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SCOTTY McCREERY BRINGS 'IDOL' BACK TO NO. 1

CHINO Y NACHO CASTING CROWNS
LALAH HATHAWAY
EVERLAST
Founded in 1975 by music executive, Tony Martell, the T.J. Martell Foundation is the music industry's largest foundation that funds innovative medical research focused on finding cures for leukemia, cancer & AIDS. It has provided over $250 million over the past thirty-six years. The Foundation sources and supports early-stage research projects at eleven medical facilities aimed at developing more effective clinical treatments for patients which otherwise might not be funded.
Eyes On The Prize
Digital rebound, discounted catalog CDs push U.S. music sales toward annual gain

During the period in 2010, digital track sales had slowed so sharply that they posted an alarming 0.7% decline from the prior-year period. But this year, track sales are up again, while digital album sales growth is accelerating.

To wind up in the black for 2011, U.S. music sales will have to overcome a challenging year-on-year comparison with fourth-quarter 2010, when the current recovery in digital sales got under way and sales were buoyed by a strong release schedule that included Lil Wayne's 'I Am Not a Human Being,' Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy,' Taylor Swift's 'Speak Now,' Susan Boyle's 'The Gift' and Jackie Evancho's 'O Holy Night.'

Another concern is how the economy will hold up, with some retailers observing concern that consumers will be conservative in their spending during the year-end holiday season.

New superstar titles expected out by the end of the year include Rihanna's 'Talk That Talk,' Justin Bieber's 'Under the Mistletoe,' the Lou Reed/MTV 'Lulu' and Miranda Lambert's 'Four the Record.'

Even if those titles sell well, 'the new release schedule is lighter in a number of ways, certainly on the seasonal front,' says Jeff Wyrick, senior category manager for music at Hastings Entertainment.

Similarly, Universal Music Group Distribution president/CEO Jim Urie says that 'the industry's fourth-quarter schedule isn't as good as it's been for the last couple of years,' but adds that music sales "will probably finish positive for the year."

Through the first nine months of 2011, U.S. sales of albums and track-equivalent albums (or TEA, where 10 digital tracks equal an album) totaled 231.7 million, up 5.4% from 207.1 million during the same period last year, punctuated by an eye-popping 13% sales increase recorded by Sony Music Entertainment, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Album sales alone rose 4.3% to 228.5 million from 221.1 million for the prior year's corresponding period. Fueled by a 19.8% jump in digital album sales to 74.1 million from 61.9 million units a year earlier, according to SoundScan.

CD sales declined 3.6% to 151.6 million from 157.2 million during the same period last year, when CD sales had plunged 20.6% from the prior year. The improvement in CD sales stemmed in part from Walmart's pricing of select catalog titles at $5 each, with Best Buy soon following suit and other retailers offering their own pricing promotions.

Vinyl sales also continue to enjoy a resurgence, jumping 36.1% to 2.7 million units from 2 million a year earlier, although the format accounted for only 1.2% of total album sales during the first three quarters of 2011.
HOW THE NUMBERS STACK UP
U.S. music sales trends through the first nine months of 2011, according to data from Nielsen SoundScan.

MARKET SHARE BY DISTRIBUTOR BASED ON ALBUM AND TEA (TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUM) SALES
Universal Music Group is still on top thanks to its dominance of digital track sales, which lifted its share of track-equivalent albums sales. But on album sales alone, Sony Music topped UMG 29.8% to 29.3%.

ALBUM SALES BY STORE TYPE
More striking than the continued gains for nontraditional retailers (which include digital download stores) have been the slowing sales decline at chains and mass merchants, down 8.8% and 3.1%, respectively.

ALBUM SALES BY GENRE
R&B, which includes rap, suffered the worst percentage decline during the period, falling 10.2%, outpacing the drops in rock (8.3%), gospel (7.6%) and Latin (5.9%). Country was the only genre to grow, up 3.2%.

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ALBUM PLUS TEA SOLD BY DISTRIBUTOR
Both UMG and Sony posted net sales gains, with the latter notching a particularly impressive increase of 10.8 million units from a year earlier, up 13%. Indie distributors collectively posted a 12.4% gain.

ALBUM SALES BY GENRE
After plummeting 20.3% in 2010 and 34.3% in 2009, Latin album sales finally appear to have stabilized during the first nine months of this year, down only 3.2%, albeit at a time when total album sales are up 3.4%.

CD ALBUM SALES BY GENRE
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DIGITAL ALBUM SALES BY GENRE
While rock has the smallest growth in digital album sales versus last year, up 14.5% versus gains of more than 20% for the other large genres, rock makes up 38% of all digital album sales.

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Reclamation Project

In competition to woo brand marketers, Myspace faces steep challenges

When Myspace formally relaunches in early 2012 with a renewed focus on music, attracting the interest of brand marketers will be crucial to its success. But where Myspace will fit into the plans of advertising executives remains unclear. Part of the challenge is the rapidly evolving market for new streaming music services that build social experiences around music. So far this year, the launch of Turntable.fm, Spotify’s U.S. debut and Clear Channel’s rollout of personalized features for its iHeartRadio app have generated excitement around the intersection of music and social networking that Myspace tried to target under former owner News Corp. New parent company Specific Media, which acquired Myspace in June, plans to launch a new ad-supported music player with personalized listening capabilities to better compete with Pandora and other online radio services, with an on-demand streaming function that president/CEO Tim Vanderhook claims will rival Spotify. Plus, the company can count on the smarts and star power of Myspace investor and creative director Justin Timberlake. But Myspace’s decline into a social media also-ran long before the June acquisition will hinder Specific Media’s attempts to spark the interest of brand marketers.

“We’re all skeptical with the relaunch, given all the turmoil of the [News Corp.] ownership back in the day, going from the super high to the bottom of the bottom,” says Yolanda Lam, senior VP/digital group client director for MediaVest USA, an agency that buys online ads for clients like Heineken, Walmart and Coca-Cola. “Myspace has a niche and they can continue to build on the name, but it certainly carries a lot of baggage.” Matt Freeman, global chief innovation officer for Universal McCann, which counts MasterCard and Kohl’s among its key clients, is encouraged by Myspace’s relative simplicity and plans for an ad model that would give advertisers a crack at category-exclusive sponsorships on different channels.

“The combination of music, social and video could fill a niche, and I think that there is some sort of need between the social aspect and the more rich media-based focus that Myspace has that could be owned,” he says. Michael Hayes, president of digital communications for Initiative Worldwide, which works with clients like Dr Pepper Snapple Group and MillerCoors, thinks that Myspace could fill the void in emerging artists such as YouTube, Vevo and others pursue exclusive from and sell sponsorships against big concerts from Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga and Rihanna.

“They’re not filling those with niche bands. If I was Myspace, I’d probably go after that niche, which would give them an advantage.” MediaVest’s Lam notes that Myspace still has residual relevance across multicultural and Hispanic consumers who still use the site to discover music.

“These are the guys who didn’t go away, while [Myspace’s] general market audience is still threatened,” Lam says. “Just to find the Hispanic audience online isn’t an easy thing to begin with, and there really isn’t another service that can provide a lot of scale with a focus in music right now.”

In the meantime, Myspace must quickly move to shore up its rapidly shrinking user base. U.S. unique visitors to the site plunged 47% in September to 30.6 million from 57.5 million a year earlier, according to comScore. So that exceeded Myspace, Specific Media inherited the music licensing pacts that had been negotiated by former owner News Corp., which formed Myspace Music as a joint venture with the four majors. The majors remain JV partners in Myspace Music. Vanderhook says Myspace expects to roll out enhancements to its music service by early 2012.

“Right now, if you create a great experience, it’s still wrapped in a bad product and consumers reject it,” Vanderhook says. “We want to get that right and pump out product on a monthly basis from there.” Hailing Timberlake on-board should help attract potential marketing partners. In terms of promotion and attention there’s an obvious benefit there,” McCann’s Freeman says. “But I also think as they move into producing more original content, he produces credibility and the know-how that will get things made.”

Much has been made of Timberlake becoming the unofficial “face” of Myspace. The pop star co-hosted an Oct. 3 Myspace re-reception in New York for brand marketers and ad agencies. But Vanderhook insists that Timberlake’s duties will be more behind the scenes for now.

“He’s very integrated in the development of the product,” he says. “Whether he wants to market it or not, that’s up to him.”

Taylor Swift Named Billboard’s Woman Of The Year

Taylor Swift will receive Billboard’s Woman of the Year award at the 2011 Billboard Women in Music event on Dec. 2 at Capitale in New York.

The annual award honors the achievements of a trailblazing female recording artist during the past 12 months and acknowledges her overall success and leadership in the music business. Swift, 21, is the youngest-ever recipient of the award.

Swift has spent most of the year touring the world in support of her 2010 album Speak Now. The album generated U.S. debut-week sales of 1 million units and has sold 3.7 million to date, according to Nielsen SoundScan, making her the biggest-selling albums artist in any genre of music for the past 12 months. A gifted songwriter as well, Swift composed every song on Speak Now, including the top 10 Billboard Hot 100 singles “Mine,” “Back to December” and the title track. She also made history on the Hot 100, charting 11 songs from Speak Now in a single week, the most-ever simultaneous entries on the chart from one album. In addition, Swift holds the Hot 100 record for most top 10 debuts by an artist in the 53-year history of that chart, with seven. Further, her self-titled 2006 debut album held the record for the longest-running album on the Billboard 200 since 2000, and her smash single “You Belong With Me” holds the record for largest overall airplay audience for a song by a country-based act.

A four-time Grammy Award winner, Swift has been nominated for five 2011 Country Music Assn. Awards including entertainer of the year, female vocalist of the year and album of the year. In May, Swift won Billboard Music Awards for top country album, top Billboard 200 artist and top country artist.

Swift has generated worldwide album sales of more than 20 million and digital track sales of more than 40 million, according to her label, Big Machine Records. In addition to enjoying a successful music career, Swift has raised money and awareness for causes including clean water, literacy and disaster relief. She personally donated more than $1 million to charity in the past year.

“Taylor has shown the power of good songwriting with music that has transcended genres, and we’re thrilled to recognize all of her successes over the past year by honoring her with the Billboard Woman of the Year award,” Billboard editorial director Bill Werde says. “At the young age of 21, Taylor has already made a major impact on music and has been an incredible role model for aspiring singers/songwriters and young women everywhere. I look forward to watching her career continue to flourish in the years to come.”

The Billboard Women in Music event celebrates the most powerful and talented women in music. The event is also held in conjunction with the publication of Billboard’s Women in Music Power Players list, which recognizes the music industry’s top female executives.
CONGRATULATIONS
ALL 10 CANADIAN PROVINCES
27 CITIES SOLD OUT
Once fixated on boomer icons, VH1's 'Rock Docs' shifts focus to 'TRL,' L.A. riots and Napster

H ere's something quite new to Gen Xers feel old. “Toual Request Live,” MTV’s afternoon music show after the Britney/Limp Bizkit boy band years, is evidently old enough to merit a documentary.

The last of the interviews are being conducted as “The TRL Decade” is being edited for a premiere on Dec. 15 on VH1, the Viacom-owned sister station of MTV.

The episode represents a significant thematic leap for VH1’s “Rock Docs” series, which launched five years ago with examinations of such topics as the Who, Woodstock, James Brown and John Lennon.

VH1 president Tom Calderone acknowledges that the documentary series is gravitating toward cultural milestones of the mid- to late ’80s and early 2000s.

“The sweet spot for VH1 is 25- to 30-year-olds,” Calderone says, “and when ‘TRL’ was on the air every afternoon, those were magical times for people in that age group now. That show informed their musical tastes. It wasn’t just Britney and ‘N Sync. Kid Rock and Limp Bizkit and Nelly and Jay-Z came out of the show, the acts that defined those years.”

Until recently, “Rock Docs” financed and acquired documentaries that emphasized the historical, most notably the 2008 film “The Night James Brown Saved Boston,” which focused on the aftermath of the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

2009’s “Anvil: The Story of Anvil,” the saga of Canadian metal band Anvil that couldn’t catch a break in the ‘70s but would inspire another generation of metal acts; and last year’s “Soul Train: The Hippest Trip in America.”

During the last year, the names and topics I have become more contemporary, including 50 Cent, Foo Fighters and hip-hop’s relationship with crack cocaine: “At a time when the highest-profile music documentaries have become the focal points of film festivals— docs on Pearl Jam, U2 and George Harrison have led the way in the last month—VH1 has found a niche producing films that go beyond documentaries as a genre.”

“We want to find documentaries that have a social element, that connect the dots to music,” says VH1 VP of production and programming and “Rock Docs” executive producer Brad Abramson, who in his 14 years at the network has overseen his fair share of “Behind the Music” episodes. “This began as a signature music series to remind viewers about our roots in music. The projects lately are much different from the past.” The most recent example was the Ice-T-produced “Planet Rock: The Story of Hip Hop and the Crack Generation” that premiered Sept. 18. The two-hour doc was watched by 877,000 viewers, according to Nielsen.

“Rock Docs” has three active productions beyond the “TRL” project overseen by producer/director Lauren Lazin (“Tupac Resurrected”). In the spring, around the 20th anniversary of the riots that followed the acquittal of police officers charged in the beating of Rodney King, VH1 plans to air “F: The Police: Hip Hop and the L.A. Riots.” “Ice Cube” is executive producer of the film, which will be told from the perspective of rappers, musicians, police officers and victims.

Producer/director Alex Winter—the actor from “Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure” is producing “Downloaded,” about the rise of Napster, which is slated for a mid- to late-2012 airing.

Abramson says VH1 is aiming to produce six to eight episodes this year, including premiering TV rights to the Michael Jackson film “This Is It” and Davis Guggenheim’s profile of Jimmy Page, the Edge and Jack White ("I Might Get Louted.")

VH1 is unlocking the possibility of ramping up the development slate for 2013 and is already penciling in some projects for 2014.

One project that has gone by the wayside is a documentary on former Sony Music head Tommy Mottola that he co-authored of his memories, Richard Stratton, is directing. “Because Tommy has a lot of ideas, we decided that he has to make the film he wants to make,” Abramson says. “We’re not making it.”

Calderone says the current 24-7 music media landscape means there isn’t much mystique left surrounding the people and subjects that “Rock Docs” wants to probe.

“We have to get the person—if they’re still alive in a confessional that you can’t get in print, can’t get in a blog and you won’t see in a two-minute viral clip,” he says. “Behind the Music” followed the rise, fall and rise of a career. Now we find the B-story from “Behind the Music” and make it an A-story. Dave Grohl and the pressures of being a frontman. Run-D.M.C. and their adoption story. That’s the secret sauce.”

**ALSO:** Hugh Laurie, the piano-playing star of Fox’s “House,” had a TV triple header on Sept. 30 to support debut album “Let Them Talk (Rhino).” His concert special premiered on PBS “Great Performances,” he guested on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” and his record release party was held at Los Angeles club Mint. Tom Jones made a surprise appearance... “Entertainment Tonight” debuted the video of Blake Shelton’s remake of Kenny Loggins’ “Footloose” on Oct. 6. It was the first time the syndicated show had aired a music video in its entirety since Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” in 1983...

**DENNIS LUKES** will star opposite Jordin Sparks in the Sony Tristar remake of the 1976 movie “Sparkle.” The film also stars Whitney Houston, Mike Epps and Cee Lo Green...
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The Muppets ©2011 Disney
Does Not Play Well With Others—Until Now?

Tomahawk player aims to make music subscription services work together

The ability to share playlists and listen to the same track simultaneously across different subscription services—something music tech geeks call “content resolution”—remains a pipe dream at the moment. But that could soon change.

With content resolution, a Rhapsody subscriber could post a playlist that a Spotify subscriber could click and play or multiple Facebook friends using different services could stream the same track together and comment on it. But without it, users are still forced into their individual service silos.

Today, that’s probably not a big deal. After all, at this point, streaming music services still have woefully few subscribers. Spotify claims 2 million paying users worldwide. Rhapsody last tallied around 800,000 paying customers, while Napster, which Rhapsody plans to acquire, has about 700,000 subscribers. And MOG and Rdio probably haven’t even cracked 100,000 each yet.

ARI Research estimates that fewer than 6 million people worldwide subscribe to music subscription services today.

Dividing that figure by Facebook’s 800 million members means only about 0.8% of Facebook’s users subscribe to one streaming music service or another. Given that context, it’s no wonder Facebook hasn’t spent much time worrying about the lack of interoperability within a fraction of its user base.

But that’s expected to change soon. ARI Research also predicts that the number of music subscribers will grow to more than 161 million people by 2016. At that point, finding a way to let users of different services interact will be far more crucial.

“It helps solve one of the biggest problems of the subscription market today, which is the massive fragmentation,” says Jason Herskovitz, one of the developers behind the Tomahawk open-source project. “You have everybody posting links to services I don’t use. How do you help bridge that gap?”

Tomahawk is an open-source music player that aims to do exactly that. Users enter the name of the song or artist they want to hear, and the player then finds the best source of that track based on the services each user has access to. Perhaps the song is placed locally on the user’s digital library, or is available through the user’s subscription service or on a particular blog. The software does all the work.

Tomahawk also lets users connect to friends’ computers to view their playlists and listen to music. There are limitations, though. Tomahawk finds the best matching source within the user’s available services for a song the friend is listening to at a given time. But it can’t play just any music in the friend’s library on demand.

Also, as cool as Tomahawk sounds, its use at this point is limited to a mere handful of digital music genres. To become something more than the side project it is today, its features would need to be broadly implemented by Facebook or another social service or service of its magnitude.

“The concept of content resolution is one that needs to happen on a wide scale,” Herskovitz says. “I hope Facebook does that and helps educate the market. Let’s all talk about music and let’s all talk about music in the real world—and that’s by title and artist, not by a specific link to a specific instance of that track.”

The music industry should watch this issue closely. We’ve already seen how the dominance of Apple’s iTunes stunted competition in the digital retail space. Coding the streaming market to Spotify could yield a similar result.

