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Adele

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February 5, 2011
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MIDEM 2011
Everything That Mattered

Broadway, Tour, New Album:
360° of Ricky Martin

Warner & EMI: Cash Out—Or Double Down?

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Online .COM EXCLUSIVES Visit Billboard.com on Jan. 31 at 4:30 p.m. ET for a live Q&A with Las Vegas pop-rock group Panic! at the Disco. The band members will answer fan tweets on camera the day before their new single, “The Ballad of Mona Lisa,” drops.

Billboard

No. 1

ALBUMS
THE BILLBOARD 200
HEATSEEKERS
TOP COUNTRY
BLUEGRASS
TOP R&B/HIP-HOP
CHRISTIAN
GOSPEL
DANCE/ELECTRONIC
TRADITIONAL JAZZ
CONTEMPORARY JAZZ
TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL
CLASSICAL CROSSOVER
WORLD
TOP LATIN

SONGS
THE BILLBOARD 100
HOT 100 AIRPLAY
HOT DIGITAL
HEATSEEKERS
MAINSTREAM TOP 40
ADULT CONTEMPORARY
ADULT TOP 40
ROCK
ALTERNATIVE
TRIPLE A
HOT COUNTRY
MAINSTREAM R&B/HIP-HOP
RHYTHMIC
ADULT R&B
R&B
HOT R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS
CHRISTIAN
CHRISTIAN AC
CHRISTIAN CHR
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360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD

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Match Point

EMI’s Fate Could Sway Warner’s Next Move

No matter what happens to EMI or Warner Music Group (WMG), it always seems that speculation about their respective fates is intertwined with that of the other.

That was true during the protracted will-they-or-won’t-they merger speculation that surrounded the two major-label groups until British private-equity firm Terra Firma acquired EMI in 2007.

And it’s true now as the private-equity firms that own a majority stake in Warner contemplate whether to cash out or double down on the music business.

Warner has hired Goldman Sachs to solicit buyout offers from potential acquirers for all or part of the major-label group. At the same time, Warner insiders insist they remain interested in bidding for EMI if its owner Terra Firma loses control of the company to Citigroup later this year.

Representatives at Thomas H. Lee Partners, Bain Capital and Providence Equity Partners—which own a combined stake of about 60% in Warner—either declined to comment or didn’t respond to interview requests. Their next move—or at least the timing of it—could be determined by what happens at EMI.

If, as expected, Terra Firma fails to meet an undisclosed ratio of debt to EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization), plus cash on hand, for the quarter ending March 31, it would be in technical default of its Citigroup loan, which it took out to buy EMI. The private-equity firm would have until about mid-June to “cure” the shortfall by securing a cash infusion from its investors. If it fails to do so, Citigroup would be able to take control of EMI from Terra Firma.

Unless Citigroup indicates that it’s willing to restructure Terra Firma’s debt, it’s highly unlikely that the EMI owner will be able to convince its investors to pony up another equity infusion, according to a source familiar with the situation.

Given the way things are headed, the source says, Citigroup has put out informal feelers to parties with a potential interest in buying all or part of EMI.

With an eventual Citigroup takeover of EMI looking increasingly likely, the decision by Warner’s private-equity owners to put the company in front of potential suitors now ensures that its Warner/Chappell music publishing division will be up for bid before EMI Music Publishing. The timing is important because EMI is the world’s largest music publisher, which could hurt Warner/Chappell’s valuation if they were both up for sale at the same time.

EYE ON BMG

The wild card is BMG, the music publisher jointly owned by German media conglomerate Bertelsmann and private-equity firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, which put Warner into play by approaching the private-equity owners about buying the major. Industry observers expect that BMG will wind up with at least some of the assets of Warner or EMI—whether they be all of Warner/Chappell or EMI Music Publishing, a portion of their publishing assets or possibly even catalog master recordings from either label group.

In regards to a potential merger of all of WMG and EMI Group, industry observers have long suspected that U.S. and European regulators would block a merger without requiring some asset spinoff. But, they might take a more liberal view of a major-label group combination than before, according to Anil Narang, a partner at MKM Capital Advisors and a former Alliance Entertainment CFO involved in that company’s formation through a roll-up of music wholesalers in the ’90s.

“The music industry is like a melting ice cube with companies trying to figure out how to remain profitable,” Narang says. “In this kind of environment, the regulators need to play the role of facilitator and help the industry make money rather than fend off a monopoly.”

Warner’s share price surged 27% on Jan. 21 to close at $6.01 a day after initial news reports that it was mulling a possible sale or merger with EMI. But the stock’s subsequent performance, closing Jan. 27 at $5.54, indicates that Wall Street is far from certain that a deal will take place. Representatives for Warner and EMI declined to comment.

“Investors are somewhat skeptical that this kind of deal can be pulled off without any major hitches,” says Tara Amobi, media and entertainment analyst at Standard & Poor’s Equity Research. A tale of WMG appearing unlikely to happen on its own, Amobi says. “Considering the music industry’s prospects, WMG is not your ideal take-out situation,” he says. “There are a number of scenarios in which a WMG deal could play out, but I don’t see any resolution independent of EMI. What would make it more attractive is if they could identify economies of scale that could accrue from the EMI situation.”

A buy-side Wall Street equity analyst who asked to remain anonymous agrees that an acquisition of Warner would only be attractive to a potential acquirer if it were paired with a takeover of EMI. “Until the industry learns how to drive growth again,” he says, “most earnings will come from unlocking redundancies.”
Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake made “wardrobe malfunction” part of the American lexicon at Super Bowl XXXVIII, and the National Football League responded by booking a succession of legacy acts for the championship game’s halftime entertainment.

While it’s difficult to deny the crowd-pleasing star power of Paul McCartney, the Rolling Stones, Prince, Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen and the Who, the NFL’s conservative handling of one of the most high-profile gigs around sparked complaints that it was ignoring younger viewers.

But there’ll be a break in the calvadose of heritage rockers come Feb. 6, when the Black Eyed Peas perform at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, for Super Bowl XLV. By booking Will.I.am, Fergie, Taboo and Apl.de.ap for the halftime show, the NFL no longer seems gun-shy about reaching out to younger, charting pop stars.

Overseeing the halftime entertainment is Lawrence Randall, director of programming and acquisitions for the NFL and the NFL Network. Randall discusses the Peas, going younger and the NFL as an entertainment brand.

**Questions with Lawrence Randall
**

**Can we expect to see more halftime acts that appeal to young music fans?**

We try to appeal to the widest number of viewers we can. The Super Bowl has really become a national holiday. Everyone watches it—your grandma watches it, you watch it, your kids watch it. We look for a group or an artist that appeals to the widest variety of people. The acts that we’ve done—McCartney, the Stones, Prince, Petty, Springsteen, the Who—their catalogs kind of spoke for themselves.

This year, though, we did make a conscious effort to go younger. Assuming everything goes well this year, there’s no reason—if there’s someone young and relevant next year that fits what we’re looking for—not to go that way again.

**Why did the NFL finally decide to book a younger act this year?**

We realized we had done classic rock for a while. The Black Eyed Peas are ubiquitous, and they have a ton of hits. We have a relationship with the Peas that goes back to Super Bowl XXXIX, when they did the pregame show before they became the huge world superstars that they are now. Last season, they did [the NFL Opening Kickoff concert] for us. We’ve always talked to them off and on about it—and this year was the right time.

**How far in advance does the NFL plan for halftime?**

The halftime show almost runs on a 12-month cycle. After this year’s Super Bowl, we’ll all take a little breather, do a postmortem, figure out what we learned and then we’ll start planning probably in about March or April. We’ll start talking to some acts and talk internally as to who we think is the best act for next year. We have a great relationship with the artist community and management, as well as the agent community. We get pitched as much as we go out and talk to people. It comes down to who we think will make the best show.

**After you decide, what happens next?**

We’ll pitch them some ideas. They’ll pitch us some ideas. We’ll discuss our history of putting this on. One thing we’ve learned is it’s a very different setup than when it’s a Who concert or a Springsteen concert or even a Black Eyed Peas concert, where you’re only going to see the Black Eyed Peas and they have two-and-a-half hours to entertain you. This is a much different animal where you are a smaller subset of a huge football game. The security, the stage and the way it goes up and the size and scope of it is much different than anything they’ve ever experienced. So it’s really getting everyone comfortable with it.

**Who determines the set list? Most halftime shows seem to be required to perform a few of the best-known songs. It’s an extremely collaborative effort where we’ll make suggestions and they’ll make suggestions. When you have 12 minutes, you want to get what everybody knows, you want everybody to sing along, you want everybody to have a great time. It lends itself to more of a greatest hits kind of performance.**

**The NFL is about football. What’s the appeal of live music for the league?**

It lends itself to the Super Bowl atmosphere. It’s a party. Your friends are over, people in the stadium really want to be entertained, they’re there for a good time. Music really is the soundtrack to everybody’s life and it lends itself to this platform. We look at ourselves as more than a football brand. We’re an entertainment brand. Really, we try to refer to football as the best real show on television.

**For the Record**

In the Jan. 29 issue of Billboard, a preview of Wiz Khalifa’s forthcoming album mistated the name of Khalifa’s manager. It is Benjy Grineberg, not Benjy Grissen.
The best business plans address specific needs, and the live entertainment industry is grappling with a big one: moving the estimated 40% of tickets that go unsold each year.

The blame for all that unsold inventory is laid on both pricing strategies and lack of awareness of the part of consumers. Enter ScoreBig, which aims to address those issues with a new ticketing category that’s neither primary nor secondary, but rather a hybrid that CEO Adam Kanner calls the “value market.”

After 18 months of development, ScoreBig began an invitation-only beta launch last fall. Founded by Kanner and backed by Bain Capital, ScoreBig takes a similar approach to low-price ticketing, offering discounts, ticketing revenue, merchandise and concessions sales, sponsorships and other aspects of the concert economy, says Kanner, a former VP of relationship marketing and business development at Nike.

Big either accepts or turns the offer down. Kanner calls it “very basic channel marketing,” targeted at value-conscious consumers who “would never have been in the market to pay full price for that event in the first place.”

The inventory comes “from everybody that has an unsold seat, so it could be the vendor, the promoter, the team, the league, brokers who have excess tickets, corporations that have tickets left from whatever deal they’ve done,” Kanner says.

Kanner keeps ScoreBig’s back-end model proprietary, saying only that “effectively, we get a revenue split on the ticket.” Unlike some secondary sites, the split comes from the ticket owner, not the buyer.

Kanner says there are three misperceptions about ScoreBig: It only carries tickets to events no one wants to see, it only offers lousy seats, and it only serves last-minute buyers. None of it is true, he says. “Right now, on average, consumers are buying tickets 17 days in advance of an event,” Kanner says.

Common sense dictates that if ScoreBig is selling tickets below face value, someone is making less than they hoped for when the tickets were priced initially. But Kanner counters that if the ticket wouldn’t have sold anyway, it’s still added an butt in a seat. “We tell everybody, ‘If you can sell that ticket at full price, sell it,’” he says.

The concept finds out what a ticket is worth to a casual consumer, an invaluable piece of data. “When tickets aren’t selling on the primary market, all we really know is what people aren’t willing to pay for an event,” Goldberg says. “If you put stuff on ScoreBig, you’re going to get an indication of what people are willing to pay for those tickets. That actually makes you better at pricing on the primary market.”

With so many buying options, consumer confusion is a potential concern. But Kanner feels that will work itself out as ScoreBig finds its niche as a discount supplier. “We only want to be known as a place to get a great deal on live entertainment tickets,” he says. “And the research we have is that consumers don’t know of a place like that.”
CELLULOID HEROES

Jamaican Music Biz Eyes International Boost From New Movies

Jamaica’s music industry is hopeful that a spate of recent movies featuring local artists will help roll out the red carpet for reggae acts internationally, just as the Jimmy Cliff film "The Harder They Come" did nearly 40 years ago.

"Better Mus' Come," the feature-length directoral debut by Kingston's Storm Saulter, offers a riveting account of Jamaica’s deadly late-'70s political tribalism, with an original score by Wayne Armond and Marlon Stewart Gaynor that fuses roots reggae with Ennio Morricone-inspired themes and King Tubby-derived dub reverbs.

"A Dance for Grace," starring and directed by Orville Matherson, boasts a dancehall soundtrack featuring Etta’s "Click Mi Fingers," which peaked at No. 69 on Billboard’s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart in November 2008.

"Previously, soundtracks helped sell films like Island Jamaica’s ‘Dancehall Queen,’ " says Armond. "But now, films that universally touch people’s hearts, like ‘Shumdog Millionaire,’ will determine soundtracks’ popularity."

"RiseUp" aired in the United States Jan. 26 on PBS (formerly PBS World TV) through a distribution deal with the National Black Programming Consortium. The movie's producer, Darius Holender, is organizing a "RiseUp" tour featuring the film’s breakout star Turbulence, who rose to prominence through the Blotta-directed video for his rock-reggae hit "Notorious."

The dub instrumentals on "Better Mus’ Come" have earned critical plaudits for composer Armond, leader of veteran reggae band Chalice. Young Jamaican acts Blu Grass in the Sky and Droop Lion sought Armond’s production for their upcoming releases because “they wanted the soundtrack’s western motif,” he says.

"Better Mus’ Come" was screened in November at the Dominican Republic’s Festival de Cine Global Dominicano following its five-week sold-out run in Kingston and Montego Bay. With an upcoming Caribbean promotional campaign in conjunction with Red Stripe beer, Armond envisions additional film-screening opportunities — and by extension a strengthened Jamaican music industry.

"Jamaican films’ success means more work for our musicians," he says, "and possibly the use of authentic Jamaican music in international films."
Esencia De Musica
Las Marti, Luis Fonsi—Miami Songwriter Showcase Draws More Artists

On Jan. 20 in Miami, Venezuelan singer/songwriter Franco de Vita taped “Primera Fila,” a live show that will be released by Sony Music as a CD and DVD later this year. De Vita, a pan-regional star, drew from more than two decades of original material; it was the quintessential songwriting evening.

The following night, at a bar called Hoy Como Ayer in Little Havana, a different kind of songwriting event took place—Esencia, a showcase for aspiring artists hoping to become the next de Vita.

Esencia, whose name means “essence,” was created seven years ago as a platform for new and established songwriters. Ever since then (aside from a one-year break in 2007), the series has mounted semi-monthly shows featuring major songwriters, as well as artists like Jorge Luis Piloto and Luis Fonsi, sharing the stage with up-and-comers.

Despite the continued downward spiral in U.S. sales of Latin music, Esencia has flourished and evolved. Today, the bulk of its performers are not songwriters but singers with big ambitions.

