Thank-you Elton John
7 Sold-Out Concerts

Save-On Foods Memorial Centre
Victoria

MTS Centre
Winnipeg

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Regina

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Best Frenemies

Rivalry Emerges Between Vevo And YouTube. The Issue? Live-Streaming Rights

Competition over the increasingly lucrative rights to stream concert videos live over the Internet is pitting close partners Vevo and YouTube against each other.

Take, for instance, Bonnaroo. The June 9-12 festival in Manchester, Tenn., will be streamed exclusively on Vevo. Last year, YouTube had the rights.

What happened?

“They decided it was really important to them to get that on an exclusive basis and were willing to pay for it,” YouTube VP of business development Chris Maxcy says. “We competed with them and they won.”

Not that YouTube hasn’t scored its own big events this year. In April, it live-streamed the Coachella festival in Indio, Calif. And bidding is under way for the rights to upcoming festivals like Lollapalooza and Outside Lands, among others.

The competition for live-streaming rights has “definitely increased,” says Jonathan Mayers, president of Bonnaroo co-producer Superfly Presents.

“These different platforms are looking for association with premium brands and the artists and the events,” Mayers says. “That space is more active than it’s ever been.”

“That’s because there’s big money to be made. Vevo only began airing live concerts on its site last year, but already CEO Rio Caraeff says such deals are driving revenue into the mid-to-high seven figures, and attracting between 5 million and 10 million unique viewers for each event.

“We wouldn’t be doing this if we didn’t think it was a critical thing to do,” Caraeff says. “It’s a pain in the ass. But if you’re building a premium video experience and distribution company, you can’t rest on other people’s music videos.”

Vevo was created to corner the market, largely, on those music videos. Any Web outlet that wants to stream music videos from Vevo stakeholders Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment and that of concert partner EMG Music Group, has no choice but to syndicate through Vevo.

The only music videos YouTube doesn’t need to syndicate from Vevo are user-created clips and live events. In addition to last year’s Bonnaroo and this year’s Coachella, YouTube has hosted live streams of performances by U2, Paul McCartney and Bon Jovi. Maxcy says the company hopes to add “substantially more.”

“Users like it and the advertisers like it as well,” he says. “The growth curve online in terms of the revenue generated is phenomenal, and I expect it to be a meaningful proportion of our overall revenue as we push forward into the next 12 months.”

YouTube’s advantage is its massive user base and global presence. In May, the company disclosed that it streams 3 billion videos per day. It’s also available worldwide and has a massive advertising sales force.

By contrast, Vevo is available in only three countries, with a fraction of YouTube’s audience and a far smaller sales team. So it is competing on features and relationships. Vevo’s mobile and tablet apps let live-stream viewers choose from multiple camera angles, for instance. The mobile app can also alert users when a live event is about to start, and Caraeff says half of Vevo’s 6 million mobile users opt in for that feature. In all, he says, 15% of Vevo’s live-streaming traffic comes from mobile or tablet devices.

But Vevo’s ace in the hole is its label relationships. While the labels hold no rights over artists’ live events, they do wield influence with the managers and artists who may be considering adding a live stream component to their concerts. They also have relationships with YouTube and, as Vevo stakeholders, try to persuade YouTube to involve Vevo in any live-streaming initiatives.

“There are times when the labels will say they really want us to partner with Vevo on something because they’re an owner in that company,” Maxcy says. “But there’s also an equal number of cases where artists, managers or labels come to us saying it’s just easier to work directly with YouTube.”

Despite their burgeoning rivalry over live-streaming rights, Vevo and YouTube are equal partners in a live series called Unstaged, sponsored by American Express, that has aired live concerts by Arcade Fire, Duran Duran and most recently My Morning Jacket. And Caraeff insists that Vevo only plans to exclusively host four or five “tentpole” events per year.

But there are only so many big-ticket events—like Bonnaroo, Coachella or a tour stop by a superstar artist—that can serve as cornerstones for a live-music strategy. These are the kinds of events that YouTube and Vevo are vying for.

“We can bump up against them in the marketplace, but I think it’s a healthy competition,” Caraeff says. “It’s healthy because it creates choices and options for artists and event producers and for consumers. It causes everybody to do a better job, work a little bit harder and create a better experience.”
This Year's Model
As Apple Secures iCloud Deals With The Majors, A New Payment Standard Emerges

Still searching: Google co-founder SERJEY BRIN at the Google I/O conference in San Francisco on May 11, when the company unveiled its Music Beta cloud service.

J ust days after its planned unraveling of its iCloud service, Apple has succeeded in securing licensing deals from all four major labels and music publishers.

In fact, it’s probably done more: By agreeing to pay major publishers a 12% cut of iCloud revenue, it may have set a new, higher digital payment standard for publishers, whose share of revenue from a digital service is typically about 10% or less.

Apple CEO Steve Jobs and other senior executives will provide details about the iCloud service during a June 6 keynote presentation at the company’s annual Worldwide Developers Conference in San Francisco.

Universal Music Group was the final major label to come to terms for the iCloud service, according to sources familiar with the situation. Apple has agreed to pay major labels approximately 38% of revenue, leaving Apple with about 30%.

While sources say Universal and Sony Music Entertainment were asking for 60% of revenue, they now suggest that a last-minute compromise was reached to accommodate the 12% royalty rate being paid to publishers.

Apple has yet to reach deals with independent publishers and labels. Sources say that it will offer indie publishers the same 12% rate it is paying major publishers. However, Apple began negotiations with independent labels by offering them only a 53% revenue cut. Some indie executives say they’re pushing back on Apple to get a higher cut.

Meanwhile, Google is still negotiating with the major labels and publishers for its Music Beta cloud service, which it unveiled May 11 at the Google I/O conference in San Francisco. One of the obstacles to those talks was the fact that Universal and Sony Music Entertainment were seeking a 60% revenue cut, while Google agreed to pay major publishers a 12% revenue share and retain 10% for itself, according to sources.

Universal and Sony, those sources say, wanted publishers to receive a smaller share.

Not all industry observers agree that the majors are making a play to cut the publishers’ share. “Nowadays, the majors are trying to get 80% of the revenue in the new digital deals coming their way, so I am guessing that the majors are trying to cut Google’s and Apple’s share,” a source familiar with the situation says.

Although Google has offered major labels and publishers similar revenue cuts as Apple, it doesn’t hold near the same leverage with them. Apple’s iTunes store accounted for about 33% of U.S. recorded-music revenue in 2010 (Billboard, May 14).

Disagreement over revenue splits hasn’t been the only hurdle in the Google talks, with some sources noting that differences also remain over advances and demands that the search giant be more active in fighting music piracy.

Apple, Google and Amazon, which like Google has launched a basic cloud music service without label and publisher deals, want to offer fans an on-demand style of music services, under which they would scan users’ digital music libraries and match the songs the services have licenses for in a centralized server, rather than require every user to upload their music to a cloud-based storage locker. The amount each service pays music rights-holders for individual tracks would depend on usage, with payment splits pro-rated by actual plays.
Rock Formats Fall Out Of Favor With Station Owners And Advertisers

By Paul Heine

Once among radio’s most stalwart formats, rock radio is losing ground—and confounding even some of rock radio’s most confident voices. Although station groups, advertisers and record labels continue to make money off rock radio, it is currently in a state of decline.

Active rock radio is more endangered than alternative radio—a familiar trend. Over the last two decades, rock radio has been on the decline, with the format losing ground to other genres, including alternative, hip-hop, and independent music. Recent years have seen a decrease in the number of rock radio stations, as well as a decline in the amount of airtime devoted to rock music.

Alternative rock radio is experiencing a similar decline, with many stations switching to a more mainstream format. This is due in part to the rise of digital music and streaming services, which have made it easier for listeners to access a wider variety of music.

It’s not just the number of rock stations that’s declining; it’s also the amount of airtime dedicated to rock music. According to the National Association of Broadcasters, the amount of airtime devoted to rock music has declined by 10% since 2000. This decline is due in part to the rise of digital music and streaming services, which have made it easier for listeners to access a wider variety of music.

The decline of rock radio is also due in part to changes in the music industry. In the past, rock bands were often associated with a particular radio station, and stations would work closely with these bands to promote their music. However, in recent years, these relationships have declined, and rock bands are now more likely to promote their music through digital and streaming services.

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Despite these challenges, there are still many passionate fans of rock radio. These fans are often devoted to specific stations, and they are willing to drive long distances to listen to their favorite rock bands.

For these fans, rock radio is more than just music—it’s a way of life. They identify with the music, and they see it as a way to connect with others who share their interests.

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Road Curves Ahead

Shifts In Digital Licensing Pose Challenges For Performance Rights Organizations

After decades of occupying one of the most stable corners of the music business, performance rights organizations (PROs) are starting to face uncertainty and competitive challenges.

EMI Music Publishing announced in May that it plans to issue bundled mechanical and performances licenses directly to online services for its EMI April Music catalog, assuming responsibility for functions previously handled by ASCAP (see Opinion, page 9). It’s a move that other leading music publishers are expected to make.

Greater interest in direct digital licensing among publishers, efforts to establish Pan-European licensing and the creation of a global repertoire database are reshaping the landscape being navigated by ASCAP and its fellow U.S. performing rights organizations BMI and SESAC.

ASCAP CEO John LoFrumento says that decisions by clients to take charge of some digital licensing won’t threaten the PRO’s business. He points out that EMI’s move only affects online music users who aren’t currently licensed or do not have licenses in effect with ASCAP and excludes broadcast or broadcast digital rights, cable, satellite and all other offline media. Moreover, he notes that the online dollars represented by EMI’s decision could amount to less than 1% of ASCAP’s total annual revenue.

“You see the efficiency of licensing in bundles,” LoFrumento says. “We feel very strongly that something is that will be the next step in this business environment. This will result in a new business model over the next few years.”

U.S. PROs continue to enjoy relative financial stability. For instance, ASCAP’s annual revenue fell 6% in 2010 to $935 million, but that was down from a record-high $995 million in the prior year. Still, moves toward direct licensing could potentially erode PRO revenue. But Richard Conlon, BMI senior VP of corporate strategy, communications and new media, says the PROs will weather these challenges, though he acknowledges that the business is in flux.

“The core construct of BMI will be very different in five or 10 years as we start to virtualize and as the dynamics of the global footprint start to change the global nature of copyright,” Conlon says.

In a statement, SESAC president/COO Pat Collins says that PROs have already contended with technological changes for years.

“More music is being consumed today than ever before,” Collins says, adding that the Internet has “brought efficiencies to the tracking, identifying and payment processes that were unthinkable 10 years ago. These developing technological advances will allow SESAC to achieve even more robust licensing on behalf of the copyright owner, thus increasing royalty distributions.”

In a trend that’s bound to be discussed again at the World Copyright Summit in Brussels June 6-8, publishers and collection societies across the Atlantic are contending with a shift to Pan-European licensing.

To meet a mandate by the European Commission to provide one-stop licensing for digital music providers that want to do business in multiple European countries, Universal Music Publishing Group and Sony/ATV Music Publishing have each formed a joint venture vehicle with a European collection society to handle all of their Anglo-American repertoire, while EMI has formed a JV with two societies. Warner/Chappell Music’s Pan-European Digital Licensing initiative is working with seven European societies so far to provide digital music users a choice of which society they want to work with. Each time one of these vehicles handles licensing for a digital music service, it eliminates the opportunities previously handled by each country’s own collection society.

Moreover, some industry observers suggest that the Pan-European licensing vehicle concept could soon evolve into global licensing mechanisms for the digital marketplace.

As they establish bundled, all-in digital licensing for both mechanical and performance rights, publishers must be careful not to undermine standard royalty rates, Conlon says.

“When bundling you are doing so to make it easier to license, but you have to make sure not to squeeze out some value,” he says.

Meanwhile, efforts to create a global repertoire database could enable direct licensing, which would further affect local societies’ revenue collections. But others dismiss that possibility, saying that a global database would ensure a more efficient marketplace—for example, ensuring songwriting claims don’t add up to more than 100%, a very common problem—while allowing collection societies to continue to compete on services.

In the meantime, the ability of digital music users to track and report in greater detail will also spur change.

The emerging digital market is already providing “more transparency and accountability,” says Conlon, who notes the PROs do well in worlds of complexity that are also becoming more fractionalized.

“We scale well and are totally exponential,” he says. “We are dealing with and translating the long tail … handling billions of performances every quarter. We are optimized to handle what will be an increasingly fragmented medium and marketplace.”

But improved accounting systems have enabled “some [digital users] to consider going direct” to rights-holders like publishers, Music Reports Inc. founder/chairman Ron Gertz says. “They will trade the convenience of [PRO blanket licensing] to do a la carte licensing.”

That dynamic will be matched by major music publishers looking to increase profits in difficult times by doing direct licensing deals in easily trackable media like those offered by digital music providers. The bundling of rights and direct deals are among the market forces that will increase competition among collection societies.

If publishers pull back licensing rights from PROs, how will those organizations compensate for that lost revenue? Some industry executives are predicting mergers will take place among collection societies around the world, creating regional licensing hubs. But others speculate that some societies may move to grant multiterritory rights that could, in turn, exclude an exclusive repertoire.

Meanwhile, music publishing executives predict that current trends will lead to a consolidation of backroom functions among rival PROs. In fact, ASCAP’s LoFrumento is advocating that scenario.

Collection societies “use the same database and we have the same information on the members’ share; we all use similar systems,” he says. “The idea of multiple back offices with multiple personnel doesn’t bode well for us. As the music industry faces the future, we have to look at the functions that we are not competing on and combine them. We need to start a dialogue with other societies.”

Moreover, LoFrumento thinks that if an independent third-party back office could be created, publishers may want to join such an initiative.

In the meantime, ASCAP just finished development of a new back-office distribution system, which will provide members with 24/7 access to the organization’s database as well as increased transparency.

Another issue expected to drive the evolution of PROs is the growth in the number of registered songwriters, who are demanding more services.

“We have been working on this for the last five years: how to create and extend electronic services in the virtual world,” BMI’s Conlon says.

Regardless of what happens in the digital market, PROs will always have general performance licensing to fall back on because monitoring song plays at bars, clubs and stores requires boots on the ground to track.

But here, too, they face challenges, as was illustrated last year when two federal courts approximately halved the negotiated annual blanket fee that music service providers like Muzak and DMX pay BMI and ASCAP for every apparel store, beauty salon and health club for which they program music.

The court rulings, both of which are being appealed by BMI and ASCAP, set up a carve-out mechanism to allow DMX to license and pay for music directly from a publisher and then get a discount from the blanket fee based on the proportion of music played that was directly licensed. The case could encourage other music service providers to push for similar carve-outs, a concept that could potentially be applied to terrestrial radio.

“The world is changing faster than anybody thought,” LoFrumento says.
Innovation Required
Publishers Must Embrace New Ways To License Music To Digital Services

In a music environment that has seen every fundamental premise, assumption and certainty blown away during the last 10 years, there is always much talk of innovation.

The nature of music delivery and consumption changes year after year, as new entrants come into the market to offer exciting channels to music fans across the world. This dynamism and excitement have played an important role in ensuring that more music is being used than ever before. Innovation is omnipresent in the life of the industry—except with regard to licensing the very services that innovate the most.

The simple fact is that as the representatives of the greatest songwriting and recording talent in the world, we at an industry have a duty to encourage digital platforms and services to come to market for the benefit of creators and consumers alike. Yet while we expect them to break boundaries and push technology and user experience further than ever before, record companies and publishers alike seem determined to cling to an existing licensing framework that does little to advance the cause of creators.

We are in a new world, one in which the distinctions between the rights of traditional types of music usages are blurring, reflecting technology's ongoing enrichment of the music experience. Digital music services want to be able to offer their customers the ability to download music, stream tracks, see videos, engage with rich editorial content, sing along to lyrics and interact with content. All of these have traditionally required separate licenses from separate bodies. That places a huge burden of time and money on new services. When faced with an industry as unwelcoming as music to new players, it would be little surprise if they turned their attention to more approachable forms of media.

Put simply, the music industry will be failing in its duty to the creative talent it represents if it doesn't put its licensing house in order.

That's why in May, EMI Music Publishing took the pioneering step of withdrawing from ASCAP the new-media rights for the EMI April catalog—see story, page 8.

Now, I wouldn't want anyone to think that I believe ASCAP has done a poor job with the April catalog. I'm an admirer of ASCAP chairman Paul Willmants, CEO John Frohman and the entire organization, on whose board I sit. I am happy that they will continue to represent EMI's traditional broadcast rights, and they have been very supportive of this latest initiative.

However, the changing world of digital music means that it is imperative that we explore new ways to encourage innovation, in order to allow our music to find as broad an audience as it possibly can. And that means exploring ways to unify the rights in our catalog.

Services don't care what specific rights are called or which part of the value chain those rights sit within—they just want to get the permission to do what they want to do, in a timely and efficient manner. Rather than forcing services to adapt to our processes, it is incumbent on us to adapt to their needs, and only by doing so will we speed digital development.

Of course, unification of rights is not the only tool that we have to use to reduce complexity in this space. In particular, we also need a global rights database in order to be sure that the user community knows exactly where and how to assemble the rights they need for every work that they wish to use. Significant progress has been made toward this goal, with music companies, digital platforms and industry institutions recognizing that the establishment of a global rights database would reduce the impediments to access that exist today.

Removal of the barriers to growth has to be a key focus for our industry in the coming months and years. EMI Music Publishing's removal of its new-media rights from ASCAP is one important experiment in that regard. The existing licensing framework was not designed for a world in which music is omnipresent—it is outdated and essential if we are to foster an environment in which consumers can be meaningfully engaged with music, and in which creators can achieve the successful outcomes that their passion and hard work so deserve.

Roger Faxon is chairman/CEO of EMI Music Publishing and CEO of EMI Group.
New Game Plan
After A Foray Into Interactive Remix Apps, MXP4 Moves Into Social Games

Among the many buzzwords that have been emerging from the startup eco-chamber is the notion of the pivot—if something’s not working, try something different.

It’s a concept that social gaming startup MXP4 knows all too well. The Paris-based company launched in 2006 as an interactive music format billed at the time as a replacement for the ubiquitous MP3 format. That quickly went nowhere, so the company changed focus, becoming a white-label technology provider to artists and bands that wanted to let fans interact or remix music through an embeddable app on their website or Facebook page (Billboard, Oct. 30, 2010).