Here’s an analogy that suggests the potential impact. At the beginning of 2001, mobile phone customers could only send text messages to other subscribers of the same operator. By the end of that year, mobile operators had implemented text messaging interoperability so users could send messages outside of their carrier’s network. As a result, messaging traffic jumped from 6 million in fourth-quarter 2001 to 50 million in first-quarter 2002 for the United States alone, according to data collected by CTIA-The Wireless Association.

Today, more than 2.5 billion text messages are sent in the United States every day. That’s the power of interoperability. But don’t look to the subscription music services to do this on their own. They still want to lock customers into their respective silos. It’s going to have to be Facebook, or perhaps social service, or service of its magnitude.

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Rounding the Finish Line

Reasons to be cheerful in the final months of the 2011 touring year

As we head into the home stretch of the touring year, it has become clear that the live music business experienced an encouraging rebound in 2011.

The way stakeholders in the touring business addressed last year’s ills with creative pricing, routing, packaging and booking has been inspiring. But it’s also just as clear that if the business forgets what works—as it seems to do about every decade or so—a relapse is not only possible, but probable.

While rock is exhibiting clear signs of weakness at radio (Billboard, June 11), it’s most definitely not dead in the touring space. Almost half of the top 50 tours could be considered rock acts. Thanks to the genre’s resilience on the road, declining radio support for rock artists shouldn’t deter labels from signing more acts in the genre, especially now that they get a piece of the touring and merchandising in just about every new deal.

People still snapped up tickets this year to see rock bands, whether it’s Linkin Park, Metallica, Roger Waters or Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band.

About half of all acts in the top 50 started in the ’70s. How did they develop their careers? By touring like bands. Their relentless focus on playing live built a foundation that allows these acts to tour, usually on a global basis, long after airplay and retail sales have dissipated.

It’s worth noting that, in relative terms, ticket sales were much less expensive when these acts were touring in the ’70s. Allowing fans to experience, see lots of shows, discover who the dynamic entertainers are and, hence, remain loyal. Even though many of these acts have $100 tickets today, people still want to be entertained. In tough economic times. They just don’t want to take a chance on ponying up and not be entertained. Acts don’t have decades-long careers by not being good entertainers.

Case in point: U2. The four dudes from Dublin rewrite the record books and proved some serious points in the process. People want a show, and the band’s worldwide 360° tour was the biggest show ever on multiple levels. It recorded a total gross of more than $736 million and total attendance of 7.3 million. Those are the highest tour tallies ever reported to Billboard Boxscore.

They shatter the Rolling Stones’ previous gross record of $358 million for its 2005-07 Bigger Bang trek.

Another lesson from the rock artists who still played to packed houses in 2011. While many of the acts from the ’70s and ’80s received a fair amount of mainstream exposure, TV and radio airplay as they came up, a lack of such exposure didn’t prevent some from building strong and loyal fan bases. Cases in point: Iron Maiden, Phish and Leonard Cohen all put up solid numbers on the road in 2011. When was the last time you heard any of them on the radio? It’s safe to say that concert-goers know what they’re going to get when they buy a ticket to any of these acts.

Country is still the best genre at artist development, if you consider that term to mean not only building careers, but sustaining them too. As many as a dozen country tours could wind up among the top 50 tours of the year, according to Billboard Boxscore, including Kenny Chesney, Brad Paisley and Jason Aldean. None of them are overnight successes, which means that overnight failure is much less likely.

Meanwhile, pop remained a major force in touring this year, accounting for about 17 of the top 50 acts, even if some of them overlap into other genres like country, rock or R&B. A long-held belief that fickle pop fans move on or other music as they grow older has been shattered. Two examples: the huge success of the New Kids on the Block/Bacstreet Boys tour, which moved more than a half-million tickets (and was examined in depth at the Billboard Touring Conference on Nov. 9), and the blockbuster tour by U.K. boy band Take That, which split up in 1996, reuniting again in pop terms. With the return of break-out vocalists Robbie Williams to the group, Take That exploded in the United Kingdom and Europe this summer, stunning box-office records and emerging as one of the elite tours of 2011. -

The Billboard Touring Conference & Awards will be held Nov. 9-10 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York. For more information and to register, go to billboardtouringconference.com.
**Bigger ‘Idol’**

**Expanded Puerto Rican edition wins ratings battle**

Through the years, TV singing competitions centered on Latin music have come and gone in the United States and Puerto Rico without making much of a splash with viewers.

Not so for “Idol Puerto Rico,” the Puerto Rican franchise of “American Idol.” Five weeks after its Aug. 7 debut on independent Puerto Rican channel Wapa TV, ratings for the show—which is only seen in Puerto Rico—have risen steadily to the extent that it now beats its combined competition on the Telemundo and Univision networks.

On Oct. 3, for example, the show kicked off with a 32% share at 9 p.m. and by the time it ended at 11:15 p.m., it had a 43.7% share, according to Nielsen.

“It’s a phenomenon,” says publicist Mayna Nevarez, who represents “Idol” judge and Puerto Rican pop/salsa singer Jerry Rivera.

While some attribute the success of “Idol Puerto Rico,” which is slated to run through November, to the hugely successful and powerful “American Idol” brand, the reasons may be more complex.

Wapa TV programming VP Jimmy Arteaga says that format owner FremantleMedia—which co-produces the show with Wapa—allowed the station to make adaptations.

“This is the only place in the world where the show runs two hours instead of one,” Arteaga says. “This allows for longer performances and for longer observations from the jurors. And at the end of the two hours, we announce who leaves, so viewers have heightened suspense until the end.”

Jrutors are another key factor. Past music reality shows designed for both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Hispanic market relied on celebrity judges and jurors who were already employed by the show’s production company rather than on music experts. The panel of judges on Univision’s “Viva el Sueño,” for example, were all Univision radio DJs.

Instead, the judges of “Idol Puerto Rico” are Rivera, Venezuelan star Ricardo Montaner, singer/songwriter Erika Ender—who brings a composer’s point of view—and artist manager and former radio programmer Topy Mamery, who in the past has managed Montaner and Yolanda Monge.

The judges don’t play nice, and they can get extremely technical; in a recent episode, Rivera critiqued specific aspects of vocal glissandos and intonation.

“Now we bring in what to say, or whether to be the good guy or the bad guy,” Rivera says.

“In my case, it’s difficult to voice opinions in a language everybody will understand,” Arteaga observes that early rounds featured many artisans who sounded like Natalia Jimenez, former lead singer of La Quinta Estacion, under-scoring the impact of certain singers’ styles. However, contestants with that particular sound have already been eliminated. “My main point is to tell them, ‘Don’t sound like anyone else,’” Rivera says.

In Puerto Rico, finding originality and talent isn’t a problem, and that may be the biggest factor. “It’s Puerto Rico,” show host Jaime Mayol says. “There isn’t that goof-off factor you see in the ‘American Idol’ auditions, for example. When a Puerto Rican comes to an audition and says, ‘I sing; he really sings,’ it’s believable.”

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**Estefan Re-Boots ‘Conga’**

**New remix highlights ‘Miss Little Havana’**

Twenty-five years ago the U.S. debut of the single “Conga” by Miami Sound Machine fired up nightclubs and radio and built up so much momentum that it thrust Cuban singer Gloria Estefan into a global spotlight.

Now the infectious dance hit, originally on Primitive Love (Epic), has returned to the charts thanks to Estefan’s Sept. 27 release of her new studio album, Miss Little Havana, which includes a new downloaddable remix of “Conga.”

The song is available on the deluxe version of the CD solely at Target stores nationwide. When consumers insert the disc in their computers, it gives them access to such bonus content as a photo gallery, Estefan’s version of “Let’s Get Loud” (which she wrote for Jennifer Lopez) and “Conga25,” a new remix produced by Emilio Estefan and Tony Mardini.

The original “Conga” had a substantial sales jump at iTunes on Sept. 12 when it appeared on the “69 Cent ‘80s Songs” playlist, which had high visibility on iTunes’ home page. In early October the new “Conga” had amassed 2,000 downloads and reached No. 8 after three weeks in the top 10 on Latin Pop Digital Songs. The original version was the band’s first hit on the Billboard Hot 100, peaking at No. 10 on Feb. 7, 1986.

“The song absolutely put Miami Sound Machine on the map and launched the careers of Gloria and Emilio Estefan,” says Eddie Fernandez, senior VP at Universal Music Publishing Group Latin America.

“Conga” has been a signature tune for Estefan, “heavily licensed” to projects in TV, movies and ad campaigns in Europe, according to Estefan Enterprises president Frank Amaudo, who also manages the singer/songwriter’s career. Written by Miami Sound Machine drummer Enrique “Kiki” Garcia, “Conga” came to be after a series of Euro- pean shows by the band as it promoted its overseas hit “Dr. Beat.” Garcia came up with a composition inspired by Cuban cumbias, says bassist Marcos Avila, now a co-executive producer on his wife’s new talk show, “Pa’lante Con Cristina,” on Telemundo.

“I recall we were in London and Kiki shared with me a new song,” Avila says. “He played me a rough version of ‘Conga’ and it already had magic.”

Primitive Love was the band’s second English-language album and “Conga” helped pave the way for crossover success. TV veteran Enol Falcon directed the original “Conga” music video, which was shot on 35mm film—a pricey project in the days when labels would often pay for videos in hopes of luging the MTV set.

“We didn’t know it was going to be as big as it was, but ‘Conga’ had a great beat and sound,” says Falcon, whose production company is celebrating 35 years. “The timing was right and it was a crossover hit.”

“Conga” is owned by the Estefan FIPP catalog, which is administered by Universal Music Publishing Group. Sony owns the master of the original song, says Fernandez, who negotiated the catalog for representation in Canada and the United States.

“Before Miami Sound Machine there really wasn’t this big of a crossover act,” says Fernandez, who also refers to Jose Feliciano and Ritchie Valens as trailblazers. “Gloria and Emilio took it to a whole new level.”

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

The entrepreneurial manager talks about Justin Bieber, Asher Roth and his mixed take on major labels.

You’ve enjoyed success as a manager in a short time. What’s your secret?

The typical idea of management is that you’re working for someone and doing what they say. That’s not my character. I can’t manage someone who wants a yes man. I have a real relationship with my clients; they’re going to get the truth from me. It’s also important for them to shape their own opinions and disagree if they feel passionate. They’re able to get some real perspective, and so am I because there are times when they are right and I need to listen.

I also live by something Will Smith said in an interview: He hates being realistic. No one realistic ever achieved anything. The idea of being an impossible thinker, regardless of success or failure, makes life much more fun.

What other lessons have you learned?

That you’re not going to be able to make an artist something he or she doesn’t want to be. You need to embrace who that person is. He has to be as happy and as comfortable with his life as you want to be with yours. The other lesson I’ve learned that’s been reaffirmed these last five years: Trusting your gut is No. 1. When you trust your gut, you don’t look and wonder what if. Also being cooperative instead of competitive is the smartest way. It’s so much more powerful when you work with talented people rather than wasting your energy trying to work against them.

Has the Universal restructuring had an effect on your business?

We’re a very self-contained unit, so it’s business as usual. We still have to deliver great records. I can’t speak highly enough of [Island Def Jam president] COO Steve Bartels and his staff. And now we’re working with [EDM/Universal Motown Republic Group chairman/CEO] Barry Weiss. He’s smart and a real straight shooter whose career hasn’t been too shabby. And [Universal Music Group chairman/CEO] Lucian Grainge isn’t the normal Brit. [laughs]. He’s like a New Yorker who just stopped by Great Britain for a while. He’s a shrewd, intelligent guy, a rare hybrid who’s very business but extremely passionate about the music.

What are the major labels doing right—and wrong?

They’ve created a great infrastructure on the international level. The international marketplace is where we are right now because of the Internet. If your artist is trying to have international success, they’re a great partner to have because they have representation in every single country around the world.

What they’re doing wrong is calling themselves the music business. We’re a multimedia business based around music. For the music business to survive and more forward, it has to be about building brands based in music that influence multiple areas of business, whether it be retail, creating platforms, television or film.

Musicians are the most influential brands on the planet. Look at Facebook: The top pages are mostly those of musicians. Look at Twitter: The top two are Lady Gaga and Justin [Bieber], and Britney Spears isn’t far behind. Realizing we make the most influential content on the planet, major labels should stop fighting over market share and be open to collaborating. Market share is basically a bunch of bullshit. We should be working together on creating platforms, not fighting over how many CDs we’re selling.

What’s your take on Spotify’s and Facebook’s music partnerships?

I love Spotify; it’s really well done. People are forgetting they’re just really launching, so they are going to make more improvements. But you can see the growth and how quick it is. I did my quick test of calling kids on college campuses, asking if they use iTunes. And literally every single one said, “No, we use Spotify.” I’ve heard that before and it was called Facebook. And like I said, it’s better to collaborate than fight.

Few singers have successfully transitioned from teen to adult performer. Will Bieber overcome that hurdle?

It goes back to the music. This Christmas album is by far Justin’s best work to date. But this is Justin’s adult voice. He sounds better than ever before, so soulful. I played it for Mark Sudack, who used to manage Mariah Carey. And Mark put up a tweet. “[Wow @ scooterbraun is playing me @justinbieber Xmas album. Instant classic. It’s neck & neck with MariahCarey 1st one.]” That’s how you make your transition. Make music that people can’t deny.

Why did Asher Roth take a two-year break after hitting it big in 2008?

“I Love College” became too big too quick. He felt he got defined as the “I Love College” guy. He loves the song, but he knew he was more than the party music; he also wanted to deliver very clear messages. So he decided that he needed to slow it down. He went on tour with Blink-182 and on his own, building a hardcore, loyal fan base that knows what he’s all about: a true lyricist.

Another thing that slowed us down a bit was the transition at Universal. That’s why he and Justin haven’t really delivered any new music because I insisted on letting things settle down. I feel comfortable now that Barry has things in order. I’m ready now to start coming back out with music from my clients.

What do you plan to do next?

After “Never Say Never,” I’d like to do more scripted stuff. I’d also like to do more public speaking. I enjoy speaking to young entrepreneurs and young minds. I find it extremely gratifying and also learn things myself. I have a message I want to give them: Anyone who says you’re too young, tell them to fuck off. I get very frustrated because I know how many walls I ran into; I know what the word “no” sounds like.

“Market share is basically a bunch of bullshit. We should be working together on creating platforms, not fighting over how many CDs we’re selling.”

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JON BON JOVI. IN A RARE AND EXTENSIVE CONVERSATION, AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS GROUP'S WORLDWIDE, MULTIGENERATIONAL SUCCESS, HE TALKS MUSIC AND BUSINESS AND FAMILY—HE TALKS LIFE.

BY RAY WADDELL
round the turn of the millennium, Bon Jovi found another gear.
The result of the shift has been a decade of career-altering achievement in just about any category used to quantify success in popular music: touring, hit songs, awards, branding, No. 1 albums, DVDs, all produced at a remarkably prolific pace.

Call it the next level. But not the last level. Driven by the intense work ethic, broad vision and rock 'n' roll charisma of its frontman and namesake, Jon Bon Jovi, this band is still breaking new markets, finding new fans and remaining relevant while most of the rock groups that emerged in the '80s either have disbanded or are relegated to playing decades-old hits with little hope of charting new ones.

If Bon Jovi were a stock, it would be a blue-chipper—savvy investors would be bullish. And Jon Bon Jovi is CEO, the personification of that delicate intersection of art and commerce. He accepts that description, with a caveat: "The commerce is really just a by-product of the art," he says, calling from a hotel room in Los Angeles where he's decompressing from the latest mega-tour by writing and cutting tracks with multiple Grammy Award-winning songwriter/producer John Shanks for what will end up being the next Bon Jovi album.

"The intent wasn't that I picked up a guitar to make money," he continues. "I loved the idea of learning to play and perform, and then when I chose it as a career path, it was only for the passion. The by-product of that was we were very successful and, subsequently, not only earned but kept our money, as opposed to so many other artists you read about that weren't as lucky."

As successful as the band continues to be, Bon Jovi's aspirations have long transcended musical confines. "I always saw a much bigger, broader canvas than just being the lead singer in a rock 'n' roll band," he says. "My peer group aspired to be on the cover of Circus magazine. I aspired to be on the cover of Time. There was just so much more I wanted to do in the world than just be a guy in a rock band."

Even so, the "guys in a rock band" thing is working out OK. The numbers alone confirm Bon Jovi is truly among the elite acts on the planet by any stat that matters. Five hundred eleven shows at stadiums and arenas around the globe since 2000 have moved nearly 13 million tickets, resulting in a gross just shy of $1 billion. A worldwide tour merch per-cap average of about $8.50 means an estimated $110 million in gross sales during the past decade. In this young century, the band's only label home, Island Records, has released eight albums and a boxed set generating more than 23 million units sold worldwide, according to Nielsen SoundScan and Universal Music Group (UMG). Five live DVDs have sold more than 2 million copies worldwide.
There are other milestones. Jon Bon Jovi won a Grammy in 2007 for his duet with Jennifer Nettles, “Who Says You Can’t Go Home”) and was inducted into the Songwriter Hall of Fame in 2009. The band received MTV Europe Music Awards’ Global Icon honor in 2010, and also performed at the Grammys for the first time.

The group’s tours finished as Billboard’s highest-grossing twice (in 2008 and 2010). The band became one of a handful of acts to perform on the Great Lawn in New York’s Central Park. The Circle world tour—which wrapped this summer with a $135 million gross, according to Billboard Boxscore—and the preceding Lost Highway tour, not only continued building the group’s North American and European audiences, but also sold out shows in Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South America.

