouTube in tandem with the re-launch of Juanes’ own site and a label site rich in multimedia offerings.

Outside the States, a deal with Sony Ericsson had “La Vida” embedded in 300,000 Juanes-branded phones throughout Latin America. According to Universal, by the week prior to release, accumulated sales of “La Vida” singles totaled more than 6 million downloads worldwide.

“Me Enamoró” has topped Hot Latin Songs for seven consecutive weeks. In a move that may be unprecedented for a Latin artist, Universal convinced several stations nationwide to declare a “Juanes Day” with one of them, WAMR (Amor 107.5 FM) Miami, playing only his music during a 24-hour period.

During street week, Juanes appeared on such mainstream outlets as NBC’s “Today,” along with such national Spanish-language shows as “Despierta América!” At retail, Target sold the album for a special price of $9.99. As an artist who, historically, sells consistently well beyond the first week, “Un Dia Normal” has sold 696,000 copies, while “Mi Sangre” is at 668,000.

DROPKICK DOUBLE PLAY: GIG AT SOX GAME IGNITES LOCAL SALES

Boston band the Dropkick Murphys had plenty to celebrate last week. Aside from joining the Red Sox in their World Series victory rally, the group received a sales boost after performing at Fenway Park before Game 7 of the American League Championship Series. The Murphys sang the national anthem and then played “Tessie” and “Shipping Off to Boston,” both from their 2005 helocast release, “The Warrior’s Code.” According to Duncan Browne, GM of Boston-area indie chain Newbury Comics, sales of “The Warrior’s Code” more than doubled there the week after the performance. Plus, the band’s month-old Born & Bred record “The Meanest of Times” remains a strong seller.

“Code” is No. 11 on the weekly Newbury Comics Top 100 for the week ending Oct. 28; “The Meanest of Times” is No. 14. Across the Northeast region, the band experienced a similar bump, with sales of “Code” up 140% the week after its Fenway performance (compared with an increase of 55% nationally), according to Nielsen SoundScan. Sales for “Times,” which were down 9% nationally, jumped 21% in the Northeast region during the same week.

“The Warrior’s Code” has sold 211,000 copies to date, according to SoundScan. “The Meanest of Times” has sold 67,000 copies so far.

—Courtney Harding

MUSIC HAPPENING NOW

LATIN

BY LEILA COBO

BACK IN THE BLACK: AC/DC’S DVD A HIT ACROSS THE CONTINENTS

Veteran Aussie rock act AC/DC is back on the highway to sell, with monster DVD set “Plug Me In” topping music/video/DVD charts worldwide.

“Plug Me In,” available in five-hour-two-disc or deluxe three-disc versions, was released through Sony BMG Video Oct. 15 and 16 in North America and Australia, respectively, and Oct. 22 internationally.

Within a week of release, “Plug Me In” topped music video/DVD charts in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Sony BMG Australia & New Zealand chairman/CEO Denis Handlin says the Australian ship-out was 45,000 units, while the Official U.K. Charts Co. reports British first-week sales of slightly less than 9,000. The album headed Billboard’s Nov. 5 Top Music Video chart, with U.S. sales of 15,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Tim Prescott, CEO of AC/DC’s Australian record label/publisher Albert Music, says, “We expect worldwide sales to have exceeded half a million units in the first week of release.

“The more faithful they are to their fans, the more new fans they win over,” Prescott adds. “And they’ve definitely got a new generation coming through.”

—John Ferguson

ROCK

BY ANDRE PAINE

Making Sense Out Of Shambles

With Doherty In Rehab, EMI Goes Online To Promote New CD

“It’s never easy in this band,” Babyshambles drummer Adam Ficek wryly confides.

Ficek joined Pete Doherty’s post-liberties group in early 2005—just as U.K. media feverishly flirted with the singer/guitarist’s on/off romance with super model Kate Moss and his various drug convictions.

Babyshambles’ U.S. label could be forgiven for shying away from promoting Ficek’s mood. Astralwerks issued “Shooter’s Nation” Oct. 23, but faces working out the band’s opening without the band, as Doherty’s criminal record precludes him obtaining a U.S. visa. “We haven’t even tried,” Ficek says. Indeed, when “Shooter’s Nation” hit U.K. stores Oct. 1 via Parlophone, Doherty was nowhere to be seen.

“He was in rehab,” Ficek says. “There were times when I thought this [album] wasn’t going to be made.” Doherty’s unavailability, he says, meant “we couldn’t really play or do any band stuff.”

Ficek suggests, however, that on one level Doherty’s recent rehab stint helped the band, reasoning that if he wasn’t receiving treatment, “he would have been in prison, and that’s no place for a drug addict.”