“I’ve never had so many people wanting to perform,” Esencia founder Erwin Perez says. “New technologies now allow many more people to record an album and to feel they’re artists and that they can go out and show their work. They no longer feel they need a label.”

Perez, a journalist formerly with El Nuevo Herald, launched and runs Esencia as a labor of love. He gets a nominal fee from the venue to book the shows, which feature three or four performers who play for free.

It’s an ironic twist that at a time when the music business is viewing publishing as an increasingly important source of revenue, those taking the stage at Esencia are young acts that don’t write songs.

Many come from Latin American countries, still lured by Miami’s reputation—however lagging—as the capital of Latin music. But while many of these artists have been able to secure funds to record their albums, they sorely lack managerial support, Perez says.

A recent exception was Las Marti, a sister duo from Colombia who performed at Esencia in December. While Las Marti has had several Colombian radio hits, the act is just beginning promotional efforts in the United States, where it’s signed to BZ Records, a label founded by former EMJ Music Latin chairman Marco Bissi and George Zamora. Radio promoter Al Zamora and Joe Granda of marketing/promotion company Grande Entertainment were among those in the audience during the duo’s performance at Esencia.

Annie Gonzalez, a former Sony Music marketing executive who handles marketing strategy for the duo, says she chose to showcase Las Marti at Esencia because “it’s an atmosphere that allows you to appreciate how good they are live.”

For more information on Esencia, go to EsenciaShow.com.

Accruing Interest
Banco Popular Scores Chart Hit With ‘Salsa’

“Salsa: Un Homenaje a El Gran Combo,” a tribute album honoring Puerto Rico’s greatest salsa orchestra, has been a fixture in the upper rungs of Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart since its release in November, peaking for four consecutive weeks at No. 3 through early January.

It’s an unusual achievement for old-school salsa at a time when the Latin charts are dominated by pop, regional Mexican and urban rhythm hits. Rarer still is the company that released the album and produced an accompanying TV special and DVD: San Juan-based bank Banco Popular.

“The bank and the band are alike—we’ve both transcended eras and generations,” says Jerry Rivas, one of the three lead vocalists of El Gran Combo, which was founded by pianist Rafael Ithier in 1962 and will mark its 50th anniversary next year.

Rivas adds that by including young salsa acts, like NG2 and El Sabor de Puerto Rico, the bank is supporting a project that’s helping keep the genre fresh for new generations.

As part of a long-running music branding initiative, Banco Popular has released a CD and produced a related TV special every year since 1993. Its music-related projects date back to the ‘60s, when it produced its first TV special, a program devoted to Puerto Rican composer Rafael Hernandez.

With previous Popular music releases, the funds raised from “Salsa” CD and DVD sales will go to the Banco Popular Foundation to fund music education on the island.

“Music and sports are really what define us as a people,” Popular president/CEO Richard L. Carrion says. “Everyone is very musical here.”

Carrion says that purchasers of the bank’s CDs in Puerto Rico send them to relatives living in the United States. “They just miss the music a lot,” he says. “People tell me they can’t have Christmas until they get our specials.”

“Salsa” includes 21 of El Gran Combo’s songs performed by a multigenerational roster of artists from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Colombia, as well as by the band itself. The set has sold 40,000 units in the United States and Puerto Rico, while a DVD of the accompanying Telemundo special has sold 13,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The TV special, which aired Dec. 5, helped fuel CD sales, according to Johnny Phillips, co-owner of Memphis-based distributor Select-O-Hits.

“This was a perfect project because everyone knows who El Gran Combo is,” says Phillips, whose company started distributing Latin music titles in 2007.

Phillips adds that sales at Target and Walmart have been strong, adding that the album is selling well in all U.S. Hispanic markets, although the majority of CDs have been sold in Puerto Rico.

“It was just our luck that we happened to connect with Banco Popular to distribute their most popular album,” he says.

—Judy Cantor-Navas

Sing it sister: LAS MARTI performing at the Esencia showcase in December.

EN BREVE

HIP LATIN MUSIC ACQUIRES TWO SONG CATALOGS

Indie publisher Hip Latin Music has signed a deal to administer two high-profile song catalogs in Mexico. One is that of urban/regional Mexican duo Akwid, made up of brothers Sergio and Francisco Gomez and considered one of Mexico’s top acts in the genre. The other is for Del Melodies, the publishing company of regional Mexican indie Del Records. The deal includes the songs of up-and-coming regional Mexican artist Gerardo Ortiz, one of the top-selling new acts on the Billboard charts. Del Records’ catalog also includes Noel Torres, Goyo Gastelum and Regulo Cano, who are all signed to the company’s publishing arm as well.

Hip Latin Music is owned by Hugo González, who was formerly with SESAC Latin and with Univision Music Publishing. The company is devoted mostly to regional Mexican works and also administers the catalogs of Marco Antonio Solis, Kinto Sol and Alacranes Musical.

SIMULTANEOUS DEBUT FOR LEGUIZAMO SHOW, SOUNDTRACK

In a rare occurrence for the theatrical world, a new Broadway show will premiere simultaneously with the release of a commercial soundtrack album. “Ghetto Klown,” the new John Leguizamo one-man show, will start its run March 22 at the Lyceum Theatre in New York. On the same day Fania Records releases “Ghetto Klown: Music From My Hood.” The album features 12 tracks from the Fania archives, hand-picked by Leguizamo. Many of the songs will be used during the show, whose promotional art work will be reflected in the album cover art. The CD will be available at the show and at music retailers.

The partnership between Leguizamo and Fania also includes production company WestBeth Entertainment, which is presenting the show with Daveed D. Frazier and Nelle Nugent. The show’s director is Academy Award winner Fisher Stevens. —Leila Cobo

www.billboard.biz
Michael Cohl

Former Live Nation chairman discusses helming the most talked-about Broadway musical of 2011.

Why “Spider-Man”? Julie, Bono, the Edge and Spider-Man. What a combination— I thought it would be great.

Did you have any idea what you were getting into? I thought I did, but I was clueless.

How difficult was raising money for “Spider-Man” compared with securing financing for rock tours? Getting money for rock tours was pretty difficult, too, in the beginning. This was much more like back in those days, when people kind of looked at you cross-eyed. A lot of people took a look at it and said, “Are you nuts?” It took some time and there were moments when we thought, “Oh, my God, it might not happen.” But it did. And I think it’s doing pretty good. Sales are terrific.

The show is very intense, very complicated, almost overwhelming, but fantastic. Someone asked me last week, “If you knew everything you do now, would you still get involved?” and I said, “I wouldn’t change anything.” I’d come in with a bit of a different attitude, but I’d still be here.

How accurate is the speculation that “Spider-Man” has a $65 million production budget and weekly running costs of $1 million? Those are good numbers. You can quote those.

How long will it take you to break even? Two or three years. If we sell out for a few years, we’ll be fine.

Both the production, and you personally? I understand you’re committed pretty heavily financially. Absolutely. I’m not committed as heavily as some people might think, but I’m in there. I’ve got my belly on the table, as they say.

How long are you committed to this project? I’m the producer on Broadway. We’ll see how long it plays on Broadway, then we’ll figure out what to do next. I hope people love it. As far as the rest, we’ll worry about that after we open New York.

If there is a touring production, would S2BN have the rights to produce it? We would be involved.

Is there the possibility for a soundtrack, DVD and other rights, as you’ve done with your tours in the past? There’s all sorts of possibilities, but . . . we’re only concentrating on getting the New York show running for now and then we’ll worry about the rest.

Preview performances usually don’t get reviewed but those for “Spider-Man” were. Some were good, some not so good. What’s your take on the reviews? They didn’t review the ultimate show that we’ll be presenting to the public, so in that respect it’s unfair.

How concerned were you by the injuries and technical malfunctions? I hate the injuries. Everybody hates the injuries. We’re definitely safety-first like any other company would be. We’re doing everything we can to make sure it’s as safe as possible. On the other hand, it is a bit of a rock ’n’ roll circus drama, and we know that from time to time in the circus there are mishaps. It’s unfortunate. We’re pushing the edges here, but we’re doing everything we can to make sure it’s as safe as possible.

You raised Mick Jagger 100 feet in the air on your first tour with the Rolling Stones [1989-90 Steel Wheels tour], so this isn’t totally new territory for you. It’s always new; it doesn’t matter how many times you’ve done it. That’s one of the reasons it’s so exciting.

What are your days like now? I put in 12-13 hours a day. That’s not unusual when I’m touring. I didn’t expect to be doing this at 63, but once I roll up my sleeves, I’m in it up to my neck.

What did you think of the touring industry’s difficulties last year? I didn’t watch it in any great detail. Yours and other people’s reports were that things weren’t good, that it was a disappointing year. On the other hand, if you sell tickets like they’re shirts and you discount them up to 50% and you don’t recognize that you’re selling heroes—it’s going to be a problem . . . if you convince people [that touring artists] are not heroes, that they’re just like a retail product, you’re going to kill it. And that’s what’s happening.

I never knew you to be big on discounts. I’m not. I’m learning about it on Broadway, though, because it’s part of the life of Broadway. That’s something new that I’m learning. It’s difficult to get used to, but I’m starting to get it.

There is increased chatter about the Stones going out. Are you hearing any of that? I hear it, but I don’t know. When they announce it, they’ll announce it.

Would you have time to take on a Stones tour? I’ve always got time for the Rolling Stones.

Any comment on Live Nation’s breach of contract suit against you? Yeah. “They don’t deserve the money.” There’s my quote. We’ll see what the judge says, won’t we?

It doesn’t sound like you’re too worried about it.

I’m not.

S2BN has done well with Yo Gabba Gabba! Live. Yo Gabba is fantastic. Hats off to [S2BN president of music and family entertainment] Mike Luba and his team for coming up with it and producing it. Kudos to Luba for convincing me to back it. We’re looking forward to doing it again this year.

If you sell [concert] tickets like they’re shirts, discount them up to 50% and you don’t recognize that you’re selling heroes—it’s going to be a problem . . . if you convince people [that touring artists] are just another retail product, you’re going to kill it.
MIDEM has long been one of, if not the ultimate annual ditch for the music business. And so it’s worth paying careful attention to what came up this year—the 45th iteration of the event. This year’s ran from Jan. 22 to Jan. 26.

Once, MIDEM was a place where labels, publishers and distributors would come together in small booths and listen to music—on vinyl, then cassettes, then CDs. Deals would be worked out on the spot with paper, pen, taste and guile, and international partners would be found, all determining what records would be respective priorities and for whom in the coming year. This was the MIDEM where young lawyers like Allen Grubman got their start banging out the paperwork quick, cheap and abundant deals and a skinny little publisher with giant red spectacles began to make a name—Lucian Grainge—as a hustler.

The event evolved with the business through the years, and has been challenged along with the business of late. MIDEM is 5% smaller this year, according to official numbers, and was officially 10% down the year before. Unofficially, some would say it appears to be losing population a bit more quickly than that. But make no mistake, MIDEM is essential—perhaps more so than ever.

Back when music had a clear and present business model, MIDEM existed to color within the lines. Bringing music to Cannes, find partners for all your key territories, repeat. Today, with the global business having shrunk by nearly a third since 2004 and still no overarching answer in sight, MIDEM has become one of the key places to go and hash it all out. The health of the music business depends in no small part on the continued success of such idea marketplaces.

Over at the multi-story, bunker-like Palais, MIDEM continued to smartly shift the focus of its formal programming toward technology-based solutions. A “music hack day”—literally, a team of hackers flown in by conference organizers, creating programs for music (see page 14)—drew a lot of attention and generated some fun ideas. Top startups were named in three categories (see page 15), and tech investor Saul Klein of Index, who has invested in such companies as Last.fm, Songkick, Sonos and other music brands, gave a well-received talk about what would compel him to invest in a music company today.

But as anyone in attendance knows, the truly vital part of MIDEM happens after hours, in places like Station Tavern back in the old city, where Ian Rogers’ Toppin hosts an annual happy hour, this year coinciding with the broadcast of the National Football League’s conference championship games.

And of course, there is the Carlton Hotel bar, which doesn’t seem to get started until around 1 a.m., and doesn’t close down as much as stumble into breakfast. One of the funniest lines I heard at this year’s conference was delivered in one of these moments by the ever-articulate and erudite Jim Lucchese, CEO of the Echo Nest. It was 4 a.m. and Lucchese was among a small group who had left an uproarious time in the suite of Bug Music CEO John Rudolph, when Greek star Athena Andreadis offered to play a song on the grand piano downstairs. As Lucchese helped her to remove an elaborate vase in order to open the piano, he chided himself out loud, as a parent would a child: “I shouldn’t be touching expensive things!”

OK, maybe you needed to be there, or maybe you can appreciate the innate awesomeness of a talented, rising star playing a witching-hour set for a quartet of six in marble halls along the Riviera. Even as she finished her song and the group was chased off by hotel staff, business was still happening. There was Billboard’s own digital GM George White meeting Daniel Zacagnino, a founder of Indaba; the latter’s network of independent artists a potential perfect match for Billboard’s soon-to-launch Billboard Pro service, offering aspiring artist charts and toolsets for their online fan base.

We are joined in our indiscretions, quasi as they may be. We need moments—or yes, five-day trips to Cannes—to remind us that the music business isn’t a four-place business and that still allows us the occasional indulgence of being characters, and to discover the character of which we are made as men and women. We need these moments to bond together the players from new parts and different generations of one music business community.

Creative solutions don’t simply happen because quarterly pressure demands it. They happen when bright and passionate people come together in an environment where they can let down their hair a bit, and think and breathe together. The Web may have shrunk the global business world to a tiny backyard. But it will never replace the Carlton bar at 3 in the morning.
MOVE FORWARD

"Today 30% of our revenues are in business models that did not exist seven or eight years ago," Vivendi CEO Jean-Bernard Levy said of Universal Music Group’s quest to generate revenue in an era when music is more commoditized than ever. And when asked what part of EMI he’d like to acquire, Levy quipped, “Not the debt.”

THREE STORIES MISSING IN ACTION AT MIDEM

PIRACY. Vivendi CEO Jean-Bernard Levy called for more governments to intervene, but his statements lacked the kind of grandeur needed to grab the global industry’s attention. “If the topic has worn out its welcome, governments may need to step in,” said Antonio Guisasola Gonzales del Rey of Promusicae, the IFPI group for Spain. “Unfortunately we have to create some kind of confrontation between the Internet users and the creators.”

LIVING ROOM AND AUTOMOBILE. The two places people listen most to music were scarcely mentioned by speakers and panelists. One exception was Thomas Hesse, president of Sony Music’s global digital business, who said a “brain-dead easy” digital service that works on PC, mobile and TV/surround sound systems is needed for future digital services to succeed.

