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Holding Pattern

Global financial uncertainty, already a factor in the EMI auction, now threatens to overwhelm it

The script for Citigroup’s auction of EMI Group was supposed to proceed something like this: Collect initial round of bids. Hold out for higher offers in a second round of bids. Identify leading suitors. Sell EMI.

That’s how the successful auction of Warner Music Group had proceeded earlier this year, resulting in Russian billionaire Len Blavatnik’s Access Industries acquiring WMG for $3.3 billion.

But after Access—the presumed front-runner for EMI’s recorded-music operations—dropped out of the bidding in late October, sources familiar with the situation say activity around the EMI auction has come to a virtual halt.

Representatives for Citigroup and EMI declined to comment for this story. And despite what some observers see as signs that the banking conglomerate is also slowing the sale of EMI Music Publishing, it could very well strike a deal soon with BMG Rights Management, the publishing joint venture of Bertelsmann and private-equity firm KKR & Co.

Still, the unexpected delays in completing the sale of EMI has prompted some industry sources to wonder whether Citigroup might consider falling back to plan B: pulling EMI off the block entirely and waiting for a better environment to sell the company.

When Citigroup collected first-round bids on EMI in late July, nearly all of the suitors from the successful auction of WMG turned out to make offers, with bids approaching $4 billion for the entire label group, sources say. But now, rival bids for the recorded-music and publishing operations amount to only about $3.3 billion for all of EMI, sources say—about what Access paid for WMG in July.

The bids were hurt in part by the revelation that EMI’s pension fund liabilities were far higher than previously thought: about double the $179 million ($313 million) that EMI, its pension funds and the United Kingdom’s Pension Regulator had agreed on at the end of 2010. But even more significant has been the tightening of global credit markets in the wake of the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. The most recent casualty: the crash of former Goldman Sachs CEO Jon Corzine’s MF Global Holdings, which was burned by high-risk bets on European debt.

“There has been one crisis situation after another, and as soon as one is taken care of, the next one pops up,” says Geoff Madden, a partner with New York-based boutique investment advisory/financial advice firm Christman, Peters & Madden. “So there is palpable fear out there on a global macro basis affecting every industry.”

The deepening market uncertainty chased away early EMI bidders like Apollo Global Management, Platinum Equity and Greens Group, and Oaktree Capital Management may have also prevented other potential bidders from stepping up to the plate. No doubt it has also left private-equity investors Thomas H. Lee Partners, Bain Capital and Providence Equity Partners feeling mighty fortunate that they sold WMG ahead of the latest round of global jitters.

Postponing the EMI auction would enable Citigroup to wait for market conditions to improve. As credit markets ease and bidders have an easier time raising funding, bids on EMI could once again go higher.

Sources say Access walked away from the EMI auction because it wouldn’t raise its $1.5 billion bid for EMI Music. Universal Music Group, which sources say had bid $1.2 billion on the label, withdrew from the auction a week before Access did, leaving only Ron Perelman’s MacAndrews & Forbes as the only EMI music suitor left in the bidding. But with MacAndrews & Forbes’ bid believed to be around the level of UMG’s, the door still appears to be open for Access to recapture its front-runner status.

If Citigroup reaches out to bidders on EMI Music, it will appear as though it’s thinking on its pricing demands for recorded music. And the bidders are leery of reaching out because they’re afraid of being used as a tool to drive the price back up. "Everyone is playing Crazy Ivan at this point," a source close to the situation says.

While the potential advantages of postponing the EMI auction are obvious, what isn’t as clear is whether Citigroup would want to do so. Some sources point out that Citigroup has already written off its losses on EMI. As a result, they say, it might as well take what it can get right now.

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Majors Push Back On Best Buy Price Demands

A Best Buy initiative to have all single-disc albums at an everyday price of $9.99 for the holiday selling season has been turned back by the major labels—at least for now.

While some major-label distribution executives expect the conversation to resume in 2012, others say they don’t intend to revisit Best Buy’s request to buy all single-disc CDs, including superstar titles, at a $7.25 wholesale price. The majors often use that price point for developing artists.

Part of the issue is that Best Buy has been racked by Anderson Merchandisers since May, and Walmart—an other Anderson client—sometimes gets established artists at that price point. Best Buy executives say they are entitled to the same level of wholesale pricing enjoyed by the mass merchant.

What Best Buy executives failed to note is that Walmart has a five-tier bucket pricing scheme, including a top-tier $8.50 wholesale price for titles typically sold at $11.88. Walmart’s other price buckets are about $7.25 ($10 in store), $6.50 ($9), $4.25 ($7) and $2.88 ($5).

Prior to being racked by Anderson, the majors sold Best Buy at their rate-card pricing and cut deals for bigger discounts on specific titles. In the case of Warner Music Group (WMG), superstars typically carried an $11.86 wholesale cost. Universal Music Group superstar titles wholesaled for $10.35, Sony Music Entertainment for $10.50 and EMI Group for $12.04.

As a racked account, some majors are now selling star titles to Best Buy at the $8.50 wholesale cost. But that’s not meeting Best Buy’s $7.25 demand.

Best Buy isn’t the first to try and get the majors to underwrite a $9.99 in-store price point for single CDs. In 2009, Trans Sound launched a similar initiative, requesting a $7.40 wholesale cost in a gambit supported by three majors but not WMG.

The majors agreed to Trans World’s pricing as a test. But by July 2010, some labels thought the offer had been stretched beyond what could be defended as a pricing experiment. Fearing it could be considered discriminatory pricing unless rolled out to other merchants, they forced a cessation. While some major-label executives say the Trans World test provided enough incremental sales to justify the lower pricing, others say it fell short of that goal.

When Best Buy started getting racked by Anderson, its executives expected the labels to extend all the same courtesies provided to Walmart—and sources say that’s making for a sticky situation for the labels as well as for Anderson. If Anderson goes to bat for Best Buy on the lower pricing model, how will Walmart feel about the rackjob?
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Out With The ’Inni’

With Sigur Rós on hiatus, XL Recordings plots a theatrical tour for the band’s concert DVD

When it comes to marketing, Sigur Rós, XL Recordings takes it cues from the Icelandic band’s ravid fan base.

The concept for the adventurous prerelease of its album Íni, and a concert film of the same name, has its roots in the fan response to Sigur Rós’ previous film. “Heima” Released in 2007 as a DVD after a few film festival screenings, fans requested to start copies to show at high schools, colleges, church halls, recration centers and random places where people gather. “They’d put up their own money to screen the film for a few friends—we did about 300, 400 screenings by sending out DVDs,” XL head of marketing Adam Farrell says.

For the film “Inni,” which XL Recordings will release on Nov. 15 as a video-audio package, Farrell says, “We’re taking the organic phenomenon and adding a level of professionalism on it.”

XL brought in Ray Privett and his company Cinema Purgatorio, which has handled distribution for films by Björk, the Flaming Lips and R.E.M., to get “inni” into theaters for runs as short as a day and as long as a week. Because the band isn’t on tour, “inni” will visit at least 15 cities by Dec. 14. The Los Angeles run was Oct. 28-Nov. 4 at the Downtown Independent theater. In New York, it will be screened Nov. 11-17 at the IFC Center.

Internationally, during the first week of November, “inni” played Tokyo; the Sydney suburb of Paddington; London; Glasgow, Scotland; and other cities in Europe. Further screenings are scheduled through Feb. 1 in Sweden, Slovenia, Italy, Mexico and Finland.

To stir interest among fans, XL reached out to local independent record stores to bundle a limited number of free movie tickets with preorders of the film and music package. The packages are being sold in configurations of two CDs and a DVD, two CDs and a Blu-ray disc, and three LPs and a DVD. The iTunes version of the music will include film clips.

XL chose to extend the offer to retailers and then let the shops—Grimey’s in Nashville, Other Music in New York, Euclid in New Orleans and Zia in Phoenix, among others—market to their customer bases. Beyond theatrical posters and a billboard planned for Los Angeles’ Sunset Strip, XL will let word-of-mouth drive the marketing.

“The more oblique stuff you do,” Farrell says, “the more you tease the fan base.” He explains that the few bold marketing moves the label will make are intended to be “dopped pebbles that create ripples.”

“Very few artists could pull this off,” says Neil Schleidt, owner of Origami Vinyl in the Echo Park section of Los Angeles, which offered the free ticket prder deal. A vinyl-only store, Origami will carry the LP edition, and Schleidt says he quickly sold out his allotment of 10 bundles after alerting his customer base on the store’s blog and Facebook pages. “I have never heard of anything like this,” he says. “It’s pretty ambitious.”

“Inni,” which was directed by Vincent Morisset, was filmed in November 2008 on the tour that followed Sigur Rós’ Ísland DVD/Blu Ray Endalust, that debuted at No. 15 on the Billboard 200 in June 2008. Sigur Rós has been on hiatus since 2009, when it abruptly halted the recording of what was to be its sixth album. Since then, frontman Jonsi Birgisson has released solo album Go, toured and scored the upcoming Cameron Crowe film “We Bought a Zoo.” Farrell remains mum on details, but suggests there’s more than meets the eye with the release of “inni,” as referring to it “as the palate cleaner, the final document of the years prior to their hiatus.”

The film Íni— and the complementary DVD/CD package Frátt/Haím that has sold 91,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan—“worked really well as a warm-up for Med Island Endalust,” Farrell says. “We have found that when you get [the Sigur Rós fans] engaged you don’t want to lose them. We’re trying to intimate that 2012 is going to be a big year for the band.”

ALSO: Damian McGinty, the winner of Oxygen’s “The Glee Project,” sang Joe Raposo’s “Bein’ Green” and Teddy Thompson’s “Take Care of Yourself” in the season premiere of “Glee.” He hadn’t heard of either tune, but grew to love Frank Sinatra’s version of “Bein’ Green” and found the Thompson tune “great to show off my range,” he said. He plays an exchange student from Ireland, and will appear in at least seven episodes... “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part I” is hitting the road with cast members and music by Christina Perri, whose “A Thousand Years” has been on the film’s soundtrack. They will appear in Atlanta (Nov. 7), Chicago (Nov. 8) and Dallas (Nov. 9)... Actress Rita Wilson is finishing work on her solo debut album, AM/FM, a collection of songs from the 1960s and early 1970s that Decca will release Feb. 7.
Behind The Music, Book Style

Publishers need to move books. Artists have a story to tell. Welcome to ‘the golden age of the music memoir’

These days, it’s not enough to have a platinum-selling album, No. 1 song or a catalog of great- ers past. While artists have been diversifying their portfolio for a long time, having a book deal is now right in step with having your own clothing line or cologne. And publishers are hungry for the business.

“Thinking of it’s, let’s try to focus our energy with authors capable of winning that publicity—that is the cornerstone of selling nonfiction,” says Jeremi Rubin, an editor at GalleyCat, and Schueter who’s worked on Marilyn Manson’s “The Long Hard Road Out of Hell” and “Molotov Cane: The Dirt.” Strauss is expecting another best seller with Ace Frehley’s “No Regrets” when it’s published Nov. 1. “I’ve been chasing limos since 1995.” Strauss is a business model that works. Publishers are constantly on the hunt for their next best seller, and artists are seeing more avenues to sell their life stories and expand their brands. Based on the recent success of big music books—especially Keith Richards’ “Life,” the best-selling rock memoir of all time, moving more than 1 million copies in North America alone, according to publisher Little, Brown—it’s a business arrangement that has music and books cozying up more often.

Other popular recent releases include Steven Tyler’s “Does the Noise in My Head Bother You?,” which spent 14 weeks on the New York Times Hardcover Nonfiction Best Seller list with 400,000 copies in print. Jay-Z’s “Decoded” spent 17 weeks on that New York Times list with 350,000 in print. And Sammy Hagar’s “Red” spent six weeks on the Hardcover Nonfiction Best Seller list, with 150,000 in print. “A lot of interest from publishers came in the wake of the Keith Richards book,” says Carrie Thornton, an executive editor at Dutton, which will publish Jennifer Hudson’s “I Got That” in January. “Everyone saw how great it was, how honest he had been and what a rip of a read it was.”

With shrinking budgets and less money to spend on promotion, publishers are relying more than ever on projects that can deliver an established audience. An artist with a fan base and built-in sales platform—complete with an active social media presence—makes it easier to move books.

“Right now there’s a financial frenzy,” says Ben Schaefer, an executive editor at Da Capo Press, who has books by Tony Iommi and Dave Grohl out in November. “People have seen that these really work. It’s the golden age of the music memoir at this point.”

However, just being famous isn’t enough. Publishers are looking for quality and the right work ethic to bring projects to fruition.

“We’re very selective,” says Jamie Raab, executive VP/publisher at Grand Central Publishing, the house that’s releasing a book of Lady Gaga photographs by Terry Richardson on Nov. 22. “You can only publish so many, and you have to publish those that you feel are first-rate with artists who either have something to show or something to say.”

“The folks I represent love the culture of reading and really are storytellers who either grew up as readers or admiring people who did,” says Marc Raab, a literary agent with the Agency Group whose clients include Eminem, 50 Cent and Billy Corgan. They’re not just looking for big deals. It takes a lot of commitment to do a book.

Then there are the artists who just have a good story to tell. Steve Earle, Josh Ritter and Colin Melyn of the Decemberists published fiction books this year. The latest comes from 50 Cent, whose “Playground,” a book for teens about bullying, hit shelves Nov. 1. Laura Arnold, his editor at Razorbill/Penguin, says the publishing house was “really struck by how passionately he wants to build his reputation now to speak to these issues that he finds so important.” The rapper was hands-on throughout the entire process. “I feel like we’ve gotten our feet wet with 50, and if it’s the right situa tion, we’d definitely love to explore [books] with other artists,” says his day-to-day manager, Violator’s Laura Doblin.

Artists must also promote their titles as much as possible. Schafer says that the first week after a book’s release is as important as it is with an album—oommi will do several bookstore events in and around New York, along with radio and press interviews. Considering her strong online presence, it’s not surprising that Lady Gaga’s book will receive a “huge push online,” says Raab, who expects the book to be a strong seller. 50 Cent’s media plan is expected to include TV and online campaigns as well as in-store appearances.

These deals don’t come cheap, either. While publishers won’t openly disclose numbers, editors say it isn’t unusual for A-listers to score six- or seven-figure deals. Richards’ deal—far and away the most lucrative—was for a reported $7 million. “You know, I’ve never heard of a popular musician being unable to sell his book in the 16 years I’ve been doing this,” Straus says. “It’s not a reluctance on our part.”

2012: Year Of The Music Book

The success of Keith Richards, Steven Tyler and Jay-Z has made publishing music books a hot commodity. Next year will be a banner year in music book publishing. Here are five big ones to watch for. All titles and publishing dates are subject to change.

Pete Townshend, “Who Me?,” HarperCollins, fall. A book reportedly two decades in the making, Townshend was caught by police in 2003 for accessing child pornography online, which he says was part of his research on the book due to sexual abuse in his own past. Sure to be another iconic book in the rock guitarist canon.

Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley with Ken Sharp, “Nothin’ To Lose,” HarperCollins, summer. Simmons’ life has pretty much been an open book due to his popular A&E show, “Family Jewels.” So it’s no wonder he and founding Kiss bandmate Stanley have signed up to do a book, starting with the band’s early years in New York. Kiss fans will likely lick it up.

Nas with Touré, “It Ain’t Hard to Tell,” HarperCollins, fall. Just announced in September, the controversial rapper, who’s known for his feud with Jay-Z, inked a deal with HarperCollins to publish his memoir. Will he have the same magic to move books as he does records?

Jimmy Page by Brad Tolinski, “Light & Shade,” Crown. Fall. Exclusive Page doesn’t talk to the press often, but he has talked to Guitar World editor-in-chief Tolinski. A lot, in fact, during the last 20 years, as Tolinski has interviewed Page more than any other journalist on Earth.” Crown executive editor Charlie Conrad says.

Rod Stewart, “Title TBD,” Archetype/Crown, 2012. In line with other rock brethren, Stew art just signed a deal to release his memoir next year. He promised in a statement that the book will be “a no-holds-barred ‘socks and knickers under the bed’ kind of autobiography.”
When Jeff Young predicts an album will sell well, it usually does. After 25 years in the music business—20 of them in Latin music sales and marketing—Young has developed an instinctive sense for where to place records for maximum impact. Through the years, Young has headed sales, distribution and marketing operations for EMI Latin, Sony Music Latin, Disa Records, Universal Records and, finally, Universal, where he was head of Latin music distribution before starting his own company, Venetian Marketing Group, in 2008. Miami-based Venetian works almost exclusively with independent projects and labels, providing the kinds of services that were once done by major distributors and contributing to the chart-topping success of fresh faces like Jencarlos Canela and Prince Royce. In an interview, Young spoke with Billboard about his way of doing business.

What was your plan when you launched Venetian?
I wanted to work with independent or boutique-type labels—that really had the creative juices flowing but just didn’t know how to make things happen. It was apparent to me that the distribution companies were very good at handling major labels, but they weren’t very good at handling the independent labels, or the distributed labels. So, some of these guys got left out. And, in the last couple of years, the move on the distribution side away from the distributed labels and into their own music was apparent. They just didn’t have the head count to do it. The indies and boutiques had nowhere to go.

What responsibilities do you take on when you work with an indie label?
These labels can be two, three, four, five people and that’s it, so really we are their sales and marketing team. We help them decide pricing, when to come out with something, when and how to go out digitally, how to negotiate distribution agreements and, as important as all of that is, helping them choose the right radio people, the right publicity people is just as important. I can’t tell you how many people I’ve sat down with who have said, “We worked with this or that person and we blew all this money.” A lot of these labels make terrible mistakes. Bringing a good team together—that’s what’s about.

Could Venetian’s business model have been viable five years ago?
Yes, because the majors were actually doing a lot of this at that time. For example, when I was at Sony, I had someone running my distributed label area. So we had someone who was kind of doing what we were doing. And they slowly went away.

Your first client was indie distributor Select-O-Hits. Latin music is now a significant part of its business. I was helping Select-O build their Latin music base and I was bringing in suitable labels. We have an unofficial partnership with Select-O (which distributes most Venetian projects). It changes all the time, but right now we have Top Stop, Bullseye, Planet Records, Mustang and Chosen Few, among others.

Sio7e is a Puerto Rican singer/songwriter who was around for years. Then all of a sudden, he releases an album with distribution by Select-O-Hits, gets picked up by Warner and received a Latin Grammy nod for best new artist. What did you do?
Sio7e is a talented signer/songwriter who comes across with a very strong personal message. He put out a few hundred pieces in Puerto Rico and got a little bit of reaction at radio. We reached out to them and then they came back to us around February or March and said they wanted formal distribution. So I negotiated that with their attorney and they wanted us to guide them on the sales and marketing side.

We set the release of the album, we set the pricing, we got the communication going with radio, got some press going. He hired a press person in Puerto Rico and we co-ordinated all of that to make sure everybody was on the same page.

But you have to have the song. You can have all the support, but you need the song.

LEGAL MATTERS
As the Village People case illustrates, artist copyright termination could be complicated by claims from other recording professionals

The termination right provision in the Copyright Act of 1976 says post-1977 works can be reclaimed by their creators 35 years after first publication or contract signing, regardless of what a contract says. The law promises a second bite of the apple for artists, writers and their heirs who may either take back their works or renegotiate a bigger slice from labels and publishers. But a key question is whether producers, sidemen and possibly engineers—who may also wield termination rights, depending on their creative input in the studio—will complicate the process.

Works-for-hire are exempt from the statute, but many agree artist contracts aren’t enforceable as “for hire” anywhere, as true employment relationships never existed in most cases.

When other recording professionals attempt to exercise a termination right against artists, artists will be forced to argue both sides of the “for hire” issue. That is, to break out of their recording contract, artists will argue that their contributions were not works-for-hire. Yet, to prevent further termination by other contributors, these same artists will turn around and claim that the contributions of their producers and other creators were works-for-hire. Whether artists are friendlier than labels toward recording professionals depends on the situation. Certainly some producers will avoid conflicts that could jeopardize future opportunities. Others will demand the torpedoes and terminate a copyright grant even if it means biting a hand that fed them, particularly when they haven’t worked together in a decade or more.

Without separate contracts, the Copyright Act will treat each contributor as a joint author with equal rights, regardless of whether he or she is a lead vocalist, producer or cowriter. For example, if four featured musicians, four session players, a producer and an engineer contributed to a master under the default copyright rules they are treated equally, with each entitled to 10% of the master’s copyright.

This suggests that artists wishing to terminate must work out the splits with all involved before trying to terminate the label’s participation. Another problem is a requirement that a majority of authors who executed the grant sign the termination notice. A band whose members have scattered into the woods since their heyday in the ’70s, or died leaving heirs who won’t play ball, may scuttle the opportunity. Only solo artists and bands that can pull together a majority will gain back their masters.

A recent case may clarify the statute’s majority requirement. In a case before a California federal court, Scorpio Music S.A. and Can’t Stop Productions, the publisher and production company that created the Village People, have sued original lead singer Victor Willis, seeking a judicial decree that his notice of termination is invalid because he doesn’t constitute a majority of the grantors. Willis contends he can terminate an “adaptation” agreement he signed, which granted the French producer the copyright in Willis’ English lyrics to their music. Willis was the only one who signed that grant and contends he can terminate it by himself, but the producers say he would need to join with the song’s other co-writers—who happen to be the producers themselves.

Willis contends he is the only grantor. He further insists his English lyrics weren’t really a cover translation, because there were never any French lyrics. (The producers are French.) The producers used an adaptation agreement to avoid his joint authorship, he contends.

Bob Besner, an attorney who represents the French producers and publishers, says Willis cannot terminate a grant on a song without the other songwriters joining him. But even if he can, Besner says, it would merely convert him to a joint author with the French producers.

In any event, more co-writers, singers, producers, engineers—even creative executives—will be stepping out of the woodwork to claim termination rights.

William Hochberg is an attorney based in Santa Monica, Calif., specializing in entertainment law.
A Star Is Born
Paula Fernandes capitalizes on a Christmas show guest spot to become Brazil's top-selling artist of 2011

A year ago, singer/songwriter Paula Fernandes was just beginning to gain traction on Brazil's competitive, male-dominated sertanejo music circuit. Today, the 27-year-old Fernandes is Brazil's top-selling artist of 2011. Her live album Ao Vivo and her DVD of the same name have shipped a combined 1.6 million units in Brazil, according to the Association of Brazilian Record Producers. Following its Jan. 26 release, Ao Vivo topped the country's album chart for eight consecutive months.

Fernandes has been playing 25 concerts per month this year in Brazil alone. She's been nominated for a Latin Grammy Award for best new artist and is the only Brazilian artist confirmed to perform during the Nov. 10 Latin Grammy telecast. And to top it all off, she's a featured guest artist on Michael Bolton's duets album, Genii, and has recorded a duet with Taylor Swift that will be included in the Brazilian version of Swift's upcoming CD/DVD, Speak Now World Tour Live.

"Not since the 1990s do I recall an artist selling over one million copies in 10 months," Universal Music Brazil president Jose Antonio Eboli says. "She went from having nothing to having everything in a very short time. Her life changed completely." Fernandes released her first indie album at 17. By 2008, she'd signed with Universal and released her album Pasarela Fuego a year later. It did well—selling more than 80,000 copies by the end of 2010, according to Universal. To build on that success, Eboli had Fernandes record a live CD and DVD, a standard release model in Brazil where DVDs sell nearly as well as CDs. And then, a miracle.

Roberto Carlos, Brazil's biggest music star, invited Fernandes to be one of his guest artists during his annual televised Christmas show, which is taped live in front of some half-million people at Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro. Fernandes and Carlos sang a six-minute medley of some of his romantic hits.

Those minutes onstage with Carlos changed her life. Fernandes turned in a charismatic performance that electrified viewers and prompted the press to begin speculating about a possible romantic relationship between the two artists (there was none), generating even more publicity.