Now MXP4 has unveiled its third identity—a provider of branded games for Facebook and mobile phones, under the Bopler Games banner.

This new tack isn’t so much a pivot as it is a step, one informed by the company’s previous iteration. During the years it operated as a white-label service provider, it signed up more than 150 artists who used the technology to let fans interact with their music on Facebook or their websites. They included such stars as Michael Jackson, David Guetta, Big Boi and Paramore.

The company noticed that artists who embedded the app saw traffic spike as a result. Guetta’s app generated 2 million plays and registered the contact information of some 60,000 fans, according to Guinea’s management. Time spent on each embedded song averaged 15 minutes, according to the company, and half of those doing so would share their remixes with friends on Facebook.

But rolling this out on an artist-by-artist basis just couldn’t scale. Hence the creation of Bopler Games. In 2009, MXP4 bought on former Vivendi Mobile Entertainment GM Albin Servant to spearhead its gaming strategy.

Calling the white-label activity a “proof of concept” that music fans are willing to interact in a game-like manner with their favorite songs online, MXP4 has created several custom titles designed to take the gameplay that was formerly restricted to just one artist’s track and expand it to a far larger roster of songs.

The company soft-launched its game lineup in April with four titles—Match It, Space It, Pump It, Snake It—all featuring gameplay that’s a variation of dodging or navigating obstacles that react to the beat or lyrics of a given song. The games feature music by KT Tunstall, Lily Allen, Fall Out Boy, Digital Underground, Afrika Bambaataa, the Jonas Brothers and other acts.

Another title, Dodge It, followed in May. And this month, the company will embark on a formal launch of the brand, complete with marketing and customer outreach on Facebook. Servant says the plan is to have up to 12 games developed by the end of the month.

“There’s a giant disconnect between music and social games on Facebook,” Servant says. And he’s right. But with only about 40,000 monthly active users, Bopler Games has its work cut out for it as it goes up against the likes of Zynga, which boasts 250 million active monthly users. Zynga recently launched GagaVille, a new Lady Gaga-themed subdivision of its hugely popular FarmVille game, which represents an intriguing attempt at bridging the gap between music and social games that Bopler is targeting.

MXP4 has secured licenses with three of the four major labels on about 150 songs available to play today, according to Servant, who declines to comment further on the label talks. Altogether, MXP4 needs only about 500 tracks or so—a mix of current hits and popular catalog songs—rather than access to each label’s entire roster, he says.

None of Bopler’s games, which are for more basic than console games, requires “authoring” musical notation or the ability to enter music into their titles, as “Guitar Hero” or “Rock Band” do. MXP4’s technology does it all the work.

Gamers can play any track on any game up to three times for free, or they can buy the full track using Facebook credits (about $1.50). Bundles of tracks can also be purchased in increments of three, five or 10 at increasing discounted rates. Servant expects about 95% of Bopler gamers to only play the free tracks, with the remainder paying between $5 and $15 per month.

In doing so, MXP4’s efforts serve as an important test case of whether the music industry can make inroads into the massively popular social gaming market.

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Power Play
Ex-NFL Executive Steers The NHL Toward More Music Partnerships

When country star Dierks Bentley isn’t on the road or in the recording studio, he can usually be found at an ice rink playing hockey with some of his buddies.

So it’s no surprise that the singer was excited to learn that his new party-themed single, “Am I the Only One,” was played during a recent National Hockey League playoff game.

“I was watching the playoffs and my song came on,” Bentley recalls, admitting that he wasn’t aware the track had been licensed to the NHL. “My phone blew up with texts from friends that knew I’d get a kick out of it. I’m just thrilled that my song is getting played.”

Bentley, who plays in a recreational ice hockey league in Nashville, has reason to be excited, as his new partnership with the NHL spans well beyond exposure during the playoffs. “Am I the Only One”—which moves 16-14 this week on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart—was featured in May on TV in-arena spots during the NHL conference finals on networks like NBC, CBS and the NHL Network. They also ran on NHL.com and team websites.

Bentley is also releasing a second music video to CMT and other platforms for “Am I the Only One,” which features highlights from the 2010-11 NHL season, footage from his recent concert tour and home videos of him playing hockey.

Collaborating with musical artists isn’t new for the NHL. The Goo Goo Dolls performed at last year’s NHL Awards show, while the Jonas Brothers, Garth Brooks and Usher have performed at events scheduled around the NHL All-Star Game. The league also licensed Eminem’s “Not Afraid” for use during telecasts of the 2010 Stanley Cup playoffs.

But the NHL’s partnership with Bentley is the first such artist campaign under the leadership of Charles Coplin, a former National Football League VP of programming who joined the NHL in September as executive VP of content.

Coplin reports to another former NFL executive—NHL COO John Collins, who had previously served as president/CEO of the Cleveland Browns and senior VP of marketing and sales at the NFL.

Taking a page from the NFL’s playbook, Collins and Coplin have been keen on expanding the NHL’s entertainment brand through the launch of special events and artist partnerships.

In his new role, Coplin plans to leverage relationships he built as booker of the Super Bowl halftime show and use them to create unique musical opportunities for the NHL’s lengthy October-June season.

“The NFL has those defined pieces of real estate, like the kickoff show and the Super Bowl show,” Coplin says. “Hockey has a different rhythm; it’s an everyday sport and plays a couple months longer.”

Collins has overseen the creation of new events during the NHL season, including the opening-day NHL Face-Off entertainment festival; the New Year’s Day Winter Classic, which features a regular-season game played outdoors; and the annual NHL Awards show, which will be held June 22 at the Pearl Concert Theater in Las Vegas.

“We have such a different variety of events with such different themes and geography that it allows us to be more targeted in what we’re going after,” Coplin says.

Booking musical talent for a massive event like the Super Bowl halftime show, Coplin says, can be somewhat constraining, in that it needs to be an act with wide, mainstream appeal.

But with the NHL, “we have a targeted demographic and we can take some edgier acts,” he says. The league says it has about 53 million fans in North America, of which it estimates 60% are between the ages of 18-49.

Coplin says he’s eager to expand the NHL’s relationship with more musical artists.

“We can do some things that are more aggressive or a little bit more risky,” he says, “because of the nature of the sport and the demographics.”

Thanks to his likable, boy-next-door image, Bentley probably wouldn’t be considered an edgy or risky artist in most quarters. But Capitol Nashville senior VP of marketing Cindy Mabe says his passion for hockey makes him a natural partner for the NHL.

Mabe also says the campaign will help set up Bentley’s as-yet-untitled sixth studio album, which is tentatively scheduled for release in October on Capitol Records Nashville. “Am I the Only One” is the album’s first single.

“Frankly, it’s nothing but a commercial that Dierks is coming,” she says. “Dierks had the automatic walk-in because he speaks the language of hockey. He loves hockey, appreciates it and plays it.”
Everybody Dance Now

The Sounds Of ‘Lambada’ Resurface On J.Lo’s ‘On The Floor’ And Other Hits

“Lambada” by French group Kaoma became a worldwide smash in 1990, reaching No. 46 on the Billboard Hot 100 and topping the Hot Latin Songs chart for seven straight weeks. The song’s ascent was aided by the lambada dance craze that preceded the song’s release, as well as two cheesy 1990 movies—“Lambada” and “The Forbidden Dance”—that sought to capitalize on the popularity of the Brazilian dance style.

Fast-forward 20 years and the sounds of “Lambada” are back, but not one but three charting songs featuring the melody of the 1990 hit. First up was Edward Maya and Vika Jigulina’s soulful dance track “Stereo Love,” which entered the Hot 100 last October at No. 92 and peaked in January at No. 16, spending 28 weeks on the chart.

Then there’s Don Omar’s “Taboo,” a Portuguese/Spanish version of the original that peaked at No. 9 on Hot Latin Songs in May.

Finally, there is Jennifer Lopez’s hit “On The Floor,” featuring Pitbull, which sports the melodic hook of “Lambada,” with Lopez singing new English lyrics to the original melody. The track peaked at No. 3 on the Hot 100 in May and has generated U.S. digital track sales of 2 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“Good music revises every so often,” says Rogelio Alfonso, PD for Miami’s Clear Channel-owned WEMG (Mega 94.9), which plays all three tracks, as do several other Miami stations, including top 40 WHYI (Y-100). “Plus, danceable Brazilian music is super catchy.”

As a hit turns out, Kaoma’s “Lambada” wasn’t the first recording of the song. The original version is “Llorando se Fué,” written and performed by Bolivian folk group Ljarkas, which used an Andean flute instead of an accordion.

Kaoma took credit for the composition and gave it Portuguese lyrics and the beat and instrumentation of the lambada, an urban Brazilian rhythm known for its sensual, hip-hop grinding dance. When the song became a smash, the original writers, brothers Gonzalo and Ulises Hernosa, successfully sued for a share of the royalties.

Today, all versions of the song, including Omar’s and Lopez’s, cite the writers as the writers of the song, although the roster of co-writers of “On The Floor” includes Pitbull and RedOne, while “Taboo” includes Omar.

For Maya’s “Stereo Love,” it doesn’t quote the trademark lambada accordion hook; writers changed the melody sequence just enough so that it would evoke the melody rather than replicate it.

The success of “Stereo Love” was surprising, says Patrick Moxey, president of Ultra Records, which released the track in North America. “Writing a record with an accordion hook into all these different formats and sell 20,000 copies? That doesn’t happen very often.”

The danceable yet melancholic accordion hook of “Lambada” has proved to be timeless. In the original Kaoma video, the protagonists were two children—a blond girl and a black boy, both around 10—who escape their parents’ watchful eyes to dance. Twenty years later, Omar’s video for “Taboo” continues the story, borrowing images from the original clip and hinting that he’s the boy, all grown up.

For those who ever danced to this track, it’s a powerful image.

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Ranchera Singer’s Return

Nydia Rojas, Once A Rising Star Of Mariachi, Hits The Comeback Trail

As a teenager growing up in Southern California in the 1990s, Nydia Rojas was touted as mariachi music’s next big thing.

She released four albums on Arista Latin and Hollywood Records. She toured with Juan and Ana Gabriel. She even earned a Latin Grammy Award nomination in 2000 for her album “Si Me Conocieras,” which received a nod for best ranchero performance.

And then, one day in 2001, Rojas decided to walk away from it all. She went back to school, got married, worked for a spell as a 911 emergency dispatcher and reclaimed her life—a life she felt she no longer had control of.

“I wasn’t living for myself—I was living for others and that’s all I knew,” Rojas says.

“When I left the business, I went back to school. I studied music, but I also began living normal experiences in order to be where I am today, which I believe is a good place.”

Now 31, Rojas is attempting to make a comeback. She is working with her husband, percussionist Raul Pineda, on a new album that she hopes to release in the fall.

“It’s going to be an independent project, taking my influences and adding filters of my heritage from Mexican folk music and Cuban music with modern attributes of my singing style,” she says.

Rojas is also opening nine shows in California for ranchera legend Vicente Fernandez, including five shows at the Gibson Amphitheatre in Los Angeles scheduled for mid-November.

“Not too many people get second chances,” says Jose Hernandez, musical director for Mariachi Sol de Mexico, who mentored the singer as a child. “She’s getting to tour with Vicente Fernandez because she deserves it. She has the vocal capabilities.”

Tony Romero, a tour manager working the Fernandez concerts, agrees, saying that Rojas “has a very special style and she knows how to captivate an audience.”

Live performances will play a key role in Rojas’ efforts to re-establish a career in music, says Rodri J. Rodriguez, who helped launch her career with the annual Mariachi USA showcase at the Hollywood Bowl.

“When you are passionate about something you can always come back to that road,” Rodriguez says. “I know she tried different things, but her road always brings her back to what she’s good at.”

Rojas admits that her first gig opening for Fernandez on May 6 in Fresno, Calif., gave her butterflies. But she says it also felt like a homecoming.

“It was exhilarating and I am grateful,” she says.

—Justin Aguila

EN ESPAÑOL: All the great Latin music coverage you’ve come to expect from Billboard—in Spanish. Go to billboardenespanol.com.

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BILBOARD LATIN POWER PLAYERS NOMINATIONS DUE JUNE 17

Billboard is collecting nominations for its annual Latin Power Players report, which recognizes Latin music executives who are driving the music industry forward with their artistic and business vision. Executives in all sectors of the Latin music industry are eligible. Individuals who make their living primarily as artists and/or songwriters aren’t eligible unless they own their recordings or songs and act in a business or executive capacity to market them. Billboard editors will compile the Latin Power Players report based on the nominees’ achievements in the past 12 months and their overall leadership. The deadline for nominations is June 17. Nominations can be submitted online at billboard.biz/latinpowerplayers.

—Justin Aguila
Did Judy McGrath’s move surprise you?
No, not really. You know, she’s been with the company 30 years and I was for 21 years. I had breakfast with her and I reminded her that, as measured in dog years, that’s more than 200 years. Particularly at a company like MTV, that’s a long time. She’s got a huge legacy. I wouldn’t put too much into [reports of] programming disputes. Yes, the organization does change. I think it’s more about just, gosh, even though it’s a great gig, you’ve got to move on eventually.

Your mantra was, “Aggressive, creative, relentless distribution.” Exactly how wide is the global reach of MTV Networks?
Our exposure is everywhere. Two billion—billion—have access to it in formal distribution. We’ve done research that shows 100 million tune in on a monthly basis. It’s a lot of people. We do our playlists based on a lot of different things. Record sales, radio play, gut feel, all that. Generally, you would say that about 50% of the music on any particular channel is local and 50% is international, on average. Some were 80/20, some 40/60. Over the years, early on, we didn’t really have a lot (of acts that we helped break in the United States). But then there are a lot of great examples in isolation. One of the first commercially successful Russian groups, t.a.m., was on the MTV Movie Awards. We did an “Unplugged” for Shakira and brought her to Asia [where] no one had heard of her in the United States.

“Yo! MTV Raps” started in France. Yes, with [host] Sophie Bramly. The other interesting thing is Arab rap. The language has a certain cadence that connects with rap, so rap was always going to be very popular in the Middle East. It was an interestingyper- opener for me. Who would expect rap to be so successful in Arabia?

You’ve done a lot of business with Russian entrepreneurs. It appears Warner Music will be sold to Access Industries led by Russian-born Len Blavatnik. He’s a terrific guy. I actually think that’s a good thing for Warner. I know him personally and he’s tough. It was a privilege to see this incredible transformation of [emerging markets like] the Middle East, China and India. But to me, Russia really made the most radical transformation. It was extraordinary. Overnight. Boom. This entrepreneur, Boris Zosimov [whose company Biz Enterprises developed MTV Russia], he had a passion and he made a go of it. He would come up to me and say, “What’s a sales commission?” I don’t mean to let China off the hook but China, I think, has more of a capitalist culture. China is happening too. It’s just difficult in the media business because there’s so much regulation.

Are international media companies making inroads in China?
The answer is yes, but slowly. GM sells more cars in China than anywhere else in the world. Volkswagen sells more Volkswagens in China than anywhere else in the world. So if you’re doing cars, yeah [it’s a great market]. I must say, I worked China very hard. I joked that I went there more than my U.K. operation.

How has MTV’s relationship with the music business changed?
For almost my entire career—even, I would say, recently—it’s been a critical relationship. [Cable TV magazine] John Malone said it’s like tying the tails of two cats together and throwing them over the fence: They’re intertwined and they’re going to fight. We had our ups and downs, no question. But we were dependent on them and they were dependent on us. We sold music. They gave us wonderful, fresh product on a weekly basis.

But less now than in the past?
What happened over the years is that, you know the story of course, [more] youth entertainment and less music. Now, do young people come to MTV for music? Less so, because you can get videos on YouTube. But we play more music than we ever have [on digital channels]. Pick a market. I think the U.K. is one of the best examples, with nine music channels.

MTV’s role in the fight against HIV/AIDS is an important part of your legacy. Wasn’t there a risk involved in linking MTV’s brand so closely to that pandemic?
Yes, there was. But we didn’t make this issue as important for our audience; they told us. And as we expanded our reach, particularly in hard-hit countries, I always felt, “Hey, no option. We’ve got to be part of this fight.”

Critics have asked how MTV can sell a sexual lifestyle through its programming, yet preach safe sex.
It’s a fair question. Here’s the deal. Part of being young is being irreverent and edgy. Sexual themes are part of being irreverent and young. You don’t have a connection unless you’re out there with some of these themes. But when you do have that connection, it presents you with an opportunity. So we seized that opportunity [to deliver safe-sex messages to young viewers]. Even with that, you can’t hit them over the head; you’ve got to do it in a way that’s creative and more subtle.

You write that the most serious challenge facing content providers is figuring out which distribution services in which form produce the best revenue stream.
Here’s the irony. People listen to more music than they ever have. People read more than they ever have. People are watching more content on television or video than they ever have. Yet the margins are all going down. So it’s going to take a lot of smart managers and creative people to figure this all out. It’s an uncertain future. It’s exciting though.
RELENTLESS.
A TRUE COUNTRY-ROCK INDEPENDENT SPIRIT, JASON ALDEAN IS IN BUSINESS WITH BENNY BROWN’S BROKEN BOW RECORDS (A SEVEN-ALBUM DEAL), SPALDING ENTERTAINMENT (THEY HAVE A PLAN) AND BUDDY LEE ATTRACTIONS (BOOKED HIS SUMMER TOUR WITH LIVE NATION). HE SELLS OUT AMPHITHEATERS IN ADVANCE, SINGS WITH KELLY CLARKSON AND IS THREE SINGLES DEEP INTO A PLATINUM-PLUS FOURTH ALBUM. CAN SOMEBODY SAY, ‘SUPERSTAR’?

BY RAY WADDELL
“IF IT WERE FREAKING LADY GAGA YOU’D HAVE IT ON THE COVER OF BILLBOARD. I’m over here with one of the healthiest things in the business.”

