

WHY THE BEEF?
SEE PAGE 5

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HOT SPOTS



6 Unforgettable

A string of CDs and DVDs celebrate the life of the late Latin superstar Selena.



11 M.I.A. Takes On U.S.A.

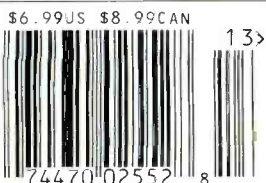
U.K. rapper M.I.A. hopes to make it big in the States with her XL debut, "Arular."



58 Hangin' With Haggard

Country icon Merle Haggard talks about war protesters, Bob Dylan and career longevity in *The Last Word*.

Breaking news
around the clock:
billboard.biz



Beck's Back

New Album 'Guero' Off To Good Start With 'E-Pro'

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

LOS ANGELES—Heralded as the voice of a disenfranchised generation ever since the 1994 release of signature song "Loser," Beck just laughs when asked if he feels pressure to live up to such an impossible standard.

"I have no delusion that that is even expected of me or anyone cares," he says. "I don't have

that big an opinion of myself. I would be a pretty sad spokesman."

But no doubt pundits will once again trot out the term when referring to his new album, "Guero," due March 29 on Interscope.

The album reunites Beck with the Dust Brothers, who produced his best-selling CD to date, the 1996 release "Odelay." The title has sold 2.2 million copies,

(Continued on page 42)

Edgar's Digital Play

Web, Mobile Initiatives Are Keys To WMG IPO

BY BRIAN GARRITY
and ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—Is Warner Music Group ready for prime time as a public company?

That is the question investment analysts and industry executives are wrestling with as the work-in-progress music giant readies itself
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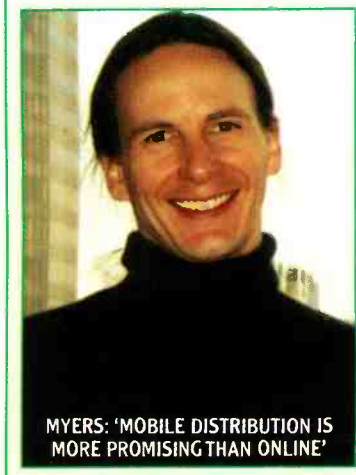
Full Songs To Phones A Hit In Japan

BY STEVE McCLURE

TOKYO—In the digital distribution race in Japan, mobile music appears to be outpacing online services.

Chaku-uta Full, Japan's only full-song mobile download service, has racked up sales of 3 million tracks as of March 1, after launching in November 2004.

While no precise statistics on legitimate online downloads in
(Continued on page 42)



MYERS: 'MOBILE DISTRIBUTION IS MORE PROMISING THAN ONLINE'

EXPERIENCE



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Experience Hendrix LLC prevailed in its lawsuit against Purple Haze Records and its owner Lawrence Miller in the High Court of England. Experience Hendrix brought the suit against Purple Haze Records and Miller to stop them from selling records embodying the performances of Jimi Hendrix throughout the world. Purple Haze Records and Miller claimed to have rights in certain Hendrix recordings based upon a license granted by John Hillman. The High Court held that Purple Haze, Miller and Hillman have no rights whatsoever to claim any ownership or interest in recordings embodying the performances of Jimi Hendrix.

"We are pleased by this judgment as it sends a clear message to those who infringe upon our company's rights that Experience Hendrix will make every effort to safeguard Jimi's legacy. We will continue in our efforts to enforce our rights throughout the world."

-Janie Hendrix, President and CEO of Experience Hendrix LLC

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THE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA

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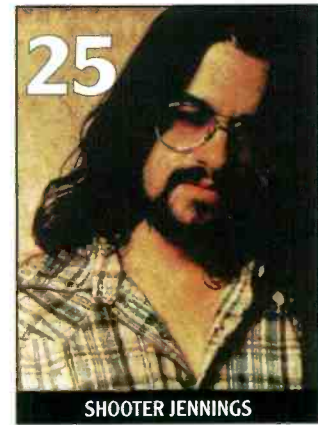


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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Nobody gave me no goddamn book saying I couldn't play rock guitar on a country song.”

SHOOTER JENNINGS ON MIXING MUSICAL GENRES
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April 25-28 at the Hotel InterContinental, Miami
Information: 646-654-4660

Billboard/American Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference & Awards
Aug. 3-5 at the Hotel InterContinental, Atlanta
Information: 646-654-4660

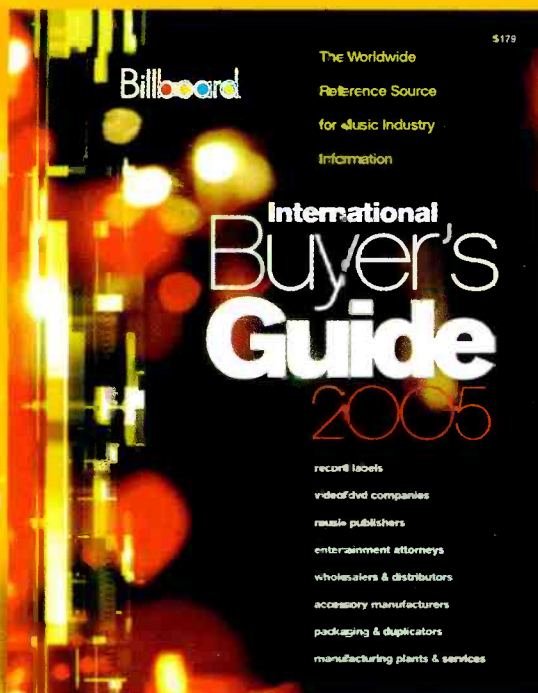
Billboard Dance Music Summit
Sept. 19-21 at the Union Square Ballroom, New York
Information: 646-654-4660

Billboard Touring Conference & Awards: Roadwork '05
Oct. 25-26 at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York
Information: 646-654-4660

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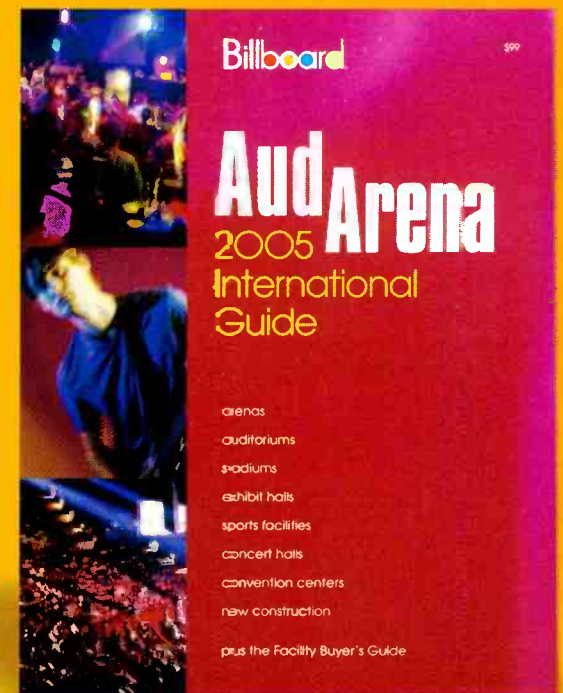
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A steady stream of CDs keeps Selena in stores 10 years after her death



Upfront

TOP OF THE

Clear Channel's Thomas Johansson taps company tools in Mean Fiddler buy



Music's Wireless Future

Labels Bullish On Mobile At CTIA

BY ANTONY BRUNO

NEW ORLEANS—The music industry has a message for the wireless industry:

We're here.
We're here to stay.
Get ready.

At the wireless industry's annual CTIA Wireless convention March 14-16 here, that thought was made very loud in actions and words. Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, in a surprise last-minute keynote appearance, supported the message by highlighting the dominant role music plays in mobile entertainment.

"People are always saying that content is king. But there is a lot of content out there, and it can't all be king," he said. "You don't want king. You want King Kong."

Warner Music Group was the 800-pound gorilla beating its chest the loudest with a star-studded reception that created the biggest buzz of the otherwise tactical event. Muzzled by a mandatory quiet period in advance of the company's pending initial public offering, WMG was unable to discuss its mobile intentions in detail. But it didn't have to. Its mere presence spoke volumes, and the wireless industry has noticed.

(Continued on page 57)



COMBS: 'SOMEONE HAS TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY NEED'



50 CENT, LEFT, AND THE GAME SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES AT A MARCH 9 PRESS CONFERENCE

The Cost Of Beefs

Rap Feuds Fuel Sales, But Can Also Feed Violence

BY GAIL MITCHELL

The high-profile feud between rappers 50 Cent and the Game may be over. But the ramifications ignited by their verbal one-upsmanship and past conflicts between rappers still reverberate, leaving one principal question on the table: How does the music industry resolve these issues and move forward?

With hip-hop born in the streets, lyrical battles have helped forge the genre's 30-year-old legacy. In fact, BET senior VP of music programming Stephen Hill says such competition has fueled some of hip-hop's more creative records.

"Both Nas and Jay-Z spit some of their lyrical best when they were beefing with each other," he says. "After becoming a pop star, LL Cool J regained his credibility when he went after Kool Moe Dee.

"But they never went at each other. The only challenge is when you take the beef out of the studio."

"These beefs simply represent the society that we live in," adds Dr. Ben Chavis, president/CEO of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network. "Lyrical battles are at the foundation of hip-hop. I would caution against making general statements regarding all beefs . . . Competition within

(Continued on page 56)

Martin Takes FCC Chair

NAB, RIAA Applaud Choice

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Many voices inside the beltway are applauding the appointment of Kevin J. Martin to the chairmanship of the Federal Communications Commission.

"Kevin Martin is the right person at the right time to lead the FCC," says Edward O. Fritts, president/CEO of the National Assn. of Broadcasters. "Kevin has a passion for public service and a deep understanding and appreciation for the value of local broadcasting."

Sens. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, and Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, the co-chairmen of the Senate Commerce Committee, also welcomed the selection of Martin.

"I've gotten to know Kevin, and I think he'll be someone who will listen to us and be accessible to us," says Mitch Bainwol, chairman/CEO of the Recording Industry Assn. of America. "I know he loves music."

The RIAA has filed comments in the pending high-definition radio proceeding calling for content protections when second-generation receiver-recorders hit the market.

President Bush announced his selection of Martin March 16. Since

(Continued on page 56)



MARTIN: SUCCEEDS MICHAEL K. POWELL AS FCC CHAIRMAN

Unstoppable Ozz

Mega Metal Event Ozzfest Turns 10, Shows No Signs Of Slowing

BY RAY WADDELL

When Ozzfest began 10 years ago, the summer touring landscape was thick with Lollapalooza, Lilith Fair, H.O.R.D.E. and the Vans Warped tour, among other festivals.

Today only the heavy metal Ozzfest and punk-centric Warped survive, clearly the most narrow niches of all the fests.

"It's become an annual fucking thing now," Ozzy Osbourne observes. "It's grown so fucking quickly, I can't begin to tell you."

Osbourne says Ozzfest was conceived by his wife Sharon Osbourne after a booking on another tour did not work. "Sharon asked Lollapalooza if we could get a spot on their tour, and they said there's no room. I don't know if it was for me in particular or my kind of music," Osbourne tells *Billboard*. "And Sharon got pissed and said, 'Fuck them, we'll do our own thing.'"

By doing their own thing during the past decade Ozzfest has become the top-grossing festival tour ever, at more than \$172 million from 240 shows that have drawn 4.2 million headbangers, according to producers Clear

Channel Entertainment.

On March 15, Ozzfest announced another raging tour, with a main-stage lineup of Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Killswitch Engage, Shadows Fall and Black Label Society (billboard.biz, March 15).

The significance of the 10-year milestone is not lost on the tour's founder. "I never thought in my wildest dreams that it would be this big," Sharon Osbourne says.

So why does Ozzfest live on when so many other touring fests have withered on the vine? According to those closest to the tour, it is about staying true to what you do.

"We haven't tried to remake Ozzfest and turn it into something it isn't," says Jane Holman, GM of Clear Channel Entertainment's touring division and a key producer of Ozzfest. "It's a heavy metal fest and we try to bring people the best metal that's out there."

Even at 10 years old, Ozzfest has not changed, Sharon Osbourne insists. "It's still exactly the same, nothing has changed," she says. "The secret to our success is we stay true to the sort of festival we put out. We don't

(Continued on page 55)



OSBOURNE: TENTH EDITION KICKS OFF JULY 15 IN BOSTON

Still In Love With Selena

BY RAMIRO BURR

SAN ANTONIO—Ten years after her death, Selena remains a central figure on the Latin music scene.

Fans cannot be blamed if there is a sense that Selena is still among us, as a steady stream of releases has kept her legacy alive.

Nearing the 10th anniversary of the superstar's death on March 31, 1995, six major Selena-related CD packages have either been released or are coming soon, mainly from EMI—the company that reissued her key catalog titles in 2002.

Among the new releases is "Selena Remembered," a greatest-hits CD and DVD documentary, narrated by Edward James Olmos. It hit stores Jan. 25.

That was followed on March 15 with EMI's "The Last Concert," a CD/DVD of Selena's Feb. 26, 1995, Houston Rodeo performance at the Astrodome. The set includes 13 songs, bonus tracks and a video biography.

Also coming from EMI is "Selena: Unforgettable," which will be available March 29 as two individual CDs or as a limited-edition two-CD set. One disc compiles

(Continued on page 55)



Photo: Jessica Craig Martin

MOTHER INC. 'PACKAGING IS IMPORTANT THESE DAYS—IT'S A SIGN OF THE TIMES'

Fendi's Bag

Fashion House Backs Stylish Musical Duo

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

NEW YORK—Globally revered fashion brand Fendi is upping the ante in the music-meets-fashion game.

Fendi is backing the self-titled debut album by fashion-minded New York duo Mother Inc. and lending its name to the group's marketing efforts. In fact, the Italian fashion dynasty paid for the recording, manufacturing and CD artwork of "Mother Inc."

The album arrives April 5 from Seven Seven Records, the inde-

pendent label set up by Mother Inc. members Yvonne Force Villareal and Sandra Hamburg, along with former MTVi president/CEO and former SonicNet president Nicholas Butterworth.

"Entertainment brand marketing helps to establish brands and provides exposure and support for artists," Butterworth says. "What we've done is the next logical step—especially for fresh, emerging talent."

For Silvia Fendi, designer of accessories and menswear, the collabora-

(Continued on page 57)

Billboard Mobile Rolls Out In April

Billboard is going mobile. Through an exclusive partnership with mobile entertainment publisher and distributor mForma, *Billboard* will make its charts and music news available to mobile users nationwide through an integrated entertainment application launching in April.

Announced March 14 at the CTIA Wireless conference in New Orleans, the service will also allow users to purchase music and download ringtones.

Billboard Mobile users will get free access to *Billboard* charts ranking the top singles, albums and music ringtones. Paid subscribers may then unlock additional *Billboard*-branded content, such as artist information, headlines, feature articles, music reviews, song information, games and trivia.

All elements are cross-navigational, meaning an artist's information page will lead to links to buy ringtones from that artist, as well as tour dates, reviews and other content. Subscribers can listen to streaming audio samples of singles

and ringtones and purchase music that is billed to their wireless phone invoice.

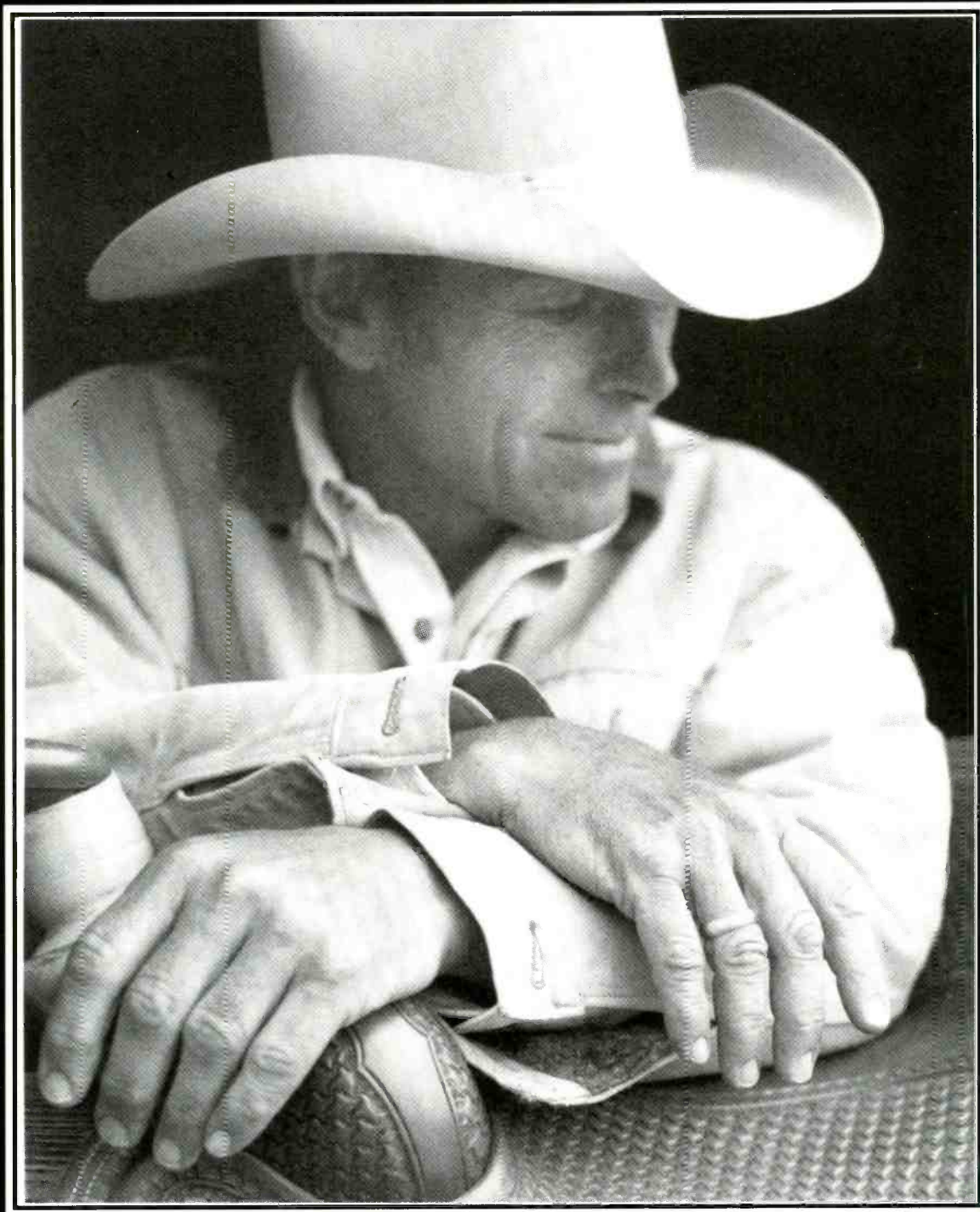
"The global mobile music business is already a \$4 billion industry and is growing exponentially," *Billboard* president/publisher John Kilcullen says. "Billboard Mobile will dynamically embed *Billboard's* proprietary charts into the bloodstream of this on-the-go world, making the charts the standard for the m-commerce music space."