"The great plus is we had that CD/DVD ready to go, so we took advantage of all that free exposure and promotion we had with the Roberto Carlos special and released the album," Eboli says. "The first single "Pra Voar," a duet with Zeca de Camargo, became a No. 1 hit, and sales of the album began to snowball. A second single featuring Victor & Leo also topped Brazil's airplay chart. And as sales of Ao Vivo continued to surge, Fernandes' previous album also got a sales lift, topping 200,000 units to date, according to the label. Not even Eboli expected the avalanche of sales for the live set, particularly because sertanejo music is the domain of men—whether as solo artists or duos—and usually focuses on uptempo numbers. Fernandes sings romantic songs that are harder to take on the outdoor sertanejo circuit, which mainly consists of fairs in rural areas.

"She was at the right time, at the right moment—this beautiful girl was suddenly discovered by many people," says Eboli.

Green Power
Heineken's Latin Grammy events illustrate brand's heightened profile in U.S. Hispanic market

Heineken, a longtime sponsor of Latin music events, has heightened its visibility in the market this year. During the summer, the brand sponsored a five-city concert series titled Ritmo Sonico that featured shows by salsa star Victor Manuelle and reggaeton duo Jowell & Randy. It also sponsored the Spot by Heineken, a three-week concert series curated by Latin music site Remezcla and held in a performance space in the Nolita section of Manhattan.

Most recently, the brand has deepened its partnership with the Latin Grammy Awards by organizing three live music events linked to the awards show.

While Heineken's overall Hispanic marketing budgets have remained stable, "there's more music there than there's been before," Heineken brand activation manager Carolyn Concepcion says, adding that the amount allocated to Latin music has doubled this year. This has been most obvious in Heineken's expanded sponsorship of the Latin Grammys, a property it has backed since its inception in 2000. Although the beer company has been a presenting sponsor of the awards and host of its green carpet, "we're adding more flavor to the event and we're trying to provide more visibility to our association," Concepcion says.

That visibility is most apparent in the live music events it's organizing around the Nov. 10 awards show, which Univision will broadcast live from the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas. Heineken sponsored a series of live shows in south Florida from mid-Octo ber to early November dubbed Noches Latin Magazine, which featured performances by such acts as SiTeK, Gocho and Alexys Fido.

During the week of the Latin Grammys, the brand will take over Mandalay Bay's Eye Candy Lounge and call it the Heineken House of Music, featuring performances by DJs and alternative acts like La Santa Cecilia and Gustavo Galindo. Finally, it will sponsor a Latin Grammy preshow performance by reggaeton star Daddy Yankee, who will perform his new single "Lo Vumba" from a Las Vegas location to be announced later.

Heineken's market research shows that its beer sales rise among Hispanic consumers during the Latin Grammys, particularly in its host city, Las Vegas, for example, when from being Heineken's 18th-largest U.S. city for Hispanic consumer consumption to a top 10 market as a result of its Latin Grammy promotions, Concepcion says, adding, "Even a year after the awards, there is a rise in consumption."

Concepcion says the brand's choice of music for its Latin Grammy-themed live events targets a specific demographic.

"Our research indicates our consumer is between 24 and 35 years old," she says, "a little younger, more bilingual and more frequent.

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ANGEL MARTINEZ TRADES LAW PRACTICE FOR VP POST AT EMI

Angela Martinez has been named VP of Latin business affairs for EMI Latin America. In her new role, Martinez will also be responsible for the day-to-day business affairs at Capitol Latin, EMI's U.S. Latin company. She replaces Oswaldo Rossi, who is now VP of business affairs for EMI Music North America. She will report to EMI Music North America senior VP of business affairs Phil Wild. Prior to her new post, Martinez had her own law practice in Miami, where her clients included Pitbull, whom she represented since he launched his career.

RICKY MARTIN BACK TO BROADWAY AS CHE GUEVARA IN 'EVITA'

Ricky Martin will play Che Guevara in a revival of the Broadway musical "Evita" that will premiere April 5 at the Marquis Theatre in New York. Argentine actress Elena Roger will play the title role, which she has already performed in London, and Tony Award-winning actor Michael Cerveris will play Juan Peron. Tony-winning director Michael Grandage will helm the new production, which marks the first Broadway revival of the Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice musical since its 1979 debut at the Broadway Theatre. For Martin, it will be his first return to a Broadway stage since 1999, when he played the role of Mar ris in "Les Miserables."

MTV TR3S SERVES UP THIRD COURSE OF ‘ROCK DINNER’

MTV Tr3s' "Rock Dinner" has returned for a third season. The show gives fans the opportunity to cook for their favorite acts. Featured artists this season will include Prince Royce, Jencarlos Canela and Tito El Bambino." Each episode features celebrity guests choosing a menu that the fan must then prepare in a span of five hours and on a limited budget. "Rock Dinner" airs Wednesdays at 7 p.m. EST. Scenes from the show can be viewed at TR3S.com. —Justina Aguilas
Analyze This

As exfm expands its platform, it eyes user data as a means to a business model

The Web has given fans a seemingly endless supply of music and music-focused blogs. But what’s the best way to find them?

The answer might just be exfm. Launched in May 2010, ExtensionFM (a.k.a. abbreviated its name due to an extension for the Google Chrome browser) that notified users when music was available to be played on a website, indexing it in a handy player. Listeners could stream the songs, save their favorites and share them with friends through social media.

In June, exfm went mobile by rolling out an iOS app for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. And in October, exfm expanded its offerings by adding support for Firefox and Safari, enhancing its website with new music discovery options and, most significantly, launching an embeddable site player designed for music blogs.

While music blogging is a hobby for some, it’s a business for others. And like any business, site owners need to make decisions based upon what music their audience is responding to. Some music bloggers have started record labels to release music by artists they write about.

At it, too, searches for a sustainable business model, exfm is keeping a close ear to the blogging community in the hopes that it can align itself with its needs. So far, exfm has raised about $1.3 million in funding from investors Spark Capital, Betaworks, Founder Collective and serial entrepreneur Dave Morgan. But exfm doesn’t yet generate revenue; it really needs a larger, engaged user base before it can determine the best path toward monetization.

What are its options? Exfm founder COO Charles Smith says he sees an opportunity in providing analytical tools. The rollout of its site player is the first step in this direction. Site owners can customize the color of their player and seed it with their music. That way, users without the browser extension can still enjoy the benefits of the robust player and discover the exfm platform.

Currently, Streampad and Yahoo WebPlayer are the go-to streaming options for websites. Exfm is aiming to create added value for publishers by linking its site player to their platform and eventually launching an analytics dashboard.

This would give them insight into the activity on their site beyond metrics like page views and time spent on the site to include most-listened-to music and most “loved” songs, Smith says.

“We want to drive really good analytics to bloggers,” he says, “so they can start thinking about who their real audience is and complete that feedback loop.”

User data itself also provides an opportunity as “a powerful, three-way tool for exfm,” Smith says. Bloggers could incorporate what they learn about user habits to enhance their offerings, labels could track new bands or determine where to tour, and users themselves would benefit from a better experience that could potentially connect them to more users, blogs and other songs they might like, he says.

“Packaging that data in creative ways for all three constituencies gives us the opportunity to monetize the data as well,” he says.

The crux of exfm’s model is to service a community that already exists and be its connective tissue. The platform has grown to accommodate more than 60,000 users—and with websites exposing their readers to its site player that number will likely increase.

Where sites like the Pirate Bay and Coda.fm let fans search for and download songs that artists didn’t intend to make available for free, exfm empowers its users to find the music they do want accessed for free. There are countless such examples—from last night’s DJ set or a studio demo—that people have blogged about or put on their Tumble that they didn’t make the effort to release commercially.

Music blogs—and their readers and listeners—need a way to tame this vast array of online music. Somewhere in this nexus of curators and music fans lurks a business for the likes of exfm.

“The more you have,” Smith says, “the better job you have to do at chipping it up.”

In addition to its mobile and Web platforms, exfm also offers a music blog for the iPhone. In February, exfm also debuted CIRCULAR SOUND, an extension for Firefox, and in March, exfm announced plans to enable Exfm’s model with a site player that can be embedded on any website.

For a complete list of artists and songs available through exfm, visit www.exfm.com.

CIRCULAR SOUND

The emerging ecosystem of audio accessories for Android smartphones is tiny compared with what's available for the iPhone. One of the latest Android entries: the Philips Fidelio AS11i docking speaker, which enables Bluetooth wireless music streaming from a handset.

Users can also download the free Philips Fidelio app for a selection of customized music alarms and up-to-date weather reports. The AS11i provides auto-synchronization between a handset and the docking speaker’s clock. It’s compatible with Android versions 2.1 or above and Bluetooth 2.1 or above.

The Philips Fidelio AS11i is available for $90.
The Christian label chief talks about revenue diversification and courting the mainstream market

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

Rod Riley

At a time when most record labels are struggling to stay in business, Word Records is celebrating its 60th anniversary and launching new initiatives to ensure the company’s continued success. Founded in Waco, Texas, in 1951 by Baylor University student Jarrell McCracken, the label has been home to such Christian music notables as Sandi Patty, Russ Taff, George Beverly Shea, Petra, Shirley Caesar, the Imperials, the Nelons, Cindy Morgan, Jaci Velasquez and Amy Grant, who spent 30 years on the label.

A Warner/Curb company, Word Entertainment is now the Christian music division of Warner Music Group. (Curb Records founder Mike Curb also owns a stake in the company and serves as chairman.) The Nashville-based company includes two labels—Fervent and Word Records—as well as Word Distribution; Word Music, the print division that handles choral music and worship resources; Word Music Publishing, the songwriting and publishing division; and 25 Entertainment, the booking and live events arm.

The current roster includes Point of Grace, Group I Crew, Sidewalk Prophets, Chris August, For King & Country, BarlowGirl, Dara Maclean and Francesca Battistelli. Word artists were big winners at this year’s Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards, with Battistelli honored as artist and female vocalist of the year, while August won male vocalist and new artist of the year.

Billboard recently caught up with Word Entertainment president/CEO Rod Riley. He joined Word as senior VP of marketing in 2005, was promoted to COO in 2008 and succeeded Mark Bright as head of the company in 2010.

As you steer Word into its next decade, what’s your business philosophy?

Our overall model is not just a record label anymore. We’ve been able to go to artists and partner with them on all the areas that they need solutions. We now have a booking agency in-house. We’ve got merchandise, sponsorships, direct-to-fan, all of these things that six years ago we weren’t really talking about. With our new artists we’ve been talking about the whole 360 approach. How do we build a career? It’s not just based on record sales. It’s really based on how they’re connected with fans.

The 360 deal often gets a bad rap. What makes Word’s approach appealing to artists?

We’ve built active solutions into this company. We’ve built a merch company within Word. We bought the Breen Agency (for booking in 2009), brought that in-house and renamed it 25 Entertainment. Not all of our artists on our label are on 25 Entertainment, nor are all the artists on 25 Entertainment just Word artists. Over six years, we’ve built the roster around Group One Crew, Francesca, Sidewalk Prophets, Chris August and Meredith Andrews. We said, “Here’s your merchandise department, your e-commerce department, your sponsorship department.” We’re not just coming in and taking away revenue streams while they’re doing it on their own. We’re coming in and trying to build the infrastructure to maximize the revenue streams with them. That has helped us in breaking new artists because we’re thinking about the artist’s whole career.

We built the business structure at the same time we’ve been rebuilding the roster and we feel like we’re locking arms—we’re in this thing together.

Word has been successful at breaking new artists like Battistelli, August, Andrews and Sidewalk Prophets. What tools have worked?

If there was a formula, we would all follow it. Every one of those artists have had a different approach. The overriding goal has been, “Let’s focus on a few, but do a lot.” We’ve put every one of them out on the Winter Jam tour. They’ve been a good partner, letting our new artists go out on a very large platform. Radio has also been a key component for each of those artists.

25 Entertainment got into the conference business this year by taking over Point of Grace’s Girls of Grace events. What plans do you have for the live division?

We have done eight Girls of Grace conferences this year and we’ll do 10 next year—one-day conferences for 12- to 17-year-old girls and their mothers. We are also doing the Message Live at Fontanel, a Sunday evening concert featuring Christian artists. [Formerly country entertainer Barbara Mandrell’s] home, Fontanel is now a tourist destination with an outdoor amphitheater, mansion tours, hiking trails, restaurant and theater. We hope it will become something like the Grand Ole Opry, a place where artists can have that down-home interaction with fans. And we are looking at other specialized live events that are faith-based.

What is the biggest challenge right now in the Christian music industry?

The greatest challenge as an industry is not losing our joy and our passion. That is a challenge for the employees, artists, songwriters, for everybody who feels like, “Oh, this is only getting smaller.” The record business is getting different, but Word is not in the record business. We’re in the music business.

I am energized and excited to see the impact that our music has. I believe it’s being consumed at an all-time high. There’s more ability to interact with Christian music than ever before, not like 15 years ago when we could never get anybody on MTV. The Internet is an equalizer. We can get as many eyeballs to see our video as to interact with a song online as anybody else.

Belief in the power of music drives us all, every day, to challenge our business model to continue to transform our ability to share the hope in our music with the world.

We partner with our artists correctly and allow them to write the music that’s in their heart, not every song they write is only going to get played on Christian music stations, so we need to have the mechanisms in place. We’ve already got the mind-set that our songs can cross over.

As you look back at the career of Jarrell McCracken, how has he shaped the modern-day Christian industry?

Jarrell was this visionary and really the first person to put on a passport and say, “I’m going to take this music to the world.” You put it all in perspective, you hear words like, “I want to be the first person to take the gospel message to the rest of the world.” That’s just a beautiful thing, isn’t it? You put it all in perspective, you hear words like, “I want to be the first person to take the gospel message to the rest of the world.” That’s just a beautiful thing, isn’t it?
AND THAT’S JUST ON YOUTUBE. HE’S GOT 1.4 MILLION FACEBOOK FANS—AND 1 MILLION-PLUS AT TWITTER. HE RECEIVES NO RADIO PLAY, YET HE’S SELLING OUT ALL-AGES CLUBS IN NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE. GIRLS LINE UP TO SEE HIM RAP. THEY SHRIEK. EVEN SOB. HE’S SOLD ALMOST 1 MILLION SINGLES. HE’S ROSTRUM RECORDS’ MAC MILLER. YOU SHOULD PROBABLY KNOW WHO HE IS.

BY DEVON MALONEY  PHOTOGRAFHS BY MATT HOYLE
A tone in the afternoon, kids were already lining up around the block in Denver’s trendy Capitol Hill neighborhood. Nine-and-a-half hours later, Mac Miller is about to take the stage at the AEG Live-operated Ogden Theatre.

The official Denver landmark has a capacity of 1,700, and for 20 minutes, the sellout crowd, most in Miller T-shirts—one of them says OY VEY HOLY COW OH MY GOD WOW—has been creating various chants, each demanding the rapper’s presence. The stage is dressed to resemble Pittsburgh’s Blue Slide Park—complete with park bench, lamp posts and a DJ station disguised as an ice cream cart—since the name of the recreation area also doubles as the title for Miller’s upcoming album.

Miller and his Most Dope crew are standing in a huddle off-stage, arms around each other’s shoulders. Miller leads a prayer that thanks God and asks that they “perform to the best of our abilities tonight.”

The PA system blares to life. DJ Clockwork, who enters first, begins spinning Miller’s song “Donald Trump.” But shrieks drown out the tune’s intro as teenagers in the front row whip out iPhones, ready to record the entire 90-minute set. Miller recites a few sporadic lines with the recording before exploding onto the stage with all the energy of his 19 years—crew at his heels.

The audience loses its collective mind.

Miller then conducts an orchestra: not onstage, but off. Trailing through mixtape hits like 2010’s “Nikes on My Feet” and 2011’s “Knock Knock,” he keeps the crowd’s arms up and bouncing to Clockwork’s rhythms as he zigzags the stage, pausing to collapse dramatically, out of breath. He jokes with the crowd, then thanks them for being the only reason for his success. He signs four Blue Slide Park caps and hands them into the audience.

Just when all that energy plateaus, Clockwork pulls the plug on the music. Many in the crowd take the opportunity to check the phone photos they’ve snapped. Miller turns his back to them and picks up a white- and gold-plated Gretsch guitar. With as much ease as he runs back and forth across the stage rapping, he launches into the intro to Lynyrd Skynyrd’s “Sweet Home Alabama,” then transitions quickly into a rendition of Weezer’s “Say It Ain’t So.” It’s difficult to discern whether the fans are more excited to experience “Frick Park Market” (Miller’s latest single, which already has 10 million-plus YouTube views) or his next cover, Oasis’ “Wonderwall.”

“I want to be, like, Beatles big, when it’s all said and done,” Miller said earlier that day. “I want to change what’s on the radio. Who the hell is this kid?”

Born Malcolm McCormick in Pittsburgh’s Point Breeze neighborhood in 1992, Miller and his older brother were raised in a Jewish household by a photographer mother. He attended Catholic grade school—to ensure, he says, a good education and the chance to play football and Lacrosse—even if that meant, as he marvels now, being forced by teachers to show his classmates how to have a Passover seder.

“I was never really a school-oriented person,” says Miller, who later attended Taylor Allderdice High School, the alma mater of labelmate Wiz Khalifa. Instead, he and his friends, many of whom were older and attended different high schools, listened to a lot of old-school hip-hop. Acts like the Sugar Hill Gang, A Tribe Called Quest and the Beastie Boys all inspired the model for much of Miller’s material today. He pays homage with songs like Blue Slide Park single “Party on 5th Ave,” which samples DJ Kool’s “Let Me Clear My Throat.”
Meanwhile, in 2003, when Miller was 11, another Allderdice High alumnus and former executive assistant (from 2000 to 2003) to Antonio "L.A." Reid, Denij Grinberg, was getting his new label, Rostrum Records, off the ground in Pittsburgh. He was a one-man operation until 2005, when he hired fellow Pittsburgh native and Allderdice alumnus Arthur Pitt as director of public relations. Today, Pitt is VP of the label.

Five years later, Miller played his first show, at a Pittsburgh bar called Moondog's, at age 16. Because they were so young, "my homies couldn't even get in to see me," he says with a laugh. "The shows we used to do, you basically perform for other rappers and their friends ... I think I've performed for two people before. Like, literally, two people."

But among Miller's listeners back then were Grinberg and Pitt. Miller befriended them and he hustled relentlessly, with people like Pittsburgh producers E. Dan and Big Jerrn, who were working with Khalifa. In 2009, a year after his first show, the buzz that Miller and then-manager Quentin "Q" Cuff (who freelance for local hip-hop magazine Jenesis and knew how to connect the right dots) had been building in the Pittsburgh area sparked Grinberg and Pitt's serious attention. Combine those DIY efforts with a handful of pending courtships from other labels, not to mention Miller's imminent plans to drop his breakout set, K.I.D.S., and Pitt says, the rapper forced Grinberg and Pitt's hands.

"People started talking about him [early last year], which caught our attention," he recalls. "K.I.D.S. was [Miller's] best work so far, and he really wanted to work with us."

Miller still has pretty much zero radio rotation. He's occasionally heard on local mixshows, on stations like WUSB (Power 99 Philadelphia and WQRT [Hot 97] and WWPR [Power 105]) New York, and played by SiriusXM DJs like Staric Selectah, DJ Green Lantern and Tony Touch. He's released the EP On and On and Beyond, which has sold 54,000 copies since its March 29 release, according to Nielsen SoundScan. There have been singles with impressive sales—among them "Donald Trump" (404,000), "Knock Knock" ($16,000) and "Frick Park Market" (150,000)—on the label in the past year, as well as free mixtapes like his Best Day Ever (released in the spring) and K.I.D.S., which promptly came out after his signing to Rostrum last summer.

For Blue Slide Park, out Nov. 8, there isn't a major co-distribution deal in place, as Rostrum has done in the past, most notably in 2005 for Khalifa, who signed deals with Warner Bros. and Atlantic Records in 2007 and 2009, respectively. But Miller boasts a whopping 176 million views on his YouTube channel, where polished, energetic videos for tracks like "Donald Trump" draw attention even from the Donald himself, who recorded a 40-second video response of his own, calling Miller "the next Eminem."

Social media is a solid force for Miller. A million-plus Twitter followers and 1.4 million Facebook fans read his personal updates. His social media activity notched him a brief spot on Billboard's Uncharted chart—which assesses online activity for artists who have never risen on a major Billboard chart—before he boomed into a debut at No. 36 on the Rap Digital Songs ranking for "Knock Knock," where he remained for 18 weeks. For the past year, Miller has played to consistently sold-out venues of increasing size—from a 300-capacity show at the Catalyst in Santa Cruz, Calif., in January to a forthcoming 3,000-capacity gig at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., in December—all over the United States and Europe. MTV live-streamed his performance at the Chicago House of Blues on Oct. 12. According to MTV, it was one of the network's top webcasts.

As Billboard previously reported, the rollout for Blue Slide Park reflects the online engagement that has made Miller (alongside kindred artists like Big K.R.I.T. and Tyler, the Creator) a force to be reckoned with: Based on the number of preorders the record gets, fans have been able to unlock a handful of increasingly valuable rewards. At 25,000, Miller dropped the title track early (on Oct. 13); at 50,000, Rostrum will make a $50,000 donation to the Make-A-Wish Foundation; and at 100,000, the record will drop ahead of schedule. The preorder figure currently stands at 33,000. The record will be released through digital retailers—primarily iTunes, for which Blue Slide Park's fan brokered release model is a first—in partnership with independent distributors Fontana (physical sales) and Ngrooves (digital distribution, including the early release if fans meet the 100,000 target ahead of schedule).

Grinberg stresses that the emphasis is on "independent." Though Rostrum itself has brokered deals with majors, with Miller, it wants to go the distance solo.

Which isn't to say the majors haven't tried. Though the label declined to name specific offers, both Pitt and Grinberg say they've all come knocking. "We've learned a lot about the ins and outs of the majors and how different things operate [through working with Khalifa]" Grinberg says. "We try to apply those lessons to everything we do ... I'm not on some sort of revolutionary [anti-major] kick. I just know there are better ways of doing things."

In June, rumors erupted when Atlantic Records VP of rap promotions Sam Crespo accidentally sent an email blast from his Atlantic account (instead of his personal address) to DJs, bloggers and journalists touting one of Miller's biggest hits, "Donald Trump." Though Crespo told XXL magazine that he plugged the rapper "because many of [them] were asking [me] for it and also to turn [them] on to good and innovative hip-hop," the move, combined with Grinberg's...
past with Res! and Khalifa’s Rostrum/Atlantic dual deal, seemed evidence to the Twitterverse and the blogosphere that Rostrum must have made a deal with the major.

“If people aren’t talking, as cliché as it sounds, you’re in trouble,” Pitt says. “People challenge us and say, ‘There’s no way you’re doing this on your own.’ They think the only way this happens is if you have a [major-label] deal. . . If you really do your research on what we’ve done over the past three or four years, you’ll figure it out that we really are doing this on our own. Rostrum gives a lot of power to its artists and Mac wants to see how far he can take it.”

Meanwhile, the 68-date Blue Slide Park tour, which kicked off Sept. 22, has sold out 24 of its 25 1,900-capacity-averages Mills. Last month, a three-leg international stint, experienced similar sales, though the venues averaged capacities of 600, then 800, and then 900 on each leg. Blue Slide Park’s kickoff show, at New York’s Irving Plaza, sold out in three hours. Thirty of the remaining 45 dates have sold out in advance. By Agency Group booking agent Peter Schwartz’s calculations, Miller is on track to sell out all but two of the tour dates—if Schwartz’s estimates are correct, he’ll have sold 99% of the tour’s tickets (an increase from the last tour, which averaged about 96% across its three legs). Running at about $22 apiece, that’s more than 110,000 sold. Most ticket holders, as was clear in Denver last month, are in their teens or early 20s.

“Knowing your demo is a key ingredient in successfully booking someone,” says Schwartz, who books acts like Khalifa, Big K.R.I.T. and B.o.B. “We know Miller’s demo is under 21, so we don’t put him in 21-plus-type venues where his fans can’t go. This whole young crowd is really coming out in force to see shows lately. It’s exciting. It is something. Fourteen-year-old girls wait in line to scream—some even sob—as Miller hops between the Ogden and his tour bus parked across the street that afternoon. Miller Must Dope T-shirts and hats fly off the tables at shows. There are few acts who can boast the fervor of Justin Bieber’s “Believers”—and Miller fans, who have yet to hear a fully produced album, are definitely in the running.