Clarence Spalding, Spalding Entertainment
DAYS BEFORE EMBARKING ON A CRITICAL RUN OF AMPHITHEATER SHOWS THAT WILL SOLIDIFY HIS MAJOR-LEAGUE TOURING STATUS, JASON ALDEAN SHOWS NO SIGNS OF STRESS. WHY SHOULD HE? HE’S OUT IN THE BARN—HIS “MAN CAVE”—AT HOME, SOUTH OF NASHVILLE. ALDEAN IS CONFIDENT AND RELAXED.—THOUGH NOT QUITE AS CHILL AS HIS GEORGIA BULLDOG, ATHENS. STILL, ALDEAN HAS SHOWN A BULLDOG’S DETERMINATION IN PURSUING A STILL-RISING CAREER. THOUGH IT RESIDES SOMEWHERE BELOW THE RADAR OF THE MAINSTREAM MUSIC INDUSTRY, A CASE CAN BE MADE THAT JASON ALDINE WILLIAMS IS THE HOTTEST MALE STAR IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

He’s signed to Nashville independent label Broken Bow, and four albums in, Aldean has racked up 11 top 10 singles on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart (including five No. 1s), and his third single from current album “My Kinda Party,” the boundary-pushing “Dirt Road Anthem,” is rising quickly up the charts. Previous single “Don’t You Wanna Stay,” a duet with Kelly Clarkson, is now making noise on the Adult Top 40 chart, a rare crossover for a male country artist.

All four of his Broken Bow records have cracked the top 10 on Billboard’s Top Country Albums chart—“Party” spent eight weeks there. Aldean has sold nearly 5 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, along with 10.5 million digital tracks. But the best heat indicator is Aldean’s box-office success. In the most competitive year in memory for contemporary country music headliners, Aldean, booked by Buddy Lee Attractions and promoted this year by Live Nation, is blowing out shows all over the place in 20,000-capacity venues.

Aldean’s growth during the past six years has been steady and sure, but prior to that the going was tough. After signing a songwriter deal with Warner/Chappell in 1998 (giving up his Pepsi delivery-truck gig in the process), Aldean moved to Nashville that fall. But, even with what must have felt like an endless parade of showcases, label after label either passed outright or failed to bring a deal home for Aldean. It was downright scary for the Macon, Ga., native: He had a wife and new baby daughter to support.

“It was like, ‘Yeah, we love it, let’s talk, we’ll come see some more shows,’ but nobody ever pulled the trigger,” he says. “I’m not somebody that gives up... easy. But it was getting to the point where, not that I didn’t think it was going to work, I just didn’t know what else to do. You start thinking about, ‘What else can I do?’ This was my backup plan.”

Being called “humble” is de rigueur for a country artist, but manager Clarence Spalding of Spalding Entertainment (Spalding’s Chris Parr handles Aldean day to day) says Aldean found humility the hard way. “He’s had the shit beat out of him,” Spalding says. “He almost packed his bags and went back to Georgia. And without Benny Brown he would have been there.”

Broken Bow owner Benny Brown is plain-spoken. An entrepreneur. He’s successfully added record labels and publishing to his other business endeavors, which include a string of California-based car dealerships. When Aldean came to Brown’s attention in 2003, Craig Morgan was the top artist at Broken Bow. Brown wanted to see Aldean showcase in front of “regular country fans.” It was set up at Nashville’s Wildhorse Saloon. “After it was over, I told some of my staff, ‘This kid has something special. I think I’ll sign him,’” Brown recalls. “Everybody thought I was crazy.”

The circumstances surrounding Broken Bow signing Aldean to a seven-album deal were unusual, to say the least. Though he’d been playing music since he was 14, Aldean was, for country fans, a brand-new artist, steadfastly committed to an unproven producer in Michael Knox (see sidebar, page 17) and sporting a rock-tinged sound. And he wanted to use his road band on the record. Brown and Broken Bow’s approach with Aldean “took huge balls,” Spalding says. “Think about it: We’re gonna sign this kid, we’ve got a guy over here who’s not a proven producer, and, hey, let’s take his road band in to record with him. It wouldn’t have happened anywhere else like that.”

Broken Bow then did the drill: introduced Aldean to country radio. “As an independent with a new artist, you kind of take what’s given to you, which meant... doing a lot of free shows to promote their stations and the songs,” Broken Bow senior VP of operations Rick Shedd says. “It was a long, hard battle to moving up the charts, like it is for a lot of companies.”

But 12 weeks after Aldean’s debut set was released (July 2005) Broken Bow had its first gold album with Aldean, driven by debut single “Hicktown.” Though the song peaked at No. 10 on Hot Country Songs, its mud-slinging, hell-raising video cast the die for Aldean’s sound—and his fans. The song “was a polarizing single, different from what was going on at the time,” Shedd says. “But when people... were turned on by it, it sold a lot of records. It set the tone.”

A key cog in the machine has been distributor RED, which, though traditionally more active in non-country genres, has a history with country dating back to Kenny Chesney’s debut on Capricorn in 1994. Broken Bow began working with RED in 2003 when Morgan’s first record came out.

“They made a compelling argument as to why they could handle the country business, and as Broken Bow grew, they grew with us,” Shedd says. “They came with stronger sales reps and more aggressive marketing so they could service our needs, and it has continued with the growth of digital. When the digital thing started taking off, they had one person in place. Now they have 15.”

RED senior VP of product development Alan Becker says, “With Broken Bow we saw this fierce determination.” He adds that RED works closely with the label on “every important initiative,” including digital/mobile marketing through RED’s digital marketing division, Stache Media.

Aldean’s self-titled debut album has moved 1.4 million copies, and follow-up “Relentless” is at 829,000, according to SoundScan. His “Wide Open” album, on the strength of mega-hit “She’s Country,” went platinum, and “Party” is heading into double-platinum territory. “If you ship too many albums out into the marketplace and they don’t sell, retailers are quick to return them and you have to buy them back,” Brown says. “Our rate of return on Jason has been exceptional; almost zero.”

Brown says that prior to launching Broken Bow in 1999, he had invested in other artist development projects. “I found out quickly that by the time the label got through recouping every- thing there wasn’t a whole lot left for the artist,” he says. “So when I came up with the model for Broken Bow, I said, ‘If we’re going to do this thing, it’s going to be without greed in mind.’”

With Jason we did a very fair contract, and consequently even his business manager said [he’d] never seen an artist that started
FORT KNOX
THE SYNERGY OF ALDEAN AND HIS PRODUCER

In 1998, when Michael Knox was a VP at Warner/Chappell, he was headed to Georgia to visit his grandmother when he heard about a talent show in Atlanta. "I was actually trying to find a way to write the trip off," he says. "I went down to the buck shack in Atlanta and wound up with a two-day talent show. Out of 20 acts, Jason was the 18th. He went on the second day, about midnight. I told him I really dug what he did. I don't know how the talent show turned out, but Jason was the guy." Knox had a sound in his head for an arena rock act—country style. "We didn't have a rock star in country music," he says. "When I first saw Jason, he was playing Guns 'N Roses in his show. That's when I knew I had the right guy. People forget that [Aldean's] generation grew up in heavy metal, as well as traditional country. It's hard to grasp that until you get out into the clubs and see it firsthand."

The producer set out to find a band that fit the idea, a process that took five years. That effort yielded the unit that would tour with Aldean and play on his albums, including the celebrated Kings rhythm section of Kurt Allison, Tully Kennedy and Rich Redmond—they've developed into in-demand producers in their own right.

Aldean made it clear that he and Knox were a producer/artist package deal, which may or may not have contributed to his difficulties in getting signed to a label. Broken Bow let it happen. "I remember having a conversation with [the label], 'If you like the demos that Michael and I have done, if that's the reason you signed me, you don't put me under somebody I don't know, because it's not going to sound like this,'" Aldean says. There were similar discussions about using the road band in the studio. "I said, 'If this is the sound you like, this is the way we get it.'"

Broken Bow owner/CEO Benny Brown says the decision wasn't that difficult. "With his band on the recordings, it's real easy for them to go out and duplicate that in live performance," he says. "I've always [attributed] a lot of Jason's success to Kurt, Rich and Tully. That was one thing that impressed me even in the original showcase—what showmen they were, along with Jason." —RW

THE SOUND: COUNTRY ROCK
Knox and Aldean honed their patented country arena rock sound to perfection and were ready to push the envelope. The debut release's title track was pretty much in the Aldean zone, but then came the Clarkson duet, an edgy power ballad, then " Dirt Road Anthem," with a sort of rap by Aldean that demands attention. "Coming off a big record with three No. 1s, we'd established ourselves enough to say, 'OK, now we're going to hit you with something completely unexpected,'" Aldean says. "I love when I think people think they have me figured out, to come with something different. We're always going to try... stuff that's different from what other people are doing."

Aldean relies on 'gut instinct.' "When I hear something like 'Dirt Road Anthem,' I think, 'Yeah, that's different, but I'd go buy that record.' Once we got locked in on how we wanted to do it, there wasn't any hesitation. Taking on a duet alongside a vocalist with the chops of Clarkson would also be daunting for many singers. 'I was like, 'OK, she's obviously going to make me look bad on this song, period, so just go get over that and sing it your way.'" he says. "I went in and did my thing, and... when she started singing with me our voices blended so well. It was just one of those things you can't predict."

Four albums in, Aldean knows what's looking for in terms of sound, and with more than 1,000 shows under his belt, he and the band, with Knox, have the sound on lock. In short, it sounds like a band, not just a singer with backing studio musicians. "Everybody knows some of these studio guys are the best in the business; technically they're flawless," Aldean says. "But there's no sense of the flaws, some of the things that aren't 100% clean are what makes it cool, because... it's a little bit raw. It's... maybe a very, very good garage band... I think that's why it's appealing to people. It's believable. It's real." Kevin Neil, president of independent Nashville agency Buddy Lee Attractions and Aldean's agent, met the country artist when he was 18 and signed him around the time of the Broken Bow deal. "He is a live act," Neil says. "He's had that for as long as I've known him. Whenever he did a show it was always there. A lot of record companies were either afraid of it or didn't get it. Or it didn't fit within their box."

Building his live fan base has been a more steady, if continually upward, progression. This was a plan Aldean bought into. "Jason believed in the long-term plan," Neil says. "I told him, 'Here's what I think an artist should do, and very few do it: Play areas where there's major radio and... develop a following. When the single comes out, they'll know who you are and maybe it'll help you get added to the station earlier.' He said, 'Fine, start looking me.'"

The climb, according to Spalding, was dictated by the market. "We wanted him to grow at a natural pace, not even a slow pace or a fast pace, but what was natural to the progression of selling records and having hits singles, and what we saw was...we knew that was going to be in those seconds (and) the market was there." Another key element is pricing. "You don't go out and just grab the money, you develop the career, have people buy a ticket... $10 or $15, then you slowly escalate the money," Neil says. "After 'She's Country,' things really started to take off, [and] at the end of our CMT tour (with Lady Antebellum in 2008) you could see the numbers growing. Jason called me that year about pricing and said, 'I'd rather have 5,000 people at $20-$25 than 1,500 at $30.'"

With a top ticket price of about $45, Aldean is moving ticket like few artists on the road, and the show is bigger on all levels. "We're able to go out now and build the kind of show that four years ago we weren't able to," Aldean says. "Now we're able to go out and I can make a show look and sound the way—if I was a fan—I'd want to see."

Given the ticket counts, it's easy to forget that these are Aldean's first headlining dates in the big rooms. "There's always a risk when you go from playing 8,000- to 10,000-seat buildings to playing 25,000-seat buildings," says Brian O'Connell, president of Live Nation's country division. "But this year, we're out there dead-on competing in some of these major markets with 14 acts over the course of a 12-month period."

But it was time for Aldean to make the move. "There was no way around it," Spalding says. "We did such good business last year that we were growing at the natural pace."

Spalding reels off the numbers: 16,000 in Dallas; 19,000 in St. Louis; 24,000 in Indianapolis; 21,000 in Washington, D.C.; 20,000 in Hartford, Conn. And he's selling out in advance. "I had a great run with Brooks & Dunn," Spalding says. "But I don't believe we ever in their history sold out the amphiteaters a week in advance. A week in advance? In an amphitheater? If it was freakin' [Lady] Gaga you'd have it on the cover of Billboard. I'm over here with one of the healthiest things alive in the business."

O'Connell says that all involved were confident. But, still, at this level? "If any of us tell you we said we thought we would do 20,000 tickets on a Sunday night in Hartford, Conn... he says, 'you could call us all liars. It took Aldean seven years to get to this point. There are acts from time to time that don't wait seven minutes before they think they're headliners. Jason has put in the work."

After pushing the boundaries on "Party," Aldean's not sure what comes next. "The album takes shape with whatever songs you get," he says. "If you ain't got the songs, you ain't got shit."

Three singles in, everyone on Team Aldean believes "Party" has a lot of legs left. "We could go probably seven singles deep and have hits," Brown says. "At the same time, if the album sales start dropping off too much, we'll have the next album. We're already looking for songs and preparing for it. We'll just let the market decide."

Whatever the next conversation with Aldean makes it clear that he's going to come hard. "I'm a competitor," he says. "I'm not going to lie: If I get nominated for an award, I want to win. I'm not pissed when I don't, but this whole 'I'm just glad to be here' stuff? Not me. I'm glad to be there, but I'm there for a reason."
He’s signed to Cash Money. He’s on-air talent at Miami’s 99 Jamz. He’s president of Def Jam South. His sync business is robust. His new single may just be the hottest hip-hop song of the summer. And he knows everybody. DJ Khaled? He’s kind of a big deal.

By Keith Murphy

“Yo, Khaled. . . you’re working hard. . . real hard.”

Khaled bin Abdul Khaled, aka DJ Khaled, is recounting what he describes as a huge moment in his life and career. The seven words were delivered in a deadly serious tone—the speaker isn’t usually in the business of extolling praise.

A gregarious producer/record/jock/artiste/executive with a deserved reputation for the ability to get chart-topping artists on his singles. Khaled is getting more and more kudos these days. But, backstage at New York’s Roseland Ballroom at a jam-packed May 18 event to celebrate Cartoon Network’s Adult Swim programming bloc, the speaker, who was set to perform, took a moment.

“This is Jay-Z!” Khaled exclaims, seemingly still unable to believe that one of music’s ultimate headliners and the founder/CEO of Roc Nation, has taken notice of his rise in the record business.

“When Jay told me that, I knew I was doing my thing,” Khaled says, beaming. “Birdman tells me the same: ‘Khaled, don’t stop what you’re doing. Keep going . . . you’re on your way.’ You know what I’m saying? These are people I look up to.”

Birdman, a Bay Baby, is Bryan Williams, co-founder/co-CEO (with his brother, Ronald “Slim” Williams) of Cash Money Records (Lil Wayne, Nicki Minaj, Drake). Khaled is signed to Cash Money as an artist. Khaled also works for Island Def Jam (IDJ), as president of Def Jam South. His clients, when working as a producer, have included Pitbull, Fabolous and Fat Joe. The 36-year-old New Orleans-born Palestinian-American first gained massive exposure as co-host of influential hip-hop radio show “The TakeOver” on Cox Radio’s WEDR (99 Jamz) Miami.

He wanted to make records, though, as much as play them. After three independent albums (on Terror Squad/Koch, Terror Squad/Koch/We the Best and Terror Squad/We the Best/E1 Music) and a string of chest-beating, superstar-laden street anthems (and remixes of those anthems)—including “We Takin’ Over,” featuring T.I., Fat Joe and Lil Wayne ( platinum, 2006); “I’m So Hood,” featuring Kanye West and T-Pain ( platinum, 2007); “Out on Tha Block” featuring Akon and Piles (gold, 2007); and “All I Do Is Win,” featuring T-Pain, Ludacris, Rick Ross and Snoop Dogg (2010)—the industry was finally taking notice of Southern rap’s most boisterous cheerleader.

Khaled’s over-the-top confidence doesn’t feel like mere bluster when one considers what it might’ve been like for a kid of Palestinian descent born in the South to claw his way to hip-hop respectability. Khaled has always had to be the brashest and most passionate dude on the block. It was that way in the mid-’80s when he called himself “Special K” and was breakdancing on the streets of North Carolina. Soon hip-hop became an obsession.

“I used to love cutting up Run-D.M.C.’s ‘Peter Piper.,” Khaled recalls of his b-boy days. “But when I moved to Florida [in the ’90s], I started really loving DJ’ing.” But the gatekeepers of Miami’s mainstream radio scene were still apprehensive about playing hardcore hip-hop. The outlet for mixtape and underground DJs was college and pirate radio—the latter Khaled embraced with fervor. The former was ruled by “Uncle Luke” Campbell on WEDR gave him the high-profile platform he needed. Khaled landed his own show. A new ambassador of Miami hip-hop had arrived.

“We the best!” is not just the wildly enthusiastic, loud proclamation Khaled uses on his songs. The omnipresent motto (and name of his label) is an affirmation of a surging power that has helped him push nearly 10 million in singles sales. Khaled’s first major-label “solo” album, “We the Best Forever” (scheduled for a June 28 release, but rumored for July, is a super-sized version of his characteristically guest-stacked releases. Longtime collaborators Wayne, Drake, J. Cole and longtime cohort/IDJ star Ross are featured, as well as Khaled newcomers Mary J. Blige, Chris Brown, Keyshia Cole and Cee Lo Green.

The man stays busy. He describes a typical morning: “I come into the Def Jam offices with the most exclusive Jordans on, with some black Levis and a ‘We the Best’ custom velour top,” he says matter of factly. “I’m doing what I do. I’m not changing who I am. I’m living my dreams and accomplishing my goals.”

But before that, when he wakes up in the morning, he’s first on the phone making sure radio is all over his latest event single, “I’m On,” which features Drake, Lil Wayne and Ross. “Tell Billboard DJ Khaled said this is going to be the biggest record in the country,” he boasts. “The TM & 40-produced track (and second single from the new album) does in fact feature three of the most successful MCs recording today. The streets and the tweets are mostly heralding it. And awaiting the video.

Back to Khaled’s day. He then rings up video director Gil Green to discuss the edits on an upcoming Ross video. He does some running around, appointments, and by early afternoon, Khaled to the We the Best imprint. After two relatively unsuccessful Ace albums there were whispers that Hood would be dropped from the house that LL Cool J built. But Khaled’s patience paid off. He took on an up-and-coming label at the time “Ace Hood” McCollister now finds himself with one of the hottest rap songs in the country. “Hustle Hard” is No. 9 on Billboard’s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. “Locally goes a long way with me,” Hood says.

Regardless of Khaled’s Southern chapters, IDJ president/coO Eve steve Bartels says that it’s his ability to recruit A-list artists from all regions that’s most impressive. That much is apparent when listening to the remix of “All I Do Is Win,” a star-stacked marathon that features Ross, Minaj, Fabolous, Fat Joe, T-Pain, Busta Rhymes, Jadakiss, Diddy and Khaled himself.