“Shooter’s Nation” hit No. 3 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. albums list Oct. 13, gaining a BPI silver disc for shipping 60,000 units.
Following last week's lackluster top 10, "American Idol" alum Carrie Underwood gives the week's charts the biggest of six records display. The opening-week tally of $57,000 copies for her sophomore effort, "Carnival Rides," is substantial by several measures. Only five albums have fetched larger numbers in 2007, and it's the second-largest sum by any of this year's country acts, exceeded only by the $45,000 that Rascal Flatts' "Still Feels Good" rang through when it crowned the Billboard 200 five weeks ago.

Underwood's total also represents the second-largest week by any "American Idol" contestant, surpassed only by 613,000 sales that greeted the first album by 2003 runner-up Clay Aiken. That acolyte goes nicely with the distinction she recently earned when her first album, "Some Hearts," overtook Kelly Clarkson's second set for the best-release-to-date total by any " Idol"-related album ($58 million to date, compared with 5.87 million for Clarkson's 2004 set, "Breakaway"). "Hearts," incidentally, gets a 38% lift in the week of the new album's release, good for Greatest Gain honors on Top Country Albums (No. 13) and the big chart (No. 1)-60%.

"Carnival" bears Underwood's first album's start by 213,000. It also establishes the best week for any female solo artist since Beyoncé's "B'Day" rallied 547,000 sales when it opened at No. 1 in September 2006 and the biggest by a female country solo artist since Shania Twain's "Greatest Hits," did 530,000 units when it entered the big chart at No. 2 in November 2004.

One would have had to live under a rock to be unaware that the fourth-season "I Idol" winner had a new album coming to market. If you somehow missed her numerous magazine and newspaper stories, including cover pieces in Billboard and Entertainment Weekly, she gave you ample opportunity to find her on TV during her release week. Aside from multiple shows on CMT and Great Country, her opening track recording week included slots on "Good Morning America," "Live With Regis and Kelly" and "The Early Show.

As one might expect for a country artist whose career was born on a huge platform of pop culture, Underwood had a healthy weekend. She got 28% of her sales during the first day from the seven large merchants represented on Nielsen SoundScan's Building Charts. On the Billboard Hot 100, CMT released Oct. 26, unweighted sales from those same sellers accounted for 55% of the final projected 527,000 units she tallied from the overall panel.

THAT GIRL: For more than a year, her headlines have been about divorce, child custody, partying and wardrobe malfunctions and lately, driving on TV. Next week, The Billboard 200 will remind people why she heard of Britney Spears in the first place, as "Blackout" is poised to notch her fifth No. 1 album (see story, page 12). According to Nielsen SoundScan, Underwood's Christmas chart, posted Oct. 31 and reflecting sales through the close of Tuesday's tracking, unweighted sales from eight leading accounts put Spears at 124,000. The next-highest number posted in that period was less than half Spears' first-day total, as current champ Carrie Underwood posted 49,000 on that day's report.

Competitors of Zomba project that the album will open somewhere in the range of 300,000-500,000, while Spears' label itself expects the title will move at least 350,000. Her public relations dilemma is that while most artists are selling smaller quantities in 2007 than in earlier years, any drop from her previous marks will be interpreted by a blood-thirsty consumer press as evidence that her sales prowess has been eroded by her negative publicity. Also tricky is the shadow of the Eagles' "Long Road Out of Eden," which is ineligible to appear on Billboard 200 because it is only sold at Wal-Mart in the United States. At press time, manager Irving Azoff told Billboard, "If the Eagles were SoundScanning this week, even though it's only available at one retailer, Britney wouldn't be No. 1," referring to the Billboard Chart. The Eagles were missing from the Oct. 31 Building Chart, suggesting Wal-Mart would withhold that title from Billboard's Top Comprehensive Albums chart, but the department store giant has until the end of the tracking week to decide whether it will report those sales.

Underwood Tops Charts; Spears In The Wings

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<td>Hollywood (1-98)</td>
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Note: The chart data provided is for the week ending November 10, 2007.
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<td><em>UNTIL YOU COME BACK TO ME</em></td>
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See chart legend for ranks and explanations. Yellow indicates recently released title, * indicates new release.
### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