DIGITAL SHORT TIME. Youth ruled at MIDEM, lending much-needed enthusiasm, vision and optimism. But history has shown us that today’s hyped digital music companies will have a short shelf life. Two years ago, music service Otrax arrived with a $250,000 marketing event and has hardly been heard from since. Missing from MIDEM was a helpful discussion on how to best keep these companies operating during the long haul in order to give stable platforms to artists, labels and publishers.

SONY CURIOUS ABOUT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Sony Network Entertainment president Tim Schaaff used MIDEM to loudly promote the formerly quiet Music Unlimited Powered by Qriocity subscription service—and included a keynote chat. Between the booth, the keynote and the large banner placed in key locations throughout the conference, MIDEM vets speculate that Sony may have spent upwards of $250,000 on its high-profile presence. “We’re trying to do something that in the past hasn’t been done very well,” he told attendees at a news conference later in the show, which featured the digital heads of all four major labels. “A lot of this is about the right timing. We will spend a lot of money to market this and explain it to customers. But you want to spend the money when it matters.”

CHECKED IN

“There are a lot of interesting things to be done with Foursquare and music,” said Foursquare founder Naveen Selvadurai during a conversation at the event. But he only offered a number of potential options rather than specific examples. For instance, brands can post tips about an area when users check in, which artists and others can use to deliver the history of music in that area. But so far there hasn’t been any information on whether they’re actually doing so. He did call out Chamillionaire and Big Boi, who check in to let fans see where they’re going and what they’re doing using the service. “I’d like to get a lot more artists on Foursquare,” Selvadurai said during a side interview with the MIDEM blog. “People don’t think about it in terms of labels. Getting a view of the world through their eyes is a very powerful thing.”

RADIO DAZE

Superstar DJ and French national David Guetta attended MIDEM as a keynote speaker, addressing a packed auditorium that for the first time required the upper balcony to be opened to handle the crowd. “Today, money doesn’t really matter,” he said, noting that recordings are cheap and the personalized nature of the Internet means radio will need to play what people want to hear—and not what big companies dictate gets played—in order to compete.

TOUGH REALITIES

Index Ventures partner Saul Klein (right)—who has invested in such music startups as SoundCloud and Songkick—represented a sorely needed venture capital point of view at an event so enamored with startups. Interviewed by TAG Strategic’s Ted Cohen, MIDEM’s unofficial honorary host, Klein’s conversation became a topic of discussion among attendees in the days that followed. “You don’t need to be in every market,” he said of music startups that sometimes have aspirations too big for the tough realities of the marketplace.

"I'm amazed by the unavailability of strong legal solutions that could be enforced in most countries in the world.... The problem we have is—music is popular, music is global, and it's up to us to get consumers with the support of government, to pay for it.... We need to take our future into our own hands.... to conceptualize it, to implement it.

—Jean-Bernard Levy, CEO, Vivendi

"Everybody's talking about the end of the music industry, but I look around and all I see are hot 29-year-old developers who are going to save it."

—Ariel Hyatt, founder, Ariel Publicity

"You'll continue to see music services fail. And you'll see a handful succeed."

—Thomas Hesse, president of global digital business, U.S. sales and corporate strategy, Sony Music

"Feels like a year of transition."

—Ian Hogarth, CEO, Songkick

SONY FORUM: Verbatim

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CARLTON LIM

FEELING LUCKY
Perhaps no clearer indication that the music business is in a state of major flux is who was seen this year at MIDEM, and more specifically—who wasn’t. Google employees were here in full force in 2011, rumored to be building out the search giant’s international licensing deals for its also-rumored Google Music service. Among them were Zahava Levine (left), director of content partnerships for Android. With her are Jim Rondinelli, senior VP of corporate development for PacketVideo, and Rachna Bhasin, senior VP of business development at Sirius XM.

Other Googlers spotted at the event include former Davis Shapiro attorney Liz Moody, who left for Google last year; Sami Vellkonen, head of international music licensing for Android (who formerly did the same for Nokia’s Comes With Music); and Ted Kartzman, an Android business development exec who was formerly VP of client services at the Independent Online Distribution Alliance. There were also several You Tubers here, including product manager Chris LaRosa and director of partnerships Chris Maxey.

CROWD-SOURCED MELODY
Imogen Heap and OK Go’s Damien Kulash had plenty to say about social media, technology and creativity during a MidemNet keynote chat. Heap announced a plan to write a song online, crowd-sourced by her fans, who are invited to submit audio and videoclips with lyrics. “We’re planning to do one every three months,” she told the crowd. Kulash meanwhile pointed to the use of online video format HTML5 as the band’s tech of choice for new music videos starting in April. “It seems like new technologies are tumbling past so quickly, the trick for me in finding a good creative idea is to figure out creative boundaries that are simple and concise,” he said.

“It’s great to watch the Titanic sink.”
—random person at the lounge at the Carlton Cannes, 2:30 a.m.

“Now, in days where content scarcity no longer exists, experience is the product, content is no longer king. Its throne has been taken by experience. Yet how many music services really focus on experience?”
—Mark Mulligan, VP/research director, Forrester Research

“My kids won’t know . . . coming home every day and watching The Brady Bunch or Gilligan’s Island because it’s the only thing on. . . . Our kids have Hulu and YouTube. They experience exactly what they want to experience. And if it’s not any good, they’re not going to care about it. None of anything we talk about in the business world matters if the music isn’t any good.”
—Ian Rogers, CEO, Topspin Media

“In five years, downloads will be over, or generational. . . . The music business needs to get moving and start to understand how this is going, or some kid is going to create an app where the artist doesn’t share in the revenue generation. . . . Content has no value. It’s the context that’s the value.”
—Terry McBride, CEO, Nettwerk Music Group
MIDEM'S FIRST MUSIC HACK DAY

Organizers invited more than a dozen hackers from all over the world to the event to collaborate on music apps using features made available to them from the likes of Last.fm, the Echo Nest, SoundCloud and 7digital. The group had 24 hours to program prototypes of whatever app struck their fancy and took time out to brief a packed room of interested onlookers on their progress.

Offering words of encouragement were Imogen Heap and Taylor Hanson of the brothers Hanson. "You guys are the closest things to actual artists at this whole convention," Hanson said. "You're creating things for the sake of creating. And that's really cool."

Hackers had a message for the music industry as well. "There's this incredible spirit of creating technology just for the fun of it, and to learn," Jammbox founder David McKinney said. "I'd like to see the music industry embrace hacking more. Hacking can make great apps, great apps means fans like it, and when fans like it, money changes hands."

Most of the programs created at the hack will never see the light of a commercial day. But still—some of the more interesting creations include:

MUSIC HANGMAN
The traditional spelling game is updated, replacing letters with lyrics. Users of 7digital who preorder an album can play the game, streaming a free track from the artist's back catalog. Typing in key lyrics to the tempo of the music could win the fan a free download.

I'M A BIG FAN
A mobile app that lets users find a comprehensive snapshot of any artist through a simple search. Results provide biographical information, upcoming concerts (based on geolocation), lyrics and playable tracks, as well as the set list most likely to be played at a show.

DANCE FIGHT
Two people with Last.fm profiles can compare libraries to determine who has the more danceable catalog. The app randomly selects a song from any service tracked by the Last.fm "scrobbling" feature and compares it to another using the Echo Nest's music recognition tools. The battle takes place via two battling robots.

—Antony Bruno

TOMMY TIME
"He's responsible for De La Soul," one partygoer said on Jan. 23, while describing Tommy Boy Entertainment chairman/CEO Tom Silverman and his place in music industry lore. Silverman was in fine form at the Carlton, warning of an impending drop in track sales, encouraging major labels to be more active in industry discussions and predicting that recorded-music sales will come back only when a format is created that hardware manufacturers can get behind. Here, he's flanked by DJ/Rasa Music head Donna D'Cruz (left) and David Guetta's manager Caroline Prothero.

GETTING SCHOoled
Berklee College of Music CEO David Kusek had perhaps the most retweeted tweet of the entire conference: "The recorded music business was an historical anomaly. Get over it. We need something entirely new." He didn't offer any suggestions, but enjoyed the Jan. 24 festivities with Amazon vendor manager for music, Laura Frazier.

ECHOMOG?
On Tuesday night, MOG CEO David Hyman (left) shares a few laughs with EchoNest CEO Jim Lucchese.

QUE SCANDALE!
On Monday, Jan. 24, App Fund CEO/managing partner Daniel Klaus (center) shows his love for Clear Channel Digital COO Gerrit Meier (right) while Billboard editorial director Bill Werde wafts his turn.
I GOT NEXT

As the traditional music business continues to contract, a new music business is emerging around dynamic startups developing products and services for fans and artists alike. Thirty of the most innovative developers were invited to present their services to a panel of judges at MIDEM's MidemNet Lab pitch sessions—twice the number flown in for last year’s inaugural event.

Ten presenters vied for top honors in each of three categories: mobile apps, business-to-business and business-to-consumer. Here are the winners.

**MOBILE APPS**

**JAMMBOX**

The Australian startup founded by recording artist David McKinney made headlines in early January with an iPad app called Discovr, which within a week after launch was featured on Apple's main App Store page. But at its MidemNet presentation, the company unveiled what it says will be its flagship service: Jammbox Magazine, an iPad app that collects news, photos, videos and other content from more than 1,200 online sources to compile a digital magazine tailored to a user's iTunes library and listening history. The app draws content from around the Web using technology from the Echo Nest, 7digital and what McKinney calls a “massive” data mining operation the company built and maintains itself.

"We were really excited about the activity around Discovr," said judge Daniel Klaus, co-founder of AppFund.

"When looking at a fund-level business, you like to see some traction around the product.”

**BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS**

**NEXT BIG SOUND**

The Boulder, Colo.-based data tracking and analytics company, which powers the Billboard Social 50 chart, was featured as one of Billboard’s top 10 music startups of 2010, while founder Alex White was listed in Billboard’s 30 Under 30 special report on rising young executives. But what won over the MidemNet judges was the company’s new premium service, which allows labels, managers and other clients to purchase more detailed reports on any artist-related online activity, including Twitter followers, Facebook likes, song streams and blog posts.

"This is going to be the year of data," said judge Anne De Kerckhove, director of MIDEM’s entertainment division.

White, who made his MIDEM debut this year, said he used the trip to expand the company’s international partnerships.

"Every meeting I had here, they say it’s the first time they’ve seen all this data in one place," he said. "The people I talk to every day see that things are changing. Data has the power to transform the music business.”

**BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER**

**SHUFFLER.FM**

The Amsterdam-based music blog aggregator impressed judges with its ability to create streaming music stations based on music hosted on more than 100 top music blogs worldwide. Users simply pick the genre they’re interested in and let the service do the rest. As each song streams, it displays the blog that is hosting it.

Artists can also use Shuffler.fm to upload their music to any of the aggregated blogs, filtered by genre. The service also features an ad network that allows brands to target multiple blogs, also by genre, with the same ad. They can also place the ad on a specific blog playing a song by a particular band.

Shuffler.fm co-founder Tim Heineke "has been involved in other startups before and has always had interesting ideas," said judge Paul Brindley, CEO of Music Ally. "This time, I think he really hit it on the money.”

**AN ISRAELI INTERLUDE**

During the MidemNet Labs pitch sessions, Interlude won a rare special mention by judges who seemed to wish they had chosen two winners in the business-to-business category. Interlude is a choose-your-own-adventure interactive music video platform that first saw the light of day in a clip by 5-Curve artist Andy Grammer last fall on Vevo. Here, 5-Curve CEO Steve Greenberg (left) enjoys the night with Interlude creator Yoni Bloch, a star musician in Israel.

**THE JUDGES**

MidemNet judges Pär-Jörgen Parson (left), general partner with Northzone Ventures, and François Mazoudier, partner at LDEA, discuss which startups they’re going to vote for in the following day’s finals.

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**The Top Eight Headlines**

**AS POSTED ON BILLBOARD.BIZ**

Sony turns up volume on Qriocity music streaming service, expands to France, Germany, Spain and Italy; plans U.S. launch in Q1

Vivendi's Levy calls for piracy crackdown

Independent Online Distribution Alliance enters Africa with digital distribution deal for Sony Music Entertainment

Musixmatch bows licensed lyrics database through deals with BMG, Kobalt, Universal Music Publishing, Sony/ATV

Start-up Zooz debuts music mash-up app, while GigWiz direct-to-fan ticket service emerges from beta

MSpot takes a beating at cloud music panel over its unlicensed locker service—CEO Daren Tsui responds, "It's not our job to police how listeners get their music.”

Vodafone’s Lee Epting claimed the company has 1 million paying subscribers for its download service.

While mobile apps are targeted at serious music fans, can they reach more casual listeners? “If something’s not popular, how can you make an argument to monetize it?” asked Ning’s Jon Hull.

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SETTING FIRE TO RAIN

ADELE AND HER TEAM—WHICH INCLUDES XL RECORDS’ RICHARD RUSSELL AND RICK RUBIN—LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER

BY MIKAEL WOOD
A HALF AN HOUR BEFORE HER SECOND ALBUM GOES ON SALE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, ADELE IS IN A MELANCHOLY STATE OF MIND.

“Everything’s less frantic than it was the first time around,” she says from her home in London, winding down after a night out with friends. The singer is referring to the promotion of her hit 2008 debut, “19,” which, with worldwide sales of nearly 2.4 million copies, turned this recent graduate of London’s BRIT School into one of England’s brightest young pop stars. “I was nervous and uptight because it was all brand-new. The reception was so unexpected that everyone just sort of went along with it.” She lets loose one of her frequent gut-deep chuckles. “Not that I’m saying I’m a professional now. But I’ve learned to sit down and enjoy it all. I feel more free than I ever have.”

That sense of freedom is audible throughout “21,” Adele’s bolder sophomore set, due Feb. 22 in the United States from Columbia Records. (It came out Jan. 24 in the United Kingdom.) Created collaboratively by a transatlantic dream team of A-list writers and producers including Rick Rubin, Paul Epworth, Ryan Tedder and Francis “Eg” White, it expands upon the delicate soul-sound of such “19” cuts as “Chasing Pavements” and “Hometown Glory” with headstrong forays into fiery disco-gospel, stomping blues and 70s-styled R&B.

This week the album’s lead single, “Rolling in the Deep,” debuted in the United Kingdom at No. 2 (ahead of Britney Spears’ “Hold It Against Me” and behind Bruno Mars’ “Grenade”) on the Official Charts Co.’s singles tally; the groove-heavy kick-off also soundtrack a fresh Nike spot featuring tennis star Maria Sharapova.