“We’re building a story because they’re all sold out,” Schwartz says. “If we were doing 70% sales, it wouldn’t be as big a story . . . [22] is a great price point for these young fans. We could probably make tickets $35 and they might still sell, but maybe not. It’s been important to stay focused on the plan and know that the next-size venue will come, and not rush it.” Schwartz says plans call for bumping up the average venue size to a 5,000 capacity for Miller’s spring tour.

To offset the $200,000 out-of-pocket cost (according to Miller’s of his two buses, the team recently negotiated a $75,000 branding deal with Mountain Dew. It includes a Mountain Dew Green Sound-released single by Miller and a stage setup with the crew’s performance water bottle in Mountain Dew containers and a bright-green logo-emblazoned four-speed bicycle.

“When we look for artists to partner with, we look for people who embody the do-it-yourself ethos in their work. Mac is a perfect fit,” says Hudson Sullivan, brand manager for Mountain Dew at PepsiCo. “Mac is known for his tight connection to his fans, which is something that is also really important to Mountain Dew. As we see it, working with an independent artist like Mac is a win for everyone—the artists get support for their work that they might not find from a traditional label. Fans get to experience great shows and original tracks, and Mountain Dew gets to be a part of it.”

It all fits in well with the way things have been going for Miller. “Fans are smart these days,” Grinberg says. “They know exactly what’s going on, and they can tell when they’re being marketed. Authenticity is what the fans are grasping onto. They can tell [Mac] is genuine, that’s he’s just being himself.”

“People try to categorize me,” Miller says. “I love the fact that I’m in some of my favorite magazines . . . But, in all reality, your opinion doesn’t mean anything more than anybody else’s.”

“It’s important that new artists don’t worry about critics because we could be on the road together for the next 10 years off of these three CDs,” Guff says, adding, “I don’t see this slowing down. These kids are invincible . . . and when you have that kind of relatability with your fans, who gives a fuck what anyone else thinks?”

Miller eschews labels like “frat rapper” that have been circulated online. And he dismisses criticisms that his music is bubble-gum pop. “I’ll never pretend I have an inspiring story like cer- tain people do,” he says. “The inspiring stories, people like Kerickl Moore or Big K.R.I.T. who have deep messages about things that . . . I can’t say. It’s not my place to say . . . I just make music that’s hip-hop. I’m not here to be a teenybopper sensation. I make music because I love making music. So whoever wants to love it, that’s the way I want as fans.”

The boisterous teenagers outside the bus weren’t, after all, a one-time thing. Their presence, the undeniable members of Miller’s team say, is par for the course. They also happen to be the reason the course exits in the first place.

“Kids—they’re too much more excited and willing to spend their money,” Miller says. “A 25-year-old dude is not going to be sitting at his computer, waiting for Mac Miller tickets to go on sale. These kids are lining up at 10 a.m. for a 9 p.m. show.”

Miller doesn’t have a personal inoculation in the bands of those teenagers— they want his blend of practicality and swagger. “It’s really up to my fans, which is why I love them, no matter who they are,” he says, adding, “I’ll be: Benjy I’d sell a hundred thou my first week. If we do, he’ll have to shave his famous beard.”

And if he doesn’t? “Oh, I don’t have to do anything. He can’t get mad at me if I don’t sell that many.”
The relationship between music and games is entering its next stage. Billboard teams with Kill Screen for chats with players behind the screens. Prepare for the most interesting opportunities in the next generation of gaming.
WAY BEYOND THE PLASTIC GUITAR

“DANCE CENTRAL,” “HAUNT,” “PAPA SANGRE” AND MORE—HOW NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN DESIGN AND INTERACTIVITY ARE BRINGING THE MUSIC AND GAMING INDUSTRIES INTO AN EVEN TIGHTER EMBRACE

BY JON IRWIN

Matt Boch has been a builder his entire life. When he was 5, he built programs on his parents’ Apple II C in BASIC. In junior high, he created Web pages for friends and businesses. As a senior art student at Harvard working on his thesis—an interactive display made from old arcade cabinets using capacitive touch screens—a friend at game developer Harmonix (@Harmonix), based in Cambridge, Mass., offered him a job as production assistant for a new game called “Rock Band.”

It was early 2007, and Boch’s job was to ensure each testing station had enough playable instruments. But they kept breaking, so he taught himself how to fix them. A year later, his soldering skills and an eye for design led to a job as hardware designer for “Rock Band 2” (2008) and later “Rock Band 3” (2010). To date, the “Rock Band” franchise has sold more than 13 million units, according to Viacom, the former parent company of Harmonix.

“The coolest thing that ‘Rock Band’ was able to do for musicians and for non-musicians,” says Boch (@mattboch), “was to break apart the elements of a rock song and allow people to understand those different parts.”

He should know. In addition to his work on “Rock Band,” Boch sings and plays guitar, keyboard and trumpet for an actual rock band, the Main Drag, whose single “A Jagged Gorgeous Winter” was featured in “Rock Band 2.” In March 2010, Harmonix launched the Rock Band Network, an online service allowing musicians to create and sell their own song charts for in-game play. The service simultaneously helped deliver a steady flow of new content to “Rock Band” while providing emerging acts, like the Main Drag, a platform to advertise their music.

Enthused by players’ response to “A Jagged Gorgeous Winter,” Boch and the Main Drag decided to put nearly the band’s entire catalog on RBN. Earnings from the service paid for printing copies of the band’s debut album, You Are Underwater, a radio campaign, and tour expenses. Harmonix doesn’t comment on sales from the RBN catalog, but reports estimate totals in the tens of millions of dollars. If nothing else, Boch sees the “Rock Band” franchise as a promotional tool, and a way to deepen the conversation between musicians and fans.

“We get the types of comments that you never get as a band,” he says. “Before ‘Rock Band’ no one would ever really tweet at you or send you a message about a particular guitar part, or the difficulty of a particular drum part or a vocal line. All that stuff became part and parcel of the experience.”

Music and videogames used to be discrete mediums, separated by their physical forms: records and floppy disks, CDs and cartridges. As each industry continues to digitize its content and delivery, and as creative innovators find ways to integrate their passions, game makers and musicians are becoming more tightly intertwined than ever before.

These days, many game designers use music as more than just a simple soundtrack, and bands are choosing interactive experiences to both sell and enrich their artistic vision.

Some say the very experience of interactive music began in 1996, when a games industry obsessed with power and speed was infiltrated by a rapping cartoon dog. The creation of Masaya Matsuura (@matsuru) for PlayStation mixed a Simon Says-like call-and-response mechanic into a quirky universe of flat anthropomorphic animals. Publisher Sony was skeptical, but Matsuura’s rapping dog with the motto “I gotta believe” was a legion of believers with its subversive charm.

The game sold more than 1 million copies in Japan alone, according to Media Create, and is often considered the forerunner of modern rhythm games. But Matsuura thinks the industry has barely scratched the surface of what sound can offer gaming titles. “While the field of graphics has seen drastic evolution in the past 20 years, interactive audio is still in its infancy,” he told Billboard in an email.

Boch and the team at Harmonix realized this. In a post-Wii market, companies were toying with all sorts of new motion interfaces. While starting work on instrument designs for “Rock Band 3,” Boch became convinced that the necessary technology was close at hand for a new kind of dance game. Ideas ranged from a simple stepping game to something closer to a dance instructor tool. The team worked with a small studio in Boston, Fire Hose Games, on concepts and initial coding, and early prototypes used body-mounted motion trackers, strapped to the wrists and ankles of players, to gauge player performance. As the project advanced, one core mechanic became clear: a commitment to real choreography.

“I basically drew a line in the sand and said, ‘If this interface is going to be great, and we’re going to make a dance game that’s really transformative, you have to be able to dance to ‘Crank That’ by Souja Boy,’” Boch says.

In early 2009, the team built a demo game featuring “Crank That.” The demo was a hit in the office, and in March of that year, Harmonix met with Microsoft at the annual Game Developer’s Conference in San Francisco. In the meeting, months before the E3 launch, the company giant revealed a motion-sensing camera technology—dubbed “Project Natal”—to be used as a new type of gaming input.

The Harmonix team was convinced this was the exact technology needed to make its dance project viable. Microsoft responded positively to the prototype, and the united Harmonix舞蹈 game was greenlit for preproduction. Boch moved into software design. One year later, the camera peripheral for Xbox 360, rechristened Kinect, was released. Kinect sold more than 8 million units in its first two months on shelves, according to Microsoft, and Harmonix’s “Dance Central” was the standout hit, a critical and commercial success that has sold more than 1.5 million units, according to industry sources.

Since the release of Kinect, other designers have begun experimenting with the technology as well as other novel controls to enhance the way their games use sound. Matsuura’s upcoming title, “Haunt,” coming to Xbox Live Arcade this holiday season, combines smart sound design and Kinect’s immersive camera to create a first-person haunted house experience. “To achieve something that nobody else has is my raison d’être,” says Matsuura, who is president of NanaOn-Sha, the developer behind “Haunt.” “Everyone wants to ‘do well’ so hard that they end up being conservative, which is really a death knell for innovation.”

Having an established business outside of games allows some developers to take those necessary risks. London-based production company Somethin’Else has created advertising and radio content in the United Kingdom for 20 years. Last December, consumers worldwide were able to “see” the company’s newest creation for themselves. Or, rather, experience it—players of its hit iOS game “Papa Sangre” haven’t seen anything at all. And that’s exactly the point.

“Papa Sangre” asks players to navigate five mystical palaces entirely through sound cues. The screen is blank, save for direction buttons, and the game world is generated by what Somethin’Else chief creative officer Paul Bennun calls “audio pixels”—3-D binaural sound recorded in-house and used in the place of graphics. The player’s headphones become the display, their imagination the CPU. Tap the phone’s screen to move away from that hideous shuffling noise, but be careful: “The monsters are listening.”

Bennun knew the Somethin’Else team was onto something after testing an unfinished build. “I remember seeing this woman pick the game up, put the headphones on, look at me really uncomfortably, then start playing the game,” he says. “Gradually I saw her tune out the room. Her eyes went into the middle distance. And that’s when I knew she was gone. She was in the system. When I saw that happening, I remember my heart beating really fast and thinking, ‘Oh, my God. I think we’re onto something here.’”

With the success of “Dance Central,” Harmonix is certainly onto something, too. In the same way “Guitar Hero” and “Rock Band” sparked a sea change in how people bought and played music games, going to be transforming how they do the dance craze. Majesco’s “Zumba Fitness” has sold more than 3 million copies worldwide, according to Majesco, and Ubisoft released its “Just Dance 2” surpassed 5 million units, with the sequel just arriving in stores in October.
Today, Boch serves as designer/project director for the “Dance Central” franchise, and he has high hopes for the just released “Dance Central 2.” With “Rock Band” rumored to be undergoing a creative overhaul, and unannounced intellectual properties in the wings, Boch and Harmonix are just getting started.

Other artists also continue to shrink the space between interactive games and music creation. Brian Enn’s generative soundtrack for Electronic Arts’ blockbuster game “Spore” (2008), which sold more than 2 million units in its first three months of release, according to EA, employed the player’s input for its otherworldly tone. Capybara’s indie hit “Super Brothers: Sword & Sworcery EP” debuted in March at No. 2 on the iPad sales charts, an impressive feat for an unknown game styled after ‘80s PC point-and-click adventures. Singer/songwriter Jim Guthrie composed the in-game music, and has since held concerts specifically for the soundtrack. Boch thinks this relationship is an untapped source of potential. “We’ve seen a handful of collaborations between Hollywood greats and game design studios,” he says. “And I think we can get as much from collaborations between the great music producers and games.”

It helps when game designers are musicians themselves. Japanese-based Tetsuya Mizuguchi (@Mizuguchiti) is Q Entertainment chief executive officer and creator of “Rez,” the cult 2001 hit for PlayStation 2. He’s also co-founder of the band Genki Rockets. “I wanted to make a new expression in entertainment,” Mizuguchi says. “Using audio and video—but to make it interactive.”

His latest release, “Child of Eden” for Xbox 360 (he’s the director), is the closest realization of that goal. Using Kinect, players maneuver their hands and arms in front of a TV, directing energy blasts into a spiraling alternate reality full of objects that react, aurally and visually, to their movements. The game is part shooter, part musical kaleidoscope. Kinect’s body control seems perfectly suited to Mizuguchi’s ideal project: pure sound synthesis. But the game-maker isn’t done yet. And with the hurdles of physical media dissolving, Mizuguchi’s future work has a wider field of possibility. “I prefer no limits,” he says. “I need more freedom. What’s beyond 512? Three-D interactive sound? I don’t know, but I want whatever’s coming.”

Trailblazing artists are experimenting with how best to bring their work to life. Björk’s Biophilia (Warner Bros.) is both album and app, a series of songs including interactive elements created in part by development studio Touch Press. Incubus released its new album, If Not Now, When? (Epix), alongside an online retro game called “Incubation”—a tongue-in-cheek brailer (made by Kill Screen) wherein band members beat up album-hunting pirates. More joint efforts are on the way. And with indie game development on the rise and digital distribution allowing any musician global reach, Boch sees prime opportunity. “Let’s get those two groups together and build something really awesome, that inspires fans of that band to go out and grab a game and inspires people into the game to go and find out more about the band.”

Kill Screen is a videogame media company dedicated to bringing culture to games and games to culture. In addition to publishing a website and magazine of the same name, Kill Screen produces such games as “Incubation” for Sony Music.

**LICENSED TO ILL**

**CHRIS RIGOPULOS—HARMONIX VP OF STRATEGY AND BUSINESS—ON MUSIC PARTNERS, TRUST AND ALL-IMPORTANT AUTHENTICITY**

Cambridge, Mass.-based Harmonix helped create the music game boom, first popularizing the genre with the first two “Guitar Hero” games in 2005 and 2006, and then perfecting it with “Rock Band,” a series that has sold more than 13 million units worldwide and has had 100 million in-game song downloads since launching in 2007, according to Harmonix. The company also beat Steve Jobs to the punch, coming to terms with the Beatles for an exclusive version of “Rock Band” more than a year before Apple brought the Fab Four to iTunes. (Released in 2009, “The Beatles: Rock Band” failed to meet sales expectations.) Harmonix’s newest title, “Dance Central 2” (released Oct. 29), is a follow-up to last year’s Kinect-powered dance title for Xbox 360. The first installment of the “Dance Central” series sold more than 2.5 million copies worldwide, according to Microsoft, and Harmonix is hoping to rekindle the old magic while showcasing dance tunes like Lady Gaga’s “Born This Way” and Willow Smith’s “Whip My Hair” in the sequel. Harmonix VP of strategy and business development Chris Rigopoulos discusses the company’s approach to music licensing and the benefits of licensing music to a good videogame.

What’s the biggest upside for a record company interested in licensing its music to a game like “Dance Central 2”?

All our music partners recognize that videogames are a growth area for them, which is particularly important, given some of the challenges with other areas of their business. “Rock Band” and “Dance Central” are promotional opportunities for artists. We’re putting their music and name in front of millions of people. The deal terms and money are important to everybody, but it’s really not as important as you’d think. With that ability comes a lot of responsibility. It makes it all the more important to make sure we’re representing them in a way that both the company, the artist and (Harmonix) feel good about. A common theme in everything we do—from “Rock Band” to “Dance Central”—is to really focus on authenticity. We don’t do stuff that’s super cartoonish. That’s something that allowed us to get our foot in the door with “The Beatles: Rock Band.” They trusted that the product that came out of the whole process would be something they could be proud of.

“Rock Band” helped revive record sales for a handful of artists featured in the game. Were you able to use that success story in securing licensing for songs used in “Dance Central 2”?

We were, but I’d draw one key distinction. The content of the catalog of “Rock Band” had a lot of stuff that was a little older. It came from the roots of rock’n’roll, and we were able to help revive some interest in it. With “Dance Central,” I would say our music is a lot more current. We have a lot more top 100 artists who are still incredibly relevant today and still selling music. We’ve had a few instances where we’ve put out a track that might be a decade old and created a resurgent interest in that song. In today’s environment that could mean downloading the song or adding it to your playlist on Spotify.

How do you approach record companies lobbying for an artist to be in the game that you don’t think is a good fit?

Really, it’s just an honest conversation. They know and respect that we’re closest to the creative vision of the game, and I think our partners understand that we’re not going to take everything they pitch us. There’s always some turning down. That happens with all our partners. They do their best to surface ideas they think might fit, and we do our best to figure out which ones will work best. It’s a part of the collaborative process.

At what point during a game’s development do you start thinking about music licensing?

The music licensing and the conceptual beginning of the game go hand in hand. With “Dance Central” we asked ourselves what kind of vibe we wanted. How many different styles and eras did we want to cover? When we’ve decided all that, we engage with our music partners. If we’re doing stuff that’s current, we talk about what’s coming next year, who’s laying low right now, who’s coming out with an album—all that information helps us put together a package that we think makes sense and then we come back to the design team and tell them: Here’s what’s going on in the music world. It starts with a conversation and a vision that we try and get our partners to buy into, and then over time a collection of tracks will start to come together.

—Michael Thomsen

**FLASHBACK**

A refresher timeline of music and gaming during the last 30 years. For those moments when you need to act like you know.

—Drew Millard

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**1983**

DIDDY ROCK VS. SNOOP DOGG

**1984**

JIMMY JAM & TERRY LEWIS VS. CMJN/DJ JAZZY JEFF & THE HIZZORD

**1985**

ALLY MCBEAL VS. MC IN THE RED VS. A$AP ROCKY

**1986**

FROM JERK TO CRUNK: THE RISE OF 2PAC

**1987**

THE GIGABYTE CRUSH VS. THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.

**1988**

TUPAC VS. DR DRE

**1989**

MATCH UP: KANYE WEST VS. M.I.A.

**1990**

THE FRESH PRINCE VS. NIPSAH

**1991**

NASTY B.CO. VS. THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.

**1992**

JAY-Z VS. NAS

**1993**

JILL SCOTT VS. HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS

**1994**

THE SEΛVAGE SEΛF VS. THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.

**1995**

2PAC VS. KANYE WEST

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**OCTOBER 1995**

THE SECOND “SUPER MARIO 64” IS RELEASED. THE SECOND INSTALLMENT IN THE SERIES, “SUPER MARIO 64: DOLPHIN’S QUEST,” ALSO SELLING THE 10 MILLION UNITS ACCORDING TO NINTENDO

**SEPTEMBER 1995**

THE “SUPER MARIO 64” SERIES STARTED WITH THE NINTENDO 64 GAME, WHICH IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE FIRST 3- DIMENSIONAL GAME TO USE 3-D VISION, SENSORS TO BE USED IN-GAME

**DECEMBER 1996**

NAMCO BANDICORN TO RELEASE“A RAVING COCONUTS ORCHESTRA” FOR THE SNES. THE GAME WILL BE SOLD AS ONE OF THE PACKAGES OF THE “SOUND ORCHESTRA” SERIES WITH THE NINTENDO 64

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**AUGUST 1997**

ROSS TRASH VS. MUTANT MUGS’ ANTHONY "MURDER RACE" GIBSON

**DECEMBER 1998**

JIMMY DURANTE VS. NAMCO BANDICORN'S "ITS A SPICY BATTLE STYLE"
5 FRESH GAMES

MUSIC. MOVEMENT. PIRATE BATTLES. GET INVOLVED.

‘ROCKSMITH’ (UBISOFT)
PlayStation 3, Xbox 360; coming to PC Dec. 13

“Rocksmith” is similar to earlier rhythm games like “Guitar Hero” and “Rock Band,” but with two significant twists: The game is compatible with any guitar, and players just might learn a thing or two. “If you’re a beginner, you can learn how to place your fingers and how to be more experienced down the road,” Ubisoft Canada PR manager Jeyson Acevedo says. “If you have experience with guitar, the game differentiates skill levels right away. Someone who has experience won’t have to go through the beginner part of the game.” Acevedo is confident the game will catch on, adding that “the buzz has been positive and interesting over the past few weeks. We do expect people to jump onboard, both experienced musicians and new ones who are curious.” Playable songs include the Rolling Stones’ “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction,” Nirvana’s “In Bloom,” the Cure’s “Boys Don’t Cry” and the Black Keys’ “Next Girl.”

‘AUDITORIUM HD’ (CIPHER PRIME)
PC, PlayStation Network, iPhone; coming to Xbox 360 soon

A unique audiovisual puzzle game in which players manipulate cascades of light to create orchestrated music.

‘SHIELD POSE’ (NINTENDO)

In development

Blending the rhythmic timing of the immensely popular “Dance Dance Revolution” with the excitement of a pirate battle, “Shield Pose” asks players to use their tablet-like controllers as a shield to block oncoming attacks against a background beast.

‘RHYTHM HEAVEN WII’ (NINTENDO)

Wii, Dec. 2

The third installment in the “Rhythm” series aims to teach basic rhythmic structure using non-musical situations—for instance, playing golf with a mandrill. According to TK, the game experienced first-week sales of more than 120,000 in Japan when it was released in July. It continued to top sales in Japan as recently as September.

‘PIXELJUNK 4AM’ (Q-GAMES)

PlayStation 3; release date TBD

Players create music by using the PlayStation Move controller to “paint” onto a virtual canvas. Lead designer Rowan Parker says, “It’s the first time we’ve made a game with the PlayStation Move. ‘4am’ is very experimental—and we’re treating a lot of new territory in both the motion and music genres. We’re really excited to release it into the wild as soon as we can.”

WHO’S KEEPING SCORE?

COMPOSER/AUDIO DIRECTOR MARTY O’DONNELL ON EVERYTHING FROM CYMBAL-CRASH EXPLOSIONS TO PLAYER-BASED CUES

Composers who work within videogames aren’t quite as well-known as their counterparts in film—yet. But composer and Bungie audio director Marty O’Donnell (@MartyTheElder) is at the forefront of a generation that will change that. His work in the Seattle-based studio’s “Halo” series is as recognizable as any game music in recent years, matching rhythm and a driving melody with explosive action in a manner reminiscent of Hans Zimmer or Basil Poledouris. Since its launch 10 years ago, the Xbox-exclusive series of shooters has spawned five games and sold more than 40 million units worldwide, according to Microsoft. After 2010’s “Halo: Reach,” Bungie passed the creative reins of the franchise back to Microsoft and moved on to a still-secret new project with Activision. O’Donnell recently spoke about his approach to composing for games, how he entered the business and what the future holds for he and his Bungie colleagues.

How did you get into composing for videogames?

I got a master’s degree in composition from [the University of Southern California] in the early ’80s, and then moved back to Chicago and opened up a studio with a friend of mine, Michael Salvatori. We did original music for commercials, films, animated films, whatever we could get.

In the mid-’90s I was hired to do the sound design for “Riven,” which was the sequel to Cyan World’s “Myst.” Then I met some guys from Bungie, they asked me if they had anything I could work on. I did a game called “Myth” with them and went on to do “Ori” and then started work on “Halo.” I went full time with Bungie in 2000. I still compose a lot with Mike, who works outside Bungie. I also work with some other composers as well, C. Paul Johnson and Stan LePard, who’s done a lot of orchestration for me as well as contributed some compositional stuff.

Working full time with just one company is rare for a composer. How did that happen with you and Bungie? I always said I wanted to be the audio director. I wanted to lay out the vision for the entire audio composition, figure out how to put it together, figure out how to hire and then [be] responsible for the final mix. I compose, I direct actors, cast actors, sit in on the writing side to consult on the game script. I think I made myself valuable enough to Bungie that they wanted to hire me full time as audio director. I’m in control of the whole thing. Because I’m directing I can say, if we have a big explosion, “We’re not going to put a big cymbal crash in to let the explosion come through, then I’ll bring cymbals in after.”

What’s different about composing for a videogame compared to a film? Are there particular things you do to dynamically match game play?

It’s way more cued up than anything I’ve done before. The person who writes the code for the music director is the one who’s responsible for the timing. Sometimes if we have a big score change, a whole new section in the song, you could; we’ll just change the timing so that it starts at 50 percent and then jumps a whole thing. Sometimes if we have a quick camera cut, you don’t need much time to go to another theme. There are a lot of downsides of being full time is that you’ve worked almost exclusively on the “Halo” franchise during the last decade. Do you ever get burned out?