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<thead>
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Chart Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Don't Blink</em></td>
<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 30</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Free And Easy (Down The Road I Go)</em></td>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Go Small</em></td>
<td>Elevation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>More Than A Memory</em></td>
<td>Garth Brooks</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>If You're Reading This</em></td>
<td>Tim McGraw</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>How 'Bout Them Cowgirls</em></td>
<td>George Strait</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Fall</em></td>
<td>Clay Walker</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Firecracker</em></td>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 7</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Livable</em></td>
<td>Jason Michael Carroll</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Our Song</em></td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Online</em></td>
<td><em>Lightning Rods &amp; a Lovelorn</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>What Do You Think About That Woman</em></td>
<td><em>She's Worth It</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>As I Am</em></td>
<td>Sara Evans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
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<td><em>Take Me There</em></td>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
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<td><em>Another Side Of You</em></td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
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<td><em>A Girl And A Gun</em></td>
<td>Sugarland</td>
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<td><em>Ninety Three Years</em></td>
<td>LeAnn Rimes</td>
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<td>Aug 28</td>
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<td><em>Going To California</em></td>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
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<td>Aug 28</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I Am A Dreamer</em></td>
<td><em>I Can Only Imagine</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ready, Heartache And The Power Of Love</em></td>
<td><em>Waitin' On A Friend</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Don't Go</em></td>
<td><em>Ellie Ray Cyrus &amp; Miley Cyrus</em></td>
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<td>Chuck Wicks</td>
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<td><em>The More I Drink</em></td>
<td><em>Jack &amp;Enums</em></td>
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<td><em>How Long</em></td>
<td>Eagles</td>
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<td><em>What Kinda Gone</em></td>
<td>Chris Cagle</td>
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### HOT COUNTRY ALBUMS

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<tr>
<td><em>Cold Beer &amp; Cigarettes</em></td>
<td><em>Brooks &amp; Dunn</em></td>
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<td><em>It's All About Your Love</em></td>
<td><em>Dierks Bentley</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>We Were Us</em></td>
<td><em>Brad Paisley</em></td>
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<td><em>Make You Mine</em></td>
<td><em>Kenny Chesney</em></td>
<td>4</td>
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### SWIFT'S SWIFTEST SPRINT YET TO TOP 10

Newcomer Taylor Swift collects her third consecutive top 10 on Hot Country Songs, as "Our Song" gains 1.7 million audience impressions and jumps 13-10. In so doing, Swift becomes the third solo female this decade to score three straight top 10 singles from a debut album. Gretchen Wilson became the decade's first such artist when she competed in the top 10 with "Redneck Woman," "Here For The Party" and "When I Think About Cheatin'" (2004-05). "American Idol" winner Carrie Underwood went one better with four top 10 songs from "Some Hearts" (2006-07).

Swift's new single also marks her quickest top 10 climb, reaching that mark in 11 weeks. Her debut single, "Tim McGraw," needed 24 weeks while "Teardrops On My Guitar" took 20.

Watch for Swift's self-titled debut set (No. 6 on Top Country Albums) to benefit from an expanded limited-edition, which streets Nov. 6. —Wade Jessen
### Top Latin Albums

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<td>JUANES</td>
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<td>Recuerdos del alma</td>
<td>LOS TEMERARIOS</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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### Hot Latin Songs

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**Tropical column's 25th chart entry covers free "Caribe Cantist," a tribute album to the legendary Caribbean Cantist."
Latin Airplay

Title | Artist | Label
--- | --- | ---
1 | ME ENAMORAM | Synergy/RCA Latin
2 | NOS QUIDARÁ | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
3 | ALGUIEN SOY Y NO | SONY BMG MEXICO
4 | TODO CAMBIO | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
5 | SOLO PARA TI | SONY BMG MEXICO
6 | INTOCABLE | SONY BMG MEXICO
7 | QAALA PUDERIA BORRATTE | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
8 | TE VAY A PERDER | SONY BMG MEXICO
9 | LA TRAVESÍA | SONY BMG MEXICO
10 | NO ESTEMOS OLVIDANDO | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
11 | ME DUELE AMARTE | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
12 | NO PENSE ENAMORAME OTRA VEZ | SONY BMG MEXICO
13 | BAILA MI CORAZÓN | SONY BMG MEXICO

Study Move

Title | Artist | Label
--- | --- | ---
1 | LA TRAVESA | SONY BMG MEXICO
2 | NO TE VEO | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
3 | CUESTA ABajo | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
4 | MI CORDONCITO | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
5 | SI NO DUELE | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
6 | CONFERTE RESCUE | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
7 | SEX MOVIMIENTO | SONY BMG MEXICO
8 | DIME QUE FALTO | SONY BMG MEXICO
9 | ME ENAMORAM | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
10 | AYER LA VI | SONY BMG MEXICO
11 | ELLA ME LEVANTO | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
12 | MALDITO AMOR | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
13 | AGUANE | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
14 | CAMBIA POR TI | SONY BMG MEXICO
15 | MI CONTRA | SONY BMG MEXICO