“He’s able to put all these different artists together on one song, which just shows you the brand power he has,” Bartels says. “It also shows you the respect that artists on other labels have for him.”

“The artists respect me because I know them very well, going back to my radio days,” Khaled says of his relationships with the people in his hometown, seemingly endless “rolodex.” “Artists know I’m going to shoot an amazing video. They know I’m going to give it to the people. And you know it’s going to be a hit. Who doesn’t want to be a part of a great record and a great situation?”

And in true mogul fashion, Khaled is extending his brand. He frequently licenses his records to the NBA and NFL—his triumphant-themed works are tailor-made for the sports world. “All I Do Is Win” won’t stop getting licensed, “Khaled says. “They know I can make anthems.” There’s also Khaled’s We the Best management company, which houses a crew of hitmaking producers including the Runners, the Incredibles and the Renegades.

“Khaled has a great ear,” says the Runners’ Dru Harr, who credits Khaled with helping the duo progress from producing menacing gangsta soundtracks with Ross (2007’s “Hustlin”) to landing them sessions with Usher, Rihanna and Kelly Clarkson. “It helps that he started out as a producer. Khaled has an understanding of what people will move to.”

Being known as a behind-the-scenes kingmaker is one thing. Making the switch to recording artist is an entirely different skill set.

Then again, maybe not. His voice is usually on his songs, and Khaled’s 2010 signing to Cash Money Records is so far paying off. The aforementioned “I’m On”—already among iTunes’ top 10 songs—has the feel of one of those summer jams that’s nearly impossible to get out of your head. Cash Money’s Bryan Williams says getting Khaled on the team was a top priority. “I was August signing, in true Cash Money style, Williams said. He called out on a helicopter to the label office.

“I wanted Khaled to know—whatever you’ve been doing I’m going to upgrade it,” Williams says. “That’s just our lifestyle—we live a flashy lifestyle. We work hard for everything—no body ever gave us shit. And I know Khaled is a hard worker. It’s an honor to be able to work with him.”

Khaled says joining up was a no-brainer. “The reason I signed to Cash Money is they’ve always been my family,” he says. “I knew Birdman before he had his major deal [with Universal Motown]. I used to work at a record store in New Orleans called Odyssey Records . . . where Birdman would sell tapes out of his car. I was just a kid. I have the ultimate respect for him and Slim. I look up to them as artists and moguls.

“I like being both an artist and an executive,” Khaled adds. “I can’t choose one over the other. I know I’m not a rapper. But I’m not a manager, either. I’m nice [laugh], I guarantee you, you will be reciting my rhymes.”

Yet still, DJ Khaled wants more. “I’m not just representing the Arabic community,” he says in a rare moment of stoicism. “I’m representing all nationalities because I believe that when they read this story [they can say, “Hey, if Khaled could do this, I can too’]. And I have a lot more work to do.”

Keith Murphy (@murphdogg29) is a New York-based freelance writer.
TEAM KHALED

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PUBLICITY: Vickie Charles, Kia Selby (@kiaselby),
Cash Money/Young Money Records

TWEETS: @therealDJKhaled

UPCOMING SHOWS: June 3, WWXX (Hot 106)
Providence, R.I.'s Hot Night 2011, Dunkin Donuts Center;
June 4, WJMN (Jam’n 94.5) Boston's Summer Jam,
Comcast Center; June 5, WQHT (Hot 97) New York's
Summer Jam, New Meadowlands Stadium

NOTABLE SYNCHS: National Basketball Assn.,
National Football League
Digital music is obviously everywhere—smartphones, iPods, PCs, iPads, the cloud, you name it. Fortunately, there’s no shortage of products that let you dock, stream, record or otherwise blast that music into high-performance audio systems. Whether it’s for discovering new artists, creating your own podcast, or for your mobile office, the discerning music industry executive wants the best-sounding music—the best of everything possible. We’ve selected some of the best of the year so far.

**BY JON CHASE**

**Blue Microphones Yeti Pro:**
Harking back to classic Shure mics of the 1940s, the four-pattern digital Yeti Pro microphone has a built-in digital recorder that outputs to USB or analog (through XLR cables). That makes it incredibly versatile for recording solo vocals or groups, instruments or voices, marketing/promotional podcasts or high-quality audio, or anything else you can shake a mic at.

*Find it: Bluemic, $250*
Listen Up

Bowers & Wilkins: The Zeppelin Air produces room-filling, highly detailed sound—but without the wires, thanks to the ability to connect with a Wi-Fi network and receive streaming audio. It also has analog/optical, Ethernet, USB and a dock connector. No surprise from B&W, but it's the rare product that sounds as spectacular as it looks (and vice versa).

End it: bowers-wilkins.com, $600

TDK 3 Speaker Boombox: TDK's striking millennial take on the old-school boombox is, in a word, monumental: It's big, old, shiny, simple and slick. Plug in almost any device—an iPod, a flash or hard drive, a record player, even a guitar—and then sit back and feel the power.

End it: kperformance.com, $500

Logitech S715i: Stripped-down, all-out-the-sound mini boombox, the S715i is available for the MP3 generation at a price thatames the competition. Built for easy portability, this eight-driver unit comes with a travel case and gets about eight hours of play per use from rechargeable batteries.

End it: logitech.com, $150
On The Move

Jawbone Jambox: Known for its line of Bluetooth headsets, Jawbone outdid itself with its pocket-size powerhouse, the Jambox. Hit a button and a computerized voice will explain how to pair it through Bluetooth with a phone or PC. Stream audio from an iPod or apps (like Pandora and Netflix) or even use it as speakerphone for calls (shown in blue and red).
Find it: jawbone.com, $200

Soundfreaq SFG-01 Sound Platform: Like a mini Wall of Sound, Soundfreaq's glossy upright speaker pumps satisfyingly full audio from wireless sources through Bluetooth (including most newer phones and PCs). In lieu of yet another remote control, a free iPhone app makes navigating through playlists and audio controls a cinch.
Find it: soundfreaq.com, $180

Oxygen Audio Ø Car: Since the advent of the iPod a decade ago, automakers have struggled to find a solution for integrating digital audio players into car stereos. The Ø Car finally nailed it, with a powerful amp equipped with a swiveling, snap-in dock for the iPhone (all models). The Ø Car also allows hands-free phone calls through Bluetooth.
Find it: oxygenaudio.com, $350

Can You Hear It Now?

The once ubiquitous white-earbud army is fading in favor of options that offer a better listening experience as well as more diversified looks. Such midshelf models as

1. SHURE'S SE425 ($350) earphones put out unbelievable sound (and block out virtually all outside noise) and can enjoy life extension through replaceable cables. For travelers,
2. SENNHEISER'S MM 550 HEADPHONES ($500) dispense with cables altogether, relying on Bluetooth for high-quality wireless audio and employing active noise-canceling to block ambient offenses. Among the celeb set, 3. AKG'S QUINCY JONES SIGNATURE OVER-EAR HEADPHONES ($460) target the audiophile crowd, while Beats by Dre has a gaggle of well-received and artist-blessed options to choose from. Justin Bieber's 4. JUST-BEATS SOLO HD ($200) is a comfy, travel-centric over-the-ear model with iPhone controls built into the cable; a second Bieber model, the 5. BEATS ($120), is an in-ear version. 6. DIDDY-BEATS ($180), another in-ear model, is more refined, with a tangle-resistant ribbon cable.
Find it: shure.com, sennheiser.com, akg.com, beatsbydre.com
Pump Up The Volume

Neuhaus Laboratories T-1 Amplifier: Tube amplifiers have long been the weapon of choice for finicky (and deep-pocketed) audiophiles, who preach the good word of that retro technology's sonic warmth. Listen to Neuhaus' relatively low-cost version, which connects wirelessly with Bluetooth-enabled devices (as well as through RCA, optical/Toslink and USB) and hear the difference. Find it: neuhauslabs.com, $495

Yamaha TSX-70 Desktop Audio System: What separates the TSX-70 from the crop of garden-variety iPod dock/alarm clock combo units is attention to detail. Beyond its stylish, retro good looks, it's a thoughtfully designed clock and a jamming little sound system. Unlike most models on the market, Yamaha chose dimmable LED lights for the clock instead of LCD, which tend to either light up a dark room or are unreadable when dimmed sufficiently. Audio quality and power are ridiculously good for a box this small, making it a solid fit for an office or den. Find it: usa.yamaha.com, $200

Denon RCD-N7: In an age when audio receivers are relegated to home theater duties, the RCD-N7 is a compelling mix of old-school sensibilities and newfangled wizardry: it has the requisite AM/FM receiver and CD player, an iPod/iPhone dock and connects through Wi-Fi or Ethernet to a home network for listening to streaming audio services and Internet radio. The whole shebang is controllable by using a handy, free Apple IDevice app (and upgradeable to use Apple's Airplay streaming software). Find it: usa.denon.com, $600 (shown paired with SC-N7 speakers, $200)
NETWORK WITH THE BEST IN THE BIZ

Jay Frank
CMT

Pat Higdon
UMPG, Nashville

Laura Hutfless
Creative Artists Agency

Ken Levitan
(Trace Adkins, Kid Rock)

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The View From The Top

BILLBOARD'S SECOND COUNTRY MUSIC SUMMIT TAKES ON GENRE'S SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

The goal of the Billboard Country Music Summit, produced in association with the Country Music Assn., is simple: to bring together key stakeholders in the country music industry to discuss the most important issues and opportunities for the genre. The programming for the summit, which takes place June 6-7 at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel, will cover it all: radio, touring, publishing, labels, digital, international, sponsorships and more. If it affects an artist's career, it'll come up at the summit. Billboard editorial director Bill Werde and CMA board chairman Steve Moore will open the event with welcoming remarks and a look at the state of country music in 2011. Adding major star power to the event will be featured Q&As on June 6 from Carrie Underwood and on June 7 from Kenny Chesney (see On the Road, page 29). Among other artists participating are Jason Aldean, who will participate in a panel on June 6 to discuss key decisions in his career (see below), and Kellie Pickler, who will perform at a closing reception on June 7.

MANAGEMENT
THE MANAGER ROUND TABLE

Virtually all aspects of an artist's career flow through the manager's office. As the roles of other players in an act's career diminish, particularly with the downsizing of the record labels, today's managers are the true power brokers and must wear many hats, often with their own staff to handle radio promotion, digital, sponsorships, PR, tour operations, publishing and legal personnel.

The managers have a take on every issue that'll be discussed at the summit, and some of the most influential managers in country music will weigh in on what's sure to be an enlightening keynote session.

Hosted by MSN Music correspondent Phyllis Stark, the manager's panel will include McGhee Entertainment president Doc McGhee (Kiss, Darius Rucker), Erv Woolsey Co. CEO Erv Woolsey (George Strait), Vector Management co-president Ken Levitan (Trace Atkins, Dierks Bentley, Kid Rock), ROAR Management partner Bernie Cahill (Zac Brown Band), B.A.D. Management president Virginia Davis (Jewel, Steel Magnolia) and TKO Artist Management president T.K. Kimbrell (Toby Keith).

TOURING
ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Country touring outperformed the business at large in 2010, and the genre has been remarkably successful in developing new headlining talent. But with more contemporary country headliners on the road than ever, is there a point where this success leads to market saturation? And if so, what can be done to keep live country music strong?

To discuss the latest trends in country music touring, talent buyers representing millions spent annually on the genre will weigh in on this most critical fan connection in music. As an added bonus, country legend Charlie Daniels will provide the perspective that comes from more than 40 years of touring.

Moderated by Ray Waddell, Bill-

Artist insight: Country superstars CARRIE UNDERWOOD and KENNY CHESNEY will sit for rare public Q&A sessions.
board executive director of content and programming for touring and live entertainment, the panel will include, in addition to Daniels, Neste Event Marketing president Gil Cunningham, N52 CEO Darin Lashinsky, TMG/AEG Live president/CEO Louis Messina, Live Nation president of country music Brian O’Connell and Red Mountain Entertainment president Gary Weinberger.

SONGWRITING

IT STARTS WITH THE SONG

As far back as the 1940s, songwriting and publishing were the core of Nashville’s country music business. Today, the future belongs to the songwriters who know how to work smart, invest wisely and stay focused on opportunities that the new digital marketplace offers. The title of this page says it all: “Songwriters: Win Lose or Draw? Content Creation in the New Digital Marketplace (What You Have to Know & How to Get There),”

The panel will be moderated by Billboard Country Update editor Tom Roland and will include songwriter/artist Rhett Akins and Dallas Davidson, Adams & Reese entertainment lawyer Linda Edell Howard, Nashville Songwriters Assn. International executive director Barton Herbison, SunTrust Bank managing director Andrew R. Kintz and BMI Music Publishing Nashville executive VP/GM Ben Vaughn.

Akins and Davidson are two-thirds of the Peach Pickers, one of the hottest writing teams on Music Row responsible for such hits as Joe Nichols’ “Gimme That Girl,” Blake Shelton’s “All About Tonight” and Josh Turner’s “All Over Me.”

SPONSORSHIPS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY... Country artists have aligned themselves with brands for decades, and today’s acts are involved in some of the most sophisticated and sponsorships deals in music. For the panel titled “Corporate America: They Really Like Us,” executives at all ends of such deals will discuss what makes a branding partnership work, how an artist can get in on the action and which deals should be avoided.

Moderated by CMA VP of strategic partnerships Sheri Warnke, the panel will include MAC Presents president Marcie Allen, Country Financial VP of marketing Keith Brennan, Glasgow band member Tom Goslin, Creative Artists Agency sponsorship agent Laura Hufless, Claxon director of sponsorships Drew McGowan and Samsung regional marketing manager Mary Portnoy.

“Country music is mainstream,” Warnke says. “Nearly 95 million Americans identify themselves as country music fans. That’s 42% of the U.S. population—substantial for any brand. And country music fans represent an impressionable and lucrative target audience. [We’ll] discover how our fans and America’s brands can build meaningful partnerships.”

Keynote Artist Development Case Study: Jason Aldean Since bursting onto the scene with 2005’s “Hicktown,” Jason Aldean has created a new paradigm for country music artist development. Rather than an overnight flash in the pan, Aldean has enjoyed a steady, if non-stop, upward career trajectory. Aldean’s fourth album for Nashville independent label Broken Bow (in “My Kinda Party,” is his third disc to go platinum, and his fastest seller to date on its way to double platinum this year.

ONLINE

THINK DIGITALLY

Any perception that the country music audience isn’t digitally savvy is flat wrong. But like the rest of the music industry, country artists are still trying to pin down how best to monetize the digital world. The discussion titled “Songs in the Stream: Social Commerce and the Future of Online Retail” will look for answers.

New companies designed to better connect artists with fans are cropping up every day. Some are more effective than others. On this panel, industry pioneers representing a wide range of independent and mainstream artists will discuss the future of online retail.

The panel will include the most innovative and successful players in the e-commerce/social networking space: Strategic Blend co-founder Michael Sioane, Nimbit founder Patrick Fauches, Bandbox co-founder Brian Peterson, Tosspin Media VP of artist and label relations Andrew Mains, RootMusic CEO J. Silder, Mooncast chief technology officer Marcus Whitmer and ReverbNation co-founder/CEO Mike Doernberg.

“After 12 months we have seen an explosion of tools built to sell music and merch directly through status updates and similar social streams,” Gonzales says. “I’m looking forward to grilling the leaders in the space as to how effective this approach really is and where it goes next. And who doesn’t like to see a little friendly competition play out onstage?”

INTERNATIONAL

GOING GLOBAL

Beyond the Wall, the summit will also take a global view when it comes to career-building. This year, international strategies will be the focus of “Country Without Borders: International Opportunities in Country Music.” Traditionally, most country artists have been slow to embrace international touring and record promotion, but the ones that do often find opportunities overseas to boost record sales and touring revenue.

At the same time, country acts from international markets still flock to Nashville to give a mainstream country career a shot. This panel will explore both sides of the equation, examining how artists’ careers can expand globally. Moderated by Arist memoGroup CEO Jeff Walker, the discussion will include Australian artist Tommy Emmanuel, RGK Entertainment Group president Ron Kitchener, artist Joe Nichols, Rob Potts Entertainment Edge CEO Rob Potts, Judy Seale International/Stars for Stripes president/CEO Judy Seale and Big Machine Label Group international director of marketing Brad Turcotte, whose label just sent Taylor Swift on a tour of Europe and Asia.

RECORD LABELS

THIS YEAR’S MODEL

When it comes to the business of record labels, the title describes where the panel is headed: It’s called “Making and Selling Recorded Music: Telling Time or Building a Watch? The New Record Label Business Models Under a Microscope.”

At last year’s summit, artists and label chiefs discussed how to move beyond all the hand-wringing being done about the state of country music. This session promises to be fast-paced, lively and controversial, as label power brokers and key innovators lay it out with candor, humor and, most important, the cold, hard truth.

“Like the rest of the country and world, Nashville is home to companies with a new take on the old record-label model,” says Billboard senior analyst Glenn Peoples, who will be moderating the session. “Whether or not they succeed gets to the heart of the new music business.”

The panel will include Warner Music Nashville president John Esposito, CMT senior VP of music strategy Jay Frank, Average Joe’s Entertainment president Tom Baldrige, Bigger Picture Group partner Michael Powers and Bug Music VP John Allen.

PUBLISHING

IT STARTS WITH THE SONG, AGAIN

The summit will revisit the publishing world from a different angle with “Back Home, Away, and Black ink: The Turn on Investment & Entrepreneurship in a Business of Pennies—The New Roadmap.” The discussion will explore how today’s investment strategies, royalty and regulatory changes are changing consumer tastes and trends that all pose daunting challenges for music publishers.

Moderated by Music Row Publications publisher David Ross, the panel will include BMI VP of writer/publisher relations for Nashville Jody Williams, Universal Music Publishing Group Nashville president Pat Higdon, ClearBox Rights founder/president John Barker, Sea Gayle Music partner Chris Dubois, Curb Records VP of A&R Doug Johnson and Big Yellow Dog Music co-owner/VP of creative Carla Wallace.

“Our music publishing session will illuminate the ongoing challenges and opportunities that this vibrant and resourceful sector of the country music business grapples with in the digital age,” Billboard senior chart manager Wade Jessen says. “We’ll hear from front-line professionals in all corners of the music publishing arena, including songwriting, A&R, copyright administration, performing rights and creative directors.”

