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RE-ENTER THE WU-TANG

With Help From Loud Records Mastermind Steve Rifkind, Staten Island's Hip-Hop Sons Rise Anew

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The OWard

Ownership Should Mean More Than Offensive Language

So what's in a word? Plenty if the word in question is the N-word.

Several weeks ago, rap giant Nas—respected for his socially conscious rhymes—announced plans to release a new album singing the N-word as its title. Nas' announcement reignited a debate that's been raging for most of the past year, thanks to a series of high-profile incidents. The notorious bourgeoisie kicked off, to some extent, in November, with comedian Michael Richards' offensive, loose-lipped tirade against four African-American patrons at Hollywood's Laugh Factory. Somehow, the mainstream quickly transitioned its focus from Don Imus' April "nappy-headed ho" comment to the use of racially sensitive words in hip-hop. And now Nas.

These incendiary events have prompted congressional calls on the use of the N-word passed by the city councils in New York and Los Angeles. The NAACP staged a congressional funeral of the word this past summer.

When Billboard's eighth annual R&B/Hip-Hop Conference convenes in Atlanta (Nov. 28-30), the ongoing dialogue over offensive language—and not to sell it short as an issue—female-bashing images in hip-hop will be addressed during the Thursday afternoon panel "Hip-Hop Post-Imus: A Wrappal Rebirth?" Panelists include BET programming executive Stephen Hill, Grand Hustle principal/T.I. manager Jason Geter and noted author/social activist/Princeton professor Dr. Cornel West.

Blaming hip-hop for all of the African-American community's problems isn't the answer. Whether Nas and Universal Music Group-distributed Def Jam ultimately decide to release his N-word titled album (there's been no definitive word to this point), I still respect the exercise of free speech. As a fan of Nas' work, it's not right to pass judgment on something I've yet to hear. As more than one industry observer has noted to me, Nas' statement could be the ground zero needed to spawn intellectual dialogue and finally bridge a racial divide that only seems to be getting wider.

I don't know. I hope that would be the intent behind Nas' announced plan and not merely publicity for his sake to drive sales. I do know that I don't buy the argument that black people need to take ownership of the six-letter word and thereby take the sting out of its offensive- ness. In order to do that, you have to understand the historical struggle behind the word: whipped slaves; the Underground Railroad; water-hoses and attack dogs trained on people seeking basic human rights; a right to vote; understanding; voting rights injustices...the list goes on.

But understanding that struggle is difficult when you have a whole generation of impressionable kids in school—black, white and others—who aren't being exposed to the meaning and possibilities of that word. I was taught growing up that if someone called me out of my name with that word to hit first and ask questions later. I still swing when I hear the N-word, no matter the color of the person using it. I've explained to my 12- and 13-year-old the ramifications of the N-word: it's not something used in our house. And if they are called out of their name with that word, they've been taught what to do.

Yes, comedian Richard Pryor used the word. So did fellow comic/playwright Dick Gregory, the Last Poets and N.W.A.

But it was a different era, and in most instances, it was for a meaningful rather than gratuitous purpose. Pryor was challenged to the N-word's negativity during an eye-opening trip to motherland Africa. Upon his stateside return, Pryor denounced usage of the word.

But now it's being bandied about with- out any sensitive thought to its desig- nating effects. Everyone thinks they can use it. They can't, and shouldn't.

If African Americans are to take control of something, why not take back control of a different word: ownership? Ownership of our black history and cul- ture. Ownership of positive images and self-worth. Ownership of stemming black-on-black crime. Ownership of improving education. Ownership of the political process. Ownership and control of more businesses, especially those making money off our rhythms and lifestyle.

As the Persuaders once sang, there is a thin line between love and hate. We as a people and as a prime force in the music industry need to work on which side of the line we're on.

The African-American cultural touchstones for today's kids often aren't Martin Luther King Jr. or W.E.B. Du Bois, but one-note rappers.

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LETTERS

June 1, 2007
It's looking like a bleak Christmas for music sales, but retailers don't seem too worried because they see a strong season for video and videogames.

While the numericals show a down 14.5% and CD sales down 18.8% so far this year, according to Nielson Soundscan, labels and music accounts had been counting on the fourth-quarter release schedule to offset some of that decline. But so far that hasn't happened. From Sept. 30 through Nov. 1, album sales have declined 18% when compared with the corresponding six-week period last year.

And merchants say they are not enthused about the remaining release schedule.

"It's looking like the holiday selling season will not be as strong as everyone was hoping it would be," says Galaxy of Sound VP of purchasing Joe Barrone Jr. says, "I would like to sell catalog and the independent labels, but the traffic for those sales is generated by the hits, and the edge seems to be off on that. It's hard to create mega-blockbuster hits nowadays."

Making matters worse, economists are predicting a weak holiday spending period for retail in general. A Bloomberg news survey of 46 economists in early November forecast that the economy will grow at an annual rate of 1.5% in the fourth quarter after expanding at a 3.9% pace in the previous three months. Meanwhile, some merchants, according to press reports, have reduced earnings projections because of lower sales.

For instance, chain management is attributing the sales drop to price resistance, seen as an indicator of a softening U.S. economy.

At least one senior major-label executive acknowledges that music sales could present a problem in December. "The release schedule is not strong enough to stop the CD decline," he says, "But what scares me more than anything, there is no presence for major in Black Friday advertising. It's indicative of how the big box have been treating the category."
UPFRONT

from ->77

doesn't understand why labels issue so few rap albums in January when they could have a much longer shelf-life than rap albums released in December.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS

When music did show up in Black Friday advertising, an advance peek at stores' circulars on the Black Friday gontdeal.com site suggested prices weren't as low as in the last three years. For instance, two years ago, Wal-Mart shocked competition and suppliers by offering hit titles at $5 each.

So far, Circuit City looks as though it will resume its traditional role as the music price leader for the holiday selling period. Going into Black Friday, the chain was featuring six titles at $6.99 each: Rihanna's "Good Girl Gone Bad," "High School Musical 2," Reba McEntire's "Duet," Kanye West's "Graduation," T.I.'s "T.I. vs. T.I.P." and Fergie's "The Dutchess.


Trans World has announced a number of Universal CDs at offer for $11.99, with a free $15 iTunes gift card, while Taylor offers more than 50 catalog titles in a two-for-$15 deal.

But in general this year, Europe's Fly says, "music deals are definitely not the focus. It's other things, like DVD and games."

The big box stores, merchants note, seem to be betting that flat-screen TV sales will drive traffic. In part for that reason, some retailers say they're less concerned about their businesses being hurt by low CD pricing in big-box Black Friday advertising.

"They say all the heat will be on low TV pricing this year," says, Gallery of Sound's Nandone says, "Besides, the Black Friday ads appeal to those who want to get up to 6 a.m. and stand on your head, which if you do, you deserve to pay next to nothing."

Newbury Comics CEO Dreese says he welcomes a shift in the big-box focus as well. "We are seeing more activity on hardware, videogames and DVD," he says.

Merchants say that's happening because movie studios have big hits and aggressive catalog pricing programs and there's carry-over demand for video hardware. Last year, the introduction of Sony's PlayStation 3 and Nintendo's Wii left many customers frustrated when they found overwhelmingly inflated supply. This year, retailers say, there will be better supply of hardware, and at lower prices.

"Please, stop cataloging things as hit titles being offered as low as $3.99. The lowest price deal, however, appeared to be at Best Buy, where it had such movies as "King Kong," "A Few Good Men" and "My Best Friend's Wedding" at $2.49. The video business keeps leading the charge in price drops, one music supplier complains. When pressed, he acknowledges that the pricing levels are no lower than last year, but he adds, "it's for stronger titles."

Music merchandisers say the video category also should receive a lift from the Blue-ray/HD DVD format war, which should start reaching a crescendo now that the price of players is dropping. Moreover, Dreese says the writers strike, which affects TV, could spur DVD sales even more.

Dreese also sees hope in that his stores should make up some ground from last year, because those numbers were adversely affected by the bargains at Tower and Musicland, which were undergoing liquidation sales during the fourth quarter.

Can Coline Dion's album lure people into record stores?

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FUELING THE FREEFALL

Perception Of Industry's Future Drives WMG Stock Price Downslide

The 11-month-long stock meltdown on Warner Music Group shares from its Jan. 1 opening at $23.14 to its Nov. 19 close at $7.60 seems to be driven by the perception of industry problems rather than the company's performance.

On Nov. 1, when WMG was trading at $10.09, Pali Research analysts Richard Greenfield and Mark Smaldown charged their rating on WMG from "hold" to "sell." They said the stock would fall to $7.50. On Nov. 12, Pali issued another report lowering that share price target to $5, saying the firm had underestimated the decline of music sales in its earlier report.

In addition to big declines in CD sales, Pali analysts said that the consumer is moving toward obtaining music for free and that the industry will have to get revenue from advertising, which will cause a painful transition.

On Nov. 2, Merrill Lynch also initiated the same downgrade, saying continuing declines in industry revenue will leave the business model in flux, which will pressure profit margins during the next several years.

As the only stand-alone publicly traded music company, WMG appears to be bearing the brunt of Wall Street's growing belief that digital distribution will not be the salvation of the music industry but its downfall.

"All the bad press for the music industry is weighing on the WMG stock price irrespective of the company's financial performance," Koch Entertainment chairman Michael Koch says. "The stock market always exaggerates things on the way up and also on the way down. When WMG went up to $30, it was probably trading too high, and now it's probably trading too low. The true value is probably in the middle.

One analyst says that the second Pali report with the lower estimate appears to be fueled by a Comscore Metro report on Radiohead, which estimated that 62% of consumers downloading the "In Rainbows" album chose to do so for free. The accuracy of the Comscore report has been challenged by Radiohead, though the band will refuses to release any sales results on its experiment.

Regardless, "this is a classic case of Wall Street throwing out the baby with the bathwater," says Anil Narang, a music industry investor who retains a stake in Sheridan Square, among other investments. "Because the industry is under such assault, Warner is getting pulverized."

Narang adds that "Wall Street is very fickle and they have uncertainty." If investors could figure out what physical sales will bottom out and saw stable growth from digital sales, "they'd be more optimistic. But the problem is not knowing when the two will cross is what gets people crazy on Wall Street," he adds. "It's not that there is tons of inventors selling WMG, it's that the buying has dried up.

As it is, Narang now thinks the stock is cheap and violated for a comeback.

Both Pali and Merrill Lynch project healthy earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization performance for WMG for 2007, even with expected declines next year. Pali estimates WMG's EBITDA at $460 million this year and $398 million for next year, while Merrill Lynch estimates WMG's EBITDA numbers at $426 million and $396 million, respectively.

But almost all the profit is eaten up by interest payments on the $2.27 billion in debt used to finance the company's 2003 acquisition by an investment group led by Edgar Bronfman Jr. So far this year, WMG has reported a $26 million net loss, or 18 cents per diluted share, on sales of $2.5 billion. Merrill Lynch estimates a 4-cents-per-share loss, while Pali projects a 15-cents-per-share loss.

Another Wall Street analyst, who chooses not to be identified, says Wall Street investors are fleeing the stock because most of the company's investments for the future—such as Bronfman's statement at a Goldman Sachs media conference in September that the company has adopted the 60-40 degree model—will take years to pay off. In addition to signing new artists to deal, the major will see the major share in touring, merchandising and publishing revenue. WMG in June formed a joint venture with Violator Management CEO Chris Lightly called Brand Asset Group. It is designed to capitalize on artists' brands through corporate sponsorships and strategic and integrated marketing campaigns.

On the mobile front, in the last 15 months, WMG has signed a series of deals with mobile companies around the world. WMG also started a division named Den of Thieves to develop original programming for network and cable TV, broadband and mobile.

"In the short term, immediate physical sales will get crushed," the Wall Street analyst speculates.

But an executive at a publicly traded company involved in the music industry says that today's environment requires a "contrarian view."

"The music business is in a period of redefining itself," that executive says. "If someone with the right vision and staying power were to buy in now, he could come out with a very successful investment."

But another industry executive suggests that its low share price makes WMG a takeover target. That does not take into consideration that the private equity owners, who hold 68%, could refuse any attempt if they didn't like the price. With WMG ready to report earnings Nov. 29, the company is in a quiet period and unable to comment.

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MBV GOES MP3
Re-Formed British Shoegaze Legend Plans Digital Future

DUBLIN—Legendary alternative act My Bloody Valentine plans to "do a Radiohead" at this year's Coachella Music Festival. It's also reportedly planning to release a vault of unreleased material, including some recordings from their "Shoegazing" era. The band has appeared in the U.S. recently, but will not play the festival due to scheduling conflicts. The band is expected to release a new album later this year.

The plan is that they will release the album themselves over the Internet.

—VINITA JOSHI, MANAGER

probably be a vinyl release.

Joshi adds that the band is unlikely to follow Radiohead's pay-what-you-like download model for its new recordings.

In the meantime, demand for the band's 2008 U.K. tour, its first since 1992, has proved strong. The initial three dates sold out in 15 minutes, causing four additional shows to be added.

The dates, promoted by All Tomorrow's Parties, include shows in London and Manchester.

MBV was a prime mover in Britain's "shoegazing" scene of the late '80s and early '90s, with "Loveless"—released by Creation in the United Kingdom and Sire in the United States—still regarded as a landmark recording that influenced subsequent generations of guitar bands with its mix of distorted guitar, pretty pop melodies and ethereal vocals.

"Loveless" reached No. 24 in the United Kingdom, but Shield's perfectionist recording techniques almost bankrupted Creation. The album has sold 250,000 copies in America, according to Nielsen SoundScan, with its predecessor, 1988's "Isn't Anything," scanning 69,000.

Signing with Island Records soon after leaving Creation, MBV made numerous attempts to record a follow-up to "Loveless" but was unhappy with the results and eventually abandoned the project. Shields went on to score the music for Sofia Coppola's film "Lost in Translation" and also joined Primal Scream, a role from which he has now stepped down.

Nonetheless, industry insiders remain excited at the prospect of the reunion. Peter Murphy, rock writer with Dublin-based music publication Hot Press, is one of the few journalists to have spoken to Shields in the last 15 years, having interviewed him in 2004.

"Like the Pixies, MBV died a premature death," Murphy says. "It was inevitable they would get back together at some stage. I'm just surprised it took this long. He told me that having to work to a deadline for 'Lost in Translation' focused his mind, and I got the impression that he was happy to simplify his working methods in the future."

Meanwhile, Joshi denied reports that MBV is planning to appear at the Coachella Music Festival in California next summer.

"If the band had been booked to play any summer festivals, I'd know about it," Joshi says. "We'll see how the summer shows go first."

1. At which point did you start thinking that you might be able to go back to work? The doctors at the UCLA Trauma Center let me know that there was a good possibility that the part of my brain that I injured could affect certain things. So I went back for a six-month checkup and they were totally surprised at how quickly I recovered.

2. Why did you start Tony Brown Enterprises? When I started at Universal South, I cut my production down to two acts. Strait from the MCA days and Brooks & Dunn. I wasn't having tons of fun being a [label head] 24/7, so when my deal came up at the end of last year, I decided this was the time to hang a shingle out and not be exclusively with one label.

3. What else do you want to accomplish? I always wanted to play for Elvis, and I did. I always wanted to play for Emmylou, and I did. I always wanted to produce someone as big as Barbara Streisand, and I did. I got to produce Strait's "Reba Duets" album, and I got to produce Strait's "It Just Comes Natural."
Congratulations to Tracy Lawrence and Rocky Comfort Records

2007 CMA Musical Event of the Year

“Find Out Who Your Friends Are”
w/ Tim McGraw and Kenny Chesney
COME TO THE COUNTRY

A CMA Marketing Summit Connects Nashville With Brands

Whether it’s Toby Keith’s partnership with Ford, which places him on your TV screen on a regular basis, or Jeep’s sponsorship of Faith Hill and Tim McGraw’s successful Soul2Soul tour, brand marketers are turning to country artists to advance their product lines. And while those deals were worked out between artist managers and the brands, the Country Music Assn. is also taking an active role in connecting the corporate world with country music. In fact, it could be argued that no other specific music genre’s trade organization is as involved with brand marketing as the CMA is.

And lately, that role is expanding.

In November, a select number of representatives from companies Procter & Gamble, Ketel One and Yankee Candle came to Nashville for the CMA’s second annual Marketing Summit. “We wanted to make it a small, intimate experience,” CMA director of brand development Paula Milton says. Billboard was also on hand, granted a behind-the-scenes look by the CMA.

Founded in 1958, the CMA is more than just a presenter of the awards show and the annual Music Festival, which brings thousands of fans to Nashville every summer for four days of performances, fan club parties and autograph signings. The organization is also a strong advocate for the format—and among its stated objectives is to demonstrate country “as a viable medium to advertisers, consumers and media.”

The summit was born out of the CMA’s experience with agencies and advertisers in 2005, which is when the awards show went to New York for one year. “Folks were saying, ‘How can we utilize country?’” Milton says.

The summit also builds on a corporate ticket program the CMA employs. If, for example, Kenny Chesney is performing in Chicago, the CMA may provide tickets to an advertiser and/or agency and then also “blitz” the market with in-person visits from the CMA marketing staff. It’s not enough to just talk about the country audience, the CMA contends—why not expose brand marketers to it? “It helps a lot when they get to experience something firsthand,” Milton says.

The guest list for the summit was culled from the CMA corporate database and was also based on information from Billboard sister publication Brand Week, which chronicles upcoming launches and re-launches of brands. “The summit is our way of getting some of these bigger brands that haven’t thought about country to think about country,” Milton says, “and let them see how other brands have worked with the format.”

Colin Gorman of New York-based consulting and brand imaging firm Translation, the entertainment agency of record for Proctor & Gamble’s oral care division, says that while marketing summits are not new, “the fact that this one was so targeted and with a small group was unique.”

Once in Nashville, the group received VIP treatment that included attending a concert that featured some of country’s rising stars, a songwriter showcase with some of Nashville’s top tunesmiths and a tour of the Country Music Hall of Fame. There was also a behind-the-scenes peek of the CMA Awards show and a studio tour that allowed participants to be a part of the recording process. Participants’ attendance at the awards show capped the event.

But the CMA did more than just wine and dine the participants. One panel, “Music Business 101,” featured a label marketing rep, an artist manager, a booking agent and a publicist explaining the importance of branding for country artists. A second panel, “The Power of Country,” demonstrated how representatives from AOL Music, CMF and People view the genre’s impact on their respective businesses. A representative from Crisco presented a case study chronicling that brand’s successful use of country music.

Those in attendance were also given pointers on how to work with country artists, how to contact a publisher to license a song and how to partner with such a third party as People or CMF.

Crystal Harrell, who works at Procter & Gamble in its oral care division, came away impressed. “A summit like this helps you understand what is possible, what country and CMA has to offer, as well as foster[ing] relationship building, which enables opportunities specific to your brands and needs to be created and developed,” she says.

Yankee Candle senior VP of brand, marketing and innovation Rick Ruffolo attended the first summit last year and sent company representatives this year as well. “I view it as a critical experience for our team to take time out of the office to better understand how to fully develop the partnership with country music,” Ruffolo says. “It’s been a great opportunity for our team to brainstorm with the folks from the CMA, as well as with the other marketing summit participants.”

Yankee Candle first became involved in the CMA Awards last year. It returned this year and will also be involved in the 2008 Music Festival. “We are in the beginning stages of our relationship with country music, and getting more familiar with the artists, the industry, the events and the fans, as well as how to create winning partnerships, [which] will be critical to grow this relationship in the years to come.”

The partnership just makes sense, Ruffolo says. “There is nothing more distinctly American than Yankee Candle and country music. Both are American originals and both have widespread, loyal and unprecedented popularity and support throughout the country.”

Gorman, a first-time visitor to the summit, was also impressed.

“I am definitely more likely to consider recommending it to my clients if there is a synergy with the product,” he says. “The CMA seem like fantastic potential partners.”

“The background on country music history and successful partnerships and integrations was very eye-opening and encouraging,” Gorman adds.

While not part of the summit, General Motors’ Chevy brand was frequently referenced as an example of a successful partnership. Chevrolet national promotion manager Phil Caruso says the company meets with the CMA each year to discuss its goals and objectives for the coming year, “while obtaining CMA objectives as well. It truly is a joint activity, which is why the relationship works so well.”

Caruso says the CMA is unique “in that nearly no other genre of music could deliver what they have because of the natural, organic connection between Chevy and country music. Many trade organizations have approached us with partner proposals, but very few deliver the way CMA has.”

Chevy is currently involved in the organization’s “Road to the CMA Music Festival” concert series, the festival itself, the awards show and the annual CMA calendar.

The recent Country Music Assn. Awards show, held Nov. 7 in Nashville at the Sommet Center and broadcast on ABC, has its own long list of promotional partners. American Airlines was the official airline, Chevy was the official ride and Mary Kay the official beauty sponsor. AOL, Borders Books & Music, Carl Black Chevrolet, Coca-Cola, Dr Pepper, Gibson Guitar, Greased Lightning Cleaning Products, Hard Rock Cafe Nashville, Mr. Coffee and Yankee Candle were also involved.

Whether it’s tour sponsorships or print, TV and radio advertising, country music is rife with promotional partnerships between artists and brands. Here’s a list of some of the current agreements:

- Sara Evans, Chevy Malibu (tour sponsorship, print advertising, billboards)
- Pat Green, Dickies (tour sponsorship)
- Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, Jeep (tour sponsorship)
- Toby Keith, Ford trucks (tour sponsorship, print advertising, TV advertising)
- Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland, Listerine Whitening Quick Dissolving Strips (internet campaign, print advertising)
- Brad Paisley, Hershey’s (tour sponsorship, TV advertising, billboards)
- Julie Roberts, Frito lays (tour sponsorship, personal appearances), Schwan’s Asian Sensations and Red Baron Singles (print advertising)
- George Strait, Wrangler (tour sponsorship, line of clothing, print advertising)
- Shania Twain, Stetson fragrance (print advertising, TV advertising)
- Phil Vassar, Rip It Energy Drink (tour sponsorship)

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In The Cards
Digital Albums You Can Hold In Your Hand

When Gerardo Alton Ortega began handling the career of his wife, Mexican pop/dance singer Alondra, he grew increasingly frustrated with the state of digital music.

To be precise, he felt the 99 cent-per-track model shortchanged artists—especially those like Alondra, who actively sold dance singles abroad.

“I was convinced people would buy the album, as opposed to just the track,” Alton Ortega says. “But they don’t want to pay $14 or $15 for it. So I wanted to find a way to make something that’s cheaper to produce, to ship and to store and be able to sell in millions of points of sale around the world.”