We worked on five games in 10 years, and it did get constraining. It definitely started to get to the point where I was asking how I would keep things fresh and do something different with these themes. I’m glad to have the decade-long body of work behind me sitting on a bunch of CDs on a shelf. I’m free now to not go back to any of those themes, which is nice. It’s a little bit scary too. It was also nice to know I ran out of ideas I could always do something that I’ve already done in a slightly different way. Not that I ever did that [laughs].

Bungie recently started a new initiative called Aerospace to release smaller, downloadable games. Have you contributed music to any of those titles?

At this point I’m not spending a lot of time thinking about composing in those areas. I could, I’ll see what happens. As audio director I’m certainly doing a quality control check, but there certainly comes a point where we start doing original music for some of these platforms.

—Michael Thomsen
His Own Private Metamorphosis

IN LINE WITH A RECENT TENDENCY AMONG SOME OF LATIN’S MAJOR SUPERSTARS, RICARDO ARJONA GOES INDEPENDENT

BY LEILA COBO

RICARDO ARJONA WALKS INTO A PRIVATE RECORDING STUDIO INSIDE A SUITE AT MIAMI BEACH’S TRENDY SETA HOTEL.

SLIGHTLY DISHEVELED AND UNSHAVEN—he’s dressed in cargo pants, sneakers without socks, and suspenders over a long-sleeved T-shirt—he looks more like an aimless poet than a Latin pop superstar who makes women swoon.

But Arjona, a former schoolteacher, has long sought to follow in the tradition of the great Latin American troubadours by conveying meaningful messages in his songs. However, he has also shed away from discussing business matters, even as his music has changed, and he has switched labels, moving from his longtime home at Sony to Warner Bros.

Now the very private Arjona is facing those changes head-on with his aptly named new album, Independiente. The album is released Oct. 4 on Arjona’s own, newly created label, Metamorfosis, with distribution by Warner in the United States, Spain and Latin America. It debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart, where it remained for two weeks. It also debuted atop both Argentina and Mexico’s IFPI sales charts, where it stayed for three weeks.

“I used to think that the creative aspect of my career was writing and recording the songs, and that was it,” says Arjona, who is the sole composer of all his records—and he seldom writes for others. “We want to get out of that mind-set and generate ideas in every step of the process. The key element in this is not merely about finances. In the end, this is a service for my career. I’m providing a service to my songs, and the greatest challenge is not financial but creative.”

While the decision to go indie may be a creative one for Arjona, it’s also a gigantic step for the Latin industry at large and the results will be closely watched. Several other big Latin acts have also gone indie in the past few years, including salsa star Victor Manuelle and norteno group Intocable. But no pop star of Arjona’s stature—and indeed, no Latin artist with his international reach—had done so until Arjona announced his intentions to Billboard this summer. Within days, another major Latin pop star, Gloria Estefan, followed suit, announcing that her next album, Miss Little Havana, would be on her own Crescent Moon label, with the physical album available exclusively at Target and the digital version sold through iTunes (Billboard, Sept. 17). The album, distributed by Universal and released Sept. 27, debuted at No. 28 on the Billboard 200.

In Arjona’s case, he created an entertainment company, Metamorfosis, with photographer/video director Ricardo Calderon and his brother, marketing executive Humberto Calderon, as his business partners. The company is in charge of funding, developing and executing all aspects of Independiente’s promotion and marketing.

It’s a tall order.

Arjona is not only a major artist in the United States—where his top-selling release, 1999’s Ricardo Arjona Vivo, has sold 326,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan (1998’s Sto Piso has sold 108,000)—but throughout Latin America, particularly Mexico and Argentina.

According to Billboard Boxscore, Arjona played 37 North American shows in 2009 (mostly arenas) and grossed more than $15 million. Stateside, he had the top-selling Latin album of the year. Under his new business plan, his tour will be managed by another division of Metamorfosis, Antigua Productions, run by Alejandra Gutierrez out of Argentina.

Arjona says the decision to branch out on his own wasn’t made out of dissatisfaction or lack of offers, but because of the possibilities that opened up after he started working with Ricardo Calderon nearly a decade ago. “I want to be very clear,” he says. “I’m not the anti-label poster child. Major labels put me where I am today. Sony did a great job with me. Then Warner. I have no resentment. Quite the opposite. They did what they needed to do within their format. They’re not here to complain but to try it myself and see if I can do it better. I don’t know what I’ll say for myself in two years.”

Independiente, produced with guitarist Dan Warner and drummer Lee Levin, is a Latin pop superstars, with fine lyrics and memorable melodies. It weans from the rougher, acoustic feel of the honky-tonk “Lo Que Esta Bien Esta Mal” through the innocent simplicity of “A la Medida” to the sophisticated strings of first single “El Amor,” which is No. 5 on the Hot Latin Songs chart. For someone with massive success such as his across Latin America, Arjona is atypical. His songs are musically sophisticated and often lyrically complex. More a pop/rock than a balladeer, he does none of the uptempo, danceable fare that permeates radio. Indeed, the title track of Arjona’s 1990 breakthrough debut album, Jesus Verbo, No Sustantivo, is all about acting on Christian principles as opposed to preaching. Nor a common pop message.

“It is that rarest of combinations: a writer with impeccable integrity and artistic quality who is also extremely successful commercially,” says Jorge Mejia, senior VP of Latin America and U.S. Latin Sony/ATV Music Publishing, where Arjona is signed. “He is one of our top revenue generators in the Spanish-speaking or any other market.”

Arjona placed his first top 10 hit on the Hot Latin Songs chart in 1993 with “Mujeres” and since then, has had 13 additional top 30s, including three No. 1. His first album to appear on Top Latin Albums was 1994’s Historia, which peaked at No. 43 from there, his star continued to rise: 1997’s El Sierra Fuego Sur peaked at No. 21 in 1998’s Sin Dato a Tevesor at No. 6 and 2000’s Gatica Canzle at No 1. With his next album, 2002’s Sueno Pecado, Arjona modified his contract to a licensing and marketing deal, retaining ownership of the master recordings.

Maintaining control over his work is as much an emotional consideration as it is financial for Arjona. “I was facing the most lucrative contract of my career, but I chose to go with a licensing deal,” he says. “At a business level, these decisions are that are more romantic than mere business. I truly make my decisions based on affection.”

Having kept the bulk of his masters, Arjona now has leeway with his promotion and marketing. For example, Humberto Calderon has secured TV campaigns with Televisa in Mexico and Univision in the United States. In addition, Arjona recently taped a special for Televisa that included 14 tracks—from seven from the new album and eight older hits—and will air in Mexico as No. 5 and the United States Dec. 4 on Univision. In addition, a TV special shot for the Biography Channel in Argentina will air during November in Latin America and the United States.

“We can really move quickly because we don’t have to depend on anyone for authorizations,” says Calderon, who’s also negotiating sponsorships for a world tour—which kicks off in February—to the creation of exclusive content that can be distributed online.

By producing content in-house—Ricardo Calderon supervises all audio and graphic material—Metamorfosis can deliver vastly different deals to various partners. “Everything has continuity and we’re always producing new material, which is key at a time when that material is consumed so quickly,” Calderon says.

Although touring revenue is essential to Arjona, who plays mostly stadiums in Latin America, Calderon adds that music sales are still important and that Arjona’s fans want to make purchases beyond music. As a result, the company is developing clothing lines and special items. “It’s like a museum store that will be housed online and accompany the tour,” Calderon says. One area Metamorfosis does own-source is radio promotion, both in the States and Latin America.

“I never liked to be labeled a romantic singer/songwriter, but through the years, the label always chose a ballad as first single,” Arjona says of “El Amor,” a romantic ballad with Arjona’s unique, ironic twist. “This is a protest against romanticism. It criticizes all the defects and problems that love generates. El Amor is the juxtaposition of what I became without wanting to.”

Team Arjona

ALBUM: Independiente

RELEASE DATE: Oct. 4

LABEL: Metamorfosis

TV APPEARANCES: Special airing Nov. 3 in Mexico (Televisa) and Dec. 3 in the United States (Univision); Biography Channel special airing in November

BOOKING AGENT: Marcelo Figoli, Silvercape

TOUR PRODUCER: Alejandra Gutierrez, Antigua Productions

MANAGEMENT: Oricina Ricardo Arjona

PUBLISHING: Arjona Musical/Sony/ATV

PUBLICITY: Miriam Sonmez, Metamorfosis; Nanette Lamohey, Artisan Solutions

SITES: RicardoArjona.com, Facebook.com/arjonoufficial

TWEETS: @Ricardo_Arjona
Acer Arena became Allphones Arena on September 1, 2011

allphones arena

FINALIST in the TOP ARENA category
~ Billboard Touring Awards ~
THE BILLBOARD TOURING CONFERENCE & AWARDS

FETE THE BEST IN A YEAR OF RESURGENCE

BY RAY WADDELL

The Billboard Touring Awards are examples of the types of shows that worked. The wide range of success proves artist development still works, and offers compelling evidence that consumers still love the live concert experience.

The Billboard Touring Awards are primarily based on actual numbers reported to Billboard Boxscore, reflecting real business being done, as opposed to any sort of voting procedure. The exceptions would be such awards as Legend of Live, the Concert Marketing & Promotion Award, the Apple award and the Humanitarian Award, as well as the online voting for the Eventful Fans’ Choice Award, the latter determined by online fan “demands” at Eventful.com.

The nature of the business and the prep time involved in tabulating finalists and winners don’t always match up with tour schedules, which means that some tours have to be broken up between different venues. Still, for a given year, the Billboard Touring Awards showcase the acts, venues and firms that were doing the highest level of business in the preceding months. The awards are based on numbers reported to Billboard Boxscore between Oct. 1, 2010, and Sept. 30, 2011.

BIGGEST OF THE BIG

The finalists for the top tour, based on Billboard Boxscore gross, and top draw, based on Boxscore attendance, are almost always the same three acts and that’s also the case this year. Two of these are no surprise: the mighty U2—which completed the highest-grossing tour in history with $360 million in July—though not all of it counts for this year—and Bon Jovi, which wrapped the biggest tour of its storied history with the Circleashing, also in July. U2’s 360°, which captured top tour and top draw nods last year, was produced by Live Nation global touring chairman Arthur Fogel and his team. Bon Jovi’s tour was produced by AEG Live and booked by Creative Artists Agency (CAA), under the watch of Bon Jovi’s management tour director Paul Korfius.

The third act up for the big two awards might take some by surprise: Take That’s European/ U.K. tour shattered box-office records as the re-united group went out again with breakout superstar Robbie Williams. Simon Mottin, managing director at SJM Concerts, promoter of the band’s shows in England, admits the Take That numbers are impressive—and they shouldn’t be too shocking. “Their track record in the U.K. is second to none,” he says. “You go through U2, Oasis, the Rolling Stones—they outsell all of them in the U.K. And the production is unbelievable. It’s like Cirque du Soleil mixed with a rock show.”

TOP PACKAGE

The top package award, which goes to the top-grossing tour with three or more artists on the bill, rewards synergistic packaging and value offered to consumers. The industry served up a wealth of inspired packages this year, and the finalists are only the three examples of a trend that ran deep in 2011.

Six-time winner Kenny Chesney is back in the hunt this year, after taking 2010 off. He returned with a vengeance on his Goin’ Coastal tour, once again cracking 1 million in attendance at amphitheaters, arenas and NFL stadiums. Along for the ride were Zac Brown Band, Uncle Kracker and Billy Currington, with special appearances by Grace Potter at select shows. The tour was produced by TMG/AEG Live.

Usher solidified his status as an arena-level headliner with the blockbuster OMG tour, produced by AEG Live. Among Usher’s tour support were Miguel, Trey Songz, Alon and the Cataracs.

Taylor Swift’s Speak Now tour took her into international markets for the first time, as well as at her first stadium shows in North America. Support included Needtobreathe on all dates, with such additional support as Danny Gokey, Frankie Ballard, Hunter Hayes, Randy Montana and Josh Kelley, and special guests like Nicki Minaj, Tim McGraw, Justin Bieber, Usher and Hayley Williams.
SERIOUS BOX OFFICE
Recognizing that comedy was a strong and growing touring concern, Billboard added the top comedy tour award three years ago. This year's finalists are ventriloquist Jeff Dunham, booked by Matthew Blaké at CAA; British comedian Peter Kay’s U.K. tour, booked by Phil McIntyre Entertainment; and Robin Williams, booked by Marc Geiger at William Morris Endeavor.

BIG GIGS
The top boxscore award recognizes the highest-grossing single engagement for the time period—the biggest of the big gigs. Take That is responsible for two of them from its remarkable U.K. run: June 30-July 9 at Wembley Stadium in London and June 3-12 at City of Manchester Stadium.

Eight nights at Wembley broke Michael Jackson’s record at the venue, but “there may have been another nine or 10, [so] who knows?” Moran says. “But while [Take That] obviously did tremendous in London, the business was spread right across the U.K. We did another eight nights in Manchester, and another four nights in the North-east at the [Stadium of Light] in Sunderland.”

Without the multiple-night stadium runs of Take That, U2, with the expanded capacities that 360° afforded, would likely have dominated the top boxscores of the year. As it stands, U2’s entry

U2’s entry for the top boxscore award is a massive one, staged April 9-13 at Estadio do Morumbi in São Paulo. This was the show that took U2 past the previous all-time gross record held by the Rolling Stones for their Bigger Bang Tour.

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TOP PROMOTER
Global promoters Live Nation and AEG Live are joined by U.K. promoter SJM as finalists for the top promoter award. SJM is also a finalist, with Brazil’s T4F and Australia’s Michael Copel Presents, for top independent promoter, international.

Seven-time top promoter winner Live Nation promoted concerts from the club to stadium level around the globe, along with major European festivals and tours by U2, Lady Gaga, Journey, Jason Aldean, Brad Paisley, Tim McGraw, NKOTBSB, Maroon 5, Train, Rascal Flatts and Sade in 2011.

AEG Live was also extremely active, with Swift and Chesney (under the TMG/AEG Live banner), Bon Jovi, Usher and American Idols Live! steered by the promoter, the live entertainment division of sports and entertainment giant Anschutz Entertainment Group.

SJM steered Take That’s U.K. tour, but was also active with a wide range of U.K. tours and one-offs in what may well be the most productive touring market in the world.

The final three for top independent promoter, U.S. are the same as last year: five-time winner Jam Productions in Chicago, two-time winner C3 Presents in Austin and venerable New Orleans independent Beaver Productions. C3 enjoyed the huge grosses from Lollapalooza in Chicago and the Austin City Limits (ACL) Music Festival in its hometown, along with a growing list of one-off promotions and a booming casino business. Beaver did well with Michael Bublé and one-offs across the country.

TOP MANAGER
The top manager award recognizes the management firm with the combined highest-grossing clients among the top 50 tours. The three finalists are Principle Management’s Paul McGuinness for its work with U2 (a winner in 2005); Front Line Management Group, whose affiliates handled hard-touring acts including the Eagles, Journey, Chesney, Neil Diamond, and Jason Aldean, and another one-client firm in Bon Jovi Management, whose principles are Kozlilus and David Munns.

TOP AGENCY
Similar to the top manager award, the top agency honor goes to the booking agency with the highest-grossing combined tours among the top 50, with William Morris Endeavor, CAA and independent Artists Group International ending up as the top three.

CAA had such acts as Bon Jovi, Justin Bieber, Lil Wayne, Katy Perry, Tim McGraw and Carrie Underwood spinning the turbines. WME had a busy roster, with big tours by Swift, Journey, Brad Paisley, the Eagles and Rascal Flats, among others. Artists Group International, even with star client Billy Joel taking the year off, still did well with tours by Metallica, Rod Stewart, Rush and Motley Crue.

TOP FESTIVAL
After the United Kingdom’s Download Festival captured the top festival award in 2010, three U.S. fests are finalists this year, reflecting the robust runs that these North American events enjoyed in 2010 and how North American fans have embraced the festival experience. The finalists include two produced by C3 Presents: Lollapalooza (Foo Fighters, Eminem, Muse) in August and the ACL, Music Festival (Stevie Wonder, Coldplay, Kanye West) that celebrated its 10th anniversary in September. The third finalist is the groundbreaking Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival, held in April and featuring such acts as West, Arcade Fire and the Strokes.
WE'RE HONORED OUR NYC VENUES HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR THE 2011 BILLBOARD TOURING AWARDS.

"The World's Most Famous Arena" is just the beginning...
We will shake up the format a bit at the eighth annual Billboard Touring Conference as it returns to New York's Roosevelt Hotel Nov. 9-10. But not too much, as exit surveys indicate that attendees like what they're doing, with more than 95% positive ratings.

What we want to do is offer useful sessions on targeted issues that are laser-focused on how attendees can tackle them and use these tools to do better business and, in the end, sell more tickets. Beyond that, we chose specific artists from different genres, at different stages of their careers, who are doing something right in the touring space. We want to know how these touring acts and their teams set up, launch, execute and follow up on their touring strategies.

We always strive to keep our content fresh, and by extension, provide a platform for new ideas and vision from innovators and winners across the industry. While many speakers are welcomed back because what they say matters, and their moves directly affect the industry at large, we also keep bringing in first-time speakers. This year, more than 40 panelists will be making their Billboard Touring Conference debut (and we're still booking). We jump into the fray with a white-hot topic right out of the gate. Social marketing is on everyone's minds these days, and we know it works, but the space is so cluttered that many people are confused to the point of frustration. We'll tackle that head on in the opening session that has a title that says it all: "How Exactly Will Social Sell Tickets?"

Social networking is decided cool, but where's the money? This panel will drill down and address specific ways of using digital, social media and mobile to sell tickets and other goods, now the needle on the 46% of concert inventory that goes unsold and broadens revenue streams. If they can't demonstrate how their platform helps artists make money off the live thing, they don't book and Twitter have turned the world upside down, and I guarantee that this panel will blow minds. CEOs and senior executives from the companies paving the way will debate the pros, cons and opportunities facing the industry in an ever more connected world.

We move from the digital world to the real world of staging events with a brand new topic from tour and production managers that will shine a light on "Here's What We Really Think About Your Venue, Your Food, Your Fans and Your Event." When it comes to making a date come off successfully, tour and production managers are on the front lines, making quick decisions that can affect how well a show is executed on every level. From comp tickets to logistical challenges leading up to feeding the crew to event safety, some of the most experienced and visionary tour and production managers will lay it on the line. Rather than a bitch fest, this is about things that can help make an event better for all involved.

Participants include: tour managers Rich Aronson (Britney Spears, Mariah Carey), Steve Lopez (Widespread Panic), Steve Powell (Jason Mraz, Avril Lavigne) and Max Louibere (Billy Joel) and production managers Jake Berry (U2, Walking With Dinosaurs) and Live Nation's Steve Lawler.

LiveWorks events producer Jim Lewis will expertly steer the conversation. "For many years, there has been talk among tour and production managers about creating best practice standards for our business," he says. "Whether in the form of a school, website, book, video or combination... creating a source for communicating lessons of years of experience, innovation and, of course, trial and error, that makes our events more organized, safe, fun, entertaining and financially feasible. This panel will be the start of that process." The "let's hear it from the horse's mouth" portion of our programming begins with back-to-back "Road Case" sessions moderated by yours truly. The highly successful New Kids on the Block/Backstreet Boys tour and the development of rising singer/songwriter Amos Lee will be the focus of two separate Road Cases on Nov. 9. "NKOTBBSS: Anatomy of a Home Run" will break down the trek that uniquely combined the forces of the two pop supergroups in a groundbreaking co-headlining tour that moved more than 500,000 tickets and emerged as one of the Sleepers of 2011. The staging and presentation, which fully integrated the hits and performances of both acts, proved to be a sensation and changed the paradigm for such tours. Key players will discuss the strategic moves in the setup, launch and execution of one of the most creative tour concepts in pop music history, including BSM executive Peter Katz (Prospect Park), NKOTB manager Jared Paul of AGPS, Creative Artists Agency agent Darryl Earon, Live Nation VP Brad Water and New Kids Donnie Wahlberg (@DonnieWahlberg), who tweeted recently, "Pretty awesome tour! Pretty awesome panel... I'll be on it! See you there!"

The artist development Road Case will examine the touring career of Lee, whose critically acclaimed songs and strategic touring led to a significant career uptick this year. Since the release of the Blue Note artist's self-titled album in 2005, Lee has combined key supporting slots, select headlining and festival appearances to become an artist many in the industry feel is poised to break out in a big way. Team Lee will break down the moves that now have him poised to step up to major headlining status, and what comes next. Onboard are Lee, his managers Perry Greenfield and Kevin Morris at Red Light Management, EMI senior VP and Live Nation's Steve Lawler.
TOP TOUR OF 2011, TOP TOUR IN HISTORY
7,200,000 TICKETS SOLD

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PAUL MCGUINNESS AND PRINCIPLE MANAGEMENT

PRODUCED AND PROMOTED WORLDWIDE BY LIVE NATION GLOBAL TOURING
BRING ON THE AGENTS

Let's face it, a high percentage of those attending the Billboard Touring Conference come in search of leads to get more content to their market or venue. The agents are the gatekeepers in this regard, and we're serving up agents aplenty at the first Agency Forum, a revamped version of the conference's genre round tables. It's still genre-based, but the round tables are populated only by agents, and active, high-profile agents at that. Successful agents who decide where acts play—or where they don't—will be on hand for face-to-face communication in what will be a highly valuable "marketplace" for the live business.

FEST FEST

A few years ago, there was concern that the festival marketplace in North America was in danger of becoming saturated. While some festivals have fallen by the wayside, 2011 has been arguably the most robust year ever for festivals of all sizes, particularly in North America, with several major players setting records. What is it about the festival experience that fans crave, and what turns them off? Festivals producers with proven track records will unveil their strategies. Josh Baron, editor of Relix magazine and co-author of "Ticket Masters," will moderate the session, which includes AC Productions president Ashley Capps (Bonnaroo, Moogfest), Festival Productions president Quint Davis (New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Bayou Country Superfest), C3 Presents partner Charlie Jones (Austin City Limits Music Festival, Lollapalooza), Hard Events president Gary Richards (Hard Fest), Milwaukee World Festival president/CEO Don Smiley (Milwaukee Summerfest) and Newport Folk Festival producer Jay Sweet.

"Festivals have become one of the concert industry's biggest and most consistent attractions," Baron says. "Whether it's Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, Coachella or JazzFest, these festivals mean big business to the promoters but these artists lucky enough to headline. There's the saying that Rome wasn't built in a day. The same holds true for festivals. What once began as 'first annual' events have become pillars of the concert industry, though not without their learning curves. Sometimes they find themselves competing for talent, so it makes sense to follow up with a session that takes a hard look at the state of the market for these cornerstone venues with "Clubs: Solidifying Their Role in the New World Order." Clubs have for decades been the primary breeding ground for developing tomorrow's superstars. As label marketing budgets shrink, clubs can be even more important to artists at all stages of their careers. But this sector of the business faces many challenges, from saturation of unproven ticket sellers in the marketplace to the growth of festivals as prolific buyers of developing—but meaningful—bands.

Even for those not in the club business, this is a can't-miss session if only for the participation of Square Peg Concerts Speakers president Dan Steinberg, whose moderating style is in a class of its own. Panelists heavyweight include Nic Adler, owner of Los Angeles' Roxy; House of Blues Entertainment CEO Ron Bension; AEG Live VP of booking Bobby Reynolds; Peter Shaprio, founder of New York's Brooklyn Bowl; Soda Jerk Presents owner/talent buyer Mike Barsch; and ICM agent Nick Storch.

Steinberg is prepared to deliver a show. "This gathering of braintrust is an amazing mixture of entertainment front-runners, from the visionary of the Brooklyn Bowl, the power of the Vegas Strip's Bobby Reynolds, true rock royalty of the Adler family, the man who made ICM's roster cool again and, to cap it off, bookending the club business from HBO's CEO to Colorado's startup Soda Jerk," he says. "We have it all."

Spending in the live entertainment marketing is outpacing the general sponsorship sector because live music brings passionate, highly engaged fans who often become loyal consumers. But not just any tour, artist, building or event will do. These must be true partnerships that not only raise the profile of the artist, event or brand, but also target specific consumers and provide added value to fans. We'll show how this is done with "Sponsorship Buyers and Sellers Weigh In: What We're Looking for in Naming Rights, Tour, Event and Concert Partnerships."