The service also will be integrated with *billboard.com*. Under the mForma partnership, *Billboard* Mobile will expand to markets worldwide.

"Billboard Mobile applications are designed to provide real-time, portable and trusted music news, reviews and charts to millions of fans around the world, for whom the *Billboard* brand is synonymous with success in music," mForma CEO Dan Kranzler says. "Billboard Mobile is designed to let users immerse themselves in all things music through the single most credible music brand out there."



Good Ride Cowboy



In a world of egos and soundalikes, he was a unique artist and a wonderful man. We have always been proud to represent his music.

Chris LeDoux

(1948 -2005)



CCE Playing Fiddler

Company In Takeover Bid For U.K. Concert Institution

BY JULIANA KORANTENG

LONDON—Clear Channel Entertainment is strengthening its position in Europe with the planned acquisition of British live-music institution Mean Fiddler Music Group.

The U.S. giant has teamed with Dublin-based MCD Productions in a takeover bid for MFMG (billboard.biz, March 11). Upon completion, the transaction will add to CCE's portfolio such events as England's popular Glastonbury, Leeds and Reading festivals and venues like the Astoria and Forum in London.

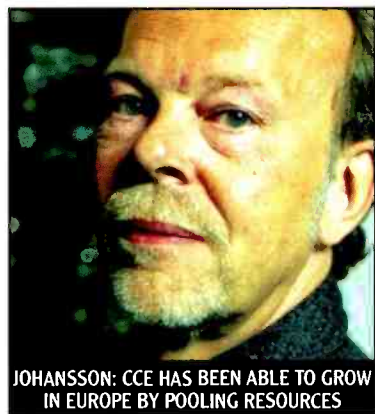
Through their jointly owned investment company Hamsard, CCE and MCD propose to buy more than 21 million shares from MFMG chairman Vince Power at 60 pence (\$1.15) each. The cash offer values Power's 34.9% stake in MFMG at almost £13 million (\$25 million). Under U.K. Takeovers and Mergers rules, Hamsard must make a formal offer within 30 days. MCD—which owns Dublin's Point, Olympia and Gaiety venues, among others—is already MFMG's second-biggest shareholder, with 24.3%.

Power would not comment on the deal, but the industry is watching closely. "The news is still brand-new, so it will be difficult to know Clear Channel's influence within MFMG," says Neil Warnock, a director at the Agency Group in London. "What is more interesting will be the synergy between Clear Channel and MCD, as they both own theaters, venues, festivals and agencies. That will definitely be a topic of discussion in the industry."

CCE owns, manages or consults on more than 25 European outdoor festivals, including the Isle of Wight in Britain, Werchter Festival in Belgium and the North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands. At any given time, the company is involved in shows in up

to 1,800 small- to medium-sized clubs and theaters, 500 arenas and 60 stadiums. In 2004, it handled major European tours by Madonna, Sting, Anastacia and Britney Spears, followed by U2 this year.

Additionally, this summer will see the third edition of the CCE-created Download Festival at England's Don-



JOHANSSON: CCE HAS BEEN ABLE TO GROW IN EUROPE BY POOLING RESOURCES

ington Park; Ozzfest will be part of this year's three-day event. CCE is also planning a new event, Wireless Festival, in London's Hyde Park.

"CCE subsidiaries in most of our European territories already had established festivals," says Stuart Galbraith, the company's VP of promotions/director of festivals in the United Kingdom. "In the U.K., we didn't have any of our own [festivals] until Download. We have a lot of things in the pipeline." In addition to the rock-focused Download and contemporary-pop Wireless fests, he says, the company is planning a "heritage" event.

Galbraith would not comment on the bid for the publicly quoted MFMG, but he says CCE's European strategy is a combination of acquiring established companies, managing venues and creating new events.

Thomas Johansson, Stockholm-based chairman of CCE's European

music division, explains that the company's growth has been made possible by pooling its resources in the region. Another advantage is CCE's outdoor-advertising sister company. "We've been doing more together," he says. "We're trying to use all the tools we have in the Clear Channel box."

CCE was the center of attention at this year's International Live Music Conference March 11-13 in London.

Only three years ago at ILMC, the industry vilified CCE for its aggressive acquisition strategies (*Billboard*, March 23, 2002). This year, the conference held a session called "Corporatization: Five Years Down the Company Line," debating whether the presence of such giants as CCE has benefited the European live-music sector.

Panelist John Giddings, managing director of London-based talent agency Solo, does not regret his company's absorption by CCE Europe. "I think corporatization is good for the artists; they are more protected. It has dragged this business into the 21st century," Giddings said. "The image of promoters stealing from groups—corporatization has taken away all that pirate and maverick angle."

Also on the panel, the Agency Group's Warnock declared that such corporations as CCE have made the industry more competitive. "Some individual promoters signed early with these corporations, and some decided not to re-sign when their contracts ended because they liked the idea of being entrepreneurs in their own right," he said. "Some like being in the corporate structure, but that doesn't work for everyone."

Claudio Trotta, managing director of Milan's Barley Arts Promotions, said CCE Europe's move into Italy has forced independents like himself to raise their game. "I had to fight to survive, because I needed to make money," he said.

Toyota's Scion Starts Label

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

Automobile companies have been having torrid love affairs with music for years now. How else to explain the numerous TV car commercials that feature acts as diverse as Sting, the Vines, Kinky and the Yardbirds?

In an attempt to separate from the pack—and to align itself with tastemakers in the underground music scene—Toyota's Scion brand has set up its own label, Scion A/V.

The label—which follows Scion-sponsored DJ and MC competitions and other music initiatives (including



DAKAH: SCION A/V COVERED RECORDING COSTS FOR HIP-HOP ORCHESTRA'S ALBUM

magazines and DVDs)—will be launched at the Scion Independent

Showcase March 19 at the South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin.

Unlike more traditional labels, Scion A/V—which spotlights up-and-coming talent—does not "own the artists or the master recordings," Scion manager of sales promotion Jeri Yoshizu says. The car company does not derive any profit from this creative branding endeavor.

"We're about selling cars, not making money from these initiatives," Yoshizu notes.

The first two acts "signed" to Scion A/V are Los Angeles-based 70-member (Continued on page 57)

NEWSLINE

THE WEEK IN BRIEF

Viacom's MTV Networks has named Bill Roedy and Herb Scannell vice chairmen. The two will continue in their roles as MTV Networks International president and Nickelodeon Networks president, respectively. Both report to MTVN chairman/CEO Judy McGrath.

London-based Roedy will continue to manage MTVN's growing international operations, while also overseeing his division's investments and expansions into a variety of multimedia platforms. He also leads the company's efforts to promote important global issues, including HIV/AIDS and is an ambassador for the United Nations program UNAIDS.

In addition to overseeing the day-to-day business of Nickelodeon, Nick at Nite, TV Land, Noggin/The N and Spike TV, Scannell will now manage the development of new channels and multimedia services. New York-based Scannell will also be responsible for several MTVN corporate functions, including human resources, business development and creative services.

MICHAEL PAOLETTA

Viacom says it is "exploring" with its board of directors a possible "division of its businesses into separate publicly traded companies." According to Viacom, Les Moonves and Tom Freston, who both carry the titles of co-president/co-COO, would each head one of the new Viacom companies. Further details regarding the possible separation would come by June.

The suggested split would give Moonves CBS Television, Infinity Broadcasting and the Viacom Outdoor business. Freston's portfolio would include MTV Networks.

TONY SANDERS

Blockbuster says it may start buying shares of rental chain Hollywood Entertainment as soon as March 21. It is possible that the Federal Trade Commission may file a lawsuit against Blockbuster if the chain moves forward with the hostile Hollywood purchase. The FTC already filed a motion to bar Blockbuster from going forward with its \$1.3 billion bid for Hollywood.

Hollywood has approved an FTC-cleared \$1.2 billion acquisition bid from Movie Gallery. The Movie Gallery offer expires May 1.

JILL KIPNIS

EMI Music has appointed former Warner Music Group chairman/CEO Roger Ames senior adviser. In his consultancy capacity, he will report to EMI Music chairman/CEO Alain Levy and vice chairman/North America chairman/CEO David Munns. EMI has not disclosed the exact scope of his role.

Ames is familiar with EMI's operations. In 1999, he led an ill-fated attempt to merge WMG and EMI. The deal was scrapped when it became apparent that it would not bear up to scrutiny from the European Commission. Ames last worked under Levy when the pair were high-level executives at PolyGram Music Group in London in the 1990s.

LARS BRANDLE

Shelia Shipley Biddy has exited Nashville-based independent label Vivaton Records, where she had been VP of national promotion and artist development since the label's launch in February 2004. The label is home to Mark Chesnutt and several developing acts. Prior to joining Vivaton, Shipley Biddy was senior VP/GM at Decca Records. After leaving that label, she spent five years as a manager of such artists as Jeff Carson and Danni Leigh.

PHYLLIS STARK

Jason Helfstein, director of equity research for CIBC World Markets, painted an optimistic picture for pay-radio at the Kagan Radio/TV Summit March 16 in New York. Helfstein's research projects 35 million satellite radio subscribers by 2010 and 44 million by 2013. In its first three years, satellite radio has grown faster than satellite TV or wireless, he said, but much slower than Apple Computer's iPod and DVDs. At the end of 2004, XM and Sirius had a combined 4.7 million subscribers.

PAUL HEINE

A new Senate bill, the Indecent and Gratuitous and Excessive Violence Broadcasting Control Act, S. 616, would subject cable and satellite radio and TV to current broadcast-only indecency rules.

The bill, introduced March 14, would also increase the maximum fine for a single incident of indecent or excessively violent programming to \$500,000, subject to a cap of \$3 million. It also authorizes the Federal Communications Commission to require broadcast, cable and satellite stations to post 30-second, full-screen warnings that violent or indecent programming is to follow. The FCC would be given latitude to dole out double fines for egregious cases.

The commission would have the authority to reduce fines when appropriate for small and locally owned broadcasters. Premium and pay-for-view fare would be exempt.

The bill was introduced by Sens. John D. Rockefeller IV, D-W.Va., and Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas.

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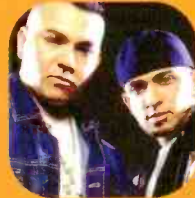
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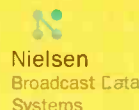
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Opinion

Editorials / Commentary / Letters

Indies Need Options Under Compulsory License Reform

The Case For Competition

The bitter struggle between music publishers and digital music services over the rates and terms of publishing licenses for online use has caught the attention of Congress—so much so that an oversight hearing was held March 8 before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property regarding digital music licensing and revision of Section 115 of the U.S. Copyright Act.

Section 115 (the compulsory mechanical license section for compositions) authorizes music distributors—such as record labels and digital music services—to reproduce and distribute songs that have been previously released as recordings, without asking permission of the music publisher, simply by sending a notice to the publisher, its agent or to the Copyright Office, provided that the distributor then properly administers the license and pays the publisher an arbitrated fee (i.e., the “statutory rate”).

It is understandable why Congress would believe that there is a need to revise Section 115 to create a more “user-friendly” compulsory license. While licenses based on it can be administered by digital music services, generally with the use of a third-party agent, the real and transactional costs of administration have proven to be either too expensive or too cumbersome to facilitate music usage on the broad scale required by digital music services.

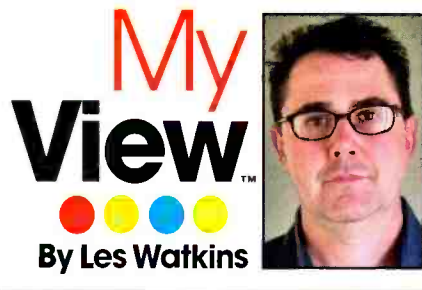
However, judging from the statements at the hearings, Congress was not advised of a critical aspect of any compulsory license, insofar as benefits to music copyright owners, artists, music distributors and consumers are concerned: competition among entities that are authorized to collect compulsory royalties.

The witnesses at the hearing included a representative of the trade association for the digital music services, a senior executive at one of the major record labels, a representative of the National Music Publishers’ Assn. and a songwriter. Absent was any representative of the tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of independent publishers in the United States.

Traditionally, the Harry Fox Agency, a subsidiary of the NMPA, has acted as the agent for the collection of Section 115-based royalties for publishers representing the majority of musical works in the United States. However, by many estimates, approximately 40% of songs that are used commercially in this country are controlled by publishers who are “self-published” and who do not use HFA to collect these royalties. Their reasons for doing so are varied, but include a desire

to avoid HFA’s administrative fees; the delay in payment from an agent, as opposed to direct payment from the music distributor; to be in contractual privity with the music distributor, for purposes of audits of the distributor; and to remain autonomous, insofar as the choice to license or not is concerned.

Surprisingly to some, the independent publishers include a number of the most popular U.S. recording artists/writers. These artists can afford to “pass” on the advances proffered by music publishers and thereby avoid transferring their rights to them. They aim to gain the benefits of self-publishing and build a cottage industry out of publishing administration.



Nonetheless, it appears that the independent publishers will no longer enjoy the autonomy of self-administration when it comes to Section 115 royalties for online music services. Judging again from the tenor of the hearings, it appears that the record labels, music publishers and the digital music services have collectively convinced Congress that Section 115 should be revised so that the digital music services may be licensed, virtually automatically, to use the universe of songs in the United States without asking permission of each music publisher and without accounting directly to each music publisher. (At least, it appears that this will be the case with respect to subscription-based music services selling “tethered” or “limited” downloads and on-demand streams.)

The independent music publishing community could respond to this seemingly catastrophic event by petitioning Congress to preserve their right to choose whether or not to license their songs. But it is doubtful, at this point, that such an effort would be successful; Congress appears ready, maybe rightfully so, to accept a solution to an industry squabble and move on to the issues that the voting public cares about, such as the war in Iraq.

Even more, by advocating the right to say “no” to a digital music service license request, the independent publishers would play into the hands of the services and the

record labels—these entities appear to have convinced Congress that the biggest impediment to the growth of a digital music business is the acquisition of music publishing licenses.

A wiser move by the indie music publishers would be to lobby for the authorization of one or more agencies in addition to HFA to bring the benefits of competition to Section 115 royalty collection. This model would then be similar to the ASCAP/BMI/SESAC competitive framework for collection of royalties for the public performance of songs, as well as the framework under Section 114 of the Copyright Act—the digital public performance of sound recordings—which authorizes such entities as Royalty Logic (an affiliate of Music Reports) to compete with SoundExchange for the collection of royalties for the public performance of masters by digital music services.

As noted in 2001 by the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, in connection with its oversight of ASCAP and BMI, competing collectives benefit music copyright owners, artists, music distributors and the public.

When there are multiple collecting societies, copyright owners and artists benefit, because competing collectives offer lower administrative charges, better service and even advances as an enticement to affiliate. Digital music services benefit because competition creates a faster and more efficient marketplace for music license administration. And the public benefits, because the lower costs of license administration are inevitably reflected in the price of music to the consumer.

As demonstrated by the proliferation of illegitimate file sharing, it is no longer practicable in a digital age for individual music copyright owners to control the licensing of music over the Internet. Congress recognized this fact in creating a compulsory license in Section 114 for certain digital performances of sound recordings, and it appears to be on the verge of doing so by revising the compulsory license in Section 115 for compositions.

Copyright owners and artists should now focus on maximizing the flow of license fees derived from compulsory licensing. The best way to do that is to foster competition among collectives that are authorized to collect compulsory license fees. Monopolies in compulsory royalty collection will lead to diminished fees for all.

Les Watkins is VP of business affairs and business development for Music Reports Inc., which administers publishing licenses for digital music services.

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This year's summer tours will harbor a surge of '80s acts like Def Leppard



Music

Vico C fuses reggaeton and hip-hop beats to convey the messages of 'Desahogo'



POP / ROCK / COUNTRY / R&B / HIP-HOP / LATIN / DANCE / TOURING

XL Finds Hot Prospect In M.I.A.