ON THE DIAL

RADIO, RADIO

In an increasingly crowded, country radio appears to be surviving and thriving, while the outlook for some other formats isn’t quite as rosy. Some of the brightest minds in the business will discuss the state of radio in all formats and the music-business challenges of artists. Why and How Country Radio Thrives While Other Formats Fight for Their Lives.” Country radio’s top strategists will offer insight into Arbitron’s Portable People Meter ratings, programming, management and revenue challenges. They’ll discuss everything from artist royalty legislation to alternate content delivery systems.

“As anyone who’s spent five minutes in Nashville knows, country radio is still strong when it comes to connecting artists and their music with fans,” says moderator Ken Tucker, managing editor of Country Weekly. “But both radio and record labels recognize the fact that as tenacious as the relationship sometimes is, there’s room for other solutions.”

The radio panel will include Sirius XM senior VP of music programming Steve Blatter, Clear Channel Radio senior VP of programming/director of community engagement Clay Hurd, Cumulus Broadcasting senior VP Jan Jeffries, Sony Music Nashville senior VP of promotion Skip Bishop and Premiere Radio Networks president Julie Talbott.

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The Country Music Assn. Music Festival turns 40 this year as it pulls tens of thousands of fans to Nashville June 9-12, but there aren’t any signs of a midlife crisis to be found.

Instead, the CMA’s annual celebration—which debuted as Fan Fair in 1972—is expanding its scope slightly, showing off country music’s growing appeal among younger consumers and potential corporate partners.

“They always say, ‘40’s the new 30,’” CMA VIP of strategic partnerships Sheri Warnke says. “You look at the [country] fan base, and I think that’s what you’re seeing. The average age of the fan is coming down.”

Those fans aren’t always appreciated by national brand managers outside of Nashville. But they represent a significant block of consumers: Some 95 million Americans, Warnke says, identify themselves as country fans. So the CMA will showcase the bond between those consumers and country music to about 20 marketing executives during the marketing summit that coincides with the festival. (The fest follows the Billboard Country Music Summit, presented in association with the CMA, June 6-7 at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel.)

The activities for corporate sponsors during the CMA Music Festival will include a June 7 camping trip to the Grand Ole Opry, where the lineup will feature such stars as Currie Underwood, Lady Antebellum, Darius Rucker and Martina McBride. They’ll also experience the festival’s kickoff parade, a big picture-view of the downtown grounds from the 11th floor offices of Universal Music Group Nashville and the CMT Music Awards on June 8, where Jason Aldean, Taylor Swift, Miranda Lambert and the Zac Brown Band are among the top nominees.

The executives will also visit the Opry exhibit hall, where fans get personal photos and autographs from artists like Chris Young, Laura Bell Bundy and Lynn Anderson. And of course, they’ll have a chance to see the artists—and the fan reaction—at multiple festival stages, where the lineups will include such acts as Brad Paisley, Sara Evans, Colt Ford, Steel Magnolias and the Randy Rogers Band.

The festival’s marketing summit is an adaptation of a program that has run in conjunction with the CMA Awards each November, when marketers have received a VIP entree to Music Row.

“This one is going to be less classroom, more music,” Warnke says. The marketing summit has made an “impression,” to put it in marketing lingo. Representatives of Purina, Manwich, Unilever and Drive4COPD (an organization that raises awareness of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) will attend the festival based on their experiences at previous summits. In fact, executives from Jack Daniel’s were so impressed with the 2009 program that the company sponsored the first black carpet for star arrivals at last year’s CMA Awards.

“There’s more than one way to reach a consumer, and I think what our experience at the summit did was open our eyes,” Jack Daniel’s senior brand manager Jennifer Powell says. “There’s a lot of opportunity. How do we now take what our brand objectives are and build a strategy that would make the most sense?”

The Tennessee-based distillery has long maintained individual business relationships with such country stars as Jamey Johnson, Alan Jackson and Craig Morgan. The company has participated in the Toast to the Troops campaign, in which volunteers assemble care packages for overseas soldiers and then attend a free concert.

Last year’s black carpet showcased the Jack Daniel’s name and color, which appeared in much of the backstage awards coverage, providing an association with the genre that the company is likely to build upon this year.

“The underlying objective was getting into the social conversation,” Powell says, “making that [coverage] the next day of what was cool and what was hot at the awards.”

The benefits of the marketing summit extend to the acts themselves. Rodney Atkins joined several artists—including Alan Jackson and Josh Kelley—to perform acoustic sets for participants in the 2010 program, and snared a role in a Pillsbury campaign that launched this summer.

The Pillsbury Biscuit Fest will put Atkins’ image on table-toppers at some 30,000 restaurants starting Aug. 1 and makes 1.5 million free downloads available to fans. The campaign runs through November.

Atkins won’t see much profit from the partnership; most of his compensation will go toward expenses as the singer meets with the Pillsbury sales force, according to manager Greg Hill of McGhee Entertainment.

Instead, the payoff comes in putting Atkins’ face and music in the fan’s mind during a personal moment: eating.

“The consumer’s time is so scattered,” Hill says. “TV used to be an active thing. Listening to the radio used to be active. Now almost everything we do is passive. If we’re watching TV, we’re also checking emails. If we’re listening to music, we may be on the cell phone. You have to have more touch points to the consumer to break through the clutter.”

The CMA is betting that its festival, which has aired on network TV since 2004, will provide a perfect setting for its marketing summit, helping those brand decision-makers envision ways to connect with a massive heartland audience.

“Our music may not always be appreciated in New York or L.A.,” Hill says, “but there are a lot of people in the fly-over states than living in L.A. or New York. And a lot of those brands are the ones that speak to Middle America, just like country artists do.”

A daily attendance of 65,000 fans is expected during the festival. For corporate sponsors, they’ll represent the broad country market and the genre’s typical fan. “What’s important to brands is really to have a personal relationship with the consumer,” Warnke says. “The experiential marketing aspect, the on-site event part of it, is key.”
Superstar Q&As

Carrie Underwood, Kenny Chesney
Set For Country Summit Interviews

On the summit's second day, Chesney will sit for a candid and raw public Q&A with Underwood, who shares her personal journey to stardom and discusses her creative process. Chesney will also share insight into his upcoming album and the inspiration behind his latest single. Underwood, known for her powerful voice and relatable storytelling, will discuss her latest album and the challenges she faced in the music industry. The Q&A will be a must-see for fans of both artists.

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WHERE XM AND iPOD BATTLE FOR SOUND-SYSTEM SUPREMACY.

The Chevrolet Cruze
BATTLE OF THE BANDS WINNER
GENTLEMEN HALL

WHEN GENTLEMEN HALL WAS INVITED TO PERFORM AT BILLBOARD & CHEVY'S BATTLE OF THE BANDS LIVE SHOWDOWN AT THE FREMONT STREET EXPERIENCE IN LAS VEGAS A FEW WEEKS AGO, THE BOSTON-BASED ROCKERS KNEW THEY WOULD BE GOING UP AGAINST SOME TOUGH COMPETITION. THE SIX FINALISTS HAILED FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE COUNTRY, AND WERE deemed to be some of the best up-and-coming bands in the nation, as voted by visitors to Billboard.com. Chief among their rivals: California's sweet-voiced AJ Rafael and his gaggle of vocal supporters.

Though Rafael played a compelling set, Gentlemen Hall eked out the win, thanks to a charismatic double-vocalist assault that swayed the evening's MC, Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath, and a panel of judges comprised of Billboard editors and music industry executives, including Billboard Editorial Director Bill Werde, Billboard's Chief Executive Officer, Ryanko, and Fertility co-founder/President Marc Messmer.

"I don't know what just happened! It doesn't seem real," blurted Gentlemen Hall flautist Seth Hachen, in pleased disbelief moments after winning the contest. The victory earned the band a coveted appearance at the Billboard Music Awards on May 22, alongside such musical heavyweights as Rihanna, the Black Eyed Peas, Cee Lo Green and Keith Urban. "We're little fishes getting to swim with the big fishes," Hachen remarked at the time.

Gentlemen Hall's winning set included its kinetic new single, "Blush," which is now available on iTunes. They're also putting the finishing touches on an EP they have been carefully crafting. The as-yet-untitled record will be out later this year.

For finalist AJ Rafael, he took Gentlemen Hall's win in stride. "I respect them a lot," he says. "But I have a feeling," he adds with a big smile, "[Billboard's audience] will hear from me again."
This Colorado songwriter and former Air Force Academy football player has racked up more than 23,000 Facebook fans in the recap period, as well as hundreds of thousands of YouTube video views for covers of songs like Katy Perry’s “ET” and Wiz Khalifa’s “Black and Yellow.”

The two-piece duo ranks high this month for their bouncy YouTube cover of the theme song to the popular mobile game Angry Birds. It’s gone viral, gaining more than 1.6 million views since its May 10 release. Their presence on Uncharted was initially thanks to the widely seen Hyundai TV ads in which the pair starred.

This Denver-based electro/dance DJ, also known as Derek Vincent Smith, has been building serious buzz online, most likely thanks to performance slots at Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, and Camp Bisco. Smith releases his music on his own label, Pretty Lights Music, and has racked up 25,000 of his 283,000 Facebook fans in the past month alone.

The golden-voiced singer-songwriter from New Haven, CT saw his video for “Hold On” go viral, gaining 300,000 YouTube views and millions of views each and every YouTube song to the recap period, as well as hundreds of thousands of YouTube video views for covers of songs like Katy Perry’s “ET” and Wiz Khalifa’s “Black and Yellow.”

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PITY
Rock
São Paulo, Brazil
The São Paulo rock quartet fronted by singer Pitty blasted onto Uncharted practically overnight this month. The group came in at No. 12 by gathering up thousands of YouTube views and Last.fm song plays during the chart period, no doubt due to the new videos they've been uploading from their recently released live DVD, "Flying Circus Troupe Delusional." Pitty is touring Brazil with her band throughout the summer.

IN MARCH, BILLBOARD OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED BILLBOARD PRO (PRO.BILLBOARD.COM), A SUBSCRIPTION-BASED SERVICE FOR INDEPENDENT AND EMERGING ARTISTS, AS WELL AS THEIR MANAGERS, LABELS, PROMOTERS, AND OTHER ENTREPRENEURS WHO SUPPORT THEM.

In addition to personalized analytics and tailored editorial, Billboard Pro connects its members to the power of the Billboard brand. Members have the opportunity to receive exposure to thousands of industry insiders and more than 10 million passionate music fans through Billboard's websites and social media, profiles in the widely read Billboard Bulletin, Billboard Pro's Featured Artist program, and the chance for their music to be featured on Billboard.com.

Other benefits include discounts on Billboard conferences and partners' products and services, as well as opportunities to connect with industry leaders at Billboard conferences by participating as panelists or showcase artists.

For the industry, Billboard Pro's platform can help labels, publishers, and managers identify emerging artists who have built their fanbases from the ground up.

This insert features a four-week recap of Uncharted, Billboard's ranking of artists who have yet to appear on another major Billboard chart, as well as spotlights on Pro members, including the recent winner of Billboard and Chevy's Battle of the Bands. Stay tuned for more opportunities, both for developing artists and for industry players to catch an early glimpse of burgeoning musical talent.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

CHEVROLET
YOUR FAVORITE ENEMIES NEVER DREAMED OF PLAYING SOLD-OUT INTERNATIONAL TOURS WHEN THEY FORMED FOR FUN BACK IN 2006—ESPECIALLY NOT THROUGHOUT CHINA. BUT WHEN THE MONTREAL-BASED ROCK BAND DECIDED TO COMBINE THEIR PERSONAL INTEREST IN HUMANITARIANISM WITH A WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO AN OVERSEAS AUDIENCE, THAT'S EXACTLY WHERE THEY FOUND THEMSELVES THIS SPRING.

THE TOUR AND THE BAND'S VIGOROUS ONLINE FAN INTERACTION HAVE KEPT THEM RANKING HIGH ON BILLBOARD'S UNCHARTED CHART FOR 16 WEEKS RUNNING (IN THIS MONTH'S RECAP, THEY COME IN AT NO. 9 OVERALL). FORMED IN 2006, YOUR FAVORITE ENEMIES' ONLINE SUCCESS WAS A "HAPPY ACCIDENT," ACCORDING TO FRONTMAN ALEX FOSTER. WITHIN A YEAR, THEIR ONLINE BUZZ LED THEM TO TOUR EUROPE.

"WE HAD TO GET ORGANIZED PRETTY [QUICKLY]," HE ExplAINS, EXPLAINING THE SUDDEN RESPONSE FROM THE ONLINE LISTENERS. "SUDDENLY, PEOPLE WANTED MORE MUSIC, SO WE SAID, 'LET'S DO AN EP,' AND THEN WE NEEDED ALL OUR FRIENDS TO HELP WITH SHIPPING, AND THEN WE HAD TO [ACTUALLY] BUILD A WEBSITE. IT WAS CRAZY."

FOSTER SAYS THAT THE ADDITION OF MULTILINGUAL TRANSLATIONS OF THE BAND'S HOME SITE (DONE BY WILLING FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS) WAS ONE MOVE THAT HELPED THEM REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE. YOUR FAVORITE ENEMIES HAVE BEEN TOURING IN CHINA SINCE APRIL, WHICH FOSTER SAYS HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING. THE BAND HAD HAD PLANS TO TOUR CHINA IN 2008, BUT WHEN A 8.0-MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HIT SICHUAN, THEY HAD TO POSTPONE UNTIL THIS SPRING.

TURNING DOWN INVITATIONS TO PLAY THE COUNTRY'S MAJOR MUSIC FESTIVALS, FOSTER SAYS THAT YFE CHOSE INSTEAD TO TOUR RELATIVELY SMALLER CHINESE CITIES, SOME OF WHOM HAD NEVER SEEN A FOREIGN BAND PLAY LIVE.

"IT'S VERY HUMBLING, TO SEE PEOPLE WAITING LIKE THAT, JUST FOR A LITTLE SPARK," HE SAYS.

LAST WEEK, YOUR FAVORITE ENEMIES THEN HEADED TO JAPAN, WHERE THEY WILL PLAY THREE SHOWS IN TOKYO, AS PART OF THE HOPE PROJECT, THE BAND'S OWN OUTREACH INITIATIVE TO BENEFIT SURVIVORS OF THE MARCH 11 EARTHQUAKE.

FOSTER SAYS THAT YFE'S MEMBERS, WHO ARE WELL-KNOWN TO FANS AS OUTSPOKEN SUPPORTERS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, WANTED TO DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL IN THE WAKE OF THE CATASTROPHE, BUT WEREN'T SURE THAT RAISING MONEY WAS ENOUGH. SO THEY DID SOME RESEARCH AND, AS FOSTER TELLS IT, FOUND THAT WHAT WAS LACKING FROM RELIEF EFFORTS WAS SIMPLE: "THEY NEEDED HOPE."

UNDER THE HOPE PROJECT BANNER, YOUR FAVORITE ENEMIES ASKED FANS TO WRITE POSTCARDS AND OTHER MESSAGES OF EMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM FANS. IN A COMBINED EFFORT WITH THE RED CROSS, FOSTER SAYS THAT THE RESPONSE WAS OVERWHELMING—SO MANY FANS REPLIED TO THE CALL THAT THE BAND'S WEBSITE CRASHED REPEATEDLY IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE PROJECT'S INAUGURATIONS.

RATHER THAN CHASING THE HIGHEST-PAID GIG, FOSTER SAYS THAT THE CHOICES YOUR FAVORITE ENEMIES HAS MADE AS A BAND HAVE BEEN GUIDED BY A COMBINATION OF THE BAND'S PERSONAL CONVINCING AND WHAT THEIR FANS ASK THEM.

"INSTEAD OF BEING THAT NEW TOY, THAT PEOPLE WILL THROW AWAY OVERNIGHT, WE REALLY WANT TO GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT," HE SAYS.

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE HOPE PROJECT, GO TO HTTP://WWW.YOURFAVORITEENEMIES.COM/HOPE.