Regional Mexican

Title | Artist | Label
--- | --- | ---
1 | ESTOS CELOS | JOSE PEPE RIOS/LO MOVIE
2 | A TI SI PODÍA DECREÍRE | JOSE PEPE RIOS/LO MOVIE
3 | QUE BONITO | JOSE PEPE RIOS/LO MOVIE
4 | CHUY Y MAURICIO | SONY MUSIC LATIN
5 | EL PRIMO DE RAYA | SONY MUSIC LATIN
6 | LAZARIGAS DEL CORAZON | DISA/EMI MEXICO
7 | PAZ EN ESTE MONDO | SONY MUSIC LATIN
8 | PERDIENDO LA CASA | SONY MUSIC LATIN
9 | BIENEME QUE TE ODEES | SONY MUSIC LATIN
10 | BASTO | SONY MUSIC LATIN
11 | BASTA YA | SONY MUSIC LATIN
12 | POR AMANTE ASI LO LLEGO | SONY MUSIC LATIN
13 | DE TI EXCLUSIVO | SONY MUSIC LATIN
14 | ME ACOPLA | SONY MUSIC LATIN
15 | MIL HERIDAS | SONY MUSIC LATIN
16 | SIN QUE LO SEPA | SONY MUSIC LATIN
17 | CUANDO REGRES | SONY MUSIC LATIN
18 | ESTO ME HACE | SONY MUSIC LATIN
19 | SOBRE MIS PIES | SONY MUSIC LATIN
20 | LA ABOLICIÓN DE LA LÍM | SONY MUSIC LATIN

Regional Mexican

Title | Artist | Label
--- | --- | ---
1 | LOS MERIDIANOS | AROVITA/SONY MUSIC LATIN
2 | LA GARRASTA | SONY BMG MEXICO
3 | VACANTE | SONY BMG MEXICO
4 | LA TROMPA | SONY BMG MEXICO
5 | GRUPO MONTES DE DURANGO | SONY BMG MEXICO
6 | LOS CRIEGES DEL NORTE | SONY BMG MEXICO
7 | LAS TROMPETAS DE LA HUAPER | SONY BMG MEXICO
8 | MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS | SONY BMG MEXICO
9 | VICENTE FERNÁNDEZ | SONY BMG MEXICO
10 | LUCIO VALLADA | SONY BMG MEXICO
11 | LA COCINERA DE LA FAMILIA | SONY BMG MEXICO
12 | TAPIA CALI | SONY BMG MEXICO
13 | MARÍA MARTINEZ | SONY BMG MEXICO
14 | INTOCABLE | SONY BMG MEXICO
15 | AX-7 | SONY BMG MEXICO
16 | ABRE MI MÚA | SONY BMG MEXICO
17 | SABE TODO | SONY BMG MEXICO
18 | SUPER MONTES DE DURANGO | SONY BMG MEXICO
19 | MARK CARINA | SONY BMG MEXICO
20 | SHE'S REVENGE | SONY BMG MEXICO
21 | ELECTRO POP | SONY BMG MEXICO
22 | JAYGEE | SONY BMG MEXICO
23 | LEONEL RODRIGUEZ | SONY BMG MEXICO
24 | JAVI ENRIQUEZ | SONY BMG MEXICO
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<td>5. GIUSEPPE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FRANCE**

| **ALBUMS** | **NEW** | 1. LIM | 2. JAMES BLUNT | 3. CHRISTOPHE MAE | 4. VANESSA PARADIS | 5. MANU CHAO | 6. AMY WINEHOUSE | 7. FREDERIC FRANCOIS | 8. NEIL YOUNG | 9. MIKA | 10. MIKA |

**ITALY**


**SPAIN**

| **ALBUMS** | **NEW** | 1. EL BARRIO | 2. JUANES | 3. LUCIANO PAVAROTTI | 4. CHENEA | 5. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN | 6. KATHERINE CONTEST KIDS | 7. DIANA NAVARRO | 8. MIGUEL BOSE | 9. FITO Y LOS FITIPALDIS | 10. FELIPE IGLESIAS |

**DENMARK**

| **ALBUMS** | **NEW** | 1. ANNE LINNET | 2. NATAKLASS | 3. VALENTINA | 4. KATIE MEJIA | 5. NEIL YOUNG | 6. KATIE MEJIA | 7. JEAN BOOYER |

**PORTUGAL**

### EUROCHARTS

**SINGLE SALES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sales</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HERBIE HANCOCK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICK BRAUN &amp; RICHARD ELLIOT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICARDO SCARES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,258</td>
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**ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICARDO SCARES</td>
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<td>10,258</td>
</tr>
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### TOP JAZZ

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<td>MICHAEL BUBLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>TONY BENNETT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVE BRUBECK</td>
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### TOP CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>HERBIE HANCOCK</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICK BRAUN &amp; RICHARD ELLIOT</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>RICARDO SCARES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,258</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### EUROPEAN COUNTRY

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<td>ANDY WILLIAMS</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANDRA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Data for week of November 10, 2007**

**For chart reprints call 646-654-4653**

**Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data**
Compiled from the Billboard Hot 100 and has been removed from the chart. Indicating the title with the chart's percentage growth.