Alton Ortega came up with the Digimusicard; a card that looks exactly like a credit card, but is redeemable for a full music album. Its content can be downloaded manually by visiting the Digimusicard site and entering a scratch-off code printed on the back of each card or with a reader attached to your computer that allows it to be scanned, like a credit card. The suggested retail price is $10.

But it’s not a debit card—a la the Starbucks gift card. More similar to album-specific iTunes cards recently introduced through Starbucks and Safeway stores (Billboard, Nov. 3), the Digimusicard is an album—just sold in a different format. It can’t be duplicated and once it’s downloaded, it can’t be downloaded again.

Alton Ortega has quietly sold and tested the Digimusicards since the beginning of 2007, working out kinks in the technology and looking for partnerships with distributors and labels. In spring 2008, he expects to announce a deal with a major record label that will begin releasing its artists on the Digimusicard format.

When users login to Digimusicard (digimusicard.com), they can choose to receive newsletters from artists, which also acts directly to fans. Alton Ortega has between 60 and 80 artists with albums in Digimusicard format, and he’s manufacturing approximately 18,000 cards per month.

“Right now the artist is responsible for distributing and marketing the product,” he says. But that will change as of April, when he expects to see Digimusicards popping up just about everywhere.

“Sure, there are a lot of distribution systems,” he says. “But kids will love that they’re credit cards and they can collect them. And each card has a unique number and design that makes it easy to use for product giveaways.”

Alton Ortega is also expanding his technology into other “digim” realms, including a Digipromocard that will feature NBA players.

Tapping Into iTunes
Digital Store Still Scratching Surface Of Latin Market

iTunes Latino’s first anniversary passed quietly Nov. 1, with Latin digital album sales having slightly more than doubled year over year since its launch.

But those sales still represent a drop in the bucket, comprising just 498,000, or 1.4%, of all Latin albums sold between Oct. 30, 2006, and Nov. 4, 2007, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Other digital stores sell Latin content, but iTunes dominates the market as a whole.

A Pew Hispanic Center study released earlier this year showed only 29% of Latinos have broadband connections at home—something iTunes VP Eddy Cue acknowledges is an obstacle for potential customers, though one that will diminish as high-speed connections become cheaper.

The strategy for iTunes Latino is “to make sure that we try to get in as many places as possible—whether it’s through gift cards, whether it’s through the sales, live sessions, conferences, live music events… that’s how we get a lot of new customers.”

iTunes has run Spanish radio ads in the top five Hispanic markets, as well as TV ads on Spanish networks. Two months ago, it introduced Tarjeta iTunes gift cards—Spanish-language cards with Latin artists pictured on them—at mass merchants and supermarkets.

iTunes’ next major marketing push will be on the Latin online portals.
The invasion begins with a fully dedicated episode of "Vivo" as the duo performs three tracks from their new album "Los Extraterrestres" including Sexy Movimiento, Pegao, and Yo Te Quiero. Plus tune in to "One Nation Under Hip Hop" as they talk about their smash concert "Tomando Control" recorded live from el Coliseo in Puerto Rico. We also bring you a live "mun2Talks2", Wisin y Yandel's "Top 5" all-time favorite videos, special behind the scenes look from their video "Yo Te Quiero," online vignettes, customized on-air promos and much more.

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Band On The Run
Jonas Brothers Recording New Album On Gibson Bus

For sibling pop band the Jonas Brothers, currently opening the 54-date Miley Cyrus/Hannah Montana arena tour, time is priceless. So with a little help from Gibson Guitar, the trio is transforming its tour bus into a recording studio to get a jump on its next album.

"We approached Gibson, saying, 'What can you do to help us?'" Kevin Jonas recalls after a recent performance for screaming fans at Los Angeles' Staples Center. "Our goal is to never stop and to get it while it's hot."

Indeed, a hectic schedule of nonstop touring and intense performances, coupled with a handful of upcoming film and TV projects for the Disney Channel, the Jonas Brothers—Kevin, Joe, and Nick—left little time to record a new album. So instead of going the traditional recording studio route, the band partnered with Gibson, which provided a branded tour bus and recording equipment for 10 West Coast dates in early November.

"The bus thing isn't necessarily ideal," Hollywood Records senior VP of A&R Jon Lind says. "But the guys are in the absolute most creative period of their careers, and the music is pouring out of them."

Lind expects Hollywood to release the album in July. And with more than a dozen songs already in the can, everything seems to be on schedule. "We could have a finished record within the next month," Kevin says, noting that the band will need at least a couple of additional weeks in a real studio to fine-tune the material. "We've been working 12 hours every day in the studio."

If further studio time on the road is needed, the Jonas Brothers can ride on the AEG Live tour bus, which stopped in West Coast cities including Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco—could visit the tour's East Coast leg in December. Gibson owns five tour buses in the United States, according to a representative, but the Jonas Brothers partnership marks the first time an act has used one as a recording studio while on tour.

"Band in a Bus was such a unique idea and perfect for our state-of-the-art Gibson tour bus," Gibson Guitar chairman/CEO Henry Juszkiewicz says. "We've been with the Jonas Brothers since the beginning and couldn't be happier about their success."

On The Road
Ray Waddell, rwaddell@billboard.com

What Makes Touring Tick
Industry Heavyweights Take Stock At Billboard Conference

Columbia Records VP of artist development Liana Farnham wasn't exactly bubbling over with good news when she moderated the artist development panel at the recent Billboard Touring Conference, titled "The Long Run." But the general consensus of the panel—and the conference—was that artist development is taking place, and the news is clearly better than one live side of things than the recorded side.

According to Farnham's stats, sales of recorded product, physical and digital, are down 10% from a year ago. The digital market is up 30%, though it is still only 25% of revenue. "On the physical side we're seeing hundreds of millions in losses, down $437 million to $354 million industry-wide," she said. "A 20% decline is a loss of 82 million scans." Farnham said the majors feel strongly about touring's power in promoting record sales, with Columbia spending nearly $2.5 million in tour support last year. "The major labels, despite what you hear, still believe in artist development and touring," she said.

On the artist side of the tour-support equation, managers aren't always eager to take too much recognizable financial aid from the labels. Manager Michael McDonald of Mick Management/ATO Records (John Mayer) doesn't like taking tour support from labels, though "sometimes it's a necessity." More important than money is "to find people who believe in the band," McDonald says.

Considering the growth of multi-act festivals, the consensus among panelists was that a large festival play doesn't always damage an act's immediate future play in a market unless it's a major headliner. Charles Affat, partner with C1 (Lollapalooza, Austin City Limits Music Festival), said festivalgoers and club concert fans often are not all the same people. Particularly at the ACM fest, bands will play the festival during the day and sell out an Austin club that night.

That may not be as true for the touring festivals like Vans Warped or Ozzfest. Though they offered a critical platform to showcase
The Jonas Brothers, who are endorsed by Gibson, didn’t go about the recording process alone. To assist, the trio recruited producer John Fields (Jimmy Eat World, Pink), who worked on the group’s most recent album. That self-titled set, released in August, has sold nearly 360,000 units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Fields and the Jonas Brothers recorded that project in 21 days at Los Angeles’ Seecy Underbelly studio. The producer describes the band’s work ethic as “insane. With every other record I make there’s like three years between albums. With these guys, it’s one-year.”

However, the mobile studio is not without disadvantages. Along with bumpy highways and a growling generator, “it’s weird because I’m used to my gear,” he says, pointing to a small laptop. “I’m used to a full-on studio with ProTools—no limitations. This has limitations.”

But the Jonas Brothers don’t feel the production or songwriting will suffer. “We’re laying down the basics for a great record,” Kevin says. “It won’t suffer, because we believe in the songs we’re writing.”

On the financial side, band manager Philip McIntyre says the overall cost of recording on the bus doesn’t differ from going into a studio. “It will probably end up to be dead even,” he says. “I don’t expect it to be considerably more or considerably less.”

The next day on the “You Oughta Know” concert promotion panel, Warped founder Kevin Lyman said a key to keeping fans interested is slowly releasing the artist lineup and not necessarily the biggest names first. “I’ve learned from my audience that I don’t lead with my big headliners” when launching the tour’s promotion campaign. “I’ll announce five bands, probably smaller bands, on smaller stages,” he said, noting that the method creates significant word-of-mouth buzz among fans.

On her panel, Farinhah asked panelists their predictions of whom might break big in 2008 and promised to make them address their crystal ball accuracy at the next conference. Attal thinks 2008 will be My Morn-

ING JACKET’S year, and William Morris Agency’s Rob Beckham is high on Dierks Bentley for next year. Bowery Presents’ Jim Glancy cited Band of Horses. Storch offered We the Kings, Crush Management’s Bob Mc Lynn predicted Cobra Starship. McDonald came up with Mute Math, and Farnihan herself foresees great things for the Avett Brothers.

Additional reporting by Mitchell Pstew.

For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see billboard.biz/touring.
Clips That Click

Music Videos Get Interactive

Indie rock band Arcade Fire recently unveiled the first video for a song from its sophomore album, "Neon Bible." Set to the record’s title track, the clip—which launched on the Internet in early October—allows users to control the movement of images by mousing and clicking. The "interactive video" appeared after several weeks of cryptic missives from the band, urging fans to stay tuned to the URL beyondeh.com (an acronym for "Neon Bible").

Featuring shots of singer Win Butler’s head and hands on a black background, the clip is among the first of its kind, possibly paving the way for the proliferation of more individualized music videos in the near future. And now, Bristol, U.K.-based interactive media firm Coull is making clickable clips accessible for virtually anyone. Nov. 19 marks the official launch of coulltv.com, a YouTube-like site that allows users to convert any traditional video to an interactive format and publish it for free. A beta version of the site has hosted clickable concert footage by Kylie Minogue and U2, among others, for several months, pioneering interactive video as a medium for sharing and promoting music.

In Arcade Fire’s case, the decision to make a Web-functional video was a matter of technological forward thinking. "Traditional videos are mostly viewed on YouTube now," says creator Vincent Morisset, who also develops the band’s Web sites. "I thought, ‘Why spend $200,000 on a production and finish with this tiny pixelated thing? Since it will end up on a computer, let’s take advantage of the possibilities that medium offers.’"

The move made sense for an indie-label band (Merge Records) that built its fan base largely on the viral power of the Internet. For a total production cost of about $15,000, Arcade Fire reinforced its image as a cutting-edge act by engaging its indie-minded fans in new and interesting ways.

In the United Kingdom, major labels have experimented with interactive video strategies for mainstream pop acts for the past few years. RCA Label Group (U.K.) created a "personalized video experience" to promote the Simon Cowell-created group Westlife’s cover of "The Rose" from 2006’s "The Love Album." Made interactive by "responsive advertising" firm 20.20 London, the video, parked at mywestlife.com, began with a screen where users plug in their first and last name. During the wedding-themed video that follows, users monikers pop up on stationery and in text messages as if they are part of the plot.

"Videos made specifically for the Internet are catching on, because they really get fans engaged," says London’s Marc Connor, who manages Canadian opera crossover act RyanDan. The "reactive video" for the duo’s single, "Like the Sun," appeared on ryandan.com in September. Unlike Arcade Fire’s video, which allows users to control the action, the RyanDan clip utilizes embedded hyperlinks and text boxes offering information, forums, sharing features and even online shopping. Clicking the images brings up a separate screen where users can join a discussion about the object or scene they clicked (in this case, either Ryan or Dan). The alternate screen also provides HTML codes and URLs for sharing and embedding the video or its screen grabs. And perhaps most important, hyperlinks lead users directly to iTunes, where they can purchase Ryan Dan video content or audio tracks. Universal would not reveal the costs of the interactive video.

Produced in partnership with Universal Music Group’s U.K. arm and Coull, the RyanDan video demonstrates how the medium is changing from a nebulous promotional tool to a portal that actively links fans to revenue streams. "The realization that you can just click on a video and it takes you somewhere is huge," Coull CEO Irfan Watkins says. "It can lead users to merchandise, tickets and anything else the artist or label wants to sell.

Coull first integrated its interactive video technology in an online version of the video for "Do They Know It’s Christmas?" recorded by various artists in 2004 to raise money for Band Aid 20. The video, still viewable at bandaid20.com, featured biographical information about Bon Jovi, Chris Martin, Paul McCartney and other stars who appeared, but it also provided direct links to Band Aid’s donation site, thus tracking and monetizing the clip’s promotional impact.

That same year, Coull created an interactive video for British pop group Girls Aloud’s single "The Show," also under contract from Universal. Like the RyanDan clip, the online feature provided biographical information and chat forums for each of the singers, along with links to store fronts where users could buy the clothes and accessories they wear in the video.

The clickable video would seem to be the most likely interactive format to proliferate in the near future, if only because it has the potential to draw revenue directly. Though malleable images like those in the Arcade Fire video are impressive artistically, such controllable content might not prove cost-effective for every band or label, because the video has to be hot and sold to respond to users’ commands with seamless visuals.

"A lot of the things we see on the Internet are made to look like they’re for a computer," says Morisset, who shuns clunky, link-laden video content. "Our goal was to make something truly cinematic."

But if the goal is to make money, then Coull’s model is something to keep an eye on. Coull provides downloadable Video Activator Interface software that allows users to isolate, highlight and tag objects in music or other videos before uploading them back to the site, from which they can be linked and embedded anywhere on the Internet. Coull runs a pay-as-you-go system that bills clients for the number of times a user clicks on the client’s video. The company charges $10 ($20.49 per 1,000 clicks). "Ideally, the client would link to an online store to offset the cost," says Watkins, who claims Coull-hosted videos enjoy a 40%-60% click-through rate.

Neither Watkins nor the labels he has partnered with on interactive videos would comment on the cost of the videos’ production. And representatives at Universal and Sony BMG say it’s too early to give concrete figures on online sales of albums, tickets and merchandise due to interactive video installation. But the medium does offer a direct link to these products—therefore, in essence, the migration of the video from the TV screen to the computer screen has changed the medium’s potential.

No longer just an expensive tool for enhancing and promoting an artist’s image, videos can now lead consumers by the nose to make on-the-spot purchases.
GLOBAL NEWSLINE

>>DEZELSKY EXITS HMV JAPAN

HMV Japan president Paul Dezelsky will leave his post at the end of the year. "It is a completely personal decision," Dezelsky says. "After 12 years, I feel it is time to challenge something new and would like to run my own business, which will not be related to music retailing." Dezelsky adds that he feels this is "a good time to hand over." HMV Japan, he says, "is in good shape and has a strong management team." In late August, HMV Group sold the 62-store HMV Japan business to Daiai Securities SMC Principal Investments, an affiliate of Tokyo-based Daiwa Securities Group for 17 billion yen ($153.1 million). Dezelsky will serve as an adviser to HMV Japan after stepping down as president, when Daiwa executives Tetsujiro Hasegawa and Yuichi Amemiya will be appointed HMV Japan chairman and president, respectively.
—Steve McClure

>>NEW BRIT AWARD UNVEILED

The 2008 BRIT Awards will introduce a new Critics Choice category, celebrating acts tipped to break through in the coming year. A panel of experts comprising music critics from national newspapers, major music magazines and Web sites, plus heads of music at major radio and TV stations, will decide on the shortlist and the ultimate winner. The inaugural Critics Choice champion will be unveiled Dec. 10 on the revamped BRITs Web site. Acts signed to a label with a debut album due in 2008 will qualify for the new category. The winner will perform Jan. 14 at the BRITs Nominations Party, which will take place at London's Roundhouse venue in Camden and will be broadcast that night on ITV2. The annual BRITs show, organized by labels body the BPI, will take place Feb. 20 at London's Earls Court venue.
—Lars Brandle

>>AMG EXPANDS IN U.K.

U.K. venue operator Academy Music Group has struck long-term lease agreements to open new sites in 2008 in the northern English cities of Leeds and Sheffield. AMG will revamp/rebrand the former Town & Country Club on Leeds's Cookridge Street and the former Roxy nightclub on Arundel Gate in Sheffield as "Academy" venues. The new properties will open for business next year, as will AMG's recently acquired Hippodrome venue in Brighton on England's south coast, taking AMG's venue estate to 14. They include the Carling Brixton Academy and Shepherd's Bush Empire in London, plus sites in Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol, Birmingham and Oxford. AMG CEO John Northcote anticipates adding further venues to the group's collection. "We have a very supportive bank," Northcote says, "and we're currently negotiating on three or four sites for 2009. Providing I can keep finding buildings, I can keep opening them."
—Lars Brandle

>>MERLIN WEB SITE LAUNCHES

Merlin, the global digital rights body for independent music companies, launched its official Web site Nov. 19. The new service, at merlin-network.org, provides indies with a clear statement of Merlin's aims, methods and structure. At launch, the site is available in English, French and Spanish, with German and Portuguese to follow. Merlin says it is finalizing its regulatory obligations and preparing mandates, which will allow indies to appoint the rights body to act on their behalf. Merlin was unveiled at the MIDEM trade fair in January. Koch Records U.S. president Bob Frank was elected in October as the body's first chairman.
—Lars Brandle

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Anime Magic

‘Visual-Kei’ Bands Target The States Through Manga Conventions

TOYKO—Japan’s home-grown glam rock bands are attracting overseas fans by piggybacking on the growing international popularity of Japanese animation (anime) and graphic novels (manga).

The “visual-kei” (“kei” means “style”) genre, first founded in the 1980s, is enjoying a revival at home, thanks to a new wave of elaborately coiffed, heavily made-up and androgynously attired bands with exotic-sounding names.

Many of these bands now regularly tour to North America to perform at anime conventions. In 2007, for example, Renner En Soi played at Oticon Houston, 2012 performed at Anime Next in New York, and Duel appeared at Katsucon in Washington, D.C.

Katsuson vice chairwoman Collete Fozard says visual-kei bands at the convention “add a lot to the show” and have been “very well-received,” while Long Beach, Calif.-based Anime Expo programming division director May Anderson credits them with helping boost attendance at her event, which attracted a new high of 44,000 visitors in 2007.

“This year, S.K.I.N. [a supergroup comprising visual-kei artists Yoshiki, Gackt, Miyavi and Sugizo] debuted the [Japanese rock] concert of the century,” Anderson adds. “People from all corners of the globe flew in to Long Beach just to see this event.”

Recent partnerships between visual-kei bands and the anime world include Alice Nine supplying the theme song "Katsuragi" for the "Ginga: Nagareboshi Gin," while Ensoi recorded the theme song for the popular animated version of the "Death Note" manga series, released on DVD stateside by San Francisco-based Viz Video.

“The popularity of manga and anime helps overseas fans get used to the unique style of visual-kei,” says Joshua Lau, CEO of San Francisco-based online retailer YesAsia, one of the biggest international distributors of Asian pop culture products.

Now, leading visual-kei bands are stepping up to headline status overseas. Dir en Grey is the scene’s hottest property, taking its "Inward Scream" show to 17 North American cities in February, and mounting a joint 23-date U.S. tour with the Deftones in June and July. Venues ranged in size from Atlanta’s 7,000-seat Roxy Theater on Dir en Grey’s own tour to Seattle’s 4,000-capacity WaMu Theater with the Deftones.

The movement even had its own stateside festival this summer in the form of JRock Revolution, held May 26-27 at Los Angeles’ 2,300-seat Wiltern Theater, and featuring visual-kei mainstays Alice Nine, Vidoll, Duel, and the Deftones.

“Visual-kei is hampered commercially in the United States by its musically extreme nature, drawing on a disparate array of influences including hardcore punk, thrash, industrial, pop balladry, new wave and electronica.

With mainstream media generally wary, Kamijo—lead vocalist of rising visual-kei band Versailles—notes the importance of the genre’s founding fathers now occupying key executive roles. Yoshiki, lead vocalist of pioneering ‘80s band X Japan, is now one of the organizers of Jrock Revolution, while Hiroshi Tomioka, a ‘80s punk act, Color, is now president/CEO of Tokyo-based management company Free Will, whose roster includes Dir en Grey, 1202, and the Studs and other punk-oriented visual-kei bands.

Tomioka claims the Internet is the most effective overseas promotional medium for bands like Dir en Grey, whom he describes as “too radical” for mainstream TV. The band has more than 62,000 Myspace friends, while the Net also showcases the band’s renowned sex- and violence-filled videos.

“I don’t think it’s strange that people in other countries are attracted by anime and then Japanese music,” Tomioka says. “Visual-kei artists are dressed in the most eccentric way in the world, so foreign anime fans may have become addicted to visual-kei artists, thinking that they are like anime characters coming out of the screen.”

Tomioka claims Dir en Grey’s latest album, "The Marrow of America" (Firewall Divx), has sold some 100,000 units in Japan. It has sold 19,000 copies so far in the United States, closing in on previous set’s ‘Withering to Death,’ with 29,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The Recording Industry Assn. of Japan does not track CD exports or concert figures for Japanese music sold under license overseas, but recent breakout successes in America can be counted on one hand.

Some of the few to make any impact include pop/punk band Shonen Knife, which became a cult favorite after opening for Nirvana on its 1991 U.K. tour and moved 40,000 copies of its 1993 set "Let’s Knife" (Capitol), according to Nielsen SoundScan; and club act Pizzicato Five, whose top seller is its 1994 compilation ‘Made in U.S.A.’ (Matador), which has moved 98,000 units.

But Versailles’ Kamijo is confident that visual-kei will prove its staying power globally.

“We want a lot of people to listen to our music,” he says. “So it’s better to do promotion internationally, rather than confining ourselves to the Japanese music scene.”
HONOR BOUND

Return Of Premios Amigo Draws Mixed Reception

MADRID—After five years in limbo, the Spanish record industry’s flagship annual awards show returns Nov. 27. Don’t blink—you might miss it.

Labels body Promusicae launched Premios Amigo in 1997. The 150-minute telecast annually showcased local talent and attracted major international names from U2 to Kylie Minogue. But after just five editions, it was suspended in protest of Spain’s rampant physical piracy rate, estimated then at 50% of all sales.

Now it’s back in trimmed-down form with a new sponsorship deal with cellphone manufacturer Nokia—but no TV partner. “That Premios Amigo will not be televised reflects an absolute lack of respect towards music from private and public TV channels,” says Promusicae board member Simone Böse, who is also GM at EMI Spain.

Outside of reality TV series, there aren’t any regular pop/rock shows in Spain, only occasional airings of concert recordings.