From tour deals to major festivals to key relationships with up-and-coming bands, the decision-makers in this dynamic space will tell what it takes to make these partnerships work, how to acquire them and how content and social media play important roles in decision-making. The panel will be moderated by Liana Huth, senior VP of partnerships and events at MSG Entertainment media property FUSE. Speakers include MAC Presents president Marcie Allen, Citi senior VP of entertainment marketing Jennifer Breithaupt, Live Nation Network president Russell Wallach, Samsung regional marketing VP Stacey Portnoy, Pitchfork Media VP of sales Matt Frampton and ESPN music director Kevin Wilson. Together, these buyers and sellers represent millions of dollars in annual live event sponsorship campaigns.

The final panel of the conference, appropriately titled "Are We Out of the Woods Yet," will feature some of the most influential players in the live business. This state-of-the-art session will include comments from C3 partner Charlie Walker, Live Nation president of North American concerts Bob Roux, TMG/AEG Live president Louis Mesasina, Paradigm Agency music department head Chip Hooper and Maverege manager Chris Lightby, COO of Primary Violator.

Making Tracks

Closing the conference's professional sessions portion will be intimate discussions that examine the unique touring challenges and opportunities around three hot areas for touring professionals: digital/social, sponsorship/branding/cause marketing and ticketing. Additionally, representatives of the State of Louisiana's tax incentive programs for concert tours and live performances will be on hand to discuss their innovative opportunities in tour financing. Attendees can pick the topic of their choice and ask questions of these industry experts in an informal session.

Case studies of recent success stories (Josh Groban, Avenged Sevenfold, the Addams Family) will be highlighted in a presentation by the tax incentive program reps. As part of the session, state officials will be on hand to discuss Louisiana's position as the national leader in developing an integrated approach to entertainment incentives by being the only state to offer incentives for film, live performances, digital media and sound recording.

For the sponsorships/branding/cause marketing track, leaders in the field will answer questions and offer ideas as to how to acquire sponsorships, make them work and find the right fit. Also addressed will be unique branding concepts and fresh takes on cause marketing surrounding...
For booking information, please contact Sean Saadeh at 718.923.8693
Journey’s Reward

VETERAN ROCKERS TO ACCEPT LEGEND OF LIVE AWARD
BY RAY WADDELL

Since the group’s formation in San Francisco’s Bay Area in 1973, Journey has earned 19 top 40 singles and 25 gold and platinum albums. But it’s the band’s decades of epic live performances that have earned Journey the title of Legend of Live. Billboard’s highest accolade in the live music space.

The Legend of Live award honors individuals or bands that have made significant and lasting contributions to live music and the touring business. Beyond success at the box office, though that’s surely a part of it, Legend of Live recognizes professionalism and steadfast commitment to the art and craft of live performance and reaching fans through the concert experience. Previous honorees are promoter Michael Cohl, promoter Jack Boyle, Elton John, agent Frank Baralona, the Allman Brothers Band, Ozzy Osbourne and Rush.

Though the band has sold millions of records and charted a wealth of the most beloved Billboard hits in history, most would agree that Journey’s career longevity has in large part been driven by its stellar live performances. From the group’s days blowing up the Bay Area music scene, to its ascent to mega hits, international headlining and now icon status, while withstanding personnel changes that would bring down a lesser band, Journey’s talent transcends musical trends and draws bigger crowds year after year.

Founding member and guitar hero Neal Schon launched Journey in 1973, after leaving home at the age of 15 to play in Santana. The band signed to Columbia in 1974, releasing three prog rock-leaning records and touring incessantly before vocalist Steve Perry joined the group, leading to an incredibly productive period of success that only gained momentum when keyboardist/songwriter Jonathan Cain of the Babies entered the fold.

Since then, the band has survived lineup changes, hiatuses and the changing winds of popular culture to become one of the most enduring rock bands in the world. With its current lineup of Schon, Cain, Ross Valory (bass, backing vocals), Deen Castronovo (drums, percussion, backing vocals) and Arnel Pineda (lead vocals), Journey just completed its biggest tour in 20 years in support of new album Eclipse on the Novo label. Billboard enjoyed a lengthy conversation with Schon as he traveled on his tour bus between shows in Los Angeles and Fresno, Calif.

By the time Steve Perry joined the band, Journey already had hundreds of shows under its belt.

We played a lot of shows. We played eight-and-a-half to nine months out of the year, every year, from the beginning. I don’t know how we even squeezed in time to make records. If we had a month off, it was spent in the studio, then straight back out on tour. That was our bread and butter back then. We traveled in two station wagons, with the crew in one car and the band in the other. It was nuts. We’d drive 13 hours, no hotel, grab the guitar and jump onstage. Then we upgraded to a Winnebago, which was even worse than the station wagon, because we ended up pushing the damn thing all the time. It kept breaking down.

With three albums behind you, all of a sudden Journey becomes a platinum act with big hits with Infinity in 1978. How did that change the game?

We were all kind of in shock and stoked. In the Bay Area we started winning a lot of awards at the Bammies. I started winning guitarist of the year, year after year. We won band of the year. Steve Perry won vocalist—it went on and on, like an out of control dream.

Journey had huge momentum, but clearly Jonathan Cain brought a lot to the band when he joined in 1980, particularly as a songwriter. No doubt, I had been eyeball-bashing Jonathan for a while because we were on tour with the Babies and I was watching Jon every night. I started hanging out with him. We had a lot in common musically. When [original keyboardist] Gregg Rolie decided he had really had enough of touring—he wanted to start a family and get off the road—Jon was my absolute first pick. He’s a tremendous asset to the band, not only as a songwriter, but as a player. He’s pretty much can pick up any instrument and play anything he wants to play.

It was about that time that the band started to push the envelope in terms of production and video screens. A lot of people might not realize that the video screen company Nocturne began with Journey.

It was a vision of our prior manager, Herbie Herbert. We were playing stadiums, and he was looking for a way to make the nosebleed section in the back, where we looked like ants, a little more in your face—like you’re sitting in a club—to try to bring us closer to those people. It was video screens, and that started the company Nocturne that the whole band was a part of for the first couple of years. Then it ended up just being Herbie and I, and now I’m out of it and he’s out of it and [Nocturne] continues. I thought at the time we were the pioneers of that, and years later I saw a video of Elvis Presley in Vegas and he had a huge screen behind him. And I thought, “Ah, that’s where the idea came from.” But we definitely were one of the first rock bands to use the screens. Nocturne did every act you can imagine, and sort of paved the way for that. It was a great vision that Herbie had, and we followed it together.

How can you sum up the Steve Perry era of the band and his contribution to the Journey legacy?

Steve Perry is an amazing singer, one of the best ever in the world. I love the fact that he had R&B roots—Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson. Anybody that ever listens to Sam Cooke would go, “Wow, that guy sounds like Steve Perry,” if they didn’t know about him, but really it’s the other way around, and God bless Steve for that. He knew exactly what he loved, and he could really do it like nobody’s business. I love what he brought to the band because of the mixture with my playing. My job was to bring the rough edge to everything. When Jon and Steve wrote, it was all melody, beautiful songwriting. I loved that [Perry] brought the soul factor in with the rock. It made it sound to me way different than what we used to get categorized as.

The band came back strong at the turn of the millennium with vocalist Steve Augeri. You did some great shows, including the 30th-anniversary tour. It was a productive era, and you sold a lot of tickets. How can you sum up the eight years with Augeri? Steve Augeri did a great job for us, especially in the beginning. I think the wear and tear of the road eventually took its toll on him and wore him down. Steve Perry was bionic to be able to do what he did for as many years as he did under our touring schedule. That would be tough for anybody.
WE PROUDLY CONGRATULATE

JOURNEY

2011 LEGEND OF LIVE AWARD RECIPIENT
from >>p32 to keep up with that—except Arnel Pineda. This boy is insane. He's got tremendous strength. We've done a lot of work this year, and not easy work—one run of five shows in a row, a lot of three in a row—that's not easy to do with us. There's a lot required of a vocalist. Perry set the standard very high, and we like to give the fans what they're used to hearing.

The story's been told a lot, but for the record, did you discover Arnel on YouTube? I did. I discovered hym on YouTube. I didn't want to go through the whole auditioning process, so I was looking for a way to actually use the Internet instead of having the Internet use me. I liked the idea of YouTube because it's all live and unscripted. So even though it doesn't sound great, it's a big deal—I could still tell if the guy has pipes, or is singing in tune, with soul and conviction. That's what I was looking for, and I searched a couple of days and was about to give up when I hit this one last link. It was Arnel singing a Survivor song and I'm like, "Wow, who is that?"

He really sounded like he had big lungs and lots of power, and a lot of control and very into it. So I got really curious and I followed it back to his site and listened to 40 or 50 other songs from all sorts of bands, Aerosmith to Led Zeppelin, Sting, the Police, Beatles. He was doing it on there. Then I heard our stuff. He did "Open Arms" and "Faithfully," and I was astounded by his talent and the dexterity of his voice.

It wasn't a question of whether he could do our gig. I was looking a him like, "What can't he do?" I told management and Jon Cain about him: "I found a singer." They said, "Great. Is he in L.A. or New York?" I said, "Not exactly. He's in Manila." They said, "You're out of your mind. Does he even speak English?" I said, "I don't even fucking care. He sings in English really great. You've got to get this guy over. I know this is the guy."

So they worked on it. It's not easy to get someone over from the Philippines to the United States on short notice. But it happened. We got him over, he did the audition, and Jon and I took him in the studio and ran him through a couple of brand-new songs we were just writing. We put his voice on it, and "There It Is" it was that automatic.

But who could have foreseen how the public would fall in love with him? I didn't even really care. I had people ask me, "Don't you think it was risky to bring someone in from the Philippines when you're the American band?" And I don't look at anything like that. I hear and feel. He's the greatest guy. I love him to death. And nobody deserves the gig more than he does.

By the end of the '80s you had spent more than a decade as one of the elite touring bands in the world. You still kept your ticket prices relatively low. We're still doing that. We don't believe in charging outrageous ticket prices, and that's one of the reasons we're selling out every night. With the economy the way it is, people don't have that kind of money to spend. They want to come, they want to enjoy themselves, they want to take themselves out of the daily grind they have to deal with. Journey is a feel-good band, and I don't think the way to treat fans is to club them over the head and get as much money as you can get. So we keep our ticket prices low compared to a lot of other bands.

This year's tour has made a real statement about Journey's power on a global level.

It's actually happened very late for us in our careers. We've always wanted to go overseas and play abroad. In the early days, there were certain people that didn't want to go, so we just didn't. Something I always wanted to do was become an international band, not just known in the States and Japan. So we set out to conquer that about five years ago, and now things have really come along. The international tour we did this year was our best ever. You go places you've never played before, and you don't realize how many fans you have there until you go. It's completely amazing to me that this many years later we can go somewhere we've never been before and be treated like we're brand-new.

What is the key to a band surviving personnel changes?

It's just your desire and strength to move forward. As a person, I refuse to go back, and I refuse to sit in neutral. I want to always go forward in anything I do in my life. No matter what happens, you can always pick up the pieces—you can't sit there and sulk in a situation. It's mind over matter. You could sit there and go, "This guy is irreparable. Let's just break up and move on." Anybody is replaceable. The music and your accomplishments are much larger than any individual when you're in a band.

So I called Paul and asked him if he would be interested in doing something like this and he said, "Absolutely, I'm down. I'll send you a single-cut that actually sounds and plays great." I got to tell you, these guitars are really nice. I don't even know where they're made. I didn't even ask him. I just took it out of the case, and he was nice enough to put in a really great treble pickup because I do play it for one song."

So every night when the band breaks into "Any Way You Want It," Schon wanders out to the front of the stage at the end of his solo and he says, "I find somebody I want to give it to, I strap it around their neck, pull out the jack and walk back onstage," he says. "What's really cool about it is that I used to be quite a little artist as a kid, and I'm painting these guitars every night before I go out. They all have a different kind of theme, depending on what city I'm in. I guess you would call it "guitar 60s-type art that I do with a marker pen, and some of the tops of these guitars have come out really great."

All of the guitars are photographed, and "eventually, with Paul, we're interested in doing a high-end guitar," Schon says. "I love kids, and I love to inspire them to play, because I feel music is one of the greatest things that could ever happen to a kid to keep them out of trouble."

Schon says that none of these efforts would be possible without Smith's cooperation. "Paul gave me the first 30 guitars for free and said, 'If you want another 30 I'll just cost you $10 dollars," Schon says. "I said, 'That's still out of the question. I'm in for life. We'll probably end up doing it for the rest of our career.'"

For the complete interview, go to Billboard.com.
WELLS FARGO
THEATRE
DOWNTOWN DENVER
Halls Of Fame

FROM ARENAS TO CLUBS, VENUES VIE FOR BILLBOARD TOURING HONORS

BY MITCHELL PETERS

This year’s Billboard Touring Conference & Awards, taking place Nov. 9-10 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, will recognize the top-grossing venues for the 2011 touring season. In addition to top theatrical and family productions, the year was filled with successful tours from acts like Lady Gaga, Usher, Justin Bieber, Celine Dion, Metallica, Kyle Minogue and Michael Bublé. Here’s a look at the venue finalists, based on Billboard Boxscore results from Oct. 1, 2010, through Sept. 30, 2011.

TOP ARENA

The success of London’s O2 Arena during the past 12 months can be attributed to the “depth and variation of the venue’s content programming and the number of long-term residencies we’ve been able to secure,” O2 events director Sally Davies says, noting that the arena has hosted 226 events since September 2010.

The O2, which took home Billboard’s top arena honor in 2010, will again compete for the award this year.

In addition to music performances by Glee Live! In Concert (seven shows), Usher, Minogue (both five), Bieber (three) and Gaga (two), the O2 Arena hosted its non-concert events as the 2011 BRIT Awards, the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals, regular-season NBA games and performances from the Royal Ballet.

But the highlight for Davies was Roger Waters’ six-night stand in May. “Roger Waters’ spectacular staging of The Wall was something special,” she says. “He packed the arena, often reducing grown men to tears.”

Comedy was also a significant revenue driver at the O2. “British comedian Peter Kay played a total of 15 nights to over 180,000 people, which set a venue record for a solo performer on the same tour,” Davies says, noting that performances by Jerry Seinfeld and Lee Evans were also huge hits.

Brian Morris, CEO of Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust, which manages the Rod Laver Arena, says the facility experienced another strong year with multiple-night performances by Usher (five), Buble, the Eagles (both four), Minogue and comedian Robin Williams (both three).

Other highlights at Rod Laver were three sold-out shows by Metallica, which “lifted the roof off the arena,” and 24 performances for Cirque du Soleil from May through June, Morris says.

Boasting more than 100 major performances, “the past 12 months have been truly remarkable considering the tough conditions brought on by the global financial crisis,” says Paul Sergeant, GM of the Allphones Arena (formerly Acer Arena) in Sydney.

Highlights at the arena were performances by Metallica, Bublé, Usher, Bieber, Muse, Cirque du Soleil, the Wiggles, Alan Jackson and Armin van Buuren, Sergeant says.

TOP AMPHITHEATER

The building operators from the three finalists in the top amphitheater category—Comcast Center (Manalapan, N.J.), Shoreline Amphitheatre (Mountain View, Calif.) and Gorge Ampitheatre (George, Wash.)—agree that live music was as vibrant as ever during the 2011 summer concert season.

Live events in country and electronic music were especially strong at the Comcast Center and Shoreline Amphitheatre, facility executives note.

“Country music again showed its popularity in the Boston summer concert landscape, as our 2011 schedule clearly demonstrated with Sugarland, Jason Aldean, Tim McGraw, Brad Paisley and Toby Keith each playing to big crowds,” says Dave Marsden, senior VP of booking at Live Nation New England.

Another successful event at the Comcast Center was the pairing of Maroon 5 and Train on Aug. 11, which drew 16,000 concert-goers, according to Marsden. But one of the most “ad- venturous” shows at the shed during the past year, he says, was electronic music festival identity in late August, which featured Kaskade, DJ Shadow, Rusko and many others.

A highlight of the year at London’s O2 Arena was Roger Waters’ six-night stand in May. “Roger Waters’ spectacular staging of The Wall was something special,” O2 events director Sally Davies says. “He packed the arena, often reducing grown men to tears.”

At the Shoreline, “country shows were bigger than ever, drawing a record average of 18,000 fans per show,” says Jodi Goodman, president of Northern California at Live Nation.

Other highlights at the Shoreline included the annual Bridge School Benefit Concert, Identity and the WILD 94.9 Comedy Jam, which featured Chris Tucker; Dave Chappelle and Gabriel Iglesias, among others.

Live Nation president of Northwest music Jeff Trisler says his venue’s strength “continues to be the breathtaking natural beauty that is the

Gorge Amphitheatre, located in the high desert climate of central Washington State.” That natural beauty, along with 100 rock bands—including Foo Fighters, Death Cab for Cutie and Wilco—helped sell 100,000 tickets to this year’s four-day Sasquatch Music Festival.

“Other highlights of our season included the only Western U.S. dates for the Dave Matthews Band Caravan over Labor Day weekend, Tim McGraw, two days with Phish and the first electronic event we’ve ever hosted, the Identity Festival,” Trisler says.

Last year’s top amphitheater honor went to the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

TOP VENUE (10,000 SEATS OR LESS)

New York’s Radio City Music Hall, which took home the top award in this category at the 2010 Billboard Touring Awards, will again vie for the honor at this year’s event. Radio City is competing against Mexico City’s Auditorio Nacional and New York’s Theater at Madison Square Garden.

“A wide spectrum of events contributed to Radio City Music Hall’s success this year,” says MSG Entertainment (MSGE) executive VP of bookings Bob Shea says. “MSG Entertainment is committed to booking a variety of high-quality entertainment attractions for our customers who are continuing to seek out all forms of live entertainment.”

Shea says that highlights at Radio City during the period were concerts by Janet Jackson. Further (both three), Bright Eyes, Mary J. Blige, John Mellencamp (all two), Iron and Wine and Italian pop star Gigi D’Alessio. The building also hosted major theatrical productions like Yo Gabba Gabba! Live, Madagascar Live! and Cirque du Soleil’s Zarkana.

Between October 2010 and September 2011, the Auditorio Nacional hosted 255 concerts by 105 acts. Among the artists who performed there were Luis Miguel (20), Alejandro Fernandez (12), Chayanne (10), Bublé and Andrè Rieu.

“The Auditorio Nacional continues to be the most successful live show venue in Mexico and one of the best in the world due to the quality and variety of its presentations and the attention it gives to artists and audiences alike,” venue COO Luis Carlosromo says.

Back in New York, the Theater at MSG experienced success from performances by Trey Songz, BeBe & CeCe Winans, Mary Mary, Machel Montano, Kem and comedian Mike Epps, Shea says. The venue also hosted such theatrical and family productions as Tyler Perry’s Madea’s Big Happy Family, Sesame Street Live, Thomas & Friends Live and Disney Live!

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More and more, artists and promoters are seeking out venues both intimate and massive, such as the Theater at MSG, where they have a strong opportunity to sell out and add shows based on demand," she says.

**TOP VENUE (5,000 SEATS OR LESS)**

Las Vegas may slowly be recovering from the economic downturn, but this hasn’t hurt box-office sales at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace, AEG Live president/co-CEO John Meglen says.

“Our ability to attract the biggest, most diverse group of international superstars is one of the reasons people love to visit the Colosseum," he says.

In addition to successful residencies by Celine Dion, Rod Stewart and Elton John, the Colosseum has hosted sold-out engagements during the past year by Luis Miguel (four), Diana Ross, Leonard Cohen, Stevie Nicks and Janet Jackson. Other highlights included shows by Minogue, Ricki Martin and resident comedian Jerry Seinfeld.

Caesars Palace president Gary Selesner says that Dion’s triumphant return to the Colosseum on March 19 ushered in “a whole new era of top-shelf entertainment for the venue." The artist’s first 20 residency shows grossed more than $14 million. “We saw a ripple effect from those ticket sales by way of increased hotel revenue at Caesars Palace," Selesner says. The facility, which will host a residency by Shania Twain beginning in December 2012, won this category in 2010.

At the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, "we were fortunate to host over 40 concerts this year, many of them sellouts, thanks to the strength of Atlanta’s marketplace," GM Allan Vella says. “The Fox brought a wide variety of shows to its stage in terms of musical genres."

In addition to concerts by Minogue, Kem, Bruno Mars, Mumford & Sons, Florence & the Machine, Drake, Massive Attack, Band of Horses, the National, Fantasia, Lady Antebellum, the Fox also hosted such comedians as Seinfeld, Ron White, Kevin Hart, Chris Tucker and George Lopez.


Other highlights at the Beacon included a 13-night run by the Allman Brothers Band, the live pairing of Elton John and Leon Russell and comedy sellouts by Chelsea Handler, Daniel Tosh, Lisa Lampanelli (all two), Hari, Margaret Cho and Aziz Ansari.

**TOP CLUB**

Touring in clubs is crucial to building a loyal touring fan base that helps developing artists shift to playing larger-sized venues. As such, the Top Club award is based on attendance and not gross.

“The club level is the public’s best shot for seeing bands at a reasonable price," says I.M.P. Productions chairman Seth Hurwitz, whose 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C., took home last year’s award in the category. “Tickets have kind of stabilized in the $20-$25 range for most shows, so there is no sticker shock, and people can afford to go to more. The whole experience is a much happier one than big concerts."

In addition to the 9:30 Club, the other finalists are a pair of House of Blues venues, one in Chicago and the other in Orlando, Fla.

House of Blues Orlando promotes an average of 150 concerts per year, which attract approximately 200,000 ticket buyers, HOB Entertainment Southeast VP of talent Jim Mallozzi says.

“Being that 98% of HOB Orlando’s attendance is local patrons—rather than tourists, considering the venue is located on Disney World property—it is a strong indication that we are considered the hometown club of choice," he says, noting that the venue sees strong business from its dance and local band nights.

Noteworthy concerts at HOB Orlando during the year included multiple-night booklings from Widespread Panic, Rise Against, A Day to Remember, Ke$ha and Flogging Molly.

HOB Chicago senior director of booking Tommy Gonzalez says the club has recently changed its booking strategy to suit the current economic times.

“If we’re not absolutely sure that we have a solid national act on any given night, we’ll go with local band nights that both help us discover new talent and fill dark nights in the club with shows that have built-in local followings," he says. “We’ve also filled the late night/ morning hours with club nights following our regular concerts."

In Bill Graham's honor, the legendary Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco was named the 2011 Top Venue Award winner.

**REMEMBERING THE LEGACY OF BILL GRAHAM, FIRST HONOR GOES TO KEYNOTER PERRY FARRELL**

BY RAY WADDELL

Bill Graham, arguably the best and the most influential concert promoter of all time, was killed in a helicopter crash near Vallejo, Calif., on Oct. 25, 1991. He was headed home from his last concert, a Huey Lewis & the News gig at the Concord (Calif.) Pavilion.

To honor his legacy, the Billboard Touring Awards is launching the Apple award, whose first recipient will be Lollapalooza/Jane’s Addiction co-founder Perry Farrell on Nov. 10.

Graham famously gave patrons of the legendary Fillmore in San Francisco an apple—or two—at shows, and was notoriously obsessed with the quality of the fan experience.

In honor of Graham’s focus on customer service and his skills as a concert promoter, the Apple award will go to an artist or touring professional who goes the extra mile in ensuring that fans leave a concert feeling they’ve gotten more than a show, or even a great value, but a lasting memory.

Farrell launched Lollapalooza as a trail-blazing traveling festival 20 years ago with the intent of revolutionizing the fan experience. From Lollapalooza’s circus theme to Farrell’s focus on social issues, the Jane’s frontman endeavored to lift up the entire cultural impact of the live music experience.

In the process, Lollapalooza raised the bar for immersive music events. That mission continues today with the Lollapalooza festival in Chicago’s Grant Park and, beginning this year, at Lollapalooza Chile. Farrell told Billboard earlier this year that he believes a great festival “is a spiritual thing.” He also believes festival producers can lose their way if they focus more on maximizing revenue than ensuring fans are overserved.