“A great as I love ‘19’ — and do — this is a giant leap forward for her,” says Tedder, the OneRepublic frontman who’s written and produced hits for Beyoncé (“Halo”) and Leona Lewis (“Breathing Love”), among others. “With a couple of exceptions, ‘19’ was very subdued, “Tedder continues. ‘21’ isn’t.”

“She’s got a little more swagger now,” adds Rick Kern, executive VP of music and talent relations at VH1. The network selected Adele as a You Oughta Know artist in 2008, and will premiere ‘VH1 Unplugged: Adele’ on March 4. “A lot has happened to her since her first record, so you expect to hear some growth. The first single, it’s just instantaneous — it doesn’t sound like anything on her debut.”

A MASTERS PLAN

Born Adele Laurie Blue Adkins, the singer comes by that swagger honestly: In 2006, England’s super-hit X. Records signed Adele on the strength of a three-song demo a friend of hers had posted on MySpace; within two years she’d won the BRIT Awards’ Critics’ Choice prize and been tipped by the BBC as the “Sound of 2008.” In 2009 she beat out the Jonas Brothers (as well as fellow U.K. import Duffy) for the best new artist Grammy Award, and capped her world tour in support of ‘19’ with a sold-out show at Los Angeles’ 17,000-capacity Hollywood Bowl.

Adele says much of the inspiration for “21” came from the country and roots music she heard while on the road in America; she singles out Lady Antebellum and rockabilly pioneer Wanda Jackson as particular influences.

“She’d definitely been exposed to things that opened her eyes musically,” says Epworth, who co-wrote and produced “Rolling in the Deep.” “So much of the music from the United States over the last century was formed from various trials and tribulations, and I think that’s reflected on Adele’s record—that she identified with these artists singing about their lives.”

Virtually all of the album’s lyrics refer to a single breakup Adele experienced between “19” and “21,” often in disarming detail, as in the song’s clocked closer, “Someone Like You”: “I heard that you’re settled down/That you found a girl and you’re married now,” she sings. “I heard that your dreams came true/Guess she gave you something I wouldn’t give to you.”

“We didn’t try to make it open-ended so it could apply to anyone,” says that song’s co-writer/producer, former Semisonic frontman Dan Wilson. “We tried to make it as personal as possible.” He and Adele wrote together after being hooked up by Rubin, who has enlisted Wilson’s services on other projects by Dixie Chicks and Josh Groban. “She may not have had a melodic hook or a specific lyrical idea,” he says, “but she always knew what she wanted to say. She definitely had a master plan.”

According to Adele’s London-based manager, Jonathan Dickins, that emotional certitude is what has fueled the singer’s success. “The key to great singers is believing every single word they sing,” he says. “And I think you believe every word that comes out of Adele’s mouth.”

“People feel like they can relate to her because she’s relatable,” XL chief Richard Russell adds. “‘Down to earth’ is such an overused phrase, but it’s never more applicable than it is to Adele.”

Rubin says with characteristic Zen-like flourish: “You can feel her life force through her voice.”

OLD-SCHOOL APPROACH

When Dickins began gearing up for the release of “21,” one fact loomed larger than all others: the number of sophomore slumps littering the music-industry landscape. “And I don’t mean a slump just in terms of sales,” he says. “I mean, is the artist still relevant? Adele’s made a great record that we’re immensely proud of. And it’s just another step in a long, fruitful career. Everything we try to do — every decision — is absolutely focused on the long term.”

That’s the strategy Dickins says Columbia took with “19” upon the album’s American release, six months after its U.K. appearance. “When she won the BRIT Award and the BBC poll, what came with that [in England] was a tremendous amount of hype,” he says. “But no one cares about the BRIT Awards in the U.S., so Columbia was brilliant in thinking, ‘Right, OK, let’s build this record at a grass-roots level.’ It wasn’t about flying the record out and going for the jugular. It was a slower process, looking for the right TV looks, building at triple A and hot AC, generally snowballing through multiple platforms. Consequently, people bought into her, not into a song.”

“At the time we really had no other choice,” Columbia chairman Steve Barnett says. “The American market is a world of niches, and Adele didn’t fit perfectly in any of them—certainly not at radio. But we knew people had to experience her, so we took an old-fashioned approach. She had to go out and play, and because she’s so captivating, we felt that if we got the right TV opportunities, she’d be able to cut through.”

The most important of those opportunities, Columbia senior VP of marketing Scott Greer says, was Adele’s October 2008 appearance on “Saturday Night Live,” in a highly rated episode that also featured a guest appearance by Sarah Palin. Dickins, who was in New York at the time, remembers going to bed after the “SNL” taping with “19” at No. 40 on the iTunes sales chart. By the time he’d woken up for an early flight back to London, the album had risen to the top 10; when he landed it was at No. 1.

Barnett says that the “long tail” sales theory fundamentally shaped the label’s “21” campaign, which Greer describes as being “about building a critical mass throughout February in order to reach all those people who bought ‘19’ over a span of 18 months.” For help facilitating those connections, Columbia has sought support from “everywhere we had it in the first place,” Greer says. “We had Adele [in New York] in September and went to some of our key partners”—Vevo, AOL and VH1, among others—“to play a few songs and say, ‘Hey, I’m back!’”

In October the label took Adele to Minneapolis, where she performed for Target execs; according to Greer, the retailer is slated to roll a two-CD version of “21” that contains several live tracks, including a cover of Lady Antebellum’s “Need You Now” that Adele and Darius Rucker performed on CMT’s recent “Artists of the Year” special. The singer also performed Oct. 26 for an invite-only tastemaker crowd at Los Angeles’ Largo.

The result of that advance work is a filled-up February: Adele is scheduled to appear Feb. 18 on “Today,” Feb. 21 on “The Early Show,” Feb. 24 on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” and “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” and Feb. 28 on “CBS This Morning.” Additionally, Greer says, “Rolling in the Deep” figures prominently in a scene in “1 Am Number Four,” a Michael Bay-produced sci-fi film due in theaters Feb. 18.
In the digital realm, Columbia senior VP of digital marketing Kathy Baker says Perez Hilton has mentioned Adele 10 times in the last three months. "No one can deny the reach he has," Baker says. "If someone doesn't know who Adele is, those multiple impressions could alter that." Adele's official site carried a live webcast of an acoustic concert the singer performed Jan. 24 at London's Tabernacle, and beginning Feb. 1, Baker says, the site will host a "21 Days of Adele" promotion with exclusive daily content including a live chat and a video of Adele explaining the inspiration for an album track. NPR Music is also set to stream "21" the week of Feb. 7 as part of its First Listen series.

Adele doesn't use Twitter; she says she was late to the social networking service and fears that if she started tweeting now, it would look like she was only doing it to promote her album. "(I also don't want to write, 'Oh, I'm on the toilet—last night's dinner was really spicy,' she adds. "That's just gross.") Baker says Columbia created an account for the singer anyway, which the label uses to push followers to Adele's blog.

At radio, "Rolling in the Deep" is shaping up to be a "slam-dunk," says Columbia VP of triple A and public radio promotion Lisa Sonkin, who adds that the tune has begun crossing over to a handful of modern rock stations, such as WFNX Boston. This week "Rolling in the Deep" is No. 2 on Billboard's Triple A chart and No. 26 on Adult Top 40.

"Playing the song was a no-brainer for us," says KCRW Santa Monica, Calif., music director Jason Bentley, whose station presented Adele's 2009 Hollywood Bowl show. "She's a core artist for us.

Sonkin says she's utilized Adele's real-life charm in the same way Greer has. "She sat down with Jess Besack at Sirius, who programs Spectrum," Sonkin recalls, "and after their talk, Jess looked at me and said, 'I wanna go out for drinks with her!' That makes a big difference.

The goal here is straightforward: "We want a No. 1 record," Greer says. Still, Barnett is quick to point out that Columbia's dedication to "21" extends far beyond the album's opening frame. He says he hears live singles and envisions working the disc at least through the 2012 Grammys.

To that end, Adele will spend much of 2011 on the road. European dates are scheduled for March and April, while Kirk Sommer, Adele's agent at William Morris Endeavor, says the singer will hit the United States in May and June, playing 1,500- to 3,000-capacity rooms. "We've done some underplays with a view to come back later in the year and play larger rooms," Sommer adds. "She's extremely versatile. On the last campaign she played some key major markets multiple times but made a conscious effort to change the format of the show when she returned."

The singer says she's looking forward to touring again, even if it means relying on a nightly basis the painful experiences her songs depict. "That's really fucking hard," she says. "Toward the end of touring on '19' there were a couple of shows where I'd be singing 'Make You Feel My Love' and I'd just have to start thinking of a cheat or something." She laughs. "You have to switch off sometimes—otherwise it's completely emotionally draining.

"Anything I find difficult, though, is completely thrown in the bin when I see how people respond to my music," she adds. "I love it when a wife drags her husband to a show and he's standing there like a lollipop. You spend the whole night trying to win him over, and by the end he's kissing his wife. That's amazing."

'I FEEL MORE FREE THAN I EVER HAVE.'

Count it off: ADELE in Malibu, Calif., at a "21" session (top); inset: Adele launches "21" at London venue the Tabernacle on Jan. 24.
YOU DON'T GET TO ZILLIONS OF FANS
WITHOUT MAKING A FEW FACEBOOK FRIENDS

AS MYSPACE STRUGGLES, YOUNG COMPANIES LIKE ROOTMUSIC, BANDBOX, MOONTOAST AND BANDCAMP HELP ARTIST TEAMS NAVIGATE THE BIGGEST SOCIAL NETWORK OF ALL

BY GLENN PEOPLES

FEBRUARY 5, 2011 21 www.billboard.biz
THE FUTURE OF MYSPACE AND THE MYSPACE MUSIC UNIT IS VERY MUCH IN QUESTION.

The music industry is turning increasingly to Facebook to stay engaged with fans. Why? Because everyone uses it. The site has more than 500 million users worldwide, with 10% of them in the United States. Half of its active users log in everyday, and each month its users spend more than 700 billion minutes sharing content at the site.

That constant contact has made Facebook the No. 1 most trafficked website in the United States. According to J.P. Morgan estimates, Facebook commands 10% of Internet users' time, exceeding the 9% and 4% captured by Yahoo and Google, respectively.

"The value proposition is where people are, and where they're comfortable," says I. Sider, founder of RootMusic, a San Francisco-based startup that gives artists tools to help them market themselves on the social network. RootMusic recently scored $2.3 million in new funding. "They trust Facebook, and they're interested in sharing things."

But while Facebook may have reached that levels Myspace (which currently has around 100 million users, almost half the 185 million it claimed in 2007, using it as a platform for promoting and sampling music isn't the no-brainer that it is on Myspace.

At Myspace, "music is in the DNA," as the company likes to say. With support of the four major labels, Myspace is licensed to stream music on demand, supported by advertising. Myspace sells tickets directly from artist profiles, gives artists, managers and labels granular data on usage, and has programs like "Introducing" designed to expose new artists to users. Myspace does all this through apps, technology and partnerships—most developed in-house and offered as a package to artists as a sort of one-stop shop for all things music and social.

Facebook, on the other hand, doesn't have the central music strategy. It primarily makes its platform available to third-party developers to do whatever they like with it. But to artist teams that want to utilize Facebook like they do Myspace, Facebook can seem like a fragmented set of music-related tools and services that make for a disjointed experience.

The trick to Facebook? "It's about the communication, not the technology," says Charlene Li, a partner at San Mateo, Calif.-based tech advisory firm Altimeter Group. Social media sites may come and go, she explains, but the need to reach consumers transcends any single platform. A message needs to be a part of a larger strategy, while specific ways to communicate—Facebook, Twitter, Myspace—are tactics in that strategy.

And there are lessons to be learned about such communication from how other companies use Facebook. For example, Coca-Cola has 21 million Facebook followers. Starbucks, 14 million. Both facilitate conversations on their pages instead of responding directly to their millions of followers.

On Coca-Cola's page, fans leave messages praising the product: Others comment on "like" these posts. Some post pictures that feature a Coca-Cola product or image. There is the occasional criticism, such as pleas to remove high fructose corn syrup. Altogether, the wall page represents an ongoing, global discussion that's carried on without the guidance of the company.

Will Artists Using Tumblr Be Able To Post More Music? President Says 'We'll See'

In the wake of the latest round of layoffs at Myspace, speculation is rife about what could possibly take its place as the go-to spot for artists. Business Insider blogger Dan Frommer nominated micro-blogging site Tumblr, writing that it's "insanely simple to use for blogging" and that it "could easily handle most musicians' needs with 1) better support for static pages like 'tour dates,' 'bio,' etc., and 2) some sort of digital playlist tool for music samples."

Tumblr president John Maloney says he has admiration for what Myspace did in the music space. "They took an entire vertical and completely owned it," he says. "It was revolutionary. Artists had to have a Myspace account, and arguably, they still do."

He adds that for Tumblr, "creative communities are a huge focus. We think there is an opportunity in music, and we are making an effort to reach out to all creative communities."

John Mayer loves Tumblr. His OneFiftyPlus is at jnmtyr.tumblr.com. Last April he famously wrote on his Tumblr site, "It's the future of social networking if your image of the future features intelligent discourse." While the Beastie Boys still have a Myspace page, their last login was in September 2010. Their Tumblr page, however, was updated as recently as the last week of January.

"One of the things Myspace still does right is provide a centralized, easy place to post music and tour dates," says Deanna Zandt, author of "Share This: How You Will Change the World With Social Networking." (Benett-Koehler Publishers). "Tumblr doesn't have that set of features. As of now, Tumblr only allows users to post one song per day, and when asked if that policy will change, Maloney simply says, 'We'll see.'"

Corey Denis, head of digital music marketing and social media consultancy Not Shocking, also doubts that Tumblr will take over Myspace's role in music. "The next Myspace," she says, "has probably not been invented yet." —Courtney Harding
Starbucks' wall posts reflect a similar level of fan devotion. The company keeps followers engaged by tossing out questions to spark conversation. In one post that announced $2 breakfast sandwiches with the purchase of a beverage, Starbucks created a social commentary thread by asking what toppings customers would prefer. In one hour, 3,706 people "liked" the post and 523 left comments.

But as a sales channel, Facebook is in its infancy. The potential is large enough, though, that startups are building tools to help artists, publishers and a wide range of companies to sell—as opposed to just promoting goods directly to fans through their Facebook pages.

"Will Facebook be a strong sales channel in the future? Absolutely," Bandbox CEO Brian Peterson says. A music-tech startup that previously built tools for artists and labels to sell music and merchandise from a variety of websites, Bandbox now focuses on tools for selling only through Facebook. "You know it's going to happen from looking at how technologies have evolved in the past."