**Singles Sales Charts**

The top selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail store, mass merchandiser, and Internet sales reports compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/Pop/Hi-Top Sales, singles sales data is compiled from a national sample of retail store and R&B-Hip Hop by Nielsen SoundScan. **Singles with the greatest sales gains.**

**CONFIGURATIONS**

**RIPTPREDICTOR**
- Indicates the handheld predictor status in that artist's prediction format based on research data provided by Promoscore. Songs are scored initially by Promoscore weighted ballots and a weighted mean of carefully curtailed music consumers. Scores are rated on a 5-scale; final results are based on weighted averages. Songs with a score of 60 or above are viewed as likely to be hit, and songs with a score of 40 or below are viewed as likely to have a Hit Potential; although that research number can fluctuate per format based on the strength of available music. For a complete and updated list of current songs with hit potential, comments, and polls, please visit www.RipTpred.com.

**Dance Club Play**
Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs. **T** = Titles with the greatest club play increase over the previous week.

**Award Levels**
- **Album Charts**
  - Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certification for net shipments of 500,000 albums (Gold). **RRIAA** certification for net shipments of 10 million units (Diamond). Simple ratings signify artist's album's multi-platform level. For boxed sets, and double albums with a running time of 100 minutes or more, the RIAA multiplies shipments by the number of discs in order to have a Top Artist Status. Certification for net shipments of 100,000 units (Platinum). **Certification of 500,000 units (Platinum). (Multi-Platinum).**

- **Singles Charts**
  - **RIAA certification for $50,000,000 sold** (Gold). **RIAA** certification for $1 million paid downloads (Platinum). Sales = RIAA platinum symbol indicates album's multi-platform level. For boxed sets, and double albums with a running time of 100 minutes or more, the RIAA multiplies shipments by the number of discs in order to have a Top Artist Status. Certification for net shipments of 100,000 units (Platinum). **Certification of 500,000 units (Platinum). (Multi-Platinum).**

- **Music Video Sales Charts**
  - **RIAA gold certification for net shipments of 25,000 units for video singles.** **RIAA** gold certification for net shipments of 25,000 units for longform videos. **RIAA** platinum certification for net shipments of 500,000 units for video singles. **RIAA** platinum certification for sales of 100,000 units or more for shortform videos.

- **DVD Sales/VHS Sales/Video Rentals**
  - **RIAA** gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units or $5 million in sales at suggested retail price. **RIAA** diamond certification for net shipment of 500,000 units or $5 million in sales at suggested retail price. **RIAA** gold certification for a minimum sale of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of 99 million at retail to three-yearly released programs, or of at least 25,000 units and $1 million at suggested retail for non-theatrical titles. **RIAA** platinum certification for a minimum sale of 500,000 units or a dollar volume of 99 million at retail to three-yearly released programs, or of at least 50,000 units and $2 million at suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.
## DVD SALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planets &amp; Universe</td>
<td>Mystique Label</td>
<td>1369</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transformers</td>
<td>Mystique Label</td>
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<td>$19.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet Terror</td>
<td>Mythic Video Label</td>
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<td>$19.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scary Stories</td>
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<td>$19.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aliens &amp; Predators</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Reaping</td>
<td>Mythic Video Label</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Jungle Book</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantastic 4: Rise Of The Silver Surfer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>The Invisible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbie as The Island Princess</td>
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<td>$19.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Are Marshall</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanny Montana: Life's What You Make It</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong Turn 2: Dead End</td>
<td>Mythic Video Label</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirates Of The Caribbean: The Curse Of The Black Pearl</td>
<td>Mythic Video Label</td>
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## DVD RENTALS

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Pirates Of The Caribbean: The Curse Of The Black Pearl</td>
<td>Mythic Video Label</td>
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<td>$19.98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## TV SHOW SALES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>South Park</td>
<td>The Complete Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Love Lucy</td>
<td>The Complete Series</td>
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<td>$29.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Simpsons</td>
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<td>$29.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>The Complete Series</td>
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## HEATSEEKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jody Mathais</td>
<td>Hombre</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Bochil Show</td>
<td>Hombres</td>
<td>710451</td>
<td>$15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Bochil Show</td>
<td>Nena</td>
<td>710451</td>
<td>$15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The All American Rejects</td>
<td>Girls and Boys</td>
<td>710451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Evans</td>
<td>All I Ever Wanted</td>
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## VIDEO GAME SALES