BY TODD MARTENS

With a single in dance clubs, London-based rapper M.I.A. (real name Mathangi Arulpragasam) had labels eager to work with her. But her decision to sign with Beggars Group's XL Recordings was initially based on one factor: proximity.

"XL was the closest one to the area I lived in," she says. "I just went and knocked on the door."

No one at XL had heard of her, but she gave the label a copy of her single "Galang." As M.I.A. recalls, "I kept saying, 'Trust me, you've been looking for me.' They rang me back in 20 minutes and said, 'We want to speak with you.' They just got lucky I was lazy and didn't bother to get on the tube to see other companies."

Little did XL know that its new artist would record one of the most anticipated albums of 2005. The 27-year-old is already a magazine cover girl, and "Galang" has scored mainstream airplay in the United States.

Yet getting her debut album, "Arular," onto store shelves hasn't been easy. "Arular," out March 22 in the United States and April 4 in the United Kingdom, was delayed a month because of what Beggars VP of marketing Matt Harmon says were a "variety of legal issues."

Also, in the past four weeks, XL and M.I.A. found a major-label partner stateside in Interscope Records, forcing last-minute changes to the album's retail plan.

M.I.A., who spent her formative years in war-torn Sri Lanka, brings an inner-city bravado to her electronically spiced combative raps. Add in dancehall grooves and club-ready choruses, and M.I.A. has many believing she is going to be the first U.K. rapper to become a breakout star in the States.

(Continued on page 12)

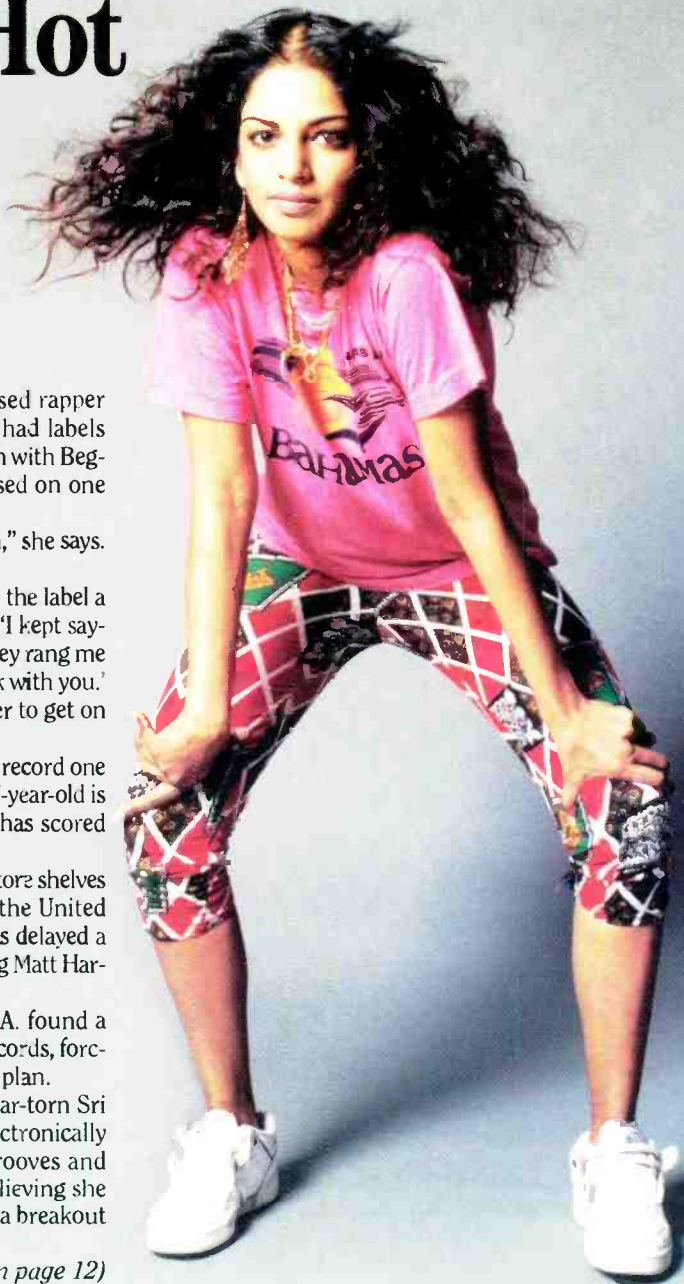


Photo: David Titlow

Savoy Plucks Vollenweider

We've never been one to spout that major labels no longer practice artist development; it's just that they now limit it to acts that they believe (and hope and pray) can turn into huge moneymakers down the line. And that line is getting shorter and shorter.

What majors *have* done through the years is abandon many music art forms that show no chance of yielding such rewards, leaving a bounty for smaller labels that do not have the overhead or expectations of a major.

That's how a label like Savoy Label Group ends up with Andreas Vollenweider and uses him to launch a world music imprint.

As many of you will recall, in the '80s and '90s, as improbable as it may seem for a harpist, Swiss artist Vollenweider was quite the sales force, with one platinum album and three gold sets in the United States alone while signed to Sony worldwide. According to SLG, he has sold more than 20 million albums globally.

After a hiatus, during which he got back all his Sony masters, Vollenweider will resurface on SLG's new Kin Kou world music label. Within the next few weeks Kin Kou will announce three more signings of established artists.

"The approach is, you kind of figure out which way the water is running and swim against it," SLG president Steve Vining says. "These are areas where larger companies aren't functioning anymore."

The Vollenweider discussion went from releasing new album "Vox" to developing into a yearlong rollout that includes the reissue of his

The Beat

By Melinda Newman
mnewman@billboard.com



entire catalog with, in some cases, accompanying DVDs or CD-ROMs.

The slate starts with the June release of "The Magic Harp," a greatest-hits set. The album will be the first SLG project to go through WEA Distribution; SLG formerly funneled through RED Distribution. Reissues will summarize follow, punctuated by "Vox," which is due in September.

The Vollenweider releases will receive an extra push through a PBS special that will air during the August pledge drive and again

(Continued on page 56)

Louis XIV Reigns With 'Secrets'

Atlantic Act Builds On Early Independent Success

BY MARGO WHITMIRE

With a frontman who tends to write in the nude, it is not surprising that Louis XIV's Atlantic debut is a bit naughty.

A handful of the languidly playful lyrics on "The Best Little Secrets Are Kept"—out March 22—were inspired on a night that was "so hot that I had to just strip down," vocalist/guitarist Jason Hill says. "A lot of it was sort of off the cuff, improvised, and those are the songs that I dig because they don't happen all the time."

One part mischievous schoolboy and one part retro sophisticate, San Diego-based Louis XIV is emerging from a quiet Internet enterprise that sold thousands of copies of its 2003 self-titled debut and follow-up EPs "Pink" and "Blue" on its imprint, Pineapple Recording Group.

Local radio picked up on "God Killed the Queen" from the self-titled release, which led to the band building a radio following that included the BBC's Radio 1 and modern rock station KDLD Los Angeles.

"They were already buzzing," Atlantic senior VP of marketing and artist development Livia Tortella says. "Radio really embraced them and it started to spread quickly to the image stations, so we were at an advantage there."

Hill shares vocal, guitar and piano duties with friend Brian Karscig, who he met during recess in grade school. The two linked with drummer Mark Maigaard a few years later, and after playing in various bands together while growing up, the trio made it official two years ago.

"We've known each other so long that it's really easy to

(Continued on page 12)



LOUIS XIV: PLANS MIDNIGHT IN-STORE PERFORMANCE ON STREET DATE

Pianist O'Riley Is No Radiohead Amnesiac

Fans of **Radiohead** take their love of the band very seriously. Classical pianist **Christopher O'Riley**, however, has taken his admiration further by recording two full albums of Radiohead transcriptions for solo piano. His latest CD, "Hold Me to This," will be released by **Harmonia Mundi's World Village** imprint April 12. The new album, which follows 2003's "True Love Waits" (released on **Sony Classical Odyssey**), features many of the band's B-sides and rarities.

"I'm not arranging these songs

just to have arranged them," says O'Riley, who also hosts the **Public Radio International** syndicated show "From the Top," which showcases young classical musicians from across the United States. "I'm doing the best I can to approximate the energy of a full rock band. And that's really always been part of the conceit and the seduction of piano reductions or arrangements of any kind of music. That possible range of color, and vitality, is the same thing that drives, say, **Liszt's** transcriptions of the **Beethoven** symphonies."

"Hold Me to This" isn't O'Riley's only new Radiohead project; the pianist is also publishing all the arrangements he has recorded on both of his transcription albums in a striking LP-sized book (available through his Web site, christopher-oriley.com). "It's an incredibly beautiful book," O'Riley raves. "It's really a collaboration with **Steve Byram**, who designed the package for both of my Radiohead discs; for this book, he created incredible art for every page. I think it will be attractive as a work of art on its own."

O'Riley's tastes are famously diverse, and his repertoire ranges from Beethoven to new music by

Aaron Jay Kernis to collaborations with tango pianist **Pablo Ziegler**. "I've continually been writing arrangements," O'Riley says. "I'm not just doing Radiohead, but also other artists. Right now, I'm hard at work at a lot of **Elliott Smith's**

songs. The common thread is what sends chills down my spine.

"There are two qualities in particular that really get me excited: harmony and texture," O'Riley notes. "In the **Shostakovich** Preludes and

Fugues I'm currently playing, for example, it's the fugal texture that gets under my skin. In Radiohead, each band member contributes one integral part of the puzzle in every song, which is a very contrapuntal way of making music. That, in turn, is part of what makes Radiohead so attractive for piano arrangements," he adds. "The varied texture means that you have different threads to pull together."

In fact, O'Riley has been pairing the Shostakovich with Radiohead in

his live performances. He says that with this kind of genre fluidity, playing each style undoubtedly influences the other in his work.

"Given that classical music involves a very wide repertoire and a very broad vocabulary of composi-

Classical Score
By Anastasia Tsioulcas
atsioulcas@billboard.com



tional material," he muses, "that background informs everything I play in a very good way. In turn, the Radiohead stuff encourages the spontaneity and kineticism of my performances. It's definitely a two-way street."

SWEEPING THE CHART: Sony BMG's **RCA Red Seal** label gambled on the mainstream appeal of five clean-cut, piano-playing siblings: the Brown family of Salt Lake City.

So far, it looks as though the risk-taking has paid off: **The 5 Browns'** self-titled debut album, released Feb. 8, has been a major sales success. Debuting at No. 1 on the Top Classical chart, the Browns' first album managed to knock "Yo-Yo Ma Plays Errio Morricone" out of the top spot after a 19-week reign.

The group's massive media campaign continues in the weeks ahead, including a live outdoor performance in Rockefeller Plaza for **NBC's** "Weekend Today" slated for April 2. The group's upcoming tour dates are what Sony BMG classical division president **Gilbert Hetherwick** calls "a series of little events," including appearances in Florida, Seattle, San Francisco and Salt Lake City.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: This time, a bevy of intriguing piano releases: the reissue of **Rudolf Serkin's** album of **Chopin's 24 Preludes (Sony Classical, Feb. 22)**, **Helene Grimaud's** performances of Chopin's and **Rachmaninov's Piano Sonatas Nos. 2 (Deutsche Grammophon, March 8)** and **Richard Goode's** recording of the **Mozart Piano Sonatas** in a minor, K. 310 and F Major, K. 533/494, with a variety of other short solo works (**Nonesuch, April 5**).



O'RILEY: SUSTAINING ROCK ENERGY ON PIANO

Louis XIV

Continued from page 11

be in a band," Hill says. "We don't see the point to practicing, and if we didn't know each other the way we do, it would be a lot harder to do."

Hill produced, recorded and engineered the new 10-track set, which pairs songs from the band's initial releases with new tracks like "Paper Doll" and "Pledge of Allegiance."

Hill made his living recording other bands before Louis XIV headed to a magazine warehouse in Paris to record its first album.

Although he never looked through the stacks, Hill likes to imagine they were piles of French pornography. "Louis XIV" took two weeks to complete.

"It's really raw and unmodern," he says. "In terms of recording, it's really warm and reminds me of something out of 1972."

In January, the group released the five-song EP "Illegal Tender" through a partnership for its imprint with WEA's independent distribution arm, Alternative Distribution Alliance.

The title, which peaked at No. 36 on the *Billboard* Top Heatseekers chart and at No. 45 on Top Independent Albums, placed "Finding Out True Love Is Blind" on the map as the group's first official single.

A raunchy homage to the female

population, the single represents Hill's favorite vice: "That's one of these sort of addictions in life that I think are wonderful and that I don't mind so much. That I like to give in to, you know?"

The song, which is also on "Best Little Secrets," is No. 28 on the *Billboard* Modern Rock Tracks chart this issue.

"There are certain things I'll do onstage that I can't do if I don't have a guitar strapped to me," Hill says of his swaggering live-show persona. "You just sort of have this electricity go through you, and you don't think about it."

Tortella says that despite Louis XIV's

head start at radio, Atlantic is approaching marketing from a grassroots angle.

"It's really about putting the music in people's hands at parties and just making sure we connect the dots and allow the time to develop organically beyond the song on the radio," she says.

The label plans to ship more than 65,000 copies to retailers. Listening posts have been secured.

"It's a record for us that we feel is a great fit, and we're looking forward to doing a lot with it," says Jerry Suarez, senior music product manager for Virgin Entertainment Group. "Obviously, it's a developing artist, but we're going

to try and give it as key a positioning as we can."

At midnight on March 22, the group will do an in-store performance at Virgin's Sunset Boulevard location in Los Angeles.

Tortella says print promotion will also be a major component for the new album, with ads planned in Filter, Spin and Fader, among other publications.

In April and May, Vice will release a series of lifestyle samplers featuring Louis XIV and other acts.

The group, which recently added bass player James Armbrust, just finished a U.S. tour supporting Hot Hot Heat and will join former tour mates

the Killers for another trek.

On March 17, Louis XIV performed at Radio 1's La Zona Rosa showcase during the South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin. Doves and the Futureheads were also on the bill.

Louis XIV will appear on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" on street date. "Finding Out True Love Is Blind" is being played at MTV2. And the band will rejoin Hot Hot Heat on the road in April in Canada.

"We want them to stay on the road for a long time," Tortella says. "They're sexy, and they put it out there. They definitely don't take themselves too seriously, and yet, they're quality."

M.I.A.

Continued from page 11

"It felt like music that was coming from the streets," Interscope A&R executive Mark Williams says. "We feel Interscope is a company that can take advantage of that."

M.I.A. is happy with the licensing arrangement because she can keep one foot in the independent world. "All the labels say, 'We're genuine and into integrity,' so who actually is? I just wanted to have some fun. I'm not going to turn into a pop artist or a tamed-down version of what I'm doing."

With a major label now involved, the

self-taught musician is on the fast track, and she knows it.

"My learning curve goes straight up so far that it bends back on itself and does a back flip," she says.

SAMPLING OF PROBLEMS

The underground stir caused by "Galang" set up "Arular" quite nicely. Then Beggars announced that some samples still needed clearance, and it was pulled from its Feb. 22 release. But other issues loomed.

M.I.A.'s buzz was growing to a roar, and with Interscope entering the picture, Beggars had to switch distribution from Warner Music Group's Alternative Distribution Alliance to Universal Music & Video Distribution's Fontana for the project.

"There were a few retail programs that were booked and were about to happen that we lost some money on," Harmon says. "We were able to salvage most of it. That said, this is a softer launch than we expected."

For now, "Arular" will be released solely on XL, but Interscope will jump in at a point to be determined. Future M.I.A. albums will carry the XL/Interscope tag from the start.

Despite the attention the media has lavished on M.I.A.—she has been profiled in *The New Yorker* and placed on the cover of *The Fader*—Harmon says she is still an underground phenomenon.

"We'd be kidding ourselves to think that kids in Omaha, Neb., would be familiar with M.I.A.," he says. "To really impact a Wal-Mart, we're going to need

a lot more radio and MTV support."

The artist is gaining ground, says Matt Olsen, a buyer at Sonic Boom in Seattle. "Somebody comes in every day asking for a copy of it."

Yet M.I.A. isn't in the clear yet. Recent U.S. shows were canceled because of visa issues, and she is still waiting for approval to tour the United States this spring.

"Immigration offices are my second home," she says. "I'm just going through the standard procedures. There's a reason you don't have many Sri Lankans coming to sing" in the United States.

M.I.A. is managed by Sara Newkirk at Cornerstone and booked by Sam Kirby at the William Morris Agency. Her music is published by Zomba.

Fountain Remembers Blind Boy Bandmate Scott

This column began as a celebratory piece spotlighting the **Blind Boys of Alabama's** new album, "Atom Bomb." But just after it was written, there came news that founding member **George Scott** had died in his sleep at his home in Durham, N.C. He was 75.

Among the last people to speak with Scott was **Clarence Fountain**, another founding member of the group, which formed in 1939, three years after Scott, Fountain and **Jimmy Carter** met at the **Alabama Institute for the Negro Blind**. (The group's current lineup features Fountain, Carter, **Joey Williams**, **Eric McKinnie**, **Bobby Butler**, **Tracy Pierce** and Bishop **Billy Bowers**.)

"It just goes to show you never know when you may be talking to

someone for the last time, so always be thankful for the people you have in your life," Fountain said in a statement. "We're grateful to the Lord for letting us have George for as long as we did. He and I grew up together and sang together from little boys to old men. George was a great singer. He could sing any part in a song. We loved him and he was one of the 'Boys.' He lived a life of service and now he's gone on to his reward."

Born **George Lewis Scott** on March 18, 1929, in Notasulga, Ala., the legendary baritone also played guitar, which was the group's only instrumental accompaniment in the early days. The Blind Boys went on to become one of the most popular gospel groups of the 1940s-1960s.