“If you’re building a festival just to make money, that will kill you,” he said. “If you’re not sensitive to the fact that the reason people are coming is they want to be free, they want to hear great music, and you’re thinking, ‘Let’s see how I can get them here or how I can get them there,' I mean, you figure it out."

While he’s at the Billboard Touring Conference & Awards, Farrell will take part in a Q&A session. While one never knows what Farrell will say, the artist, who recently reunited with his band Jane’s Addiction for a critically acclaimed album and mini tour, is expected to talk about his life in touring and music, as well as his views on live music and the overall music business.

Farrell has been deeply involved in the live music biz for decades.

Farrell is perhaps most well-known for his vision with Lollapalooza. Launched as a tour in 1991, the name “Lollapalooza” has established a legacy of providing a platform for such groundbreaking acts as Jane’s Addiction, along with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nine Inch Nails, Soundgarden, the Smashing Pumpkins, Tool, Alice in Chains, Beastie Boys, Snoop Dogg and many others.

As a destination festival that debuted in 2005, produced by C3 Presents, Lollapalooza has embraced various art forms throughout its concourse section, creating the perfect intersection for art and music. The festival sells out every summer with some of the biggest pioneers and new talent in live music, including Rage Against the Machine, Radiohead, Kanye West and Lady Gaga.

This year’s Lolla was headlined by Eminem, Foo Fighters, Coldplay, Muse, Deadmau5 and My Morning Jacket.

Farrell is in particular a creative and productive period these days, having just released the first Jane’s Addiction album in eight years. The Great Escape Artist, followed by more touring from the incendiary live act.
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Rising Stars

TRIO OF TALENTS UP FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH AWARD
BY MITCHELL PETERS

Jason Aldean, Katy Perry and Rihanna will compete for the Breakthrough Award at this year's Billboard Touring Conference & Awards, taking place Nov. 9-10 in New York.

The Breakthrough Award goes to the top-grossing artist that cracks Billboard Boxscore's top tour recap for the first time in his or her career based on ticket sales reported to Boxscore from Oct. 1, 2010, through Sept. 30, 2011. Previous winners include Lady Gaga, Il Divo, Miley Cyrus and Justin Timberlake.

JASON ALDEAN
Country music star Jason Aldean's onstage career began when he was 15 years old and performing in VFW halls in his hometown of Macon, Ga. Since then, he has become an arena-level headliner who sells out nearly everywhere he goes.

Buddy Lee Attractions president Kevin Neal has been booking concerts for Aldean since 2004, when the artist was playing club gigs in Florida to only 12 people. Early on, Neal encouraged Aldean to play as many dates as possible to build a fan base and get exposure in front of radio programmers.

"It helped early on with radio being able to come out and get a leg up, especially in the Southeast where he had played, because radio knew who he was," Neal says. "Some of the radio guys had met him and befriended him."

Since his 2005 breakthrough single, "Hicktown," the touring strategy for Aldean has been to play hard-ticketed dates, as opposed to fairs and festivals. "It's hard to build markets by continuing to just take money and play non-ticketed shows," Neal says. "So the strategy from the beginning was to have people pay to see him, whether it was $5 at a club and built to $10."

Through the years, Aldean has steadily built a fan base touring clubs and theaters, and has opened for such acts as Rascal Flatts, Tim McGraw, Toby Keith, Keith Urban and Brooks & Dunn.

But he became a North American arena-headliner in 2010 following the release of his fourth studio album, My Kinda Party, which debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and has sold 1.9 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The set has spawned such hits as "Don't You Wanna Stay" (featuring Kelly Clarkson) and "Dirt Road Anthem."

Aldean's manager, Clarence Spalding, says another part of the artist's touring strategy has been to keep ticket prices affordable. "Through the years we've probably left some money on the table, but we've kept our ticket price low," he says. "You can't build a fan base long term charging too much for tickets. You have to allow your fans to get into the building."

So what's next for Aldean? "He's the next stadium act in country." continued on >>p42

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Neal says. "Hopefully in two years we'll be talking about a stadium tour."

KATY PERRY

In addition to breaking records on the Billboard charts, Katy Perry has also established herself as a global touring heavyweight.

Since the release of her 2008 debut album, One of the Boys, Perry has gone from performing on the Vans Warped tour to headlining arenas around the world. Those early Warped dates helped establish Perry as more than just a pop act while also building relationships at pop radio.

"What the 2008 Warped tour helped do was turn her on to kids who never would've known her, and at the same time she was going during the day to pop radio to visit all the big stations while she was playing to all the cool kids later in the day," says Mitch Rose, head of the music department at Creative Artists Agency.

CAA's Ijeoma Lewis, who works with Rose on booking Perry's tours, notes that the Warped shows also "legitimized her as more than just a pop act and her ability to play live."

After nearly a year of promotion behind 2008's Teenage Dream, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 and has sold 1.8 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, Perry became the first musical artist to appear on Facebook's live video streaming channel when she announced her North American arena tour in January to more than 1.4 million viewers.

"She has always had a unique ability to touch, reach out and connect with her fans in a way that isn't just about engaging with them," Rose says. "She deserves incredible credit for where she is today because of not only her efforts on songs and performances, but also her savvy in the social media arena."

When gauging the demand for booking Perry's North American trek earlier this year, Lewis says that he and Rose looked to the success she was having overseas. "We knew because she was doing arena business in the other territories around the world that it was the logical next step here as well," Lewis says.

Rose notes that Perry also had six No. 1s on Billboard's Mainstream Top 40 chart by the time her tour began in June. "It's pretty clear that when there are hits, people want to see them," he says.

Perry's ongoing global tour is scheduled to end Dec. 1 in Grand Rapids, Mich., at the Van Andel Arena. She's managed by Martin Kirkup, Steve Jensen and Bradford Cobb, and booked internationally by CAA's Emma Bunks.

RIHANNA

With five studio albums released since 2005, and numerous tours during that time to support her numerous hit singles, Rihanna is one of today's hardest-working artists.

Cara Lewis, Rihanna's North American booking agent at William Morris Endeavor (WME), has been helping develop the pop star's touring career since the release of her first single, "Pon De Replay," in 2005.

"Because she was a young artist, we worked on developing a fan base so that it became more about Rihanna's brand and not just a hit record," Lewis says, noting that Rihanna's first club tour was in support of 2005's Music of the Sun.

Now a global touring artist, Rihanna first broke into the European market through a support slot on the Pussycat Dolls' 2006 trek of the continent. Shortly thereafter the singer was headlining her own European dates.

WME's Tony Goldring is the international agent for Rihanna, and her manager is Jay Brown at Roc Nation.

In 2007, Rihanna primarily toured arenas in Canada and large clubs/theaters in the United States. A year later she was tapped as support for Kanye West's Glow in the Dark tour, which grossed $30.8 million from 49 concerts that attracted 507,853 fans.

"We worked on developing her internationally and not just domestically, and I think that's a key to why she's an international icon today," Lewis says. "She headlined shows in Europe and Canada at the same time she was playing protected, tastemaker shows in the U.S. She was visible in a way that helped us strengthen her brand and elevate her to the status she's at today."

But Lewis believes Rihanna really came into her own as touring artist during the 2010-11 Last Girl on Earth (arenas/amphi-theaters) and Loud (arenas) tours. The international treks were in support of her pop star's 2010 album, Loud, which has sold 1.5 million albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album produced the top 10 Billboard Hot 100 singles "Only Girl (In the World)," "What's My Name?" (featuring Drake), "S&M" (featuring Britney Spears) and "Cheers (Drink to That)."

Following the Loud tour, which ends in late December with a multiple-night stand at the O2 Arena in London, Rihanna will take a break before going out on the road to support new set Talk That Talk, due Nov. 21.

"After nearly seven years on the road, it's time for a break," Lewis says. "She's going to take some time off and when it's time to tour again, the focus will be on playing different venues and packaging her with the unexpected."
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<td>$472,492</td>
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<td>Ford Field, Detroit, Oct. 24</td>
<td>9,469</td>
<td>Live Nation, Greenwood Productions</td>
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<td>$460,999</td>
<td>S O 8 , JOHN LEGEND</td>
<td>NRG Stadium, Houston, Texas, Oct. 24</td>
<td>10,674</td>
<td>Live Nation</td>
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Red Light Management founder Coran Capshaw will be the first manager to receive the Humanitarian Award at the Billboard Touring Awards, set for Nov. 10 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York. Previous honorees include Jack Johnson, Vans Warped founder Kevin Lyman, Jon Bon Jovi, Bob Ezrin and the Edge for Music Rising. Live producer Kevin Wall, Dave Matthews and Clear Channel Entertainment.

Much of Capshaw's philanthropic efforts are directly related to live music events. In light of the natural disasters that have affected both the world and the United States in the past few years, Capshaw and Red Light Management have produced many benefit concerts to offer disaster relief, including Nashville Rising, which raised $3 million for flood relief in Nashville after the devastating floods in 2010. BAMA Rising, which raised $2.2 million for tornado recovery throughout the state of Alabama; and Phish: A Benefit for Vermont Hurricane Recovery, which raised more than $1.2 million to help with statewide recovery in light of the recent devastating hurricanes that hammered the state.

Capshaw has worked with client Dave Matthews Band to raise more than $4 million for charitable initiatives and helped the group establish its charitable arm, BAMA Works. A portion of all DMB ticket sales is donated directly to BAMA Works, which is hosted at the Community Foundation in Charlottesville, Va. DMB has played and headlined countless charitable concerts. It has also been a pioneer in green touring and has carbon-offset its touring since its inception in 1991.

Along with Matthews, Capshaw launched a new charity concept in which fans are able to donate the value of their ticket to the charity of their choosing. This groundbreaking idea has resulted in more than $3.3 million in donations, and Capshaw plans to further the idea and inspire other bands to follow this model.

Capshaw also has his own charitable fund, the Start Hill/Red Light Fund, which has made grants locally and nationally. Capshaw and Red Light Management sponsor myriad charitable events, including the Bridge School gala, Alicia Keys' keep a Child Alive Black Ball and Creative Artists Agency's annual Young Philanthropist Party.

With a large and diverse artist roster, Capshaw and Red Light encourage all of their bands to weave philanthropy and giving into the core of their businesses. Keys, DMB, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, Phish, O.A.R., Jars of Clay, Third Day, Switchfoot and more have raised the bar in artist giving and fan engagement with philanthropy.

Anyone who knows Capshaw knows he would never seek out such attention for his philanthropy. The manager/entrepreneur is notoriously press-shy and, like most great managers, prefers the focus to be on his acts. Rather than put his name on buildings or seek the spotlight, Capshaw instead opts to do work that directly affects thousands of people—moving the live business forward in the process.
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A Delectable Debut

Louisville’s KFC Yum! Center celebrates its first anniversary on the concert scene

BY JOHN LANNERT

Louisville, Ky., has produced more than its share of hits.

Since 1884, the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory has been manufacturing baseball bats used by a parade of legends, from Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth to contemporary fence busters like Alex Rodriguez and Prince Fielder.

Now, several blocks east of the famed baseball complex, KFC Yum! Center has smacked a home run of its own, marking its first year as the region's newest entertainment center and multipurpose arena.

In the wake of a sold-out opening engagement by the Eagles on Oct. 10, 2010, the center has welcomed sell-out shows in the past year: Lady Gaga, Elton John, Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, Taylor Swift and Kid Rock.

Complementing the big-name concerts, the KFC Yum! Center has hosted an array of well-attended events, including shows featuring Dane Cook, Katt Williams, Cirque Du Soleil, Disney on Ice, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the Harlem Globetrotters and WWE's Smackdown tour. Bob Seger is slated to perform Nov. 17.

And for the rabid followers of the University of Louisville's basketball team, the KFC Yum! Center—or Yum! Center, as it's most commonly known—is home to the city's beloved Cardinals basketball team.

Nestled downtown between the Galt House hotel and the Clark Memorial Bridge, near the banks of the Ohio River, the distinctive, wavy-shaped arena, encased in paneled glass windows, is "one of the premier iconic projects to be built in our country in the last 10 years," says Bob Newman, COO of AEG Facilities, which books the arena. "You're going to see continued interest and awareness among the sport and entertainment communities to include Louisville in their routing and change it from a potential play to a must-play market."

Touring industry observers note that the Yum! Center is rising up through the ranks of top venues as measured by ticket sales.

Built for $238 million, according to the center's website, the building offers superb acoustics, such amenities as dressing rooms designed exclusively for performers and state-of-the-art production features. It houses more than 7,210,000 square feet.

Yum! Brands paid $13.5 million for naming rights over a 10-year period. Headquartered in Louisville, Yum! Brands is the parent company of KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.

The Yum! Center might seem a bit large for Louisville, whose metropolitan population is only 1.3 million. But Newman insists the time was ripe to construct a new downtown entertainment venue in the Derby City.

"We've always had the belief," Newman says, "that the Louisville market was a tremendous market and a certain degree was underserved on the arena side, and that a new building in the location would ..."
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The KFC Yum! Center is located in Louisville, Kentucky and managed and operated by the Kentucky State Fair Board.
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from >>p47 bring in a new level of interest from both the artist events and the fans. The Yum! Center has turned out to be a much greater success than even we imagined.”

While saying he is “ecstatic” with the first-year run for the Yum! Center, AEG Facilities VP of event booking and development Eric Bresler emphasizes that the arena couldn’t have realized its quick start without “the promoters of the shows who have really supported the venue from the get-go.”

Among the promotion firms Bresler cites as key players during the first-year run of performances are AEG Live, Live Nation, the Messina Group, Beaver Productions, NS2, Feld Entertainment, WWE and the Harlem Globetrotters.

“I recall hearing a couple of my Live Nation friends speaking very positively about their experiences with Lady Gaga,” AEG Live senior VP Ali Harnell says.

“You’re going to see interest and awareness among the sports and entertainment communities to include Louisville as a must-play market.” - Bob Newman, COO, AEG Facilities

Certainly Swift seemed beguiled by the Yum! Center as she thanked her adoring faithful for attending her Oct. 11 concert. Swift, recently named Billboard’s Woman of the Year, played the date as a makeup show for an earlier engagement that was canceled due to laryngitis. Many concert-goers at Swift’s show acknowledged that Louisville had long needed an updated, arena-sized venue.

Will such appreciation among music fans last? Harnell suggests that even after the honeymoon period wears off between the local concert-goers and their new arena, the Yum! Center could develop into a long-standing fan favorite, similar to Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, built in 1996.

“Bridgestone Arena, which started as the Nashville Arena... is having a record year this year,” Harnell says. “So, you have a honeymoon and then hopefully, you fall deeper in love as the relationship continues. It’s certainly happening in... Nashville and I would expect the same for Louisville.”

Newman credits Jim Host, chairman of the Louisville Arena Authority, which owns the Yum! Center, and Harold Workman, president/CEO of the Kentucky State Fair Board, which manages the building, with crafting a singular, fan-friendly facility that can be booked for nearly any type of event.

“They designed the building to be a true, multipurpose sport and entertainment venue, and they hit it right on the mark,” Newman says. He adds that AEG’s current pact with the Kentucky State Fair Board for the Yum! Center was an extension of a relationship that began years ago when AEG signed on to book concerts at Freedom Hall. Another arena-sized venue the Kentucky State Fair Board was managing.

Host, a sports marketing pioneer who spearheaded the development of the Yum! Center, says his involvement in the early 1990s with the construction of Rupp Arena in Lexington, Ky., allowed him to fine-tune his vision for Louisville’s arena complex.

“What I learned was that [arena] had to be more than a basketball facility in order for it to be successful financially and develop economic impact for the downtown community,” Host says. “And I learned to build the doors on the street big enough to get the [circus] elephants in.”

Assisted by a volunteer board, Host embarked on a series of visits to arena-sized facilities built in the last 15 years, such as Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis and Sprint Center in Kansas City, Mo., to learn about the most efficient operating features of each facility and incorporate them into the Yum! Center’s design.

Host says that one of the ideas adopted was the increasingly popular “arena theater” configuration, a curtained system that transforms the 21,700-capacity, in-round arena into a cozier, lower-bowl facility that can seat more than 9,000.

“We saw how the curtain worked at Conseco and it was the first time we saw one that we thought was perfectly done, so we wanted to copy that,” Host says. “But we wanted to do it in such a way to where the sight lines were perfect for a lower bowl, so that when you had a Disney show or a circus that would bring in 6,000 or 7,000 people, it would look like a heck of a crowd.”

Several big-name musical acts have already played the lower bowl, such as My Morning Jacket and R. Kelly, as well as comic Martin Lawrence.

In addition... continued on >>p52
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Host points out that the Yum! Center is equipped with a Venus fiber optic system, separate bays for loading and unloading garbage and equipment, ample space to hold private functions before and after an event and connections to 3,300 hotel rooms through weather-protected pedestrian walkways.

Host figures the Yum! Center will "operate in the black" after one year in business. The economic impact of the construction of the venue on the Louisville business community, he says, has been estimated at $479 million. Also, two hotels and several restaurants have opened near the arena since its debut.

Despite its smooth first year, the development of the Yum! Center was a problematic project for Host that took nearly six years to complete.

"The number of detractors who said it couldn't be done [outnumbered supporters] 9 to 1 at the beginning," Host says.

And most naysayers, he remembers, didn't want the facility to be built by the Ohio River: "I felt passionately and strongly that we would be missing a huge opportunity for the state and for the city not to build it where it now stands," Host says. "Today, I would say the ratio is reversed. It's 9 to 1 of everybody who's saying, 'Man, I was really for that.'"

That widespread support is reflected in ticket sales. Dennis Petrullo, the Louisville-based booking director for AEG Facilities, affirms that the vast majority of tickets have been bought by area residents who haven't flocked to high-end concert tickets.

"We have not had any issues with selling tickets, no matter what the price has been," Petrullo says. "The Eagles came in at $175 [a seat]. The economy has hurt people who are thinking of taking an extended vacation. So, when a husband and his wife go out for a nice evening to a show here, it's a little more justifiable than going to Cancun for a week."

Petrullo says most of the large-scale concerts are produced in an end-stage format that seats 17,000. Given the larger number of smaller-scale recording artists than large-ticket stars, Petrullo expects more lower-ticket events to be booked in the future, as well as annual shows by Disney on Ice, WWE, Ringling Brothers and the Harlem Globetrotters.

A prime source of local support, AEG's Bresler says, are the season ticket holders to the University of Louisville home basketball games, "because there is a built-in base of fans who are fans not only of basketball, but also of entertainment. There are presale opportunities for season ticket holders who also have the first right to purchase [concert] tickets and that's really important because it does generate immediate buzz from a sales standpoint before you've even gone on sale to the general public."

As its reputation continues to grow, the Yum! Center is fast becoming a Louisville landmark as well known for sport and en-

A prime source of local support are the season ticket holders to the University of Louisville home basketball games, who will be offered pre-sale opportunities for tickets to concerts and other events.

from page 50

John Lannert, former senior editor at Billboard, lives in Louisville.
Welcome Back

After a two-year hiatus, Laura Pausini returns home with a new album and world tour

Two years ago, fresh off her worldwide Primavera Anticipada tour, Laura Pausini, Italy's top-selling female act, made a surprise announcement. She was taking two years off—not to write or work on new material, but simply to rest and, in her own words, "lead a normal life with my family." It must have been a good vacation. A renewed Pausini returns Nov. 15 with Antidoto, an album that bears her signature sound and will be released in Italian and Spanish in more than 30 countries. But it comes with a whole new game plan that almost immediately incorporates the launch of her extensive worldwide tour.

"It's the first time in my life that my tour is already planned out," Pausini says, speaking on the phone from Milan between rehearsals. "It feels like a dream. One of the things I always fought for was my tour. I could never understand how it was possible to release an album and not have tour dates."

This time around, Pausini need not worry. Her Antidoto world tour kicks off Dec. 22 in Milan and ends more than a year later. In late December alone, Pausini will play six nights—including Christmas—in Milan's Mediolanum Forum (capacity 12,000), followed by five nights at Rome's Palalottomatica (capacity 12,000). Between January and May, she has booked 50 more dates in Italy, Latin America and 23 other European countries.

Heavy touring isn't new to Pausini. Her career, after all, wasn't launched from the studio, but from the stage. She was the winner of the prestigious Sanremo Music Festival in 1993, when she was only 19, and she's been performing non-stop ever since.

"It's been almost 18 years where I've only traveled, played shows, done promotion," Pausini says with a laugh. "This is the first time in all that time that I've been able to sit back and review everything that's happened to me. There have been changes in my career, of course."

Those changes include an amicable split with longtime manager Gabriele Parisi and a new agreement with veteran Riccardo Benini, who previously handled Emi Ramazzotti. But her music, naturally, has evolved as well. "When you start at 18, your music grows with you," Pausini says. "And I hope you can hear that in the arrangements and in the way the songs are written, particularly the lyrics. But I haven't wanted to make dramatic changes to my musical style. This is absolutely a very 'Pausini' album."

"Pausini albums" are defined by the melodic lines of Italian pop and by her signature voice, a dulcet, beautiful instrument with a bell-like timbre that works equally well in Italian, Spanish and English—all languages Pausini, unlike most other Italians who sing in Spanish and English, speaks fluently. On Antidoto, Pausini navigates easily convincingly from the jovous "Bienvenido," whose video is an homage to "Aquarius" (from "Hair")—to the soulful melancholy of "Bastata."

Pausini's versatility has eased her entry into multiple markets—she's a big seller in Brazil, for example—to the tune of 45 million albums sold worldwide since the launch of her career, according to Warner. In Italy, she reigns: Two years ago, she became the only female act to ever sell out a stadium, playing for more than 60,000 at Milan's San Siro.

"Laura, even in recent times, has been able to maintain her level of sales," says Warner Italy chairman Massimiliano Giuliano, who's worked with Pausini since 2000 and expects Antidoto to sell between 250,000 and 300,000 copies in Italy alone. "Because she's been out of the business for a couple of years, there's a lot of expectation."

"As a female act, she has a place in the market that no one else has," adds Gabriela Martinez, VP of marketing for Warner Music Latin America, which is coordinating the release of the Spanish-language version of Antidoto for both the U.S. and Latin American markets. "She's such a familiar name that she's transcended any niche."

Warner will work at least four singles from Antidoto, beginning with "Bienvenido," which is No. 7 in Italy. A second single, "Jamas Abandone," will be released there on Nov. 15. But both Giuliano and Martinez say that the epicenter of Antidoto's promotion is the tour.

While Pausini long toured with Live Nation, this time around she's with concert promotion company F&P Group in Italy, which she was recently acquired by Warner. "So, it's really a 360 project," Giuliano says. F&P works with local promoters in markets outside of Italy, and timing the tour in tandem with the album's release allows Pausini to promote in each country as she performs there—a major plus for a global artist.

Still, the week prior to Antidoto's release, Pausini will fly from Italy to Mexico to Argentina to Brazil to the United States and then to Puerto Rico, with promotional activities at every stop. Although Pausini only launched her Twitter account a couple of months ago—at the urging of her Latin fans—she already has 200,000 plus followers. On her Facebook page, which she launched a year ago, she has close to 1.2 million likes. Most important, even during her hiatus, she made a point of connecting with fans through website LauraForYou.com, where subscribers can participate in daily live chats with Pausini.

"I spend 30-40 minutes a day with them, and you hear amazing stories," says Pausini, who dedicated "Jamas Abandonar" to her fans. "It speaks about returning to the stage and about the fact that even though I went through a phase where I most wanted to rest, I never abandoned the thought of singing on a stage again."

BY LEILA COBO
IROAD

Feb.11

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North America to celebrate
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him the opportunity
to make two appearances on West's chart-topping 2010
album, "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy," on the aforementioned "Runaway" and the posse cut "So
Appalled." But it also came at a price: Pusha had to
begin working harder than ever to prove he could
shine with the spotlight focused solely on him.

He got the ball rolling by releasing "Fear of God II" and
headlining the Heineken Red Star Access x
G.O.O.D. Music tour during the summer. Now, he's hop-
ing "Fear of God II"—led by singles "Trouble on My Mind,"
featuring Tyler, the Creator, and "Amen," featuring West
and Young Jeezy—will sustain the momentum.