While several channels did not return calls, their own viewing figures indicate declining public enthusiasm for awards shows. In 2001, Premios Amigo’s telecast on commercial channel Antena 3 claimed 12.2% of the viewing audience, down from 20.9% in 2000. RTVE communications director Begoña Pérez responds to Böse’s comments, insisting the broadcaster “is increasing its music broadcasts.” She cites a new series of live, late-night concerts that launched Nov. 14, plus a prime-time series, “Don’t Shoot the Pianist,” debuting at the end of November.

Promusicae president Antonio Guisasola says that the day after the event, mobile phone operator Vodafone will offer highlights via its Vodafone Live music service, while Yahoo Spain will deliver delayed coverage at promios-nokiaamigo.com. However, the only members of the public to actually experience the awards live will be the 300 inside the 1,500-capacity Circo Price theater. Guisasola claims exposure will still come from “prime-time TV news programs, radio and the press. More people will know about it that way than by watching TV at 1 a.m.”

Böse says the 2007 show has been trimmed to a fast-moving 75 minutes, with nine awards instead of the previous 17.

Six awards are sales-based, two publicly voted on and one chosen by Promusicae members. That focus on sales, SGAE corporate affairs director Paco Galindo says, differentiates Premios Amigo from Premios de la Musica, which “does not just promote the most-sold records, but showcases artists who otherwise have virtually no space in the media.”

While Promusicae’s major-label members have welcomed Premios Amigo’s return, there’s skepticism among independents and at retail. Xavi Turull, percussionist with leading Barcelona-based indie band Ojos de Brujo, finds it “surprising that Promusicae has organized an award gala that does not reflect the fact that some 80% of albums released in Spain are produced by Indies.”

Turull notes the band won a 2007 Latin Grammy Award for best flamenco album for “Techari,” released on its own label, Diquila. “There’s space for the indie sector even in major award ceremonies,” he says.

And Sergio García, music sales manager at retailer FNAC’s largest store in central Madrid, isn’t expecting a sales windfall. “Five of the Amigo winners will be this year’s top sellers,” he says, “and fans have already bought those records.”

Meanwhile, Guisasola claims Premios Amigo’s revival does not mean Spain’s piracy problems are over. Promusicae purges the present physical piracy rate at 22%, mainly thanks to a decline in major cities. It does not have current digital piracy figures, but claims there were more than 800 million illegal downloads in Spain during 2006.

The reappearance of Premios Amigo, Guisasola says, can only help Promusicae’s battle against the pirates. “We can protest about piracy better with a gala, instead of without.”
The Trans World Play

Will The Chain Go Private?

In 2006 at this time, Musicland and Tower Records were being liquidated in a year that would wind up with CD sales down 5% from 2005. This year, CD sales are down nearly 19%, and maybe the labels are sweating the downturn a little—but so far, their account base seems remarkably healthy. You wouldn’t know it, though, from reading the mainstream press, which never seems to tire of its mantra that record stores are doomed.

“My biggest frustration is that we are doing well and every other chain I talk to says things are OK, but people don’t seem to believe it,” one chain executive says. “They think we are all in trouble.”

Sure, inside the industry suppliers are a little concerned with longjobber Handlerman, but that seems to have more to do with the revolving door in its president’s office than it has to do with how the account is performing. And another new uncertainty is what will happen to Trans World, now that chain founder Bob Higgins is trying to take the company private.

If that happens, what next? And here’s another question Higgins’ play raises: Will the bid put the chain into play?

On Nov. 9, a day after Trans World stock closed at $1.89, Higgins—the largest shareholder in the company, who, with related persons and entities, has an approximate 40% stake—proposed paying $5 each for the outstanding publicly traded shares of the 963-unit, Albany, N.Y.-based chain. As part of that bid, Higgins contacted Raley Investment Management, which controls 12% of the company’s share.

If Raley participates and the price remains at $5 per share, Higgins would need to raise $74.6 million, not including investment banking and legal fees. If Higgins has to go it alone, he would need $93.2 million.

But on Nov. 16, Trans World announced that it received a letter from Sherwood Investments, which owns 4.3% of Trans World, stating that the offer is “grossly inadequate.” That letter suggested that $8 per share would be a fair price, which means Higgins would have to pay $119.3 million or $150 million, depending on whether Raley takes part.

The Higgins proposal was made to a special committee of the company’s board of directors consisting of non-management board members, who had already retained Goldman Sachs as their financial adviser to explore “strategic alternatives” to enhance shareholder value. That’s usually Wall Street code for “sell.”

So based on events so far, we could make one of two speculations: Maybe the board shopped the chain and couldn’t find a buyer, but Higgins wants to ensure that all possible suitors are aware the company is up for sale. Or maybe Higgins is capitalizing on the board’s apparent failure to find a buyer by making a bid to take it private. The latter scenario seems a lot more likely.

But if Higgins manages to take the chain private, what’s his plan? One scenario making the rounds that scares the bejesus out of suppliers has Higgins closing all stores and returning inventory—which, as of Aug. 3, stood at $475 million. So assuming Higgins gets to take the chain private by himself at $8 per share, he would owe the $150 million he borrowed to pay outstanding shares; another $166 million in accounts payable as of Aug. 3, according to the company’s 10-Q filing; and $62 million drawn down from the revolving credit facility.

In the all-stores-shuttered theory, that would leave Higgins with an apparent profit of $97 million. But that scenario is ridiculous for many reasons, most of which is because Trans World has only 400 leases expiring at the end of this year. That leaves rent obligations for another 63 stores.

No, what will probably happen is that Higgins will take the company private and then get even more aggressive in transforming the chain into a full-blown home entertainment retailer. As one Wall Street observer puts it, “Bob is a believer in Bob.” When I repeated that comment to a senior label executive who is a Higgins fan, he asked, “How many times has the industry written off Trans World and been wrong?”

I wouldn’t be surprised to see Trans World close some 150 or so stores in the new year, with inventory returned to partially pay down whatever has been borrowed to take the company private. But I learned a long time ago not to bet against Trans World.
in Portugal, Spain, and Greenland since he hooked up with AFE. Prior to these trips, he had never traveled internationally.

But free trips to exotic locales aren't the only benefit indie acts can get from working with AFE. For Henry, who came from a military background, there was a sense of "giving back" to an organization that had sustained many of his relatives. More tautly, bands can get a career boost out of completing a tour.

R&B singer Margot B says hooking up with AFE and playing in Cuba was "the best decision of my life." Aside from having the once-in-a-lifetime experience of performing for soldiers and deserters at Girón, she says that her career has "opened up" in the year since she did the tour. "I'm still getting e-mails from soldiers thanking me for playing, and they've been passing my music along to their friends and families," she says. "Because of the connections I made, I've been picked up for compilations in Europe and called to audition for 'Spring Awakening' on Broadway."

Adam's Ants has had a similar experience. "We've had people start street teams on the bases for us," Henry says. "Military fans are really loyal, and as they move from base to base, they spread the word." The band is planning on self-releasing a recording digitally in December, and hopes that the fans it gained during its world tour will support the act.

While the tours are all expenses paid, bands are not allowed to sell merchandise on the bases. They are free to give away copies of CDs and direct traffic to Web sites, and a few manage to create individual partnerships with on-base stores. According to Snoek, however, these partnerships are rare. Bands that want to sell their albums in stores on military bases face much higher hurdles, including the need to be affiliated with a recognized distribution company and make it past a rigorous screening process. Jeralyn Reid, the lead music buyer for military retailer AAFES, says that many records of the songs tend to be best sellers that interest younger listeners. But even if a trip abroad to perform with AFE doesn't lead to moving more units, it can still be a benefit for an up-and-coming band. "We've had a huge increase in the amount of interest we get from the press," Vailly says. "The story of the AFE tour is something that a lot of people want to hear, and it really sets us apart from other bands. Plus, it's just a great thing to have on your résumé."

O'Connor says the DOJ hasn't yet had the opportunity to review the Leahy/Comyn bill, but it has either formally or informally provided its views on other pending enforcement bills.

"The bottom line is we're generally very supportive of the effort to give prosecutors and others the tools to combat intellectual property piracy, but there are some concerns in the specifics—whether they're practical or will have the desired effect," O'Connor says. "So we're working closely with our colleagues on the Hill—Democrats and Republicans—to come up with an end product that everyone's happy with."

O'Connor says the DOJ is generally thought to make its greatest impact by focusing on criminal prosecutions—private lawyers can enforce civil remedies, while only the DOJ can legally prosecute criminals.

"Our civil division, who presumably would do these cases, are obviously operated with a lot of other lawsuits brought against the government as their core mission," O'Connor says. "To ask them on top of that to go out and bring civil claims on behalf of the industry would be difficult, absent the infusion of new bodies."

The DOJ's focus on the criminal front is showing some important results.

For example, prosecutions continue against defendants in the two largest international enforcement actions undertaken against online piracy—Operations FastLink and SiteDown. In 2004-05, officers busted "warez" groups (organized groups that illegally share copyrighted works, often prereleases); so far, the U.S.-led operations in 15 countries have resulted in more than 100 felony convictions.

"The difficulty with [online piracy] cases is that, oftentimes, the defendants aren't motivated by profit," O'Connor says. "Sometimes the colleges look at us like, "We're a bunch of college dropouts sitting behind their computers acting like Robin Hood, robbing from the rich to feed the poor.""

Nevertheless, O'Connor says prosecutors make it very clear at sentencing that they don't agree with such an assessment.

Meanwhile, earlier this month, the first DOJ Intellectual Property Law Enforcement Coordinator to work in Eastern Europe landed in Sofia, Bulgaria. And earlier this year, the first IPLEC was placed in Bangkok to help fight piracy in Southeast Asia. The experienced IP prosecutors will be developing relationships with private industry and the governments, O'Connor says, to train local officials and coordinate investigations and operations against IP crime.

"We are very, very aware of [the music industry's] concerns," O'Connor says. "There's a real keen awareness of the economic benefit of being very aggressive in enforcing IP rights in the criminal arena, but there's also a realism that with the Internet and the international scope of this problem, we've got to pick and choose wisely where we put our resources and make sure we have the most significant impact."

That requiring the DOJ to handle civil cases may not be such a great idea; there isn't sufficient staff to handle the cases.

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Dave Marsh has a fabulous new book.

I don't think any writer in rock history celebrates the shotgun marriage of intelligent, important critical analysis and the pure unbridled mindless joy of pop culture more effortlessly than Marsh.

When he told me 15 years ago that he was writing a book about "Louie Louie," I laughed out loud. But he wasn't kidding. Who would even think to do something like that? Certainly no serious writer. Unless it was for a quick, light-hearted magazine essay for a quick check.

Today "Louie Louie" remains among my top five rock books of all time and might just be my favorite.

Well, here he goes again.

This time he's chancing the most unlikely subject (and yes, as the former editor of Creem, he helped define the term "contrarian"): the completely disregarded, disre-pected, déclassé and ultimately deleted "The Beatles Second Album" (which, of course, it wasn't).

All of the early albums by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and everyone else English had different configurations in America than the official ones in England.

This was done for two simple reasons: greed ("We can make three albums out of two, and no one will care") and the need to include the hit singles on the albums. Which England mostly didn't do—well, come to think of it, that was greed too.

The complication that revealed itself years later was that, while the Beatles' American versions were considered irrelevant, the Stones' American versions contained two of their best albums, including the record I consider the best album ever made by anyone, "12 X 5."

So ironically or coincidentally or whatever, the American Stones' configurations are considered totally valid, while the Beatles' American albums are considered just silly and irrelevant.

As counter, says Marsh—who, in this tiny little tome, manages to shave an amazing amount of insights ranging from the racial ("You Really Got a Hold On Me") to the philosophical ("In the end, it's the collective aspect that touches me most deeply. Individualism is a cheap commodity in America because there's always a surplus of it. Finding some sort of community is a much more difficult task"); to the musical ("In terms of sheer power and rude eloquence, [John] Lennon outstripped even 'Twist and Shout' with his vocal on 'Money,' naked, abrasive, honest-to-a-fault").

And the story even has a villain, Capitol A&R man Dave Dexter Jr., the man who passed on the Beatles' first five singles and, as an example, passed on the Dave Clark 5, the Animals, Herman's Hermits and the Yardbirds, and didn't lose his job.

I love this book and can't recommend it highly enough. (OK, one quibble: Marsh is completely wrong about "Roll Over Beethoven"—but he's entitled.)

This book is a personal, universal, insightful, celebratory, revelatory, funny, stupid and brilliant.

Just like "The Beatles Second Album."...
If You Can't Join 'Em, Beat 'Em

Apple, Google Sidestepping Mobile Operators

Things in the mobile music world are about to get a whole lot more interesting.

It seems as though pretty much everybody nowadays thinks he can do a better job offering mobile applications and content services than the mobile operators have. While there are plenty of mobile applications out there, mobile operators have been notoriously stingy about which ones they allow on the handsets and networks they control.

As phones take on more entertainment functionality, the response has been to simply go around them. The latest entrants: handset manufacturers. Or more specifically, software companies that suddenly fancy themselves handset manufacturers. Even more specifically—Google and Apple.

Apple obviously came first. The iPhone has been heralded as a wake-up call to a mobile industry long criticized for making anything other than voice phone calls too difficult and too expensive.

More recently is Google, making things really interesting with its Android initiative. Unlike the iPhone—which is a flashy piece of hardware optimized with equally flashy software—Android is Google's open-source operating system for mobile phones.

The company hopes it will attract teams of developers making slick applications that will finally get the mass market using their phones like computers.

This openness is exactly what content providers want. Warner Music Group chairman Edgar Bronfman Jr. is perhaps the most vocal, saying that carriers need to either get on board or miss the boat.

If the mobile phone industry doesn't respond with highly competitive offerings, they're going to watch their share of the opportunity diminished," he recently told the Financial Times.

Of course, we've heard that before.

A host of upstart wireless services companies emerged during the last four years to take on the carriers at their own game. These companies basically leased airtime from incumbent operators like Sprint and Verizon to offer wireless services—and handsets—under their own brands, taking a decidedly content-heavy approach. They included Amp'd Wireless, Disney Mobile, ESPN Mobile and Helio.

At first blush, it made a lot of sense. Carriers know technology, but content companies know content, and it seemed reasonable that they would be able to sell content and services on mobile phones better than stodgy wireless operators could.

Naturally, that didn't happen. Of these mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs), adhering to the mobile industry's love of acronyms that emerged only the original—Virgin Mobile—and Helio are still around, and Helio is burning through hundreds of millions annually. Amp'd declared bankruptcy, while Disney and ESPN vanished in the vestiges of the dot coms.

The point? Competing with established wireless operators on their own turf is hard.

Which is why the effort has moved to handset instead. Apple has proved its ability to create slick devices with the iPod. Google is a software juggernaut. They're not competing with carriers on the carriers' terms but rather on their own.

By creating a better device—or a better software platform—these companies are gambling that wireless operators will have no choice but to support their products. Other phone manufacturers like Nokia and Sony Ericsson are trying similar tactics by launching their own mobile music services, mobile gaming platforms and mobile social networking services.

But these are closed systems. And while Apple has rapidly opened the iPhone platform to third-party applications, developers will have to pay a fee for the opportunity to do so.

Which makes Google the real pioneer here.

Sort of. Google is licensing Android for free and even offering $10 million in prize money to developers who write exceptionally good applications for the platform. And rather than building the phone itself, Google is licensing Android to handset manufacturers to multiply devices, even forming the Open Handset Alliance to lure such manufacturers, operators and tech companies as Motorola, Sprint and Qualcomm on board.

It's a bit of a pipe dream that others have reached for but have yet to obtain.

Android is Google's open-source operating system for mobile phones.

Microsoft tried to unite the fragmented mobile phone market under Windows Mobile OS, but despite licensing agreements with some 50 phone manufacturers, it will ship only 10 million-15 million phones this year.

Nokia tried it too, spearheading the Symbian OS, which has captured more than 70% of the global smart-phone market, according to ABI Research. But developers must pay licensing fees to write for the platform, and ABI expects its market share to fall to almost 40% by 2012.

So yes, it's been tried before. But there are reasons Apple and Google are getting the attention they have. Both are the 800-pound gorillas in their respective areas—Apple as it pertains to digital entertainment (music and video) and Google with advertising and location-based services (two areas expected to dominate the mobile content market in the years ahead).

The point: Both in their actions are saying they can do better than the wireless operators have. To date, operators have dictated the features and capabilities of the devices on their networks. They set the agenda, and the device manufacturers followed.

Google and Apple won't have that. They're leading the way and daring mobile operators to ignore them at their own peril.

BITS & BRIEFS

GOING MOBILE

MTV has tapped Interacasting to create a series of mobile social networking sites built around its various programs. The first is for MTV Tr3s, MTV's Latino-focused music video channel. The mobile social network will be called ConXion. Both hope to extend the social network to the Web in the near future, but for now, it will remain in mobile-only access mode. MTV says it has seen Tr3s mobile video traffic increase 60% every month in the last quarter, hence the focus on mobile.
Ed Bicknell

I was stunned by the sheer number of festivals this summer. There are too many out there that are jumping on the bandwagon.

As a manager, I was reluctant to place acts at festivals. I preferred Dire Straits to perform before a crowd of 5,000 who wanted to see them in front of 50,000 when they were just one of several acts on the bill. Festivals can do very well for big headliners, but it’s questionable how useful they are for people lower down the stream.

How do radio and labels affect the U.K. and European touring business?

Depends on whether you’re already established. I certainly don’t think the Rolling Stones get that much airplay, apart from a couple of their classic hits. Labels and radio are important to everyone, apart from those acts that are not even trying to be record-selling acts. Led Zeppelin has not had a [studio] record out in about 20 years, but they are currently the biggest single ticket draw at the moment because of their reputation and curiosity value.

Has the U.K. secondary-ticketing market gotten out of hand?

With the escalating ticket prices and secondary ticketing, two things may happen: People who normally go to shows a year will now go to only 10, and no one knows who will replace the older acts, such as the Rolling Stones, when they are gone. I thought the way the ticketing for Prince [at London’s 02 Arena] was handled was equitable. But not many acts are willing to play that many high-profile shows. When I was managing Dire Straits, they would play in venues such as the Sydney Entertainment Centre for 22 nights in 1986; that decreased chances for the tours.

Why was it important for the William Morris Agency to boost its music presence in the United Kingdom, even though the literary and movie divisions have been there for several years?

The company is very hot at the moment, and there is a push to become the dominant but most diversified talent agency in the world in the next two to three years. Music was the natural extension here, and we’ve just now started a corporate consulting division.

The company has recently gone from being an old-fashioned, conservative operation to being very young and dynamic. Jim Watt, the CEO, has reinvented the company. It now has a clear strategy, and the music department is almost the first step in that direction. We have someone on the ground in China, where it is very difficult to do business because of the bureaucracy and censorship, but it can be done.

The way the whole company is laid out is not just about booking a few bands. Within WMA’s music group alone, we’ve got a division that covers just about everything that you’re likely to come in contact with. For example, Jack White of the White Stripes has just been signed on as an agent. In corporate consulting, we use music artists for [broadcast] commercials. There are a couple of music-related books being written by or about people in bands that originated from this office.

Is the U.K. concert market the hottest one in the world?

The U.K. market is very buoyant. I was stunned by the sheer number of festivals this summer. But I must admit to being a little worried. There are too many out there that are jumping on the bandwagon. I hope it doesn’t go the way of the recording business, which has shot itself in the foot through greed.

William Morris has an enormous [middle-of-the-road] roster, with people like Johnny Mathis, Harry Belafonte and Natalie Cole, who are also popular in Europe. And we also have an enormous urban and hip-hop roster. There are some country acts in North America that will translate well here, such as Rascal Flatts, Brooks & Dunn and Kenny Chesney, plus a major R&B operation that we could do more with.

Why do the major acts play stadiums in Europe but play arenas in the United States?

It really depends on the individual acts, how much time they are prepared to spend in a market and how big they are in the different markets. A lot of U.S. artists come to Europe during a very narrow window of time, from the end of May until the end of July. They usually want to play at the music festivals or at a stadium or a combination of the two. Then, you also have some like the Foo Fighters, who did some festivals and are coming back in the autumn to do an arena tour. If you looked at the U.K. stadium shows this summer, most of them, such as George Michael, the Police and the Rolling Stones, are from the United Kingdom. The truth is that the number of acts that can fill a stadium is very small—probably fewer than 50.

How do Europe’s music festivals play into artist development?

Festivals might get you in front of a big audience in one go, but I have mixed feelings about them. I’m not sure it’s really helpful to put a baby band in front of a festival crowd. Some festivals—such as Glastonbury—are, in fact, social events. But if you look at a heavy metal event, then you’d know that the acts playing are key to the festival doing very well. When you go to the Download Festival in Donington Park, you’d not be surprised to see acts like Black Sabbath or Metallica.
RETURN OF THE WU

Six Years After The Pioneering Rap Collective Raised Its ‘Iron Flag,’ The Wu-Tang Clan Reunites With Loud Records For A Dual Comeback

BY MARIEL CONCEPCION

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXX HENRY
It's a hot late-summer night in Seattle, and the cloud of pot smoke emanating from the Memorial Stadium stage is growing more formidable by the minute.

There's RZA, picking up a blunt thrown on-stage by the crowd and giving it a puff, then passing it to Method Man, who passes and poses for a photo. There's DJ Mathematics, busting out the signature beats of "Protect Ya Neck," "C.R.E.A.M.," and "Triumph," which, once performed, drive the audience into hysterics.

RZA even leads the crowd through a Tai Chi exercise as a precursor to "Gravel Pit." But there's no Ghostface Killah on this night (an unexplained no-show), and there's most definitely no Ol' Dirty Bastard (dead since November 2004). And though the Wu-Tang Clan's name is on the ticket, this is a very different group than the collective of Staten Island rappers who stormed the hip-hop world with 1993's instant classic, "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)."

For one, there hasn't been a Wu-Tang album since 2001's "Iron Flag," and group members have gotten used to the higher paydays they can command with their solo releases. For another, the artists have been feuding in the press during the past month about money from creative vision. It all sounds like the worst possible setup for the group's new "8 Diagrams," due Dec. 11, but such is the state of the Wu-Tang Clan circa 2007.

"We're not day-to-day in tune," RZA says. "But when Wu-Tang comes together, we put our lives on hold. Sometimes that's a good thing, sometimes it's bad. I turned down two TV shows to do this record.

The first step in easing Wu-Tang back into the marketplace was re-igniting with Steve Rifkind, whose Loud Records imprint put the group on the map in the '90s. Rifkind now runs SRC, whose roster includes Akon and David Banner and is distributed through Universal.