The act enjoyed a resurgence when it signed with **Peter Gabriel's Real World Records** in 2001.

The group has won four Grammy Awards, including one last month for "There Will Be a Light," a collaboration with **Ben Harper**.

Funeral services were held March 15, the same day "Atom Bomb" was released.

Scott retired from touring with the Blind Boys in 2004 but sang lead on several tracks on the new album. When he retired last year, he urged the band to continue.

"When you come hear the Blind Boys, you come to hear a phenomenon," Fountain tells *Billboard*. "We know how to do it. We've been doing it for more than 60 years, and we haven't gotten tired yet."

For "Atom Bomb," the Blind Boys once again recorded at **Capitol's** historic studio in Los Angeles, with **Jon Chelew** producing.

The Blind Boys serve up a spunky

version of the **Fatboy Slim/Macy Gray** song "Demons," joined by **Gift of Gab** from **Blackalicious**. The legendary **Billy Preston** adds some Hammond B-3 organ to **Eric Clapton's** "Presence

Fountain, 72, who makes his home in Baton Rouge, La. "It wasn't too complicated because just about any song you could put up there, we'd know it."

Fountain looks forward to performing the songs live when the Blind Boys tour this summer. "The last three years have been packed houses," Fountain says. "It's been a fantastic run for us. The more Grammys we win, the more people we draw."

After spending decades on the road, Fountain has his own philosophy on maintaining longevity. "My theory has always been, 'Do your body right and you'll be alright,'" he says. "I never drank or did drugs, so I've got a chance to go on for a little while."

Beyond touring, the Blind Boys have been visible via a public service campaign for the **American Diabetes Assn.** Some members suffer from the disease, and the group is committed to raising awareness.

Fountain says the group also has "a couple of movie deals" in the works, including a film version of "The Gospel at Colonus," an Obie Award-winning play in which the Blind Boys performed. "I want one good movie deal, then I could go home and sit down. I'd be satisfied then," he says with a laugh.



THE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA: THE GROUP WILL CONTINUE TO TOUR


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Organizers Go Underground For Package Tour

BY RAY WADDELL

Given the limited number of premium touring options for aggressive music bands, their handlers must be aggressive in creating tour opportunities.

Enter Sounds of the Underground, a hard-hitting DIY tour project that brings a high-profile live platform to bands that might not fit into Ozzfest or the Vans Warped tour this year.

Produced by Face the Music Touring booking agent Tim Borrer, Ferret label executive/artist manager Paul Conroy, Ferret owner Carl Severson and artist manager Larry Mazer, the tour runs June 25 through the end of July (billboard.biz, March 8).

All of the principals in the project found themselves without an optimum touring situation for their bands this summer.

"We all either had certain bands on Ozzfest or Warped last year that weren't going to be on it this year," Borrer says. "But they had gotten to the point where they had a lot of touring meat on their bones, and it would be a shame to see them climax at the club level. We all decided to force the issue and make this happen."

Confirmed bands include Clutch, Poison the Well, Opeth, Unearth, From Autumn to Ashes, Chimaira, Norma Jean, Every Time I Die, Strapping Young Lad, Throwdown, High on Fire, Devil Driver, All That Remains and A Life Once Lost. Another major headliner will be announced soon.

Additionally, Madball and Terror will split the eastern and western portions of the tour.

Regional appearances will be made by the Red Chord (East Coast markets), Fear Before the March of Flames (Midwest and Southeast) and Himsa (Western).

The number of bands participating is evidence of a vibrant scene. "A lot of the artists we work with were kind of left in the dust with touring opportunities," Conroy says. "If we didn't create an opportunity, we could be stuck playing clubs this summer. And if this scene stops at the club level, we're failing these bands, who deserve more."

Conroy says the lineup came together "fairly quickly," given that most of these bands have toured together in the past. "Ninety-five percent of these bands have played together at the club level, or at events like Hellfest or Metalfest," he says. "This whole scene is very organic."



LABEL SUPPORT

Independent labels Ferret, Prosthetic, Trustkill and Metal Blade came to the table with enough money to set up the tour, including production, road personnel and initial marketing costs.

"After the labels that initially believed in this tour got the nut together and put up the money, Tim was able to put together this jaw-dropping

lineup," Severson says. "Then we had something we could take to the sponsors for visibility."

Initial sponsors are Music Choice, Revolver magazine, purevolume.com and Hot Topic. The tour producers are open to an appropriate title sponsor, as well.

"If the right sponsor comes onboard at the corporate level that wants to invest in our tour, we're willing to listen, if it makes sense," Conroy says. "But we want the brand to remain true to the tour itself."

Mazer adds, "My dream would be Red Bull or one of those energy drinks that are popular among these bands. It has to be lifestyle-oriented."

Sounds of the Underground will play indoor and outdoor venues in the United States and Canada. "We're looking at cut-down arenas, parking lots, 5,000-capacity civic centers and open-floor buildings," Borrer says. "Basically, we were looking for buildings where kids can have fun the same way they do in the clubs."

Promoter deals are still being worked out, but negotiations are under way, and a national promoter (with some input from independents) is a possibility. Whatever the case, the tour is priced conservatively for buyers.

"All the bands have come together to do the

kind of deals to make it possible for the promoters to make money," Borrer says. "This is priced so bands can play to a larger audience and have a shot at becoming stronger than the club level."

Tickets will be \$30, with doors opening at 11 a.m., first music at noon, and the show wrapping at about 11:30 p.m. Each show will feature a "halftime performance" by GWAR, but outside of band merchandise outlets, concourse activity will be limited. "We want people in front of the stage for 12 hours," Mazer says.

All involved are intent on creating a touring franchise with Sounds of the Underground. "We would love for this to become an annual event, and even take it internationally," Mazer says.

"A lot of people that work in this music say we have a tour that really fits in this marketplace, that falls right between Ozzfest and Warped," Conroy says. "When we were trying to come up with a name, we didn't want to seem overly metal or overly hardcore. 'Sounds of the Underground' really bespeaks lifestyle-driven heavy music."

The active hard-music fan base has responded, Severson says. "Every 15-year-old kid with an opinion has offered it up," he says. "The response has been awesome."

Meanwhile, all four principals stress the importance of Ozzfest and Warped for this type of music. "The first choice for developing these bands at this time is still Ozzfest or Warped," Borrer says. "But some of these bands may never find themselves on either Ozzfest or Warped. They're the bastard children of hard rock."

Summer Season To See Surge In '80s Acts

BY JILL KIPNIS

LOS ANGELES—This summer, get ready to travel back in time.

Although there have been package tours featuring '80s artists for years, the upcoming summer concert season marks a notable increase.

Promoters say the acts' multigenerational appeal, strong catalog of hits and, perhaps most important, reasonable ticket prices are propelling the upswing.

The eighth annual Rock Never Stops tour, scheduled to hit 2,500- to 5,000-seat theaters in at least 40 cities starting in June, will feature Cinderella, Ratt, Quiet Riot and Firehouse.

Also in June, Def Leppard and Bryan Adams are launching a 26-date co-headlining tour of minor league ballparks.

"When we started eight years ago, this style of rock'n'roll was niche. There weren't a lot of people banging our doors down," says Mark Hyman, a partner at Paradise Artists, creator of the Rock Never Stops tour. "The fans used to be embarrassed to come; they didn't want people to know they love the music. With Mötley Crüe out there packing them in, that tells you that this music has once again arrived."

Rock Never Stops and the Def Leppard/Adams trek will reach fans of

1980s-era rock with targeted promotions in each market. Also, Rock Never Stops has again retained VH1 Classic as a promotional sponsor. The channel will feature on-air spots and ticket giveaways.

Jay Frey, a partner at Paradise Artists, says, "We've done hardcore pushes to make sure there is a lot of awareness. We think of it as building a brand."

WHY IT APPEALS NOW

So-called "hair bands" and other rockers from the 1980s are rising in popularity on the touring circuit because their initial fans continue to go to concerts.

The 2003 edition of Rock Never Stops, with Whitesnake, Warrant, Kip Winger and Slaughter, grossed about \$1.1 million and attracted nearly 85,000 people for 24 dates, according to Billboard Boxscore. Full results were not reported for the tour's 2004 outing.

Fans are now bringing their children to these shows, and a new generation is developing strong connections to these acts.

"These bands are the new classic rock of the current era," says John Domagall, manager of Firehouse at Artists Representation & Management and a former promoter for Rock Never Stops. "The

people that really listen to those '70s artists aren't going to as many concerts. The demo for the '80s stuff are mostly in their 30s and 40s, and they are warmly receiving these acts. I've also got 12-year-olds wanting to see Mötley Crüe and Lynyrd Skynyrd so bad."

SHOWSTOPPING PRODUCTIONS

The shows themselves are also more theatrical, and perceived to be a good deal by consumers. Tickets for Rock Never Stops range from \$35 to \$45. Def Leppard/Adams has a base price of \$45.

Tim Heyne, Cinderella's manager at Union Entertainment Group, notes, "We will have pyro and other special things for Rock Never Stops.

You're going to get a lot of pop for your dollar."

Securing the right venue is critical. Jerry Mickelson, co-president at Jam Productions, the promoter for Def Leppard/Adams, says minor league ballparks are "alternative venues that bring back the experience of the way music used to be. Also, there are almost no facility fees at most of these parks. Parking is cheaper, or there's no charge at all."

Mickelson adds that Jam last year promoted a Bob Dylan/Willie Nelson tour of minor league parks that excited music fans.

At each Def Leppard/Adams stop, a stage will be built on the field, and fans can sit in the outfield or in the stands.

"Everybody wants to play Madison Square Garden, but there's a point when you want to do something that's a little different," Def Leppard lead singer Joe Elliott says. The band's two-disc set "Rock of Ages: The Definitive Collection" (Mercury/UME) will be released May 17.

"There's always logistical issues to convert from baseball to concert mode," says John Cunningham, president/GM of PGE Bark in Portland, Ore., where the Def Leppard/Adams trek kicks off June 1. "But being part of an

event like this is good for the community."

A multi-act tour with reasonable guarantees also appeals to venues and promoters.

ARM's Domagall notes that promoters know they can make money with these package tours. "The cost of buying talent for summer festivals has gone through the roof," he says. "This particular package has been priced reasonably."

Jason Stone, VP of Ron Delsener Presents, the booker for the North Fork Theatre @ Westbury in Westbury, N.Y., is hosting Rock Never Stops this year because "it's a value to patrons and artists. Artists are battling for the fan going to see solo tours from Aerosmith. If the customer can see four bands, they will."

Elliott says that although Def Leppard has generally toured alone, pairing with Adams makes sense and is even a way to draw in new fans. "A Bon Jovi or a Bryan Adams is what people would perceive is a right fit for us," he says. "We're comfortable accepting the way people think."

Each tour will reach out to potential fans through targeted marketing. Promotion for Def Leppard/Adams will include print, radio and TV advertising, as well as an e-mail campaign. Jam is also working on obtaining a sponsor.



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CONCERT GROSSES

ARTIST(S)	VENUE/ DATE	GROSS/ TICKET PRICE(S)	ATTENDANCE/ CAPACITY	PROMOTER
CELINE DION	The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas March 3-6	\$2,246,511 \$225/\$175/\$127.50/\$87.50	16,367 four sellouts	Concerts West/AEG Live
GEORGE STRAIT, DIERKS BENTLEY, AMBER DOTSON	Pepsi Center, Denver March 5	\$1,132,200 \$63.50/\$53.50	18,015 sellout	Varnell Enterprises
JIMMY BUFFETT	Ford Amphitheatre, Tampa, Fla. Feb. 26	\$1,101,686 \$79.50/\$36	19,385 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
MÖTLEY CRÜE	Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Ill. March 10	\$681,139 \$75/\$49.50/\$29.50	13,350 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
JOSH GROBAN, CHRIS BOTTI	Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich. March 1	\$674,542 \$79.50/\$49.50	11,197 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
JOSH GROBAN, CHRIS BOTTI	John D. Millett Hall, Oxford, Ohio March 4	\$527,183 \$59/\$35	10,185 10,388	Clear Channel Entertainment
MÖTLEY CRÜE	Target Center, Minneapolis March 14	\$487,204 \$75/\$48/\$35	9,974 sellout	in-house
DURAN DURAN, IMA ROBOT	HP Pavilion, San Jose, Calif. March 2	\$477,420 \$75/\$35	9,656 10,454	Clear Channel Entertainment
JOSH GROBAN, CHRIS BOTTI	Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, Ill. March 2	\$437,625 \$66.50/\$32	7,906 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
MÖTLEY CRÜE	U.S. Cellular Arena, Milwaukee March 12	\$406,882 \$65/\$47/\$37	8,370 sellout	Frank Productions
MÖTLEY CRÜE	The Mark of the Quad Cities, Moline, Ill. March 11	\$402,615 \$65/\$45	7,567 sellout	Frank Productions
INTERPOL, BLONDE REDHEAD	Radio City Music Hall, New York March 1-2	\$401,183 \$39.50/\$29.50	10,825 11,946 two shows	Clear Channel Entertainment, Radio City Entertainment
MÖTLEY CRÜE	Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio March 8	\$377,640 \$67/\$47/\$32	8,020 sellout	in-house
PAUL WELLER, NIC ARMSTRONG	Civic Hall, Wolverhampton, England March 2-3	\$325,542 (£169,518) \$54.73/\$27.85	6,000 two sellouts	3A Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents
ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ	Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot, Hato Rey, P.R. March 12	\$314,508 \$85/\$35	4,911 5,100	Gianfi Communications
HILARY DUFF	Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas March 4	\$312,855 \$97.50/\$37.50	5,970 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
KEITH URBAN, KATRINA ELAM	Ford Center, Oklahoma City March 10	\$296,835 \$35	8,481 sellout	Beaver Productions
LIZA MINNELLI	North Fork Theatre at Westbury, Westbury, N.Y. Feb. 18-20	\$266,955 \$65/\$58.50	4,425 8,226 three shows	Clear Channel Entertainment
RASCAL FLATTS, BLAKE SHELTON	Stephen C. O'Connell Center, Gainesville, Fla. Feb. 18	\$264,164 \$37	6,961 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
RASCAL FLATTS, BLAKE SHELTON, SHELLY FAIRCHILD	Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Miss. March 12	\$263,883 \$37	7,159 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
RASCAL FLATTS, BLAKE SHELTON, SHELLY FAIRCHILD	Mullins Center, Amherst, Mass. Feb. 26	\$263,865 \$47/\$37	6,184 7,000	Clear Channel Entertainment
YANNI	Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich. Feb. 15	\$261,282 \$59.50/\$39.50	4,756 7,227	Danny O'Donovan Presents, Concerts West/AEG Live
DURAN DURAN	Toyota Center, Houston Feb. 20	\$260,386 \$49.50/\$14.50	7,270 17,960	Clear Channel Entertainment
RASCAL FLATTS, BLAKE SHELTON, SHELLY FAIRCHILD	DeSoto Civic Center, Southaven, Miss. March 11	\$259,037 \$37	7,002 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
HARRY CONNICK JR.	Reno Hilton Theatre, Reno, Nev. Feb. 17-18	\$254,495 \$85/\$55	3,476 3,665 two shows	Clear Channel Entertainment
SLIPKNOT	Wachovia Spectrum, Philadelphia March 5	\$248,045 \$35	7,348 10,000	Electric Factory Concerts
AUSTRALIAN IDOL	Vodafone Arena, Melbourne, Australia Feb. 1	\$244,525 (\$315,435 Australian) \$154.26/\$52.17	5,304 6,870	Michael Chugg Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents
RASCAL FLATTS, BLAKE SHELTON	Columbus Civic Center, Columbus, Ga. Feb. 20	\$241,788 \$37	6,412 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
RASCAL FLATTS, BLAKE SHELTON, SHELLY FAIRCHILD	Sovereign Center, Reading, Pa. Feb. 25	\$238,687 \$37	6,451 sellout	Clear Channel Entertainment
PAUL WELLER, NIC ARMSTRONG	Cardiff International Arena, Cardiff, Wales March 4	\$238,340 (£124,916) \$54.38	4,472 sellout	3A Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents
AUSTRALIAN IDOL	Sydney Entertainment Centre, Sydney, Australia Jan. 22	\$230,142 (\$298,925 Australian) \$152.90/\$52.28	5,080 6,000	Michael Chugg Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents
ASHLEE SIMPSON, PEPPER'S GHOST, THE CLICK FIVE	Universal Amphitheatre, Universal City, Calif. Feb. 18	\$223,527 \$42/\$37/\$32	5,641 sellout	House of Blues Concerts
PAUL WELLER, NIC ARMSTRONG	City Hall, Newcastle, England Feb. 24-25	\$219,992 (£115,197) \$54.43	4,170 two sellouts	3A Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents
JILL SCOTT	Fox Theatre, Atlanta March 2	\$219,656 \$67.50/\$44.50	4,343 4,678	CD Enterprises
KEITH URBAN, KATRINA ELAM	Pete Maravich Assembly Center, Baton Rouge, La. March 12	\$215,356 \$34	6,334 sellout	Beaver Productions

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Touring Music

Starwood Shines With Fan Offerings

Opened by PACE Concerts in 1985, Starwood Amphitheater in Antioch, Tenn., was considered a prototype of the modern shed. This year, the local PACE office, in conjunction with Clear Channel Entertainment, is using the venue once again as a forerunner of things to come by showcasing changes

designed to improve the concert experience at CCE amphitheaters.

Among the changes this year at Starwood:

- Concertgoers will be allowed to bring in food and one unopened bottle of water.