Initially, the plan was to seek a simple distribution deal
for "Fear of God II." "I was going to go through some
one like Fontana and have them distribute it, and we
would pay the marketing costs," Pusha's longtime man-
ger Steven Victor says.

But in April, Victor met with Peter Bittenbender, co-
founder/CEO of New York-based production company
Universal Music, to pitch the album. Bittenbender offered to
partner with G.O.O.D. to release the EP—complete with
distribution, three videos and a marketing plan that includes
an iTunes deal that will allow fans to download the 12-
song EP for $7.99 during the first week.

"The whole point of this EP was to keep the heat on
Pusha until the official album comes," Bittenbender says.
"If she didn't have this project, he'd be limbo right now.

That's a situation Pusha is trying to avoid. As a mem-
ber of the Clipse, he was forced to put his career on hold
too many times. So, as he preps his solo album for a
2012 release, he wants "Fear of God II" to keep his
name at the forefront.

"This isn't my official album," says Pusha, who will
perform at select dates on West's Ambition tour through
December. "But, it's official. People in the retail market
need to know about Pusha T, the solo artist."
Forever And A Day

Millions of albums in, Keith Sweat is going strong with radio show, forthcoming book

"I'm not going to tell Picasso how to paint," says Keith Sweat. He's offering his take on the current state of R&B.

"No one's going to hear any acerbic comments from the veteran singer/songwriter/producer about what some perceive as the watering down of soul music from its traditional gospel-inspired roots to its current dance/pop incarnation.

"I'm fine with what everyone else is doing because that's what they do," Sweat says. "But I'm going to do what I do. I've stayed true to my sound throughout the years—it's made me realize that even the pop audience wants to hear traditional R&B."

Of course, when you've had major hits in the past—"Make It Last Forever" and "Dee-Lite"—and have sold more than 11 million albums since then, why change? Sweat's 11th studio set, "Til the Morning (Due Nov. 8 on EOne Music)," is heavy on the R&B—a break from Keith Sweat blueprint of sensual pillow talk and on-my-knees heartfelt. But as the 50-year-old points out, there's a youthful energy to the set, which features artists like T-Pain, SWV's Coco and Johnny Gill.

"My whole thing was getting up-and-coming songwriters and producers that listened to Keith Sweat, the Deele and all the way I listened to O'Jays," Sweat says. He's specifically highlighted newcomer Angelo Romone, who co-produced the album's sultry throwback title track/lead single: "If it feels old school, that's only because it's Keith Sweat," he says with a laugh.

Sweat earned his old-school stripes at a time when hip-hop and soul were set to collide with game-changing results. With the help of groundbreaking producer Teddy Riley, the Harlem native released New Jack Swing's opening salvo in 1987—his triple-platinum debut, "Make It Last Forever." The album made Sweat a favorite among a new generation of R&B romantics, and his frenetic first single, "I Want Her," landed in the top five on the Billboard Hot 100.

But while many of his peers struggled to keep the groove going, Sweat's proved he's in it for the long haul. A string of well-received albums that includes 1990's "Tell Me All Your Love" (peaking at No. 1 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart and No. 6 on the Billboard 200), 1996's Keith Sweat (No. 1 peak on R&B/Hip-Hop Albums and No. 5 on the Billboard 200) and 2010's "Ruin" (Silent No. 13 peak on the Billboard 200) signifies an artist who's been a model of meticulous consistency. Yet EOne VP of urban music Marlene Dominguez is banking on another attribute to make "Til the Morning a commercial success: Sweat's expansion into radio, publishing and TV. "Not only did we sign a veteran artist, we signed a great business model," she says. "Keith continues to go outside of the spectrum of what his fans would expect him to do."

The Sweat brand began expanding in 2007, when the soulful crooner was tapped to host his own nationally syndicated radio program, "The Sweat Hotel," a show that mixes quiet storms and jams and relationship advice. "Being an older artist who's putting out R&B, I might not get the same radio stations to play my music that I used to," he says. "So I thought, 'What else can I do to really get out to my audience?' Now I can be heard in approximately 50 markets."

Then there's his 2010 reality show, "Keith Sweat's Platinum House," and an upcoming feature on the career-reflective series "As Written," both on cable network Centric. Sweat's also set to drop a relationship book next May, titled "Make It Last Forever" (Simon & Schuster). "He's not some kid that broke big out of the jazz and became a sensation," says Sweat's agent, Jeff Allen of Universal Attractions. "Keith literally used to work in Wall Street. He's not dummy."

For his part, Sweat is excited about taking his music work ethic on the road and performing "Til the Morning for a new generation of fans on his pending world tour. "I'll be in Las Vegas, Japan, Nigeria and South Africa," he says. "It should always be, 'What more can I do?'"
It's an indication of Bradford Cox's arty streak that, at six-and-a-half minutes long, the single finds from his third studio album under the Atlas Sound handle is also the record's longest cut. Cox and his bandmates in Atlanta's Deerhunter drew some mainstream praise last year for Halcyon Digest, which offered a very slightly cleaned-up version of the indie group's self-described "ambient punk." Parallax has its share of fuzz-free moments as well. ("Lightworks," the harmonica-faced closer, might've fit unnoticed on either of the two recent Buddy Holly tribute records.) But Cox's solo project still serves as a repository for some of his more idiosyncratic ideas, as in the woozily sung "My Angel Is Broken" and "Amplifiers," which sounds like it was recorded inside an aquarium. As for Bradford Incognito, the aforementioned single, it spirals out from a pretty acoustic ballad into the kind of lengthy dream-folk jam we've grown to expect from Cox's pals in Animal Collective.—MW

**ATLAS SOUND**

Parallax

Producers: Bradford Cox, Nicolas Vernhes

4AD

Release Date: Nov. 8

**NICKELBACK**

Here and Now

Producer: Nickelback

Roadrunner Records

Release Date: Nov. 21

Nickelback's dream girl apparently "smokes a little home-grown, drinks a little Cuervo" and drives a fast car. We're so surprised. But that's a welcome sign—especially for fans—that while the Canadian troupe has grown musically, it hasn't grown up on its seventh album, Here and Now. The quartet comes out fixin' for a fight with the switchblade guitars of "This Means War," gets into full-on party mode with "Bottoms Up" and pursues that ideal female on "Gotta Get Me Some," "Midnight Queen" and "Everything I Wanna Do." The anesthetic "When We Stand Together" offers a requisite bit of social consciousness, while frontman Chad Kroeger's melodic love songs—"Lullaby," "Trying Not to Love You," "Holding On to Heaven," the vividly characterized "Don't Ever Let It End"—boast a rich sheen that could be traced to producer Mutt Lange's work on 2008's Dark Horse but without quite as much bombast. It's a well-crafted brand of meat 'n' potatoes hard rock.—GG

**R&B**

**TYRESE**

Open Invitation

Producers: various

V2/Island Def Jam

Release Date: Nov. 1

Open Invitation ends a five-year gap between studio albums for Tyrese, who's spent much of the time since 2006's double-disc After Ego pursuing his interests in film (such as Michael Bay's "Transformers" movies) and self-help literature ("How to Get Out of Your Own Way"). But if the singer/actor/author's musical cachet has diminished as a result of his hiatus, you can't tell from this self-released effort, which features cameos from such A-list guests as R. Kelly, Ludacris and Rick Ross. Up-and-coming rapper Jay Rock also contributes a verse to opener "I'm Home," right before Tyrese thanks his fans for keeping his music alive. "You never gave your heart away to nobody else," he sings, "and I just appreciate you." Those fans won't be disappointed by new tunes like "Stay," a handsome, retro-accented slow jam, and the bedroom-ready "One Night," in which Tyrese makes admiring lyrical reference to Kelly's 1993 classic "12 Play." "I swear I make it look easy," he brags elsewhere, and indeed, there's some truth to that.—MW

**WALE**

Ambition

Producers: various

Maybach Music/Warner Bros

Release Date: Nov. 1

More than any of the other young rappers who emerged at the same time—think of Drake and Kid Cudi, for starters—Wale has seemed resistant to being boxed into a single style. 2008's The Mixtape About Nothing showcased an unusually clever wordsmith with ties to Washington, D.C.'s go-go scene, the next year's aptly titled Attention Deficit revealed an arty hipster-rap streak. Now, not long after touring with earnest Canadian MC K'naan, Wale has aligned himself with Rick Ross' Maybach Music Group for his sophomore studio disc. Ambition nods to Ross' cartoon grandiosity in "Miami Nights," where Wale details his collection of luxury goods over a jubilant horn riff. Characteristically, though, the album heads in plenty of other directions as well: trippy neo-soul ("Lotus Flower Bomb," with Miguel), percollating digital dancehall (the Diplo-produced "Slight Work") and breezy pop-rap ("Sabotage," featuring Lloyd). And if not all of it sticks? Blame the influence of Wale's new boss, the so-called Teflon Don.—MW

**DJ DRAMA**

Third Power

Producers: various

Aphilliates/Power House

Release Date: Oct. 11

Hip-hop's mixtape king breaks from his successful Gangsta Grillz series on his latest studio disc. But Third Power hardly forgoes DJ Drama's all-star formula: here he enlist an expansive cast of rappers and singers—Fabolous, Wiz Khalifa, Freeway, Yo Gotti, B.o.B and Akon, among others—for an album that rarely thrills but consistently satisfies. Highlights include the woozy "Me & My Money," in which Gucci Mane extends a lure-as-lady metaphor to remarkable lengths; a Young Jeezy/Freddie Gibbs duet aptly titled "Rough"; and the sprightly, '80s R&B-styled "Never See You Again," with Talia Coles and Wale. However, "Undercover," featuring Chris Brown and J. Cole, projects a youthfulness even as it feels like a squandered opportunity for something more memorable. Drama fans will recognize "Oh My," the DJ's Drumma Boy-produced single from earlier this year. It's bookended by a remix with Trey Songz, 2 Chainz and Big Sean. But familiarity, of course, is Drama's forte—with or without the brand name.—MW

**COUNTRY**

**TOBY KEITH**

Clancy's Tavern

Producer: Toby Keith

Showdog Universal

Release Date: Oct. 25

It may seem hard to believe, but Toby Keith has been doing what he does—and doing it well—for 18 years now. On his latest album, Clancy's Tavern, he hasn't made any major changes stylistically or lyrically. For the most part, the country singer adheres to the show-biz adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The chart-topping "Made in America" and "Red Solo Cup" have already shown their appeal to Keith's core, though the latter might have some degree of difficulty at country radio. Still, there's more than enough to keep Keith's name on the airwaves for the next 12-18 months. "I Won't Let You Down" is a bluesy love song that he handles well, and he even shines the spotlight on a couple of '80s classics: Chuck Berry's "Memphis" and the gear-jamming "Truck Drivin' Man." Also worth a listen is the stunning title cut, which has a bit of an Irish lean. Overall, another solid effort from one of country's finest.—CD
**SINGLES**

**THE ROOTS FEATURING BIG K.R.I.T. AND DICE RAW**

**THE BLACK KEYS**

**NERVO FEATURING AFROJACK AND STEVE AOKI**

**THE FRAY**

**THE ROOTS FEATURING BIG K.R.I.T. AND DICE RAW**

Make My (4:31)
Producers: Phan-Mateen, Ahmir, "Questlove" Thompson

The Roots, otherwise occupied as the house band for Jimmy Fallon, return with an affecting new single to preview their upcoming concept album, *undun*. "Make My" mourns youthful greed with shamefaced sorrow and stinging bitterness. Rising Mississippi artist Big K.R.I.T. opens with an uncommonly elegiac verse that owes more to Mos Def than David Banner, rapping, "I did it all for the money, Lord/It's what it seems, in it the world of night terrors/it's hard to dream, they're holding cash rules everything." Roots MC Black Thought's verse is more restless, as he grows about hardship while dropping some distantly goofy wordplay. A blanket of neo-soul tones play in lieu of a third verse, and the musicality of the veteran group shines bright. "Make My" succeeds because it's personal rather than preachy, avoiding the critical pitfall of so-called "conscious rap." —EN

**HIP-HOP**

**SNOOP DOGG & WIZ KHALIFA FEATURING BRUNO MARS**

Young, Wild & Free (3:27)
Producers: The Smeezingtons
Writers: various
Publishers: Rostrum/Atlantic/RIR

Simply put, "Young, Wild & Free," the first taste of the upcoming soundtrack to *Snoop Dogg and Wiz Khalifa's* forthcoming buddy comedy "Mac and Devin Go to High School," is a weed rap song from two of hip-hop's favorite stoners. The drums groove but the twinking piano overpowers them, leaving the track swooning in a haze of nostalgia as Bruno Mars delivers a carefree choral hook. The Doggfather and his apprentice trade green-friendly verses where Snoop reminisces—"It's like I'm 17 again/Peach fuzz on my face/Lookin' on the case/Trying to get a hella taste"—while Khalifa handles most of the boast. Although Snoop's flow is effortless, the younger rapper's forceful, punchy delivery gets on top of the beat and harshens the mellowness of the Smeezingtons' laid-back production. Even so, "Young, Wild & Free" is pretty much exactly what you'd expect from these two pro-marijuana rap stars. —JB

**ALTERNATIVE**

**CHAIRLIFT**

Sidewalk Safari (3:50)
Producer: Dan Carey
Writer: Chairlift
Publishers: Avent-Guarin/Patrick Wimberly (GESAC)
Columbia Records

This adorable Brooklyn electro-pop duo scored big back in 2008 with "Bruises," a twinkling, tear-streaked anthem that famously perked up a colorful iPod ad. "TV commercial soundtrack stars" is a weird title to be saddled with, particularly for an indie outfit that probably never foresee a smash single. Unlike folk chameleons Leslie Feist—who chose to follow her Apple time capsule moment ("1234") with the insular, un-catchy album Metals—Chairlift has offered another slice of infectious surf sunshine for its welcome-back party, but "Sidewalk Safari" is wiser and a tad rougher around the edges than "Bruises." It's also way better—check out Patrick Wimberly's undulating vintage keys, the snaking collage of exotic beats and Caroline Polacheck's wicked vocal performance, which alternates between top-40 sparkle and prog rock. Even the outo sounds like the dis-integrating soundtrack to a '70s B-movie. —RR

**REVIEW INDEX**

**POP**

**THE FRAY**

Heartbeat (3:39)
Producer: Brendan O'Brien
Writers: I. Slade, J. King
Publishers: Lincoln & Ollie Music/SMI/Arpil Music/ Little Bike Music (ASCAP)

SINGLE

The Fray is set to release its third studio album, *Scars and Stories*, in February, and the album's first single is essentially more of the same sound fans heard on the group's self-titled sophomore set. After huge radio success with "Over My Head (Cable Car)" and "How to Save a Life" in 2006, the alt-rock troupe ventured into deeper emotional territory on 2009's *The Fray*, and "Heartbeat" continues that trend. Frontman Isaac Slade drew inspiration for the song on a trip to Rwanda, although the lyrics remain pretty universal: "Oh, I'm feeling your heartbeat/And oh, you're comin' around, comin' around in/And if you can love somebody, love them all the same." Despite some obvious similarities to past works, "Heartbeat" has a catchy chorus, a nice mixture of Slade's melodic falsetto and quirky lower range, and a chock-a-block production. As expected by now from the Fray, the song sets itself up nicely for persistent radio play. —MD
Valley Of The Dolls

Pussycat Dolls creator Robin Antin promises the revamped girl group will be ‘fierce’

D
d plez Hilton jump the gun with his recent blog post and photo proclaiming, “The REAL New Pussycat Dolls?” According to Pussycat Dolls creator Robin Antin, the actual members of the revamped group haven’t officially been chosen.

“It’s official that I’m doing a new group of Pussycat Dolls,” she says. “But the only reason I can talk about the girls individually is because of contracts.”

Then who are the six females pictured in the Hilton post? There’s Lauren Bennett, the featured singer on LMFAO’s No. 1 hit “Party Rock Anthem.” Antin notes that both Bennett and Vanessa Curry, a Los Angeles Laker Girl, have been part of my crew [the Pussycat Dolls Burlesque Revue] for a long time and have helped her promote the latest Pussycat Dolls workout DVD. The remaining ladies include Kristal “Lyndriette” Smith, Kia Hampton, Tiffany “Taz” Zavala and Paula Van Oppen. Van Oppen is also a member of the Burlesque Revue, but hasn’t been promoting the DVD with Bennett and Curry.

Ultimately, Antin adds, the latest Dolls incarnation may not include six ladies. “The number of girls could change,” she says. “I’ve been going back and forth. It could go back to five. It really depends on how it goes once we start to do our thing. This is what happened back in the day when the original Dolls’ first album, PCD, featured six members in 2005. By the time second album Doll Domination bowed in 2008, the lineup had shrunk to five.

Launched as a burlesque dance troupe in 1995, the Pussycat Dolls later morphed into a pop dance group signed to Interscope. Like the Spice Girls before them, the Pussycat Dolls became a worldwide phenomenon thanks to four top 10 hits: “Don’t Cha,” “Stickwitu,” “Buttons” and “When I Grow Up.” At the time, the group members consisted of Nicole Scherzinger, Carmat Barchar, Melody Thornton, Jessica Sutta, Ashley Roberts and Kimberly Wyatt. A whirlwind of stateside and international tours and reality TV followed before the group disbanded in 2010 in pursuit of solo careers. The most notable alumna is Scherzinger, now a judge on the American version of “The X Factor” and still awaiting the U.S. release of her Interscope debut album, Killer Love, which was released earlier this year in the United Kingdom.

“There’s a reason Nicole is on ‘X Factor,’” Antin says. “It’s because of the Pussycat Dolls. I’m ready to make that happen for the next batch of girls.”

But the track record for girl groups—or any pop or R&B group, for that matter—has been disappointing. So can a revamped Pussycat Dolls break that streak? “The Pussycat Dolls reboot is an interesting concept,” says Joe “Moe” Roberts, PD of top 40 KHOP, Modesto, Calif. “We’ve seen other pop groups attempt to relaunch, like Menudo. But they are typically unsuccessful the second time around. I’m not saying it won’t work. But based on past examples, the chips seem stacked against them. Antin, however, is confident the new Dolls will thrive. ‘Producers are calling. Everyone wants to be a part of the Pussycat Dolls. A group is a hard thing to do but I feel like we hold that part of the market. I’ve been able to really brand it.’

Beyond the workout DVDs, the brand extends to clubs in Las Vegas, a clothing line and to the girls themselves, whether they’re in the recording group or not. A reality show is also being developed, focusing on Antin. She says that Kim Kardashian and producer Nigel Lythgoe (“American Idol”) are on board. The troupe’s recording revival will be a part of the show, but not the focus.

“Everyone wants to see the Pussycat Dolls,” Antin says of the brand’s ongoing success and the music group’s revival. “They know whoever I put in that all the girls are going to be amazing. They’re obviously going to be really hot, but also really talented. I don’t let anyone into my world—the Pussycat Dolls—unless they are fierce.”

Beyond classical:

VITTORIO GRIGOLO

Coldplay’s Mylo Xyloto arrives atop the Billboard 200 with 447,000 sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan, granting the band its third No. 1. The band is only the fifth rock act to bow three albums with sales of 400,000 or more since SoundScan began tracking data in 1991. Mylo Xyloto follows blockbuster starts for the outfit’s last two studio sets: 2005’s X&Y (737,000) and 2008’s Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends (721,000).

The other acts in the triple-play 400,000 plus club are Metallica, Dave Matthews Band, the Beatles and U2. For Metallica, all six of its studio sets released in the SoundScan era launched with at least 400,000. The same goes for DMB, whose 400,000-plus debut reigned with studio sets streaks back in 1998’s Before These Crowded Streets. —Keith Caulfield

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*According to Nielsen SoundScan
Stepping Up

DJ/producer Kaskade posts his strongest first-week debut—No. 17—with digitally released seventh album ‘Fire & Ice’

Not one person packed into New York’s sold-out Roseland Ballroom on Oct. 29 would describe Kaskade as quiet. He’s well-known for writing some of the lowliest melodies in dance music, replete with acoustic guitar strums and sweet-voiced nymphs. However, the 40-year-old DJ/producer does things differently live.

When Kaskade dropped fan favorite singalong “Be Still” from 2006’s Love Mysterious, it was over a wallowing bass beat that made it more of a command than a soothing suggestion. “Eyes,” the first single off his latest album, Fire & Ice (Ultra), had its lullaby-like vocal by Mindy Gledhill launch into a shower of power synths.

But despite his boisterous big-room DJ sets during the last decade, Kaskade (born Ryan Raddon) has been quietly establishing himself as one of dance music’s true institutions. Successful even before electronic music’s past few years, he continues to gain momentum with each subsequent release and tour—without the benefit of big hits or fanfare. Fire & Ice, his seventh album and first full-length, was released digitally on Oct. 25 and joined his strongest first week thus far. It debuted atop Billboard’s Dance/Electronic Albums chart and at No. 17 on the Billboard 200 with 20,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. A physical release will follow Nov. 8.

“Crossing the country on the Identity tour this summer really helped with the momentum,” manager Stephanie LaFera says. “We made a point to start letting fans hear the new music in the shows and in his tour videos on YouTube. By the time the release date was here, people were ready for it.”

Kaskade is one of dance’s true road warriors, regularly playing more than 100 DJ shows per year. In 2011, he headlined the 19-date Identity Festival, playing for 140,000 plus fans at venues like San Diego’s Cricket Wireless Amphitheater and the Nikon at Jones Beach Theater in Wantagh, N.Y. He has the only double-residency in Las Vegas: Wynn’s Encore Beach Club and Cosmopolitan’s Marquee.

His two-night, Halloween-themed stint at Roseland was a sellout. LaFera—who was a one-woman show before launching Atom Empire, the electronic music arm of Troy Carter’s Atom Factory, last month—utilized other new-media tools to sell: Fire allu.xe. SiriusXM’s dance-dedicated BPM channel did a Kaskade station takeover during release week, with significant on-air exposure and tagging plus a playlist of the entire album. “Most stations wouldn’t do that. It’s pretty huge,” LaFera says. “They’re the one radio resource that we use a dance act really have.”

An iTunes preorder program let fans stream snippets of every track for two weeks prior to release. Vevo provided main-page exposure during release week for the video to second single “Turn It Down.” The clip shows Swedish singers Rebecca & Fiona dancing to the beat, while a trio of figure skaters spin and twirl. It garnered more than 600,000 plays in five days. Spotify will offer users exclusive content—probably a remix—and a Kaskade playlist. These aren’t songs he’d play while DJing, LaFera says, but “more of what he listens to as a music consumer.”

Perhaps the most seductive and unique elements of Kaskade’s music are the lyrics. Nine of Fire & Ice’s 10 tracks (disc two contains remixes of the same set) are full vocals, a rarity for a dance artist. At Roseland, the crowd seemed to sing as much as it danced.

“I want the words to reflect things that I’m feeling or situations that I have gone through... things that anyone can relate to,” he says. “Dance music can be fun, but it can also say something and be more than just party music.”

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ROME’S ESCAPE

Vittorio Grigolo balances opera roles with blues, jazz and other new directions

After a three-hour rehearsal of Charles Gounod’s “Roméo et Juliette,” tenor Vittorio Grigolo is still in the mood to sing before heading off to fly toy helicopters.

He’s not interested in singing the arias he’ll perform in the lead role in the Los Angeles Opera production that begins Nov. 6. And selections from his two Sony Classical albums, the recently released Amor Verderò and The Italian Tenor, formerly No. 1 on Billboard’s classical chart, are out of the question, too. He wants to sing the blues.

“It’s a long road to heaven, a shorter one to hell,” he belts out while seated outdoors in the downtown Los Angeles Music Center plaza. He repeats the line a few times, jumbling the words and making his delivery more deliberate and louder before scatting and concluding with the sound of a cymbal crash. The song isn’t an improvisation—he has already written it.

“I feel rock, I feel jazz,” he says. “My dream would be to go to Hitsville (Studios) and make a Motown album. I want to be more in contact with my generation—and still be part of opera.”