But will consumers become comfortable spending money on Facebook? Yes, says Marcus Whitney, co-founder/chief technology officer of social commerce company Moontastic. The ability to buy from an official page at a trusted site like Facebook elimi- nates consumer doubt. Sales have typically been directed from sites like Myspace and completed on another Web page, he explains. "Now, it's, 'Don't make them leave.'"

Whitney points to the astronomical success of online gaming company Zynga, creator of the Farmville and CityVille social games, which can only be played within the Facebook platform. The privately held company is estimated, according to technology sources as CNBC and TechCrunch, to have annual revenue of $500 million-$700 million. Zynga makes money by selling virtual currency for use in its games (a new tool for use in Farmville, for example) at either its own website or through Facebook's in-house payment system, Facebook Credits.

Booyah's Nightclub City is a sort of CityVille for the music set, with 14 million users creating virtual nightclubs complete with licensed music, celebrity-themed avatar upgrades and the occasional appearance by artists themselves (see Kiss case study, page 22). Another is the hip-hop-themed role-playing game Platinum Life.

So far there's no Zynga of the music space, but plenty of companies are vying for that role. Facebook's No. 1 music app is RootMusic, which helps artists enhance their Facebook profiles, and FanBridge recently acquired it for an undisclosed sum. There's also Bandbox, Moontastic, Bandcamp and scores of others. It will be some time before a clear winner emerges.

"Consumers aren't screaming, 'We need a new iTunes.'" Peterson says, "or, 'We need a better way,' but hopefully there are other entrepreneurs that want to bring a natural evolution."

Selling through Facebook will become a higher priority, and it may come out of necessity as artists and labels prepare for more disruption at music retail. There are simply fewer options for selling physical product as more retailers are going out of business, reducing their CD inventories or dropping the format altogether. In effect, the CD faces a massive supply problem that could be partially alleviated by integrating storefronts into artists' Facebook pages.

Facebook can also be good for digital music because it circumvents the limitations inherent at, say, iTunes. iTunes doesn't share consumer information, but Facebook lets sellers stay in touch with buyers. Awareness is another difference. Digital download stores are limited in the number of titles they can highlight in new-release emails and at the store. Facebook provides an inexpensive way to update fans about new material and immediately entice them and their friends to listen or purchase.

People also agree about Facebook's ability to be a constant presence in people's lives. The company has already proved itself able to continuously improve its product and stay well ahead of the competition, something Myspace hasn't been able to do. Fortunately for the artists who communicate and sell on the platform, Whitney says, Facebook—which received a $450 million investment from Goldman Sachs in January—has staying power. "It's going to be incredibly hard for them to screw it up. Nothing else has had so many hooks in it."
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Dynamite/Taio Cruz/Mercury/IDJMG
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Airplanes/B.o.B feat. Hayley Williams/RebelRock/Grand Hustle/Atlantic

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I Like It/Enrique Iglesias Feat. Pitbull/Universal Republic
Find Your Love/Drake/Young Money/Cash Money/Universal Motown
DJ Got Us Fallin' In Love/Usher Feat. Pitbull/LaFace/Jive/JLG

200,000 SPINS
Just A Dream/Nelly/Universal Motown

100,000 SPINS
The Boys Of Fall/Kenny Chesney/BNA
Stuck Like Glue/Sugarland/Mercury
Raise Your Glass/P!nk/LaFace/JLG
Farmer’s Daughter/Rodney Atkins/Curb

50,000 SPINS
Whip My Hair/Willow Smith/Roc Nation/Columbia
Say You’ll Haunt Me/Stone Sour/Roadrunner/RRP
Right Thru Me/Nicki Minaj/Young Money/Cash Money/Universal Motown
Right Above It/Lil Wayne Feat. Drake/Cash Money/Universal Motown
Please Don’t Go/Mike Posner/J/RMG
Only Prettier/Miranda Lambert/Columbia
My Kinda Party/Jason Aldean/Broken Bow
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Love Like Woe/The Ready Set/Sire/Decaydance/Reprise
Light Up The Sky/The Afters/INO
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F**k You (Forget You)/Cee Lo Green/Elektra/RRP
Check It Out/will.i.am & Nicki Minaj/will.i.am/Interscope
Champagne Life/Ne Yo/Del Jam/IDJMG
Can’t Be Friends/Trey Songz/Songbook/Atlantic
LA VIDA RICKY
Martin Takes ‘MAS’ On Tour; Has Target Deal, Preps For ‘Evita’

A year ago, Ricky Martin thought he had a great plan. In addition to a bilingual album, he was going to publish a biography, a tome in which he'd talk about his eponymous foundation that benefits children issues, his work and his career. But literally 500 words into his book, Martin had a change of heart.

"Within the first few hours, I made a decision," he says. "I started writing about the foundation. Why? Because of my spiritual work. Why? To remove myself from the entertainment environment. Why remove myself? Because they asked me questions about my personal life."

Martin decided to take the plunge and address the questions head on. In late March, he came out of the closet, in a thought-out, direct and often moving statement he posted at rickymartinmusic.com and on his Twitter page.

This revelation also led him to rework his first studio album in six years, which he's titled "Musica + Alma + Sexo" (Music + Soul + Sex, or "MAS"), due Feb. 1. The album now overwhelmingly comprises self-empowering, uptempo tracks. The record is mostly in Spanish, save for a couple of English-language tracks, including first single "The Best of Me Is You" with Joss Stone. (The Spanish-language counterpart features Natalia Jimenez.) Desmond Child, the architect of Martin's early hits, co-produced the album with the singer, and the two of them co-wrote much of its material.

An international version of the album, which will be released in more than 30 countries, will include more English versions and remixes. Martin's label in the United States, Sony Music Latin, has struck a deal with Target, which will sell an exclusive version with seven extra tracks. Target will also feature Martin in a massive promotion that includes radio, print and TV spots featuring his album on both English and Spanish networks.

Martin is also preparing to kick off the first leg of his U.S. tour on March 25 with three shows at the Coliseo in Puerto Rico, for a total of approximately 20 arena dates. He'll then head to Europe and Asia, before returning to the United States and then Latin America in the fall. In January 2012, he begins rehearsals for his role as Che Guevara in the new Broadway version of "Evita."

All this, coupled with his biography "Me," which was published by Penguin imprint Celebra in November, has elevated Martin's visibility to levels probably not enjoyed since his "Livin' la Vida Loca" days.

It wasn't planned, says Martin's manager, Bruno Del Granado. "Publisher Penguin didn't come around looking for that kind of book. [But] the book took on a life of its own."

The minute Martin went public with his sexual orientation, he was deluged by press requests, but didn't give any interviews. Instead, he accelerated work on the album and the book. At that point, Del Granado says, it was a race to see what was finished first: Because Broadway was calling for 2012, there was pressure to wrap everything up by the end of 2011.

The book won, and Martin went on a tour in November that included interviews with Larry King and Oprah Winfrey, where producers asked him for a performance. Sony hustled to get the first single on iTunes, and Martin performed on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" with Stone.

Today, with the album promo in full swing, Martin is relaxed in his home studio, dressed in cargo pants, flip-flops and a long-sleeved white T-shirt. He's come up from playing with his twin boys in the yard. Standing from the second-story window, he looks at them as they make their way around the block in little push carts.

"I love you!" he shouts, and the twins wave back. His children, Martin says, were a key factor in his personal decision. "They'll go to school at some point, and I want them to be proud of their father," he says, "and to be a proud part of a modern family."

Martin's comfort level translates to the music. While "MAS" could have walled in self-consciousness or even preaching, it's a fun album that recalls his dancing days, beginning with the album-opening title track, which celebrates a night out. While many songs carry a deeper message ("In my hand I have the flag that defends the revolution," he sings in the anthemic "Basta ya," while "Cantame de Tu Vida" is about children in the streets), it never supersedes the spirit of the music.

"I'm influenced by my live show," says Martin, who riveted the world in 1999 with his hip-swinging in "Livin' la Vida Loca." "When I get up onstage, the first thing I say is, 'We're here to forget everything and to have a blast the next two hours.' When I work with my producers, we look for that liberty. It's uptempo because I'm at a point in my life where I simply want to be—and be free."

"My children will go to school at some point, and I want them to be proud of their father."—RICKY MARTIN

Truth teller: RICKY MARTIN
Ten years ago, veteran Detroit garage rock band the Dirtbombs released “Ultraglide in Black,” an album of covers of classic soul songs associated with their hometown. Now, they’re releasing a sequel, re-working material from another of the city’s crucial musical styles: techno.

“Party Store,” which in the Red will release on Feb. 1, features the quintet. Led by guitarist/singer Nick Collins, named through live versions of eight electronic-dance classics, as well as the Collins-penned finale, “Mista Mystery-Naiso (Detorto Mo),”

“This was an idea that happened kind of suddenly,” Collins says. “We kind of took 2009 off. I wanted to do some recordings just to let people know the band is still active.” Collins originally intended to present the music as three dozen singles, to be released in June, July and August 2010, and indeed, “Party Store” will be available on triple-vinyl as well as CD and MP3. “If we’re going to be making these dance records, we ought to put them in a format that DJs can use,” Collins says, noting that garage rock fans crave vinyl as well.

The band—Collins, guitarist Ko Melina, bassist Zack Weedon and drummers Ben Blackwell and Patrick Pantano—took the task of re-creating the synthesized originals seriously. Occasionally, this presented problems, such as with “Strings of Life,” Derrick May’s late ’80s rave anthem (originally credited to Rhythm Is Rhythm).

“That took a great deal of effort,” Collins says with a laugh. “On the original recording, May had 20 synths going. There was a whole lot that wasn’t going to make it. I stripped as much out as I could to still have a workable sound. I’m happy with the end result, but I really didn’t think it was going to work.”

Collins has long been friendly with hometown techno legends like May, Juan Atkins and Carl Craig, the last of whom appears on “Party Store,” playing a modular synthesizer on a 23-minute blast through his own “Bug in the Bass Bin” (originally credited to Innerzone Orchestra).

“He came to see us play one night,” Collins says of Craig. “We got to talking about the record, and he said he was interested in hearing it. At some point, I called him up and said, ‘Hey, would you come on it’—thinking he would never say yes.” The track ended up as long as it did, Collins says, when Blackwell suggested that we keep playing till we run out of tape. We set up a reel of tape for just the one song, and we kept playing till the tape literally ran off the spool. We basically did it in one take.”

The Dirtbombs have played many rock festivals, but “Party Store” suggests the band might have more dance-oriented bookings in its future. “We got asked to play Movement last year,” Collins says of Detroit’s annual electronic-dance festival. “We ended up not doing it, because we just weren’t prepared. The concept would be perfect in keeping with the way I like to run things musically. I would really love that cognitive dissonance.”

In April, the Dirtbombs will play a handful of shows sponsored by Scoon, which has commissioned a promo remix 10-inch (featuring Detroit electro artist Ectomorph), while a new, original Dirtbombs album follows in May. “We do have some shows planned, [that’s] the best I can say,” Collins says. “It’s suddenly gotten really complicated here.”

Greg Dulli Revives The Twilight Singers

Greg Dulli is many things—a singer, songwriter, bar owner, hotelier—but he is decidedly not a handymen.

“I just got back from a week in Mexico helping my friend renovate his house,” says the gravelly voiced musician from his Los Angeles home. “And by helping, I mean lounging in the hammock on the beach and telling him where things should go.”

Luckily for Dulli, the chances of him having to make a living shlepping anything besides a guitar are slim. After raising to prominence as the frontman for the scene’s rockin’ blues-influenced garage punk band the Afghan Whigs in the ’80s and ’90s, Dulli has spent the last 10 years hopping from project to project. His latest effort, “Dynamite Steps,” the sixth album by his band the Twilight Singers, will be released Feb. 15 on Sub Pop. Dulli says he decided to reassemble the Twilight Singers after taking time to release solo material and collaborate with former Screaming Trees frontman Mark Lanegan on a project called the Gutter Twins. Unlike previous Twilight Singers albums, which were in line with the Afghan Whigs’ sound, “Dynamite Steps” is a straightforward rock record.

“The new album is really built to be played live,” Dulli says. “I want to go out on stage and throw it the fuck down. I hadn’t played electric guitar on stage for two years and I was dying to be able to do that again.”

Sub Pop GM Megan Jasper agrees that “Steps is” definitely more aggressive than what they’ve done before,” she says. “Greg’s great talent is being able to take whatever is happening in his life and channeling that on the record.”

Jasper says Sub Pop will use some old-school methods to promote the album. College radio is a major focus, “because that’s been such a strong base for him and it’s a great way to reach younger fans,” she says. The Twilight Singers will also play in-store shows at the Amoeba outlets in Los Angeles and San Francisco. But she adds that the entire plan isn’t stuck in the ’90s.

“While Greg himself isn’t really into social media, that’s something we can do for him pretty easily,” Jasper says. “We’re using Topspin to help us focus our e-mail marketing—for instance, when Greg did a run of solo dates last year, we collected thousands of e-mail addresses and then sent out a free track. And we’ll have [bar] codes on the posters that will send people to the Facebook page.”

Dulli will also sit down for a taped interview with Sub Pop head Jonathan Poneman, which will then be posted online. “This isn’t something we usually do, but the two of them have known each other for so long, and it’s fun to watch them go back and forth,” Jasper says.

The Twilight Singers will kick off a European tour on March 18 in London, with a U.S. run to follow later in the year. In addition to his rock’n’roll life, Dulli is co-owner of two bars in Los Angeles and a boutique hotel in New Orleans. “There are a lot of the same ups and downs for bars and rock bands,” he says. “But my bar the Short Stop just celebrated its 10th anniversary, and I’ve been playing music for a long time, so I think I know how to weather them.”
And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Nerds

‘Tao Of The Dead’ Coming Soon To A Basement Near You

After reclaiming its independence following a rough streak at Interscope for 2009’s “The Century of Self,” Austin art rock band… And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead continues blazing its own path for its latest release, the two-part “Tao of The Dead.”

The set, due Feb. 8 on the band’s own Richter Scale Records and Superballmusic, finds the group exploring a new approach to the album format, recording it in two parts, or sides, in two different tunings. Part 1, in the tuning of D, was recorded in 10 days with longtime friend Chris “Frenchie” Smith at the Sonic Ranch in El Paso, Texas, and is divided into 11 tracks; Part 2, in the tuning of F, was recorded with former producer Chris Coady (Yeah Yeah Yeahs, TV on the Radio) in upstate New York and is a heroic 16-minute track broken up into five movements. Although the album is divided into essentially two long tracks, Trail of Dead singer/guitarist Conrad Keely is quick to clear up a misconception: “People ask if it’s a concept album or not, and I tend to think it isn’t,” he says. “There is no one concept; it’s multiple themes.”