- Five hundred lawn chairs will be available for free on a first come, first served basis.

- Domestic beer will be priced at \$5, and all concession prices will be lowered.

- One ticket holder at every concert will be randomly selected during ticket scanning to receive a Birthday Prize Pack that includes such VIP perks as upgraded seats (from lawn to seats under the shed), VIP passes, backstage passes and meet-and-greets.

Also in celebration of Starwood's 20th season, the venue is donating 20 cents from every ticket sold to local nonprofit organizations.

CRÜE-NECK TEES: OK, so Mötley Crüe is getting way more ink than anyone could have predicted. But the Red, White and Crüe 2005... Better Live Than Dead tour, an early contender for sleeper of the year, is notching stellar merchandise sales, according to Signatures Network, the band's licensing and tour merch company.



MÖTLEY CRÜE'S MERCH IS A HOT ITEM

So far, the Crüe is running up the highest merch sales in its history, averaging more than \$10 per head for the first week of shows, including dates in Fort Lauderdale and

Tampa, Fla.; Cleveland; and Toronto. Also selling well are Platinum Ticket Packages, available at motleycrue.com, which allow fans to meet and take photos with the band throughout the tour. Limited to 25 fans per engagement, the packages have sold out at every show.

On The Road™
By Ray Waddell
rwaddell@billboard.com



WHITHER HOB? While an announcement regarding the future of House of Blues Entertainment's concert division had been expected by mid-February, sources close to the situation say news of a pending sale is not imminent. The reason for the delay is anyone's guess, but HOB is notching strong ticket sales early in the year, which could signal a "no sale" environment.

STILL VERTI-GOING: As expected, the initial on-sales for U2's fall run of the Vertigo tour in North America blew out quickly, resulting in the addition of many dates. It looks as though Vertigo has finally realized its potential for New York, after finding room for only one Madison Square Garden show on the spring leg. With the fall run, MSG will sell out another seven shows in October and November. This could potentially be the top Boxscore of the year, with a gross near \$15 million.

In Chicago, traditionally one of U2's hottest markets, fans previously bought more than 76,000 tickets for four sellouts in May. An additional two shows for Sept. 20-21 also sold out quickly, bringing the total take in the market to about \$10 million.

In Boston, where U2 had sold out shows for May 24, 26 and 28, an additional two were announced for Oct. 3-4. When these sold out in 10 minutes, Dec. 4-5 shows were added, for a grand total of seven sellouts.

This is as hot as it gets.

OZZY WEIGHS IN: Told that Ozzfest has grossed \$172 million, Ozzy Osbourne asks, "Where is it?" conceding it might have gone toward the purchase of dogs. "We've got more dogs than the fucking pet shop. The pet shop's calling over here to see if we've got any spares they can give to their other customers."

Tweet Returns, Whistling A Happier Tune

BY GAIL MITCHELL

LOS ANGELES—It's spring, and a new Tweet is blooming.

Yes, the Missy Elliott protégé is back with her sophomore set, "It's Me Again." However, it's a sunnier and more content "me" that listeners will encounter on the March 22 release from the Gold Mind/Atlantic.



TWEET: 'I'VE MATURED AS AN ARTIST'

Tweet says her 2002 debut, "Southern Hummingbird," "reflected my life at that time, very dark." The singer/songwriter, whose real name is Char-

lene Keys, had contemplated suicide when her initial attempt at a music career failed.

"This new album reflects where I am now," adds Tweet, who is managed by Violator. "I've matured as an artist and a woman. I'm comfortable in my skin."

The album's first single, the Kwame-produced "Turn Da Lights Off," featuring Elliott, peaked at No. 47 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks. But word-of-mouth about "It's Me Again" indicates Tweet is on the right track.

"People are going to be very surprised when they hear this project," says DC, PD of WQQK-FM Nashville. "The first single is not indicative of the album's depth." He cites as a prime example "The Two of Us," a duet with Tweet's sound-alike 15-year-old daughter, Tashawna.

As on "Southern Hummingbird," love in its various guises permeates the new set. "I'm Done" was written after a breakup, while "Sports, Sex & Food" doubles as a manual for keeping a man satisfied.

"I want to bring back good, timeless soul music," says Tweet, who is published through Foshawna Pro-

ductions/Mass Confusion/WB Music. "R&B is evolving, and I want to be part of that revolution."

GLOBE-TROTTING

Tweet's talent for penning frank lyrics and fashioning interwoven harmonies first sparked attention with "Southern Hummingbird." Thanks to her No. 1 R&B/No. 7 pop single "Oops (Oh My)," the album sold 857,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Tweet is working through an extensive promotional tour that began last month. Among the events was a New York listening party co-hosted by Elliott and Gold Mind. A West Coast stopover is slated for the end of this month, after Tweet returns from Europe, where the album's release coincides with its U.S. arrival.

The marketing blitz also includes lifestyle and tastemaker campaigns

helmed by Giant Step, print coverage, Tweet media players and a pending iTunes download for a remix of the single.

Atlantic began trumpeting Tweet's return last year during the Seagram's Gin tour, which Tweet headlined with Cee-Lo. Atlantic executive VP Ronnie Johnson says the tour "did a lot in terms of reintroducing Tweet and solidifying her as a singer/performer."

As does the video for "Turn Da Lights Off," which showcases Tweet's new "me." "I felt the need to change the images being portrayed," Tweet says. "You don't have to be naked to be sexy. I want to evoke a classy, timeless style."

To further boost awareness of her album, Gold Mind/Atlantic has secured two high-profile tie-ins.

The label partnered with Lady Foot Locker and Cosmopolitan for the "Work Out Your Dreams" pro-

motion/sweepstakes. Participants can register at selected Foot Locker stores and submit a written description of their dreams to win \$3,500 toward making that dream come true. Advertorials in Cosmopolitan will complement the campaign, designed to promote a healthy lifestyle amid a busy schedule.

In addition, Tweet performs the theme to USA Network's revamped "Kojak" series, which stars Ving Rhames and bows this month. "When I Need a Man" has been shot as a video and doubles as a bonus track on Tweet's album. The network's promos for the show include scrolling text highlighting Tweet's album. "Kojak" trailers that use similar promotional text will screen at Regal theaters in more than 100 markets March 18-April 4. Also, 131 Loews theaters will showcase the trailer and video in their lobbies.

Whitehead Foundation Bows

There was no stopping **John Whitehead**. He and his partner in soul, **Gene McFadden**, penned hits for **Teddy Pendergrass**, the **O'Jays** and **Freddie Jackson**. The Philadelphia pair even recorded their own R&B/pop crossover hit, "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now."

Then last May, Whitehead was fatally shot outside his home. But his still-unsolved murder isn't stopping his widow, **Elnor**.

In addition to creating the **John Whitehead There's No Stoppin' the Music Foundation**, she plans to open the **John C. Whitehead Charter School for the Creative and Performing Arts** in 2006.

To get the ball rolling, the foundation is mounting its first major fundraiser April 20 at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center.

The benefit concert and award show will be hosted by **Patti LaBelle** and feature **Gerald Levert**, **Floetry** and **Melba Moore**, among others. Award recipients include **Kenny Gamble** and **Leon Huff** and **Universal Motown's Sylvia Rhone**.

"Unfortunately, you don't think about things like this until something happens," Elnor Whitehead says. "John loved children, and I wanted to do something like a scholarship. Then it escalated from there."



Rising solo star **Omarion** has signed with **SESAC**. Pictured, from left, are **SESAC** director of writer/publisher relations **James Leach**, **SESAC** associate director of writer/publisher relations **Allison Hagendorf** and **Omarion**.

Rhythm & Blues
By Gail Mitchell
gmitchell@billboard.com



A four-song tribute CD, "Messages From Whitehead," is also available at 101distribution.com. One track is a newly discovered love song that Whitehead wrote for his wife, "Love Don't Come No Better Than You." Vocalists on the track include **McFadden**, who is battling cancer.

INDUSTRY BRIEFS: Omarion

has signed with **SESAC**. **Aretha Franklin** plans a June release for her still-untitled album. It will be issued via her own **Aretha Records**. Guests include **Faith Hill**, **Smokie Norful** and former **Temptations** lead singer **Dennis Edwards**.

KUDOS: "Soul Train" creator **Don Cornelius** was recently honored again, this time by **TV Land** during its third annual awards show celebrating classic TV series. Cornelius received the Pop Culture Award as **Stevie Wonder**, **Little Richard**, **Smokey Robinson** and **Ashanti** saluted the "Soul Train" legacy.

PAYING TRIBUTE: One of R&B's distinctive voices is now silenced. **James Brown** protégé **Lyn Collins** died March 13 of cardiac arrhythmia in Pasadena, Calif. She was 56. Dubbed the "Female Preacher" by Brown, Collins sang background on many of his records and was a member of the **James Brown Revue** before notching her own top 10 R&B hit in 1972, "Think (About It)." Many will recall her arresting signature line, "It takes two to make a thing go right," had folks pumping up the volume on the **Rob Base & D.J. E-Z Rock** 1988 classic "It Takes Two." Her work has also been sampled by **Ludacris** and others.

Collins, born in Abilene, Texas, also worked as a backup session vocalist, appearing on the "Dr. Detroit" soundtrack and TV's "Fame." She wrapped a European tour last month, and her "Think (About It)" will be included on the forthcoming "James Brown & Friends" Millennium disc via **UME**, a division of **Universal**. A relative of Brown Revue members **Bootsy** and **Catfish Collins**, Collins is survived by sons **Anthony** and **Bobby Jackson**. Services were held March 19 in Dokes Springs, Texas.

MARCH 26 2005 Billboard HOT RAP TRACKS™			
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	Artist
1	1	CANDY SHOP SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE	50 Cent Featuring Olivia
2	2	HOW WE DO AFTERMATH/G-UNIT/INTERSCOPE	The Game Featuring 50 Cent
3	3	LOVERS AND FRIENDS BME/TVT	Lil Jon & The East Side Boyz Featuring Usher & Ludacris
4	4	DISCO INFERNO SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE	50 Cent
5	6	HATE IT OR LOVE IT AFTERMATH/G-UNIT/INTERSCOPE	The Game Featuring 50 Cent
6	5	SOME CUT BME/REPRISE/WARNER BROS	Trillville Featuring Cutty
7	7	BRING EM OUT GRAND HUSTLE/ATLANTIC	T.I.
8	8	U DON'T KNOW ME GRAND HUSTLE/ATLANTIC	T.I.
9	10	WAIT (THE WHISPER SONG) COLLIPARK/TVT	Ying Yang Twins
10	9	DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT DGGYSTYLE/GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE	Snoop Dogg Featuring Pharrell
11	11	MOCKINGBIRD SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE	Eminem
12	12	NUMBER ONE SPOT DTP/DEF JAM SOUTH/IDJMG	Ludacris
13	14	BABY I'M BACK LATIUM/UNIVERSAL/UMRG	Baby Bash Featuring Akon
14	15	SUGAR (GIMME SOME) SLIP-N-SLIDE/ATLANTIC	Trick Daddy Featuring Ludacris, Lil' Kim & Cee-Lo
15	13	KARMA G-UNIT/INTERSCOPE	Lloyd Banks Featuring Avant
16	16	STILL TIPPIN' SWISHADUSE/ASYLUM/WARNER BROS	Mike Jones Featuring Slim Thug & Paul Wall
17	23	I'M A HUSTLA FULL SURFACE/JRMG	Cassidy
18	19	GASOLINA EL CARTEL/VI	Daddy Yankee
19	17	LEAN BACK SRC/UNIVERSAL/UMRG	Terror Squad
20	20	DOWN AND OUT RCC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM/IDJMG	Cam'ron Featuring Kanye West & Syleena Johnson
21	24	TOMA DIAZ BROTHERS/TVT	Pitbull Featuring Lil Jon
22	21	HOPE CAPITOL	Twista Featuring Faith Evans
23	20	BABY DESERT STORM/ATLANTIC	Fabulous Featuring Mike Shorey
24	25	GET BACK DTP/DEF JAM SOUTH/IDJMG	Ludacris
25	NEW	SO MUCH MORE TERROR SQUAD/ATLANTIC	Fat Joe

Records with the greatest increase in audience impressions. The rap tracks audience is compiled from 88 R&B/Hip-Hop and 65 rhythmic top 40 stations which are electronically monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Songs ranked by number of audience, computed by cross-referencing exact times of airplay with Arbitron listener data. © 2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, 2 WKS. AGO, WEEKS ON CHART, TITLE, PRODUCER (SONGWRITER), Artist, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, PEAK POSITION.

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITLE, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, ARTIST, THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITLE, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, ARTIST.

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITLE, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, ARTIST, THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITLE, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, ARTIST.

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITLE, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, ARTIST, THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITLE, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, ARTIST.

Compiled from a national sample of airplay supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems' Radio Track service. A panel of 98 stations (39 Latin Pop, 15 Tropical, 52 Regional Mexican) are electronically monitored 24 hrs. a day, 7 days a week. Songs ranked by Audience Impressions. Records showing an increase in audience over the previous week, regardless of chart movement. A record which has been on the chart for more than 20 weeks will generally not receive a bullet, even if it registers an increase in audience. Greatest Gainer indicates song with largest audience growth. If two records are tied in audience size, the record being played on more stations is placed first. Records below the top 20 are removed from the chart after 26 weeks. Videoclip availability. ©2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.



Rapper Don Dinero signed a joint-venture deal with Universal Music Latino earlier this year. At the signing, from left, are Dinero's brother, Oscar Guitan; Universal Music Latino senior VP of marketing and A&R Walter Kolm; Universal Music Latino president John Echevarria; Dinero; and Dinero's managers, Rich Isaacson and Jerry Blair of the Fuerte Group.

Notas

Continued from page 20

creative director **Claribel Cuevas**, "can write for both the Latin and general markets."

Cuevas inked a worldwide, co-publishing deal with writer/producer **Chris Rodriguez**, whose credits include tracks for **Paulina Rubio**, **Chayanne**, **Ednita Nazario**, **Ricky Martin** and **Jennifer Lopez**. His recent hits include Rubio's "Algo Tienes" and **Michael Murphy's** "So Damn Beautiful." Upcoming projects include tracks on the solo debut of former **OV7** member **Ari Borovoy** on **Sony BMG Norte Mexico** and **Muffy Nixon's** new album on independent label **Triggerfish**. Rodriguez was previously with **Sony Music Publishing**.

Also signed to a worldwide, co-publishing deal with Famous is **Christian Leuzzi**, who has had songs recorded by **David Bisbal**, **Alejandro Fernandez** and **Christian Castro**, among others. Leuzzi's work appears on Irish tenor **Ronan Tynan's**

newest release and **Andrea Bocelli's** forthcoming album. Leuzzi was previously signed to **Deston Songs**.

EMI Music Publishing Latin America has signed up-and-coming songwriters **María Mato** and **Desemer Bueno**. Mato, who is based in Miami, is signed to **Sony BMG Norte** and is expected to release an album later this year. Bueno, a former member of **Yerba Buena**, is signed to



AGUILAR: RECORDS HIS FIRST DUET

Universal Music Latino with his group **Desemer Bueno y Siete Rayo**. An album is expected from the act later this year.

NORTH BEACH MUSIC: Another concert series has launched in Miami, this time organized by local producer **Rudy Perez**.

Rudy Perez Presents North Beach Nights is organized in conjunction with **North Beach Development** in North Miami Beach. The free concert series, which kicked off Feb. 11 and takes place monthly, features up-and-coming acts.

"It's basically to stimulate live music," says Perez, whose studio is located in North Miami Beach and who was inspired by the North Shore Band Shell, an open-air venue in the area, which is far quieter than bustling South Beach.

Perez not only books the shows but also produces and helps promote them.

Featured acts so far have included **Jay Lozada**, **Victoria** and, on March 11, **Sabrina Barnett**, a new artist signed to **Jack Utsick's Omega Records**.

Teens To Tell All At Latin Confab

What do teens want?

That's the million dollar question that marketers, label executives and radio programmers ask themselves daily.

When it comes to Latin teens, however, that question becomes a desperate cry, for few markets are as underdeveloped or little explored as that of the Latin teen consumer.

Attendees at the **Billboard Latin Music Conference**, set for April 25-28 in Miami, will get the chance to ask teens what it is they want and what it is they buy at the panel "Smells Like Teen Spirit."

Ten Miami consumers aged 13-19 will have a candid



conversation on their likes and dislikes, from how they purchase their music (or not) to what stations they listen to, what concerts they attend and what dictates their musical tastes. This group of bilingual and bicultural teens will provide insight into the fastest-growing minority in the United States.

"Smells Like Teen Spirit" takes place April 26. Immediately following will be "I Want to Be Your No. 1," a charts workshop given by **Billboard** director of charts/senior analyst **Geoff Mayfield**.

For additional information on the **Billboard Latin Music Conference**, go to billboardevents.com.

Lady Bunny Hops To Pen And Paper

New York drag comedian and globe-trotting DJ **Lady Bunny** has appeared on screens large ("To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar") and small ("Sex and the City," **Britney Spears' MTV** special "In the Zone & Up All Night").

Recently, between her numerous deliciously pop- and song-oriented DJ gigs, Bunny has been putting pen to paper. Yes, the founder of **Wigstock** (an annual daylong drag/music fest held in Manhattan) is ready to share her songs with the world.

"I'm doing what I can to get my music heard," Bunny says. "And it's not just dance; it's R&B, funk and pop, too."