Rifkind launched Loud in 1992 and housed such acts as Big Pun, Twista, Mob Deep, Dead Prez and Three 6 Mafia until it shut its doors in 2002. "Loud had shifted over to Sony, but they didn't understand our environment and we didn't understand their environment, so the shoe just didn't fit," Rifkind says.

"In December of 2006, [we] sat down and started thinking about what we did for hip-hop, which led us up to injecting ourselves into it again," RZA says about his initial meeting with Rifkind. "We thought we should find closure and rediscover the synergy." In January, he reached out to the rest of the Wu family and everyone agreed to jump onboard.

**SHAOLIN SOUNDS**

So it was that the eight surviving Clan members, along with longtime affiliate Cappadonna, who was recently inducted as an official Wu-Tang member, were back together in the studio.

"My idea with this album was to have an hour of your day be different—you go into this other world of beats, hardcore lyrics and imagery of hip-hop," RZA says. "I wanted the listener to be stimulated by the music.

For RZA, that meant balancing a heartfelt "Of Dirty Bastard tribute ("Life Changes") with the horn-laden "Starter," and the Erykah Badu-assisted single "The Heart Gently Weeps," which features an interpolation of the Beatles' "While My Guitar Gently Weeps."

The song features guitar contributions from the Red Hot Chili Peppers' John Frusciante and George Harrison's son, Dhani, but contrary to rumors, it does not include an actual Beatles sample. Rather, RZA selected a California band, Stone Mecca, to re-create the backing track. Other guests include George Clinton, Valentine, Dexter Wiggles, Gerald Alston and Tashmahogany.

Raekwon adds grit to "Watch Your Mouth!" ("I'm from a boulevard where niggas get jacked and peed on," he raps), while Method Man is showcased on the soulful head-nodder "Stick Me for My Riches." On "Take It Back," the group raps about re-asserting its hip-hop dominance, with Method Man noting, "Before you even had a name, you was screaming, 'Wu-Tang.'"

Sometimes all the Wu members were in the studio on the same day, but just as often, they were emailing each other their finished verses from some far-flung locale. But as the album nears release, not everyone is happy with the finished product.

Raeekwon complained in an online interview that RZA's guitar and piano-heavy productions wouldn't appeal to hardcore fans, claiming, "He's like a hip-hop hippie.

"I don't know if everybody agreed with it—everybody got their own opinion," RZA says of his production style.

"With any family structure, you always have some type of disagreement," says Mathematics, who produced one track on the new album. "Someone is always going to be dissatisfied," he adds, noting that certain tracks are made for certain individuals. "Sometimes someone's voice or style won't fit. It's important when making beats and tracks and songs to know who's right for what."

**BIRTH OF THE WU**

The Wu-Tang Clan started as the vision of a young Robert Diggs, aka RZA, in the late '80s. He and his cousins Russell Jones (Ol' Dirty Bastard, or ODB) and Gary Grice (GZA) formed a rap trio called Force of the Imperial Master (aka All in Together Now Crew), but after they disbanded a few years later, GZA and RZA went on to pursue solo careers, landing short-lived individual deals with Cold Chillin' and Tommy Boy, respectively.

"That era in hip-hop was about MC Hammer, Young MC and Tone Loc," RZA recalls. "The big hip-hop sellers were making more pop music, and so the label wanted me to be a sex symbol. GZA's label wanted him to be like Big Daddy Kane; the self-proclaimed 'wop chocolate.' It was a conflict of creativity."

Undaunted, GZA, RZA and ODB reunited and set out to start their own group again, this time recruiting childhood friends Corey Woods (Raekwon), Clifford Smith (Method Man), Jason Hunter (Inspectah Deck), Dennis Coles (Ghostface Killah), Egin Turner (Masta Killa) and Lamont Hawkins (U-God) to form Wu-Tang.

Their first single, the independently released "Protect Ya Neck," had no hooks and eight different people rapping on it, but it caused a sensation regionally in 1993. It also caught the attention of the young Rifkind, who had just launched Loud Records a year prior under RCA/BMG. He offered Wu-Tang an unorthodox deal that allowed the members to sign solo contracts with unaffiliated labels while releasing in-house group albums.

"He told me he didn't have enough money and he didn't understand hip-hop much, but when I told him my vision, he believed in it," RZA says. "One, Steve couldn't take control of 10 guys from the hood. And two, creatively, we had so much material backed up that one label couldn't handle [so many niggas]."

Rifkind gave the group a $60,000 advance to split among the members and put up $30,000 of his own money to produce "Enter the Wu-Tang," which introduced the group's kung fu-obsessed philosophy and dense, gritty sound to a wider audience.

As Wu-Tang rose through the hip-hop ranks, its members quickly became solo stars through such albums as GZA's "Liquid Swords" and ODB's "Nigga Please," regarded by many as one of most bizarre releases in hip-hop history.

The group also pioneered the collision of branding and hip-hop, first with the 1997 launch of the Wu-Wear clothing line and affiliate stores in New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Norfolk, Va. In 1999, the Clan capitalized on its name recognition by appearing in the PlayStation videogame "Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style," which was a commercial disappointment but has since acquired something of a cult following among fans.

By the turn of the century, there wasn't much steam left in the group's own music (see chart, page 29). It seemed as though fans were more interested in Method Man's burgeoning acting career or the enduring antics of ODB, who had once appeared in an MTV News clip pulling up to a welfare office in a limousine with several of his children in tow.

Then, at the New York record release party for Wu-Tang's "The W" in November 2000, ODB, who was at the time a fugitive, joined the group for three songs and then promptly escaped from the police.

In and out of jail for the first several years of the decade, ODB died of an accidental overdose on Nov. 13, 2004, while recording at the Wu-Tang's New York studio.

"It was such a shock to find out something happened to our brother," GZA says. "We've done albums without him either because he was locked up or was not fucking with us or was
just on his own mission, but to know that he definitely won't be around—it's just not a good feeling. Wu-Tang came together like Voltron and he was a major part of the body. Now, we're walking around with crutches.

MOVE THE CROWD
RZA is putting on a brave face as the pressure builds to spread the word about "8 Diagrams." Observers say solid foundation was laid during the band's stint on the Rock the Bells tour this summer, during which Method Man made a point of plugging the album at each show.

But controversy ensued when Ghostface slated his next Def Jam solo album, "The Big Doe Rehab," for release on Dec. 4, also the original date for "8 Diagrams."

"We weren't aware Ghost was dropping an album the same day," RZA says. "When he first brought it in, he was told the Wu album had a September release date. But the album took so long to make that it was pushed back from September to November and finally Dec. 4. We asked him to step back and let Wu come, but, at the end of the day, he has his own career. So we moved our date."

Street-level marketing is underway with a Mathematica-helmed mixtape; a widget is also available to embed music from the tape on such social networking sites as MySpace.

According to Loud marketing director Daniel Pappas, additional visibility will come via a Times Square billboard that will be up until New Year's Eve, along with a partnership with skateboard-distributor to sell Wu-Tang posters and stickers as well as the mixtape.

In a nod to the group's early branding initiatives, select urban retailers will give away a can of Riffkin's new Loud Energy drink with purchase of "8 Diagrams."

Online, several tracks will be featured via Times during street week, and a viral campaign is being conceived to create eight exclusive videos delving further into the "8 Diagrams" concept. "The plan is to give these to eight different partners, whether they are Yahoo or AOL," says Pappas, who says details are still coming together.

The Clan will return to the road in mid-January in the United States to promote the project, and a recently inked deal with BODOG will facilitate distribution and promotion of the album in Europe. SRC and BODOG will split the promotional costs. BODOG conceived a major marketing campaign ahead, led by Europe-wide billboards in major cities featuring the slogan, "How Can Hip Hop Be Dead If Wu-Tang Is Forever?" The album, which will be released Dec. 7 in continental Europe and Dec. 10 in the United Kingdom, will include a bonus DVD and two alternate covers.

In addition, there will be a 25,000-copy run of a stainless steel boxed set engraved with the Wu-Tang logo, according to the group's international publicist, Eva Ries, who adds that Wu-Tang will tour internationally beginning in March.

Wu-Wear is also back in action, having teamed with the Alife NYC clothing group for a line of sneakers, shirts and accessories branded "A Wu-Tang Life."

In tandem, Loud created customized shirts that say "1 W New York" with the Wu-Tang logo, which will be sold in New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago.

Surveying the present and looking to the future, RZA stresses that the yin and yang of the members' interpersonal dynamic has been there since day one, and that the tension often results in great music.

"We all bring a unique aspect to the group. whether we're known or not," he says. "Some of us have more success than others, but that's why Wu-Tang is stronger than Raekwon as himself or Ghost as himself. Inspectah is one of the best lyricists, Mastah is the most handsome, and Raekwon is the most hood. But collectively, we bring that whole appeal."

Additional reporting by Jonathan Cohen.

A SALES SAGA
The Wu-Tang Clan burst forth from Staten Island in 1993 with "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)," the first of three consecutive platinum-plus albums. Since then, the group's sales fortunes have slid, although its members' solo projects still do solid business (see graphic, above).
LUPE FIASCO PLAYS
THE HIP-HOP GAME
BY HIS OWN RULES.
WILL HIS SOPHOMORE
ALBUM INSPIRE FANS
TO JOIN THE RIDE?

BY HILLARY CROSLEY
PHOTOGRAPH BY LIONEL DELUY
"LupéND"—that's going to be my last album's title. When you play a videogame, you can only put in three letters for your name and when the game's over, those three letters and 'END' pop up. My next record might be my last one." We're supposed to be talking with Lupe Fiasco about his sophomore album, "The Cool," due Dec. 18 via Atlantic. But instead, the Chicago rapper is already forecasting how his career will end—he's not sure when it will happen, but it sure seems like it'll be more sooner than later. Fiasco has never been a typical artist, and that's part of his charm. On one hand, he's a slightly defensive know-it-all; on the other, he's an endearing, introverted nerd. Hip-hop consumers either get him or they don't. Add to the equation that during the last several years, he's collaborated with Jay-Z, Pharrell and Kanye West; scored a Reebok shoe deal before his debut album dropped; and dealt with several family deaths and the imprisonment of his co-manager. So it's only natural that Fiasco's a bit more weathered than your average 25-year-old.

“I don't define myself by this industry's standards,” says Fiasco, sporting a slim army fatigue Gortex rain hoodie, black jeans and his signature thin glasses, as he looks out the rain-beaded window of a Navigator. “I have a core fan base of about 200,000 people, so I'm with Lupe here at Hot 97 if it takes me a year-and-a-half.

Clearly, Fiasco has realized that there's more to life than hip-hop and isn't shy about saying so. Still, he's got "The Cool" to promote, and Atlantic won't have an easy time marketing a concept record whose creative songs don't easily fit onto urban radio playlists.

BEFORE THE STORM

In 2005, Fiasco was bubbling underneath the hip-hop mainstream as the next MC to watch. He peppered the Internet with mixtapes long before the practice was popular, earning international fans in the process, and kept an eye on street wear marketing by performing in sneaker and clothing shows and launching his own clothing design company, Righteous Kung Fu.

Drawing on such influences as Spice 1 to R&B & MJG, Fiasco carved a niche with fun yet intricate lyrics over beats that leaned more backpacker than gangster.

It wasn’t long before Jay-Z declared himself a fan, fellow Chicago native West added him to his single "Touch the Sky" and Pharrell hopped on Fiasco’s "Kick Push Remix." A deal with Reebok’s RBK line before his first album, "Food & Liquor," was even further fortified the notion that Fiasco could be hip-hop’s next breakout star.

But the album leaked several months ahead of the intended August 2006 street date, with the music spreading across the same Web sites that had previously devoured his mixtapes. Bloggers championed Fiasco’s artistry, and once released on Sept. 19, 2006, "Food & Liquor" went on to sell a respectable 81,000 copies in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. To date, it has shifted more than 320,000.

Songs like "Kick Push!" did connect with heavier radio programmers like Ebro Darden at rhythmic WQHT (Hot 97) New York. But despite a Grammy Award nomination for best rap solo performance, "Kick Push!" failed to rise higher than No. 56 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. His current single, "Supersaurus," was No. 82 after five weeks on the Nov. 24 tally.

"I've had success, but that's why we continue to support him," Darden says. "I don't think he fits into a familiar mold that many radio programmers associate with what they think is hip-hop.

They may not get Lupe because he's not a traditional rapper."

Riding the line of creativity and commercial success, Fiasco almost begged the question: Why not work with big-name producers in hopes of creating a radio hit?

"It's too expensive," Fiasco says, noting that a prior Pharrell production, "Gochu," "didn't even do anything at radio."

All of this is par for the course in the eyes of Atlantic president Craig Kallman, who sees the sales of "Food & Liquor" as a natural step toward building a new artist.

"It's been an overall sales decline in hip-hop," Kallman says. "If we can surpass his last album's sales, I'd be thrilled because I'll know that we're growing his audience."

THE PLOT THICKENS

"The Cool" will certainly separate his true fans from the onlookers. Fiasco created an interior world strung together with several mixtape songs, including "The Pills," along with variations on two songs that were also on his debut, "The Cool" and "He Say/He Say." "It's about a hustler who dies and comes back to life, only to get robbed by two little kids with the same gun that killed him," Fiasco says of the new "Cool." "I expanded that story by connecting different songs and characters in those songs."

"The Pills" introduces the characters the Streets and the Game, at a funeral for the Cool, whom several other songs are related to. Each character has defining attributes: The Game has dice for eyes and blunts for arms. The Streets is a tempstress with dollar signs for eyes and tattoos of ex-boyfriends like Al Capone and Alexander the Great.

Fiasco explains that the Cool "is actually the little boy from "He Say/He Say" who grew up without a father. And the people that step in to raise him are the Streets and the Game, like how people also say, 'the streets raised me.' It's an answer to that."

Before anyone gets too confused, Fiasco clarifies that the entire album doesn't adhere to the concept. Outside of the aforementioned four songs, "The Cool" is another helping of left-of-center hip-hop, often with a melodic, jazzy vibe.

In-house producers from Fiasco's 1st & 15th Records like Soundركةraf crafted the bulk of the album, although there are contributions from Fall Out Boy's Patrick Stump, Snoop Dogg and UNKLE.

BRANDING LUPE

Fiasco plans to up the new album's characters into a Vin- cent Price-esque vintage radio show via a currently unspeci- fied satellite radio company for release alongside his album. In addition, he is creating character-inspired toys and is work- ing with Converse, Levi's, street wear brand Maharishi and Japanese clothing line J&G to craft custom Righteous Kung Fu designs. Each clothing line will release their pieces at differ- ent times throughout next year, to keep the brand top of mind with consumers.

Mobile is a key part of Atlantic's marketing campaign. The company has partnered with AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint for ringtones and downloads, and Boost Mobile, which was an early Fiasco supporter, will prominently display stand- up advertisements for "The Cool" in 8,000 stores beginning in January.

Online, additional viral videos are planned in an attempt to capitalize on the crossover of "Dumb It Down," which became so popular on YouTube that it landed on BET and MTV. In ad- dition, Atlantic product manager Veronica Alverissi says Fiasco might blog on a to-be-announced site for the remainder of his 22-market promo tour.

An online in-store is in the works, where Atlantic will "partner with a major retailer, who'd air the in-store across their Web sites nationally, and distribute it amongst all of their chains," Alverissi says, and MTV.com's "The Leak" initiative will begin streaming "The Cool" Dec. 11, a week ahead of street date.

TV placements include a "Monday Night Football" commit- ment from ESPN for "Superstar," while several other album tracks are due to be used on the sports network's Sunday pro- gram, "Ultimate Highlight."

You can't blame Fiasco for having a few things other than marketing plans on his mind these days. During the last year, his father, aunt and friend Stack Bundles passed away, and his longtime friend and manager Charles "Chill" Patterson was arrested and sentenced to 44 years in prison for a 2003 drug charge.

In October, Fiasco published the lyrics to A Tribe Called Quest's "Electric Relaxation" at the VH1 Hip-Hop Awards in New York, then incited an online riot by saying he wasn't that into Tribe's "Midnight Marauders" album growing up. Ironically, his fan base skews more Q-Tip than Spice 1, which Fiasco hails as his inspiration. But instead of let- ting the storm pass, Fiasco argued with fans, pushing the controversy onto radio and further into the blogosphere.

"Ninety percent of the people saying something about that probably downloaded my first album," Fiasco says. "Besides, the people at my shows don’t care about that shit."

In the same way that West has basically forced people to form an opinion about him, Fiasco is not biting his tongue. And with "The Cool" nearing release, only time will tell if his fans do indeed care.

"I don’t know how to make a No. 1 record, so I don’t even try," he says. "The reason behind the whole "The Cool" con- cept is because I miss my father, Stack Bundles, my auntie and Chill. I found solace in the miracle in itself and it came out in "The Cool." I wish the shit was true."
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As the roller coaster year of 2007 draws to a close, one question comes to mind: What does the future hold for R&B/hip-hop? That and other topical issues will provide the talking points for the eighth annual Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Conference taking place Nov. 28-30.

Back in Atlanta for the third consecutive year, the conference boasts a new host hotel, the Renaissance Downtown. A welcome reception and a live artist showcase/competition preface two days' worth of what promises to be stimulating discussion.

One panel guaranteed to throw off more than a few sparks is Thursday afternoon's "Hip-Hop Post Imus: A Wrap or a Rebirth?" Panelists will include noted Princeton professor of African-American studies and author Dr. Cornel West, BET senior VP of music programming Stephen Hill, T.I. manager/Grand Hustle partner Jason Geter, Music Choice director of urban and Latin programming Lamonda Williams and Columbia Records president of urban Kyambo "Hip-Hop" Joshua. They'll share their perspectives on the use of the "N" word and other questionable language and images in hip-hop.

Despite notable sales success notched by T.I. and Kanye West, this year has still been marked by more misses than hits, especially in hip-hop. Just what's in store for the genres in 2008 will be the focus of the "State of the Union" session.

Billboard urban charts manager Raphael George will moderate a diverse slate of panelists that includes Billboard director of charts/senior analyst Geoff Mayfield, Nielsen BDS urban format manager Kyle Brown, Far Wax Records/Atlanta manager Chuck Won, Dr. Sykevia Thompson (author of "Rhythm Without Blues: The Dichotomy of a Music Genre") and Universal Motown VP of urban promotion Troy Dudley.

A rousing look at gospel's mainstream crusade and its relationship with hip-hop opens the conference on Thursday morning. Moderated by WPZE Atlanta PD Derek Harper, the panel will feature April Essex Washington, founder/CEO of newly launched gospel label Halal Ink Music, Universal Music Christian Group, and Atlanta senior director of music industry development for the Gospel Music Channel.

Rounding out Thursday's panel lineup is "We Got Game," which will explore how to develop revenue streams beyond releasing recording projects. Among those offering advice will be Wendell Hanes, a sound designer/composer who has penned commercial ad and theme music for clients such as Heineken ("Birth of a Scratch"), Mercedes-Benz, Mountain Dew, ESPN, ABC, CBS and Showtime; and Corey "CL" Llewellyn, CEO of Digwaxx and co-manager of hit rapper Mims.

Friday's programming agenda encompasses everything from a look at Arbitron's new Portable People Meter and how it's affecting the urban radio...
Billboard Radio Awards Bestowed For Creativity And Commitment

For the second consecutive year, the Billboard Radio Awards will be presented to outstanding programmers during the Billboard R & B / Hip-Hop Conference, which this year takes place Nov. 28-30 in Atlanta. The honorees were chosen by Billboard's advisory committee, which includes the top names in the record, music publishing, retail and radio industries. Award recipients were selected for their outstanding achievements, creative programming approach and commitment to the craft. They represent the radio industry's next generation of influential, dynamic and successful programmers. Past honorees include Terry Bello (Radio One/Cleveland), Kris Kelley (Clear Channel/Chicago), Terri Avery (CBS Radio/Charlotte, N.C.) and Erv Smith (now of Radio One/Philadelphia). This year's winners are:

EMMANUEL 'E-MAN' COQUIA
KPWR (Power 106) LOS ANGELES

DI'ing since he was 13 years old, Emmanuel "E-Man" Coquia is Emmis Communications' West Coast music man. He is APD/music director at one of urban radio's most powerful stations, KPWR (Power 106) Los Angeles. Coquia is also the music programmer for nationally syndicated morning show "Big Boy's Neighborhood," where he mixes live during his signature "Mickey-Fickey" mix.

Coquia has been previously recognized as R&R's music director of the year, Billboard's music director of the year and Mixshow Power Summit's morning show DJ of the year.

"My family is my motivation," Coquia says.

EBRO DARDEN
WQHT (Hot 97) NEW YORK

Thirty-two-year-old Ebros Darden began his radio career in 1991, when the Oakland, Calif., native took a job at KSF M (102.5) Sacramento, Calif., when he was just 16.

In 1997, he resigned when he was offered the OM/PD/music director post at KBMB (The Bomb 103.5) Sacramento.

Although Darden remained at the station, he accepted a position as morning show host for KKJM (Jammin' 95.5) Portland, Ore., in 1999. He juggled both gigs until he left KBMB in 2001. A year later, he parted ways with KKJM to become music director/AD at WQHT (Hot 97) New York. He was promoted to PD this year.

KJ HOLIDAY
WJLB and WMXD DETROIT

Few are strong enough to call Detroit home, but KJ Holiday, PD of WJLB and Clear Channel/Detroit's director of urban programming, commands the city with resilience.

Falling into his radio career in 1983 as a part-time weekend announcer/mixer at W/DYAM Salisbury, Md., Holiday originally planned to become either the area's first successful rapper or a football player.

However, after picking up the turntables as a side job in college, Holiday hasn't looked back. Now he can count among his achievements successfully maneuvering WJLB to No. 1 in Detroit's 12+ demographic and building a successful morning show from scratch, hosted by Third Bass' MC Sech.

Holiday was elevated to director of urban programming for Clear Channel/Detroit, which includes WJLB and WMXD, in 2003.

REGGIE ROUSE
WAOK and WVVEE ATLANTA

Radio veteran Reggie Rouse upholds double duties as PD of WVVEE (V-103) and WAOK Atlanta and VP of urban programming for CBS Radio.

Rouse is a graduate of Syracuse (N.Y.) University and a member of the Omega Psi Phi Organization and Prince Hall Masones. The 16-year radio veteran credits a combination of business insight and cunning programming ability for his success.