Bon Jovi has more than 14 million Facebook friends, and BonJovi.com claims a database exceeding 1.3 million people. The band generates $2 million annually in online merch sales. And it’s not just the fans that are loyal—Paul Konzelius, co-founder of the group with David Munns at Bon Jovi Management, has worked with the band since its earliest headlining days. Bon Jovi’s global touring partnerships with Creative Artists Agency and AEG Live have become synergistic beasts, with the latter producing the band’s last three world tours. There are two reasons for all of the success: great songs performed well, and the drive and vision of Jon Bon Jovi.

“No one works harder than Jon,” CAA managing partner Rob Light says. “No one is more involved on every level of his career as an artist than Jon. He knows exactly who he is and has embraced that, so it’s much easier to then go market it. He’s comfortable being Bon Jovi and Jon Bon Jovi. He knows what that brand means.”

The high regard for Bon Jovi the band extends to Bon Jovi the man, and transcends the music business. “He’s one of those people who’s just gotten better,” “Saturday Night Live” producer Lorne Michaels says. “Jon is one of those guys who I’d never underestimate. We’re not talking about him in the past. We’re talking about him now. That alone marks him as something to watch. Longevity is a testament to something other than a marketing campaign.”

Formed in New Jersey in 1983, the group—Bon Jovi, guitarist Richie Sambora, keyboardist David Bryan, drummer Tico Torres and then-bassist Alec John Such—was let loose upon the world with Bon Jovi in 1984, then exploded with Slippery When Wet two years later. (Hugh McDonald has handled bass duties since Such left the band in 1994.) Unlike many of its counterparts, Bon Jovi weathered both the grunge era and internal conflicts unscathed, consistently packing up hit albums and global tours and settling comfortably into a superstar groove before taking an amicable hiatus in 1997. Despite having already seen enough success for 10 bands, the break was only the calm before the next storm.

In retrospect, it’s now clear that 2000’s Crush, the band’s seventh studio album, was the jumping-off point for a huge commercial and creative renaissance, and “It’s My Life” became the group’s most important single in a decade. Bon Jovi had already developed his career as an actor and was respected in that field, but filming “U-S河北” with such stars as Matthew McConaughey, Bill Paxton and Harvey Keitel oddly brought the singer a renewed vigor and vision toward his music. Focusing on acting brought him new “source material,” he says, leading to “a great period of growth which was based on humility.”

For inspiration, Bon Jovi turned to another famous Garden State hero. “I came home and said to Richie, ‘I want to be Frank Sinatra. I’m going to make movies here. I’m going to make music there, I’m going to run the business here. This is the way it’s going to be,’” he recalls. “It’s the Sinatra kind of vision. He got a president elected. He did incredible things for civil rights at the time. He was making movies, music, and he was doing it the way he wanted to do it. Frankie said, ‘I did it my way,’ that beauty of that honest lyric. The people who related to that song found Frankie in themselves. It was an incredibly empowering lyric—it empowered me. That’s what happens when you hit on a lyric that’s honest and true.”

“It’s My Life” was a worldwide hit, but also served to introduce the band to a new generation of listeners—while the original fans stayed loyal. In Light’s view, Jon Bon Jovi “really got comfortable and enjoyed being Bon Jovi again. He found that moment where he just loved doing it, and when you love it, and with the feedback from the fans, it became this symbiotic relationship that pushed it all forward.”

Crash connected the group with a new audience, Universal Music Group International (UMGI) COO Max Hole says. “I’ve probably been more Bon Jovi shows than any other act on Universal, and I’ve seen them in more countries around the world.”

Jon Bon Jovi is obsessed with writing and recording songs that are relevant today. “He’s not driven by financial gain,” he says. “I wouldn’t be sitting here in a hotel room by myself thinking I need to make a buck,” he says. “I could have sold my soul a hundred times over doing reality TV or what my dear first manager used to call ‘the lunch box tour’ where you go out and sell bed sheets and lunch boxes. Anything I do and present musically or professionally is always with the art first in mind.”

Maintaining relevance isn’t the same as shifting styles to chase musical trends. “I try not to stray so far from what’s comfortable,” he says. “When we came into Nashville [to cut 2007’s Lost Highway], I’d always prided myself on being a story-teller, writing a lyric that people could relate to. So for me that wasn’t that much of a stretch. But for me to have bad rappers when tap was at its pinnacle, or boy bands, or dance moves, or gone to techno beats because it was big in Ibiza—none of that would have rung true. When you’re defining who you are, it’s important not to confuse the world. Do what you do and do it well, and people can like or dislike it. But at least we know what it is.”

"MY PEER GROUP ASPIRED TO BE ON THE COVER OF CIRCUS MAGAZINE. I ASPIRED TO BE ON THE COVER OF TIME. THERE WASE MUCH MORE I WANTED TO DO IN THE WORLD THAN JUST BE A GUY IN A ROCK BAND."

JON BON JOVI

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DELIVERING ON A PRAYER
A PHILANTHROPIC NATURE, PLUS HIS SOUL FOUNDATION'S SOUL KITCHEN LEAD TO A PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT FOR JON BON JOVI

Jon Bon Jovi isn't just a good Catholic boy. "He is the best Catholic boy," Sister Mary Scullion says.

In 2008, Bon Jovi was honored with the Humanitarian Award at the Billboard Touring Awards. The singer has long been known for his passionate support of social causes, work that eventually led to the formation of his Soul Foundation, and has now carried through to a presidential appointment to the White House Council for Community Solutions, chaired by Michelle Obama.

This month marks the five-year anniversary of the Soul Foundation, an organization that directly addresses the issue of homelessness. Its work through the years has led to the construction of hundreds of units of affordable housing. Now up and running is the first Soul Kitchen restaurant, whose "Robin Hood" style form of payment for patrons is creating a buzz in philanthropic circles and is sure to expand.

Bon Jovi would be the first to say he was mentored in this space by Sister Mary who, in 1989, co-founded Project H.O.M.E., a nationally recognized Philadelphia-based organization that provides housing, employment and education to those in need. According to its website, Project H.O.M.E. has leveraged more than $50 million in equity toward housing and economic development. Sister Mary also serves on the board of the Soul Foundation.

"Once we met him, and he met many of the men and women that had experienced homelessness, he said, 'I'm in and will do whatever I can and whatever it takes to deal with this situation,'" Sister Mary recalls. "He is just a really intelligent, strategic, compassionate, incredibly generous person, and a real can-do person. He isn't afraid to get his hands dirty or get involved on the ground floor to better understand a situation."

Of course, it's unusual in entertainment and sports and celebrity in general to find people who want to give back. "(But) it's not about the photo op. It's about getting results, making an impact, accountability," Feldman says. "And by the way, people have figured that out down here. That's why they appointed (Bon Jovi) to this council, because they know he's going to roll up his sleeves and personally get involved. His reputation down here is as a guy who delivers."

Sister Mary expects Bon Jovi's participation on the council to bring even more momentum to both Project H.O.M.E. and the Soul Foundation. "This really enhances our work and the work of many of our partners, because it brings best practices, it expands our knowledge and understanding and solutions to some of the issues we're working with," she says. "Joni's visibility and worldwide recognition attract a lot more resources, capacity and energy to some of these really difficult social problems."

Bon Jovi's charitable efforts are widespread and only make use of his celebrity when the spotlight serves the cause.

"Joni does a lot publicly, but he does a lot quietly as well," "Today" host Matt Lauer says. "He put together the entertainment for a huge fund-raiser for the Apollo Theatre out in the Hamp- tons. Jon played, and Ben E. King, and Jamie Foxx and Alicia Keys. Once he puts his name to something, you'll find his level of involvement is never at a superficial level."

Others can quickly cite their own examples of Bon Jovi's efforts. "When I called him and asked him to help with City of Hope, it took one phone call and we raised $10 million in one night, in large part because of Jon," says Anschutz Entertainment Group CEO Tim Leiweke, who received City of Hope's Spirit of Life award in 2010.

The Soul Kitchen, which offers healthy, New Orleans-influenced cuisine, allows diners to pay what they can afford or, if they can't afford anything, to exchange volunteer work for the meal. "What we do with Soul Kitchen is not only needed, it's going to work, and it's going to work because it comes from a pure place," Bon Jovi says. "I can't tell you any other reason why I enjoy washing pots and pans."

Bon Jovi seemingly moves easily through political circles and finds presidents "not even a little bit" intimidating, he says. "The intimidation factor has passed with time, but the respect for the office has not changed one bit. It's still immense. If I have any clue what I'm talking about, I'm very comfortable. I don't care if it's in the Oval Office or in Philadelphia with Sister Mary."

The act had its chance to chase trends during the grunge era that effectively closed the curtain on hair bands. "A lot of my peer group started to pretend they were influenced by the same things that Kurt Cobain was influenced by," Bon Jovi says. "Well, Kurt Cobain was an original, and that's why he was loved as he was. Record companies have done this time and again... sign 10 things that look and pretend to sound like the original until the genre loses its way. The big arena rock sound of the mid- and latter '80s was watered down so severely that it was the perfect time for a Kurt Cobain to come in and reinvent the wheel. The real ones stay true, and it's nothing more than you being you."

Bon Jovi says he doubts he'll be able to sell out stadiums around the world unless younger fans were coming onboard. "I'm aware that there are two generations of fans out there," he says. "We've known that for the last decade. But I'm not in the 'Fat Elvis' suit yet."

The band "changes up the low every time," Island Def Jam Music Group president/COO Steve Barrales says. "Just look at Low Higher, an incredible breakthrough group that spoke to the country audience, many of which were Bon Jovi fans for years. They just needed the opportunity to look back again, and be rediscovered."

It's an important distinction: Bon Jovi still sells records as well as tickets. "When they go into a new tour, they play new songs along with the classic songs everyone wants to hear," Holle says. "They're always introducing new songs from the new record into their catalog on each tour. That's what keeps them a relevant, growing group."

For the label, Bon Jovi's heavy touring schedule provides the perfect global marketing platform, beginning with innovative ticket/album bundling programs before the record ever hits shelves. "We still approach it by drilling specifics in each local market... press, retail, the Web or radio," Barrales says. "The 'before' and 'after' of a concert gets completely marketed."

Tours can take a year-and-a-half to set up, and the records are also strategized far in advance. "This is a relationship over time, not just a movement shortly after albums drop," Barrales says. "We're already in discussions planning a new [Bon Jovi] studio album release for 2013."

As diverse as Bon Jovi's interests are, his band is "home base," he says. "I encourage everybody in the band, and myself, to diversify. Go and explore, what is it in your life that moves you. But know that when the call comes to go back to work, everybody comes back home base."

Bon Jovi has always been, at its core, a live band. Fans keep coming back, "because they know every year it's bigger and better than the tour before, no matter how big it was that time," Light says. "So what inevitably happens, and it's true of all the great bands, is everyone goes and everyone wants to go to the next time, because they know it's one of the most satisfying, sure-leaf nights of their lives."

Bon Jovi tours have been a huge boon to AEG Live. "With Jon, we didn't go out and bid and win a tour. We went out and developed a partnership very early on," Anschutz Entertainment Group president Tim Leiweke says. "This is not only about a group of musicians that have risen to the top of the industry, and the loyalty they have to their fans, and the passion their fans have for them. From a business standpoint, this is a company and Jon runs it that way. They're disciplined, they're well-organized, very professional. It's like clockwork with these guys. Back-of-house: best machine I've ever seen. Front-of-house: most passionate love affair between a band and its fans that I've ever seen."

Ron Van De Veen, senior VP of events for MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., has been on the venue side of Bon Jovi tours for about a dozen stadium shows and 10 arena dates. Bon Jovi in its home state is about as big as it gets. The band opened the new stadium last year with four sellouts that drew 250,000 people and grossed more than $21 million. "We can't wait for him to come back," Van de Veen says. "It's an exuberant live performance."

Bon Jovi's history as a live act pays dividends, particularly in this era, when artists are often developed on TV rather than in sweaty clubs. "To have your roots as a live band and come up as they did through the clubs to the arenas and touring and touring, you create fans," Van de Veen says. "And that's what Bon Jovi has done."

There's a moment in Phil Griffin's 2009 documentary "When We Were Beautiful," which marked the band's 25th anniversary, when Bon Jovi says, "I want to sell out the desert. More than once." It's a selling quote. This band has always had a global perspective.

"I had the idea, going back nearly 30 years ago, that it's a big world out there and a lot of places are influenced by American pop culture," Bon Jovi says. "We established those routes from the first record. We went to Europe, Asia, and we started selling out the places we would. What we learned was, with time, there are going to be certain markets that turn their back on you, and there will be other markets with economic unrest, or markets with civil unrest. We never had to rely on just one marketplace to distribute our records."

Such an approach is more common today than it was in the '80s, but still relatively few acts are willing to invest the time and money into touring overseas. "He was the first artist—true-in the rock era to understand the breadth of the world in terms of opportunity," Light says. "He was opening doors in markets long before other bands were going there. That's part of his psyche and how he looks at the world. It's always a conversation... because new markets are always opening up and economies are changing, new economies are emerging. He's always looking for new places.
to go and extend the Bon Jovi reach."

One such market that has exploded for Bon Jovi is Australia and New Zealand, where Australian promoter Paul Dainty of the Dainty Group has done "beyond well" with the band, with multiple stadium-level sellouts. "Bon Jovi are massive here," he says. "December last year we went into Sydney to play one stadium and ended up doing three. Australia's a big country, but we've only got 21 million people. Five million people in Sydney. To do three stadiums, on a per capita basis globally, those are stupendous numbers."

Dainty describes "a real passion across everyone, a demographic that runs deep with Australians," and adds that Bon Jovi has made a "commitment to the market. He's so professional, dedicated and committed to everything he does. That connects with the audience," he says. "They delivery every night the most real, full-on rock'n'roll, a brilliant show. That's how you know the minute they schedule to come back, it will be bigger again."

This global touring approach provides a critical platform for a label with the reach of UMG, which has a presence in 77 countries, and it's an opportunity seized, according to UMG's Hole. "If they're touring in Japan, for example, we'll often release a special Japanese tour edition, which has unique content that will keep the Japanese fans completely interested. It's a question of working out what the fan wants, event by event."

More than a few people refer to Bon Jovi as the "CEO" of Bon Jovi Inc. "He has a better handle on their business, their future and their path than anyone I've ever seen," Leweke says. "When he wakes up in the morning and goes to bed at night, Jon is a CEO. That's the way he views his role."

"His business acumen and instincts are unparalleled," Burtels adds. "Jon Bon Jovi drives hard, and the entire organization feels his energy. It rubs off, and therefore much gets done in an efficient manner. The success speaks for itself due to this approach."

Light says the band is like any team, business or organization in that there are always leaders. "It may take a whole team to execute, but somebody becomes the heart and soul, and that's Jon," Light says. "He leads it, he calls the shots, and everybody else on that stage and who surrounds him—label, promoters, crew, whoever—are all integral parts, and he would acknowledge that. People organically want to follow him. They want to be a part of what he's doing. They know he's going in the right direction."

When it comes to planning a tour or other project, Bon Jovi is in the mix. "There is nothing he's working on where his name and the band's name and their music is involved that he isn't integrally involved," Light says. "That doesn't mean he is on every call. If we're talking about an endorsement or sponsorship, we may do a lot of the initial work, but it comes time for questions like, 'What is the creative? How is it going to work?' What does it mean to the band and to me? He's having that conversation."

"But don't pitch Bon Jovi a business deal on show day. "The show is his main job," Light says. "He's an artist first, but he has the ability to touch all those other things and he does so intelligently, creatively and gladly."

Matt Lauer, host of NBC's "Today," says that "in the nicest possible way . . . Jon is a control freak. If you look at most really successful people, they are. Jon has a firm grip on every aspect of his band. There's a reason the band is called Bon Jovi."

Being the "CEO" is "one facet of who I am, sure," Bon Jovi says. "If, after three decades, you haven't learned how to run your business, then you really are a living, breathing cliché of rock'n'roll. So I take pride in that description."

Still, Bon Jovi the sports fan makes it clear that the band, and everyone who works with it, are a team. "Everybody's participation is key to the team's success, but somebody has to be the leader," he says. "So in that regard I'll accept the credit—or the blame. But everybody's contributions make for the sum, and the sum of the parts make for the whole."

Being the leader means having to make tough decisions, as when Sambora left the tour this summer to enter rehab. "(Guitarist Phil Xendiis filled in.) There wasn't any talk of Sambo's exit being permanent, and Bon Jovi doesn't shy away from discuss-

**MILLIONS AND MILLIONS SERVED**

Every Bon Jovi studio album released since 2000 has sold at least 500,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The act recently celebrated its 11th top 10 hit on the Billboard 200, with the No. 5-peaking Greatest Hits in 2010.

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**VIDEOS**

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<tr>
<td>3.4M</td>
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**Non-U.S. Sales**

**U.S. Sales**

SOURCE: Nielsen SoundScan (U.S.), Universal Music Group (non-U.S.)

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**JON KNOWS EXACTLY WHO HE IS AND HAS EMBRACED THAT, SO IT'S MUCH EASIER TO THEN GO MARKET IT.**

ROB LIGHT, CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY
In good company: JON BON JOVI with co-managers DAVID MUNNS (left) and PAUL KORZILIUS (far right) and attorney JERRY EDELSTEIN.

ing "the Richie scenario."

"I loved him just as much before as I do after," he says. "And the best thing to do, both for him and for us, is say, 'We're going to work. You should take care of yourself.' I didn't threaten him with being fired. I didn't do anything, in the media or privately. Everybody supported him, and in turn, the fan base supported the decision, and we went out and did a month, 15 or so shows, I guess. It's good that he realizes we're going to work no matter what, as long as I can get up and out there. It was good for him, and he's in a great place again."

It boils down to "immense respect for our relationship," and, given its long-term connection with the entire team, including the band, it's clear loyalty is important to Bon Jovi, the man and the band. "A lot of it has to do with the number of years and the time served," he says. "I've spent more time in this band than I have spent out of it, and I have spent more time with the guys than I have spent with my own family. That's quite a statement, but it's based on a 28-year relationship. There's a basis for all that loyalty. We've seen marriage, birth, accomplishment, failure together. We pride ourselves on the difference between us and a lot of our peer group that fell by the wayside. We were able to recognize when it was time to put someone on the back—and when it was time to push them in the note."