Bunny, whose songs are published by **Lady Bunny Music (BMI)**, has inked a six-song deal with **DJ Disciple's** label, **Catch 22 Recordings**. Half the songs are for other singers, while three will spotlight Bunny. Among the latter is the kicky "I Get High," which **Catch 22** released Feb. 22.

The track showcases a singer who has come a long way since her quirky covers of "Shame, Shame, Shame" and "The Pussycat Song" in the '90s. Bunny's original material shows much promise, focusing on memorable hooks and melodies.

It's no wonder that DJ/producers like **Warren Rigg**, **Gomi** and **Davidson Ospina** have lined up to work with her. And club divas **Lonnie Gordon** and **Ele Ferrer** have recorded Bunny's "You've Got to Reach" and "So Much More (Than Just a Thug)," respectively.

"I'm aiming to be a career songwriter," Bunny tells *Billboard*. "While I enjoy being the comedian and the life of the party, I get so much satisfaction from hearing my songs performed by others."

Bunny's five-track demo—with standout cut "Let's Get Jumpin'" — is making the rounds at labels here and abroad. Additional tracks can be heard at ladybunny.net.

SINGLE FILE: Superstar **Mariah Carey** has enjoyed eight No. 1s on the **Billboard** Hot Dance Club Play chart—most recently with remixes of "Through the Rain."

Carey is well-positioned to have her ninth No. 1 on the chart with **David Morales'** remixes of "It's Like That," the first single from her forthcoming "The Emancipation of Mimi." Wisely, Morales offers something for underground jocks (the **Stereo Experience** and **Stereo Dub** versions) and those that like their house music with a bit more sunshine (Club and Classic mixes).

Morales' Classic Mix offers a peek into the mind of a producer who relishes music and melody. This is one spirited, uplifting and joyful journey, with Carey's soul-smacked, party-down delivery the icing on the cake.

Last year, dance radio embraced trance-hued remixes of **Wynonna's** "I Want to Know What Love Is" (**Curb**)

Beat Box™



By **Michael Paoletta**
mpaoletta@billboard.com



by Nashville-based production trio **Piper (Tommy Dorsey, Ron Słowicz and Lenny Bertoldo)**.

The process will surely be repeated with Piper's latest remix, "Resurrec-



BUNNY: VENTURING INTO SONGWRITING

tion" by **Nicol Sponberg**, a respected singer in the Christian music field.

Before passing judgment, give this (secular) gem a listen. Sponberg will remind you of **Annie Lennox**. Her emotional delivery proves to be the perfect muse for Piper's rugged pop foundation.

Less pop are **Gabriel & Dresden's** Vocal Mix and Dub, which are as haunting as they are uplifting. The vocal version is wildly pleasing—particularly when, midway through, the tempo drops to a chilled-out groove, with Sponberg's voice surrounded by synth swirls.

To the DJs that helped take Lennox's "Wonderful" and "A Thousand Beautiful Things" to the top of the Hot Dance Club Play chart last year: Do not ignore this potent, poignant jam.

Wailin' Jennings Shoots Straight In Debut

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—Shooter Jennings sets his own outlaw country tone while paying respects to his old man from the outset of "Put the 'O' Back in Country," his debut album, which Universal South released March 1.

The title track, one of nine cuts either written or co-written by the artist, takes a hardcore country music attitude and quotes from "Are You Ready for the Country," the Neil Young song that was a 1977 country hit for Shooter's dad, Waylon Jennings.

Shooter, who was born Waylon Albright Jennings, is the only child of Jessi Colter and the late country outlaw hero. He cites "Solid Country Gold" as his favorite cut from the album because it has "a Waylon kind of vibe."

No surprise, then, that the 26-year-old names his father first among his country influences, followed by such confederates as Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and George Jones. In fact, Jones appears on the album, as does a fellow son of a country music giant, Hank Williams Jr.

Like the junior Williams, Jennings has a hard rock side, as evidenced by his acknowledged rock inspirations Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith and Guns N' Roses.

Leaving Nashville after high school, Jennings moved to Los Angeles and formed the rock band Stargunn. In L.A., he could pursue a rock career without the scrutiny of a judgmental

Nashville country establishment, a move cynically recalled in album track "Southern Comfort."

"What I love about rock is the energy," Jennings says. "Country is really about the lyrics and songwriting and storytelling, but nobody gave me no goddamn book saying I couldn't play rock guitar on a country song. So I took what I learned from rock and brought it into country."

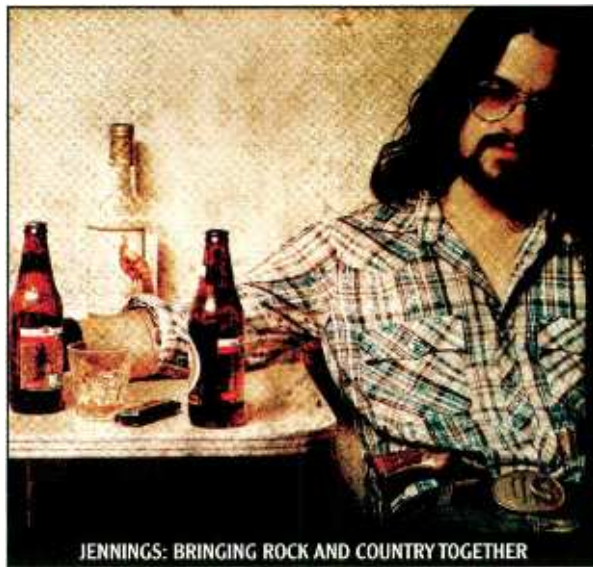
But with "Put the 'O' Back in Country," Jennings is proud to proclaim a renewed commitment to his country heritage. "In rock'n'roll, you separate yourself from the audience, but in country you bring yourself down to their level and connect with them so they can understand you," he says.

FINDING A LABEL HOME

When he started shopping his finished album a year ago, Jennings recalls, "Everybody said this, and the other thing, except for [Universal South senior partner] Tony Brown, who said, 'We'll put it out like it is.'"

Brown had seen a Stargunn show in Nashville and had been disappointed. "When he sent me the new album that was an outlaw country kind of thing, I was anxious to hear it, because that's

what he should be doing," Brown says. "Shooter's got an organic thing that just comes natural."



JENNINGS: BRINGING ROCK AND COUNTRY TOGETHER

Indeed, there's "no formula to Shooter or his music," Universal South national sales and marketing manager Karin Cupit notes. "We knew from the beginning that this would not be a conventional setup," she adds. "His music will appeal not only to the traditional country fans but also the outlaw country fans as well as fans of real rock music, so our approach to retail and radio is multiformat."

At retail, the label is addressing the traditional chain and rack country accounts and indie stores with advertising and marketing dollars. The ini-

tial shipment was 50,000 units, which Cupit says "isn't huge, but we feel it's the right number to start with, because it's a project that will grow from the first week as press and radio begins to build."

"We're also releasing limited-edition vinyl of the album on March 29, because the packaging [a grainy, sepia-toned shot of Shooter and band] and the music and the vibe of what Shooter is all about lends itself to cool, limited-edition vinyl," Cupit says.

The release debuted at No. 29 on the *Billboard* Top Country Albums chart last week, with first-week sales of close to 6,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Universal South is going multiformat with first single "4th of July," which features Jones singing a bit of "He Stopped Loving Her Today." The single, produced by Brown, was shipped to country radio March 14. The full album went to triple-A and Americana stations Feb. 15.

"Satellite radio is extremely interested, with Sirius taking a leadership position and already playing several tracks to great response and giving Shooter his own hourlong show," Cupit says. She notes that a video will go to all country video outlets and that CMT is developing a show

around Jennings.

The artist, who is managed by Marc Dottore of Universal South Artists, will portray his father in the upcoming feature film "Walk the Line." He is published by Universal Music/Faster N Harder Music, administered by Universal Music (ASCAP).

SHOWCASING AT CBGB

Internet marketing will utilize fan sites, especially the AOL Music Breaker program. To secure the AOL involvement, Universal South recently showcased Jennings twice at fabled New York punk rock club CBGB, where he also celebrated his CD release March 1.

"We needed a way for AOL and press and our sales partners to see a live show and see what he's all about," Cupit says. She reports "tons of great press commitment" from publications including GQ, Interview, Rolling Stone, People and Maxim. "To see Shooter is to love Shooter."

James Yelich, Jennings' agent at Monterey Peninsula, is seeing the same thing.

"The [CBGB] dates just blew everybody away," says Yelich, who has Jennings out playing shows with Robert Earl Keen, David Allan Coe and Travis Tritt.

"I wish Waylon was here to hear this record," Brown says. "It's exactly what he and Willie and Cash fought for in creating original country music, and we're honored to have him on our label."

Video Awards And Career Moves At CMT

Big & Rich, Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith and Tim McGraw are the top nominees in the CMT 2005 Music Awards, set to be telecast live on the cable network April 11 from Nashville. Each of the artists received four nominations. **Keith Urban** and **Gretchen Wilson** scored three nominations each.

Five individual videos received three nominations apiece. They are Chesney's "I Go Back," Keith's "Stays in Mexico," McGraw's "Live Like You Were Dying," Wilson's "Redneck Woman" and the **Brad Paisley** video featuring **Alison Krauss**, "Whiskey Lullaby."

For a complete list of nominees, go to billboard.com/awards. Final nominees and winners are chosen by CMT viewers voting online at cmt.com.

In related news, CMT has named **Loretta Lynn** as this year's recipient of the cable network's Johnny Cash Visionary Award. Lynn will be presented with the honor during the telecast. Previous winners are the **Dixie Chicks** (2002), **Johnny Cash** (2003) and **Reba McEntire** (2004).

Previously known as the Video Visionary Award, it was permanently renamed in honor of Cash last year. It recognizes an artist's "extraordinary musical vision, innovative and groundbreaking music videos and pioneering initiatives in entertainment," according to CMT.

In other news from CMT, **Brian Philips** has been promoted to executive VP/GM of the network, where he previously served as senior VP/GM. Philips joined CMT in 2001 after a long and successful career in radio programming. Under his guidance, CMT's distribution has grown to more than 77 million U.S. homes, according to the network.

SIGNINGS: Capitol Records Nashville has signed Grammy Award-winning country legend **Kenny Rogers** for a long-term worldwide deal.

Rogers most recently recorded for his own Nashville-based label, **Dreamcatcher Records**. The status of that label was unclear at press time. A label representative did not respond to requests for comment. Rogers con-

tinues to be represented by the company's management arm, **Dreamcatcher Artist Management**.

While Capitol is positioning the move as a return to the fold for Rogers, he was never previously signed to that label, although most of his biggest hits were released on EMI-affiliated imprints such as **United Artists** and **Liberty**. Capitol has also served as a reissue imprint for Rogers' EMI-owned titles, including the best-of packages "A&E Biography: Kenny Rogers" in 1999 and "42 Ultimate Hits" last year.

Rogers has also recorded for **Reprise**, **Atlantic**, **RCA** and indie labels **Carlton**, **Jolly Rogers** and **Magnatone**.

STUVE STEPS UP: Ron Stuve has been upped to VP of A&R/GM of **BMG**

Songs' Nashville office.

He replaces longtime senior VP **Karen Conrad**, who departs the company. **BMG** is expected to announce some kind of ongoing relationship with Conrad shortly.

Nashville Scene
By Phyllis Stark
pstark@billboard.com



Stuve joined the company in 1997, rising to his most recent post as VP of the repertoire department. Prior to joining **BMG**, Stuve was VP of **AMR/New Haven Music**, which **BMG** acquired in 1997.

The **BMG** Songs Nashville roster includes writers **Hugh Prestwood**, **Bill Luther**, **Aimee Mayo**,

Ed Hill, **Marcus Hummon** and **John Hiatt**.

ON THE ROW: The **Country Music Assn.** has promoted **Bobette Dudley** to VP of events and program development and **Rick Murray** to VP of strategic marketing. Dudley was senior director of events and program development. Murray was senior director of strategic marketing.

Steve Hodges has been promoted to senior director of national promotion at **Capitol Records Nashville**. He succeeds **Jimmy Harnen**, who was recently elevated to VP of promotion (*Billboard*, March 19). Hodges was Capitol's Southeast regional promoter.

Director/photographer **Sam Erickson** joins the staff of Nashville-based production company **Taillight TV**. He has already completed his first project for the company, directing the video for **Dierks Bentley's** "Lot of Leavin' Left to Do."

Additional reporting by Wade Jessen in Nashville.

ALBUMS

Edited by Michael Paoletta

POP/ROCK

► THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES Origin Vol. 1

PRODUCERS: the Soundtrack of Our Lives, Johan Forsman

Republic/Universal B0004217

RELEASE DATE: March 15

Everything about "Origin Vol. 1" is big: Big chords. Big ideas. Big energy. Even the first single is big, or rather "Bigtime," although that is one place the Soundtrack of Our Lives has yet to arrive. This album, the Swedish band's sixth (but only the second with major U.S. distribution, a worthy follow-up to the brilliant 2002 disc "Behind the Music") should change all that. TSOOL has worked the essential riffs of big-arena rock'n'roll (the Who, the Rolling Stones, AC/DC) into its own unstoppable DNA: These guys are peers, not poachers; they've got an entertaining, imprecisely defined worldview that splits the difference between "living the Aquarian dream" ("Midnight Children") and a scary sci-fi future ("Bigtime") that looks a lot like today. Made to be played loud on a grand automobile sound system, "Origin Vol. 1" is big fun.—**WR**

► KASABIAN

Kasabian

PRODUCER: Kasabian

RCA 82876 66428

RELEASE DATE: March 8

Remember the British music scene of the early '90s? England's Kasabian sure does. The band channels the Happy Mondays, Stone Roses and early Primal Scream on its debut album. However, it does it with a darker edge and updated technology, seamlessly combining muscular guitars, driving basslines, multiple keyboards and, to borrow one of its song titles, processed beats. The band is already a smash in its home country, where this album debuted at No. 4 and was certified gold in just two weeks. Stateside, the single "Club Foot" has made an impact on the modern charts, and tastemaker station KITS (Live 105) San Francisco added a whopping five tracks from the album. Songs like "Reason Is Treason," "L.S.F. (Lost Souls Forever)" and "Processed Beats" should keep the band on the radio. Whether it is described as danceable rock, rock-infused dance or sinister Britpop, Kasabian has made an excellent debut album.—**BT**

★ MANDO DIAO

Hurricane Bar

PRODUCER: Richard Rainey

Mute 9280

RELEASE DATE: March 8

Britpop was the rage when the members of Mando Diao were growing up in Borlänge, Sweden, and the Fair Four learned their lessons well. Led by singer/guitarist/songwriters Gustaf Noren and Bjorn Dixgard, the band follows the British music time machine "Down in the Past," as one of its songs is called, through the blur of

ESSENTIAL REVIEWS



QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

Lullabies to Paralyze

PRODUCERS: Joe Barresi, Josh Homme

Interscope B0004186

RELEASE DATE: March 22

Following 2002's near-flawless set "Songs for the Deaf," Queens of the Stone Age have their work cut out for them. The loss of manic bassist and band co-founder Nick Oliveri is felt; so is the absence of Dave Grohl, who contributed drums to "Deaf." But the 2005 version of QOTSA finds the band more relaxed and loose than it has ever been on record. "Lullabies" often sounds more like singer/guitarist Josh Homme's collaborative "Desert Sessions" albums. Here, guests include ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons and Garbage's Shirley Manson. This makes for definite mood shifts. Songs like lead single "Little Sister" and "Medication" seethe with a punk intensity; "Burn the Witch" sounds like vintage, bluesy Aerosmith; "Long Slow Goodbye" is more melodic and showcases Homme's unique falsetto. The band cuts loose on longer tracks like "The Blood Is Love" and "Someone's in the Wolf." Fans won't be disappointed.—**BT**

Oasis, through Ireland for a cup of Thin Lizzy and then back to Liverpool 1964. Mando Diao is even smart enough to borrow from Beatles influencers the Isley Brothers and the Shirelles. You can't argue with the source material, and you can't argue with songs as winning as "You Can't Steal My Love." George Harrison would enjoy hearing his guitar tone played with such clean efficiency on "Added Family." Melody is primary (we haven't heard such a melodic Swedish act since ABBA), even on the rock anthem "Kingdom & Glory." And are we crazy about the harmonies on "Clean Town"? Yeah, yeah, yeah!—**WR**

ANA EGGE

Out Past the Lights

PRODUCERS: Jason Mercer, Ana Egge

Grace/ParkinSong/Rykodisc 45439

RELEASE DATE: March 15

Brooklyn-by-way-of-Austin songsmith Ana Egge emerges from opening-act status for the likes of Shawn Colvin and Ron Sexsmith to deserving headliner with her fourth CD, "Out Past the Lights," a breakout collection. Egge sings about tangled relationships and new beginnings in her lyrical tunes that are dreamlike and

BLOC PARTY

Silent Alarm

PRODUCERS: Paul Epworth, Bloc Party

Vice 93815

RELEASE DATE: March 22

The Clash. Joy Division. The Smiths. Talking Heads. Rock bands all that just happened to infuse their respective music with elements of disco and funk. Fab British foursome Bloc Party has the same rhythmic sensibility. The multiracial band's self-titled 2004 EP featured the underground dance-floor hit "Banquet." On this, its debut album, Bloc Party soundly proves that there is much, much more



where that came from. In other words, while "Banquet" is included here, consider it one of many highlights. "This Modern Love," "Like Eating Glass," "Little Thoughts" and "Positive Tension" showcase a band—singer Kele Okereke, guitarist Russell Lissack, bassist Gordon Moakes and drummer Matt Tong—that wears its passions, aggressions and melancholia well. Consider "Silent Alarm" to be one of the best debuts of 2005 so far.—**MP**

haunting, delicate and rough, folksy and hard-strum rocking. While she could easily play the folk card with her acoustic guitar-crafted songs, Egge takes them to a new level, with instrumental flavors and textures from country (pedal steel), jazz (trumpet) and pop (electric guitar). Sexsmith contributes harmony vocals, guitarist Tony Scherr plays a stinging slide on the gritty "Closer to the Motor," and trumpeter Shane Endsley soars through the indelible pop tune "Straight to My Head." Highlights include "Motorcycle," which captures the freedom of the two-wheel-experience, and the quiet, show-stopping gem "Victoria," that clocks in at barely more than two minutes.—**DO**