Logging career stops at WHLS New York; WAFO Augusta, Ga.; and WQKS Montgomery, Ala., before landing at WPGC-WFMS Washington, D.C., to produce "The Donna Simpson Show" in the mornings, Rouse is now back where he began.

Reporting by Mariel Conception, Hillary Creasy and Raphael George.
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Stephanie Mills Honored with R&B Founders Award
By Gail Mitchell

Before there was "American Idol," there was "Amateur Night" at Harlem's famed Apollo Theater, where, for six consecutive weeks in the early '70s, a tough audience voted 11-year-old Stephanie Mills the winner.

And before such R&B singers as Heather Headley and Fantasia left their vocal imprints on Broadway, there was Mills.

Mills' career-long achievements have led to her being recognized with Billboard's R&B Founder's Award. It will be presented to her during the Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Conference, taking place Nov. 28-30 in Atlanta.

A diminutive powerhouse, Mills first appeared on Broadway in the 1966 show "Maggie Flynn." But her promise as an R&B icon was foreshadowed during the 15-year-old's stint as Dorothy in the 1975 Broadway production of "The Wiz." Even then, her soulful, church-bred vocals and energetic delivery were mesmerizing. It's those theatrical roots that Mills recalls while describing her chapter in R&B history.

"I can see some of me in Mary J. Blige and the younger female singers," she says. "It's the idea of being not just a recording artist but also an all-around entertainer. It's about learning your craft, working hard and reinventing yourself."

After signing with 20th Century Records, Mills charted her first top 10 R&B hit in 1979 with "What Cha Gonna Do With My Lovin'."

Several more hit followed, including two top five R&B singles ("Sweet Sensation" and "Two Hearts" featuring Teddy Pendergrass), before Mills segued to Casablanca Records.

She scored a top 15 R&B hit with a cover of Prince's "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore?" before netting the No. 8 R&B chart slot with "The Medicine Song."

The best was yet to come, however. Moving to MCA in the mid-'80s, Mills recorded five No. 1 R&B singles. "I Have Learned to Respect the Power of Love" was the first, followed by "I Feel Good All Over," "(You're Puttin') A Rush on Me," "Something in the Way You Make Me Feel" and "Home." Another top 10 R&B hit, "Comfort of a Man," arrived in 1990.

The Grammy Award-winning first new studio album in 13 years, "Born for This!" was released in 2004 on Mills' own JM Records label. Still an in-demand concert fave, the singer/song-writer recently wrapped an East Coast tour with R&B vets the Whispers and After 7. They will take the show to the West Coast after the holiday season.

In the meantime, Mills has recorded her first live album. Due out next year on JM, the project was taped at B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in New York. And Mills, who is mother to a piano-playing 6-year-old son, has also written a children's book.

Revisiting her theatrical roots, Mills and former "Wiz" co-star Hinton Battle have established a company that will present plays around the country. Hinton will choreograph and direct; Mills will write and produce.

The pair are collaborating now on an as-yet-untitled play that they hope to take out next year. Mills says, "Hinton and I want to take black theater to a whole other level."

Despite hit records that radio plays to this day and a career that still influences other hopefuls, Mills remains humble. "When you're an artist, you sometimes don't know if you're making an impact," she says. "I'm surprised yet honored that people would remember me and my music."
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Pioneering Trio Salt-N-Pepa Honored With Hip-Hop Founder’s Award
By Hillary Crosley

In a time when female MCs are struggling to prove their relevancy, Salt-N-Pepa are solid examples of what it takes to succeed in the music industry. Spoiling their fans with such hits as “Shake Your Thang,” “Shoop” and “Whatta Man,” Salt-N-Pepa created the archetype that women like Lil’ Kim, Eve and Lil’ Mama continue to follow.

Now the ladies are back together for their VH1 reality series “The Salt-N-Pepa Show.” The program readresses old wounds, like Salt quitting the group via phone and whether Pepa was abandoned, and the group’s fans are still buzzing about their lives and their legacy. This legacy, coupled with Salt-N-Pepa’s talent and resilience, is why the trio will be honored with the Billboard Hip-Hop Founder’s Award Nov. 30 at the ninth annual Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Conference. The confab runs Nov. 29-30, and will be held at Atlanta’s Renaissance Hotel Downtown.

Beginning their career in the mid-’80s, Cheryl “Salt” Wray, Sandra “Pepa” Denton and DJ Spinderella (followed by DJ Latoya Hanson, who was later replaced with Deidra Rogers) broke into the rap world with “My Mic Sounds Nice” and “Ramp” from 1988’s “Hot, Cool & Vicious.” A remix of “Push It” put the record on The Billboard Hot 100 and Rap/Hip-Hop Songs chart, peaking at No. 19 and No. 28, respectively.

The single garnered the group significant attention and opened the door for 1989’s “A Salt With A Deadly Pepa.” It became an instant hit with Deidra Rogers created “Shake Your Thang,” featuring the band E.U., rose to No. 4 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and propelled urban audiences across the country to don ripped pants and bleached-blond hair.

By 1990, the trio leaned more socially conscious with their third album, “Blacks’ Magic.” Rapping about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases that were on the rise in the black and Hispanic communities, the ladies created “Let’s Talk About Sex,” which peaked at No. 13 on the Hot 100 and “Expression,” which hit No. 8 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs. “Black’s Magic” set the ladies on their way to releasing their most successful album yet, 1993’s “Very Necessary.” Such songs as “Shoop” and “Whatta Man” gave Salt-N-Pepa their first top 10 hits on the Hot 100, and “Very Necessary” sold triple-platinum. Despite the act’s chart glory, its feminine anthem “None Of Your Business” only hit No. 32 on the Hot 100, but it still won Salt-N-Pepa their first Grammy Award for best rap performance by a duo or group in 1994. The ladies’ next album was 1997’s “Brand New,” featuring lead single “RU Ready,” but they parted ways not long after.

Still, even the trio’s breakup worked in its favor, and the aforementioned old wounds have not stopped the ladies from continuing their lives and careers. As a result, Billboard is excited to honor Salt-N-Pepa with the Hip-Hop Founder’s Award.

What inspired you to launch Loud Records?
Well, I had a marketing company called Steve Rifkind Co., where I founded the street team marketing idea. Those days I was pretty much managing artists and working every major rap record that was out. One day somebody asked me, “Why don’t you start a label?” I said, “What would I want a label for? Why would I want the headache?”

And then they explained the difference between a service business and an asset business to me. A service business is a business where you’re only as good as your last contract. And asset business is where you own your masters.

How and when did you create the street team concept?
That kicked in early, like in 1992, though I was working records at street level as far back as 1988. The first two records I really worked that way were Tone Loc and Young MC. The first official records I worked that way after I came up with the concept were Brand Nubian’s “Slow Down” and Leaders of the New School’s “Just A Case of the PTA.”

I listened to the feedback I got in the streets and if it was negative, I’d get that information back to the label as quickly as possible so that before they put out the...
all they could make the necessary changes.

There was no Internet then, it was really all just word-of-mouth. It's why Loud was so successful—because we listened to it so carefully. We wouldn't put a record out until we knew for sure we had a hit in our hands.

In 2002 Loud Records officially shut down. Why? Sony didn't understand our environment and we didn't understand theirs. The shoe just didn't fit. So, all the acts were pretty much dropped. Sony owned the Loud name then because we sold the company to them. I launched the Steve Rifkind Co. in 2003 with David Banner, followed by Terror Squad and then Akon.

What was it about Akon that made you think he was a star, probably even before others saw it?

There was just something about him. I trust my gut. With Akon, I mean there was nothing sounding like that, and I believe in the underdog and I'm willing to take chances. You just can't stay steady, you have to grow and take chances. When I heard the music for the first time, I was on my way to the hospital with a broken nose I got from a basketball injury. A friend of mine saw me as I pulled up to a corner. He jumped in the car and said, "You have to hear this." I heard it and I lost my mind. Once the doctors gave me antibiotics so I wouldn't get an infection, I booked a flight and flew to Atlanta. I signed him on the spot.

Now, five years since Loud shut down, you're resurrecting it with a brand-new album by Wu-Tang. How did that happen?

RZA and I always stayed in contact. So we were talking one day and we said, "Man, let's do one more album and see what it brings." People always wanted another Wu record. There was never really any closure. And, they've got a new fan base too. I went to a show in San Francisco and there were 72,000 white kids. They're like a legendary rock 'n' roll band.

Plus, we always had a common cause, and that is to win. Their last album was the third album for Loud. Wu-Tang was my first platinum act. Those were the best days of my life. It's like the relationships you have with your kids. Method Man and I share the same birthday. When Ghostface got sick, I was the one that took him to the doctor, the doctor that took me out of my mom's stomach. I have a unique and different relationship with each one of them.

What's the relationship with Ghostface now that he's been quoted as saying he's upset the Wu album is scheduled to be released the same day of his upcoming solo effort? Oh, we moved the [release] date back to Dec. 11. Ghost is familiar with how well he speaks. I wasn't worried about that at all. As far as the censorship aspect goes, I think everybody's full of shit. Everybody has their own agenda.

With Akon, when he got into that mess with the young girl and the one audience member that threw something at him, I wanted to fight. I feel like he got the raw deal on both things. Akon never has to worry about his cool. He was on stage and when the kid threw something at him, he snapped. He's human. And he's the hardest-working man in show business.

What's one of the hardest lessons you've learned throughout your career in music?

There are companies that I've tried to start that I should've followed my gut about instead of being excited about partnering with certain people. Or like starting a company and not jumping in as soon as I saw there was a problem with management. All of those are mistakes that I've made, but now, every time I see there's a problem, I jump in immediately. But every day's a lesson. I don't believe in mistakes. I believe you turn mistakes into lessons.
BOLD FACE NAMES BRIGHT STARS BIG OPPORTUNITIES

FIND OUT WHAT THE R&B/HIP-HOP COMMUNITY IS BUZZING ABOUT!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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AN IN-DEPTH CONVERSATION WITH
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OTHER TOPICS INCLUDE:
Contemporary Gospel vs. Hip-Hop Gospel
State of the Union
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Hip-Hop Post Imus: A Wrap or a Rebirth?
People Meter’s Impact on Urban Radio
Breaking and Entering: The Women’s Panel

PLUS...
THE BILLBOARD Q&A WITH
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Hip-Hop Pioneer/Founder
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Georgia's musical roots run deep. It's the place that such legendary acts as Ray Charles, Otis Redding, James Brown, Little Richard, the Allman Brothers, R.E.M., the B-52's and many others have each called home. And as the creative base for some of the most in-demand urban music producers and artists, the state is known for an exploding hip-hop and R&B scene, as well as a thriving broad-based music industry that continues to expand. "People pretty much know that it's the hottest for music right now," Atlanta native and Island Urban president Jermaine Dupri says. "And it's only going to get hotter."

With dozens of record labels, studios, publishers, distributors, booking agencies, artist managers, concert promoters and venues spread across the state, the city of Atlanta alone houses regional offices for ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. In addition, the state's capital is in the base of the Recording Academy's 12 regional chapters. Atlanta will again host the Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Conference & Awards. The eighth annual edition of the event takes place Nov. 26-30 at the Renaissance Atlanta Hotel Downtown.

A 2007 study conducted by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University reveals that the state's music industry employs more than 9,400 people and generates approximately $1.1 billion in annual revenue. The industry also brings in up to $50 million in tax revenue per year, which is "nothing to sneeze at," says Sally Wallace, one of the study's authors and a professor of economics at Georgia State University.

She notes that the biannual report helps Georgia officials gauge "what direction the industry is going" and "gives them a way to talk to people in the state to show it's an important industry."

The Georgia Film, Video and Music Office, with a staff of seven led by deputy commissioner Bill Thompson, aims to support and promote Georgia's music industry. The music industry segment of the department was added about four years ago, Thompson recalls. "We felt the music industry was growing and needed separate support instead of being lumped in with everything else," he says.

The state-funded office, a division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, operates with a $1.2 million annual budget. To benefit the music industry, one of the office's main initiatives in 2007 was establishing the Georgia Music Industry...
from >>p61 Roundtable and the Georgia Music Industry Task Force, a pair of meetings in Atlanta that drew various producers, musicians, promoters, studio owners, managers and music entertainment lawyers.

A number of ideas emerged from the two meetings about how to improve upon the state's music industry, Thompson says. They included a possible Georgia music museum in Atlanta and various educational programs for the state's youth.

Another important initiative for the office is the production of its annual Georgia Music Production Sourcebook, which offers a look at what's happening in the state's music business. Along with industry-related articles, the free publication provides readers with contact information for various sectors of the business within Georgia, including recording studios, labels and managers. Thompson says approximately 12,000 books are printed and distributed each year.

The office's long-term goal, Thompson adds, is for Georgia to lead the music business in the Southeast by 2020. "We believe that we're very close to being the music capital of the South," he says. "It's certainly something we want to be in the future."

Atlanta's thriving urban music scene is definitely a contributor to the state's growth. Along with originating the crunk and snap music styles, Atlanta is credited for spawning a long list of acts, including OutKast, Ludacris, T.I., Young Jeezy, Cee-Lo, Yung Joc and recent chart-topper Soulja Boy, to name a few.

From an urban music standpoint, "Atlanta is operating at its musical pinnacle right now," says Chris Hicks, who holds executive titles at Atlantic Records and Warner/Chappell Music. "People here want to win and excel, and they have no problem linking together. That approach isn't prevalent everywhere in the United States, in my experience."

Atlanta-based singer/songwriter/producer Sean "the Pen" Garrett, who will release his currently untitled solo debut later this year, agrees with Hicks, crediting much of Atlanta's success to "a high sense of camaraderie among artists and producers."

"We have quite a few different camps here in Atlanta, and we all respect each other," Garrett says. "I work with Jermaine Dupri, Jazze Pha, Bryan-Michael Cox and Tricky Stewart. We all work with each other in some sense and share the love and the gift that we're blessed with. That's the one thing I love about Atlanta."

Atlanta is also the city that record label mogul Dupri calls home. Not only is the producer credited for founding Atlanta-based So So Def Recordings, but he has also produced nearly 40 top 10 singles on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart for artists including Mariah Carey, Usher, Monica and Janet Jackson.

Dupri says the city provides more opportunities for artists now than it has in the past. "More labels are paying attention to Atlanta," he says. "The music as a whole continues to keep growing. It's a hotbed for making hit records."

Clockwise from top: Georgia native son RAY CHARLES rocks to an ovation from the Georgia Legislature in 1979; YOUNG JEEZY at Atlanta's Fox Theatre in June 2007; R.E.M., formed in 1980 in Athens, Ga.

Hicks relocated from Washington, D.C., to Atlanta in 1996 primarily because of its affordability. Another reason, he says, had to do with the opportunities that arose after Antonio "L.A." Reid and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds co-founded LaFace Records in 1989, which boosted such acts as TLC, Toni Braxton, Usher and OutKast.

Reid and Edmonds "came here and set the R&B bar so high creatively, that in order just to make it out of here, you have to be exceptional," he says.

When Reid left Atlanta to head up Arista Records in 2001, Hicks recalls, even more opportunities bloomed. "It has opened the door to a crew of executives like myself who see it as an opportunity to create an attraction for themselves and the people they represent," he says.

While artists continue flocking to Atlanta from other parts of the country, Dupri says that sustaining such success will depend on artist development. "Take, for example, Kris Kross, TLC, Braxton and Usher—all of those artists went through a lot of changes to become the [stars] we know them as."

As for creativity and inspiration, Dupri and Garrett often look to the same place: the city's strip clubs. "One of the great passions of Atlanta is going to the strip clubs," Garrett says. "We have some of the most beautiful girls in the world—the Georgia peaches are for real."

Dupri, on the other hand, looks to the strip clubs as an indicator for hit songs. "If I don't hear my songs in there, I'm a little disturbed sometimes, because that means I'm not making a street-enough record as a record with enough beat to be played in a strip club."

However, the strip club as test market, particularly for hip-hop hits, is recognized well beyond Atlanta (Billboard, May 13, 2006). Along with the urban scene, the number of recording studios in Georgia keeps growing. Bruce Springsteen's current album "Magic," which debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200, was recorded at Brendan O'Brien's Atlanta studio.

Meanwhile, tucked away in Atlanta's quiet residential district is John Keane Studios, which most recently served as the recording studio for the new B-52's album "Funkpunk," due Feb. 26 on Astralwerks. Along with numerous local artists, studio owner John Keane, who has lived in Athens all his life, has worked with R.E.M., Billy Bragg, Indigo Girls and Wide Spread Panic, to name a few.

Keane says one of the charms of his studio is the "stimulation, or lack thereof, that artists are looking for. It's
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exhibits is "Otis Redding: I've Got Dreams to Remember," on display through September 2008.

The Macon building opened in 1996, but the Hall of Fame has been inducting artists since 1979, Love says. This year's inductees included acts Lynyrd Skynyrd, Usher and Freddy Cole, while last year's included producer/songwriter Dallas Austin. Dupri and R. E. M. Nominations and selections are made by the Senate Music Industry Committee and Friends of Georgia Music Festival, a nonprofit organization.

Along with the Georgia Film, Video and Music Office, the Hall of Fame is doing its part to promote music within the state.

"We want to grow awareness of the past, but also promote our active music industry," Love explains. "Georgia is an incredibly rich place, both historically and today.

The Hall of Fame recently completed an initial round of commercials, which feature a number of Georgia-based artists. The "My Music Is Georgia Music" spots are featured on YouTube and will be used for trade shows, conventions and other marketing opportunities, Love says.

Though still in the planning stages, the Hall of Fame plans to mount temporary satellite exhibits in Atlanta and Athens.

In addition to a monthly 45-minute podcast (found on georgiamusic.org), the Hall of Fame publishes the quarterly Georgia Music magazine. The publication is found in about 400 stores throughout the state and covers topics that include Georgia music history, festivals, upcoming events, reviews and news.

"By promoting Georgia music, we hope to encourage investment in our music industry and to entice tourists to visit here," Love says. "I believe we can successfully use music to market the state of Georgia and enhance its image."
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Seven years ago, Paul Oakenfold sat down with new manager Marc Marot and laid his cards on the table. They were impressive: Years of dominance as a touring DJ. The first European DJ to open the floodgates on the American market. A growing list of pop and underground remixes, including a tight relationship—personally and artistically—with U2. A name globally synonymous with dance music.

But the superstar wanted more, or perhaps less: He wanted the challenge of scoring films. Marot—who had just resigned from a 10-year stint as president of Island Records and who also counted noted film composer Trevor Jones as a client—had the prescription.

“You couldn’t [score films] unless you were known as a composer, and obviously the shortcut to that is becoming known as an artist,” Marot says. At the time, Oakenfold had two hits vying for position in the U.K. top 10: the theme to TV series “Big Brother” and trance banger “Bullet in a Gun.” But neither was under his own name. “That was my case in point,” Marot says. “Both were on the charts at the same time, competing against each other at radio and for radio play, and neither anything other than

Nelly Furtado and Ice Cube and two songs that became hits via the new world of licensing. “Ready Steady Go,” used in a Saab spot, and “Starry Eyed Surprise,” synced to that bubby, roller-skating Diet Coke spot, now held up as one of the most successful combinations of music and images in advertising produced up to that point.

“In that instance, [the agency] actually came to us asking if they could use the track,” says Three Artist Management’s Richard Bishop, Oakenfold’s U.S.-based manager. “We looked at the boards and felt it was a good combination of music and images, so we said yes.”

The journey to Hollywood had begun.

Oakenfold’s remarkably diverse career started in the early ’80s, when he was a hungry twenty-something obsessed with new music, particularly hip-hop. The U.K. native held down three posts at the same time: A&R for Profile Records and Champion Records and promoter for Rush Release, the U.K. promo company for upstart label Def Jam.

“I was working for Russell Simmons in those days, and I was very aware of Oakenfold and his interest in urban music, and music in general,” says
from >>p50

Patrick Moxey, president of Ultra Records, Perfecto's U.S. distributor. "He's always been into music with beats, whether it was hip-hop or rock/dance crossover. He's pioneered a lot of these sounds. He has an ear for talent and hits."

He proved his clairvoyance by signing Salt-N-Pepa and Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince at age 22. "Paul is a music man. He has a very broad church," says David Guetta, an artist signed to Perfecto whose poppier sound diverges from the label's usual hard trance. "I don't think label identity is as important as it used to be. It comes down to the record and how it's positioned. Inside dance music, the genre definitions seem very extreme, but beyond, it's so subjective. I want to be part of the people who push dance music to be equal to rock, pop, whatever. We share that belief and commitment."

Two years after his two fortuitous signings, everything changed for Oakenfold. He vacationed on the Spanish island of Ibiza and became immersed in the music that was popular there: a style of dreamy dance known as Balearic, which later branched off into many genres, including the most popular, trance. He brought it back to London, thus kick-starting Europe's nightclub, and later, rave culture. He even co-produced (with Steve Osborne) one of the definitive albums of the period, Happy Mondays' "Pills 'N Thrills and Bellyaches." Soon, this European style of dance music—less groovy and more aggressive and electronic than U.S. house—had gone global, and Oakenfold was widely identified as its primary emissary.

Ruling the world is one thing; ruling the United States is quite another. But in 1995, Oakenfold set out with the stated goal of doing just that. "There's a reason Paul became the bestselling DJ in the U.S.," Moxey says. "It's because he did something like 150 U.S. and Canada tour dates for two years in a row. And it was like, Tuesday night in Nashville: Paul Oakenfold. Monday night in Omaha (Neb.), next to the rodeo, it's Paul Oakenfold. And that's how he broke. He really paid attention to the fans, the people all over America. He brought the music directly to them."

Oakenfold learned his carpet-bombing tactics from his old friend in U2. In 1990, Marot headed the band's reinvigoration efforts for Island during the "Achtung Baby" era. "They had never had anyone remix their music," Marot says. "We introduced them to Paul as a concept." He remixed the band several times, including the track "Even Better Than the Real Thing" for "Achtung Baby," and joined the group's Zoo TV tour as an opener.

In the years that followed, Oakenfold did everything a DJ could conceivably do: He played for 70,000 at Clapham Common in London, sold out the Hollywood Bowl, DJ'd live with the Boston Pops, released countless compilations and traveled the United States on the Area:One tour with OutKast and Moby.

Film music became a real option in 2001, when producer Joel Silver approached him to score some scenes for "Swordfish." The process instantly clicked for him. "I've watched him in spotting sessions. He's able to really get to the gritty, right to the heart of the project very, very quickly. It's very impressive, and it's all to do with his knowledge," Marot says. "I think he feels he's on the point of proving himself to a serious Hollywood industry, an industry that doesn't give its money away very lightly to people who can't deliver. Scoring is technical. It's difficult; it's conveying a mood in 42 seconds or 1.3 seconds. It's not something where you can build a mood like you can on a fantastic trance hit. So I think before he made his big declaration, 'This is really what I'd like to do,' he wanted to learn the craft. And that's what we've been slogging away at."