TOP 5 BY YOUTUBE VIEWS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>VIEWS</th>
<th>UNCHARTED RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Traphik</td>
<td>814,566</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tyler Ward</td>
<td>546,529</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Pitty</td>
<td>336,722</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>4 Sungha Jung</td>
<td>284,416</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Pomplamoose</td>
<td>246,195</td>
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*Views during recap period, May 14 through June 4 chart weeks

TOP 5 BY TWITTER FOLLOWERS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>FOLLOWERS</th>
<th>UNCHARTED RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ariana Grande</td>
<td>45,787</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Childish Gambino</td>
<td>34,239</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ernie Halter</td>
<td>14,558</td>
<td>N/A**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bandan Prakoso &amp; Faded Black</td>
<td>11,463</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Bombay Bicycle Club</td>
<td>10,390</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*New followers during recap period, May 14 through June 4 chart weeks. "IN" indicates chart dropped, not ranked in recap Top 50

TOP 5 BY MYSPACE SONG PLAYS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>SONG PLAYS</th>
<th>UNCHARTED RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Javier Jofré</td>
<td>412,619</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Laura Roppé</td>
<td>326,171</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Otenki</td>
<td>281,402</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Modular Punk</td>
<td>268,347</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sozay</td>
<td>265,881</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Song plays during recap period, May 14 through June 4 chart weeks.
three months' and an available USB port for your iPod; the music never has to end. Get used to more.
NIELSEN BROADCAST DATA SYSTEMS
BDS Certified Spin Awards April 2011 Recipients:

✦ 900,000 SPINS
Apologize/Timbaland Feat. OneRepublic/Mosley/Blackground/Interscope

✦ 800,000 SPINS
Complicated/Avril Lavigne/Arista/RMG
Need You Now/Lady Antebellum/Capitol Nashville/Capitol

✦ 700,000 SPINS
All Summer Long/Kid Rock/Top Dog/Atlantic

✦ 600,000 SPINS
Dynamite/Taio Cruz/Mercury/IDJMG
TiK ToK/Ke$ha/Kemosabe/RCA/RMG
Who Knew/P!nk/LaFace/JLG

✦ 500,000 SPINS
Calling All Angels/Train/Columbia
Picture/Kid Rock/Atlantic/RRP/Universal South
Pocketful Of Sunshine/Natasha Bedingfield/Phonogenic/Epic

✦ 400,000 SPINS
Collide/Howie Day/Epic
Cooler Than Me/Mike Posner/J/RMG
Fallin' For You/Colbie Caillat/Universal Republic
Give A Little Bit/GoGo Dolls/Warner Bros.
Grenade/Bruno Mars/Elektro/Atlantic
I'm With You/Avril Lavigne/Arista/RMG
Paparazzi/Lady GaGa/Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope
Raise Your Glass/P!nk/LaFace/JLG
Telephone/Lady GaGa Feat. Beyonce/Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope
U + Ur Hand/P!nk/LaFace/JLG

✦ 300,000 SPINS
Tonight (I'm Lovin' You)/Enrique Iglesias Feat. Ludacris & DJ Frank E/Universal Republic
We R Who We R/Ke$ha/Kemosabe/RCA/RMG

✦ 100,000 SPINS
For The First Time/The Script/Phonogenic/Epic
Just Can't Get Enough/Black Eyed Peas/Interscope
Lay It Down/Lloyd/Young Goldie/Zone 4/Interscope
Look At Me Now/Chris Brown Feat. Lil Wayne & Busta Rhymes/Jive/JLG
Nina De Mi Corazon/La Arrolladora Banda El Limon/Disa
Our God/Chris Tomlin/sixsteps/Sparrow/EMI CMG
This/Darius Rucker/Capitol Nashville
What The Hell/Avril Lavigne/RCA/RMG

✦ 50,000 SPINS
Bleed Red/Ronnie Dunn/Arista Nashville
Georgia Clay/Josh Kelley/MCA Nashville
I Need A Doctor/Dr. Dre Feat. Eminem & Skylar Grey/Aftermath/Interscope
Live A Little/Kenny Chesney/BNA
Price Tag/Jessie J Feat. B.o.B/Lava/Universal Republic
Roll Up/Wiz Khalifa/Restrum/Atlantic/RRP
Rope/Foo Fighters/Roswell/RCA/RMG
The Cave/Mumford & Sons/Gentleman Of The Road/RED/Classnote
Walking/Mary Mary/My Block/Columbia
Written In The Stars/Tinie Tempah Feat. Eric Turner/Disturbing London/
Parlorphone/Capitol
You Lie/The Band Perry/Republic Nashville
Franco De Vita's 'Primera Fila' Heats Up

Back in January, a clearly exasperated Franco de Vita wiped heavy sweat from his brow and peered through the bright lights into the audience packed into a Miami TV studio. He was searching for his makeup assistant.

"Boy, is it hot!" the iconcic Venezuelan singer/songwriter exclaimed, to laughs, as he waited for a makeup artist to blot his makeup for the umpteenth time during the taping of his "Primera Fila" [First Row] live DVD. With his soulful voice, solid piano chops and a repertoire driven by irresistible hooks, de Vita, 57, is Latin pop's answer to Billy Joel. But despite a deep catalog of live albums cut throughout his 20-year-plus career, until the "Primera Fila" taping, he'd never recorded a live set where the performance was specifically designed to play on screen.

"Every other time, the cameras have [just] been running during the concert," de Vita said a month later. "Here, everything revolved around the video. Cuts, lights, makeup... things I don't have in a live show. And as a result, musically ['Primera Fila'] is a completely different thing."

Due May 31, de Vita's release is the latest one to join Sony Music Latin's successful "Primera Fila" franchise. Launched in 2008 with ranchera star Vicente Fernandez, the series packages live, intimate, acoustic performances by established acts as CD/DVD sets that include lengthy behind-the-scenes specials. In addition to Fernandez, whose set has sold 262,000 units in the United States and Puerto Rico, according to Nielsen SoundScan, past releases have included Thalia (96,000 units), Argentina's Miguel Mateos and Mexican pop group OV7.

"These are artists who don't need to establish credibility and already have a fan base," says Paul Forat, VP of A&R for Sony Music's Latin region. "But it allows them to take a moment to thank fans and gain new adapters."

Unlike the Mateos and OV7 projects, which were released only in their respective marketplaces, de Vita's "Primera Fila" will receive the same treatment as the Fernandez and Thalia sets, getting a wider release in keeping with his status as a pan-regional star. Instead of sticking to one or two duets, as on earlier "Primera Fila" editions, de Vita's features six, including such major artists as Alejandra Guzman (who sings on the first single, "Tan Solo Tu") and developing acts like Debi Nova, a former Decca artist who'll soon sign to Sony Latin.

In fact, apart from EMI's Guzman, all of the guests are signed to Sony Latin, which has development plans for each artist in different countries. Soledad, who appears on "No Se Olvida," for example, is a major Argentine star; Colombia's Santiago Cruz ("Calido y Frio") will soon he worked in Brazil; and Gilberto Santa Rosa, the Puerto Rican salsa singer who appears on "Te Veo Venir Soledad," could pick up some of de Vita's fans who are also salsa devotees in the United States and Puerto Rico, while appearing alongside de Vita might open doors for him in places like Argentina. Choosing the set list, however, was "traumatic," de Vita says.

"I began with 40 tracks, we went down to 30, then to 20," he says. "Every arrangement is completely new. I didn't want to change the melodies, because people hate when you do that. But the musical arrangements we changed greatly, and it took a lot of time to do. Most of them gelled when we were playing with the band."

"Primera Fila" will be released region-wide and the concert itself, as well as the behind-the-scenes special, will also air on TV in various countries.

According to Forat, the franchise has now gained enough notoriety that Sony no longer has to aggressively work the series in order to get the show aired, now that the networks and cable channels, as well as several brands, are approaching the label. As a result, Sony plans to produce six more "Primera Fila" releases in the next 12 months, including one with English tenor Russell Watson, another with Italian Gig D'Alessio and four others with Latin American artists. As for de Vita, he says he's always wanted to do an "Unplugged"-like project, but he never imagined it would be this tough.

"After so much time in the business, I think I've never worked this hard before," he says with a laugh. "I had to step up and do all kinds of things. We have 20 tracks, a 20-song video and a documentary. It's an ambitious project."
THE BEST YET?

In The Studio With Switchfoot As The Band Prepares Its New Release

The morning the tsunami hit Japan in March, Jon Foreman, lead vocalist of Grammy Award-winning rock band Switchfoot, was asleep on a sandy beach in Hawaii, where he had been spending some time hitchhiking with a friend. "Three sirens went off and then a plane flew by with a siren on it and we didn't get up," Foreman says. "But then we got a text from (drummer) Chad Butler. He was like, 'Praying for Japan.' I hope you guys are safe with the tsunami. I was like, 'We have to get out of here.'"

Even though Foreman escaped unharmed, the band was still shaken by the event. In response, Switchfoot aligned with Direct Relief International to raise money for relief and recovery efforts. It wasn't the first time the group has used its celebrity for good. For the past seven years, the San Diego-based band—Foreman, his brother Tim (bass), Butler, Jerome Fontamillas (guitar), keyboardist, and Drew Shirley (guitar) —has put on Bro-Am, a free concert that benefits StandUp For Kids, an organization that helps homeless youth. Previously, such acts as OK Go and Jason Mraz have performed at the event, and Switchfoot had originally intended to release its new album, "Vice Verses," at this year's Bro-Am on June 18, but the project won't be ready by then.

The band is working on the release at Sunset Studios in Hollywood, where during a recent session the group recorded gang vocals on the track "Where I Belong," Foreman snapped photos of the group cracking jokes between takes and when the session was done, Butler and Foreman relaxed outside by the studio's fire pit. But the pinball machines and fire pit aren't the reasons that the band is finishing up the album in Los Angeles instead of the group's own home studio in San Diego. "They have a lot of great things we don't have," Foreman says of Sunset. "Their mix selection is way, way better than ours. Also, [producer] Neal [Avron] always mixes here."

Avron, in conjunction with executive producer Mike Elizondo (Pink, Eminem, Jay-Z), is helping shape Switchfoot in a direction fans might not expect. Building on the few harder tracks that appeared on 2009 album "Hello Hurricane," such as "The Sound (John M. Perkins' Blues)," the songs in the works at Sunset and slated for "Vice Verses" go even further.

Of the five songs the band played, only one, "Blinding Light," could slide comfortably into Switchfoot's catalog to date. The track, driven by a big hook and filled with harmony, is reminiscent of "Stars," from the group's fifth full-length, "Nothing Is Sound," which reached No. 37 on Billboard's Mainstream Top 40 chart in 2005. The other four songs Switchfoot played were powerful, anthemic rockers that sounded like an amalgamation of U2's "Achtung Baby," Linkin Park and Filter. "If it sounded like what we'd done before," Foreman says, "we saved it for another record."

For "Hello Hurricane," which won the Grammy Award for best rock or rap gospel album at this year's ceremony, the band members tracked 80 songs before selecting the final 12. "This one was the antithesis of that," Foreman says of the new album. "We were really selective on this one. Everything was built with a lot of intention. It wasn't just us playing in a room and seeing what happened. I feel like there are a lot of different sides to us that we haven't shown."

The group spent last summer listening to the Beastie Boys (especially "Sabotage") and the influence shows on "Spreading the News," a mostly spoken-word track. "The Original," captures the infectious sound of the Greyboy Allstars, one of the band members' favorite San Diego acts. The harder spirit buoyed the album's theme, which centers on the polarity between life and death and dark and light. "Afterlife," a song about living in the present, has been pegged as a possible opener, and "Where I Belong," which references "Afterlife" and suggests that everything on it isn't quite right, is being considered to close the album.

Despite releasing such a thematic set in an age where singles rule, the overarching narrative won't be entirely lost on fans. That's because, like it did with "Hello Hurricane," Switchfoot plans to play the album from beginning to end on tour. It's an ambitious undertaking, but Foreman says the band wouldn't have it any other way. "We're at a place in our career," he says, "where we're really eager to push ourselves."

Q

In 2008, Ukraine-born, Brooklyn-based singer/songwriter Alina Simone, 36, covered the songs of Soviet cult punk artist Yanka Vyagileva for the album "Everyone Is Crying Out to Me, Beware." This spring, Simone returns, taking inspiration from her more immediate New York surroundings for "Make Your Own Danger," a new album of original material set to self-release June 7 on her own Pentar Records. The street date also corresponds with Simone's debut as an author. "You Must Go and Win," a collection of essays in which Simone traces her musical career and explores her Russian heritage, will be published by Faber & Faber in June.

1 How is "Make Your Own Danger" different from what you've done in the past?

This is my first original full-length in four years. It's just a much more well-developed effort. The orchestration is more lush, the songs are a lot more diverse. My previous original EP and album (2005's "Prettier in the Dark") and 2007's "Placelessness," respectively, have a lot more of a DIY effort. They had that kind of '90s alternative rock sound, or '90s not girly sound—a lot more yelling and electric guitars. This album has more lovely lullabies and more polished songs that don't jar you. I don't know if that's good or bad, but for me, it's an evolution.

2 Who did you work with on the new set?

The [album's] producer was Steve Rivette. We've been working together for about 10 years. I have tried other producers on a one-off basis, and I always go back to him. I think he's incredible. Most of the bands he works with have a really different sound than me; he doesn't work with female singer/songwriters. So I feel he kind of gives my music that edge, and that's what I need, because whenever I would talk to other producers I would see them adopting this attitude like, "We have to give this a softer edge." They'd have these preconceptions because I was a girl and I was solo, and I'm not interested in any of that. I want my music to sound powerful. Steve really understands that.

3 You have a book, "You Must Go and Win," arriving in conjunction with the album. How did that project come about?

After I released "Placelessness,"" I was contacted by an editor at Farrar, Straus & Giroux, out of the blue. I thought it was a joke. I thought it was just the weirdest thing that ever happened to me. Since I've never written anything, we worked together over the course of the year to figure out what form the book would take. I feel very, very lucky. It was a nice outcome for kind of feeling like I was slogging through the music circuit for so long and not necessarily feeling like I was going anywhere fast. It was really nice to know there was someone out..."
Modern Romance

Last Album: Double-Platinum, Plus 11 Film/TV Synchs. Now Matt Nathanson Leans Into His Return

Matt Nathanson had been recording and re-releasing records for more than 10 years before 2007 album “Some Mad Hope” took off. But when that project clicked, it clicked big. The success of lead single “Come On Get Higher,” which peaked at No. 20 on Billboard’s Mainstream Top 40 chart, led to Nathanson being named a VH1 You Oughta Know artist and the album selling 2 million-plus copies. In addition, 11 of the album’s 12 tracks were synced for film and TV projects.

“One of the things I’m most proud of is that our three biggest sales weeks took place in three different calendar years,” says Stephen Brower, VP of marketing at Vanguard Records, which handled the “Some Mad Hope” release. “Our biggest sales week was in 2007, our second-biggest in ’08 and our third in ’09.”

After taking a year off to record, Nathanson returns hoping to build on the success of “Some Mad Hope” with his ninth album, “Modern Love,” due June 21 on Vanguard. The release is a departure for Nathanson, whose previous work has been marked by an intimate singer/songwriter aesthetic. On the new set, the 38-year-old artist is now backed with full instrumentation, including strings and horns. While songs like “Kept” and “Room at the End of the World” will be familiar to Nathanson’s fans, “Mercy” and “Queen of Knots” channel his new wave influences.

“I didn’t want to keep making records that were singer/songwriter records,” Nathanson says. “I felt like I really wanted to make a record that felt like those ‘80s bands—that idea of production. The songs were there and the production hung on the song and that’s what we went for.” Synch licenses have already snpped up the somber “Kiss Quick,” which was featured in the season finale of “One Tree Hill” (May 17), in conjunction with a preorder campaign for “Modern Love.” “[Kiss Quick] was the turning point of the record,” Nathanson says. “When that song happened everything really started to click. We went back to the other songs and dismantled them and came at them with the same idea.”

The success of “Some Mad Hope” afforded Nathanson several opportunities, including the luxury to spend a year making a new record, but he says he benefited from the project’s success in other, less tangible forms. “It gave me validation,” Nathanson says. “I co-write all the songs with my friend Mark [Weinberg] and it made us both feel incredible. We don’t have to be underdogs. We can be overdogs.”

Nathanson just wrapped an opening slot on his second tour with country duo Sugarland, with whom Nathanson is friends. The pair covered “Come On Get Higher” for the bonus edition of its “Love on the Inside” album, and the duo appears on “Modern Love” track “Run,” which Sugarland co-wrote. In August, Nathanson will support Maroon 5 and Train before setting up the rest of his touring cycle for the new album.

“I don’t think the record is really finished until you bounce it off of people, until you give it away,” Nathanson says. “I’m looking forward to everyone hearing it and having them take it in as their own.”

Valuated: Matt Nathanson

pop

by megan vick

Brooklyn Bound

Sondre Lerche Delivers A Gritty Album—Conceived In His New Hometown

Singer/songwriter Sondre Lerche has called Brooklyn home for six years. Unlike many residents of the borough’s hip Williamsburg neighborhood, however, he didn’t move there to be part of hipster nation or because it was the epicenter of indie rock.

“I wanted to stay,” says Lerche, 29, who was already a well-established pop star in his native Norway before he decided to relocate to New York in 2005. After three years in Brooklyn, the move became permanent. “The first half year I felt no need to leave the apartment,” he says. “I had had a couple of years of intense traveling after some nice acclaim. Wonderful things had happened and I remember thinking, ‘At this point, I can live anywhere I want and work as a musician.’ Coming from a small town in a small country, I felt I should take advantage of that.”

When Lerche moved to New York, his third album, “The Duper Sessions,” was already in the works. In Norway, where he was signed to EMI, Lerche’s brand of chamber pop bounced between the melancholic and the cheerful. In the United States he took a jazzy interlude with “The Duper Sessions” before opting for punchy rock songs that retained a level of pop sophistication as heard in the arrangements on 2007’s “Phantom Punch” (Astralwerks) and, two years later, “Heartbeat Radio” (Rounder). He also wrote a song score for the 2007 Steve Carell film “Dan in Real Life.”

Lerche’s new self-titled disc is the first he has self-financed and the first album on which every song was written in New York. Although he says he would’ve preferred to record the album in Brooklyn as well, he wound up in a studio in Los Angeles with a collection of collaborators from his new hometown.

“When I looked for a studio (in Brooklyn), I wound up meeting a lot of musicians I wanted to pursue and experiment with,” says Lerche, who brought in longtime producer/collaborator Kate Ailand to work with his new bandmates. “I really wanted him around, thinking he would get the most out of me working with new people. I also wanted the limitations. ‘Heartbeat Radio’ was layer upon layer and I felt I didn’t want to dress up these songs. I wanted to capture a moment rather than make it stylistic.”

Lerche says the difference between the new album and his previous efforts is “a stronger connection with reality.” Dreamy elements have been replaced with some assertive, no-holds-barred hand performances, giving some songs hearty improvisations as they conclude, as on the song “Domino.”

“You keep pushing,” he says of the recording process. “It was very new to me in a way. I wanted the atmosphere of a song to set the tone. There were some big moments, times when we got closer to the intensity that is experienced in a live show. I wanted that urgency and risk and potential.”