Among the ideas explored in the psychedelically tinged, Pink Floyd-inspired music are the demise of rock radio (the immediate rush of “Pure Radio Cosplay”) and environmental art (“The Spiral Jetty”). Several songs touch on mythologist/writer Joseph Campbell’s narrative concept of “the hero’s journey,” including “Ebb Away,” which Keely notes “is almost symbolic of death, but also symbolic of rebirth.” Part 2 is inspired by the “Tao Te Ching,” an ancient Chinese text the group encountered while in the studio.

Superballmusic, which put out the group’s last effort overseas while Justice Records handled stateside duties, is heading the worldwide release of the new set in conjunction with the band’s own Richter Scale and the Century Media family of labels (distributed by EMI).

Having parted ways in 2007 with Interscope, which released 2002’s critically acclaimed “Source Tags & Codes,” as well as 2005’s “World’s Apart” and 2006’s “So Divided,” guitarist/singer Jason Reece says there wasn’t any deliberation as to whom to sign with for “Tao of the Dead.” “We would never have that [label] conversation,” he says. “All we care about is that someone is interested enough to put it out.”

As with past Trail of Dead albums, Keely’s artwork will accompany the release, this time in graphic novel form. Different album packaging contains either the first 12 or 16 panels of the novel, which will be unveiled episodically throughout 2011. The artwork will also be on display at concerts throughout the year.

Superballmusic North American product manager Marc Schapiro says one of the unique aspects of the group’s material is its marriage of music and artwork. He also notes that the band members’ depth as musicians broadens its appeal. “Tao of Dead have always pushed the boundaries of musical genres,” he says. “They’ve influenced alternative and rock bands for over a decade, and even toured with metal and country bands in the past.”

Like a family reunion, Wanda Jackson’s latest covers album, “The Party Ain’t Over,” is a multigenerational affair. The song selection alone spans decades, from 1945’s Andrew Sisters hit “Rum and Coca Cola” to Amy Winehouse’s “You Know I’m No Good” from 2007. The album also pairs a back-up cast of current indie rockers, featuring members of My Morning Jacket and the Raconteurs, with Jackson’s legendary crackling voice—a voice whose biggest hit blazed through radios in 1960.

Jackson wasn’t quite sure she wanted to make another record, but a meeting with Jack White convinced her otherwise. White went on to arrange and produce the record and will release it Jan. 25 through his own Third Man Records, in partnership with Nonesuch. Much like Loretta Lynn’s “Van Lear Rose” in 2004, “The Party” finds White elegantly escorting an iconic voice from pop music’s past into the present.

1. How did you first hook up with Jack White, and what was your impression of him before you began working together?

Well, my publicist heard Jack was a fan of mine and of that era of music. He called to see if he’d be interested in doing a duet with me. Jack said he wasn’t interested in that, but he did want to record me for a single, and possibly an album.

Now I knew his career, his popularity. And you try not to form opinions, but I was worried about the type of material he’d want me to do. I was apprehensive until I saw that he didn’t want to change my style of singing—he wanted to embellish it.

2. He came to the studio with the songs arranged and a band ready to play with you. How did those sessions go?

He really pushed me… right into the 21st century. He’s like a velvet-covered brick. He’s forceful in a very nice way, he knows what he wants, and we recorded until he was happy that he’d gotten the best of me. He was cool, laid-back. And he recorded me in analog. For me, that was like stepping back in a time machine to the ’50s.

3. You say White pushed you in the studio. What do you think he was looking for?

He wanted more of the Wanda Jackson sound from the ’50s. He wanted that wild girl that might still be in me somewhere; he wanted to pull her to the forefront. I did my best, and he was very happy. After I knew I was pleasing Jack, I felt free to just sing the songs.

4. It’s easy to call you a rock’n’roll legend, but do you feel legendary?

In the rock genre, I do. I was the first girl to have the nerve to do it. It wasn’t easy because there weren’t many people doing it at all. You had Bill Haley and Elvis, then Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash. Those are the guys I worked with, and I was always the only girl. I knew I was stepping into new territory, but I wasn’t afraid of it. I had this growl and this attitude in me I didn’t even know existed. Rock’n’roll songs pulled it out of me.

5. Was it difficult to push rock’n’roll to the masses in the late ’50s, especially as a woman?

Rock was new. The radio people and the older generation were pushing against it. It looked like rock’n’roll wasn’t going to pull through. But the kids started to have the voice. It was the fans that made it happen. They demanded that music. The rest of the world had to bend and come along. Each generation wants their own music, whether it’s folk or country or early rock or hard rock.

6. Do you have grandchildren? What do they think of their rocking grandma?

I have four grandchildren; they are so very proud. You can’t imagine it. Even my youngest grandson, who just turned 13. He’s the first one to tell people, “My grandma rocks.”
ALBUMS

ROCK

SMITH WESTERNS
Dye It Blonde
Producer: Chris Coody
Fat Possum Records
Release Date: Jan. 18

"Everybody wants to be a star on a Saturday night," Cullen Omori sings on "End of the Night," a cut from this young Chicago outfit's sophomoric studio set. That includes the Smith Westerns. Since the release of the band's self-titled 2009 debut, Omori and his bandmates have become one of the blogosphere's most buzzed-about outfits. The group's recent alliance with Mississippi's ascendant Fat Possum label suggests it's now ready to join the higher-profile ranks of Wavves and the Walkmen. A consistently tuneful slice of teenage-dream neo-glam, "Dye It Blonde" is certainly strong enough to push the Smith Westerns to that next level. On gems like "Weekend" and the string-strung "Still New," Omori channels the wistful romance of Marc Bolan's T. Rex, while "Imaginate Pt. 5" shimmers like an indie-garage version of "Mr. Blue Sky" by Electric Light Orchestra. These kids' sound isn't quite their own yet, but the big-hearted borrowings are very nearly irresistible.—MW

THE DECEMBERISTS
The King Is Dead
Producer: Tucker Martine
Capitol/EMI

Release Date: Jan. 18

On their sixth studio album, the Decemberists strip down to their acoustic skivvies, dispensing with the more abstruse compositions found on 2009's "The Hazards of Love." While that album cited the '60s British folk revival as its primary inspiration, here the band's muse is clad in red, white and bluegrass. "The King Is Dead" is a hyperliterate hootenanny crammed with pickin', fiddlin' and very likely grinmin' (it was recorded in a barn in the shadow of Oregon's Mount Hood) and Scrabble words like "panoply" and "trillium." Lead singer Colin Meloy's irrepressible baritone in all its full-throated glory stands in stark contrast to the unplugged ensemble's dulcet tones. It's wisely paired with Gillian Welch's stunning countrified voice on seven of the album's 10 tracks, including the foot-stomping single "Down by the Water" and the gorgeous pedal-steel ballad "Dear Avery" (featuring Laura Veirs). The R.E.M. homage "Calamity Song" would be copyright infringement if it didn't also feature Peter Buck's jangly 12-string guitar (circa 1983's "Murmur").—AG

BRANDON HEATH
Leaving Eden
Producer: Dan Muckala
Reunion Records/Provident Music Group
Release Date: Jan. 18

Listening to Brandon Heath's impressive third album, "Leaving Eden," it's easy to see why he's won the Gospel Music Assn.'s male vocalist Dove Award the last two consecutive years. Like the genre's veteran superstars Michael W. Smith and Steven Curtis Chapman, Heath has perfected the art of delivering Christian pop that's both easily accessible and lyrically substantive. The songs are musically inventive, but it's the messages of hope and redemption that sink into your soul. The tender ballad "It's Alright" opens with the bracing question, "Tiny boat on an angry sea, sails torn and tattered/How could Jesus be fast asleep like it doesn't matter?" It's thought-provoking and ultimately uplifting, which can be said of most of Heath's work, including new standout tracks "The Light In Me" and lead single "Your Love." The title track is an insightful look at the state of the world, and "Only Wasted," an eloquent ballad that he wrote with Lee Thomas Miller and Ross Copperman. "Leaving Eden" is a powerful collection from a young artist who's doing an excellent job of carrying the Christian genre forward in changing times.—DEP

AMOS LEE
Mission Bell
Producer: Joey Burns
Blue Note Records
Release Date: Jan. 25

Amos Lee took the acoustic troubadour route as far as he could on his first three albums. So on his latest set, "Mission Bell," the singer/songwriter smartly enlists Calexico's Joey Burns to flesh out the sound. With the musical backing of Calexico, the unique integrity of Lee's songs is kept intact and dressed with new layers of sonic textures. Lee sings that he's "spent a lot of time chasing that old-time feeling," and a rootsy kind of folk-soul-gospel blend floats throughout the album. This is heard on the gentle prettiness of opener "El Camino" (a stripped-down version with Willie Nelson closes the 13-song set), the chorale majesty of "Flower" and the gritty "Jesus" with R&B drumming legend James Gadsen providing echo vocals. Lee finds a unique take on war in "Out of the Cold" and manages to offer original spins on tried-and-true themes of loss and redemption throughout. But it's the new sounds that really give this gentle genius a genuine "Bell" ringer of a fourth album.—GG

BLUES

GREGG ALLMAN
Low Country Blues
Producer: T Bone Burnett
Rounder Records
Release Date: Jan. 18

There aren't many contemporary voices better-suited to sing the blues than Gregg Allman. Gritty and whiskey-soaked, it's a perfect instrument for his latest album, "Low Country Blues." The mostly covers collaboration with T Bone Burnett puts Allman—who's capably delivered gems from Elmore James, T-Bone Walker and Blind Willie McTell with the Allman Brothers Band—in a decided comfortability habitat. Backed by an ace band (Doyle Bramhall II on guitar, Dr. John on piano) and buoyed by Burnett's retrograde lo-fi sonic, Allman's first solo album in 14 years sports passionate renditions of Bobby "Blue" Bland's "Blind Man" and Otis Rush's "Checking On My Baby," a country-steeped treatment of Sleepy John Estes' "Floating Bridge," a gospel-tinged romp through Muddy Waters' "I Can't Be Satisfied" and a brassy, New Orleans nod on B.B. King's "Please Accept My Love." The lone original—"Just Another Rider," co-written with Warren Haynes—rides a Memphis-style soul groove that's tighter than the pockets of Tim McGraw's jeans. The album was recorded before Allman's liver transplant last June, but it still sounds like the work of a man with a new lease on life.—GG

JAMES BLUNT
Some Kind of Trouble
Producers: various
Cus tard/Atlantic
Release Date: Jan. 18

How intimidating does a woman have to be for James Blunt to write a song about her called "Dangerous"? Not very. "She's dangerous, she is dangerous, I'm sure," the English star sings in not long into his third studio set, "Some Kind of Trouble." And she's all dressed up and knocking at my door," All dressed up and knocking at his door? Yikes. Like Blunt's previous two albums—including 2005's "Back to Bedlam," which spawned the international smash "You're Beautiful"—"Some Kind of Trouble" boasts a thoroughly edge-free soft-rock sound with its roots in the wimpy early-'70s excursions of Bread and America. The only real hint of danger here appears on the album's cover, which pictures someone throwing a small child several inches into the air. Given that congenital lack of gravitas, Blunt is best when he keeps things airy and up-tempo, as in opener "Stay the Night," an appealing, though ode to "singing 'Billie Jean,' mixing vodka with caffeine." The ballads are rather less enjoyable.—MW

TIMES OF GRACE
The Hymn of a Broken Man
Producer: Adam Dutkiewicz
Roadrunner Records
Release Date: Jan. 18

Headbangers have been buzzing about this collaboration between Killswitch Engage co-founders Adam Dutkiewicz and Jesse Leach—and with good reason. During his three-plus years with Killswitch, Leach, who now fronts Seemless, was the voice of 2002's reputation-staking "Alive or Just Breathing." And his sudden departure from Killswitch left a taste of unfinished business. "The Hymn of a Broken Man" is a heavy-handed, angsty affair, reflecting on Dutkiewicz's despair while facing career-threatening back problems and a variety of demons in Leach's personal life. And while a mantra-like "one love, one truth, one destiny" sounds like a lift from Bob Marley's songbook, rest assured that the track "Strength in Numbers" is a lumbering beast that gets the set off to a goose-stepping, martial-rhythmed start. Melodic passages collide with blast beats and apocalyptic power chords throughout the 12-song set, resulting in a hard-rocking roller coaster of turn-on-a-dime tempo shifts. And while it reaches an optimistic conclusion, with Leach declaring, "I will live again," pain is what truly gives "The Hymn of a Broken Man" its power.—GG
KANYE WEST & JAY-Z
H.A.M. (4:37)
Producers: Lex Luger, Kanye West
Publishers: various

Roc-a-Fella/Roc Nation/Def Jam/IDJMG
Critics and fans alike have expressed mixed emotions over "H.A.M.," the first single off Kanye West and Jay-Z's highly anticipated collaborative album, "Watch the Throne." Simply put: The song is good, but could have been better. Producer Lex Luger gives listeners a loaded beat full of psychedelic bang, with strings and opera-like hollers catering to fans with short attention spans. Unfortunately, the verses from these two hip-hop MVPs leave a lot to be desired. With all the explicit lyrics in his bar, West sounds too much like an ordinary hard-talking rapper and less like the vulnerable MC his fans appreciate. And while Jay-Z's lyrics sport a personal vibe, including mentions of his late uncle and nephew, the verse somehow still feels hollow. While "H.A.M." is a bit undermining, fans likely won't skip it when listening to the rest of "Throne."—MC

ASHLYNE HUFF
White Flag (3:32)
Producer: Greg Ogan
Writers: E. Bellinger, E. Vogar, A. Huff, G. Ogan
Publishers: various

Liquid Digital Audio
After contributing a track to the Pussycat Dolls' most recent album and opening for Jordin Sparks last summer, Los Angeles singer/songwriter Ashlyne Huff takes the spotlight on her debut single, "White Flag." With a playful persona and charismatic voice, Huff smartly keeps the stakes of her introduction low by surrounding the song's begging hook with light romantic musings. "I've been hiding from the truth this whole time/Picture perfect hanging right in front of me," Huff sings in the second verse before putting her "White Flag in the air" and surrendering to her true love. Producer Greg Ogan's cooking beat recalls the synthesizer-laden drive of Katy Perry's "California Gurls" and takes off during a delightfully catchy bridge. "White Flag" makes unadulterated fun its top priority and gives Huff a powerful opening statement as a pop artist.—JL

ASHLYNE HUFF
I Can't Love You Back (4:05)
Producer: Carson Chamberlain
Writers: C. Chamberlain, C. Daniels, J. Hyde
Publishers: FSM/KMG/WCCR

Music administered by State One Music America (IMRO/BMI), Sony/ATV Music Publishing/Maman's Combored Music (BMI)