Oakenfold has two more films slated, in addition to videogames, a few pet-project artists to produce, another artist album for himself somewhere down the line (he released "Burakka" follow-up "A Lively Mind" in 2005) and more DJ-ing gigs with orchestras. Plus, Perfecto (Ultra) just released his first career retrospective, "Greatest Hits & Remixes." "Outside of the "NOW" series, it's got to be one of the most amazing track listings I've ever seen," Moxey says.

Even if the next decade marks another evolution for Oakenfold, his grand years in the world's DJ booths, taking thousands of people on one shared journey, will remain. "DJing is always going to be the cornerstone of his career," Moxey says. "He'll do everything, but even as he's doing everything else, somehow the experience of the DJ to the audience is at the core of [his] sensibility."

Did you always want to score films?

Probably without realizing it, if that makes sense. My father would take me to see films and we'd discuss the music, because he was a musician. Then Joel Silver, the producer, contacted me completely out of the blue [in 2001] and said, "We want you to co-score a John Travolta/Halle Berry movie." So I got the opportunity to work on "Swordfish."

I put everything on hold, went to L.A. for three months and just really enjoyed the process. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity for me to move away from DJ'ing and move on with my career in the direction I felt was right. So I did a bunch of cues for various different films: "Matrix Reloaded," "Shrek," "Collateral." They were a means for me to get into actually scoring a whole film.

How do you even begin to fit music to images? How does your mind work?

I read the script and I write notes. I'll say, "Big fight scene, lead actor is being chased." So I'm sitting there thinking, "Percussion, drums, pulsing sounds, tension." Then I sit with the director and we go through it all. It's primarily his vision; his film, his vision. It's completely different when you're making your own artist record. So we talk through what he's looking for. Once they start shooting, I get dailies, so what he shoots today, I get tomorrow. I write away; if he likes it, great, and if he doesn't, then I start again and continue to work until he's happy with it.

Is it hard to be beholden to someone else's vision after you've controlled your own destiny as a DJ for so long?

I've never been one of those people who's very precious, I think because I started in remixing. You're remixing other people's stuff, and if they don't like it, they don't use it. The pressure's always been on, so I'm kind of used to that.

Of course it's my responsibility, and if it's a failure, then I'd get fired. But that's the process. But consciously, five years ago, when "Swordfish" came along, I knew this was going to be more my destiny and where I was going to end up.

Were you tired of DJ'ing, or did you change focus because you had other options?

A bit of both. I love DJ'ing, but I've...
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kind of achieved a lot of what I wanted to achieve. What was I going to get from it personally? Now I’m playing with orchestras.

How did that come about?
I was the first DJ to play the Hollywood Bowl, and I used a six-piece orchestra to make more of a show. Then I thought, “Well, I’ll use 20-piece orchestra [for Miami’s Winter Music Conference],” so I hired the Miami Philharmonic, and it worked really well.

Then I was invited to play with the Boston Pops, which was really nerve-wracking because the people are sitting down and watching me. Normally in clubs they watch you and they study you, but they’re dancing, they’re in the moment, they’re feeling it. But this was an older crowd. But if I could get someone to sponsor it—it costs a lot of money—I’d be on the road with a full orchestra.

I always look for the challenge. To score games and film is a challenge, to go on tour with an orchestra would be a big challenge for me. That’s what motivates me. And the way you have to travel these days, it makes you not want to get on a plane.

In 2002, you did a remix of Justin Timberlake’s “Rock Your Body” that was positively disco-y, and it made it onto the radio. People didn’t expect it from you.

He’s got soul, that guy. I looked at the pace and the elements of what he was singing and how he was singing it. My approach to remixing has always been [about] keeping the integrity of the artist. I won’t say, “All my remixes are 130 beats per minute, they’re all the same drums.” You play to the strength of the song and the delivery of the vocal. I don’t want to pitch his vocal up, I think that’s wrong.

“Rock Your Body” is midtempo; it’s more of a funkier, melodic fill. There’s an old band called Slave, a band I came across, that I thought was really, really funky. The rhythm felt very comfortable to sit under something like a Timberlake record. I did a mash-up of that, where I took the complete rhythm and put his vocal over it, but obviously it could never have been released.

But then I did the version that is on the record, which goes to the strength of the lyric and gives you a real funky, soful feel. So it’s not going to be a remix that will be played by every DJ, but it’s a mix that Mark Ronson will play, rather than Tiësto. I think that’s why I’ve been doing so many remixes, because I’m really versatile.

The “Starry Eyed Surprise” synch in the Diet Coke commercial seemed like a perfect union. What did you think of it? If the music fits the visual as it did there . . . I didn’t write it for the commercial, I find it difficult to write for commercials because they never know really what they want. They always want something that sounds like someone else. I find it easier to write for film. I don’t mind if they let me get on with it; it’s just when they really don’t know.

I wrote for Hummer, and because that’s rhythm and pace, it’s quite easy to find a starting point. But even with games—I’m doing the “Bourne Ultimatech” game, before that I did a James Bond game—you sit there and the people you’re working with, they’ll say, “Can you put in a little bit of Michael Jackson’s ‘Thriller’?” And you’re like, “What? OK, it’s the wrong key and it won’t work, but I’ll try it.”

Has the DJ scene developed the way you thought it would, since you were there from the beginning?
Not to go on about it, but I certainly feel we need more acts for the scene to be embraced in a normal way, especially in America. They, for some reason, can’t get their heads around that it’s DJ-driven and DJs are artists, DJs do make music, DJs do remix, and DJs are on the front line.

But because they’re not perceived in the old-fashioned way as an artist, sometimes it’s difficult. I wish there would be more Chemical Brothers and Underworlds, but they’re DJ-based acts anyway.

There’s room for a lot more acts. I’m always looking for those acts to sign to my label, but they’re hard to come by. You’ve heard the [David] Guetta record; we’re doing really well with it. How far can we take it? Who knows? The mainstream doesn’t necessarily see it.

When I toured behind [2002 album] “Bunk’ka” in America, we did about 50-odd shows. I had a band, and we were up there touring the hell out of it, and it was difficult, to be honest. The club fan base, they didn’t necessarily want an act. They were just into the rhythm and the tracks.

It’s strange. “Starry Eyed Surprise” crossed over onto the pop charts. “Ready Steady Go” was on commercials and in film, and it’s still a stretch. You can sell out 15,000-capacity venues like the Hollywood Bowl, but they still don’t necessarily understand why or how.

— Kerri Mason

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Since Billboard launched its Top Electronic Albums chart in the June 30, 2001, issue, Paul Oakenfold has scored a half-dozen top five albums, including his current chart-topping "Greatest Hits & Remixes." His top five career albums appear below. But several of his earlier successes predated 2001, including his "Tranceport" album in 1998, "Global Underground: New York" in 1999 and "Perfecto Presents: Another World" in 2000. Also, Oakenfold has frequently produced or remixed recordings credited to other acts. The titles here are ordered by peak position on the Top Electronic Albums chart. If more than one title peaked at the same position, ties were broken by the number of weeks spent at the peak.

**TOP FIVE ELECTRONIC ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Debut Date</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Bunkka</td>
<td>1 (2 weeks)</td>
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<td>Maverick/Warner Bros.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Greatest Hits &amp; Remixes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nov. 10, 2007</td>
<td>Perfecto/Perfecto</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Swordfish: The Album (soundtrack)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 30, 2001</td>
<td>Warner Sunset/FFRR/London-Sire</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Creamfields</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 2004</td>
<td>Perfecto/Thrive</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Perfecto Presents...</td>
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<td>Oct. 18, 2003</td>
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Back On The Chain Gang
Reunited Jesus And Mary Chain Shopping New Album

BY JONATHAN COHEN

Forget meditation, forget rehab. Apparently, bands whose members haven't spoken to each other in years just need to play at the annual Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival in Indio, Calif., to get their careers back on track.

That's pretty much what happened for the Jesus & Mary Chain. The influential Scottish rock combo rose to fame in the mid-1980s on the strength of such albums as "Psychocandy," but splintered in 1999 with its sibling members, Jim and William Reid, barely able to be in the same room together.

"I originally started working on both Jim's and William's solo albums, and when I approached [promoter] Golden once about getting Jim a solo gig at Coachella, they came back with an offer for the Jesus and Mary Chain," manager Kevin Oberlin says. "We thought having the band reunite for Coachella would help set up both of their solo albums, but the very next day after the show, Jim and William did an interview and said that they were going to do a new Mary Chain album."

"When we ended in '98, we hated each other," William Reid says. "A lot of that was down to drink and drugs. Jim's completely sober now, and I don't drink during the shows. But there's a kind of warmth and tenderness we've both had that we could snap at each other," he says with a laugh. "But we're trying to hold it together. We love this band, and we love each other."

At first, nobody was quite sure reuniting was the right decision. The band's pre-Coachella warm-up show "went disastrously," according to Reid. "My guitar pedals kept fucking up. I thought we were going to do the same thing in front of 50,000 people. But on stage in the desert, with actress Scarlett Johansson guesting on "Just Like Honey," the ship was righted. "Once the first couple of songs were under our belt, we knew where we were going," Reid says.

The siblings are now whittling down dozens of new songs to 12 or so for the new album. They performed one track, "All Things Must Pass," this summer on "Late Show With David Letterman," and will appear early next year on the soundtrack to the hit NBC drama "Heroes." Another, "Dead End Kids," has been a fixture in JAMC's live set of late.

"I would say it's an evolution," Reid says of the new material, which he and his brother wrote separately. "It definitely sounds like the Mary Chain, but I guess you evolve as a person and a writer. You can't really stand still. If you do that, you're lost."

JAMC was last signed to Sub Pop for 1998's "Munki" but is in no hurry to align with a traditional label.

"I'm getting calls from labels of every stripe and size—from majors to indies," Oberlin says. "The band has been making decisions on their own terms without a lot of outside pressures or taking things slowly, so the process of deciding on a label is likely going to follow the same pattern."

As such, placing "All Things Must Pass" on the "Heroes" soundtrack gives the band a chance to test the waters before committing to anything else.

"I was blown away by their return at Coachella," says Errl Kolosinski, the former Astarwerks GM who is executive-producing the "Heroes" album. "They're a band that has been relentlessly imitated, but nobody pulls it off. This is an ideal opportunity to reintroduce them to the marketplace."

With a tentative late spring/early summer release date for the JAMC album, Oberlin is working with Rhino to bring new product to the marketplace beforehand. The label, which reissued five vintage JAMC albums in 2005, is eyeing a March release for a four-disc boxed set. "There's really cleaned the vaults for this," he says. "There are so many great finds—demos of a couple songs, alternate takes and rare acoustic versions."

For Reid, reconnecting with the back catalog has been a kick, but he's more excited to return to the road armed with new material.

"Playing these shows has been really good fun because it's been a long time since we've played those songs," he says. "It's a greatest hits package we're playing right now, to be honest. That's fine for me at the moment. But it's not what I want to be doing next year. I want to be playing a lot of new songs."

Even better, Reid isn't alone in wanting to push the JAMC forward.

"When we started doing this in January, we didn't know we were going to make a record," he says. "I was hoping Jim would agree, but he didn't agree right away. He said, 'Let's see what happens.' He's up for doing it, which really, really thrills me. I'd be so disappointed if we just did a few shows and went back to life without making a record."
Give Peace a Chance
Maida Hunting Solo Success

As the singer with Our Lady Peace, Raine Maida has made six albums of stadium-friendly rock, but his new set, "The Hunter's Lullaby," is a departure on numerous fronts. It's his solo album, on his own Sony BMG Music Canada-distributed Kingtong Records imprint—and its sparse sound is light years away from OLP.

Taking inspiration from Leonard Cohen and beat poets, Maida says the album was made organically in his home studio, recording late at night after putting his kids to bed. "I've always written a lot of poetry and wanted to record something that didn't have the typical rock structure," he says. "I didn't really know if it would work." Maida says the new album's promotion will be as low-key as its sound. "This is going to be a viral thing," he says. "Very different from the other albums I've been involved with." Maida adds that he'd like to tour the record in intimate venues, following a Nov. 20 show at Los Angeles' VIPer Rooms. Canadian fans are booked through S.L. Feldman Associates; U.S. dates are through Paradigm.

The reunion's first fruit was the 14-minute psychedelic rock "The Shaw Session," released in October on MP3 via NME.com. Since then, the Verve has played six low-key sold-out U.K. shows and will perform six similarly sold-out arena dates Dec. 11-21, all booked by ITB.

Summer reports that the band will return to the studio to work on a new album in January, which will appear on Parlophone in the United Kingdom. A global tour will follow in summer 2008.

—Steve Adams

BOA CONSTRUCTION: One year after Violadores del Verso became the first hip-hop act to top Spain's Media Control album chart, Madrid-based indie BOA Music looks to repeat the task with the Nov. 28 release of the group's sixth album, the live set "Gira 06/07.—Presente." The release follows the group's triumph at the Nov. 2 MTV Europe Music Awards in Munich, where it was named best Spanish band. The chart-topping set "Viva Paro Conta" has sold some 60,000 units, BOA communications director Inma Grass says. The new album is accompanied by a four-hour DVD, which includes the entire Sept. 15 Madrid concert at which the album was recorded, plus a documentary on the band.

BOA plans to release the album in some Latin-American territories, although Grass says the label's distribution is increasingly digital. "Violadores recently played at a festival in Santiago, and the fans knew their lyrics, even though there had been no physical releases in Chile," she says. The label has opened talks with distributor Megaforce Records and hip-hop promoter Red about working the band in the United States. Grass adds.

BOA handles Violadores del Verso's publishing and live booking. —Howell Unruh
The Club Is Open

Jazz Returns To San Francisco Music Scene

While it's one of the most vibrant outposts and top markets for jazz, San Francisco has gone without a club that features national jazz acts for more than two decades. Catching a tour band in a club setting meant going to Oakland in the East Bay. There, Yoshi's had grown from a small restaurant into the marquee 330-seat venue in Jack London Square featuring jazz's crème de la crème, from Betty Carter to Diana Krall and Oscar Peterson to McCoy Tyner.

On Nov. 28, top-tier club jazz finally returns to San Francisco when Yoshi's opens its second state-of-the-art nightspot at the Fillmore Heritage Center in the Fillmore District, as part of a massive city redevelopment plan. The club sits 417 people (317 on the stage level, 100 in the mezzanine). Opening night features drummer Roy Haynes' Birds of a Feather Super Band with Nicholas Payton, Kenny Garrett, John Patitucci and Dave Kikoski, augmented by guest appearances by Gary Burton and Ravi Coltrane (the regular band finishes the week off at Yoshi's Oakland). Following will be midday stints by Taj Mahal (Nov. 29-Dec. 2) and Chick Corea's Freedom Band (Dec. 4-9).

Peter Williams, the artistic director of both clubs, says booking the venues offers an opportunity to be creative. "We can use the two clubs to show the depth of an artist's music as well as give them a chance to relax over the course of two weeks," he says. For example, after Corea's week in San Francisco, he travels across the Bay to perform a week with his Electric Band (Dec. 11-16). Likewise, Charlie Hunter's trio is augmented by the Campbell Brothers in San Francisco (Dec. 12-16), and then joins by guests Steven Bernstein and Curtis Fowlkes in Oakland (Dec. 18-23). But will San Francisco—which used to be a hotspot of jazz club action with major spots like Bop City, Both/And, the Blackhawk, the Jazz Workshop, Half Note and Keystone Korner in the '50s through the early '80s—support a 365-night jazz club? "I'm hoping that the new Yoshi's will be a positive force for the city," says Randall Kline, co-founder/executive director of SFJazz, which presents the 25-year-old San Francisco Jazz Festival. "They're taking on an ambitious project. I hope running a club these days is challenging. I'm hoping the club will help to generate more interest in jazz—priming the pump."

Todd Barkan, artistic director of Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center, concurs. "High tide floats all boats," he says. "When we first opened Dizzy's three years ago, clubs in the city were worried, but we're not competing. It's been good for everyone." Barkan hopes Yoshi's will jump-start a jazz scene in San Francisco. He knows the Bay Area well: He owned and operated Keystone Korner in North Beach from 1972 to 1983, then rejoined Yoshi's in Oakland for a year in 1992-93. While Barkan describes his creative programming there as "making bricks out of straw," he's impressed by the funding support for the new Yoshi's.

Still, he says, San Francisco has become more gentrified and less bohemian than in the old jazz days. "It's a brave new world for running clubs today," he says. "But given Yoshi's commitment, a new day and a new way could well carry its success."
I've had some issues with hip-hop lately. I'm not going to lie. Not enough new artists, no exciting releases at the top of next year outside of Lil Wayne, and pressuring questions like... can Foxx, Webbie and Boosie make another "Wipe Me Down"? Even Jay-Z's "Blue Magic," the first single from his "American Gangster," album, made me exceptionally nervous about hip-hop's future. I didn't love it (I welcome other opinions), and let's be honest: If Jay-Z sucks, then hip-hop sucks. However, in the last few weeks, Def Jam's president released another single, "Roc Boys," with a fabulous Chris Robinson-directed video that made me think twice.

Forget the genre's sliding sales and seeming death of new mass-marketable MCs---this business we're actually begins with music. Hard to remember sometimes, I know. So when I saw the "Roc Boys" video, that warm, fuzzy feeling of good music washed over me in my little cubicle and I was happy with hip-hop again. As such, it's only fair that I caught up with the two producers, Sean C and LV, who made that song and five other tracks on "American Gangster."

"American Gangster" is the No. 1 record, and it's all still sinking in," Sean C says. We got to set the tone for the entire album. Sean C and LV grew up three blocks away from each other in Harlem and have been producing together for more than 10 years. Ironically, their first major placement was on Jay-Z's first album, "Reasonable Doubt," in 1996. The duo crafted "Can't Knock the Hustle" featuring Mary J. Blige when Jay-Z was a rookie and Blige was doing the uptown Roc-a-Fella label a huge favor by singing the song's chorus.

Now, Jay-Z has marked his 10th No. 1 debut (tying Elvis Presley), and Sean C and LV's soulful sound has come full circle.

Their path to "Gangster" began with Sean "Puffy" Combs. Sean C and LV had helped one of their artists, Asiam, get signed to Bad Boy and Combs subsequently invited them to join his production team, the Hitmen. Earlier this year, Puffy called us from Saint Tropez, like, "It's on the low, but I want you to work on Jay-Z's new album," Sean C says.

Once Combs returned to New York, the three went to the studio and Jay-Z dropped by to hear some songs. After playing several tracks, including "Sweat," Jay-Z said that while he liked what he'd heard, he was leaving if they didn't have...
As Christian music's most awarded artist—
with 51 Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards
and five Grammy Awards to his credit—Steven
Curtis Chapman could well afford to rest on
his considerable laurels, but complacency
isn't in the veteran singer/songwriter's
vocabulary. On Oct. 23, longtime label
home Sparrow Records released "This Moment,"
Chapman's 16th studio album and his first
new project in three years.

In the midst of a fall tour, Chapman chatted
with Billboard about his new release and
his 20th anniversary in Christian music.

1. When you went in to record "This Mo-
ment," what did you want to say at this
point in your career?

I wanted to be as honest as I've ever been about
everything—about where I am personally,
where I am in my career. The message that
came to the surface, the common thread, was
you really can't do anything about the future,
and you actually can't do anything about the
past. Let it rest in God's hands.

2. After having won 51 Dove Awards, is
there a lot of pressure when you make
a new album?

Honestly, there was a tremendous amount of
pressure, but not being put on me from record
company people. It was just what I imposed
on myself. There were times where it almost
shut me down. I was so analytical. Verses of
scripture really inspire a lot of my music, and
there's one verse in particular, Revelation 1:19.

"Write therefore the things that are
seen." I felt like God was saying, "Here's re-
ally what you need to do—just write about
the things you've seen."

3. What are the biggest changes you've
seen in the Christian music in-
dustry during the past 20 years?

The diversity. When my first records came
out, we thought it was diverse then because
you had Whiteheart on one end of the spec-
trum, and then we had Sandi Patty on the
other end. We never imagined there would be a
day that we'd have Christian hip-hop and real
modern rock stuff like Switchfoot.

My son went to hear a band
called the Clearao and they
couldn't believe they were
meeting Steven Curtis
Chapman's son. They start-
ing "The Great Adven-
ture" to my boy. It's the
widest thing—the influ-
ence guys like myself
have had runs into hard-
core screaming and hip-
hop. I'm thinking,"How in the world did
that diversity come out of
what we were doing
15-20 years ago?"

4. How does it feel to
be taking on a mentor role with some of
these new artists?

I feel so honored. It kind of started with Cast-
ing Crowns when I got the role of producing
and mentoring them and introducing them
to the Christian music industry. Of course,
they took that little introduction and just went
onto pretty much rule and reign at Christian
radio, retail and everywhere else, which has
been awesome. You gain so much knowledge
and wisdom through the years, and you get to
pass that on. It's a very, very cool role.

5. Your sons Caleb and Will are on tour
with you, playing in your band. What
type of advice do you give them about
the business?

Music is where they would love to spend their
life. When you take your sons on tour when
they are still in high school, you know you are
probably limiting your chances of them get-
ing real excited about going on and cranking
textbooks for four more years. The most im-
portant thing to me that I want to convey to
them is to follow God and to live their lives to
honor him and whatever gifts he's given.

6. What can you say about your Change
for Orphans campaign?

We're collecting loose change, and in each of
the cities, we invite a family who are in
the process of adopting and need help financially
to bring the child home. We bring them on-
tage and give them the money that we've col-
lected that night by the people in that room.
Every night, we've made over $2,000.
One night, we had $7,000. We have a matching anony-

mous donor that's matched up a
$2,000 every night when we raise at
least $2,000. It's really been a blessing.

I think everything I was doing with Les
Rhymes Digitales, a lot of the reference points
were about pop music and about
wanting to make artist albums. At the time,
I just wanted to make my own," he says. "I
suppose the path that life took for me just
meant I started bumping into these people
along the way, Madonnas and Seals, and
what I realized was that way more impor-
tant than being the artist was making songs
and making music.

Now a two-time Grammy Award winner
(both for remixes), Price still sees himself
as a member of the dance community,
Djing and remixing as often as he works
with big names. (Next up are some tracks
with the Killers.)