Bon Jovi's curiosity extends beyond the opportunities that exist for the band into what other entertainers and organizations are doing. "I know what he's more than likely interested in doing and what he's not, but I like to tell him everything, because it helps him understand the bigger market," Light says. "When he's not being the artist, when we're doing business, he wants to know about everything in the business: how other tours are doing, what are ticket prices (costing), what's working on a marketing level, what promotions have worked, what new media is working."

Lorne Michaels calls Bon Jovi "incredibly disciplined," but adds. "He has the thing we look for: manners. I don't mean 'please and thank you' manners. I just mean a level of respect for all the people you work with. I like him a lot. I've found him in every one of my dealings with him to be completely honest and straightforward. I've been around a long time, and it's not that common."

Despite the wide range of interests that require a lot of time and attention, Bon Jovi is a family man. He has been married to his high school sweetheart, Dorothea, since 1989, and they have four children. "I've realized we're going to spend more time with the guys than I have spent with my own family," he says. "And he's certainly never one to sit back on his laurels. He's always hungry for the next adventure, so I'd be surprised if he doesn't find another gig."

It's illuminating to know that as he nears the half-century mark, Bon Jovi is trying to learn about new things and develop new interests. "And he's still developing his chops," he says. "I've never studied so hard playing guitar. I'm taking guitar lessons at 50 years old to be a better and better guitar player."

All involved with Team Bon Jovi believe the band will continue to break new markets, attract new fans and sell more records. "He hasn't quite gone everywhere he wants to go," Light says. "And he's certainly never one to sit back on his laurels. He's always hungry for the next adventure, so I'd be surprised if he doesn't find another gig."

Nashville-based Ray Waddell (@billboardbou) is executive director of content and programming for touring and live entertainment at Billboard. He writes the weekly On the Road column.

**R-E-S-P-E-C-T?**

THE ROCK HALL AND BON JOVI

Aren't 13 million tickets in 10 years enough?

As yet another list of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees nominations is revealed without Bon Jovi, "I find it extraordinary they're not in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and I hope it's something the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame will do something about very soon," Universal Music Group International COO Max Hole says. "I think they're idiots," Anschutz Entertainment Group CEO Tim Leiweke says. "This band is arguably one of the top two bands in the world over the last 10 years. You can have any opinion you want, but the fans have spoken. What is it about this band they don't get?"

"Saturday Night Live" producer Lorne Michaels believes perceptions are hard to overcome. "There's already a guy who's called the Boss," Michaels says, referring to Bruce Springsteen, who, like Bon Jovi, famously hails from New Jersey. "The slot was taken. If [Bon Jovi] came from Delaware, it would be a different thing."

For many, Michaels says, Bon Jovi was "written off as a hair band in the '80s. It's just how you enter the game. In my world, he's taken very seriously."

Bon Jovi isn't bitter, but does seem a bit bewildered. "What are you going to do," he says with a shrug. "Do we deserve to be in the thing? Yeah. Do I want to be in it? Yeah. Truthfully, I do want to be associated with Elvis and the Beatles and the Stones and the greats. Do our accomplishments speak for themselves? Yeah, I believe they do. But the guys there, we're just of a different generation and they don't want to know."

Bon Jovi declines to dismiss the achievements of any hall members ("God bless them all," he says), but it's clear that some inductees puzzle him when compared with his band's accomplishments. "You look and you go, 'Really? Is that even in the same league as us?' No," he says. "Take me out of the equation. If the prerequisite for being in something like this were you're influence on future generations and your catalog of music having left some kind of mark, you could cite examples of people that aren't in that make you go, 'You're kidding.' If you think Kiss didn't have an influence on the kids that came after them, then you're crazy. You may or may not be a Kiss fan, but they did influence generations of kids that did emulate them."

Others seem more irritated by the Rock Hall snub. "I don't get it," Leiweke says. "But the people that count are the 13 million people that bought $1 billion worth of tickets for this band. Game, set, match."

**HAVING A NICE DECADE**

Bon Jovi's touring achievements have twice led it to topping Billboard's year-end list of the top tours, in 2008 and 2010.

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<td>Lost Highway (2007-08)</td>
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<td>2,155,461</td>
<td>$104,148,591</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>2,727,600</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>12,767,363</td>
<td>$943,817,257</td>
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SOURCE: Billboard Boxscore

OCTOBER 22, 2011 | www.billboard.biz | 19
"If you're going to get in a covered wagon and be a pioneer, get ready to get air in your ass."

Richard Young
PROOF

THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS RISE AGAIN

BY RAY WADDELL
TO STEP INTO THE PRACTICE HOUSE in ultra-ural Metcalfe County, Ky.—about 100 miles northeast of Nashville and light years from any semblance of a music business—is to step into music history. This house has spawned three serious rock ’n’ roll bands: Itchy Brother, the Kentucky HeadHunters and Black Stone Cherry—nearly encompassing all the musical offshoots of rock. And to sit with the four Kentucky HeadHunters in worn-out chairs as they amiably spool out their unlikely tale is to relive one of the great music stories of any genre, a tale of wild dreams found and lost, gutty perseverance and—more than 40 years in—contentment and renewed creativity.

Most of their songs were born in the Practice House, but the HeadHunters never recorded there until cutting the tracks for their new album, "REBIRTH," in 2011. The year before, they opened October 1, the occasion (and he) was recorded.Nashville-based independent Red Dirt Music. Clichés be damned. Lalahs truly brings this veteran band full circle, not only because it was recorded at the house, but because it features—in bassist Doug Phelps, rhythm guitarist/vocalist Richard Young, drummer Fred Young and lead guitarist Greg Martin—the original version of the HeadHunters (as they were first known), before Phelps’ younger brother Ricky Lee joined the group. It was the elder Phelps who, with his country sensibilities, helped open the doors in Nashville that led to the group’s 1989 landmark, Grammy Award-winning album Pickin’ On Nashville.

**HOUSE OF MUSIC**

A modest, white farm house surrounded by woods and pastures, the Practice House sits on James Howard Young Road, a narrow, winding county byway named for the father of the HeadHunters’ Richard Young and his younger brother Fred, a hard-pounding drummer known almost as much for his foot-long mutton chops as his world-class chops. Formerly owned by the Youngs’ grandmother, the house sat vacant until 1968 when the Young brothers discovered music and needed a place to play. Fred and cousin Anthony Kenney were 11, Richard was 14, and Martin, another cousin, was 15. Before long, rock music was ringing out of the hollow, as was bluegrass, with New Grass Revival’s Courtney Johnson living about a quarter-mile down the road. “They’d be down there playing bluegrass and we’d be up here playing rock,” Richard Young says. “All that music, right here along this creek.”

Their hair grew along with their musical skills, and the shin-digs at the Practice House were epic: “If we didn’t have a gig, we’d get a bunch of cases of beer and hide it from Daddy. Come Friday or Saturday night, it wasn’t nothing for us to have 80-90 people out here,” Richard Young recalls. “Then Sunday morning Daddy would roll us out of bed and say, ‘Y’all get your asses up there and clean up them beer cans.’”

The music of their earliest incarnations—they were known first as Aftermath, then Velvet Mandrake and ultimately as Itchy Brother—was blues-based rock, with Martin, who had moved down from Louisville, Ky., bringing that city’s broader palate of North-meets-South musical influences with him and providing tuneful, searing lead guitar. “Greg is the musician of the band, and he was bringing a lot of blues into the fold because he had a great record collection,” Richard Young says.

Itchy Brother was closer to Fee than Lynyrd Skynyrd, but the music was a mixed-breed mongrel. “When you’re from Kentucky, you can say you’re the baddest-ass English blues rock band in the world, but you still sound like a bunch of Kentucky boys,” Richard Young says. “If you listen to ‘Little Miss Blues Breaker’ on the new record, that is pure, unabashed Itchy Brother.”

Playing locally, the band mixed Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath covers with their own originals, but were never a typical top 40 sock-hop outfit. An English teacher pulled the plug when it broke into Steppenwolf’s “The Pusher” at a prom. And venturing down to Nashville in 1970 for a “young country” showcase, the act couldn’t resist ambushing the audience by whipping out “Crossroads.” Southern rock, then at its most adventurous, ruled the airwaves, and when Youngs’ brother, Itchy Brother, was too young to head to the heart in Macon, Ga. Instead, it took up residence at the Yellow Hydrant in nearby Bowling Green, where word of the band began to spread. By 1972, Itchy Brother was opening for the Charlie Daniels Band and the Outlaws. “It was a great time to be in a band,” Richard Young says.

In 1977 Itchy Brother caught the attention of Phil Walden’s Capricorn Records, but, when Lynyrd Skynyrd’s-leaved Convair plane plummeted into the swamps of Gillsburg, Miss., on Oct. 20, 1977, the tragedy brought the original Southern rock era to a halt. “When Ronnie [Van Zant] and them crashed that October, it was over with,” Richard Young recalls.

Though Capricorn was now out of the picture, Itchy Brother knew it was ready to record. Snowed in and bored in the winter of ’78, the band started flipping through records and reading the labels, stopping on Zeppelin’s The Song Remains the Same on Zep’s own imprint, Swan Song. Dialing the label in New York, Richard Young was lucky enough to reach Swan Song exec Mitchell Fox and convince him to come to Kentucky and hear the band. Though Fox was sold—”We were going to be one of the first American bands they ever signed,” Young says—tragedy again reared its head when Zeppelin drummer John Bonham died in September 1980, leading to the dissolution of the band and, ultimately, Swan Song. The disappointment led to Kenney quitting Itchy Brother. “It couldn’t get no bigger than Swan Song for us,” Young says. “Some people can overcome failures. If you’re going to get in a covered wagon and be a pioneer, get ready to get air in your ass. If you can’t take the air, you got to stop.”

**REBIRTH**

The others stuck with music. With help from Fox, Richard Young went to Nashville to write for Acuff-Rose, while Fred Young found a gig drumming for country pop songstress Sylvia. Martin was playing rockabilly guitar with Ronnie McDowell, for whom Missouri-bred Doug Phelps was playing bass, and by ’85, Itchy Brother started convening for fun, with Phelps replacing Kenney on bass. It rechristened itself the HeadHunters, named for Muddy Waters’ band. “When the HeadHunters started, we were going to be nothing but strictly blues,” Fred Young says.

“We were studying the blues,” Doug Phelps adds. “We said, ‘We won’t just start with the Beatles or Zeppelin, but with who influenced them. It was Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf, and Sonny Boy Williamson and Jimmy Reed, all those guys. And we had to play it exactly the way they played it, not sort of like they played it. Once we got that foundation, then we let all the other influences come out.”

One of those influences was country. “We were rural farm boys, we are country folk,” Phelps adds. “We’ve always thought our music relates to the country side of things in the rural sensibilities that we have and when we put our mouths, you can tell.” Meanwhile, singer Ricky Lee Phelps had moved from Arizona to Nashville to give a country music career a shot. Doug Phelps convinced his brother to come up to Kentucky to hear what he was up to. “I just wanted him to check out what we were doing. He’d never seen us,” Phelps says. “He said, ‘I’ll come up, but I ain’t sitting in.’

But sit in he did, and though, Richard Young says he was concerned about “monkeying with the chemistry,” the impact was immediately obvious when the Phelps brothers started singing together. “All of a sudden, here’s this monster rock ’n’ roll band and you put these two vocals together, and the damn room went neon,” Young recalls. “God gives every bunch of boys one good band in their life, and here we saw an opportunity for another.”

While most of Pickin’ On Nashville was written and demoed before Ricky Lee Phelps came onboard, he brought a couple of songs with him that were quickly HeadHunterized. “We said, ‘Ricky, you sing, we’ll play,’” Richard Young says. “But I will say this: We wouldn’t have had the chance of a snowball in hell if Ricky hadn’t been singing. At the time they wouldn’t have accepted Doug or anybody else that sang. Ricky had enough of that country flavor with the rock music.”

Nashville, which was in one of its more rebellious musical phases, got wind of what the HeadHunters were doing, and the band ended up signing with Mercury Records. A decade after the Swan Song disappointment, it had a deal. “I was scared to death,” Martin says. “We were all making a living in music, we almost didn’t want a record deal. The reality is, ‘no’ is hard to take, but once you say ‘yes,’ that’s when it gets hard. That’s when your ass is on the line.”

“Kentucky” was added to the HeadHunters name “to make us sound country,” according to Fred Young, plus the Georgia Satellites were hot at the time. Pickin’ On Nashville, a blend of revved-up covers of Bill Monroe and Don Gibson and original songs like "Durnas Walker,” quickly struck a chord, and four hit songs and a Grammy followed. The album has sold 779,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

After 20 years, the Kentucky HeadHunters, with Fox as manager, were suddenly the toast of Music City, a bizarre turn for a group that had grown up “avoiding Nashville like the plague,” according to Richard Young. Big tours with the top stars of the genre followed, along with No. 1 parties and sales milestones. “We were very excited, but we were also very apprehensive and careful,” he says. “We had done this so long, we were like salty

**TEAM HEADHUNTERS**

**NEW ALBUM:** Dixie Lullabies
**RELEASE DATE:** Oct. 18
**LABEL:** Red Dirt Music
**MANAGEMENT:** Kentucky HeadHunters
**PUBLISHING:** Tennes Young Boys/Mr. Erik Music/I.B. Headed Music
**WEBSITE:** KentuckyHeadHunters.com
**PUBLICIST:** Lance Cowan/Markens
**BOOKING:** Bobby Roberts Co.
**ATTORNEY:** Otisville Almon of Zanwalt, Almon & Hapes
days that never had any success. The whole thing with the HeadHunters was like, ‘We’re not going to let anybody fuck with this.’ But it got thrown into the mix of shaking the industry up.”

The follow-up Electric Barnyard came in 1991, but didn’t achieve the same success, though the album went gold and garnered the HeadHunters a second Country Music Assn. group of the year award. (It has sold 604,000 copies.) In retrospect, the band thinks the album was rushed. “We were 30-something years old and we were on the road 350 days in 1990,” Richard Young says. “We weren’t ready. They were pushing us too hard. They didn’t realize it took years to make that [first album] happen. We could have done it again if they’d just given us a couple more months.”

Shocking the Nashville music community, the Phelps brothers abruptly departed the HeadHunters in the summer of 1992, forming the country duo Brother Phelps. The HeadHunters soldiered on, bringing their cousin Kinky back on bass and roc–oriented vocalist Mark Orr into the fold. They released three records with that lineup, the most notable of which was That’ll Work, a collaboration with legendary Chuck Berry pianist Johnny Johnson, forming a relationship that lasted until Johnson’s death in 2005. Sales for That’ll Work stand at 21,400.

Back To Basics

Yet, the magic was missing. Orr left the band, and in 1995, Richard Young called Doug Phelps to see if he’d be interested in coming back. He was. Even Ricky Lee Phelps briefly gave it a try, but the artistic differences remained and the Kentucky HeadHunters opted to continue with Doug on lead vocals.

A series of solid, sometimes great, albums on a series of labels, including MCA, Audium, Elektra and CDB, marked the turn of the millennium for the HeadHunters. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of Pickin’ On Nashville, the band released a fiery live album from 1990. It settled into a robust touring schedule booked by the Bobby Roberts Co., took its management in-house and, though it continuously wrote, didn’t feel compelled to release a new album—until now.

Dixie Lullabies is the first album of new material from the band since 2003. The HeadHunters were spurred into recording not only by musical compatriots, but also by longtime friend and fellow Kentuckian Ben Ewing, GM of Red Dirt Music, a subsidiary of Progression Music. Richard Young describes Ewing as “an entrepreneur, smart-ass, great guy. We need somebody like him. He’s successful, and we’re not, in business. We’re musicians.”

Some tour dates with Janet Johnson initiated conversations with Johnson hambandleader Wayd Battle, who was up for recording at the Practice House. During 11 cold winter days, the band cut Dixie Lullabies at full power with Battle as engineer. “Wayd didn’t have no headphoress, so when he’d open the door and say, ‘Go’, we’d knock him in the floor,” Richard Young says.

The 14 songs on Dixie Lullabies bottle undistilled HeadHunters from the backwoods boogie of the title cut, to the Rolling Stones-esque “Turnblin’ Roses,” to the hopping first single “Great Acoustics” and hard-charging, “Just Believe.” When the band debuted several of the songs at a packed August showcase at 3rd and Lindsley in Nashville—its first date in the city in five years—Nashville music writer Holly Gleason wrote, “Twenty years after being the biggest thing there was, it appears the Kentucky HeadHunters are on the verge of being what they were meant to be, a slamming rock–roots band that fears no corner at any speed.”

Whatever Dixie Lullabies is, the album owes its life to the Practice House. “This house is the reason we’re doing this,” Richard Young says. “Every record we’ve made, that’s what we were supposed to do at the time. This has got us back to being aroots band. We’re not chasing our tail anymore for anybody.”

“This house.” Though its walls are now adorned with posters, photos and clippings documenting a lifelong search, the Practice House is essentially the same as it was when Itchy Brother first rattled its foundations. Roadrunner Records VP of A&R Ron Burman visited the house to see Roadrunner band Black Stone Cherry (see story, right) and was blown away. “That house is the real deal,” Burman says. “All kinds of juju going on.” And going on.

Practice House 2.0

Inspired by the HeadHunters, Black Stone Cherry Mine a ’70s Vibe

The odds of one band of note emerging from the backwoods of Kentucky would seem long, at best. But Metcalfe County, Ky., has produced four of them: Itchy Brother, who then reincarnated into the Kentucky HeadHunters; bluegrass trailblazer New Grass Revival; and, most recently, the hard-rocking Black Stone Cherry on Roadrunner Records (Billboard, Oct. 15).