SAM PREKOP

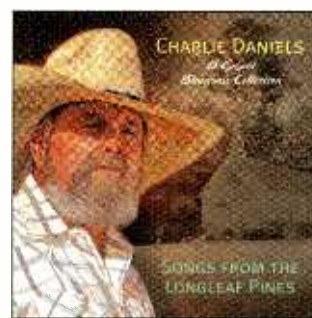
Who's Your New Professor

PRODUCERS: Sam Prekop, John McEntire

Thrill Jockey 146

RELEASE DATE: March 8

Sam Prekop struck out from the Sea & Cake with his excellent self-titled 1999 solo debut, a seductive listen studded with Brazilian-influenced melodies. Without abandoning that stylistic precedent, he returns here with 11 warm, loose tracks that defy easy categoriza-



CHARLIE DANIELS

Songs From the Longleaf Pines: A

Gospel Bluegrass Collection

PRODUCER: Scott Rouse

Blue Hat/Koch KOC-CD 9823

RELEASE DATE: March 22

Throughout his legendary career, Charlie Daniels has won audiences and awards in multiple genres. Here, he makes his first foray into bluegrass, rediscovering the sounds he grew up with in his native North Carolina. The result is musical magic—one of the finest albums of his storied career. Joined by a stellar cast that includes Ricky Skaggs, Cyndi Wheeler and Nickel Creek's Chris Thile, Daniels resurrects such classics as "Keep On the Sunny Side," "Softly and Tenderly" and "I've Found a Hiding Place." "Walkin' in Jerusalem (Just Like John)" is an absolutely infectious tune featuring the Whites. Gospel chestnut "I'll Fly Away" gets a spirited instrumental treatment. "I'm Working on a Building" has a cool, swampy vibe. There are also two powerful recitations, Psalms 23 and 91, beautifully accented by Thile's mandolin.—**DEP**

tion. Even when you can't understand what he is breathily crooning, Prekop is a master at setting just the right mood. On highlights like "Two Dedications," he channels Curtis Mayfield atop a lithe, midtempo groove, while horns and tasteful electronics add a romantic zest to opener "Something." The playful tone of the first album is evident on "Density" and the instrumental "Magic Step," but the ace band really shines on "Dot Eye," an improbable Antonio Carlos Jobim/Crazy Horse hybrid that crackles with sultry soul.—**JC**

R&B/HIP-HOP

► BROOKE VALENTINE

Chain Letter

PRODUCERS: various

Subliminal Entertainment/Virgin 7243 5

94229

RELEASE DATE: March 15

This 19-year-old Houston native initially fronted the female trio Best Kept Secret—very fitting, given that the city is also home to another girl group, Destiny's Child. But BKS' implosion became Brooke Valentine's gain. She is grabbing attention with

the aggressive, Lil Jon-produced single "Girlfight," also featuring OutKast's Big Boi. Given the song's crunk'n'B flavor, it's easy to dismiss Valentine as another assembly-line wannabe. But listen further. Her wry, forthright look at life with all of its joys and foibles sets her apart from the pack. Like an amusement park bumper car, she careens from crunk to R&B/pop to alternative/rock. Her edgy, sassy persona takes off on such tracks as "Blah Blah Blah" featuring Dirt McGirt (the late Ol' Dirty Bastard), the funky "American Girl" and the revenge-themed "I Want You Dead." But the lady also isn't afraid to show her vulnerable side, most notably on "Long As You Come Home" and "Tell Me Why You Don't Love Me." Chances are good that this Houston lass can't miss.—**GM**

COUNTRY

► TRACE ADKINS

Songs About Me

PRODUCERS: Scott Henderix, Dann Huff

Capitol 7243

RELEASE DATE: March 22

On his seventh Capitol release, Trace Adkins, he of the rumbling baritone and imposing presence, showcases more of the style and confidence that has made him one of country's more enduring stars. Adkins has earned much of his success at radio with uptempos and attitude, and he has that in spades here with the rousing bar-room rocker "Honky Tonk Badonkadonk," which sounds like a monster hit out of the box. But his ace in the hole has always been sultry, slow-burn ballads. Really, no one in country music today can deliver a ballad quite like Adkins, and here he kills with the insistent "Baby, I'm Home" and the slow-rolin' romance of "Find Me a Preacher." The soaring, regretful "I Wish It Was You" is produced like a great Jimmy Webb-via-Glen Campbell classic to great effect, and "Arlington" is a touching tribute given major authority by Adkins' vocal. Finally, the title cut is seriously strong, showcasing with guts and flair what country music and Trace Adkins are all about.—**RW**

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

► DAFT PUNK

Human After All

PRODUCER: Daft Punk

Virgin 63562

RELEASE DATE: March 15

Parisian duo Daft Punk has been a mainstay on dancefloors since its 1997 full-length debut, "Homework." With this third studio album, Punks Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo take a less commercial approach to music making. Instead of delivering pop-friendly jams like No. 1 Hot Dance Club Play hit "One More Time," the Frenchmen are decidedly experimental this time out. It doesn't always make for an enjoyable listening experience, on or off the dancefloor. The techno-flavored beats are primarily cold and lifeless or rehashed references to past glories ("Steam Machine," lead single "Robot Rock"). The album's high (Continued on next page)

CONTRIBUTORS: Keith Caulfield, Jonathan Cohen, Leila Cobo, Deborah Evans Price, Gail Mitchell, Dan Ouellette, Michael Paoletta, Wayne Robins, Bram Teitelman, Christa L. Titus, Philip van Vleck, Ray Waddell. **ESSENTIALS:** Releases deemed by the review editors to deserve special attention on the basis of musical merit and/or *Billboard* chart potential. **VITAL REISSUES:** Rereleased albums of special artistic, archival and commercial interest and outstanding collections of works by one or more artists. **PICKS (►):** New releases predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format. **CRITICS' CHOICES (★):** New releases, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended because of their musical merit. All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies and singles review copies to Michael Paoletta (*Billboard*, 770 Broadway, 6th floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

RECORD COMPANIES: Sony BMG Global Marketing Group appoints **George Levendis** senior VP. He was managing director/CEO of **Heaven Music/Antenna Entertainment**.

Universal Music Nashville promotes **Jason Owen** to senior VP of media, artist relations and creative services for its **Mercury, MCA Nashville** and **DreamWorks Nashville** labels. He was VP of media and artist relations for Mercury and MCA Nashville.

Razor & Tie Records in New York names **Michael Krumper** senior VP of marketing. He was executive VP at **Artemis Records**.

Island Def Jam Music Group ups **Joe Calitri** to VP of field marketing. He was senior director of sales and field marketing at **Island Records**.

EMI Music Latin America in Miami names **Jorge Melendez** senior VP/CFO. He was executive VP/CFO at **Sony Discos**.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment in New York appoints **David G. Jacoby, Wade Leak** and **Jennifer L. Pariser** VPs of litigation. Jacoby and Pariser were senior counsel at **Sony Music Entertainment**. Leak was VP of legal and business affairs at **BMG**.

Atlantic Records in New York promotes **Ari Taitz** to VP of

business and legal affairs. He was senior director of business and legal affairs.

Universal Music Group in Santa Monica, Calif., elevates **Margaret Wilhelm** to senior director of consumer relationship management. She was director of consumer relationship management.

Jive Records in New York appoints **Samantha Selolwane** national director of urban promotion. She was an executive at promotion firm **A.I.R.**

Artemis Records in New York names **Charlie Foster** director of national promotion. He was VP of promotion at **TVT Records**.

PUBLISHING: Sound-Exchange in Washington, D.C., names **Gary R.**

Greenstein general counsel. He was VP of legal and business affairs at the **Recording Industry Assn. of America**.

DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT: **Music Choice** in New York appoints **John Hendricks** director of country music programming. He was founder of **John Hendricks Broadcast Services**.

VIDEOGAMES: **Atari** in New York names **Patricia Steele** senior VP of communications. She was executive VP of corporate communications at **NBC**.



OWEN



TAITZ



Sisters For A Lifetime Canada's **Kate and Anna McGarrigle** were honored with the ASCAP Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award in Folk Music. The trophies were presented at a special tribute hosted by **ASCAP** and **SOCAN** during the 2005 Folk Alliance Conference in Montreal. Pictured, from left, are ASCAP assistant VP of media relations **Jim Steinblatt**, country legend **Emmylou Harris**, Anna McGarrigle, Kate McGarrigle, ASCAP assistant VP of membership **Brendan Okrent** and ASCAP VP of membership **Harry Poloner**.



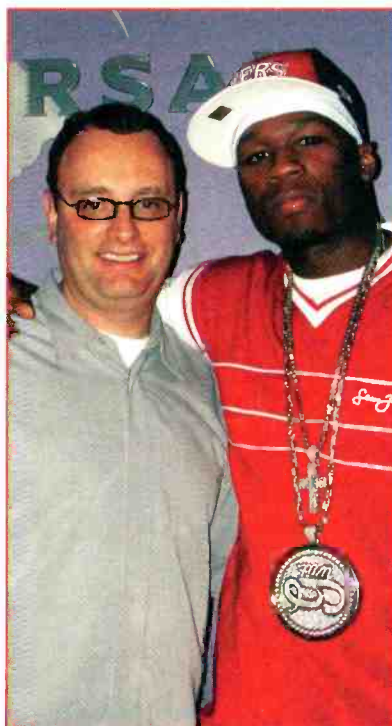
Photo: Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com

They Rock!

At left, **Bruce Springsteen** inducted **Bono** and **U2** into the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** March 14 with a warm-hearted speech. U2 obliged with a four-song performance that included guest vocals from Springsteen on "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." Below, blues legend **Buddy Guy**, center, was inducted earlier by Hall of Famers **B.B. King**, left, and **Eric Clapton**. The three axemen took the stage together for a searing rendition of "Let Me Love You Baby." The 20th annual gala at New York's Waldorf-Astoria also honored the **Pretenders**, the **O'Jays** and **Percy Sledge**. Industry veterans **Frank Barsalona** and **Seymour Stein** were inducted in the non-performer category.



Photo: Dimitrios Kambouris/WireImage.com



Mastery Of 'Massacre'

Shady/Aftermath/Interscope artist **50 Cent**, right, is congratulated by **Universal Music Publishing Group** chairman/CEO **David Renzer** for the landmark release of "The Massacre." The album debuted at No. 1 on **The Billboard 200** last week, selling more than 1 million units in its first four days.

Now, Hear This ... BOBBY VALENTINO Artists to Watch

Describing **Bobby Valentino** as a "singer trapped in a rapper's body," **Ludacris** anointed the Atlanta native the first R&B artist on his **Disturbing Tha Peace** label. And the tough-but-tender swain is already off to a promising start. His hypnotic, soulful first single, "Slow Down," is No. 22 on **Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks**. Arriving April 12 is his **Island Def Jam**-distributed debut, "Give Me a Chance." The album marks the Clark Atlanta University graduate's second shot at a music career, following a taste of stardom at age 13 (under the name **Bobby Wilson**) with the **EastWest** act **Mista**. "Give Me a Chance" reunites Valentino with **Mista** producers **Tim & Bob**, best-known for **Sisqó's** "Thong Song." Valentino, published by **Tight Werk (BMI)** and booked by the **William Morris Agency**, co-wrote all but one of the songs. "Writing is where it's at," he says. "There's nothing like singing a song you wrote." With the learning experience provided by **Mista**, Valentino says his dream is to make records that will still sound hot 30 years from now. Among the acts that inspired him: **Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Anita Baker** and **Boyz II Men**. "I really love music," Valentino says. "It's like putting all of my influences into a pot. Then I put a Valentino swagger on it and make it mine."

GAIL MITCHELL



(Continued from previous page)

point arrives with "Make Love," a laid-back, blissfully chilled house track that proves Daft Punk can be human when it wants to.—MP

3 SPEAKER HIGH

3 Speaker High

PRODUCERS: Gabrielis Kaye, Robert K. Rodriguez, Eric Kupper, Craven Moorhaus
PAS Entertainment PAS001
RELEASE DATE: March 8
3 Speaker High is the brainchild of Gabrielis Kaye and Robert K. Rodriguez (aka DJ Rob Keith). The duo has already scored a top 10 and top 20 hit on the Hot Dance Club Play chart with "Make Me Dance All Night" and "Have a Good Time," respectively. With this self-titled debut, 3 Speaker High further explores the possibilities in mixing elements of dance/electronic, soul and rock. The promising end result—with a focus on lyrics and melody—is just waiting to be performed live. Obviously raised on the sounds of the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd and "One More Time"—era Daft Punk, Kaye and Rodriguez do not wince at the thought of merging blazing guitars and Euro-pop sensibilities. Instead, they revel in it—particularly on "This Is What It Feels Like," "Live Out This Dream" and "Don't Take It Too Far."—MP

LATIN

► **ANDY & LUCAS**

Desde Mi Barrio

PRODUCERS: Alejo Estivel, Emanuele

Rufinengo

Sony Discos BMG LAK 95668

RELEASE DATE: March 8

On their sophomore effort, Spanish duo Andy & Lucas look to repeat their successful debut with a similar formula: A radio-friendly mix of flamenco and pop that is more predictable than the more sophisticated sounds of Alejandro Sanz but nevertheless maintains a true flamenco spirit in the vocals and the guitars. Lucas wrote most of the tracks, which are full of hooks and catchy melodies; radio appeal has been a key ingredient in this group's success, and it is deserved. These are good songs, with colloquial, charming lyrics. Some may prefer the rougher edges and stronger flamenco vibes of "Sabe Que la Engaña" or the infectiousness of "Dime Que Me Quieres" to the more suave arrangements in "Por Ella." Regardless, this is an album of nonstop hits.—LC

★ **ANDREA ECHEVERRI**

Andrea Echeverri

PRODUCERS: Hector Buitrago, Richard

Blair, José Manuel Jaramillo

Nacional 07242

RELEASE DATE: March 8

On her solo debut, Andrea Echeverri, one-half of Colombian duo Aterciopelados, celebrates motherhood. But instead of the self-absorption usually associated with this subject, this is a true homage to the child rather than the mother. It is an unselfish attitude and an unselfish album, humming with relaxed good nature, bluesy guitars and acoustic instruments (including typical Colombian ones) with touches of loops and programming. In its lyricism and imminently melodic nature, "Andrea Echeverri" is more conventional than past Aterciopelados

albums, and as a result more appealing. Song quality is not secondary to production here, and the lyrics are remarkably good. On her own, Echeverri may gain new followers and will retain old fans as well.—LC

WORLD

★ **MARIA de BARROS**

Dança Ma Mi

PRODUCERS: Danny Luchansky, Djim Job,

Kalú Monteiro

Narada 70876-19133

RELEASE DATE: March 15

Raised by Cape Verdean parents in Mauritania and Rhode Island, and currently living in Los Angeles, Maria de Barros flourishes amidst a whirlwind of musical influences. Her sophomore effort for Narada, "Dança Ma Mi," is an invitation to dance with her to a dozen romantic vignettes. Like Barros' debut CD, "Nha Mundo," this project is animated by a vitality and charm that is her particular vibe. She has quickly become known for her special feel for the *coladeira*—an upbeat Cape Verdean style similar to salsa—and the album opens with a wonderful song in that vein, "Amor Luz." Following in the barefoot steps of her inspiration—the legendary Césaria Évora—Barros sings bluesy Cape Verdean *mornas* with a good deal of soul ("Espaco Infinito"). Also note the lively *ferro* rhythm on "Pazinho Laa" and "Sol Di Manha"; this is something new in Barros' repertoire. "Dança Ma Mi" is a dose of Cape Verdean sunshine.—PVV

DVD

THE GRATEFUL DEAD

Anthem to Beauty

Eagle Rock Entertainment EV 30099

RELEASE DATE: Feb. 22

Eagle Rock Entertainment's "Classic Albums" series hits its stride with "Anthem to Beauty," an exploration of how the Grateful Dead evolved between its 1968 experimental set, "Anthem of the Sun," and its 1970 classic, "American Beauty." The analysis of the Dead's accidentally innovative nature (using live and studio tracks on an album, then unheard-of, for example) is informative, but the hoot is the rare footage (Jerry Garcia sans beard) and comical stories that band members and associates recall. (The drug usage supplies the most hysterical tales.) Warner Bros. exec Joe Smith admits the label was afraid of the band and he himself thought Mickey Hart was certifiably nuts; even funnier is his remembering how Phil Lesh wanted to record Los Angeles smog and clean desert air to be mixed into a rhythm track. "Anthem" captures a golden time in the act's career, along with the philosophies of an era that, for all its excess, still retained a certain innocence.—CLT

Billboard.com

- The Evens, "The Evens" (Dischord)
- A-Frames, "Black Forest" (Sub Pop)
- Perceptionists, "Black Dialogue" (Definitive Jux)

SINGLES

Edited by Michael Paoletta

POP

KELLY OSBOURNE One Word (4:01)