"People complain about dance music's
lack of acceptance into the mainstream, but
I think it doesn't necessarily do itself any fa-

vors," he says. "There's no question about
the quality of electronic music—it's con-
stantly raised, it gets higher and higher.
However, the more you talk about something
being limited, the more it becomes limited. I
think the best way to do it is to get on with it.
A lot of innovative music makers would have
a problem with working with a mainstream
artist, and that right there in a nutshell is the
problem. Don't be too cool for school."
PITBULL
The Boatlift
Producers: various
TV/T
Release Date: Nov 27
Pitbull’s signature combination of clever, in-your-face Spanish lyrical and frenetic dance beats is at its best on this album, where he plays to his less excessively crude sensibilities. The talented Miami MC shows his range here, deftly transitioning from uptempo dance to R&B to everything in between. There are some party-perfect club tracks, particularly “The Anthem,” a fun hipshaker featuring Lil Jon, and “Midnight,” featuring Casely on the hook. “Fuego,” produced by Mr. Collipark and featuring Don Omar, has pleasing rhythmic touches that recall “Planet Rock.” Of the slower songs, the best is the refreshingly serious “My Life” (“I apologize, but this game made me a monster/I’m sorry”). The production is top-notch—if you don’t mind the 2 Live Crew-ish blue streak, turn it up.—ABY

MERCYME
All That Is Within Me
Producer: Brown Bannister
INO Records
Release Date: Nov 20
This Texas-based group is once again singing primarily to the choir on “All That Is Within Me,” which finds frontman Bart Millard and his compadres serving up strong songs geared more toward the church. A prime example is “Time Has Come,” a buoyant number that celebrates being children of God. The first single, “God With Us,” is already saturating Christian radio, while “You Reign” is a classic-sounding worship anthem. Amid the sea of overtly spiritual songs, the Beatles-esque “Goodbye Ordinary” has solid crossover potential and could land the band back on the pop charts. No matter what tag the industry puts on these guys, the bottom line is that they continually make great music with broad-based appeal.—DEP

KYLIE MINOGUE
X
Producers: various
Parlophone
Release Date: Nov 26
Even after a four-year absence and a courageous battle against cancer, Kylie Minogue’s appetite for pop perfection remains undimmed. Indeed, her 10th studio album (due next year in the United States) is stuffed with pointers to why she was one of the few pure pop artists to sustain a career into a third decade without ever pulling a Britney. The hit producers (Calvin Harris, Bloodshy & Avant) and heavy-hitting songwriters (Guy Chambers, Cathy Dennis) are all present and correct, but they never overshadow Minogue’s perky/saucy pop/dance formula. You’ll search in vain for insight into her recent personal traumas, but there’s still plenty of heart and soul, and in the shape of “Sensitized,” “In My Arms,” “The One” and lead single “Two Hearts,” her best batch of tunes in a while. A truly welcome return.—MS

GOPALVAUGH
Superstar
Producers: Damian Marley, Stephen Marley, Julian Marley, John Bond
Tuff Gong/Ghetto Youths/Universal
Release Date: Nov 20
On his delightfully lightweight majorlabel debut, this 14-year-old Jamaican native makes no attempt to pass himself off as an adult. The key track on “Superstar” is an update of “Santa Claus (Do You Ever Come to the Ghetto?” on which Jauchavn’s adolescent voice is pitched up even higher to resemble that of a baby. But if “Superstar” rightfully plays up the singer’s youth, the album’s sound is not one of inexperience. Thanks to instrumental contributions by reggae vets including Sly & Robbie as well as several members of the extended Marley clan, Jauchavn’s pop-wise confections (many written by his father, John Bond) throb with a vintage vibe that should satisfy any old-schoolers worried about digging the work of a fresh-faced new jack.—MW

THE BILLBOARD REVIEWS

ALBUMS

POP
GORILLAZ
D-Sides
Producers: various
Virgin
Release Date: Nov 20
Gorillaz’ second rarities compilation covers “phase two” of the cartoon-avator band’s career, centering on its second album, 2002’s “Demon Days.” It’s not all killer, but some impressive tracks lurk within. Opener “68 State” is a sexy, fractured instrumentalfueled by a haunting bassline. “People” is also a great listen; the song is a demo version of “Demon Days” single “DARE.” But here it has a completely different lyric and melody, sung by band leader Damen Alborn (aka 2D) instead of eventual guest vocalist Shaun Ryder. “Hong Kong,” originally recorded for a Warpchild benefit album, is a different animal: Alborn is at his Buressitic, his voice melancholy yet hopeful as he muses over a river of gently plucked strings. A bonus disc features a host of remixes, including three versions each of “DARE” and “Kids With Guns.”—TC

IMANI COPPOLA
The Black & White Album
Producers: Imani Coppola, Josh Valleau specac
Release Date: Nov 6
You might remember Coppola as a late-’90s Nelly Furtado precursor with one hit and a Coolio hairdo on the cover of her first and only major-label album. Or you might not. No matter, because today’s Coppola is a different, more ferocious animal. From the first track here—a narrow-eyed indictment of chronic blame-passers, with harmony and organs nonetheless—you know you’re in for it. Coppola goes on to bust countless styles into submission, wielding a lusty growl and the unbridled boldness of onebooted from the kingdom. “Wake Up White One” is today’s best dual, under-2:30 punk shriek since PJ Harvey’s “50 FT Queenie”; “Keys 2 Your Ass” sends up natty hip-hop cruising tracks so accurately that it might be able to pass as one.—KM

REJEE
JAVAUGH
Superstar
Producers: Damian Marley, Stephen Marley, Julian Marley, John Bond Tuff Gong/Ghetto Youths/Universal
Release Date: Nov 20
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OPETH
The Roundhouse Tapes
Producer: Jens Bogren Peaceville Records
Release Date: Nov 20
If it weren’t for the audience’s cheers, you almost wouldn’t know “The Roundhouse Tapes” documents a 2006 live performance in London. The black metal band’s graceful tone is pristine enough to be mistaken for studio takes, even when it’s digging deep into the relentless “Demon of the Fall.” The recording style does most the justice to Opeth’s softer side, as heard on the gentle first stanza of “Face of Melinda,” which is as enjoyably wistful as a rainy Sunday afternoon. Elsewhere, the medieval-leaning “The Night and the Silent Water” is a gratifying communal experience interspersed throughout the lengthy tracks is the dry (but never arid) wit of frontman Mikeas Akerfeldt, whose elegant Swedish accent cuts him out to be a new breed of stand-up comic.—CLT
**The Billboard Reviews**

**Singles**

**Single Plan**
- When I’m Gone (3:49)
  - **Producers:** Dave Fortman, Danja
  - **Artists:** Simple Plan, A. Lami, F.N. Hills

**AMY WINEHOUSE**

- Frank
  - **Producer:** various
  - **Universal Republic**

**JONATHAN BENNETT**

- The Art of Us
  - **Producer:** various

**THEROYS**

- Gossip
  - **Producer:** various

**GEOFF MCGILL**

- Break My Heart
  - **Producer:** various

**DVJ**

- Thirteen
  - **Producer:** various

**COUNTRY**

**THE BELLAMY BROTHERS**

- Drug Problem (3:50)
  - **Writer:** not listed

**BROOKS & DUNN**

- God Must Be Busy (3:45)
  - **Producers:** Tony Brown, Ronnie Dunn
  - **Writer:** C. Daniels, M.P. Heaney

**MAROON 5**

- Won’t Go Home Without You (3:51)
  - **Producers:** Mike Elizondo, Mark “Spoke” Stent

**LEGEND & CREDITS**

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

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Ayala Ben-Yehuda, Alexandra Cahill, Troy Carpinteri, Jonathan Cohen, Courtney Harding, Clover G. Koppe, Ken Mason, Sven Philips, Deborah Evans Porge, Mark Sutherland, Chuck Taylor, Christa L. Tuss, Philip Van Vleck, Jeff Viabel, Mikki Wood

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

**CRITICS’ CHOICE:** A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

All albums commercially available in the United States are elite bids. Send album review copy to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copy to Chuck Taylor. (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaux.

**NEW TITLES & VERSIONS**

**Anzic Records**

- **Release Date:** Nov. 20

- With "Brash" we have a fortunate assemblage of Cohen brothers—Anat (tenor sax and clarinet), Avishai (trumpet) and Yuval (soprano sax) on their second co-op album. A favorite among the nine original numbers is "Gigi et Amélie," written by Avishai. The song opens gently, with Avishai working a rough to sound that positively is in-candescent. Yuval and Anat echo Avishai's initial statement as the tune blossoms into an intricate layering of horn and reeds. The lone cover, Van Heusen and Burke's "It's Could Happen To You," quickly develops into an imaginative, fugue-like interpretation. Another special number is Yuval's "Elegy for Elkiu," an eloquent bit of expansive jazz. —PVV

**DVD**

- **MTV Unplugged**

  - **Producer:** Alex Coletti
  - **Geffen/MTV Networks/Live**

- **Release Date:** Nov. 20

- Nirvana fans that rued not taking the tape's classic "MTV Unplugged" back in 1994. The wait for the DVD is finally over. The show, unsurprisingly, holds up miraculously well after 13 years; Kurt Cobain still looks hunched and tortured, Krist Novoselic still looks goofy, and Dave Grohl just looks really young. The songs are as strong and haunting as ever, and the way Cobain sings to the kids behind the desk is a real treat to watch. —MRR
GLOBAL  BY PAUL SEXTON

WORTH
THE WAIT

Patience Proves A Virtue For U.K.'s Lewis

The decision to wait a year before unleashing Leona Lewis on the public paid dividends with her debut album "Spirit" (Sony Music/Sony BMG) becoming the market's fastest-selling debut release of all time. "Spirit" entered the Official U.K. Charts Co.'s Nov. 18 albums listing at No. 1, 11 months after she was crowned winner of U.K. TV talent show The X-Factor, as its opening-week sales of 375,000 took it ahead of the Arctic Monkeys' 363,000 for "Whatever People Say I Am. That's What I'm Not" (Domino) in January 2006. "Spirit," which commanded almost 12% of the entire U.K. album market in its opening week (11.17.06 frame), now also stands fourth among the top-ranking first-week album sales performers in U.K. chart history. That list is headed by Oasis' "Be Here Now," which moved a massive 813,000 in 1997, followed by Coldplay's "X&Y" (446,000, 2005) and Dido's "Life for Rent" (400,000, 2003).

Leona Lewis' spectacular arrival as a heavyweight album artist took place as she continued her reign in the U.K. singles market. "Bleeding Love" achieved its fourth week atop that survey, with cumulative sales of 363,000. "Spirit" has been flying off the shelves of all our stores," says Keith Black, music buyer for Woolworths, which has 818 U.K. outlets and sells music in all of them. "It's the biggest week one of the year and is almost certainly set to be No. 1 this Christmas.

Black says British audiences are enjoying expressing the solidarity established with Lewis during her triumphant TV run. "She proves an ordinary girl with talent can really hit the big time," he says. "The X-Factor" has a huge fan base, and now people can support Leona after watching her week after week.

"Bleeding Love" is due for U.K. release Jan. 14 on J Records, ahead of the "Spirit" album March 14, and chairman/CEO Olivo Davis says that the U.K. success is the perfect scene-setter. The album entering at No. 1 with all-time sales numbers is beyond fantastic," he says. "From the showcase we held for Leona in Los Angeles in February for the best songwriters in the world, to the selection of material and then throughout the entire recording process, this has truly been a wonderful creative experience. We're now diligently preparing for her major U.S. debut, taking nothing for granted but knowing that Leona's prodigious talent will win out."

FOR U.K. STORES, A WEEK OF REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

Leona Lewis' record-breaking debut was only part of the U.K. market's best sales week of 2007 to date. The new-release-heavy Nov. 11-17 period generated total album sales of 3.175 million, according to Official U.K. Charts Co. data, ahead of the 3.084 million in Feb. 11-17—which included the release of Mike's "Life in Cartoon Motion" (Island) and the traditional Valentine's Day sales spike.

Lewis' 375,000 sales for "Spirit" were followed by the Spice Girls' "Greatest Hits" (Virgin, 75,000), Led Zeppelin's "Mothership" (Atlantic, 58,000) and Celine Dion's "Taking Chances" (Sony, 55,000), while the Killers' "Sawdust" (Vertigo) and "Vivere—The Best of Andrea Bocelli" (Sugar/UC) both debuted with sales of 40,000-plus.

"Leona has been a massive album for us, driving lots of people in-store and online and creating a 'halo' effect for other new releases," HMV head of music Rudy Osorio says. Its success "has also got the media talking about music, so everybody stands to benefit. It's helped kick-start the Christmas sales campaign.

Paul Quirk, partner at Quirk's Records in Ormskirk, Lancashire, adds: "It shows that if the product is there, spread across different genres, fans will turn out in force to buy it. It was one of our busiest weeks right across the board." —PS

ELECTRONIC  BY CORTNEY HARDING

SOUPED-UP 'SOUND'

LCD Rerelease Caps Successful '07

Despite having already sold 10,000 digital downloads of LCD Soundsystem's "45:33," DFA Records bet that a larger audience exists for the nearly 46-minute track and rereleased the song physically last week with an additional three songs. In its first week, the project sold slightly more than 1,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, debuting at No. 7 on Billboard's Top Electronic Albums chart. The long and winding track, which was originally marketed to runners through a partnership with Nike, is the centerpiece of the album. "The first thing I want to make clear is that exercise is not a part of the marketing of this record," jokes Jonathon Galkin, manager of DFA, which was co-founded by LCD Soundsystem mastermind James Murphy and releases all his work. "This is coming out as a proper: LCD Soundsystem release, almost as a follow-up to this year's "Sound of Silver."" "45:33" was timed to arrive at the same time that magazines, newspapers and Web sites publish their "Best of 2007" lists, many of which "Sound of Silver" is expected to top. The record has moved 77,000 copies, peaking at No. 46 on the Billboard 200.

That album "is still gaining speed," Galkin says, "but we also realized there is a finite number of people who will buy "45:33" on iTunes and will discover it in the wake of all the press about "Sound of Silver." He is also betting that many "Silver" fans will take a special interest in the track, as the song "Someone Great," a highlight of the original album, has its roots in "45:33." Like other DFA releases, "45:33" will be available on vinyl. "Everything we do comes out on vinyl," he says. "We have a huge audience of DJs and make sure that vinyl is available for them."

REASONS TO CHEERFUL

OTHER涼音

LEONAHUMES

ONEREPUBLIC with TIMBALAND

Spin Me Round
(like a Record)

'Apologize' Breaks Barrier For Most Radio Plays In A Week

Right now, there's nothing Timbaland needs to feel sorry about. "Apologize," the latest single from his April release "Shock Value," smashes the previous CHR/Top 40 weekly plays record this week in Billboard's sister publication Radio & Records, with a healthy 10,241 spins.

The single, which is in its third week at the top of the chart and features vocals from rock band OneRepublic, broke the 10,000 plays mark last week, but it trailed Fergie's "Big Girls Don't Cry" by 41 spins for the most-plays-in-a-week title. "Big Girls" notched 10,092 spins on the Aug. chart, while "Apologize" collected 10,051 spins last week.

But with its 190-spin increase this week, the record now squarely belongs to Timbaland and his OneRepublic collaborators. "Apologize" and "Big Girls Don't Cry" are the only two songs in the 15-year history of the Nielsen BDS-fed chart to top 10,000 plays. Making the feat, even more impressive: Only four other songs have ever topped 9,000 spins, one of which—Nelly Furtado's "Promiscuous"—featured Timbaland.

"Apologize" is the third song from "Shock Value" to impact the CHR/Top 40 chart and the second to reach No. 1. "The Way I Are," featuring Keri Hilson, spent three weeks at the summit in September, charting for a total of 23 weeks. And first single "Give It to Me," featuring Nelly Furtado and Justin Timberlake, hit No. 3 in May during a 25-week run. While "Apologize" tops CHR/Top 40, it also moves into the top 10 on the Rhythm Airplay chart, rising 12-9. Timbaland last peaked on that chart at No. 4 with "The Way I Are," the peak as "Give It to Me.

Meanwhile, Interscope labelmate and fellow top 40 favorite Fergie is already mounting an effort to retake her record. New single "Clumsy" isn't showing any signs of klutziness on the chart as it rises 12-8 and helps album "The Dutchess" become just the seventh set in the chart's history to spawn five top 10s.
Writing about Alicia Keys’ career feels odd. As a Billboard charts wonk who previously worked for a music retail chain, I am a fan of success, even when it happens to music I don’t particularly enjoy. Well, except for 1980, when “Hit Infidelity” became such a huge hit for REO Speedwagon. That still bothers me.

Beyond that bit of chart lore, Keys secures her latest success with the best sales week of her career, 742,000 copies, an accomplishment that has eluded most No. 1 acts in 2007. It’s also the second-largest sales frame by any album this year, topped only by Kanye West’s “Graduation” with 957,000 first-week sales.

Until now, Keys had scored her best with sophomore album “The Diary of Alicia Keys,” which opened with 618,000 copies in November 2003.

I’m going to go out on a limb and say Keys’ “As I Am” was not too roughed up from her missing a “Late Night With David Letterman” appearance due to the Writers Guild of America strike (Billboard, Nov. 24). In fact, Keys’ start marks the largest Nielsen SoundScan frame by a solo female since 1987, “Feel Like Home,” opened at 1 million copies in February 2004. It would be a pleasure to deliver this kind of good news, the way a sports writer might rave about a towering home run, even if the chart-topping album wasn’t my cup of tea. It feels better to do so when I am genuinely a fan of the artist’s music.

“NOW” AND AGAIN: The sure signs that Thanksgiving is about to arrive include autumn leaves, ads for the big Thanksgiving sales, children’s renderings of turkeys and pilgrims—and the arrival of a new “Now” compilation. That musical holiday tradition continues with “Now 26,” which opens at No. 4 on the Billboard 200 with 208,000 sold. That’s down from 337,000 for “Now 23” when it arrived the week before Thanksgiving 2006.

More to the immediate point, the new “Now” also trails Celine Dion’s “Taking Chances,” which opens at No. 1 with 214,000 copies. That’s more than double the first-week sales of either of the top 10 albums she placed in 2004, “Miracle” (107,000) and “A New Day… Live in Las Vegas” ($8,000).

Josh Groban beats both of those new entries (6,000), his being one of several Christmas albums to post hand- some increases this week. Fueling his 93% gain is drier pricing from Target, but look for him to beat this issue’s 223,000 copies next week, thanks to an announced appearance No. 20 on Oprah Winfrey’s annual “10 Favo- rite Things” episode of her afternoon talk show.

Depending on how much he gains and Alicia Keys falls, Groban’s “Noel” could be the first Christmas title to lead the charts since Kenny G’s “Miracles — The Holiday Album” in 1994.

Missing from this week’s Thanksgiving menu are the sort of prime-time TV specials that have boosted such artists as Dion, Jennifer Lopez and Faith Hill in recent years, but any halo from the Nov. 18 ASCAP telecast of the American Music Awards will also feed next issue’s chart, with Chris Brown and Sugarland being my personal picks for the best post-show traction.

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The Hot Box

BILLBOARD

A WEEKLY ROUNDUP OF NOTABLE CHART ACHIEVEMENTS

WHOLE LOTA ZEP

Led Zeppelin’s No. 7 bow on The Billboard 200 is not the band’s only chart action. Zep's late a uge into the downloads market puts its policy iTunes exclusive “The Complete Led Zeppelin” at No. 10 on Top Digital Albums, while five of 51 tracks enter Hot Digital Songs (at Nos. 57, 62, 65 and 79).

MOUSE HOUSE

Top Soundtracks joined Billboard’s pages in 2001, each of the top four titles belong to one label: The only label to hold that winning hand is the one that sweeps this week, Walt Disney.

HOLLY JOLLY

Even before Thanksgiving arrived, two post-"American Idol" finals hits hit the Adult Contemporary chart with holiday songs. Kimberley Locke, who has had two faller holiday No. 1 bows at No. 22, "Carr & Underwood" gets one at No. 25.

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Chart Beat

There’s a songwriter in the top 10 of The Billboard Hot 100 that had to find extra barks in the Billboard pop singles chart 66 years ago. The late Bobby Troup, who penned the classic song "Route 66," has his first hit in 1941 when Sonny Bono recorded "Daddy." Now, "hook is couched in Poplene's "Chantilly," a pop hit 64 years later because the steep samples Troup's "The Girl Can't Help It" is recorded by Little Richard in 1956.

Another songwriter also expands his career, chart gain, thanks to the debut of Boyz II Men's "The Tears of My Heart" on the Adult Contemporary and Adult R&B charts. Same day Bill Robinson first charted 48 years ago when the Miracles' "Where Did Our Love Go" found its way to the Hot 100.