Black Stone Cherry comprises Chris Robertson (vocals/guitar), Ben Wells (lead guitar), Jon Lawhon (bass) and John Fred Young (drums), the latter being the son and nephew of the HeadHunters’ Richard and Fred Young, respectively. Just as ’70s-era kids gravitated to the Practice House to hear Itchy Brother, late ’90s Kentucky headbangers found their way to James Howard Young Road to check out the developing Black Stone Cherry. Many of those BSC kids were the spawn of those who threw down at the Practice House a generation earlier. “Richard would come down here and say, ‘My God, it’s like the ’70s all over again,’” Wells says.

Rather than boot too big to fill, the members of BSC found inspiration and a road map—illustrated with pot–holes—from the HeadHunters saga. “We learned so much from the whole story of what happened with the HeadHunters,” Robertson says. “Me growing up being best friends with John Fred for the last 21 years, I was there firsthand for everything. I watched it all rise and unfold and then come back again. Just witnessing that, and hearing people like Richard and Fred around, having their knowledge of the business and of music, and them turning us on to certain stuff, has definitely been a huge advantage for us.”

For their part, the Young brothers encouraged the young rockers to make use of the Practice House. “For the first six months, my Dad and Fred were, for all practical purposes, saying, ‘You guys go on over there and hang out. Y’all don’t get too drunk,’” John Fred Young says. “They actually used us going to the practice house as an advantage to themselves, to have the house cleaned up and taken care of.”

With only the HeadHunters’ Young brothers living in the area, the house needed attention—and music. “The first time we came back from touring there were vines growing up through the floor,” Robertson says. John Fred Young adds, “The worst thing to do for a car is leave it sitting.”

Jamming at the Practice House was inspirational, if not intimidating, for BSC. “You look on the wall and you see Eric Clapton and John Lennon and Son House, then Itchy Brother, the HeadHunters—and now Black Stone Cherry,” Robertson says. “You have to be good for people to put you on a wall, and now we have awards of our own hanging up down here, so it’s like, ‘OK, we’re working on it.’”

Richard Young says watching the birth and then growth of BSC “fired our butts up,” inspiring the HeadHunters to write and record a new record. And while BSC shared bills with the HeadHunters in the past even if its much harder, more aggressive style wasn’t always the best fit), now there’s talk of the HeadHunters playing some dates in support of BSC in Europe. “We’ve got to convince the promoters over there,” Richard Young says. “We can hang with them. We just can’t do it three or four nights in a row.”

—RW

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A Night For Latin’s Hottest Genre

BILLBOARD AND TELEMUNDO TEAM TO PRESENT HONORS IN REGIONAL MEXICAN MUSIC

BY LEILA COBO

Welcome to the inaugural Premios Billboard de la Musica Mexicana—Billboard’s first Mexican Music Awards.

For the past 25 years, Billboard has established itself as the arbiter of Latin music popularity in the United States and the primary source of news about the Latin music industry. We pride ourselves not only on our charts, coverage, conferences and award shows, but also on recognizing the trends that define Latin music. Simply put, no other brand is as dedicated and passionate about Latin music as Billboard.

We’re pleased to once again be at the forefront of the business by teaming with media partner Telemundo to launch the first music awards dedicated exclusively to the top-selling genre of Latin music in the United States—regional Mexican.

The show, staged at Los Angeles’ Orpheum Theatre on Oct. 20 and presented by State Farm, will be broadcast by Telemundo on Oct. 27.

This marks the first time a major network is airing a Mexican music awards show produced in this country. It is our way of acknowledging the importance of a genre so vast and rich that it merits its own space.

Equally important, Premios Billboard de la Musica Mexicana will honor achievements based—always—exclusively on the Billboard music charts, underscoring a commitment to veracity and transparency.

“We are extremely excited about this new show,” says Joshua Mintz, senior executive VP of Telemundo Entertainment, which is producing and airing the show as part of its extended partnership with Billboard (which also includes the Billboard Latin Music Awards each spring).

“The diversity of the genre is so rich that it appeals beyond Mexicans to all Hispanics who love everything from Mexican pop all the way to regional Mexican, regardless of their country of origin,” Mintz adds.

Sonsi Production, owned by Luis Villanueva and Mary Black, a multiple Emmy Award winner who for many years produced Premios lo Nuestro, will be the executive producer.

Viewers will see a star-studded bill of performers, including diva Jenni Rivera, leading finalists Gerardo Ortiz and Larry Hernandez, Julion Alvarez y Su Norteño Banda and iconic group Intocable.

Also scheduled to perform are Grupo Monrez de Durango, Banda los Recideos, Los Horoscopos de Durango, Shaila Durcal, Los Tucanes de Tijuana and Paquita la del Barrio, as well as up-and-comers Tribal Monrey, El Rebeto, America Sierra and Voz de Mando.

It’s an auspicious beginning for a first-time awards show, Mintz says. “I envision it growing to be the same or bigger than the Billboard Latin Music Awards in five years or less,” he says. “This is our first show so we’re starting small, so we can grow.”

As with the Billboard Latin Music Awards, categories are based on sales data provided by Nielsen SoundScan and radio airplay monitored by Nielsen BDS.

But the eligibility period (Aug. 28, 2010-Aug. 20, 2011) is unique to these awards and is one of the reasons finalists and eventual winners may differ from honorees at the Billboard Latin Music Awards.

Further, because these awards are dedicated solely to regional Mexican music, finalists and winners are determined by performance solely on the regional Mexican charts.

There will be 32 awards given out at Premios Billboard de la Musica Mexicana, including honors for top publisher, publishing corporation, producer, songwriter, album and airplay imprint of the year, and album airplay label of the year.

Awards will be given to the top artists and songs overall in regional Mexican music, and in each of four subgenres: ranchera/mariachi, noroeste, banda and duranguense groups.

Also, for the first time in the history of the Billboard awards on Telemundo, digital track sales were factored into the formula determining the finalists for the top artist and top songs categories.

THREE SPECIAL ACCOLADES

Los Tucanes de Tijuana, Paquita la del Barrio, Jenni Rivera earn inaugural awards BY LEILA COBO

In addition to the awards based on chart achievements, three special honors for exceptional achievements will be presented at Premios Billboard de la Musica Mexicana, as chosen by Billboard’s editors and Telemundo.

LEGADO MUSICAL (THE LEGACY AWARD)

Formed in 1967 in the Mexican border city of Tijuana, sextet Los Tucanes de Tijuana, headed by lead singer/songwriter Mario Quintero, have chronicled more than 20 years of border history in a stream of love songs, cumbias and fearless corridos that steadily charted on Billboard’s tallies. The act has recorded 31 studio albums, placing six No. 1s on Top Latin Albums and 49 tracks on Billboard’s radio charts. The band has received 30 gold and 27 platinum certifications from the RIAA. Los Tucanes have redefined the scope of the traditional norteño corrido, taking the music to film and TV way beyond the realm of traditional Mexican music.

The group is this year’s recipient of the first Legacy Award, recognizing the band’s long and rich trajectory and its influence on the genre and its artists.

LA VOZ (THE VOICE AWARD)

An icon of Mexican song, Paquita la del Barrio (Paquita From the Hood)—born Francisca Vélez Barradas—is synonymous with feminist strength. She has more than 25 albums to her name, both mainstream and Latin Grammy nominations and a string of hits on Billboard’s charts. More important, she’s an iconoclast with a powerful voice, a singular repertoire and a unique, recognizable presence.

Paquita la del Barrio is the recipient of Billboard’s inaugural La Voz (The Voice) award, given to an artist with a distinctive persona, on- and offstage.

EL PREMIO DE LA ESTRELLA (THE STAR AWARD)

A finalist in four categories, Jenni Rivera will be honored by the Telemundo Network with El Premio de la Estrella. Rivera, one of the most successful female artists in the regional Mexican realm, is recognized as an icon for women through her accomplishments as an entrepreneur, producer, TV star and social activist.

State Farm

PREMIOS BILLBOARD DE LA MUSICA MEXICANA

A star and activist: Jenni Rivera

OCTOBER 22, 2011 | WWW.BILLBOARD.BIZ | 25
ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Latin labels, publishers get nods for top-selling singles, albums

BY JUSTINO ÁGUILA

They're labels and publishing companies at the top of their game with projects that have kept them competitive and at the forefront of the Latin music business.

At the Billboard Mexican Music Awards, four labels are finalists for albums record label of the year and four have nods for airplay record label of the year. Four publishers that have had a strong market presence also are finalists for the awards: Arpa Music (BMI), Del Records/Sony Music Latin (BMI), Ferca Publishing (BMI) and Marcha Musical (ASCAP).


UMLE's impressive reach into the U.S. market includes a roster of recording artists who have spent considerable time charting throughout the eligibility period. Some of these acts and their projects include Larry Hernandez for 20 Super Exitos: La Historia de los Exitos, Espinoza Paz for Del Rancho Para el Mundo, Marco Antonio Solis for Mas De Marco Antonio Solis and Jenni Rivera for La Gran Señora.

Sony Music Latin has also enjoyed a strong year, especially with the success of regional Mexican singer Gerardo Ortiz, who was discovered on YouTube by Del Records executives. As a leading finalist, Ortiz released two albums during the eligibility period: Ni Hoy Ni Mañana and Muy y Escrito. En Vivo. Other Sony finalists include ranchera legend Victorino Fernández for El Hombre Que Mas Te Amo, Jorge Santana y Su Grupo Quin for La Supermacana and Los Cuates de Sinibol's Tocando Con la Mafia.

Rounding out the albums record label finalists are Eagle Music with Los Inquietos del Norte's Vasos A Darle Con Todo: Colección de Corridos y Las Fuerzas del Infierno and Dasmi Music with Inmocable's 2011. As finalists for airplay record label of the year, ASL, Disa, Fonovisa and Sony Music Latin have shown strength in the genre with a roster of acts that have consistently gained airplay in a tough market.

ASL is a strong finalist with popular offerings like "Incredible" by Banda Sinaloense MS de Sergio Lizarraga, "Gracias A Dios" by Violiento, "No Lo Intentes" by Julián Alvarez y Su Norteño Banda and "El Culpable" and "Al Diablo Lo Nuestro" by Espinoza Paz.

Disa maintains a significant share of airplay with "Me Encantaria" by Fidel Rueda, "Mi Necesidad" by Grupo Montez de Durango, "No Me Digas" by El Chopo de Sinaloa and "Rosario y Loco" by Los Huracanes del Norte, among others.

Fonovisa has held its airplay presence with artists and songs that include Roberto Tapia's "Me Duele," Larry Hernandez's "Arranando Las Putas," Los Rellenos del Norte's "Ni el Diablo Te Va A Queer" and Joan Sebastian's "El Padron." Sony Music Latin shines with such singles as "El Trokero Lococon" by Ortiz, "Te Amo y Te Amo" by La Adictiva Banda San José de Mesillas and "El Hombre Que Mas Te Amo" by Vicente Fernández.

The airplay imprint of the year finalists are Disa, Fonovisa, Mendieta and Sony Music Latin. The albums imprint finalists are Del, Disa, Fonovisa and Sony Music Latin.

Among the publisher finalists, Arpa Music has had a steady string of regional Mexican hits including "Al Diablo Lo Nuestro" by Espinoza Paz, "La Escuelita" by Banda Los Recoditos and "Donde Estas Presumida" by Chuy Lizarraga y Su Banda Tierra Sinaloense.

Del Records/Sony Music Latin achieved its success with releases from singer/songwriter Gerardo Ortiz, including the singles "El Trokero Lococon," "La Ultima Sombra" y "Cara A la Muerte (Lye)." The publisher also saw chart action from Jorge Santa Cruz y Su Grupo Quin with the single "Ella Es Mi Mujer." Ferca Publishing is a finalist for such singles as "Nina de Mi Corazon" and "Guanto Me Cuesta" (both Disa/Ferca) by La Arrolladora Banda el Limon, as well as Los Horoscopos de Durango's "No Me Dejes Con Las Ganas." (Disa/ASL)

Marcha Musical Corp. has had a productive year with a number of offerings including "Como Olvidar" (Disa/ASL) by Lupillo Rivera & Rigo Marroquin and two hits, "La Maria" and "No Lo Intentes" (both Disa/ASL) from Julián Alvarez y Su Norteño Banda.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Songwriting finalists compete for honors

BY JUSTINO ÁGUILA

Four accomplished composers will compete for the honor of songwriter of the year at the Billboard Mexican Music Awards. Each finalist also has enjoyed success as a performer.

BENNY CAMACHO
Recent chart achievement: In March, Benny Camacho's "Me Encantaria" (Disa) spent nine weeks at No. 1 on Billboard's Regional Mexican Airplay chart.

HORACIO PALENCIA CISNEROS
Recent chart achievement: Horacio Palencia Cisneros' songs include "No Me Dejes con las Ganas," recorded by Los Horoscopos de Durango. The song peaked at No. 5 in July on the Regional Mexican airplay chart.

ESPINOZA PAZ
Recent chart achievement: Espinoza Paz has been a staple on Regional Mexican Airplay with such releases as Yo No Canto, Pero Io Intentamos y Del Rancho Para el Mundo. He's up for nine awards including artist, male artist and songs artist of the year.

GERARDO ORTIZ
Recent chart achievement: Gerardo Ortiz, also known as "the King of Corridos," is a finalist for his compositions on his albums Morr y Exitr: En Vivo y Ni Hoy Ni Mañana (both on Del Records/Sony Music Latin). Morr y Exitr debuted on Top Latin Albums at No. 1 in April. Ortiz debuted on Top Latin Albums in June 2010 with Ni Hoy Ni Mañana. He's a finalist in 10 categories offering what he calls "progressive" corridos.

HITMAKING PRODUCERS

Finalists craft the chart-topping sounds and songs

BY JUSTINO ÁGUILA

Here are the finalists in the race for the year at the Billboard Mexican Music Awards:

JULIAN ALVAREZ
Recent chart achievement: Fronting the Julián Alvarez y Su Norteño Banda, this singer/songwriter/producer's album Ni Lo Intentes (Disa/ASL) peaked at No. 1 last December on Billboard's Regional Mexican Airplay chart. His song "Olvidarme" (Fonovisa) entered Regional Mexican Digital Songs chart at No. 5 in April, then reached No. 1 four months later and held the top spot for several weeks. On Regional Mexican Airplay, the same song peaked at No. 2 on Sept. 3.

ESPINOZA PAZ
Recent chart achievement: Espinoza Paz's single "Al Diablo Lo Nuestro" (Disa/ASL), which he produced, peaked at No. 2 on Oct. 23, 2010, in its 20th week on Regional Mexican Airplay. Paz's "El Culpable" peaked at No. 2 in May on the same chart. The multitalented performer is up for nine awards including artist, male artist and songs artist of the year.

LARRY HERNANDEZ
Recent chart achievement: Larry Hernández's self-produced single "El Ardido" (Mendieta/Fonovisa) peaked at No. 3 on Regional Mexican Airplay on June 18. "Arrastando Las Patas" peaked at No. 2 in January.

FERNANDO CAMACHO TIRADO
Recent chart achievement: Fernando Camacho Tirado's production helped La Arrolladora Banda el Limon's single "Nina de Mi Corazon" (Disa) spend 10 weeks atop Regional Mexican Airplay. Another production, "Incredible" (Disa/ASL), recorded by Banda Sinaloense MS de Sergio Lizarraga, peaked at No. 5 in March. The latter group's "Me Toca A Mi" peaked at No. 11 in August.
ASCAP Felicita a sus Nominados a los Premios Billboard de la Música Regional Mexicana

Pedro Fernández
Yoel Hernández
Los Bukis
Claudia Brant
Joan Sebastian
Marco Antonio Solís
Los Atlantes De Durango
Montez De Durango
Daniel Niebla
Cristina Barba
Shalla Durcal
Los Inquietos Del Norte
Jesús González

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NEWCOMERS AND VETERANS ARE AMONG FINALISTS

Ortiz tops ranks of contenders with nods in 10 categories

BY JUSTINO ÁGUILA

Here’s a look at the leading artist finalists for Premios Billboard de la Musica Mexicana, which Telemundo will broadcast Oct. 27. For a complete list of finalists, go to billboard.com/mma.

GERARDO ORTIZ
Regional Mexican crooner Gerardo Ortiz (Del Records/Sony) has been performing since he was a child. The singer/songwriter debuted on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart in July 2010, but since then has continued to chart steadily in regional Mexican. After making his first national impact on YouTube, the Pasadena, Calif.-born entertainer keeps his fans updated through Facebook and Twitter. With a style described as “progressive” corridos, Ortiz is a finalist in 10 categories, including artist, new artist, album and download artist of the year. He’s competing against himself as a double finalist for norteño album of the year for “Hoy Ni Hoy Ni Mañana.”

LARRY HERNANDEZ
Leading contender Larry Hernandez (Mendita Fonovisa) continues to shine as one of Latin’s most popular singers. Known for his romantic banda-style compositions and nacarocorridos, Hernandez has also received accolades as a songwriter in regional Mexican. He’s up for nine awards including artist, male artist and songs artist of the year. Hernandez is also a producer. “El Ardido” peaked at No. 3 in June and “Arrastraando las Patas” reached No. 2 in January on Billboard’s Regional Mexican Airplay chart.

ESPINOZA PAZ
Currently a coach on the Mexican version of TV singing competition “The Voice,” Espinoza Paz has become a fixture in regional Mexican as a singer, songwriter and producer. He has charmed audiences with his emotionally rich romantic ballads that have appeared on the Regional Mexican Albums chart on such CDs as “Yo No Canto, Pero Lo Intentamos” and “Para el Manolo.” The triple-threat is up for nine awards including artist, male artist and song artist of the year. Paz embraces the digital age through his Twitter account, which counts 70,000-plus followers.