—Sondre Lerche

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ROMAN BURTON - "Bianca"

BRIAN "DANGGER MOUSE" & DANIELE LUPPI
Rome

Producers: Danger Mouse, Daniele Luppi
Capitol Records

Release Date: May 17

Brian "Danger Mouse" Burton certainly has a knack for getting himself into interesting musical projects—and given this track record, interesting is a gross understatement. But "Bianca" stands out even alongside the likes of Gnarls Barkley, "Dark Night of the Soul" and Broken Bells. Written and produced with composer/arranger Daniele Luppi, the 15-track set is an homage to such forms as Italian film music and spaghetti westerns. It's made all the more authentic with musicians who played on Ennio Morricone scores—the Marc 4 band and the reunited Canton Modern choral, whose wordless vocals add an appropriately cinematic texture and soulful ambiance. Additionally, Jack White and Norah Jones sing on (and in White's case wrote lyrics for) three tracks each; White is featured on "The Rose With a Broken Neck," "Two Against One" and "The World," while Jones appears on "Season's Trees," "Problem Queen" and "Black." Some of those tracks rank with their best work to date. Burton and Luppi even brought in a "visual director" for the project (Chris Milk), but their sonic creations create a rare brand of aural pictures that require no enhancement.—GG

LADY GAGA
Born This Way
Producers: various
Streamline/KonLive/Interscope

Release Date: May 23

Last year Lady Gaga promised her fans (perhaps a tad prematurely) that her new album would be the greatest of the decade. But even if the next nine years bring something better, we're unlikely to hear anything bigger than "Born This Way," which opens with Gaga declaring herself a warrior queen over a stomping techno-metal beat and only gets more grandiose from there—witness the gospel-gospel choral vocals in "Bloody Mary," the ersatz flamenco guitars in "Americano" and the equality-endorsing stump speech in the Madonna-esque title track. Like a lot of current pop, "Born This Way" is obsessed with the '80s: The bassline in "Highway Unicorn (Road to Love)," for instance, keeps threatening to turn into the bassline from "Don't Stop Believin'" while "Harry the Night" is less a rewrite of Bonnie Tyler's "Holding Out for a Hero." (For the power ballad "You and I" Gaga even got Robert "Mutt" Lange to lend his arena-rock production finesse.) Yet the singer uses these unabashedly retro moves to ponder some up-to-the-minute themes, including gay marriage and our always-on gossip culture. It's a wonder Gaga didn't find room for a song about 2012 presidential hopeful Tim Pawlenty.—MW

ELECTRONIC

MOBY

Producer: Moby
Mute Records

Release Date: May 17

Nine studio albums in, it's safe to call Moby reliable. The baid-headed vegan nerd who became synch licensing's reluctant poster boy with 1999's multimillionaire "Play" has a baseline sound and feel—simple melodies and themes, breezy electronic soundscapes, an underlying sense of solitude—that doesn't vary too wildly from album to album, despite their different themes. Coming off 2009's winsome and sad "Wait for Me," "Destroyed" is a much more plugged-in, uncomfortable affair. Inspired by Moby's inordinately international touring during the last few years, the whole album feels on the brink of some sort of—yes—destruction, the kind wrought upon one's self in the lonely hotel rooms in which it was recorded. There's a troubled instrumental named after Sylvia Plath's pen name on "The Bell Jar" ("Victoria Lucías"), a meditation on the bitter end with throaty vocals by Inyang ("The Right Thing") and an empathetic plea to a drug addict (first single "The Day"). With an accompanying book of similarly isolated photographs, "Destroyed" succeeds in making a solo artist's tour fatigue palatable.—KM

ALBUMS

ROCK

THE CARS
Move Like This
Producers: Garret "Jackknife" Lee, The Cars

Hear Music/Concord Music Group

Release Date: May 10

This isn't exactly the full-on Cars reunion fans have long craved owing to bassist/vocalist Benjamin Orr's death in 2000. But with frontman Ric Ocasek and drummer David Robinson strapped in again, it's much more authentic and satisfying than 2005's New Cars experiment. The first set of new, Ocasek-penned Cars music in 24 years picks up where the group left off in the late '80s, a testament to how timeless and forward-looking the Cars were in their heyday. Blending guitar drive and synthesized colorings, "Blue Tip," "Free" the crunchy "Keep On Knocking" and first single "Sad Song" could be dropped onto any of the Cars' previous six albums, as could gentler, ambient fare like "Too Late" and "Take Another Look." Ocasek exercises a Dylanesque dissociative tranquility throughout the album ("Your waxy face is melting on your lap/sit there trying to crush a ginger snap").

TYLER, THE CREATOR
Goblin
Producers: Tyler, the Creator, Left Brain
XL Recordings

Release Date: May 10

As media-conscious as any rapper since Eminem, newcomer Tyler, the Creator is well aware of the volume required to make himself heard over the hype surrounding his first label-affiliated full-length. And on "Goblin" the 20-year-old frontman of Los Angeles' Odd Future happily provides it, describing inamped-up detail his outrageous hatred (for any number of subjects) at a cut-rate price. Neatly inspired beats he largely produced himself. Musically speaking, the album never rises above the standard set by "Yonkers," the bracingly stripped-down single from last year's Tyler threatens to stab Bruno Mars in the esophagus. But for all the MC's talk about wanting to win a Grammy, you only occasionally get the sense from "Goblin" that perfect musical moments are what matter to Tyler. Spewing words by the bucket load, he seems concerned primarily with tightening a mental load grown only heavier since his first taste of fame. The hour-plus result is clearly too long; Tyler probably wished it were longer.—MW

FRANKIE BALLARD
Frankie Ballard
Producer: Michael Knox
Warner Bros. Records

Release Date: May 24

Opening for Bob Seger during a recent Nashville show, newcomer Frankie Ballard demonstrated a seasoned country-rock swagger that earned enthusiastic audience response not generally afforded an opening act. This self-titled debut captures the energy and charisma of Ballard's live show. A Battle Creek, Mich., native with a soulful voice and a bluesy edge, Ballard is also opening for Taylor Swift on the North American leg of her current Speak Now tour. The song "Tell Me You Get Lonely" is a well-crafted tune about a failed romance and a guy hoping his ex hasn't really moved on. And the single "A Bunche Girls" is a slice of fun penned by Ballard, Rhett Akins, Ben Hayslip and Dallas Davidson. Elsewhere, the track "Sober Me Up" is a honky-tonk plea for a good woman's love to change a wayward man. Far from being a nostalgic ode, "Grandpa's Farm" is a funky uptempo tune about a guy looking forward to a girl's visit to her grandfather's farm. This album is laced with a sense of good-natured fun and anchored by Ballard's impressive voice. It's an auspicious debut from one of the country format's hardest-working young talents.—DEP

IL VOLO
Il Volo
Producers: Humberto Gatica, Tony Renis
Geffen Records

Release Date: May 17

The operatic pop world has had all kinds of groups—Il Divo, Amici Forever—but has yet to welcome a boy band to its rank. Say hello, then, to Il Volo, three teenage tenors from Italy who nevertheless sing with the booming authority of those twice their age. The trio's self-titled debut is powered to a fault, in fact—and loaded with enough firepower to ensure hit potential, including hitmaking producers (Humberto Gatica, Tony Renis), songwriters (Diane Warren, Walter Afanasieff, Josh Groban) and arrangers (Paul Buckmaster, David Campbell). Most of the album's 12 tracks are delivered in Italian—nicely, but it makes the set a touch less accessible. However, the vocal interplay among the three is convincing and the troupe shows its chops on both "E Piu Ti Penso," a medley of Ennio Morricone movie themes. Other highlights include "This Time" and Warren's keening "Painfully Beautiful."—GG
LADY GAGA
The Edge of Glory (5:21)
Producers: Lady Gaga, Fernando Garibay
Writers: Lady Gaga, F. Garibay, DJ White Shadow...

ALTERNATIVE
BON IVER
Calgary (4:10)
Producer: Justin Vernon
Writers: J. Vernon, M. McCaughan
Publisher: April Base Publishing (ASCAP)

The Edge of Glory," the third proper single from Gaga's much-touted sophomore album, "Born This Way," high-
born European electronica finds a home alongside '80s power ballads, with the two styles melded seamlessly by
glorious synthesizers. Clemens' standout sax solo is, in
close affinity to the uplifting track, but it's also the
curveball element that nestles the track among the
burst of weirdness that is "Born This Way." Not only is
"The Edge of Glory" a stronger single choice than mis-
guided predecessor "Judas," it's a club-ready anthem
ripe for fist-pumping glorification all summer long.—JM

first single from sophomore album "Bon Iver, Bon Iver," his
follow-up should be just as brill-
liant, but brighter: "Calgary" is
the lone track on the set written
with another person (Matt Mc-
Caughan), but it's unmistakably
Vernon—from the random,
wind-blown guitar noise to the
organic percussion to the
thrusting mass of heaven-sent
harmonies. There are new tricks
too, like the acoustic 12-string
strum and the production gloss
offered from more studio re-
finement. As always with
Vernon, it's hard to decipher
what he's cooing about in "Cal-
gary," but it sounds absolutely
majestic.—RR

POD
DAVID GUETTA FEATURING FLO RIDA AND NICKI MINAJ
Where They Girls At (5:14)
Producer: David Guetta
Writers: various
Publishers: various

"Lady Gaga's "The Edge of Glory" was
the only Top 40 hit this year to top
the chart. This week the Dance
Club Chart no. 1 hit "Where They
Girls At" becomes the first Top 10
dance hit of the year. It's
featured on the top 10 most
added dance tracks of the week.

"Where They Girls At" comes from
"This Is G-Eazy," a 15-track
mixtape of dance party anthems
produced by David Guetta. The
collaboration between Guetta
and Nicki Minaj is one of the
most anticipated dance tracks of
the year. The song has
become a favorite at dance
fests and has been a hit on the
dance club charts since its
release last month. The song
features Flo Rida and is
produced by David Guetta.

"Where They Girls At" is the first single
from the upcoming album "This Is
G-Eazy," which is due out in
2022. The album will feature
some of the biggest dance
acts in the world, including
David Guetta, Nicki Minaj, and
Flo Rida. The album will also
feature some of the biggest
hip-hop artists, including
T.I. and 2 Chainz. The album
will be released through
Ultra Music, and it is
expected to be a huge
commercial success.

SWEDISH HOUSE MAFIA
Save the World (5:35)
Producer: Swedish House Mafia
Writers: Swedish House Mafia
Publisher: Universal Music Publishing, administered by
Universal Songs of PolyGram International (BMI)
EMI

"World" is as grandiose as its title. The DJ/produc-
ers trio has
made a global brand out of big-room vocal anthems
with addictive hooks, like "One" with Pharrell and "Leave
the World Behind" with Deborah Cox. While "World" takes
a more contemplative stance, the synths swell in epic
ways, the breakdown still warrants a proper fist-pump
and the bass propels the whole affair. "Turn the crowd
up now/We'll never back down," Martin pledges, sounding
like Train's Pat Monahan. Coming from Swedish House
Mafia, that's a promise, not a threat.—KM

FRANK OCEAN
Novacane (5:03)
Producer: not listed
Writer: not listed
Publisher: not listed

"Novacane" is a difficult song
to master vocally, but Ocean


NICKI MINAJ FEATURING ESTER DEAN
Super Bass (3:19)
Producer: Kane
Beat, J-Mike
Writers: N. Minaj, D.A. Johnson, E. Dean
Publisher: various

The love-crazed, vivacious
new single from the de-
luxe version of Nicki
Minaj's debut album, "Pink Friday," couldn't come at a better
time: the beginning of sum-
mer, perfect for booming from
the car stereo. The Kane Beat
and J-Mike-produced track
features one of hip-hop and R&B's best-kept secrets, Ester
Dean, on the infectious hook.

Meanwhile, "Super Bass" showcases Minaj at her lyrical
best, as she offers a spellbinding
flow without trying to show off her skills. The Harajuku Barbie fuses seductive lyricism
with clean, booty-shaking soundscapes and an addictive bubble-gum hook. The
24-year-old's breakout, in between the final two choruses, slows the tempo to match the enticing
subject matter. It's easy to see why non-rap stars like Taylor Swift and Selena Gomez have
recently name-checked "Super Bass" as their favorite jam—Minaj's latest is undeniable
summertime fun.—ER

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The Last Laugh

Electro-Hip-Hop Duo LMFAO Are Chuckling All The Way Up The Charts

Summer fun: LMFAO

Across much of the United States and Europe, winter's chill has finally lifted and summer is around the corner. And with it comes the desire for big, fun pop songs to blast from cars and clubs.

While there are plenty of contenders for this year's "song of the summer" title, including Beyoncé and Lady Gaga, a dark horse candidate has emerged in the form of Los Angeles' LMFAO. The duo's new single, "Party Rock Anthem," featuring Lauren Bennett and GoonRock, last week jumped 20-8 on the Billboard Hot 100, and this week stands at No. 9 with a bullet. The track, from LMFAO's sophomore set, "Sorry for Party Rocking" (June 21, Party Rock/Will.I.Am/Cheerrytree/Interscope), sold 154,000 downloads in the past week for a total of 769,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

LMFAO's Redfoo (Stefan Kendal Gordy) and nephew SkyBlu (Skyler Hudson Gordy) have found a formula that works. Three of the four singles from the pair's debut album, 2009's "Party Rock," cracked the Hot 100, including "I'm in Miami Trick/Bitch" (No. 51) and "La La La" (No. 35). The act's total track sales, including guest appearances on such songs as David Guetta & Chris Willis' "Getting Over You," are at 6.1 million. The pair's own biggest-selling song is "Miami," at 1.7 million.

But behind the goofy songs—whose primary themes, if it isn't clear by now, are "partying" and "rocking"—are two serious musicians and producers who are connected to everyone from Will.I.Am to Kanye West.

"Redfoo is a true student of music," Cherrytree chairman Martin Kierszenbaum says. "He knows the history of dance music and all the technical skills that go into creating a true pop gem. He's also got great comedic timing."

Which only makes sense, given that Redfoo dabbled in stand-up comedy and acting during a break from music a few years ago. But he couldn't stay away forever. "I've always loved DJ'ing," he says. "When I was 10, my mom drove me to Compton (Calif.) to buy turntables." After spending time in Sweden as a high school student, Redfoo returned to the States and started hanging out with his classmates Will.I.Am, who would later co-sign LMFAO with Cherrytree.

After doing some production work and DJ'ing, Redfoo connected with SkyBlu and formed LMFAO. "I saw a void in the market—no one was ripping over house music," he says. "We made the track "I'm in Miami, Bitch," put it on a mixtape and then we did the entire album on our laptops."

The "Party Rock" album has since sold 213,000 copies, according to SoundScan. It also snared LMFAO its first Grammy Award nomination for best electronic dance album at the 52nd annual event, as well as a hosting gig at this year's pretelecast ceremony.

Follow-up "Sorry for Party Rocking" keeps the fun going. In addition to "Party Rock Anthem," the set includes "Champagne Showers," featuring Natasha Kills; "Put That Ass to Work;" "I'm on a Roll;" featuring Busta Rhymes; "Best Night;" featuring Will.I.Am, GoonRock and Eva Simons; and "Hot Dog."

Managed by Ian Fletcher, LMFAO makes it a point to engage fans on Twitter and its PartyRockPeople.com network. And the pair will further cement that bond when it hits the concert trail with Ke$ha in July. However, the duo has recently been spending time with a special new fan. "I was DJ'ing at a party at the recent Cannes Film Festival and played our second single, 'Champagne Showers,' " Redfoo recalls. "I also threw in some dubstep, a Skrillex track, just to mix things up. After my set, someone came over and told me Kanye West wanted to see me."

A few days later, LMFAO went to Paris to work with West in his hotel studio. Redfoo adds, "He told me that when he heard 'Champagne Showers' and the Skrillex cut, those were some of the best moments he'd ever had in a club."
**In Synch**

**Danish Artist Oh Land Nets High-Profile Placements With Honda, Hershey’s And More**

From an underwear fantasy, to a chocolatey indulgence, to a furry creature named Teeny, the music of quirky Danish pop artist Oh Land is making inroads across the media landscape this spring.

Born Nanna ØlandFabricius, the 25-year-old singer/songwriter released her self-titled Epic debut on March 15. It has since sold 11,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. However, its drum-driven, buoyant electro-pop is catching the ears of music supervisors, landing high-profile commercial campaigns for brands like Honda and Hershey’s plus synchs on TV’s “Gossip Girl” (four different songs across four episodes), “Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show” (the track “Son of a Gun” was played during commercial breaks) and the trailer promoting the upcoming premiere of “Teen Wolf.”

Epic executive VP of marketing Lee Stimmel says it’s all part of the label’s artist development strategy, with the next step being a more aggressive mainstream marketing push. “We knew early on that her music had a lot of possibilities in the sync realm; it’s up tempo with a feel that works visually,” Stimmel says. “It was just a matter of understanding where we wanted to go between film, television and commercials, while keeping on-brand for Oh Land.”

The Honda spot in particular is so aligned with Oh Land’s fantastical vibe that it could have been one of her videos. It’s part of the current “To Each Their Own” campaign for the 2012 Civic, which features a different fictional character for each of the five Civic models including a ninja (for the performance-driven Si model). The intent? To get Gen Yers to add “cool” to the list of adjectives usually associated with Honda like “reliable” and “well-established.”

The Oh Land spot features Teeny, a giant furry female creature straight out of a Maurice Sendak book. She is wandering around town with her human girlfriends in a fuel-efficient HF model Civic. Listening to Oh Land’s clanging piano tune “We Turn It Up,” it was an easy sell, recalls Andrew Charles Kahn of Good Ear Music Supervision, who placed the tracks for Honda’s longtime creative agency RPA. “The creative was emailing me while listening to the track selections. She was responding well a few and then she got to the Oh Land. All capital: OMG 1 LOVE TURN IT UP, this one is fucking awesome.”

Also on-air now is a more traditional spot on behalf of Hershey’s Kiss line. The female-targeted commercial uses the dreamier, hum along track “White Nights.”

Stimmel, who says that film placements are also in the works, says Epic’s next step is focusing on mainstream outlets. MTV, radio and video. “The idea was to build a groundswell of viral buzz, press and digital media,” he says. “Now it’s on her to just be everywhere; for people to keep seeing her and asking, ‘Who is this girl?’”

**TRUE CALLING**


“After this, we will have a record deal,” says Eddie Carswell, a founding member of NewSong, which includes Billy Goodwin, Russ Lee, Mark Clay, Jack Pumphrey, Matt Butler and Rico Thomas. “People hear it [the album] live and say, ‘Yeah! I want a copy of that.’”

“Where aren’t lot of artists who have been around as long as NewSong and the list is even shorter when you talk about artists whose career trajectory is still in an upward pattern,” band manager Troy VanLiere says. “NewSong continue to reinvent themselves.”

Produced by Ian Eskelin and Christopher Stevens, “One True God” includes “The Way You Smile,” a duet (and potential wedding standard) with Francesca Battistelli. “All four of my kids have asked me to write a song for their weddings,” Carswell says, “and I wrote ‘Smile’ for my youngest son Stephen. When Francesca sang it at the wedding with us, it went well. So I said, ‘How about doing it with us on the CD?’”

Fans who preordered “One True God” immediately received three songs from the new album. They also got a free download of the title track first single and were registered to win a guitar autographed by the artists featured on this year’s Winter Jam. Founded in 1995 by NewSong, Winter Jam has become one of Christian music’s largest and most popular annual tours. In addition to NewSong and Battistelli, this year’s multi-artist lineup included Red, the David Crowder Band, Kutless, Chris August, Sidewalk Prophets, Chris Sligh and KJ-52.