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Market Watch

WEEKLY UNIT SALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Week</td>
<td>11,257,000</td>
<td>10,947,000</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>9,947,000</td>
<td>9,644,000</td>
<td>-2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Week Last Year</td>
<td>12,492,000</td>
<td>13,699,000</td>
<td>-9.1%</td>
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ALBUM SALES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year-ToDate</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>468,527,000</td>
<td>509,000</td>
<td>+4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>491,000</td>
<td>912,000</td>
<td>+71.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassettes</td>
<td>5,120,000</td>
<td>5,180,000</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>524,017,000</td>
<td>536,200,000</td>
<td>+2.3%</td>
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</table>

SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year-ToDate</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>453,492,000</td>
<td>468,527,000</td>
<td>+3.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>27,385,000</td>
<td>42,771,000</td>
<td>+56.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassettes</td>
<td>1,017,000</td>
<td>255,000</td>
<td>-74.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>803,000</td>
<td>893,000</td>
<td>+11.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For week ending Nov. 18, 2007. Figures are rounded. See chart notes for week currently on file. Data supplied and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.
## Billboard 200 Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alicia Keys</td>
<td>&quot;As I Am&quot;</td>
<td>J Records</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Linkin Park</td>
<td>&quot;No. 2&quot;</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>&quot;NOW 26&quot;</td>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Garth Brooks</td>
<td>&quot;The Ultimate Hits&quot;</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>$16.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Eagles</td>
<td>&quot;Long Road Out Of Eden&quot;</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
<td>$12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jay-Z</td>
<td>&quot;American Gangster&quot;</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carrie Underwood</td>
<td>&quot;Carnival Ride&quot;</td>
<td>1912 Records</td>
<td>$12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td>&quot;Exclusive&quot;</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dano Black</td>
<td>&quot;Rough Around The Edges: Live From Madison Square Garden&quot;</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>George Strait</td>
<td>&quot;22 More Hits&quot;</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>&quot;Taylor Swift&quot;</td>
<td>Big Machine</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Colbie Caillat</td>
<td>&quot;Christmas Song&quot;</td>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Muse</td>
<td>&quot;Still Feelin' Good&quot;</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sugarland</td>
<td>&quot;Enjoy The Ride&quot;</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
<td>$12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Britney Spears</td>
<td>&quot;Blackout&quot;</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Robert Plant &amp; Alison Krauss</td>
<td>&quot;Raising Sand&quot;</td>
<td>Sugar Hill</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Keysia Cole</td>
<td>&quot;Just Like You&quot;</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Boyz II Men</td>
<td>&quot;Motown: A Journey Through Motown USA&quot;</td>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kid Rock</td>
<td>&quot;Rock N Roll Jesus&quot;</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Soulja Boy Tell 'Em</td>
<td>&quot;souljabylettem.com&quot;</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
<td>&quot;Everything Is Fine&quot;</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Kanye West</td>
<td>&quot;Graduation&quot;</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Seal</td>
<td>&quot;System&quot;</td>
<td>J Records</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Duran Duran</td>
<td>&quot;Duran Duran's Red Carpet Massacre&quot;</td>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Bruce Springsteen</td>
<td>&quot;Magic&quot;</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fergie</td>
<td>&quot;The Dutchess&quot;</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>James Taylor</td>
<td>&quot;All The Right Reasons&quot;</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Wisin &amp; Yandel</td>
<td>&quot;One Chance&quot;</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>&quot;Stockings By The Fire&quot;</td>
<td>Sony</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>&quot;Disney Channel Holiday&quot;</td>
<td>Disney Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Matchbox Twenty</td>
<td>&quot;Exile On Mainstream&quot;</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>&quot;High School Musical&quot;</td>
<td>Walt Disney</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>JAMES BLUNT</td>
<td>&quot;Common Dear&quot;</td>
<td>Cherrytree</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Timbaland</td>
<td>&quot;Timbaland Presents Shock Value&quot;</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
<td>$13.99</td>
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**Notes:**
- Prices shown are for the digital download version.
- The chart is a compilation of the United States billboard 200 chart for the week ending December 1, 2007.
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>NO ONE</td>
<td>LADY GAG/REMONDI - ATLANTIC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODD SENSES</td>
<td>ZEPHYR/PICTURE THIS - SONY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DADDY'S LUXURY</td>
<td>POLARIS/PICTURE THIS - SONY</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>APOLORIZEN</td>
<td>TEMPER/PICTURE THIS - SONY</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD LIFE</td>
<td>DRAKE/KELLY/REMONDI - ATLANTIC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUBBLE</td>
<td>KANE/POLARIS/PICTURE THIS - SONY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HATE THAT MONDAY</td>
<td>MURA MASA/LIL' WAYNE - DTP</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BED</td>
<td>EMINEM/DOC BEATTY - SHADY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRONGER</td>
<td>THE GOOD LIVING - SONY</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE WAY I AM</td>
<td>SEETHER/JAMIE BOND - REPEITIVE</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY</td>
<td>KANYE - AKON/ATLANTIC</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUFFLE BAG BOY</td>
<td>ALICE COOPER/REMONDI - ATLANTIC</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAN'T HELP BUT WAIT</td>
<td>PROG - REP - SONY</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>BABY DON'T CRY</td>
<td>FERGIE - FERGIE FEAT. SHEREE - JAY-Z - COLUMBIA</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARALYZER</td>
<td>DRAKE/KELLY/REMONDI - ATLANTIC</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVER YOU</td>
<td>FREE &amp; EASY/JAY-Z - DTP</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOU BELONG TO ME</td>
<td>LINKIN PARK/JAY-Z - SONY</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>DROWN</td>
<td>TAKING CHANCES/ZAPPA - SONY</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUR HANDS</td>
<td>SEVEN DAYS OF LONELY - LEGEND</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>SIX FEET UNDER</td>
<td>SEVEN DAYS OF LONELY - LEGEND</td>
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<td>STRONGER</td>
<td>THE HONG KONG SLEEPER - SONY</td>
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<tr>
<td>AYO TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td>SEVEN DAYS OF LONELY - LEGEND</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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<td>ONE WISH</td>
<td>SHINee/REPUBLIC - SONY</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOVE THAT MONDAY</td>
<td>MURA MASA/LIL' WAYNE - DTP</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUBBLE</td>
<td>KANE/REMONDI - ATLANTIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>HATE THAT MONDAY</td>
<td>MURA MASA/LIL' WAYNE - DTP</td>
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<td>BED</td>
<td>EMINEM/DOC BEATTY - SHADY</td>
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<td>STRONGER</td>
<td>THE GOOD LIVING - SONY</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE WAY I AM</td>
<td>SEETHER/JAMIE BOND - REPEITIVE</td>
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<td>BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY</td>
<td>KANYE - AKON/ATLANTIC</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUFFLE BAG BOY</td>
<td>ALICE COOPER/REMONDI - ATLANTIC</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAN'T HELP BUT WAIT</td>
<td>PROG - REP - SONY</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>BABY DON'T CRY</td>
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<td>FREE &amp; EASY/JAY-Z - DTP</td>
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<td>LINKIN PARK/JAY-Z - SONY</td>
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<td>STRONGER</td>
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### MODERN ROCK

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<td>SLAGG - SLAGG</td>
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<td>FREE &amp; EASY/JAY-Z - DTP</td>
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<td>YOU BELONG TO ME</td>
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### Chart Legend
- **Pop** songs
- **Adult Pop** songs
- **Adult Contemporary** songs
- **R&B** songs
- **Urban** songs
- **Country** songs
- **Rock** songs
- **Other** songs

### Pop 100
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<td>Katy Perry</td>
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<td>Get Buck in Here</td>
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<td>I Gotta Feeling</td>
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<td>Money Can't Buy Me Love</td>
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### Pop 100 Airplay
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<td>Myloops</td>
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<td>Change Your Mind</td>
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<td>My Eyes</td>
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<td>Diamonds</td>
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<td>Taylor Swift feat. Kanye West</td>
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### HitPredictor
- **GIMME MORE**
- **DREAM (O.T.F. JAM**
- **Is A 10**
- **SEXIER THAN YOUR GIRL**
- **EVERYTHING I DO**
- **THE WAY I AM**
- **ANOTHER ONE Bites The Dust**
- **LOVE SEEK**
- **NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP**
- **WHEN I GROW UP**
- **TEARDROPS ON MY GUITAR**
- **BABY DON'T GO**
- **UNTIL THE END OF TIME**
- **FIRST TIME**
- **SOMETHING IN THE WAY**
- **WHO KNEW**
- **GOO ALIVE**
- **DO IT WELL**
- **FIT TO BE TIED**
- **ENYA**
- **My Eyes**
- **One Republic**
- **Etcetera**

Data for week of December 1, 2007 | Charts Legend on Page 82
## TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

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<td>Death Row</td>
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<td>K'naan</td>
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<td>B.A.R.S. The Barry Adrian Reese Story</td>
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<td>I Am</td>
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## TOP BLUES ALBUMS

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<td>Dion</td>
<td>Son Of Ship James</td>
<td>Epic/A &amp; R Records</td>
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<td>Bettye Lavette</td>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

**FOND RETURNS BY BOYZ, ARETHA**

Boy II Men pay homage to their musical roots as latest effort, "Motown: A Journey Through Hitsville USA," bows at No. 6 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. It also arrives with 42,000 copies at No. 7 on The Billboard 200, double the start of their last covers album, "Throwback," in 2004. The first single, the act's version of Stevie Wonder's "Ribbon in the Sky," is starting to break at Adult R&B radio. Aretha Franklin's "Jewels in the Crown: Duets With the Queen," a set of new and old material, starts at No. 7, her first R&B top 10 since "A Rose Is Still a Rose" in 1998.

At the top of the page, Alicia Keys becomes the first woman in the Nielsen Music era to start a career with four consecutive No. 1s on both R&B Albums and The Billboard 200. — Raphael George
BETWEEN THE BULLETS  wyssen@billboard.com

UNDERWOOD STANDS OVER SONGS CHART

The lead single from Carrie Underwood's "Carnival Ride" album rings the top bill on Hot Country Songs, her fourth trip to No. 1 on the chart. Up 278,000 audience impressions, "So Small" jumps 3-1 and replaces Dierks Bentley's "Free and Easy (Down the Road I Go)," which is pushed to No. 4.

Each of Underwood's previous country chart-toppers spent multiple weeks at No. 1, starting with "Jesus, Take the Wheel," which spent six weeks at No. 1 in January 2006. She also spent five weeks atop the chart with "Better to Live Than Die" (November 2006) and three weeks with "Wasted" (April 2007). She peaked at No. 2 with "Don't Forget to Remember Me" (August 2006).

Underwood is the only solo female to appear atop the country chart since Sara Evans spent two weeks at No. 1 with "A Real Fine Place to Start" in September 2005.

— Wade Jessen
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**CHARTS LEGEND**

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive panel of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/hi-temp retail charts is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialize in those genres.

- Albums with the greatest sales increases.
- Albums with the greatest sales decreases.
- Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.
- Albums whose sales are down from last week.

**Pricing/Configuration/Availability**

CD/CDV/DVD prices are suggested retail or equivalent prices, which are projected from known sales price. CD/DVD prices are not available for sales chart. Pricing after CDs/DVDs only available. **D** Cassette only available. **C** CD/DVD combo available. **L** Vinyl LP available. **V** Vinyl LP availability is not included on all releases. Catalog number indicates title is available to all accounts, but not limited quantities.

**SINGLE-EXCHARTS**

**Radio Airplay Singles Charts**

Compiled from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of national airplay detections, computed by cross-referencing actual airplay with Arbitron listener data. The exceptions are the RHETORICAL, ALTITUDE, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are ranked by folter detections.

**Recurrence Rules**

Songs are removed from the Billboard chart if they have been on the Billboard chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 50. Songs are removed from the Hot 100 if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 20. Songs are removed from the R&B/Hip-Hop chart if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 20. Songs are removed from the Hot Country chart if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 20. Songs are removed from the Hot Latin chart if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below No. 20.

**Radio Single Sales Charts**

Compiled from a national sample of a small number of retail sales data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of total retail sales.

**Confirgurations**

- **CD single available.** Digital Download available. **DVD single available.**
- **CD Format Single available.** **Ha-Ma-Song available.**

**HitPredector**

All tracks not on HitPredector status in that certification format is based on research data provided by Billboard, Inc. Songs are listed by Billboard, Inc. using multiple listeners and a nationwide sample of carefully profiled music consumers. Songs are ranked on a 1-10 scale. Final results are based on weighted positives. Songs with a score of 65 or more (5 or more for country) are judged to have hit potential, although that threshold can vary by market and format based on the strength of available music. For a complete and updated list of current songs with full Potential, commercial, and sales, please visit www.HitPredector.com.

**Dance Club Play**

Compiled from a national sample of reports from dance DJs.

**Award Certifications**

**Album Charts**

- Recording Industry Assoc. of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Golds). **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinums).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 5 million units (Diamonds).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 10 million units (Multi-Platinums).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 20 million units (Platinum).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 50 million units (Platinum).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 100 million units (Platinum). **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 200 million units (Platinum).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 300 million units (Platinum).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 400 million units (Platinum).

**Single Charts**

- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 50,000 units (Golds). **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 100,000 units (Platinums). **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 200,000 units (Diamonds). **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 300,000 units (Platinum).
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 400,000 units (Platinum).

**Music Video Sales Charts**

- **RIAA** gold certification for net shipment of 250,000 videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** platinum certification for net shipment of 500,000 videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 1 million videos for shortform or longform videos.
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 2 million videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 5 million videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 10 million videos for shortform or longform videos.
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 15 million videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 20 million videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 25 million videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 30 million videos for shortform or longform videos. **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 35 million videos for shortform or longform videos.
- **RIAA** certification for net shipment of 40 million videos for shortform or longform videos.

**DVD Sales/Blu-ray Sales/Videocassette Rentals**

- **RIAA** gold certification for net shipment of 250,000 units or 51 million in sales at suggested retail price. **RIAA** platinum certification for net shipment of 500,000 units or 102 million in sales at suggested retail price. **RIAA** gold certification for net shipment of 750,000 units or 153 million in sales at suggested retail price. **RIAA** platinum certification for net shipment of 1,500,000 units or 306 million in sales at suggested retail price. **RIAA** gold certification for net shipment of 2,250,000 units or 459 million in sales at suggested retail price.
### Music Video Chart

#### No One Can Top These Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Performer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Man Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help!</td>
<td>I Am Not In Love</td>
<td>#2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Last Ranger</td>
<td>I Am Not In Love</td>
<td>#3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ultimate Hits</td>
<td>The Beatles</td>
<td>#4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greatest Hits</td>
<td>Creed</td>
<td>#5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride And Joy</td>
<td>Steve Ray Vaughan And Double Trouble</td>
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<tr>
<td>Live At Slane Castle Ireland</td>
<td>Celtic Woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>A New Journey: Live At Slane Castle Ireland</td>
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#### Top Music Videos

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#### Video Movie

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<tr>
<td>Colt Cabana, Sunny</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughter, Over You</td>
<td>Colt Cabana, Sunny</td>
<td>#2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maroon 5, Wake Up Call</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matchbox Twenty</td>
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<td>All the Same</td>
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<td>Feeling, Happy</td>
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#### Music Video Sales Data

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<td>Amazing Journey: The Story Of The Who</td>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>Music Video</td>
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John Hughey, 73

John Hughey, a 1996 inductee into the Steel Guitar Hall of Fame, died Nov. 18 of heart complications in Hendersonville, Tenn. He was 73. Born Dec. 27, 1933, in Elaine, Ark., Hughey was best known for his long affiliations with Conway Twitty and Vince Gill.

At the age of 9, Hughey received his first guitar—a Gene Autry flattop from Sears—for Christmas. In seventh grade, Hughey met Harold Jenkins, and the pair later formed the Phillips County Ramblers, performing on local radio station KFAA as well as at school and church. In 1953, Hughey joined Memphis band Slim Rhodes & the Mother's Best Mountaineers, and Jenkins joined the Army.

After the Army, Jenkins pursued a rock 'n' roll career as Conway Twitty, but later turned his attention back to country music. Hughey joined Twitty's band in 1968 and spent 20 years touring and recording in the studio with his boyhood friend.

After a short stint with Loretta Lynn, Hughey toured with Vince Gill for 12 years before retiring from the road in 2002. His studio résumé includes sessions with Lynn, Gill, Dickie Betts, Elvis Presley, Isaac Hayes, Dean Martin, George Strait, Willie Nelson and Marty Stuart. He also released a number of albums on his own.

In recent years, Hughey was a member of the Time Jumpers, a group of studio and touring musicians that plays every Monday night at the Station Inn, a well-known Nashville bluegrass club.

—Ken Tucker

DEATHS

Donald Ayler, 65, free-jazz trumpeter, died Oct. 21 from a heart attack in Northfield, Ohio. Ayler began playing alto saxophone but later took up trumpet, studying at the Cleveland Institute and performing in a band with a cousin who played baritone saxophone. In 1965, he was asked to join a band with his brother, legendary tenor/alto saxophonist Abe Ayler.

Donald performed on stages across New York and Europe, and in 1966, he played in a group that John Coltrane assembled to perform at New York's Lincoln Center. He appeared on a number of his brother's recordings, including "Bells," "Spirit," "Rejoice" and "In Greenwich Village." Donald's composition "Our Prayer" is considered one of Albert's classic pieces. Donald also recorded a live set in Italy. Two of the tracks featured, "Prophet John" and "Judge Ye Not," appeared on his brother's 2004 boxed set.

Paul Fox, 56, guitarist with pioneering British punk band the Ruts, died Oct. 21 at his home in Uxbridge, West London from cancer.

The Ruts emerged from the London punk scene in 1978. The quartet's musical proficiency and shared love of reggae distinguished it from many of its punk contemporaries, and it was strongly associated with the Rock Against Racism movement that emerged that year.

The band's debut album, "The Crack," made the U.K. top 20 in October 1979. However, singer Malcolm Owen's death from a heroin overdose prematurely ended the group's career.

Fox and the surviving members attempted to continue the band's legacy, releasing two albums as Ruts D.C. in 1981 and 1982, but the group finally split in 1983. Fox subsequently joined West London band Dirty Strangers and then unsuccessfully launched his own band, Choir Militia.

After Fox's career was diagnosed in May, fellow musicians—including the U.K. Subs, Tom Robinson and John Otway—organized a benefit gig at London's Carling Academy Highbury in July. Fox also joined his former bandmates for a set of Ruts songs, with American hardcore veteran Henry Rollins taking Owen's role.

Fox's final recordings, made earlier this year, were with a new band named the Dubcats.

Fox is survived by his wife, Sharon, and sons Lawrence and William.

Lance Hahn, 40, frontman for punk band J Church, died Oct. 21 from kidney disease.

Hahn was born in Hawaii, where he played with local act Cringer before moving to San Francisco in 1992 to form J Church. The band recorded numerous records, including "My Favorite Place," a triple 7-inch that received mainstream press in the United Kingdom. Hahn also played guitar for Beck, ran Honey Bear Records, contributed to several punk magazines and managed the Vulcan Video store in Austin, where he moved in 2000.

Hahn is survived by his girlfriend, Liberty Litz.
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RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Republic Records appoints Elise Wright senior VP of urban music. She was VP of marketing at Universal Motown.
Robbins Nashville names Joe Redmond director of Northeast promotion. He was VP of promotion at Lofton Creek Records.
EMI Group recruits Pat O'Driscoll to its investor board. She was CEO at U.K.-based groceries group Northern Foods.

PUBLISHING: Sony/ATV Music Publishing elevates Kathleen Carey to senior VP of international. She was senior VP of A&R.
Disney Music Publishing promotes Louise Black to executive director of licensing. She was director.
BMI promotes Jose Gonzalez to VP of operations and analysis for licensing and ups Nick Robinson to senior executive of writer/publisher relations. Gonzalez was assistant VP of operations and financial analysis for media licensing, and Robinson was executive of writer/publisher relations.

TOURING: Palace Sports & Entertainment names Susan Greenfield senior VP/general counsel. She was legal VP/secretary.

DIGITAL: VH1 Digital promotes Tony Carbone to VP of digital production programming and Deb Kadetsky to VP of digital marketing. Carbone was executive producer, and Kadetsky was director.

LEGAL: Crispin Evans, former general counsel of the MCPPS-PRRS Alliance, will serve as a consultant to London's Virtual Law, a legal business that provides clients with an outsourced "in-house" legal service. Evans will assist the company in expanding into the music business.

MEDIA: MTV Latin America appoints Juan Frontini creative director. He was creative director at marketing firm Young & Rubicam.
—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOOD WORKS

DISPATCH AIDS ZIMBABWE WITH DVD
After announcing earlier this summer that it would suspend ongoing efforts to help raise money for the Zimbabwe, Boston's Dispatch is back again. On Jan. 29, the jam-friendly trio will release its "Dispatch: Zimbabwe—Live at Madison Square Garden" DVD, featuring interviews, concert footage and a documentary about the devastation within the African country. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Dispatch Foundation and its efforts to fight disease, famine and social injustice in Zimbabwe.

MUSIC SAVES LIVES, GIBSON AUCTION GUITARS TO RAISE FUNDS AND AWARENESS
In a joint effort between Music Saves Lives and Gibson Guitar, four hand-painted guitars—signed by acts Pennyswye, Meg & Dia, Bad Religion and Coheed and Cambria—will be auctioned through eBay to raise money and awareness. The Gibson Les Paul guitars, designed by artists Joji Kenyon and Colby Nichols, will be placed on the auction block through Christmas by the Unite the United Foundation. Founded in 2005, Music Saves Lives focuses on education about blood donation and bone marrow registry.

INSIDE TRACK
TEENS R US
Mus Supervisors who want a taste of "Hannah Montana" or "High School Musical" for their programs—be warned—they aren't going to get it from Disney—might have a solution. Track managers that Robbie Nevil has created the "Teen Po" album for Extreme Music, the unit of Sony/ATV Music Publishing that creates and licenses music for all sorts of productions. Nevil cowrote the "He nah Montana" theme song, "The Best of Both Worlds," plus three other songs on the soundtrack. He also co-wrote three to songs on the "High School Musical" soundtrack. "The Start of Something New," "We're All In This Together" and "I Can't Take My Eyes Off You." Following his success as an artist in the 1980s with "C'est La Vie," Nevil has written, produced or played on songs for major acts including Destinys Child, Jessica Simpson, David Lee Roth, Babyface, Stevie Wonder and Luther Vandross.
BILLYBOO TOURING
CONFERENCE & AWARDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 89

1. WME presents president Marcie Allen Cardwell accepts the inaugural Concert Marketing & Promotion's Award for her work on the Jeep-sponsored Tim McGraw/Faith Hill Soul 2 Soul 11 tour. 
2. Artist agent supreme Tim Boron of the Agency Group, with Ballard registration sales manager Erin Parker.
3. Carla Vannatta, far left, of Havan's Rosefeltz Ritz & Rose, received a moderated a spoty tipinion panel that included, from left, Broomfield Event Center executive VP Gene Felling, Ticketmaster executive VP David Goldberg, Tickets.com VP officials Brian Roberts, Ticketsnetwork CEO Don Vecareno and Studiobound head of business development/management Chuck Lavallone.
4. From left, cyre Billboard group editorial director Tamara Coonan, AEG Live executive VP Larry Yaffe, Madison Square Garden Entertainment president Joe Martino and MetLife's talent co-CEO John Scher at the "Which Way is Up?" panel, sponsored by the Prudential Center.
5. From left, the panel "The Long Run" are Rob Beckham, JEMAL Creations/Group; Crush Management/VP; Steve Glance; VP; Mike Evans; THP International VP Gerry Barad, John Hure, agent with Creative Artists Agency, AEG Live VP; Debra Radwell; and AGI VP Adam Kornfield.

WHAT A DRAG!

Los Angeles buzz band Giant Drag has parted ways with Interscope after a solitary album, Track heads. The group's label debut, "Hearts and Unicorns," has shifted just 14,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Frontwoman Annie Hardy played a solo gig Nov. 14 at Los Angeles' 3 of Clubs, but her next musical move has yet to be revealed.
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