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>NCAA Football 08</td>
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<td>Bioshock</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>NCAA Football 08</td>
<td>Tre Charm</td>
<td>1369</td>
<td>$59.98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THE 2007 BILLBOARD TOURING AWARDS

LEGEND OF LIVE AWARD RECIPIENT
FRANK BARSALONA
Founder/President
Premier Talent Agency

HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENT
KEVIN WALL
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF ASSETS
OF
THE SONGWRITER COLLECTIVE, LLC

Notice is hereby given that Fortress Credit Opportunities I LP, a Delaware limited partnership, as a lender and agent on behalf of the lenders (the "Agent") under that certain Loan Agreement, dated as of March 1, 2004, as amended (the "Loan Agreement"), among The Songwriter Collective, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (the "Collateral"), the Agent, and Fortress Credit Opportunities I LP (the "Agent") and on behalf of the security interest in the Collateral, will sell at public sale on the premises of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, certain personal property assets of the Debtor, generally described as all of the Debtor’s right, title and interest of every kind and nature in and to all accounts, chattel paper, deposit accounts, documents, electronic chattel paper, equipment, general intangibles, goods, instruments, inventory, investment property, payment intangibles and software belonging to the Debtor, and the following personal property assets along with all collateral in furtherance of the sale as set forth below:

1. All personal property assets of the Debtor, generally described as all of the Debtor’s right, title and interest of every kind and nature in and to all accounts, chattel paper, deposit accounts, documents, electronic chattel paper, equipment, general intangibles, goods, instruments, inventory, investment property, payment intangibles and software belonging to the Debtor, and the following personal property assets along with all collateral in furtherance of the sale as set forth below:

2. The Collateral will be sold pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement, a copy of which may be obtained by contacting one of the persons identified in the final paragraph of this notice, containing terms of sale and conditions precedent to the Agent’s obligation to sell, in each case, in addition to those set forth herein, including, without limitation, the requirement that the sale of the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement be consummated as of September 22, 2007, or such later date as the Agent shall determine which Collateral is insufficient.

3. The Agent has sole discretion to determine which offers is the highest or best offer, and to reject any offer which it deems to be insufficient.

4. Concurrently with the acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to execute and deliver to the Agent the Asset Purchase Agreement, a copy of which may be obtained by contacting one of the persons identified in the final paragraph of this notice, containing terms of sale and conditions precedent to the Agent’s obligation to sell, in each case, in addition to those set forth herein, including, without limitation, the requirement that the sale of the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement be consummated as of September 22, 2007, or such later date as the Agent shall determine which Collateral is insufficient.

5. Upon acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to deposit the ("Deposit") with the Agent earnest money in an amount equal to ten percent of the purchase price. Such Deposit shall only be refunded to such prospective purchaser as, and to the extent, provided in the Asset Purchase Agreement.

6. No bids may be withdrawn once made, but no sale is final until accepted by the Agent.

7. Only cash or cashier’s check or other immediately available funds will be accepted for the Deposit or for payment of the purchase price. The holding of the Deposit by any prospective purchaser who fails to make a final deposit may be rejected and the Agent may, subject to the other terms hereof, (i) accept any alternative bid made at the sale, in which case the Agent shall have no obligation to reconvey the sale, accept additional bids, or notify any other bidders of the acceptance of such bid, or (ii) reject the Collateral for sale without further notice, in each case, at the Agent’s option. Notwithstanding the above, in the event of the death of the Agent, the Collateral shall be sold to the highest bidder as determined by the Agent. Any sale of the Collateral shall be consummated with such prospective purchaser, the full amount of such Deposit shall be applied to the purchase price. If such sale is not consummated, the Agent shall have the right, but shall have no obligation, to reject the Collateral for sale, without further notice. The prospective purchaser shall not be entitled to any interest on the Deposit held by the Agent, whether or not the Deposit is required to be refunded to such prospective purchaser by the Agent pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement.

8. No bids may be withdrawn once made, but no sale is final until accepted by the Agent.

9. The Agent will announce at the outset of the public sale whether the Collateral will be sold in whole or in part, and whether the Collateral will be sold in one or more lots.

10. Subject to satisfaction of all of the conditions precedent to the Agent’s obligation to sell the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement and the terms and conditions hereof, consummation of the sale of the Collateral will be made immediately upon receipt by the Agent of the purchase price and shall be evidenced by delivery of the Collateral to the purchaser thereof, BUT WITHOUT DELIVERY OF A BILL OF SALE, WITHOUT GUARANTEE OF SIGNATURES, WITHOUT PAYMENT OF ANY TRANSFER OR OTHER TAX, AND WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY BY THE AGENT, AND SUBJECT TO ALL DEFENSES.

11. The above terms and conditions of sale may be subject to additional or amended terms and conditions to be announced at the time of sale.