Continuing a practice started with its 2009 album “Give Yourself Away,” NewSong is including a free extra copy of “One True God” with each purchase for buyers to give to a friend. “We encourage people to pray over it and figure out someone in their life that is in need of encouragement,” VanLiere says.

Carswell adds, “We’ve felt called to ministry from the beginning. You can’t go on forever. But until God tells us differently, we’ll keep doing it.” —Deborah Evans Price

**MORNING WARS**

Lady Gaga kicked off the “Good Morning America” summer concert series on May 27. But her presence wasn’t enough to deliver a ratings crown for ABC—the one thing the singer/songwriter didn’t win this week.

ABC’s daytime powerhouse “Today,” with Rihanna first up on its Rockefeller Center summer concert series, bestowed “GMA” by 600,000 viewers on May 27, according to Nielsen’s fast national ratings supplied by NBC. Full ratings have been delayed by the Memorial Day holiday, but in the week prior (May 16-20) “Today” averaged 5.7 million viewers versus 4.8 million watching “GMA,” according to Nielsen. Gaga’s presence, therefore, cut into the “Today” lead by nearly 300,000 viewers. A year earlier on July 9, 2010, when Gaga performed on “Today,” NBC topped ABC by 1.2 million viewers.

Gaga’s appearance was tied to the release of her album “Born This Way,” Rihanna’s to her tour that started June 4 in Baltimore. This year and last, morning/TV summer concerts more often than not support tours rather than new releases.

Acts booked this summer for “Today” that’ll play the Rockefeller Center Plaza prior to album releases are Pitbull, with T-Pain and Ne-Yo, on July 1 and Lenny Kravitz on Sept. 2. Three of the coaches on “The Voice” will appear on the “Today” concert series—Blake Shelton (July 8), Cee Lo Green (July 22) and Adam Levine’s band Maroon 5 (Aug. 5)—while Bruno Mars (June 24), Journey (July 29) and Enrique Iglesias (Aug. 19) will be promoting tours.

Besides Lady Gaga, acts with new albums to promote on the “GMA” stage include Selena Gomez (June 17) and Beyoncé (July 1). Supporting tours will be Florence & the Machine (June 24), Miranda Lambert (July 8), Nicki Minaj (Aug. 5) and American Idols Live (Aug. 12). —Phil Gallo

**WOMAN UP:** RIHANNA
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Lady Gaga’s ‘Way’ To No. 1; ‘Idol’ Makes Impact

Lady Gaga’s “Born This Way” album debuts at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with 1.11 million copies sold in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album, which features 17 tracks, is Gaga’s sixth studio album and her most successful yet.

Gaga’s debut single, “Marry the Night,” has sold over 1 million copies and has reached No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. The album includes hits such as “Just Dance,” “Poker Face,” and “Bad Romance,” all of which have been certified Platinum or higher.

Notably, Gaga has also topped the Dance/Electronic Albums chart with “Born This Way,” which debuted at No. 1.

Other artists debuting in the Top 10 include Scotty McCreery with “The Way I Do,” which debuts at No. 2; Carrie Underwood with “Blown Away,” which debuts at No. 3; and Taylor Swift with “Speak Now,” which debuts at No. 4.

“Born This Way” also marks Gaga’s first No. 1 album—her “ Fame” debut peaked at No. 2, while “The Fame Monster” EP reached No. 9 and dance EP “The Remix” hit No. 6.

“Born This Way” reaps the largest sales week of any album since 50 Cent’s “The Massacre” did 1.14 million in its first week, in March 2005. The last time we had a million-plus frame was when Taylor Swift’s “Speak Now” premiered at No. 1 with 1.05 million in November 2010. The SoundScan-era record week is held by ‘N Sync’s “No Strings Attached,” when it debuted at No. 1 with 2.4 million in 2000.

Additionally, Gaga is only the fifth woman to notch a million-plus week. The record frame for a female artist was set when Britney Spears’ “Oops!...I Did It Again” started with 1.3 million upon its release in May 2000. The soundtrack to “The Bodyguard,” driven mostly by Whitney Houston songs, was the first SoundScan-era album to shift a million, and it did so during Christmas week in 1992 (1.06 million). Later, Norah Jones’ “Feels Like Home” debuted with 1.02 million in 2004, followed by Swift last year.

While there wasn’t any doubt as to whether Gaga’s “Born This Way” album would debut atop the Billboard 200—that’s been an assumption for months—its first-week number was always in question. A month ago, industry prognosticators were expecting a first-week total of 400,000. That number escalated to 650,000-700,000 by its release on Monday, May 23—the same day Amazon MP3 announced its controversial decision to sell the album for 99 cents for one day.

By Wednesday, May 25, sources indicated that a million-unit week seemed plausible. Once Amazon opted to again sell the set for 99 cents on Thursday, May 26, the album’s million-unit week was all but guaranteed. It’s estimated that Amazon sold upwards of 440,000 downloads of the 99-cent “Born This Way” album.

Gaga’s total downloads haul from all digital retailers was 602,000—the biggest week for a digital album in SoundScan history. It represents 64% of the set’s overall first week. Gaga beats the previous record, held by the arrival of Coldplay’s “Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends,” which bowed with 288,000 downloads in the July 5, 2008 issue.

WEB SIGHTING

~ Reeva Carthy, star of Broadway’s “Spider-Man—Turn Off the Dark,” debuts at No. 74 on the Billboard Hot 100 with the show’s “This Above All” (featuring U2’s Bono and the Edge, writers of the show’s music and lyrics). The trio performed the track on the May 25 “American Idol” finale.

DANCE ‘TONIGHT’

~ Michael Bublé’s “Call Me Irresponsible” is the Dance/Electronic week’s Top Song. This Week’s “Best of Both Worlds” by Disney Channel’s “Hannah Montana” is No. 14, up 10 from its Top 25 arrival.

WHAT THEY GOT

~ Sublime—now known as Sublime With Rome—returns to the top 10 on the Alternative chart for the first time since 1997’s “Wrong Way (No. 10) as “Punks” pushes 14-10. It’s the group’s fourth top 10 simple.

BONO THE EDGE

~ U2’s “Wall of Glass” debuts at No. 33, thanks to a new video.

Market Watch

Weekly Unit Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Albums</th>
<th>Digital Tracks</th>
<th>Overall Unit Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Week</td>
<td>6,669,000</td>
<td>2,454,000</td>
<td>24,691,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>5,407,000</td>
<td>1,779,000</td>
<td>24,284,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Week Last Year</td>
<td>4,984,000</td>
<td>1,425,000</td>
<td>21,746,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Unit Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Albums</th>
<th>Digital Tracks</th>
<th>Overal Unit Sales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>125,146,000</td>
<td>174,216,800</td>
<td>359,362,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>125,861,000</td>
<td>174,479,500</td>
<td>359,340,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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Digital Tracks Sales

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>488.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>536.1 million</td>
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</table>

Distributors’ Market Share:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distributor</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UMG</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMG</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indies</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX

No.1 LADY GAGA-Born This Way (Interscope/RTG, 08-09)
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
Canadian dubstep artist Excision re-enters the Uncharted top 10 with more than 22,000 new Facebook fans, who no doubt rushed to his profile after he uploaded four new tracks spaced out over his SoundCloud account. Additionally, fans who "liked" his Facebook page received a free download. Excision is playing multiple dates in Canada and the United States throughout the summer.

---

In support of his new album, "Give 'Em Hell," Ben Harper appeared on both "The Late Show With David Letterman." Web concert series "Live on Letterman" (the TV and its parent talk show on CBS. The week following, the set list centered on live, piling up nearly 100,000 plays, a 250% week-to-week increase. In turn, he debuts at No. 47 on the Social 50 chart.
### Mainstream Top 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Hot 100 Peak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Just the Way You Are</td>
<td>Bruno Mars</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Rolling in the Deep</td>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Tomorrow</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Beautiful Girl</td>
<td>Kina Grannis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Contemporary Top 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Hot 100 Peak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Rolling in the Deep</td>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Beautiful Girl</td>
<td>Kina Grannis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Just the Way You Are</td>
<td>Bruno Mars</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Monday Morning</td>
<td>Ed Sheeran</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Rock Songs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Hot 100 Peak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Black Dog</td>
<td>Led Zeppelin</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Teenage Wasteland</td>
<td>The Cars</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Highway to Hell</td>
<td>The Rolling Stones</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Monster</td>
<td>Nine Inch Nails</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Alternative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Hot 100 Peak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  The Last Shadow of the Day</td>
<td>The Pixies</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Give It Up</td>
<td>The Black Keys</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  No Surprises</td>
<td>The Replacements</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  The End of the World</td>
<td>The Mars</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Exactly six months after topping Hot Country Songs (Dec. 11, 2010), the Band Perry’s “If I Die Young” debuts on Mainstream Top 40 at No. 36. While Universal Republic has been promoting the song to pop radio since the beginning of the year, “American Idol” runner-up Lauren Alaina boosted its profile when she sang the ballad on the series’ New Year’s episode. The track scored a top-10 in digital sales last week following Alaina’s performance and has sold 2.0 million downloads since its release, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“Young” is the 31st single Hot Country Songs Leader to cross over to the Mainstream Top 40 chart and the fifth to do so as a new artist (Lauren Alaina reached No. 7 with “This is Me” in 2010, followed by Kree Harrison’s “Who Says You Can’t Have It” (No. 30, 2012), Kacey Musgraves’ “Merry & Bright” (No. 22, 2012), and Lady Antebellum’s “Need You Now” (No. 2, 2010).
### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WHAT ARE YOU HURRYING FOR?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NEW LIGHT IN THE LIVING ROOM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Little Big Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LOST IN THE COUNTRY WIDE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>YOU DON'T KNOW</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Darius Rucker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MY SONG</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HOW TO HEAL AN INJURY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Justin Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RED ANDEMI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Randy Travis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>THE BRONX</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Randy Houser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>THAT'S MY BABY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kellie Pickler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BACK TO YOUR LIPS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>LoCash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THIS IS COUNTRY MUSIC</td>
<td>Brad Paisley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I'M ALL ABOUT YOUR LOVE</td>
<td>Miranda Lambert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRANK &amp; JAMIE ISLANDS</td>
<td>Frank &amp; Jamie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>AMERICA'S COUNTRY</td>
<td>Brooks &amp; Dunn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>COUNTRY CONVERSATIONS</td>
<td>Sam Hunt</td>
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### BLUEGRASS ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CURTIS BCEY</td>
<td>Curtis Blevins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A CALL TO ARMS</td>
<td>Rhonda Vincent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE LONE STAR</td>
<td>Rhonda Vincent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>THE TRUTH ABOUT LOVE</td>
<td>Rhonda Vincent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A CALL TO ARMS</td>
<td>Rhonda Vincent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BETWEEN THE BULLETS

As the album's second radio single, "Old Alabama," logs a second week atop Hot Country Songs, Brad Paisley's "This Is Country Music" posts the biggest opening-week Nielsen SoundScan sum on Top Country Albums so far this year. With 153,000 copies and Hot Shoe Debut applicators, Paisley's eight-set of new singles also has its high to launch the summit. The lead single and title track from the new set stopped at No. 2 in March, and successive album play for a third track, "Remind Me," with Carrie Underwood. boosts the song 36-10 on the radio list.

---

For complete chart data, visit www.billboard.com.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Album</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Weeks at No.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VEN A Bailar</td>
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</table>

**HOT LATIN SONGS**

Dot Onex breaks into the top 10 of Hot Latin Songs for the third consecutive time as “El Lado” jumps from 10 with 10,000 listener impressions. "Hasta Manual" peaked at No. 6 in March 2000; "Sueca Ruedas" (No. 5) featuring Eneida, continues its decline after spending 16 weeks at No. 1.

**REGIONAL MEXICAN ALBUMS**

Los Tigres Del Norte break new ground with the release of “MTV Unplugged” opening at No. 3 on Top Latin Albums with 4,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Though other Latin acts like Maná, Shakira, Alejandro Sanz and most recently Zoe have charted with “Unplugged” sets, Los Tigres are the first regional Mexican band to be featured in the series. The album’s appeal is widened by appearances from Juanes, Paulina Rubio and Calle 13.

---

By Ralph Ramirez

**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

Los Tigres Del Norte On MTV

Data for week of JUNE 11, 2011
### Canada

**Albums**

1. *Chord & A* (International)
2. *Give Me Everything* (International)
3. *Party Rock Anthem* (International)
4. *We Need a Dollar* (International)
5. *Gossip in the Grain* (International)
6. *On the Floor* (International)
7. *Beautiful People* (International)
8. *Judas* (International)
9. *Where the Girls Are* (International)

**Singles**

1. *OMG* (International)
2. *Body Rock* (International)
3. *One in a Million* (International)
4. *Run This Town* (International)
5. *We Need a Dollar* (International)
6. *On the Floor* (International)
7. *Beautiful People* (International)
8. *Judas* (International)
9. *Where the Girls Are* (International)

### Austria

**Albums**

1. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
2. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
3. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
4. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
5. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
6. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
7. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
8. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
9. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)
10. *Austrian Singles Chart* (International)

**Singles**

1. *Party Rock Anthem* (International)
2. *Give Me Everything* (International)
3. *We Need a Dollar* (International)
4. *Gossip in the Grain* (International)
5. *On the Floor* (International)
6. *Beautiful People* (International)
7. *Judas* (International)
8. *Where the Girls Are* (International)
10. *OMG* (International)

Data for week of JUNE 11, 2011 | For chart reprints call 212.493.4023

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 55
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EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

Send submissions to: exec@billboard.com

RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Music Group promotes Amanda Marks to global head of digital accounts. She was executive VP/GM of Universal Music Group Distribution. Sony Music Nashville appoints Kevin Kay national director of strategic partnerships. He was founder/president of marketing company Entertainment Sponsorship Group.

PUBLISHING: Kobalt Music Group names Kevin O’Byrne head of operations. He was director of copyright development at Sony/ATV Music Publishing. Universal Music Publishing Group promotes Jessica Rivera to VP of creative for urban music on the East Coast. She was senior director of creative affairs.

DIGITAL: 7digital taps James Wheatley as VP of business development. He was director of business development for Europe at eMusic. Topspin Media appoints Mark Montgomery to its board of advisers. He is a music and technology entrepreneur who co-founded digital marketing company ecoustic. Vevo names Stephanie Fried VP of research insights and analytics. She was director of digital research at NBC Universal. Digital entertainment consulting firm TAG Strategic appoints Corey Denis VP of digital marketing and social media. He founded Not Shocking.

MANAGEMENT: Universal Republic Records and Twenty First Artists, divisions of Universal Music Group, launch Twenty First Republic, a management division that caters to U.S.-based music producers and engineers. Worlds End Management CEO Sandy Robertson and Universal Republic executive VP of A&R Tom Mackay will oversee the new division.

RADIO: Univision Radio names Jose Valle president. He was VP/GM at Univision Radio in Los Angeles.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

GOODWORKS

LOS LONELY BOYS TEAM WITH CHILDHOOD CANCER NONPROFIT

As family men with children of their own, sibling rock trio Los Lonely Boys understand the importance of taking care of loved ones. So for the band’s upcoming summer tour in support of its latest album, “Rockpango,” the group has partnered with nonprofit Padres Contra El Cancer (Parents Against Cancer) to help raise money for battling childhood cancer.

“If any of my children ended up with cancer and I couldn’t somehow pay for it, then I’d wish there was some kind of organization like this that would help me,” drummer Ringo Garza says.

During its upcoming tour, which begins June 14 at Infinity Hall in Norfolk, Conn., the band will encourage concertgoers to donate $5 to the organization by texting “IAMSPOHPE” to 8594. In addition to their tour stops and recording a public service announcement for the nonprofit, Garza says the act will raise awareness of Padres Contra El Cancer through its Facebook page, website and meet-and-greets.

Los Lonely Boys have also teamed with shoe company Stacy Adams to launch their own shoe line, with a portion of sales supporting Padres Contra El Cancer. “We were honored that [Stacy Adams] would even say yes to something like that,” Garza says.

—Mitchell Peters

Universal Music Records announced the signing of attentive soul man Mayer Hawthorne on May 24. His full-length debut for the label, “Now That’s Over,” will arrive in the fall. Hawthorne (center) is flanked by Universal Republic co-president/CEO Monte Lipman (left) and co-president/COO Awary Lipman (right).

Clive Davis—chief creative officer at Sony Music Entertainment, record producer, music industry leader and New York University alum—received a doctor of fine arts degree from his alma mater at the university’s 179th commencement exercises, held May 21 at Yankee Stadium. (Photo: NYU PHOTO BUREAU; John Russell.)
Backbeat

Bon Jovi's Circle tour is among the top 10 highest-grossing tours of all time. Kicking off in February 2010, the trek has sold out stadiums and arenas worldwide, was attended by more than 15 million fans and has grossed more than $146 million. Nelson Entertainment VP of merchant services and emerging growth Chris Muratore caught up with Jon Bon Jovi at New York's Nassau Coliseum on May 6 to present him with an award for more than 20 million albums sold since 1985. (Photo: David Berman)

ABOVE: More than $160,000 was raised on behalf of the Agahozo-Sisirak Youth Village in Rwanda at a May 17 event in New York honoring S-Curve Records founder/CEO Steve Greenberg (center). The event featured musical performances by (from left) Snoop Dogg, F. Knuckles, Kamal Gray and James Poyser. (Photo: Storm Thorgerson)

LEFT: Mercury Records Australia recording artist and former Savage Garden member Darren Hayes (right) came out to support his friend and fellow pop singer Simon Curtis at the latter's debut London concert on May 14. Curtis was in town for the EU Live and Kicked for Xbox 360 approves event promoting his new single—"the just-released 'Supershow'—and his forthcoming second studio effort, '17.' Hayes' fourth solo studio album, and first for Mercury, is due later this year. (Photo: James Mason)

On May 23, Big Time Rush celebrated the gold certification of its debut album, "BTR," at Columbia's New York offices with staff from the label and Nationwide on hand for the festivities. From left: Nickelodeon/MTV Kids & Family Group president Cyma Zarghami, BTR's Kendall Schmidt, James Maslow and Carlos Pena; Columbia/Epic Label Group chairman Rob Stringer; and band manager Bret Disend. (Photo: Gary Gershoff)

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