Mercury Records
With his chart-topping debut single "A Little More Country Than That," Easton Corbin became one of country music's most successful new artists. He followed with the engaging hit "Roll With It," but on this third single, he slows down the tempo and reveals just how effective he can be as a balladeer. Penned by Carson Chamberlin, Clint Daniels and Jeff Hyde, "I Can't Love You Back" is a beautifully crafted song about a man who can't let go of failed romance. Corbin delivers an achingly vulnerable performance and makes his emotional pain palpable as he sings about trying to rekindle the flame in a relationship. Though his debut hit drew vocal comparisons to George Strait, with each successive single Corbin proves that he can carve out his own space in the country spotlight.—DEP

MDNR
Cut Me Out (3:15)
Producer: Peter Wade Kousch
Writers: A. Warner, P.W. Kousch
Publishers: SONGS Music Publishing (SESAC), 120 Music/Kobalt (ASCAP)

Green Label Sound
MDNR recently secured a spot on Chromeo's Risky Business tour, and judging from new single "Cut Me Out," the upstart New York duo will fit in perfectly with its electro-funk audience. The track features airy synthesizers and heavily relies on vocal repetition, with sugary "oh oh oh" sounds and the song title being echoed in the hook. Singer Amanda Warner, who recently breathed life into the Mark Ronson single "Bang Bang," possesses the vocal quirksiness of Santigold and the peppy style of the Sounds' Maja Ivarsson as she works over the single's steady beat. While the song loses some of its luster with repeated hearings, "Cut Me Out" is a solid club record and an impressive step toward mainstream success for the pair, which plans to release its debut full-length in early 2011.—KR

FA'EST MOVEMENT
Featuring RYAN TEDDER
Rocketeer (3:31)
Producers: Stereotypes, the Smeezhngtors
Writers: various
Publishers: various

Cherrytree/Interscope
Following breakout hit "Like a G6," electronic pop group Fa'East Movement returns to the Billboard Hot 100 with the help of OneRepublic's Ryan Tedder. "Rocketeer," the second single off the act's latest studio album, "Free Wired," fuses a nice melody but lacks the uniqueness that made "G6" a surprise chart-topper. The song develops a more laid-back groove than its rhythmic predecessor, as Tedder sings the soothing chorus and Keo Nish tosses off lines like "Baby we can stay fly like a G6/Shop the streets of Tokyo, get your fly kicks." In terms of production, however, "Rocketeer" lacks diversity in its instrumentation and feels somewhat tired by the time of its conclusion. The song rolls along on a nice combination of pop elements, but Fa'East Movement should be willing to take more chances on future singles.—GB
The Go Getters
Blues-Rock Duo The Black Keys Come Up From Under

On "The Go Getter," a track from the Black Keys’ "Brothers" album, frontman Dan Auerbach sings, "I'll be the go getter/That's my plan/That's who I am." Those now-past tense lyrics foreshadowed the winning streak that Auerbach and his partner, drummer Patrick Carney, are currently enjoying.

The Akron, Ohio, duo's throwback brand of blues-rock earned four Grammy Award nominations in December, including best alternative music album for "Brothers" and best rock song for its No. 1 lead single, "Tighten Up." The first-time nominees’ 2010 momentum is still going strong thanks to sales spiking appearances on late-night TV and a new chart-climbing single.

"We've been doing this for almost 10 years," Carney says. "And there have been some dark moments in the past two years. I think we both had this feeling, like maybe [our career] was going to dissipate. It's cool to see that we can make a record we're proud of, and people can respond to it still."

David Bither, senior VP of None-such—the band's label since 2006's "Magic Potion"—says Carney and Auerbach "have always thought of themselves as underdogs until very recently. They've come up through independent labels, and I think they see themselves, in a way, as outside the system."

The pair's underdog sentiment is belied by the success of "Brothers." Debuting at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 with 75,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan, the set has since become the act's best-selling album. To date, it has sold 547,000 copies.

The pair's widely praised appearance on the Jan. 8 episode of "Saturday Night Live"—hosted by Jim Carrey—netted an 18% sales spike for "Brothers." That boost, coupled with a performance two days later on "Late Show With David Letterman," gave the set its biggest sales frame (outside of the holiday shopping season) since its second week of release last May. Additional late-night appearances on "Late Night With Jay Leno" and "Conan" are slated for February.

"Tighten Up" continues to reign over the Rock Songs chart for a tenth week (following a nine-week tenure on the Alternative chart last October). Discussing the inspiration behind "Tighten Up," Carney says, "That was the last song that we did—and the only one with [producer] Danger Mouse."

The whole idea was to try to make something that could get played on the radio. We realized we could get all the press in the world and do everything we'd done in the past. But the only thing that would be an obvious leg up was radio airplay. Our record has been out for three months longer than Arcade Fire's ["The Suburbs"], and we're outselling them 2-to-1 right now because of the radio."

The Black Keys also have a new single on the rise, "Howlin' for You" climbs 26-21 on Alternative and 31-27 on Rock Songs (up 23% with 3.4 million audience impressions, according to Nielsen BDS). Both the new cut and "Tighten Up" have received added exposure through car commercials. "Howlin' for You" soundtracked a recent Cadillac campaign, while "Tighten Up" was featured in a fall 2010 Subaru chip.

The flurry of activity around the band hasn't come without a trade-off. Auerbach and Carney recently canceled their January-February tour of New Zealand and Australia, as well as a March European trek, because "an arduous year of touring and promotion has drained the band and necessitated time off," according to a statement. However, after the Grammys on Feb. 13, the act plans to start work on its next album. Then, in April, the Black Keys will kick off a string of U.S. dates with an opening night show at the Coachella festival in Indio, Calif. (April 15-17).

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ON THE FAST TRACK

Britney Spears’ "Hold It Against Me" becomes one of only seven songs to reach the top 10 of Billboard’s Mainstream Top 40 chart in only two weeks, charging 16-10 with Greatest Gainer honors (5,601 spins, up 38%, with spins detected on all 130 panelists) on the Nielsen BDS-based radio airplay survey. The song logs the speediest ascent to the pop top tier since Eminem’s "Just Lose It" in 2004 (see graph).

Of the prior six such songs, the first three went on to spend multiple weeks at No. 1. The next three, however, failed to reach the chart’s top three, raising the questions: Will "Hold It Against Me" be a fast-rising—but fast-burning—radio hit? Or can it sustain momentum?

NO 'HOLD UP' Unsurprisingly, all seven songs to reach the Mainstream Top 40 top 10 in a mere two weeks have introduced new albums.

Britney Spears continues the streak, as "Hold It Against Me" builds anticipation for her seventh studio set.

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<tr>
<td>The Rembrandts</td>
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*Still charting
Head Of The Class

Alter Bridge Nabs First No. 1 Single

Seven years after its formation, Alter Bridge has nabbed its first No. 1 single: "Isolation" took the top slot on Billboard’s Active Rock and Mainstream Rock charts earlier this month. While three-quarters of the Florida rock group—guitarist Mark Tremonti, bassist Brian Marshall and drummer Scott Phillips—have already enjoyed a handful of chart-topping singles as members of Creed, Tremonti believes that Alter Bridge’s recent chart achievement shows how much the current incarnation of the band has grown.

"It was the first time we hadn’t played it live with a song," Tremonti says of the head-banging single, which has sold 22,000 digital copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. "We tried [before] to come up with a song that fit the sound of commercial radio, and we ended up at No. 2 or No. 3. This time, we ended up writing the whole album without that in mind at all. I guess it worked."

That album, "ABH," has sold 64,000 copies since its October 2010 release on Alter Bridge Recordings/EMI Label Services and was supported by a fall world tour that kicked off in early November. Before that trek, Tremonti, Marshall and Phillips reunited with Creed singer Scott Stapp for a 2009 arena tour, while Alter Bridge singer Myles Kennedy toured with former Guns ‘N’ Roses guitarist Slash as a vocalist last year.

Tremonti and EMI Global Label Services executive VP/GM Mike Harris credit the band’s recent live performances, including a string of radio station Christmas shows and a Jan. 4 performance on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” for "Isolation" hitting No. 1 after a three-month climb. According to Harris, the EMI/Capitol promotion team will next cross the song over to alternative radio formats before putting a follow-up single, which will be either "Ghosts of Days Gone By" or "I Know It Hurts."

While Alter Bridge enjoys a few months off before beginning the spring leg of its tour on April 21, fans can pick up "Alter Bridge—Live From Amsterdam," a long-in-the-works DVD that hit stores on Jan. 11. After the band spends most of 2011 on the road, Tremonti says that Creed may again reconvene for "a summer 2012 tour. And if we’re going to do that tour, we’re probably going to need some new music to go along with it. We’re just trying to line things up and find some time to make some tunes together…"

MOVIE MUSIC

Several high notes have been sounded recently at the intersection of music and film.

Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor became a first-time Academy Award nominee when he and collaborator Atticus Ross received a best original score nod for the Facebook-inspired "The Social Network." Reznor tells Billboard.com that he and Ross were "intrigued to see what they could bring" to the film, but they "truly couldn’t imagine it would lead to an Oscar nomination."

Reznor and Ross join fellow nominees John Powell ("How To Train Your Dragon"), Hans Zimmer ("Inception"), Alexandre Desplat ("The King’s Speech") and A.R. Rahman ("127 Hours"), who scored a second nod for original song ("If I Rise"), with lyrics by Dido and Rolio Armstrong. Other category nominations include "Coming Home" from "Country Strong" (music and lyrics by Tom Douglas, Trey Verges and Hillary Lindsey), "I See the Light" from "Tangled" (music by Alan Menken; lyrics by Glenn Slater) and "We Belong Together" from "Toy Story 3" (music and lyrics by Randy Newman). Notably absent: Diane Warren's "You Haven't Seen the Last Of Me Yet," sung by Cher in "Burlesque."

The nominations follow in the wake of reports about a project that already has fans salivating: Beyoncé and director Clint Eastwood teaming for a musical remake of "A Star Is Born." The story was first done with a musical focus in 1976 with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson. That soundtrack spent six weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, spun off the No. 1 single "Evergreen" and is RIAA-certified four times platinum.

The pairing of longtime music fan/award-winning director Eastwood ("Bird," "Million Dollar Baby") with R&B/pop superstar Beyoncé ("Dreamgirls") reads like a boon for the film and soundtrack sides of the industry—especially the latter, whose sales slid 14% in 2010, according to Nielsen SoundScan, despite such top-selling film soundtracks as "Michael Jackson's This Is It" (No. 1 last year), "The Twilight Saga" ("New Moon") and "Eclipse" and "Iron Man 2." The standard-bearer remains Whitney Houston's soundtrack to 1992's "The Bodyguard." Spending 20 weeks at No. 1, the album has sold 11.8 million in the United States. —Gail Mitchell

FILLING A VOID

With a top 20 debut single, an Academy of Country Music nomination (for top new vocal duo or group) and an opening spot on Jason Aldean's My Kinda Party tour, the JaneDear Girls are poised to be one of country music's breakthrough acts in 2011. Also seeking to fill country's girl-group void, the duo will release its self-titled Warner Bros. Records debut album on Feb. 1. Meanwhile, lead single "Wildflower" rises 16-17 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart.

Singer/songwriters Danielle Leverett and Susie Brown first met when a friend of Leverett's suggested she check out Brown's performance at a Nashville club. "I was a new songwriter looking for people to write with," recalls Brown, who grew up in Utah and plays fiddle and mandolin. "After my show, the same friend suggested we get together and write."

Guitarist Leverett met fellow Amarillo, Texas, native John Rich of Big & Rich when she moved to Music City after college. "He's a great one to learn from; he's so honest," Leverett says. "We sent John our first work tapes and he said, 'Those aren't very good. But keep working; keep playing.'"

Rich later guided the pair to a deal with Warner Music Group and also produced their debut album. After a showcase at Rich's hilltop mansion during last year's Country Radio Seminar, the JaneDear Girls hit the road to set up "Wildflower." Brown says, "We went out and never looked back. We've been gone five days a week since last March."

Both feel that the song's tempo and lyrics made it the perfect lead single. "It's a rocking, high-energy up-tempo song that lyrically [represents] who we are: independent females chasing a dream," Leverett says. "It's been a while since a [country] girl group that also plays has come out."

The duo's energetic vibe also serves as a linchpin for the label's branding strategy. "We've identified three focus areas," says Peter Strickland, senior VP of brand management and sales at Warner Music Nashville. "Visual, youthful and high-energy." The label's efforts have already landed the duo an endorsement deal with MAC Cosmetics.

The ladies are also utilizing the Internet to engage fans. Each week, they post a new video on their website's "My Favorite Things" section. The posts range from songwriting sessions and Brown's tips for styling "country pin-up girl bangs" to Leverett helping her dad feed cows on their Texas farm. According to Brown, the JaneDear Girls are simply giving "fans insight into our lives and what we love." —Deborah Evans Price
HELP WANTED

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RETAILERS WANTED
CONCERT INFO
WANTED TO BUY
VENUES
NOTICES/ANNOUNCEMENTS
ANNOUNCEMENTS
VIDEO

For print and online contact Jeff Serrette: 212-493-4199 or Jeffrey.Serrette@billboard.com
The Decemberists notch both their first No. 1 album and their best sales week as "The King Is Dead" opens atop the Billboard 200 with 94,000 sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The Capitol act's last release, 2009's "The Hazards of Love," debuted and peaked at No. 14 with 19,000 in its premiere frame.

After the past few weeks of woeful totals at No. 1, the Decemberists' opener is a welcome sight.

The band's new album bowed the digital marketplace last week, as 65% of its opening tally—about 61,000—were downloads. Sources say about one-third of that sum came from Amazon MP3; while the rest was owed to other digital retail (primarily iTunes). Clearly, Amazon MP3's selection of the set as its Daily Deal for $3.99 on the album's street date (Jan. 18) helped matters greatly, as did its front-of-store placement at iTunes.

Also contributing to its handsome bow was the group's wall-to-wall visibility on NPR during release week. Not only were the band members on "All Things Considered" (Jan. 16) but they also popped up syndicated shows "Fresh Air" (Jan. 18) and "World Cafe" (Jan. 21). Lastly, they played a 10-song set for their hometown of Portland, Ore., that was streamed live on OPB-Music.org and NPR.org (Jan. 18).

Another interesting thing about the Decemberists' "King"—the album's sizable first week was earned without the benefit of retailer-specific bonus tracks. (Although there were some elaborately packaged direct-to-consumer versions available.)

The Kidz Are Alright: Kudos to Razor & Tie's "Kidz Boy" series, as the line's latest, "Kidz Bop 19," arrives at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 with 70,000.

The rank ties the series' highest chart position and posts its best sales week since 2007. "Kidz Bop 9" also hit No. 2 in 2006, while the last "Boy" title to sell more than 70,000 in a week was "Bop 12" in 2007, when it bowed with 71,000 at No. 7.