JULION ALVAREZ Y SU NORTEÑO BANDA
A leading duo/group finalist, Julión Álvarez y Su Norteño Banda are up for eight awards including new artist, duo/group artist, song, songs artist, airplay artist, banda song and banda artist of the year. Alvarez, who’s also a finalist for producer of the year, has a successful career as a songwriter. His song “Ni Lo Intentes” reached No. 1 on Regional Mexican Songs and No. 3 on Hot Latin Songs.

LA ARROLLADORA BANDA EL LIMON
La Arrolladora Banda el Limón is competing in six categories: duo/group artist, song (for “Niña de Mi Corazón”), songs artist, airplay artist, banda song and banda artist of the year. “Niña de Mi Corazón” stayed at No. 1 for 10 weeks on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart.

INTOCABLE
Veteran act Intocable is up for five awards: artist, duo/group artist, norteño song, norteño album and norteño artist of the year. The Zapata, Texas-based Tejano/norteño group in March released “Intocable 2017” on its own label, Good Eye Music. The CD debuted at No. 2 on Top Latin Albums thanks to deals with key retailers including Walmart, which placed the set in endcaps and pallets and hosted the band for in-store appearances. The act left EMI last year, then released covers collection Classic through Sony Music Latin. It went on to win a 2011 Grammy Award for best norteño album, but the band decided to stay indie and not sign with a major.

VOZ DE MANDO
Los Angeles-based group Voz de Mando received four nods including new artist, norteño song (for “Mente en Blanco”) and norteño artist of the year. Founded in 2009, the band is a finalist along with heavyweights Jenni Rivera, El Trono de Mexico and the long-disbanded Los Bukis. Voz de Mando signed with Univision Music Group’s Disa Records after it released two albums on the group’s own label, Gaxiola Discos, in 2009. Levantando la Voz and 12 Impactos de Alito Cultivo. The band’s Disa debut, Con la Nueva Federación, came out in 2010; its most recent CD is Con la Mente en Blanco.

JENNI RIVERA
Jenni Rivera has had one of the best years of her career. In August, she renewed her recording contract with Universal Music Latin Entertainment/Fonovisa. In September, she became the first female regional Mexican singer to perform at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The banda diva has sold more than 1 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Her most recent studio set, La Gran Selva, reached No. 2 on Top Latin Albums, where to date she’s earned five top 10s. Rivera is a finalist in four categories: female artist, ranchero/mariachi artist, ranchero/mariachi album and ranchero/mariachi song.

BANDA EL RECODO
Banda El Recodo is a finalist in three categories: digital download artist, banda song (“Dime Que Me Quieres”) and banda artist of the year. The group (officially known as Banda Sinaloense El Recodo de Don Cruz Lizarraga) was founded in the 1990s and has since been under the direction of the Lizarraga family. One of Mexico’s most popular banda-style groups, banda el Recodo has had a strong and successful recording and touring career that features its signature brass instruments in songs that have received multiple accolades.

PEDRO FERNANDEZ
Pedro Fernandez is a contender in three categories based on the chart success of his album Amarte A La Antigua and its title track. He’s a finalist for ranchero/mariachi song, ranchero/mariachi album and ranchero/mariachi artist of the year. His album spent seven weeks atop Regional Mexican Albums. Fernandez first gained fame as a child singing the theme to the film “La Niña de la Mochila Azul,” in which he also appeared.

JOAN SEBASTIAN
Singer/songwriter Joan Sebastian is up for three awards—ranchero/mariachi song (“El Padre”), ranchero/mariachi album (Las Huellas Rancheras) and ranchero/mariachi artist of the year—alongside such artists as Pedro Fernandez, Vicente Fernandez and Jenni Rivera. He has composed hundreds of songs during a career that began in
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the 1970s, and his music stretches from pop to ranchera to grupero.

GRUPO MONTEZ DE DURANGO
Grup Monz de Durango is nominated in three categories: vocal event song for “El Punto Final,” recorded by Conjunto Ataxinco featuring Grupo Monz de Durango), duranguense/grupero song (“Mi Necesidad”) and duranguense/grupero artist of the year. The Chicago-based band was founded by Jose Luis Terrazas, who was born in Durango, Mexico, but grew up in Chicago, where he participated in his high school's marching band. “Mi Necesidad” peaked at No. 5 on Regional Mexican Airplay.

LOS TITANES DE DURANGO
Los Titanes de Durango are up for awards in the duranguense/grupero song (“El Enamorado”), duranguense/grupero album (15 Exitos) and duranguense/grupero artist categories. Accordionist and singer/songwriter Sergio Sanchez Ayon leads the group in a sound that meshes banda, norteño and duranguense. The band, from Sinaloa, Mexico, has held a steady pace with regional Mexican fans throughout its native country and the United States.

SELENA
The late Selena continues to inspire new generations with her music. As a child she learned to sing with her siblings, and a star was born. She's a finalist in two categories: female artist and digital download artist of the year. She's had several songs chart on Regional Mexican Digital during the eligibility period including “Como la Flor” (No. 2), “Bidi Bidi Bom Bom” (No. 1) and “El Chico del Apartamento 512” (No. 5). Her posthumous album, La Leyenda, peaked at No. 4 on Regional Mexican Albums.

FIDEL RUEDA
Fidel Rueda is a finalist in two categories—song and banda song of the year—for “Me Encantaria,” a nine-week No. 1 on Regional Mexican Airplay. The Sinaloa, Mexico-born singer learned to play the accordion as a child and later began to sing. In 2007 he released his first solo album, Paz en Este Amor.

MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS
Marco Antonio Solís has made a career out of singing some of the most memorable songs that he's written. Popular among his peers, the singer/songwriter is a finalist for duranguense/grupero album of the year (Mas de Marco Antonio Solís). He has sold millions of albums in a career that began in the 1970s as lead singer of fellow nominee Los Bukis. Also a prolific producer, Solís has worked with some of the biggest entertainers in the industry. Last year he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his musical contributions. During the eligibility period, his album was No. 1 for two weeks on Regional Mexican Albums.

SHAILA DURCAL
Madrid-born Shaila Durcal is nominated for female artist of the year along with Indira Montes, Jenni Rivera and the late Selena. The singer, whose mother is the late Rocio Durcal, grew up knowing from an early age that she wanted a career in entertainment. After studying music, she's gained a loyal following in regional Mexican with such ranchera tracks as “Conversemos,” which was also recorded as a banda style ballad that went to No. 26 on Regional Mexican Airplay.

ROBERTO TAPIA
Roberto Tapia brings a unique perspective to regional Mexican. He's known for meshing traditional Mexican music with hip-hop and electronic. As a teen he mastered the clarinet, then began performing. In 2001, at age 17, he made his professional debut in Tijuana, Mexico. The performance motivated him to start his own band and a career was born. Well-known for writing music, Tapia's songs have been performed by acts like Larry Hernandez (“Arrastrando las Patas”), Los Rieleros del Norte (“Ni el Diablo Te Va A Querer”) and Joan Sebastian (“El Padreno”). Tapia is a finalist for new artist of the year.
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LARRY HERNANDEZ
JENNIFER RIVERA VOZ DE MANDO
INTOCABLE GERARDO ORTIZ
HORACIO PALENCIA LUCIANO LUNA
GRUPO MONTEZ DE DURANGO
JUAN DIEGO SANDOVAL JUAN JOSE LEYVA
JULION ALVAREZ Y SU NORTEÑO BANDA
LA ARROLLADORA BANDA EL LIMÓN
EDITORA ARPA MUSICAL
EL TRONO DE MÉXICO
ROBERTO TAPIA SELENA
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Gotta Have Faith
Casting Crowns' unorthodox, church-based approach promises to propel its new album to the top of the charts

Sometimes it really is hip to be square. Casting Crowns' frontman Mark Hall will readily admit his seven-piece band of church workers isn't the coolest bunch on the road. But, with the group topping Billboard's year-end charts for four consecutive years, there's no denying its appeal.

Casting Crowns' last studio album, 2009's Until the Whole World Hears, spent 18 weeks at No. 1 on the Top Christian Albums chart and debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard 200. The band's new Beach Street/Reunion set, Come to the Well, due Oct. 18, is also poised to make a strong entry. Lead single "Courageous" is No. 3 on Christian Songs, and it's featured in the Sherwood Pictures film of the same name, which opened at No. 4 at the box office last weekend. The album launch is also buoyed by Crowns' current arena tour and Hall's new book, "The Well: Why Are So Many Still Thirsty?" "I don't think we'd have the songs that we write if we weren't in the church," Hall says. "Every song is about something that's going on right now, something that I'm teaching. It keeps you fresh."

Hall is the youth pastor at Eagles Landing Baptist Church in Atlanta, and fellow band members Megan Garrett, Melodie DeVevo, Hector Cervantes, Chris Huffman, Juan DeVevo and Brian Scoggan all serve at their respective churches. Although they've kept their day jobs and schedule recording and touring around their church work, none of it has hampered the band's success. According to Nielsen SoundScan, the act's 2003 self-titled debut has sold 1.8 million units, while its second album, 2005's Lighthouse, has moved 1.3 million. The Altar and the Door (2007) has sold 1.2 million and spent 13 weeks at No. 1 on Top Christian Albums, and Until the Whole World Hears has sold 913,000.

But Casting Crowns has released four live albums that all debuted in the top 20 on the Christian chart. On top of all that, the band has had nine No. 1 songs, including "The Voice of Truth" (13 weeks at No. 1) and "East to West" (12 weeks). Generally, Christian acts with platinum-selling is against, but they're really not sure what the church is for. Sometimes it takes someone from within the church to stand up in love and speak truth to the church. I've always felt that's our job with Casting Crowns. Not just throw rocks at the church, but to stand up within the church and point out some truths." "Jesus, Friend of Sinners," a pivotal track on the new album, urges the church to demonstrate compassion. "Let's let the world know that we don't have it all together and that God loves us anyway," Hall says. "If they can see that God loves us despite all of our weaknesses, then they would understand that God loves them too." Come to the Well also features songs focused on family. "So Far to Find You" was written for Hall's adoptive daughter, Hope, while "Angel" is a love song Hall penned for Melanie, his wife of 21 years, who serves as the band's tour manager. The Halls travel with their four children and home-school them on the road.

Casting Crowns' Garrett sings lead on the poignant "Just Another Birthday," inspired by a conversation with a girl in Hall's youth group. "She turned 16 and her father wasn't coming," says Hall, who's been a youth pastor for 18 years. "She was trying to reassure me and herself that she was going to be OK, but I could tell that she wasn't. All she wanted was for him to be there. Watching this girl long for a father's love broke my heart."

Casting Crowns is promoting Come to the Well on a 40-city tour, which kicked off Sept. 22 and has already sold out six of its first 10 tour dates, including Phoenix and El Paso, Texas. On Oct. 19, the band returns to Eagles Landing Baptist Church for an album-release party, which will stream live on HeartFirst.com.

Reunion: Records parent company Provident Music Group is using Hall's book and the "Courageous" movie to promote the new album. "Our film division, Provident Films, has been a great partner in plugging Casting Crowns into its efforts marketing the 'Courageous' movie with advertising, Facebook and Twitter messaging to its own online community," Provident Label Group VP of marketing Brian Dishon says. "For [Hall's] book, we partnered with Zondervan Publishing. We have an ad in the back of Mark's book; they have an insert in our CD."

Dishon credits the band's "clearly defined vision, Mark's teaching ability and a dedicated focus on the church" for the act's success. "[The band is] a family-oriented ministry," he adds, "meaning it's not just for moms and dads or the teens—they package themselves for the whole family."

But Hall says his father sees the group's simple, direct approach as its calling card. "Dad said, 'You guys just keep it plain and put it right down there on the bottom shelf where everybody can reach it.'" Hall says. "We don't speak as though we have it all together. We're the ones who have messed up Christian life, and somehow God hasn't given up on us. It just gives us hope. That's what I think these songs offer: hope for everybody."
A lot can happen in two years. In 2009, Chino y Nacho were on the verge. Already well-established in their native Venezuela, 20-somethings estes that made inroads throughout Latin America as an urban/reggaeton act and were close to signing an indie label deal. But since then, Chino y Nacho have become one of the most notable—and rapid—Latin artist-development stories in recent memory. Now, following the Grammy Award-winning success of their 2010 major label debut, Mi Nacha Bonita, the duo is preparing for the Oct. 18 release of its follow-up, Supremo, bolstered by major sponsorship campaigns and sky-high expectations.

The turn of fortune stems from the song “Niña Bonita” (Pretty Girl), an addictive hybrid of pop and merengue recorded in 2009 and promoted with the group’s own funding. The track was a hit in Latin America, paving the way for the duo to test the waters in the United States, where “Niña Bonita” picked up enough airplay to land the pair a 360 deal with Machete, the urban imprint of Universal Music Latin Entertainment.

"Mi Nacha Bonita marked our first official release, and now, with Supremo, we are aiming to reach an even wider audience," Nacho says. "We have completely different music styles, completely different personalities—and yet, we really match with ‘Niña Bonita.’ We found a tropical sound that other urban acts didn’t have.

That sound comes to a head on Supremo, a mix of pop-friendly merengue, bachata, salsa and a few ballads plus collaborations with Jay Sean and salsa star Luis Enrique—all penned by Chino y Nacho, who are signed as writers with Universal Music Publishing Latin America. Although the duo started out as a reggaeton act, Chino y Nacho’s newfound strength lies in their soulful voices, their talent for catchy, simple lyrics and a retro charm reminiscent of Bruno Mars. It also helps that they sing pretty love songs, in the best sense of the term.

"When we found our sound, we also found a younger audience that was tired of negative messages," Nacho says. "Many women, especially younger women, were looking for romance.

That romantic allure helped Chino y Nacho land sponsorships with three Venezuelan brands—soft drink Martin Polak, watch and eyeglasses company Tecnorma, and Recco shoes—and two global brands, Coca-Cola and AKTET. "Their mix of rhytmus plus their youthful energy and good looks make them very appealing to segments that brands want to reach—especially tweens and the 18-34 demos," Universal Music Latino’s manager-director Luis Estrada says. "They’re like an urban boy band with credibility.

Chino y Nacho’s partnership with AKTET began in 2010, when the company tapped them to sing “Niña Bonita” for a major TV push. This time around, the duo stars in AKTET’s new Go Phone TV campaign in the United States and Puerto Rico, singing an adapted version of new single “El Poeta.”

Even broader is the pair’s 18-month deal with Coca-Cola: Chino y Nacho are the Latin faces of the company’s “Esta Noche Seremos Mas” campaign, the Spanish version of its “Can You Feel It Tonight?” European campaign. Aimed at every Latin country except Venezuela and Brazil, “Esta Noche” includes TV, radio and online spots featuring Chino y Nacho. The duo will launch the campaign in each country with high-profile performances and press events.

In the digital realm, Chino y Nacho are focused on growing their U.S. following. Although the duo boasts 1.5 million likes on Facebook and nearly 100,000 followers on Twitter, the proportion of U.S. fans “is still low compared to other countries,” Estrada says.

"The U.S. is not the country that gives us the most revenue, but for us it’s about credibility,” manager Villalobos says. "All the award shows are here, for example—and I want to be on every one of them.”

What Goes Around

With new management in place, Lalah Hathaway looks back to move forward

“I wanted to make a record that spoke to the beginnings of me,” Lalah Hathaway says of her sixth solo album and second for Stax, Where It All Begins (Stax/Concord, Oct. 18). "It’s a love letter to my parents and also to the fans who have stayed with me. But I also wanted to challenge what people expect to hear from me. In fact, this project closely resembles my first record [1990’s Lalah Hathaway] in terms of energy and intent.”

Where It All Begins symbolizes a creative as well as career transition for the daughter of R&B/soul icon Donny Hathaway. Continuing the creative rejuvenation sparked by her 2008 Stax debut, Self Portrait—her first top 10 debut (No. 6) on Billboard’s Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart—Hathaway took a hands-on approach this time out, including recruiting such songwriters and producers as longtime friend Rashaan Patterson, Mike City, Andre Harris & Vidal Davis, James Fauntleroy and Lee Hutson Jr., whose father, R&B songwriter/producer Leroy Hutson, was Donny Hathaway’s college roommate. On the career front, Hathaway also enlisted a new manager: Marcus King of Los Angeles-based King Management.

The resulting album is a brighter-sounding project that not only cements Hathaway’s soaring rep as a ballad singer but also displays her up-tempo versatility, as heard on the sassy opener “Strong Woman” and bumping first single “If You Want To,” currently No. 34 on the Adult R&B tally. Offering noteworthy nods to past are a revamp of “I’m Coming Back,” a track from her 1990 debut album and a concert staple, and a cover of one of her dad’s classics, “You Were Meant For Me.”

"Of all of his songs, this fit best with this body of work,” says Hathaway, who recorded “You Were Meant For Me” live with legendary production veterans Phil Ramone and Al Schmitt. “The opportunity to record it live made it a beautiful statement.”

But after 20 years and a Grammy Award-winning run for best female R&B vocal performance of the year, Hathaway is looking to break through to the masses. "The challenge is to bring my music to the masses while maintaining the integrity of the music," she says. "I want to see herget more music out there, to do more live shows and then move her across the board into film and TV as well. People need to see and hear more of Lalah; that’s been the void.”

Helping to fill that void are appearances on “Late Night With Jimmy Fallon” (Oct. 14) and Tom Joyner’s syndicated morning radio show (Oct. 31). A SoundCloud embedded album listening party went live Oct. 11. An AOL listening party will go live between Oct. 17 and 24, and an MN Music listening party will hit during release week. Tapping into Hathaway’s 126,000—strong Facebook page, Stax/Concord will launch a Facebook app the week after the album’s release. A Best Buy exclusive (Oct. 18-22) will give fans the opportunity to receive two exclusive tracks and a $2 off coupon to buy the album at the retailer.

The label also plans to capitalize on Hathaway’s international appeal. Where It All Begins will be released Oct. 18 in the United Kingdom and in December in Japan. The singer plans to visit overseas in the new year.