12. If any dispute arises between two or more bidders, the Agent may decide the same or put the Collateral up for sale again and resell to the purchaser submitting the best bid, as determined by the Agent. In all cases, the Agent’s decision shall be final.

13. All bidders and others persons attending this auction agree that they have full knowledge of the terms set forth above and contained in the Asset Purchase Agreement and agree to be bound by the terms hereof and therein.

14. The Debtor shall have the right to redeem the Collateral in accordance with, and only to the extent provided for, under applicable law.

Persons desiring further information as to the public sale of the Collateral, and the terms and condition relating thereto, and/or desire to receive a list of the Collateral, including the terms and conditions of the sale of the Collateral, and the names of the persons who are to receive notices of sale of the Collateral, may contact Mr. David Jackson (212) 839-6726 of Sidley Austin LLP, 777 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019 or Colleen McDonald (415) 772-1207 of Sidley Austin LLP, 555 California Street, San Francisco, California 94104, counsel for the Agent.

November 3, 2007

Robert Goulart, 73

Robert Goulart, 73, award-winning Broadway singer/recording artist, died Oct. 30 at a Los Angeles hospital. He was awaiting a lung transplant after September diagnosis of pulmonary fibrosis.

After beginning his career as a DJ, Goulart studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto on a singing scholarship and at 16 made his first appearance with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. He soon landed parts on stage in "Little Women" and "Spring Thaw." In 1960, he broke into stardom opposite Richard Burton and Julie Andrews as Sir Lancelot in the musical "Camelot," for which he won the World Theatre Award. The following year, he was featured on "The Ed Sullivan Show," among several other programs. Goulart was frequently showcased on the Las Vegas Strip and at the Persian Room in the Park Plaza Hotel. He gave performances for the White House and Queen Elizabeth II, and more recently, displayed his comic tendencies, lending his talent and voice to such shows as "The Simpsons" and "The Howard Stern Show."

His list of accomplishments include a Tony Award for best male actor in the musical "Happy Time" and a Grammy Award for best new artist in 1962. In addition, his single "My Love Forgive Me" went gold, charting in the top 20, and he scored two top 10 albums on Billboard's charts—"Sincerely Yours" and "My Love Forgive Me" in 1964. His name is immortalized on the Hollywood and Canadian Walks of Fame, and he was also a spokesman for the American Cancer Society.

Goulart is survived by his wife, Vera, daughter, Nollette; two sons, Christopher and Michael; and two grandchildren.

— Derek Shore

DEATHS

Rob Deacon, 42, new music producer and director, died Sept. 8 in a car accident.

Deacon published his first fanzine at 17. In just three years, he issued a number of vinyl albums under the name Abstract, featuring tracks and interviews from artists across the industrial, independent and new-music spectrum.

He created his first label, Sweatbox, in 1991, releasing compilations that coupled select tracks with a CD booklet of artist profiles and photos. Among the acts mixed and sampled were Blur, Nine Inch Nails and My Bloody Valentine. In his 1993 joint venture with Trounce Mead, Deacon produced "Trance Europe Express" and "Trance Atlantic," a CD series that captured and inspired the trance, techno and electronic music scenes. After touring Australia and Japan, he released music by Paul Van Dyk and DJ San Amo for his new label, Deviant Records.

Deacon is survived by his mother, Doreen; father, Dudley; and sister, Heather.

Dean Johnson, 45, performer and underground nightlife promoter, was found dead Sept. 20 in a Washington, D.C., apartment.

After graduating from his role as a go-go dancer at the Pyramid Club,

he went on to host his own parties in various East Village nightclubs. Among these were "Rock and Roll Fag Bar" and a gay music showcase at CBGB dubbed "HomoCors." As a musician, Johnson fronted two rock groups, then the Weenies and the Velvet Mafia.

Johnson is survived by his father, Ellis, and sister, Beth.

Linda Stein, 62, former manager of the Ramones and former wife of Sire Records founder Seymour Stein, was found dead Oct. 31 in her New York apartment. The cause of death was a severe skull fracture, and a medical examiner has ruled the death a homicide. Police have yet to name a suspect.

During their marriage, the Steins worked together to build the careers of many notable Sire artists, including Madonna and the B-52's. Linda Stein also arranged a number of the Ramones' overseas performances, which some claim helped spark the U.K. punk scene. After splitting with the Ramones in the early '80s, she worked in real estate and became known as a realtor to the stars. LaToya Jackson, Sting and Billy Joel were among Stein's clients.

She is survived by her ex-husband, two daughters and a granddaughter.
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RECORD COMPANIES: Concord Music Group names Julie Porter director of finance for Hear Music. She was senior accountant manager at business management firm Rigney/Friedman/Clazy.