Razor & Tie ponied to its stepped-up TV marketing campaign for "Kidz Bop," which helped fuel about 10% of the album's first week. In addition, Target carried an exclusive edition with four bonus tracks, while Walmart had a version with a mini-magazine and Silly Bandz. The title's mass-merchant share was about 55%.

While kidz albums in general aren't necessarily strong digital performers, "Kidz Bop 19" stood its ground. About 11% of its bow came from download services, up from the 9% with which "Kidz Bop 18" started.

Five Alive, Cake Deflates: With the Billboard 200's top five consisting entirely of debuts, it marks only the fifth time the feat has happened. It last occurred on Oct. 17, 2009, when Barbra Streisand's "Love Is the Answer" led the parade.

Meanwhile, last week's No. 1 album, Cake's "Showroom of Compassion," drops to No. 25 (15,000, down 67%). It's the largest positional fall from No. 1 since Incubus' "Light Grenades" slipped 1-37 in its second week (Dec. 23, 2006). Since Nielsen SoundScan began powering the Billboard 200 in May 1991, only three albums have slid from No. 1 straight out of the top 20. The third is Marilyn Manson's "The Golden Age of Grotesque," which fell 1-21 on June 7, 2003.

Previous to 1991, only one album dropped from No. 1 out of the top 20: Elvis Presley's "Christmas Album," which was No. 1 on Jan. 13, 1958, then disappeared from the then-25-position tally the following week.

Chart Notes: Audrey Assad's "The House You're Building" has Heatsseeker Graduate stripes on the Billboard 200 at No. 154 (3,000, up 318%)—even though it hasn't yet reached the top 100. The set, which was No. 6 on Heatsseekers Albums last week, also rises 39-8 on Christian Albums. Because of its top 10 status on the latter tally, it earns Gradute honors. (Any act that reaches the top 10 on the Christian, gospel, R&B/hip-hop, country or Latin albums charts is ineligible for the Heatsseekers tally.)

For the Record: Last week, SchoolBoy Q's "Setbacks" erroneously debuted at No. 13 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums due to a processing error. Had the snafu not occurred, it would have missed the tally.

Market Watch

Weekly Unit Sales

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Digital</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>This Week</td>
<td>5,246,000</td>
<td>19,004,000</td>
<td>24,788,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>8,649,000</td>
<td>17,700,000</td>
<td>26,447,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>-2.3%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
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Digital album sales are not counted within album sales.

Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Week</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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For week ending Jan. 29, 2011. Figures are compiled from a random sample of retail and online sales reports collected by Nielsen SoundScan.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
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<th>PRICE</th>
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</table>

The December release was Amazon MP3's Daily Deal on Jan. 13 for $5.99, resulting in an overall sales of 19,000 (36% of this week) (8,000 sold), surpassing its initial debut and peak of No. 504 (though with greater sales: 15,000).
### Nielsen Sales Data

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<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>101</td>
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<td>Judge Jerrod &amp; The Hung Jury</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<td>Chronicle The 20 Greatest Hits</td>
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<td>Interscope</td>
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<td>Hits Alive</td>
<td>Arista</td>
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### Additional Information

- The Billboard 200 is a weekly music chart that ranks the best-selling albums in the United States, compiled by Billboard magazine.
- The chart is based on each album's weekly sales, Airplay, and streaming data.
- Artists and labels are listed along with their album titles and prices.

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*Data for week of FEBRUARY 5, 2011 | For chart reprints call 212.493.4023*
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U.K. hardcore metal band Architects took its unorthodox first No. 1, with more than 50,000 new-song plays on its MySpace page. The up-and-coming group has toured with hardcore masters Norma Jean and Atreyu. Citing influences like Bring Me the Horizon and Every Time I Die, Architects unveiled their fourth album, "The New and Now," on Jan. 3, which is said to appeal to the interest of online listeners in the week prior to its release.

George Watsky, who goes by his surname, debuts at No. 51 on the Social 50 chart after his last-rapmining clip turned YouTube on its head last week (reach "pile rub rubbers"). Uploaded on Jan. 13, the video has already amassed more than 4.3 million views (through Jan. 26). His 2009 "Harmy" digital album debuts at No. 23 in Heatseekers Albums and No. 62 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with slightly more than 1,000 sold.
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Firework</td>
<td>Jeezy</td>
<td>So So Def / PolyGram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenade</td>
<td>J. Holiday</td>
<td>Republic / Epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back to December (Cali)</td>
<td>T.I.</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just the Way You Are</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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<td>Black and Yellow</td>
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<td>Stereo Love</td>
<td>J.R.</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
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### DIGITAL SONGS

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<tr>
<td>30 Animal</td>
<td>Green Day</td>
<td>Reprise / Epitome</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 You and Me</td>
<td>The Pretty Girls</td>
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### COUNTRY

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### R&B/HIP-HOP

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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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### BLUES

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<tr>
<td>4 Out of Bad Luck</td>
<td>Black to the Bone</td>
<td>Capitol / Warner Bros / Warner</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Wherever I Go</td>
<td>Nicki Minaj</td>
<td>Cash Money / Cash Money</td>
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<td>13 Wherever I Go</td>
<td>Nicki Minaj</td>
<td>Cash Money / Cash Money</td>
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Data for week of FEBRUARY 5, 2011 | For chart reprints call 212.439.4023

Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete Chart data
### Mainstream Top 40

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grenade</td>
<td>Flow</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Firework</td>
<td>K'naan</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Bohemian</td>
<td>Metric</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>White Rabbit</td>
<td>Scott Weiland</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Rockstar</td>
<td>30 Seconds</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chasing Cars</td>
<td>The Ready</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Surfin' USA</td>
<td>Billy Dean</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Sweet Child</td>
<td>Orianthi</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Just to Be Near You</td>
<td>Ginuwine</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Firecracker</td>
<td>The Brummies</td>
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### Adult Contemporary

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<td>1</td>
<td>Just the Way You Are</td>
<td>Kerri Kasem/Steve Greenberg '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>What's My Name</td>
<td>O.V..zone '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>ra'iri</td>
<td>Sean Garrett '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Macklemore '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Love Again</td>
<td>Outland '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Hold It Against Me</td>
<td>Kip Moore '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>It's Coming Down</td>
<td>Ben Harper '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I Gotta Find My Way</td>
<td>Mickey Raphael '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>Don't Let Me Be Lonesome</td>
<td>Dweezil Zappa '11 (RCA)</td>
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<td>I Do Love You</td>
<td>The Summertime '11 (RCA)</td>
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### Rock Songs

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<td>Waiting for the End</td>
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<td>To Be Loved</td>
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<td>All I Want</td>
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### Alternative

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<td>5</td>
<td>Open Up</td>
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Bronn Mars assumes the roles of two airplay charts with different songs. "Grenade" rises 3-1 in Mainstream Top 40, while "Just the Way You Are" debuts on Adult Contemporary. (The latter tops Hot Mainstream Top 40 for three weeks beginning in the Oct. 30, 2010, issue.) Mars is the second artist to dominate the Nielsen BDS-based airplay tally simultaneously with different tracks on the Mainstream Top 40 list launched the week of Oct. 5, 1992. (The Adult Contemporary chart dates to 1991.) Karlsson spent seven weeks at Number One in 2005 while prior singles "Bleak," "You're So Vain," "Liaison," and "Uniform" charted in 2005.

Mars is the third solo male to send his first two chart entries as a lead artist to the Mainstream Top 40 summit, following Jason Derulo and Taio Cruz. Mars first charted as a featured act on R&B's "Mother" on top in the Feb. 22, 2010, issue.
## HOT COUNTRY SONGS

<table>
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<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>PUT YOUR HANDS UP</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Toby Keith</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Jackand the box</td>
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## TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

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<td>NOTHING LIKE THIS</td>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

**LEGENDARY LEGACIES**

Two legendary acts return to Hot Country Songs (available in full at billboard.com/chartdata) with record-extending tracks. George Jones debuts at No. 59 as a guest on Aaron Lewis’ “Country Boy,” making him the only artist to appear on the list in each of the last seven decades. Jones’ 166 entries are the most in the chart’s history. At No. 60, Al album bow with “Are You Sure He Aint Done It This Way,” marking the band’s first visit since 2012 and 2011, the album covers or Xander Jennings’ original recording of the song, topped the No. 15, 127 chart.

[Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data.]

Data for week of FEBRUARY 5, 2011. For chart reprints call 212.493.4023.
Wiz Khalifa has a lot to celebrate this week as "Black and Yellow" steps 2-1 on Rap Songs with 46.7 million air impressions, according to Nielsen BDS. The move marks his first No. 1 on any airplay chart and comes on the heels of his hometown Pittsburgh Steelers winning the National Football League's AFC Championship. Khalifa performed his hit in front of the sold-out Heinz Field crowd during thepregame festivities.

Meanwhile, Chris Brown picks up his fifth No. 1 on Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop as "No BS" skips 3-1 exactly two weeks after "Deuces" went recurrent on the list. "Deuces" spent 10 weeks atop the chart in 2010, the longest run since Jamie Foxx's "Blame It" notched 12 weeks in 2009.

—Rudy Ramirez
**HOT LATIN SONGS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<td>4</td>
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**TOP LATIN ALBUMS**

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<td>4</td>
<td>Marc Anthony</td>
<td>Quien Te Quiere Como Yo</td>
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**REGIONAL MEXICAN MEXICAN RAMP-UP**

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**REGIONAL MEXICAN MEXICAN RAMP-UP**

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</table>

**BETWEEN THE BULLET**

Iconic band Los Bukis debut at No. 1 on Regional Mexican Albums with "35 Aniversario" moving more than 2,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It's the band's eighth chart-topper on the list. Los Inquietos del Norte (now at No. 2 with "Los Puertos del Infiero" nearly 2,000, marking its best showing in its three-year chart history. On Top Latin Albums, the set opens at Nos. 5 and 6, respectively, but its first releases to hit the top 10.

—Raul Ramirez

Data for week of FEBRUARY 5, 2011
**HITS OF THE WORLD**

### EURO

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**JAPAN**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**GERMANY**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**FRANCE**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**CANADA**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**AUSTRALIA**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**ITALY**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**SPAIN**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**IRELAND**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**SWEDEN**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**NORWAY**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**NETHERLANDS**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**BELGIUM**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**AUSTRIA**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**SWITZERLAND**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**FINLAND**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**NEW ZEALAND**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**MEXICO**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

**BRAZIL**

**BILLY BOY - Body Rock**

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**Data for week of FEBRUARY 5, 2011**

For chart reprints call 212.493.4023

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

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Among the guests was Sire Records chairman/CEO Seymour Stein (right), a longtime MIDEM attendee, who is pictured here with UMG COO Max Hole.

Additional photos online this week at billboard.biz. To submit your photos for consideration, please send images to backbeat@billboard.com.

TOPSPIN MEET-UP

Given its proximity to the National Football League playoffs and the Super Bowl, MIDEM is often the scene of extreme fan behavior when attendees are stuck abroad following their favorite teams. On Jan. 23, Topspin hosted a mixer (and football party) at Station Tavern in Cannes with an Antony Bruno.

MySpace Music president Courtney Holt (left) enjoys a pint with Mobile Roadie CEO Michael Schneider (center) and Topspin's Andrew Mains while waiting for the NFC championship game to start.


Myspace Music president Courtney Holt (left) enjoys a pint with Mobile Roadie CEO Michael Schneider (center) and Topspin's Andrew Mains while waiting for the NFC championship game to start.

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP COCKTAIL PARTY

Despite a round of layoffs the Friday prior to the event that numbered more than 60 (Billboard.biz, Jan. 21) and a buzz in the air of another round specifically targeting digital staffers, Universal Music Group international COO Max Hole hosted a festive cocktail reception on Jan. 23 at the Carlton Hotel. The industry's brightest were in attendance as they mixed and mingled into the early morning hours. Photos Richard Gaggioli.

From left: Concord Music Group VP of international business development Paddy Spinks and president/CEO Glen Barros; Atlantic Music Enterprises president/CEO Bruce Resnikoff; UMG head of business development Olivier Robert-Murphy and COO Max Hole.

Twenty First Artists CEO Colin Lester (left) and Principle Management principal Paul McGuinness, who steers the career of U2, made the rounds between panels during the day. Lester spoke about music management issues during a GSA on Jan. 24.
THE BILLBOARD BREAKFAST

Billboard hosted its fourth annual MIDEM breakfast on Tuesday, Jan. 25, with Clear Channel’s heartradio as a partner. The event was attended by more than 75 music, technology, branding and investment industry stars. “It’s humbling,” Billboard editorial director Bill Werde (pictured, right) said in his opening remarks, “to find yourself in the presence of people like [U2 manager] Paul McGuinness or [Glassnote Records president] Daniel Glass, men who have achieved so much success that they don’t need to be here, but are here because they still have a passion to learn.” Werde also spoke about Billboard’s growth across all platforms, the recent launch of the new Uncharted list ranking aspiring artists and the impending launch of artist tool set Billboard Pro.

Anne De Kerckhove, director of Reed's MIDEM entertainment division, welcomes guests of Billboard's annual MIDEM breakfast while holding up the latest issue of Billboard to emphasize how much the publication has grown through the years.

Sonicbids founder/CEO Panos Panay (left) and director of marketing/communications Darlene Doyle chat with Echo Nest CEO Jim Lucchese.

Billboard publisher Lisa Ryan Kennedy talks about technological advancements in royalty calculations and payments with Harry, Fox Entertainment Group’s CEO Gary Churgin.
Toni Braxton encourages you to learn the signs of autism at autismspeaks.org

Early diagnosis can make a lifetime of difference.

Odds of becoming a signed artist
1 in 13,700

Odds of winning 6 Grammy awards
1 in 1.4 million

Odds of having a child diagnosed with autism
1 in 110
Join 750 of the biggest names in Latin music to help move your business forward including chart-topping artists, influential record label execs, cutting-edge brand marketers and agencies, national radio programmers, world-renowned producers, revolutionary digital music execs - and many more.

Program Topics Announced:

- Writing the Song on the Spot
- Maximizing Artist and Brand Sponsorships
- Optimizing Your Social Media Strategy
- Overcoming Piracy, Legal and Immigration Issues
- Touring and New Market Opportunities
- Making PPM Work for Your Artist
- Plus Much More!

Newly enhanced website including video, photos, new program features and more

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For sponsorship questions contact:
Cebele Marquez 646.315.2961 or cebele.marquez@billboard.com

For the discounted hotel rate of $259/night at the Eden Roc, call 305.531.0000

For program details and to register visit billboardlatinconference.com