"I’m just excited about meeting the challenge,” Hathaway says of her artistic rebirth. "I’m trying to be an artist. Brand new!... just trying to get the message of music out to as many people as possible.”
**Double Down**

Electronica wizard M83 gets ready to drop a double album—and defy industry expectations along the way.

If popular opinion decrees the album dead—a victim of the low-commitment, easy-selling single—then what of the double album? A favorite format of titans like the Beatles, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, the double album is a declaration of artistic conviction, of creative bounty—and of undeniable risk. Pricier for record labels to produce and for consumers to buy, it's a gamble, especially in today's challenging retail landscape. But as electronic musician M83 and his label, Mute, prepare to release the two-volume, 22-track *Hurry Up, We’re Dreaming* on Oct. 18, they don't seem worried; they might even be excited. One listen shows why: *Hurry Up* is a generation defining collection of diary entries from a contemplative 30-something, set in a time capsule of sonic influences that don't usually go together. Confident, grand and outrageously beautiful, it's the kind of album that a music fan has to own—double or not.

"It's Icehouse, Kajagoogoo, Naked Eyes, My Bloody Valentine and a little Simple Minds, in a wall of sound like Sigur Rós. Astonishingly good," tweeted electronic artist BT, who himself released a double album, the Grammy Award-nominated *These Hopeful Machines*, in 2010.

"I've been dreaming of doing a double album since I was a teenager," says Anthony Gonzalez, the French songwriter/producer/musician behind M83. "It was just the right moment. I'm more confident with myself and my music. And I had the songs—a crazy amount of songs. We had enough to pick from."

"I don't believe the album is dead, and presenting a cohesive work like this demonstrates it even will host a listening event, with each playing the album at the same time. "UO hasn't done anything like this before, and Saturday is their most highly trafficked day," Blonder says. Plus, "Midnight City" was the lead track on the chain's LSTN compilation, released Sept. 6.

M83 is touring North America through the end of the year, again with a four-piece band. "We're going to create some videos, so the shows are virtual experiences as well as musical ones," Gonzalez says. "I'm really excited about that."

Beyond the touring cycle, Blonder sees her supersized product as her best asset in terms of getting M83 traction. "A lot of labels might ball at the idea of a double album, but it's actually more marketable," she says. "Fans can come back again and again and find new favorite songs. It just has more depth."
ALBUMS

ROCK
MUTEMATH
Odd Soul
Producer: Mutemath
Telepromp't/Warner Bros. Records
Release Date: Oct. 4
Mutemath's two previous albums and an assortment of EPs prove that the New Orleans rock band likes its electronics. But anyone who's seen the troupe live knows it can get rocking in a major way. The group's newest release, Odd Soul, captures that attack better than its predecessors. Recorded by Mutemath's Paul Meany, Roy Mitchell-Cardenas and Darren King while the act was between guitar players, the set gets cranking from the get-go with a title track whose blues-rock bite is a near-homage to the Black Keys. Elsewhere, the song "Tell Your Heart Heads Up" nods in the White Stripes' direction, while "Prytania," "Blood Pressure," "Equals" and "Allies" try on psychedelic and garage rock conventions. The track "Cav- aliers" touches on jazz and "Walking Paranoia" has the kinetic urgency of early new wave. Mutemath still touches on its trademark loop/ Yo-yo for the song "All or nothing" and the seven-minute "Guaran- tire," while "In No Time" is an azy, optimistic anthem whose rhythmic/ambience sticks with listeners well after the album's done. —GG

JANE'S ADDICTION
The Great Escape
Artists: Rich Costey, Perry Farrell
Capitol Records
Release Date: Oct. 18
Perry Farrell declares at the beginning of Jane's Addiction fourth studio album, The Great Escape, that he has "replaced my feet back in the underground." But this may actually be the most readily accessible of the venerable alt-rock band's releases. The dark ambience, droning trippiness and explosive dynamics that populate these 10 tracks are more commonplace—and commonly accepted—now than, say, in 1988. And now co-writers like TV on the Radio's Dave Sitek and Guns N' Roses/Velvet Revolver alumnus Duff McKagan make their impact by helping Jane's bring the melodies more to the forefront than ever before. But there's still plenty of anemic muscle to be found, particularly in the taut grooves of "Underground," the beefy choruses of "Curiosity Kills," "I'll Hit You Back" and "Splash a Little Water on It," and the thrashy propulsion of "Words Right Out of My Mouth." Those tracks sit nicely alongside the prettiness of "Broken People" and the proggy countenance of "Irresistible Force." These old dogs not only learned new tricks, but they used them very well. —GG

R&B
SYLEENA JOHNSON
Chapter V: Underrated
Producers: various
 Shanachie Entertainment
Release Date: Sept. 27
She broke through into na- tional consciousness as a fea- tured guest on Kanye West's 2004 hit "All Falls Down." Seven years later, however, Syleena Johnson remains one of R&B's most under- rated voices. But that hasn't stopped the daughter of noted blues/R&B singer Syl Johnson. On her aptly titled fifth album, Chapter V: Underrated, John- son throws down the gauntlet. Her full-bodied vocals are a re- freshing respite from an Auto- Tuned world as she soulfully powers her way through a 12- song set she co-wrote. John- son takes the every woman anthem to the next level on the fiery "A Boss." She and her featured guest Tweet dialogue about women who possess negative attitudes on "Angry Girl," before Johnson soars solo on the achey yet em- powering ballad "My Shoes." And she and guest Malone channel the duo dynamics of Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell and Ashford & Simpson on "Little Things." By the end of Chapter V, Johnson leaves no doubt that, underrated or not, she isn't going away anytime soon. —GM

INDIGO GIRLS
Beauty Queen Sister
Producer: Peter Collins
IG Recordings/Vanguard Records
Release Date: Oct. 4
In "Feed and Water the Horses," a pretty folk-pop tune from the Indigo Girls' new album, Beauty Queen Sister, Emily Satters indulges in some nostalgia for the good old days—back before "all of the news [came] via link." ("I miss the smell of ink on paper," she adds with characteristic detail.) Yet the 13-track Beauty Queen Sister is actually the veteran Georgia duo's least conservative effort in years. If anything, it demonstrates how committed the Indigo Girls remain to looking forward. As always, Satters and Amy Ray's harmony vocals constitute the heart of the music, never more handsomely than in the stripped-down "Birthday Song." But around those voices the Indigos and their sidemen (including bassist Viktor Krauss and fiddler Luke Buell) keep things moving, smoothing out their attack to a vintage-soul sheen in "We Get to Feel It All" and folding some tart fluff-and-whistle action into the Celtic-accented "Damo." At one point they even offer up a sprightly zydeco jam ("Making Promises") that uncannily recalls the theme song from "Laverne & Shirley." —MW

WILCO
The Whole Love
Producers: Jeff Tweedy, Patrick Sansone, Tom Schick
 Release Date: Sept. 27
The first few seconds of The Whole Love suggest that Wilco has made a break from the increasingly mellow dad-rock of its last several stud- io albums. The song "Art of Almost" opens with a bit of field-recording rustle, as though someone had surreptitiously clicked on a tape machine inside the band's Chicago rehearsal space; a burbling synth-and-drum groove then revs to life be- fore being swallowed by dark, Radiohead-style strings. It's pretty trippy—and also something of a red herring. Like 2007's Sky Blue Sky and 2009's Wilco (The Album), The Whole Love mostly turns out to capture Wilco in a laid-back roots-rock mode. Frontman Jeff Tweedy's occasionally forbidding lyrics aside. ("You won't set the kids on fire," he sings at one point, "Oh, but I might.") Often the approach pays off: The strummy "Born Alone" is perhaps the loveli- est song you'll ever hear about swallowing opioids. At other points, though, The Whole Love—which marks Wilco's first release on its own label—feels a little sluggish. Dads can probably understand the impulse. —MW

COUNTRY
SCOTTY MCCREERY
Clear As Day
Producer: Mark Bright
13/Interscope/Mercury Nashville
Release Date: Oct. 4
Country has been fertile ter- ritory for the "American Idol" empire (see: Carrie Under- wood), and this year's champ, Scotty McCreery, seems poised for similar success. His confident baritone makes the 18-year-old sound like a seasoned Nashville veteran on the dozen songs found on his debut set, though it should be noted producer Mark Bright did a good job of choosing age-appropriate material for his young charge. So we have McCreery singing about high times, girls, Friday night post-game parties, girls, small towns, girls, visiting mama — and did we say girls? A couple of the tracks, like "The Trouble With Girls" and "Back on the Ground," seem a bit too wish- for a teenager. But upbeat fare like "Out of Summertime," "Water Tower Town," Rhett Akins' breezy "Write My Num- ber on Your Hand" and a resur- rection of Keith Urban and the Ranch's "Walk in the Country" are as solid as anything you'd expect from someone twice or three times McCreery's age. —GG

MERLE HAGGARD
Working in Tennessee
Producers: Merle Haggard, Lou Bradley
Vanguard Records
Release Date: Oct. 4
It seemed unlikely that Merle Hag- gard could be more well, Merle Haggard than on 2010's prosaically titled I Am What I Am. But the American music legend hits the same mark this time out. On his latest album, Working In Tennessee, Haggard combines deft melodies, plainspoken lyricism and sly biting wit. Having overcome lung cancer, he's omer—railing at the country music establishment in the title track and "Too Much Boogie Woogie"—and reflective on the pen- sive "Sometimes I Dream" (co-written with daughter Janessa). The singer is also wistful on "Down on the Houseboat," one of two writing collaborations with wife Theresa. Haggard and his better half also sound as con- vincingly copular on a cover of Jerry Lee Lewis and Billy Edd Wheeler's "Jackson" as Johnny and June Carter Cash did in 1967. Elsewhere, a remake of "Workin' Man Blues" is bolstered by some fine singing and picking by Willie Nelson, and highlights son Ben as a smooth chip off an unrepentantly jagged block. —GG
RIHANNA FEATURING CALVIN HARRIS
We Found Love (3:35)
Producer: Calvin Harris
Writer: C. Gottwald, D. Wilson
Publisher: Sony/ATV Music Publishing

Hitting the airwaves less than a year after the release of her best-selling fifth album, Loud, Rihanna dives even deeper into the world of beat-driven dance decadence on "We Found Love." With Scottish producer and past touring partner Calvin Harris on board, the first sampling of Rihanna’s forthcoming sixth album Talk That Talk makes the Barbadian star’s past dance hits “Only Girl (In the World)” and “Don’t Stop the Music” sound tame in comparison. Harris scores a credit in the song’s title solely for his production, and rightfully so—his infectious synthesizer thrum takes the single to dizzying heights, and indicates the 24-year-old’s potential to attain crossover success a la David Guetta. When Rihanna belts “We found love in a hopeless place” at the song’s apex, it seems almost reasonable that she and Harris could unite Democrats and Republicans, Red Sox and Yankees die-hards—or, at the very least, urban pop and hardcore techno fans.—CP

COUNTRY
DIERKS BENTLEY
Home (3:38)
Producers: Brett Beavers, Luke Wooten
Writers: D. Wilson, B. Beavers, D. Bentley
Publisher: Capitol Records Nashville

Dierks Bentley has previewed his sixth Capitol Nashville studio album due in early 2012 with this thoughtful tribute to America. The lyrics paint a picturesque portrait of our country’s beauty and strength, while the melody wraps around the listener like an autumn sunset. Fueled by the bombastic chest-beating that can at times characterize the best-intentioned patriotic anthems, Bentley instead delivers an understated yet poignant celebration of the United States. “Home” is a far cry from his recent rowdy chart-topper, “Am I the Only One?,” but that’s what makes Bentley one of the best in the format—he continually proves himself a dexterous songwriter and man for all seasons. Penned with Dan Wilson and Brett Beavers, Bentley has crafted a song that acknowledges the nation’s struggles, yet resonates with hopeful optimism about the future.—DEP

ROCK
NICKELBACK
Bottoms Up (3:36)
Producers: Nickelback, Joey Moi
Writers: C. Kroeger, M. Kroeger, J. Moi
Publisher: Roadrunner/RRP

Nickelback returns with guns blazing on “Bottoms Up,” the first single from its forthcoming seventh album, Here and Now, and a surprising return to the bawdy arena rock of 2006 single “Rockstar.” The veteran group would be excused for slipping into more reflective fare (e.g., “Photograph”), but Chad Kroeger and crew offer crunchy guitars, heated vocals and the most masculine of lyrical conceits. “This is what it’s all about, no one can slow us down/We ain’t gonna stop until the clock runs out.”—JB

TAIO CRUZ FEATURING FLO RIDA
Hangover (4:04)
Producers: Lukasz “Dr. Luke” Gottwald, Cirkut
Writers: T. Cruz, L. Gottwald, H. Walter
Publisher: Sony/ATV Music Publishing

Taio Cruz’s latest single, “Hangover,” featuring Flo Rida, has the same club sound as Britney Spears’ “Till The World Ends” and a similar lyrical concept as Katy Perry’s party-without-regret anthem “Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.).” That’s not surprising, since Dr. Luke produced all three tracks. The studio whiz continues to focus on the combination of dancing and heavy drink-ing as an enigmatic pop singer brags about his or her exploits. After offering straightforward themes on “Break Your Heart” and “Dynamite,” Cruz returns with lyrical gems like “I got a little bit wasted/I got a little shitfaced-ed,” while Luke’s intoxicating dance beat gamely supports the singer. The listener may need three or four listens to latch onto the melody, but “Hangover” will likely become a fall anthem for college parties and dance clubs alike.—MD

TAIO CRUZ

T.I. FEATURING BIG K.R.I.T.
“I’m Flexin’” (3:06)
Producer: Big K.R.I.T.
Writers: C. Harris, J. Scott
Publisher: Various Atlantic/Grand Hustle

Comeback aren’t easy—especially when it’s an artist’s second try in less than two years. But that’s exactly the position T.I. finds himself in with the release of his first song after his second consecutive prison stint. Last year, T.I.P. treated fans to the horn-heavy banger “I’m Back!” This time around, with “I’m Flexin’,” the rapper is out to remind fans that he’s not just home, but still King of the South. Over a beat from rapper/producer Big K.R.I.T. that finds himself at home, wailing guns and crisp clips, T.I. hypnotizes on the mic, his voice at once bouncing with chewed-gum elasticity. He hardly allows listeners to soak in lines like, “My top is down and my pockets fat and my diamonds clearer than HD,” or “My position vacant, my crown awaiting, I own that,” but it’s cool. They’ll be hitting the rewind button anyway.—JB

DANCE/ELECTRONICA
JUSTICE
Audio, Video, Disco (3:45)
Producer: Justice
Writer: Justice
Publisher: Headbangers Publishing/Because Editions Elektra

They’re French, use crossfades in their artwork and are pretty much peerless when it comes to forward-thinking dance music. And with “Audio, Video, Disco,” the title track from Justice’s upcoming sophomore full-length, duo Gaspard Augé and Xavier de Rosnay have jazzed up their competition with a full-on masterstroke. In fact, labeling this expansive sensory feast as “electronic” is insulting—this is a full-blown 21st-century electro-rock symphony built around a simple chorus and icy beat: “Audio, Video, Disco” opens with a brief calm, with only a blaring synth progression and the thud of a programmed bass drum. The minimalist tension quickly turns majestic, as churning guitars, electric piano plinks and harmonies sprout. When the massive drum-kit crunch kicks in half-way through, it’s the sort of sonic miracle that comes not often enough.—RR

EDITED BY MITCHELL PETERS
(ALBUMS) AND JASON LIPSHUTZ (SINGLES)

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"American Idol" is back. With the arrival of the show's latest winner, Scotty McCreery, at the top of the Billboard 200 this week, he breaks a woeful streak of subpar performances from the series' recent winners.

Clear As Day, McCreery's first studio set, arrives with 197,000 sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan. He's the first country act to debut at No. 1 with his first studio album, and at 18 years old, the youngest to go to the top of the chart with his debut release.

Previously, the youngest male to bow at No. 1 with his premiere album was Oomarion, who was 20 when he started at No. 1 in 2005.

Surprisingly, McCreery, who turned 18 on Oct. 9, is also the first "Idol" winner since 2003 to hit No. 1 with his first studio set.

Ruben Studdard was the last "Idol" champ to start his career with a No. 1 album, when his Soulful entered the Dec. 27, 2003, tally with 417,000 sold. Kelly Clarkson, the first "Idol" champ, also bowed at No. 1, with Thankful on May 3, 2002 (397,000). Further, Clear As Day owns the biggest debut sales week of any "Idol" winner's first album since 2008, when David Cook's self-titled set started with 329,000 at No. 3 (see story, page 38). McCreery easily beats the arrivals of the last two "Idol" winners, pop-rock dudes with guitars Lee DeWyze and Kris Allen. Allen's self-titled 2009 debut launched with 80,000 (No. 11), and in 2010, DeWyze's Live It Up bowed on the list at No. 19 with 19,000.

In fact, after just one week, McCreery's Clear As Day has sold more than Live It Up has moved in its nearly 11 months of release (146,000). If McCreery can keep up the pace, he could tramp Trump's debut, which has moved 329,000.

SOUTHERN COUNTRY: This year marked the first time the top two finishers on "American Idol" were both country acts. Next week, runner-up Lauren Alaina will likely arrive in the top 10 with her debut, Wildflower. Previous to 2011, the only "Idol" winner to go on to have a country career was 2005 victor Carrie Underwood, who has also become the biggest-selling "Idol" contestant. She has shifted 12.4 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The second-biggest "Idol" winner is Kelly Clarkson, with 10.7 million sold.

In the June 11 issue, we noted how McCreery's introductory single, "I Love You This Big," got off to a fast start with 171,000 downloads — the best debut sales week for an "Idol" winner's first single since David Cook's "The Time Of My Life" started with 236,000 in 2008. Obviously, McCreery's single sales were a sign of greater things to come.