A native of Arrezzo, Italy, raised in Rome and now London-based, Grigolo traveled the world as a member of the Sistine Chapel Choir. As a teen, he appeared with Luciano Pavarotti in the Rome Opera’s “Tosca.” The comparisons to Pavarotti began then and have yet to let up, though Grigolo’s good looks landed him in crossover territory before he could establish himself in major opera roles.

For a short while, Grigolo was a member of Simon Cowell’s Il Divo, a band he left before signing any contracts. Prior to his operatic breakthrough, he landed a pop hit with “In the Hands of Love,” a top 10 album in the United Kingdom. While that received radio airplay, Grigolo remained focused on his opera career.

“I was told you cannot be out of opera for more than a year or two, or you will have to wait 10 years to go back to where you are,” says Grigolo, 33. “Now he’s in a rare position, an opera singer with a pop past who sees a future in opera productions. I want to be happy singing,” he says. “I could do my entire career in just three operas. Come in like a killer, unload my luggage and nail it. Romeo, Faust, whatever.”

Grigolo, who first played Romeo at La Scala in Milan, could well be singing more blues, specifically Robert Johnson’s “Crossroads.” Amore Verderò, Grigolo says, is a goodbye to the repertoire of his youth; a journey through well-known arias by Pucini, Verdi, Rossini and others, concluding with Lucio Dalla’s “Canzù.”

“I’m living in two centuries. My goal is to enlarge the audience [for opera] by using the media of our time,” he says, using the term “popera” as a definition of a viable art form rather than as a derisive insult. The next recording—he has four more on his Sony contract—could be French repertoire, Christmas songs or popera. Or even the blues.

—Phil Gallo

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

Bumping rapper A$AP signs $3M deal with Pool Grounds/RCA

“Mixtape is better than a lot of people’s albums,” ASAP Rocky declares two days after the release of his much-anticipated mixtape debut, Live Love A$AP (Oct. 31). Before signing a $3 million deal with RCA-distributed Pool Grounds Music—and before the notable co-signs (Lil Wayne, Drake, Jim Jones) rolled in—the 23-year-old rapper had independently charged up buzz for himself and his crew.

Soon after the rapper debuted his video for the track “Purple Swag,” A$AP was courted by several labels, including Pool Grounds. “It didn’t sound like anything that was coming from New York,” says Bryan Leach, president of Pool Grounds and senior VP of urban of RCA, of the artist’s doozy, speedy raps over spacey soundscapes inspired by Houston rap.

“I haven’t seen anybody with this hustle and spirit since I signed Lil Jon and Pitbull, or since I witnessed the beginnings of Kanye West as an artist.”

A$AP was hesitant about signing on the dotted line, however, telling Leach that he “didn’t want to sign with a label. I’m not in the rush. There are other things I want to do,” Leach recalls A$AP telling him. Leach also wanted to ensure A$AP was the “real deal.” So the two Harlem natives spent a few weeks talking music and lifestyle before ASAP ultimately signed.

The $3 million deal is between Pool Grounds/ RCA and A$AP’s company, A$AP Worldwide. Under the agreement, the rapper’s first two releases are Live Love A$AP and a full-length album slated to drop at the top of the year. In keeping with the rapper’s independent spirit, he can also continue to release mixtapes through RED Distribution.

In fact, ASAP is in the studio working on a compilation mixtape, Long Live ASAP, which will feature his newly signed ASAP Worldwide artists ASAP Ferg, ASAP Rocky, ASAP Nast, ASAP Twelvyy and SpaceGhostPurr. Before dropping his yet-to-be-titled debut set, ASAP plans to release a deluxe edition of his current mixtape that will be marketed and independently charged up commercially similar to Drake’s So Far Gone.

After all, ASAP says, “My mixtape is classic. It’s only right to put it out at retail.”

—Erika Ramirez

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‘Mylo’ Moves 447,000: Coldplay’s Third No. 1

As expected, Coldplay climbs to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with its third chart-topping set, Mylo Xyloto, selling 447,000 in its debut week, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Mylo’s bow marks the third-largest sales week of the year for an album, after the debut of Lady Gaga’s Born This Way (1.1 million) and the start of Lil Wayne’s Tha Carter IV (964,000). Mylo also earns the biggest week for a rock effort since U2’s No Line on the Horizon debuted at No. 1 with 484,000 on the March 21, 2009, chart.

Since SoundScan began tracking sales in 1991, only five rock acts have claimed three albums that debuted with at least 400,000. Coldplay is the latest member of that quintet, which also includes U2 (three), The Beatles (three), Dave Matthews Band (five) and Metallica (six).

Mylo is Coldplay’s fifth studio release and its third straight studio set to reach No. 1. Its previous two—2008’s Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends and 2005’s X&Y—both debuted at No. 1 as well, with 721,000 and 735,000 sold, respectively.

Viva’s blockbuster sales were fueled, in part, by the then-ubiquitous Apple (iTunes TV commercial) that featured the album’s lead single, “Viva La Vida.” The smash track was the band’s first (and so far only) No. 1 single on the Billboard Hot 100. It topped the tally the week before the Viva album opened at No. 1.

On the other hand, Mylo’s first single, “Every Teardrop Is a Waterfall,” peaked at No. 14 on the Hot 100, while the album’s second track, “Paradise,” moves 15-49 this week.

So yes, Mylo’s sales are off a chunk compared with Viva. But without an ever-present Apple advertisement and a red-hot single, it was bound to do a bit less. And, well ... it’s the years later. For any act to sustain momentum after a sizable breakthrough, the charts are a feat. Most bands would be thrilled with having three albums in a row start north of 400,000.

The O.G. ‘IDOL’ IS BACK: Nearly nine years ago this week (Nov. 9, 2002), Kelly Clarkson was hovering in the top five on the Billboard Hot 100 with her “American Idol” coronation single “A Moment Like This.” Now, all these years later, the original “Idol” champ is still force on the charts.

Her Stronger album is the Billboard 200’s second-highest debut this week, starting at No. 2 with 163,000 sold. It’s her fifth album and fifth consecutive one to debut in the top three.

Coincidentally, this year’s “Idol” winner, Scotty McCreery, can be found at No. 7 with his former No. 1 album Clear As Day (42,000, down 25%). Clarkson’s latest release, All I Ever Wanted, was her second No. 1, after it debuted in the top slot with 255,000. She also tapped the tally with her Thankful debut (297,000 in its first week).

Like Coldplay, Clarkson’s first week probably suffers from the good—but not great—performance of its lead-off track, “My Life Would Suck Without You.” It moves 16-15 on the Mainstream Top 40 airplay chart this week. Comparatively, Wanted’s first single, “My Life Would Suck Without You,” was pushed 3-4 (with a backwads bullet) on the Mainstream Top 40 chart the week Wanted debuted at No. 1.

We suspect that Stronger has a stellar second single in the stumpy empowerment anthem “What Doesn’t Kill You (Stronger).” Fans are already keen on the track, as it arrives at No. 31 on Hot Digital Songs this week with 40,000 sold.

A step below Clarkson on the Billboard 200 is fellow pop star (though of a different breed) Michael Bublé, who bows his first full-length holiday album, Christmas, at No. 3 with 141,000. It’s his fifth top 10 set and his first long-player since Crazy Love bowed at No. 1 in 2009 with 132,000.

Expect Christmas’ sales to grow larger as Thanksgiving approaches and the holiday season kicks into high gear.

SPOOKY SOUNDS: With Halloween falling on a Monday this year, not a lot of impact from the holiday will be seen on our lists this week—but it will next time. On the Billboard 200, the big gear scary album is at No. 75, where the squaking sounds of Kidz Bop Kids are found with Kidz Bop Halloween (6,000, up 123%). A number of other haunt-tivating albums dot the tally at Nos. 145, 150 and 155.

On the Hot Digital Songs chart, you can bet Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” re-enters at No. 3 with 39,000 (up 151%) thanks to Halloween. Also re-entering: Bobby ‘Boris’ Pickett & the Crypt-Kickers’ Monster Mash (No. 39 with 34,000, up 219%) and Ray Parker Jr.’s Ghostbusters (No. 62 with 23,000, up 232%).

FOR THE RECORD: Last week on page 50 we misidentified Romeo Santos as formerly part of the group Maná. He is a member of Aventura.
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For chart reprints call 212.493.4023. Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### UNCHARTED

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| 3 | MADDE JANE | www.youtube.com/maddejane
| 4 | SUNHGA JUNG | www.youtube.com/sunha
| 5 | NOISIA | www.youtube.com/noisia
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| 35 | CAPITAL (ICIAL) | www.youtube.com/capitaliscal
| 36 | DATSK | www.youtube.com/datask
| 37 | DUNA | www.youtube.com/duna
| 38 | LAMEX | www.youtube.com/lamex
| 39 | COM TRUJE | www.youtube.com/comtruje
| 40 | BONDAN PRAKO & FAIZULLA | www.youtube.com/bondanpra
| 41 | JOSEPH VINGENT | www.youtube.com/josephvingent
| 42 | JOTA QUEST | www.youtube.com/jotaquest
| 43 | EMANCIPATOR | www.youtube.com/emancipator
| 44 | MONARCHY | www.youtube.com/monarchy
| 45 | BORGORE | www.youtube.com/borgore
| 46 | DESIGNER DRUGS | www.youtube.com/designerdruuds

### SOCIAL 50

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| 1 | JUSTIN BIEBER | www.justinbieber.com/justinbieber
| 2 | RIAHANA | www.rihanna.com/rihanna
| 3 | SHAKIRA | www.shakira.com/shakira
| 4 | LADY GAGA | www.ladygaga.com/ladygaga
| 5 | LMFAO | www.lmfao.com/lmfao
| 6 | JENNIFER LOPEZ | www.jenniferlopez.com/jenniferlopez
| 7 | KATY PERRY | www.katyperry.com/katyperry
| 8 | TAYLOR SWIFT | www.taylorswift.com/taylorswift
| 9 | BRITNEY SPEARS | www.britneyspears.com/britneyspears
| 10 | BINGO MARS | www.bingomars.com/bingomars

### NEXT BIG SOUND

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| 1 | CAMERON MITCHELL | www.cameronmitchell.com/cameronmitchell
| 2 | CHINA ANNE MCCLAIN | www.chinaannemccain.com/chinaannemccain
| 3 | SEAN D'ASSAU | www.seandassau.com/seandassau
| 4 | JEZEAL CAMARO | www.jezecamaro.com/jezecamaro
| 5 | KASKADE | www.kaskade.com/kaskade
| 6 | BRIAN BRADLEY | www.brianbradley.com/brianbradley
| 7 | LACEY SCHWIMMER | www.lacey schwimmer.com/lacey schwimmer
| 8 | AKROMA | www.akromi.com/akromi
| 9 | DONNY GOINES | www.donnygoines.com/donnygoines
| 10 | ALYSSA SHOULE | www.alyssashoule.com/alyssashoule
| 11 | DAPPA | www.dappa.com/dappa
| 12 | CARLOS JEAN | www.carlosjean.com/carlosjean
| 13 | THE RAMBLES | www.thearbles.com/thearbles
| 14 | LUKE JAMES | www.lukejames.com/lukejames
| 15 | KEAN CIPIANNO | www.keancipianno.com/keancipianno

An expansion of 26,000 SoundScout plays for electronic artist
Far Too Loud's latest track, "Megaphone," sends the act straight to No. 5 on the chart. Far Too Loud's latest EP, Ready to
Shoom, premiered on the site on Sept. 11 and has earned almost 150,000 plays.

**Dubstep Act News**

Details about the Next Big Sound 50 at No. 48 thanks to Illenium
making his song "Prominent" off latest album Waukegan to Reality
the free single of the week on Oct. 25. This was in lending
the amount of fans the group gained week to week up to 12,000
and adds its weekly play gain by Waukegan. On the Heatseekers
Albums chart, "Reality" re-enters at No. 29 with a 1105 sales gain,
according to Nielsen SoundScan.
## Hot 100 Airplay

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<td>5 O'Clock</td>
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## Hot 100 Digital Songs

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## Hot R&B/Hip-Hop

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</table>
The Black Keys unlock a No. 1 debut on Rock Songs with "Lonely Boy," the first single from its fifth album, The Black Keys' seventh album and follow-up to its breakthrough debut disc, which won the Grammy Award earlier this year for Best Alternative Album. The new release arrives Dec. 6.

### Mainstream Top 40

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<td>Big Machine</td>
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<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Big Machine</td>
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### Active Rock

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Adam Levine becomes the third act to replace Boutil at No. 1 on the Mainstream Top 40 chart, after Adam Clark Morse's "Steady Room" (1-3), on which he was an additional week, and his first week at the top. His third album, "Live in Concert," was released on Oct. 12, 2011, and was produced by Max Martin and Shell-O, both of whom worked on his previous album, "3."
### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Import &amp; Number</th>
<th>Distribution Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A GOOD LIDE ME YOU</td>
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<tr>
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### TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

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<td>Scotty McCreery</td>
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<td>Lady Antebellum</td>
<td>Own The Night</td>
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<td>Eric Church</td>
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<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>Speak Now</td>
<td>COUNTRY MUS</td>
<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<td>Blake Shelton</td>
<td>Red River Blue</td>
<td>COUNTRY MUS</td>
<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<td>The Band Perry</td>
<td>The Band Perry</td>
<td>COUNTRY MUS</td>
<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zac Brown Band</td>
<td>You Can Claim What You Give</td>
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<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rodney Atkins</td>
<td>Here For A Good Time</td>
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<td>George Strait</td>
<td>I Saw The Flip Side</td>
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<td>The Band Perry</td>
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<td>Zac Brown Band</td>
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### BLUEGRASS ALBUMS

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<td>Man Of War</td>
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<td>Noam Pikelny</td>
<td>Beat The Devil And Carry A Peel</td>
<td>COUNTRY MUS</td>
<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Devil Makes Three</td>
<td>Stomp and Stash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Martin and The Steep Canyon Rangers</td>
<td>Ed erectile dysfunction (40)</td>
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<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Succulent</td>
<td>Follow Me Down</td>
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<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
<td>Up On The Ridge</td>
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<td>CAPITOL NASHVILLE</td>
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<td>Russell Moore &amp; Reid Tymne Out</td>
<td>Prime Time</td>
<td>COUNTRY MUS</td>
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<td>The Waifs</td>
<td>Jenny's Dream</td>
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<td>Sierra Hull</td>
<td>Midnight Special</td>
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### BETWEEN THE BULLETS

'TAVERN' OPENS AT 1

Arriving with 69,000 copies, Toby Keith collects his 10th No. 1 on Top Country Bets with Tavern, the artist's 15th studio set. The new leader marks Keith's fourth consecutive No. 1 start in exactly three years with the same seasonal studio set, a streak preceded by a No. 1 bow with hits package 53 Bigger Hits in May 2008. Lead single "Made In America" topped the Oct. 15 Hot Country Songs tally, and second track "Red Solo Cup" (No. 34 on Hot Country Songs) storms Country Digital Songs at No. 1 with 61,000 downloads (see page 67).

—Mike Jensen
BOYZ II MEN AT NO. 4 WITH 'TWENTY'

Boyz II Men celebrate their 20th anniversary as harmonious hitmakers with the debut of their latest album, Twenty, at No. 4 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums (16,000 sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan). The set marks the act's 12th studio offering and is its highest-charting album since 2005's Nathan Michael Shawn Wayans debuted and peaked at No. 3. The Boyz first appeared on a Billboard tally on April 20, 1991, when "Motownphilly" arrived at No. 71 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs. It eventually peaked at No. 4.

The new disc Twenty is split into two halves: one containing new, original material and the other where the act covers its own classic songs. Twenty's current single, "More Than You'll Ever Know," featuring Charlie Wilson, climbs 20-16 on Adult R&B (up 13% in detections, according to Nielsen BDS).

-Kurtis Santiago
### Dance Club Songs

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<td>JESSICA LITERI &amp; WILFORD HARRIS</td>
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<td>WITHOUT YOU</td>
<td>JASON DERULO</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SEXY AND I KNOW IT</td>
<td>KIM WAX</td>
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<td>WE FOUND LOVE</td>
<td>JENNIFER LOPEZ &amp; LIL' WAYNE</td>
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<td>IT GIRL</td>
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### Traditional Jazz Albums

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<tr>
<td>EASY COME EASY GO</td>
<td>ANDREW ROSS</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOOM TOWN</td>
<td>ANDREW ROSS</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>MARRAKEH</td>
<td>ANDREW ROSS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>PROMISES</td>
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### Contemporary Crossover Albums

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### Classical Crossover Albums

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<td>ANDREW ROSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE LADY IN MY LIFE</td>
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Ricardo Arjona reappears at the top of Tropical Songs as "El Amor" (seated Guayme, up 47% in audience impressions) recovers after a two-week slide below the pinnacle, rising to No. 1. The title now holds for three weeks, and Arjona attains No. 3 overall. The song has become a viral hit on social media.

Following its six weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Mexican Music Airplay (which aimed at the target market of Mexican listeners in the U.S.), Gerardo Ortíz' "Dueño" from Universal Music Latin celebrates his first Hot Latin Songs charted album, as his eighth charted album, "Dueño," rises to No. 1. The album features a mix of traditional Mexican regional music and contemporary pop tracks, reaching significant airplay and radio support.

**Hot Latin Songs**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Charted Album</th>
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<td>Universal Music Latin</td>
<td>Dueño</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>J Balvin &amp; El Cucuy</td>
<td>Sony Music Latin</td>
<td>Vida</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;El Amor&quot;</td>
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**Regional Mexican Albums**

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<th>Label</th>
<th>Charted Album</th>
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**Latin Pop Albums**

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<td>Universal Music Latin</td>
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**Regional Mexican Albums**

**Tropical Albums**

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<td>Universal Music Latin</td>
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**Latin Rhythm Albums**

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**Hot Latin Songs**

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<td>Ricardo Arjona</td>
<td>Universal Music Latin</td>
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<td>&quot;Dueño&quot;</td>
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**Regional Mexican Albums**

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**Latin Pop Albums**

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**Latin Rhythm Albums**

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Like
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Marisa sang

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MICHAEL

Lloyd Webber,

previously

RELATED FIELDS:

director of

band leader

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Stephanie

group founded

MANAGEMENT:

distributing

DISTRIBUTION: Universal Music Group Distribution appoints

Teresa McMenamin
director of media buying and agency relations. She was director of media planning.

MANAGEMENT: Atom Factory, the music management group founded by Lady Gaga manager Troy Carter, taps

Stephanie LaFera to head its newly launched electronic music division, Atom Empire. LaFera founded Little Empire Music, which managed a wide range of international recording acts, including Kaskade.

TV/FILM: Katreece Barnes becomes the musical director/ band leader of OWN’s “The Rosie Show.” She was musical director of NBC’s “Saturday Night Live.”

RELATED FIELDS: Creative Allies appoints Kevin Carroll VP of business development for entertainment and music. He previously ran his own marketing/promotion consultancy firm, Longball Music.

Front Row Marketing Services names Chris Lencheski president. He founded marketing company Phoenixia Sport and Entertainment.

Really Useful Group, the company that manages the intellectual property of theatrical/music composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, names Barney Wragg managing director, effective Dec. 1. He founded Barney Wragg Associates.

—Edited by Mitchell Peters

MICHAEL & MARISA TAKE ON BULLYING

Boston-based sibling duo Michael & Marisa used their opening slot on a recent tour with emerging artist Gerson Chance to help put an end to bullying among teenagers. During each performance on the summer trek, Michael & Marisa sang their song “The Same,” which they penned last year in response to the death of 15-year-old Phoebe Prince, who committed suicide after being severely bullied by classmates.

“We saw that more and more kids were committing suicide because of bullying,” 14-year-old Marisa says, noting that fans have responded to the track. “People have said, ‘I’m a bystander and because of this song I decided to stand up.’ Even hearing that one scenario is a mission accomplished.”

The video for “The Same,” from the group’s 2010 EP It’s Like That, has received more than 245,000 views on YouTube. Marisa and 13-year-old Michael—who plan to release a new EP in 2012—have also become the national teen spokespeople for the website Pacer Center’s Teens Against Bullying (pacerteenagainstbullying.org). When time permits the pair travels to schools to perform and speak with students about the dangers of bullying.

Additionally, the siblings have established a foundation in their names to donate a percentage of their music/touring sales to Pacer’s National Bullying Prevention Center.

—Mitchell Peters

Ben Folds’ first career-spanning anthology, The Best of Me, was released Sept. 20 during a special Q&A and performance at the Apollo Theater in New York. Released On Oct. 1 and available as a single disc or expanded three-disc set, the collection encompasses major hits, fan favorites, classic B-sides and three new Ben Folds Five tracks—the first in 11 years. All tracks are (left to right): Legacy Recordings VP of marketing Jim Barham; Folds; compilation producer Tim Smith; Legacy executive VP Adam Block; product manager Marisa Maglini and VP of digital sales Daris Salker.

PHOTO: ADAM KRAMER

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Plenty of fun and frenzy were stirred up during West Hollywood’s infamous Halloween Carnaval, which MTV Hosted in a Music Awards 2 on Oct. 31. Blink, Adam Lambert, Tokio Hotel and Havana were among the winners at the digital music celebration, which also featured live performances by Bobbi, the Band Perry and the Flaming Lips—introduced by Yoko Ono—during a tribute to Steve Jobs. Mr. Jobs launched a new 17-year-old from MTV Music & Logo Group president Van Toffer, MTV Music Group VP of digital music strategy Shannon Connolly, MTV Executive VP of music and talent Amy Doche, MTV Executive VP of music and talent Joanna Bonomberg and MTV Music & Logo Group Digital executive VP Dermot McInerney. Photos: RICK BALSAMO.

Wryd-up Records Raphael band Evianercross did the memory of recently deceased label founder Alan Melzer (see Billboard, page 35, with his November 1 performance at New York’s Terminal 5. The much-mourned band, packed to the gills with fans, was awash in stinging blue, magenta and white lights as the tour played powered through its New and old hits and old hits. "What You Want?" Frontwoman Amy Lee and guitarist Chris Murphey were back for a second offering in their self-titled album No. 1 on the Billboard 200 and "Yo Letting My Perform at home, so can go home and sleep in my own bed." Backstage, former Wryd-up executive VP of A&R Denis Melzer recapped the first time she heard "the song." "I didn’t even see her. I heard a tape of her singing. I’m immortal," he signed her the next day. "Here, I gave in redness of Melzer a hug, who is surrounded by them alerts Evansnosepresents." Jim McCord, drummer Will Hunt and guitarist Troy McCawley and Tony Balsamo. Photos: WICKHAM.

To capture the special evening of music book Vive Gill and Sting, CMT’s hit series “Crossroads” returned to New York after a five-year absence to tape the invitation-only show. In addition to their music, the duo artists performed songs from their new fall release, “Shop.” Twelve years ago, the Eagles’ Duane "Duke" “Wendy” Post, left, is Sting. CMT Universal Music Group Nashville Chairman/EDS Luke Lewis, CMT president Brian Hill and MTV Music & Logo Group president Van Toffer. Photo: SACK HAMPTON/REIPPH.

The kin has signed with Interscope and will enter the studio this month with producer Tony Wany et and engineer Kevin Rudder to record his label debut, slated for mid-2012. The rock band, whose self-titled DVD Live at Rockwood Music Hall will be released digitally by Interscope on Dec. 20, will also continue its Thursday night residency at New York’s Rockwood. Holding the first contract are (from left) the King drummer Skaleking and singer/keyboardist/pianist Toraid Koren, Interscope A&R executive James Marmite and King single/Vaibas/group/diegenza player Isaac Koren. Photos: WICKHAM.

Additional photos online this week at billboard.biz.

To submit your photos for consideration, please send images to backbeat@billboard.com.
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

RON CONWAY
Investor
SV ANGELS

SETH GOLDSMITH
Chairman/Co-Founder
TURNTABLE.FM

STEVE JANG
Founder/CEO
SOUNDTRACKING

JOE KENNEDY
CEO
PANDORA

NEWLY ANNOUNCED KEYNOTES:

STEVE GREENBERG, Founder/CEO, S-Curve Records
TRAVIS CLARK, Frontman, We The Kings
RICK FARMAN, Co-Founder, Superfly Presents
DANIEL GLASS, Founder, Glassnote Entertainment Group

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LOWERING THE BARRIERS TO MUSIC LICENSING
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