Koch Records promotes Paul Grosso to VP of creative services and names Christopher Herche digital marketing product manager. Grosso was senior director, and Herche was manager of digital marketing at J Records/Arista.

Sony BMG Nashville elevates Heather McBee to VP of digital business. She was senior director.

Universal Music Group Nashville ups Joe Putnam to senior director of regional promotion for the Northeast at MCA Nashville, EJ Bernas to senior director of regional promotion for the Southwest at MCA Nashville and Sally Green to director of regional promotion for the Northeast at Mercury Nashville.

PUBLISHING: BMI names Jake Cavazos and Marissa Lopez as associate directors of Latin writer/publisher relations. Cavazos, based in Miami, was senior manager of programming and acquisitions at Miami's Animus Entertainment Group. Lopez, based in Los Angeles, was creative assistant manager at peer music's Southern Music Publishing in Los Angeles.

TOURING: Washington Sports & Entertainment promotes David Touhey to VP of booking and entertainment for the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C. He was senior director of entertainment.

DIGITAL: VH1 Digital, a division of Viacom's MTV Networks, promotes Tina Imm to senior VP/GM. She was VP.

SpinalFrog appoints Jennifer Link to VP of licensing. She was director of licensing for the East Coast at Warner Music Group.

MEDIA: Music and entertainment network ME Television names Corrine Perry Rotan director of marketing. She was marketing manager at UpLink. —Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS

MYSPACE ROCKS FOR DARFUR
More than 35 concerts will occur simultaneously around the globe Nov. 10 as part of MySpace's second-annual Rock for Darfur benefit, which aims to raise funds for the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan, Africa. Among the acts scheduled to participate in the one-day event are Carlos Santana, the Fall Out Boy, Hot Hot Heat, Maroon 5, Mute Math, NoFX, Rough Wave, the Decemberists, Xavier Rudd and Three Days Grace. Portions of proceeds from the concerts will be donated to Oxfam America and the Save Darfur Coalition. Last year's event, which featured 22 concerts, raised $50,000 for relief efforts.

BEYONCE'S VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE
Beyonce, the Global FoodBanking Network and Pastor Rudy Rasmus have joined forces with the Aidmatrix Foundation to raise funds to feed the hungry in Ethiopia, India and Turkey. Money donated to idmatrix.org/beyonce will be given to the Global FoodBanking Network and later used to purchase food items for people in need. Through Aidmatrix's Virtual Aid Drive, donors can choose from a shopping list that is approved for each country.

INSIDE TRACK

JAGGER'S INDIAN SUMMER
Mick Jagger was a surprise visitor to the inaugural Rajasthan International Folk Festival, held Oct. 25-29 in the Indian city of Jodhpur. "I wouldn't say I'm an expert, but I'm definitely an enthusiast for Indian music," he told Billboard after the opening night of the event, held w thin the historic 500-year-old Mehrangarh Fort. "I've listened to Bengali, Gujarati and Rajasthani folk music, and a festival like this gives a great platform to folk artists in a magnificent venue." During his four-day stay, Jagger—who told Billboard he was on vacation—attended festival performances by several internationally acclaimed Indian recording artists, including sitar maestro K. N. Bhatt and virtuoso flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia. He also turned up to see the locally popular rock-fusion band led an Ocean, which toured the United States in 2006. And, although the Rolling Stones completed a marathon two-year world tour in August, Jagger told the Times of India that the band is hoping to announce dates in India and elsewhere in Asia next year.

SINGING A NEW TUNE
Cheetah Girl Adrienne Bailon has her sights set on the Latin market. The singer, whose parents are Ecuadorian and Puerto Rican, is a featured guest on new single "No Me Olgas Gue No," from Univision Records' urban bachata act Xtreme. The song has gotten spins on a handful of stations, including KXOL Los Angeles. Univision doesn't have plans to sign Bailon, but Track hears she's seeking a label deal for a Spanish release. Bailon's latest project with the Cheetah Girls, "TCG," features Spanish versions of two songs on the album's Walmart bonus EP.
WELCOME TO THE MACHINES

Despite the loss of founding member Benjamin Curtis, Secret Machines are pressing on with their third Warner Bros. album. The group, which features core members Brandon Curtis and Josh Garza, is recording in New York through Thanksgiving with producer Brandon Mason. Guitarist Phil Karnats is assisting in the studio, and was on-stage with the Machines during a recent residency at New York’s tiny Annex, where epic new songs like “The Fire Is Waiting” and “Atomic Hell” were tested cut.

“I like the idea of jam bands—being that creative person who can spontaneously write great melodic lines,” Brandon Curtis tells Track. “But it seems like Secret Machines is the kind of band that benefits from calculation and having an idea of where we’re going.”

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