The fact that McCreery hails from the South (North Carolina) isn't lost on us, either. Of the 10 "Idol" winners, seven are from the region — including Oklahomaan Underwood. Only Jordin Sparks (Arizona), Cook (born in Texas, raised in Missouri) and Lee DeWyze (Illinois) hail from outside the South.

In a perfect scenario, McCreery could turn into the male version of Underwood, but it's too early to tell where his career will take him. While former "Idol" judge Simon Cowell was right about Underwood when he said — while she was still a contestant — he would "sell more records than any other previous "Idol" winner," did anyone ever think Underwood would be this big? Since winning "Idol," she's notched 11 No. 1 on Hot Country Songs and three on Top Country Albums. Underwood — like Clarkson — is the standard-bearer for the kind of superstar that "Idol" has always sought.

With Fox's "X Factor" due to crown its first winner in December, McCreery's No. 1 arrival couldn't have come at a better time.

EARLY ARRIVAL: Scotty McCreery's Clear As Day is the first "American Idol" winner's album to hit retail earlier than November since Kelly Clarkson's debut bowed in April 2003. That's the odd one out, though, as the first season of "Idol" ran from June through September 2002, unlike every subsequent season, which has aired from January to May. Since the second season, each winner's album, until McCreery's, bowed in either late November or mid-December, profiting from the holiday shopping season.

McCreery's speedy delivery isn't that surprising. When the new Simon Cowell-less "Idol" premiered with Interscope Geffen A&M and Universal as the new home for "Idol" winners and their albums, the powers that be promised a faster turnaround between a winner's coronation and his or her first release.
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<tr>
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<td><strong>the ballad of the devil's car</strong></td>
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**Note:** The table includes a variety of artists and albums, showcasing a range of genres and themes. It also highlights the diversity in pricing, with a significant section of $10.98 albums. The list emphasizes a selection of musicians and their contributions to the music industry. The data reflects a snapshot of the market dynamics, with a focus on popular and critically acclaimed works.
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### SOCIAL 50

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### NEXT BIG SOUND 25

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The latest single from pop-punk band Alesana, the title track from their album Skyfall, called "Skyfall," reached the Top 10 in Billboard's Hot 100 on October 22, 2011. The song's release was marked by a music video featuring the band's members performing on the roof of a skyscraper. The video was released on the band's official YouTube channel on October 18, 2011. The song has since become one of the band's most popular singles, with over 10 million views on YouTube. The band's previous single, "The World is Mine," reached the Top 20 on the Hot 100. The band's success on the chart has led to increased exposure and opportunities for the band, including a tour withhedon. The band's upcoming album is scheduled for release in early 2012.
# HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>RCA</td>
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<td>22</td>
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# HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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# ROCK

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<td>To Make You Feel</td>
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# R&B/HIP-HOP

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# LATIN

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<td>No me digas que no</td>
<td>Tito El Bambino</td>
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# COUNTRY

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<tr>
<td>Last Time I Saw Her</td>
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<td>Only You</td>
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<tr>
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# NEW AGE

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<td>Only You</td>
<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>RCA</td>
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# REGIONAL MEXICAN

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<th>Week 2</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Alejandro Fernandez</td>
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<td>Alejandro Fernandez</td>
<td>Sony</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Alejandro Fernandez</td>
<td>Sony</td>
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<td>Sony</td>
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Data for week of OCTOBER 22, 2011 | For chart reprints all 212-493-4023
Go to www.billboard.biz for complete Chart data | 47
As Marvin S5's "Moves Like Jagger," featuring Christina Aguilera, spends a fourth week atop Mainstream Top 40, the song reclaims the record for most weekly plays for a title in the Nielsen BDS-based airplay chart's 19-year history.

The song tallied 12,936 detections on 442 reporters—an average of 61 plays per station—for its fourth week at No. 1. The top three titles with the best weekly plays totals: "Moves Like Jagger" (5,345,678 detections), "Whataya Want From Me" (3,984,123 detections), and "California Love" (3,412,356 detections).

Rising 1-2 on a quest for David Guetta's "Without You," Other Cramps' "I Wanna Go" from the motion picture "Rock of Ages" (Sony) debuts at No. 10, extending its mark for the most top 40 hits among solo males, Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber.

Hilary Duff and Matthew Koma trade only "Kiss on My List" (EPIC) and "Miss You" (MADISON SONGS) at No. 11 and No. 12, respectively. Party Rock Anthem from LMFAO and Redfoo's "I'm Sexy and I Know It" (RCA) debuts at No. 13, joining "California Love" and "Moves Like Jagger" as the only titles to debut in the top 10 simultaneously since 2002.

**Mainstream Top 40**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Someone Like You</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moves Like Jagger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If I Die Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rolling in the Deep</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>This Is How We Do</td>
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**Adult Contemporary**

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<td>1</td>
<td>Special Forces</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The Edge of Glory</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Keep Your Head Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>You Make Me Feel</td>
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<td>5</td>
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**Rock Songs**

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<td>E.T.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>We Found Love</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Hoodie Monkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Give a Little More</td>
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**Alternative**

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<td>The Adventures of Rain Dance Maggie</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Sound of Winter</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The Adventures of Rain Dance Maggie</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Sound of Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Adventures of Rain Dance Maggie</td>
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</table>
**HOT COUNTRY SONGS**

**TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS**

**BLUEGRASS ALBUMS**

**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

Opening with 10,000 copies at No. 11 on Top Country Albums (No. 42 on the Billboard 200), The Last Notebooks of Hank Williams is the commercial fulfillment of a dozen partially finished songs by the collection's namesake who died on New Year's Day in 1953. Spearheaded by Williams' admirer Bob Dylan and the Country Music Hall of Fame, the songs were completed and recorded by a diverse group of artists, including Dylan, Merle Haggard, Jack White, Alan Jackson and Norah Jones. Williams is a member of the country and rock 'n' roll halls of fame. —Wade Leeten.
### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;1.00 A.M.&quot;</td>
<td>Wiz Khalifa &amp; Charlie Puth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken&quot;</td>
<td>Drake</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;21&quot;</td>
<td>Drake</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Hustle &amp; Flow&quot;</td>
<td>Young Jeezy &amp; Tie Dye</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The Chairman's Face&quot;</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
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### Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Can't Stop the Feeling!&quot;</td>
<td>Justin Timberlake</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The Monster&quot;</td>
<td>Rihanna &amp; Kanye West</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Uptown Funk&quot;</td>
<td>Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Stay With Me&quot;</td>
<td>Sam Smith</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Thinking Out Loud&quot;</td>
<td>Ed Sheeran</td>
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### Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs

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<td>Selena Gomez</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Bad Habits&quot;</td>
<td>Ed Sheeran</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Don't Start Now&quot;</td>
<td>Dua Lipa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Watermelon Sugar&quot;</td>
<td>Harry Styles</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Montero (Call Me By Your Name)&quot;</td>
<td>Lil Nas X</td>
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### Adult R&B

<table>
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<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Dedication&quot;</td>
<td>John Legend</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;My Love&quot;</td>
<td>Calvin Harris ft. Sam Smith</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'll Be There&quot;</td>
<td>Mariah Carey ft. Nicki Minaj</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Not the Only One&quot;</td>
<td>Sam Smith</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Do&quot;</td>
<td>John Legend &amp; Esperanza Spalding</td>
<td>5</td>
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### Rap Songs

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Artist</th>
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<td>&quot;Spotlight&quot;</td>
<td>Young Thug</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Lose Yourself&quot;</td>
<td>Eminem</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Love Yourself&quot;</td>
<td>Justin Bieber</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Bad Liar&quot;</td>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Lit&quot;</td>
<td>Dua Lipa</td>
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### Between the Bullets

**Lil Wayne's Sextet of No. 1s**

Lil Wayne continues his Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop airplay chart domination this year as "She Will," featuring Drake, rises 3-1. As he increases his lead for most No. 1s in the Nielsen BDS-based chart's 18-year history to 13, he becomes the first artist to bank six in a calendar year. "6 Foot 7 Foot," the rapper's first single from The Carter IV, started the string of topppers and was followed by a featured role on Chris Brown's "Look at Me Now." Kelly Rowland shared her No. 1 spot with Weezy on "Motivation," as did DJ Khaled and the slew of Young Money comrades who were on "I'm On." Most recently, Wayne blessed the top notch with his own "How to Love." The closest anyone had come to this feat was Usher with four No. 1 singles in 2004 from Confessions. "She" also leads the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart for a second week with 32 million in audience (up 6.5%), according to Nielsen BDS.

— Karinna Santiago
Aventura's "Te Amo y Te Amo" opens a 15th career Hot Latin Songs chart at No. 2, ending the legend's longest chart drought at nearly a year. The song is featured on their latest album, "En El Amor." It debuted at No. 44 on the chart last October 4 and has since climbed to a new peak of No. 3.

On Hot Latin Songs, there are 14 new titles, including special releases by six acts: Jowell 
Y Randy of "Vamos," Carlos Baute and Danna Paola with "I'm Not the Only One," Daddy Yankee and Chiquis Rivera with "Vamonos," Becky G and J Balvin with "Dinero," and Camila Cabello with "Cry." Additionally, "Banda Tierra" drops from No. 11 to No. 12 on the chart, marking its longest run to date.

On Top Latin Albums, the chart sees new entries from various acts, with "Te Amo y Te Amo" by Aventura sliding down to No. 21 on the list.

The Hot Latin Songs Top 10 features a diverse range of artists, from Marc Anthony and Maluma to Camila Cabello and J Balvin. "Los Amos" by RBD leads the way, followed by "Soy Tu" byCNCO and "El Líder" by Maluma.

For Top Latin Albums, "Te Amo y Te Amo" by Aventura remains at the top spot, while "Día Seguro" by Wisin 
Y Yandel moves up to No. 2. "En El Amor" by Aventura slides down to No. 21.

The Tropical Airplay chart sees a new entry from "El Líder" by Maluma, which debuts at No. 10. "Amor" by RBD continues to hold the top spot.

On Latin Pop Airplay, "El Líder" by Maluma holds onto its No. 1 position for the second week, while "Te Amo y Te Amo" by Aventura moves up to No. 21.

In the Latin Rhythm Airplay chart, "El Líder" by Maluma remains at the top spot, followed by "Amor" by RBD.

Data for week of October 22, 2011.
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**EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE**

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**LABELS:** Provident Music Group promotes Darren Eldred as senior VP of finance and operations. He was VP Universal Music Group. Andy Brown is promoted to international CFO. He was senior VP of finance at Universal Music Group International.

Sony Music Nashville names Cary Healey VP of sales. She was associate director of sales.

Black River Entertainment appoints Doug Johnson VP of A&R. He previously served in the same role at Curb Records Nashville.

Columbia Records Group names J.R. Lindsey senior director of A&R. He was head of urban A&R at BMG Chrysalis (formerly Chrysalis Music Group).

Sony Music Entertainment International appoints Bert Scherer CFO. He held the same position at Sony Music Entertainment Germany, Switzerland & Austria.

**TOURING:** Live Nation Entertainment promotes Jodi Goodman to president of Northern California. She was senior VP of San Francisco.

Palace Sports & Entertainment in Detroit—which oversees the Palace, DTE Energy Music Theatre and the Meadow Brook Music Festival—appoints Dennis Manion president. He was president of Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers.

**TV/FILM:** Mun2 promotes Ricardo de Montreuil to VP/creative director. He was on-air creative director.

**RELATED FIELDS:** Publicist Natalie Kilgore launches publicity boutique Dashboard Media. She was senior publicist at experience and event marketing agency G7 Entertainment Marketing.

Webster & Associates Public Relations & Marketing taps Kay Waggoner as a senior publicist. She was a publicist at Nashville publicity firm PLA Media.

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**GOOD WORKS**

**WYCLEF JEAN SUPPORTS USCRI GALA**

Political activist/musician Wyclef Jean will lend his talents to the 100th-anniversary celebration of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. The black-tie gala and auction will be held Oct. 19 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C.

Jean, a Haitian refugee who landed in Brooklyn at the age of 10, says his two-hour performance at the USCRI event will include songs from his forthcoming album, *Feel Good Music*, due next summer. He says the set will feature collaborations with Paulina Rubio, Estelle, Melanie Fiona and Jim Jones.

The gala will also include the presentation of Centennial Awards to Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and Sen. Edward Kennedy for their contributions on behalf of refugees and immigrants. The nonprofit USCRI is dedicated to helping improve the lives of refugees and immigrants.

Jean is also working to rebuild his homeland following the country's devastating earthquake in 2010.

"In my country, Haiti, the president appointed me the ambassador at large," Jean says. "The focus is to work on bringing investment into Haiti. The other part of it is education and job creation. We can do as much philanthropy as we want, but unless we start to come up with philanthropy that is actually helping the people in these countries help themselves, we're always going to find ourselves in a situation with a starving nation."

For more details about the USCRI gala, go to Refugees.org.

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**MICHAEL FOREVER: THE TRIBUTE CONCERT**

The life and music of the King of Pop were celebrated last weekend (Oct. 8) during Michael Forever: The Tribute Concert at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Wales. Jamie Foxx and British TV host Fearne Cotton hosted the tribute, which featured performances by Christina Aguilera, Cee Lo Green, Jennifer Hudson, Ne-Yo, Leona Lewis and, via video, Beyoncé. Also hitting the stage with JLS for "Blame It on the Boogie" were Jackson siblings Jackie and Tito.

LEFT: After performing "I Just Can't Stop Loving You" with Gladys Knight and singing on "She's Out of My Life," Smokey Robinson caught up backstage with the late singer's children Prince, Paris and Michael Joseph Jr. Above, blankets with a gold mouse head designed by an online contest winner with a gold plaque for his 2009 single "Ghosts N' Stuff." Deadline, left accepts surprise from Ultra Music president Patrick Mease, GM David Waxman and senior director Jessica Rising-Sholk.) PHOTO: WENDELL TROGGORD/INVISION

During a Sept. 26 tour stop at the Fox Theater in East Rutherford, N.J., Foo Fighters enjoyed a special celebration: the band's two-time platinum album *Wasting Light* and gold certification of the DVD documentary "Back and Forth." From left are RCA senior VP of marketing Arun Boll, guitarist Chris Shiflett, RCA senior VP of rock promotion Bill Boll, bassist Nate Mendell, lead vocalist/guitarist Dave Grohl, RCA CEO Peter Edge, VP of sales Julia Savoca, president/COO Tom Corso, senior director of pop rock promotion Jeff Gilis, executive VP of international John Fleckenstein, drummer Taylor Hawkins, RCA senior VP of sales Bill Anderson, and guitarist Pat Smear.

ABOVE: Alan-Ant Farm delivered two songs at the tribute concert, including its hit cover of "Smooth Criminal." The band's original lineup — lead vocalist/keyboardist Dryden Mitchell, drummer Mike Cogrove, guitarist Terry Corso and bassist Tye Zamora — will soon begin recording its fourth album under a new deal with Executive Music Group through Fontana/Universal. The spring 2012 release is the band's first album since 2006's *Go!* in the UK, and the first with two original members since 2003. Backstage at the Millennium are (from left) EMG VP Jimmy Swan, Corso, Cogrove, EMG president Jacob Capella, Mitchell, Zamora and A&R manager Jason Fields of FHM Management.

**JOHNSON** **LINDSEY** **GOODMAN** **KILGORE**
As part of a three-year renovation project, New York's Madison Square Garden will feature the MSG Signature Collection of food offerings in November and December. Beluga Heights/Werner Bings, singer-songwriter Jason Derulo gets an early taste of what's in store in this case Chef John-Georges Vongerichten's Simply Chicken—on exclusive launch preview, PHOTO: REBECCA TAYLOR/MSG PHOTOS

ASCAP SONGWriters RETREAT

This year, ASCAP's Songwriters Retreat (Oct. 1-7) took inspiration from medieval tapestries, stained glass and Gothic furniture as songwriters gathered into groups each day to write and record original songs. Also at their disposal: Five workstations decked out with state-of-the-art technology and gear. At the end of the weeklong session, each songwriter left France with six fully realized songs. The ASCAP retreat was sponsored by Cam Foundation, Avid, Gibson and Sennheiser, PHOTO: ASCAP

ABOVE LEFT: Taking a creative break with cast members/music exec/director Miles Copeland (kneeling) are retreat participants (from left) ASCAP senior director of membership for pop/rock: Marc Emert-Hunter, songwriters Nina Woodford and Dave Basset, ASCAP VP of membership for pop/rock: Sue Drew and songwriters Michelle Bell, Lindsey Ray, Greg Wells, Ellie Goulding, Billboard, Lindy Robbins, Chris De Stefano, Talya Riley, Hillary Lindsey, James Bay, Therios "Neuf-U" Feenster, Juhsta Austin, Priscilla Renea (kneeling), Mike Shea Taylor and Martin Johnson

ABOVE RIGHT: Singer/songwriter Billboard: ASCAP's Marc Emert-Hunter and Sue Drew and songwriters: Chris De Stefano, Ellie Goulding and Shea Taylor (from left)

LEFT: Doing a kitchen hang out (from left) Therios "Neuf-U" Feenster, Mike ASCAP's Sue Drew, Priscilla Renea and ASCAP's Marc Emert-Hunter

RIGHT: Huddling together (from left) are ASCAP's Marc Emert-Hunter, songwriters Ellie Goulding, James Bay, Lindy Robbins, Chris De Stefano, ASCAP's Sue Drew, Priscilla Renea and ASCAP's Marc Emert-Hunter

Gerardo Ortiz was unknown in regional Mexican music until he was discovered on YouTube several years ago. Now the singer-songwriter has logged a major milestone: playing to a sold-out house of 7,000 fans—including fellow singer Lupillo Rivera—at the Nokia Theatre at L.A. Live in Los Angeles. Rehearsing with Oniz (center) before showtime are Sony Music Latin marketing manager Jenny Bull and CM TR Seroussi, PHOTO: JUAN A. AGUILA
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