PRODUCER: Linda Perry

WRITER: L. Perry

PUBLISHER: Stuck in the Throat/Famous Music (ASCAP)

Sanctuary SANDJ-85712 (CD promo)

Forget everything you think you know about Kelly Osbourne's music. On "One Word"—the first single from her forthcoming album, "Sleeping in the Nothing" (due June 7)—she glides through the space-age number like she's the princess of the new wave dancefloor. It is absolutely nothing like any of her previous material, which was grounded in screechy punky-pop. Songwriter/producer Linda Perry frames Osbourne as a come-hither synth-pop goddess. And the ultra-catchy chorus layers processed vocals. "One Word" doesn't easily fit into any radio format, and with top 40 overrun with hip-hop, Osbourne could have a hard time getting play. She'll very likely have the easiest go at dance radio and in clubs.—KC

ROCK

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE Helena (So Long & Goodnight) (3:22)

PRODUCER: Howard Benson

WRITER: My Chemical Romance

PUBLISHER: Blow the Doors off the Jersey

Shore Music (BMI)

Reprise 101504 (CD promo)

My Chemical Romance's "Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge" is one of this past year's undeniable rock success stories. The band's lead single from its major-label debut, "I'm Not Okay (I Promise)," was a top five track at modern rock, pushing the album past gold. "Helena," the album's first track, is even catchier than "I'm Not Okay." It's another pop-punk song that bursts with energy—even though it was written about singer Gerard Way's grandmother. The song's vocal harmonies and anthemic chorus almost guarantee that it will soon be closing the band's live shows. "Helena" just debuted on the modern chart and should carry My Chemical Romance well through the summer, when it will be a main attraction on the Vans Warped tour.—BT

ALTER BRIDGE Broken Wings (3:57)

PRODUCER: not listed

WRITER: M. Tremonti

PUBLISHERS: various

Wind-up WUJC 20123 (CD promo)

"Broken Wings" is a great track to elevate Alter Bridge's profile, which has slipped despite the promising run its first single, "Open Your Eyes," had last year. The song's sorrowful overtones and profound message were likely influenced by the loss of writer/guitarist Mark Tremonti's mother (she died in 2002), since a tune is dedicated to her on the band's self-titled debut. Contemplating topics like karma and mortality are weighty matters, but Tremonti's talent for writing inspiring anthems sets "Wings" aloft instead of letting it get bogged down in morbidity. Alter Bridge's steadfast performance anchors

ESSENTIAL REVIEWS



Photo: Colin Lane

THE KILLERS Smile Like You Mean It (3:54)

PRODUCERS: Jeff Saltzman, the Killers

WRITERS: B. Flowers, M. Stoermer

PUBLISHER: the Killers Publishing (ASCAP)

Island 16236 (CD promo)

Sure, New York and London are established epicenters of the dance-rock scene. But Las Vegas may not be far behind. With "Smile Like You Mean It" on the verge of debuting on the Modern Rock Tracks chart, the Sin City-based Killers are about to notch their third hit single in the United States. The band is on a roll: It is headlining a tour, and its previous singles ("Somebody Told Me" and "Mr. Brightside") have done very well indeed, garnering heavy support from rock and top 40 radio, MTV, VH1 and the club community. "Smile Like You Mean It"—which seems to deal with coming to terms with growing up and getting older—is more restrained and downtempo compared with the band's previous hits. That said, it's pretty upbeat and is awash with soaring new wave synthesizers and "killer" guitars. It is sure to be another multiformat hit.—KC

the lullaby melody, but the bass gently tolls in the background like a funeral bell, adding to the material's contradictions of sadness and enlightenment. It's an oddly comforting piece of work, helped by singer Myles Kennedy, whose rich, vibrant tenor makes the lyric sound soothing.—CLT

COUNTRY

► **HANNA McEuen Something Like a Broken Heart (3:52)**

PRODUCERS: James Stroud, Jaime Hanna,

Jonathan McEuen

WRITERS: J. Hanna, R. Reynolds, A. Miller

PUBLISHERS: various

MCA MCNR-02603 (CD promo)

This new MCA duo boasts an impressive musical pedigree. Jonathan McEuen is the son of John McEuen, and Jaime Hanna is the offspring of Jeff Hanna. The two elder musicians made a name for themselves as members of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and the same sense of musical adventurousness that has defined the Dirt Band's decades of work seems to have been passed down to this new generation of singer/songwriters. "Something Like a Broken Heart" has a fresh, urgent sound that immediately grabs the ears. Penned by Hanna, Robert Reynolds and Alan Miller, the lyric paints a picture of the shattered hope and hurt that linger after a failed relationship. This strong song and powerful performance will



YING YANG TWINS Wait (The Whisper Song) (3:03)

PRODUCER: Beat-in-Azz aka Mr. Collipark

WRITERS: M. Crooms, D. Holmes,

E. Jackson

PUBLISHERS: Collipark Music/EMI

Blackwood; Da Crippler/EMI Blackwood;

EWC/EMI Blackwood

TVT TV-2521 (CD promo)

Here is a change of pace from popular Lil Jon collaborators the Ying Yang Twins. This time around, the Atlanta duo trades its raucous, frenetic energy for a sparse, hypnotic downbeat—accompanied by finger-snaps—that courses throughout the song. Heightening the seductive urgency is the deft delivery. "Wait (The Whisper Song)" is done with hushed vocals as we eavesdrop on a male suitor's conversation. Talk about aural orgasm: The song oozes with sexual healing. And it also looks like TVT and the Twins made the right move in releasing this single. After less than eight weeks, "Wait" is already top 20 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and shifting into top 50 crossover territory on The Billboard Hot 100.—GM

make listeners want to hear more from this talented twosome. And with music this good, they won't spend much time in their fathers' shadow.—DEP

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

► **DAVID MORALES WITH TAMRA KEENAN Here I Am (3:36)**

PRODUCER: David Morales

WRITERS: D. Morales, A. Shantzis, T. Keenan

PUBLISHERS: various

REMIXERS: Full Intention, Kaskade

DMI/Ultra BLT 026 (CD promo)

With dance radio and numerous club DJs still playing David Morales' previous No. 1 hit, "How Would U Feel," along comes single No. 2 from the artist's sophomore album, "2 Worlds Collide." Like its predecessor, "Here I Am" is signature Morales: straight-up, sophisticated soulful house. And whereas the previous hit single featured the soulful diva stylings of Lea-Lorién, this one shines the light on Tamra Keenan, whose delivery is sweet and somewhat innocent. Of course, this fits in perfectly with the song's story line. Remixers Kaskade and Full Intention toughen up the track ever so slightly, with the former adding acoustic guitar and the latter injecting a heavy bottom end. Expect this to be one of the songs of the 20th annual Winter Music Conference, which takes place March 22-26 in Miami.—MP



The PlayStation Portable package includes headphones with remote control, battery pack, AC adapter, soft case, cleaning cloth and a movie/music/game sampler.



PlayStation Portable Set For North America Debut

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

After its highly successful launch in Japan last December, the PlayStation Portable handheld entertainment system debuts March 24 in North America from Sony Computer Entertainment America.

Using Sony's proprietary 60mm diameter, 1.8GB Universal Media Disc, the PSP launches with two dozen games priced from \$39.99 to \$49.99. The first movies and music videos will be released later this spring.

Wireless capabilities allow PSP users to download software and data and store them on a 32MB Memory Stick Duo, with music playback in MP3 and ATRAC formats.

Sony is calling the PSP "the Walkman of the 21st century" and claim-

ing it to be the first truly integrated portable entertainment system.

The UMD is said to hold more than three times the data of a CD-ROM, with hi-fi stereo audio, digital-quality video and PlayStation 2-comparable graphics.

In Japan, Sony Computer Entertainment president/CEO Ken Kutaragi announced that Sony would share its UMD specifications. Talks are under way with other manufacturers to create UMD players. "We are already planning to make the UMD... into an open standard," he said. "Games will be limited to the PSP, but movies and music should be for everyone."

The PSP is initially available only as a \$249.99 Value Pack. Aside from the PSP player, with its 4.3-inch, 16:9 widescreen display, the package

includes the Memory Stick Duo, headphones with remote control, battery pack, AC adapter, soft case, cleaning cloth and a UMD movie/music/game sampler.

As a special retail promotion, the first 1 million PSP Value Packs—guaranteed to be in 18,000 stores for the launch—contain the UMD release of "Spider-Man 2" from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment.

"From a visual and gameplay experience, the PSP will be like taking your PS2 in your pocket on the road," SCEA executive VP Jack Tretton says. "Retailers are extremely optimistic, with some opening at midnight on the 24th."

A major retail and consumer marketing campaign from TBWA Chiat Day

(Continued on page 32)

Tower Says: LOOK HERE!

DVD Preview Stations To Hit 42 Stores

BY JILL KIPNIS

LOS ANGELES—Listening stations aren't just for CDs anymore.

This month, West Sacramento, Calif.-based Tower Records is introducing DVD sampling stations in 42 of its stores in markets including Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

The stations will highlight only independent titles in an effort to attract niche-oriented customers. A new slate of 24 trailers will be available each month.

"We have been trying to make our merchandising efforts focused on niches that are perfect for Tower and will make us stand out from the rest of our competitors," says Terrel Porter-Smith, national manager of video advertising for the chain. "We've been focusing on DVDs because they are still such a growth area for us."

The first 24 featured titles include New Line Home Entertainment's "The Story of the Weeping Camel" (nominated for best documentary feature at this year's Academy Awards) and "Bright Young Things," Lions Gate Entertainment's "Fear X," Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment's "Chisholm '72: Unbought and Unbossed" and Wolfe Video's "Yes Nurse! No Nurse!"

April titles will include Anchor Bay Entertainment's "Word Wars."

Porter-Smith says the stations will spotlight a mix of genres, including foreign language and alternative lifestyle, and will feature titles as close to their release date as possible.

BUILDING LOYALTY

"This is how we want to create a loyal customer base," she explains. "Anybody can sell [Buena Vista Home Entertainment's] 'The Incredibles' below [minimum advertised price] and use it as a loss leader. We will sell 'Incredibles' at MAP. I'm hoping that customers will come to us knowing that we have independent projects on sale."

Porter-Smith says part of Tower's indie-DVD marketing focus includes easy-to-find racks. In May, for example, Tower locations will have Cannes Film Festival-themed racks with past winners.

Tower is also striving to become a destination for catalog DVDs, both major and indie.

Earlier this year, the chain partnered with Fox for a "theatrical pick of the month" promotion that will continue periodically. In conjunction with the theatrical release of "Elektra," Tower gave away tickets to the film and picked 20 Jennifer Garner and female-hero catalog DVDs to put on sale.

"We are working more with each video company's theatrical arm," Porter-Smith says. "Before, that didn't happen. Now they are more open to it, because windows have gotten shorter."

Final Thoughts From Ryko's Mann In Charge

Ryko Group president **Arthur Mann**, who is stepping down March 31 (*Billboard*, March 19), says he hasn't plotted his next move. He adds that his reasons for leaving the company he co-founded have nothing to do with its current direction.

"This is a debt-free company," Mann says. "It's bigger than just me. I don't have a crystal ball, and it would be naive of me to say anything in that regard, but I don't know of any changes. People will try to create a story of instability so they can take advantage of that. It's a very competitive marketplace,



MANN: 'THIS IS A DEBT-FREE COMPANY'

particularly in the independent distribution world."

Indeed, word hit this month that **Megaforce Records** is leaving **Ryko Distribution** for **RED Distribution**, taking with it a label group that includes more than 20 imprints. While the moves were unrelated, they led conspiracy theorists to believe a shake-up was looming. Not so, Mann says.

Mann, who oversaw the publishing division and much of the company's global operations, believes **Rykodisc** president **Bill Hein** will make the label a prominent force in the indie world once again.

He points to the latest release from **Josh Rouse**, "Nashville," as proof that Rykodisc will continue to issue quality new releases, despite speculation that the label is shifting to catalog-only.

"There have been a lot of different presidents at the label group over the last seven years," Mann says. "That's just as a result of merging and de-merging. I have every faith that the label group under the direction of Bill Hein will find its way. I'm very proud of the Ryko organization, and it's bittersweet to move on."

A Ryko representative says Mann will not be replaced, adding that it has yet to be decided how the executive's duties will be split among current employees.

"Any time someone like myself

exits from the company, there's an opportunity to look at structure," Mann says.

Mann, along with **Don Rose**, **Rob Simonds** and **Doug Lexa**, formed Rykodisc in 1983 in Salem, Mass.

FROM CITY HALL: San Rafael, Calif.-based **City Hall Records** has picked up U.S. distribution rights for the soundtrack to "The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill." The critically acclaimed **Judy Irving** film follows a San Francisco squatter who becomes a caretaker for a flock of wild parrots.

The soundtrack was the final work from guitarist **Chris Miche**, who died in early 2003. Miche worked as a session musician throughout the '70s, playing with the likes of **Van Morrison**, **Stevie Wonder** and **Link Wray**. The film—praised repeatedly on **National Public Radio**—is currently playing in California and will land in theaters around the country this spring.

In other City Hall news, the distributor recently signed a deal with the **Independent Online Distribution Alliance** that allows City Hall labels to license albums to IODA

for digital distribution. The catalog of San Francisco-based IODA includes titles from **Paper Bag Records** and **Gearhead**.

MORE WEB OPTIONS: Sacramento, Calif.-based **Digital Musicworks International** on March 14 launched **Digital OnRamp**, a serv-

The Indies
By Todd Martens
tmartens@billboard.com



ice dedicated to distributing music to the major online retailers.

So far, the company has lined up about 10 independent labels, including **Smile Records** and **Fall of Rome** in Los Angeles and **Back-Beat** in Bowie, Md.

NEW NAILS: **Allegro's Nail Distribution** has snared a few labels recently. The Portland, Ore.-based distributor inked North American deals with New York's **ESP-Disk**, Detroit's punk-slanted **Times Beach** and Chicago-based **Johann's Face**.

ESP-Disk was founded in the '60s by **Bernard Stollman**. Renowned at the time in avant-garde circles for its recordings of **Albert Ayler**, **the Fugs** and **Pearls Before Swine**, its current catalog features titles from **Sun Ra** and **Ellis Marsalis**. It is planning boxed sets from **Miles Davis** and **Billie Holiday** for release in 2006.

Nail, a division of **Allegro Music**, also renewed its contract with San Juan Capistrano, Calif.-based **Cornerstone Records**. Upcoming projects from the label include a tribute to **Sublime**, featuring such acts as **Jack Johnson**, **Pennywise**, **G Love & Special Sauce**, **Mike Watt** and **Michael Franti**. The 16-track set is due in June.

AND FINALLY: **Southern Music Digital** in Atlanta has signed Las Vegas' **Dynasty Records** to a U.S. distribution deal. The first release is due next month from R&B tyke **Michon**... Power-pop trio **the 89 Cubs** had to miss the South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin because drummer **Matt Baum** was injured in a car accident. Here's wishing him a speedy recovery with a plug for the band's **Get-Up Kids**-inspired, fuzzed-up pop. The group released its debut, "There Are Giants in the Earth," last year on Portland, Ore.'s **Slowdance Records**, distributed by **Lumberjack Mordam Music Group**.

PlayStation

Continued from page 31

kicked off the week before launch. It includes billboards, in-store displays, endcaps, TV spots and ads in lifestyle and enthusiast publications.

SPHE will release four more UMD titles—"XXX," "Hellboy," "Resident Evil 2" and "Once Upon a Time in Mexico"—on April 19, with additional titles monthly.

Lions Gate Entertainment is the first independent studio to commit to UMD movies for the PSP. North American home video executive VP Ron Schwartz confirms newer titles "The Punisher," "Open Water" and "Saw"—priced \$20-\$29, similar to DVDs—and catalog hits "Rambo: First Blood" and "Total Recall," priced \$10-\$20, will be among the first releases.

"We are proud to play a pioneering role in the introduction of this revolutionary new concept," SPHE president Benjamin Feingold says. "PSP offers consumers an exciting new movie experience, and we look forward

to making movies on PSP a success with retailers throughout the world."

While Sony BMG music videos will not be available right away, a number of titles are in development. At last year's E3 conference, PSP previewed content from more than a dozen Sony artists, including Lil' Kim, Cypress Hill, the X-ecutioners, Switchfoot and Incubus. At that time, SCEA music direc-

'We are already planning to make the Universal Media Disc... into an open standard. Games will be limited to the PlayStation Portable, but movies and music should be for everyone.'

—KEN KUTARAGI,
SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

tor Chuck Doud told *Billboard*, "With the PSP, labels will be able to get new music from established and developing artists into gamers'—and music buyers'—hands very quickly."

Sony Connect co-president Phil Wiser is also bullish. "Based on the core technologies of PSP, we do have compatibility with what we're doing in online music," he says.

At the recent International Consumer Electronics Show, Wiser notes, Sony BMG artist Xzibit demonstrated this compatibility by downloading his album from Connect to PSP.

"Our service is now fully MP3 compatible, and we have to make sure it's the right solution with the right timing when we launch our PSP connection," Wiser says.

Initial replication of UMD titles for the launch of PSP is being handled by Sony DADC in Terre Haute, Ind. DADC PlayStation operations manager Jeff Adams tells *Billboard*, "This past year we installed new replication equipment that has initial capacity of 3 million units per month, expanding to 12 million by [year's] end to meet anticipated increasing demand."

Games On The Run

The PlayStation Portable debuts with two dozen games:

Title	Released By
Ape Escape	SCEA
ATV Offroad Fury	SCEA
Darkstalkers Chronicle	Capcom
Dynasty Warriors	KOEI
FIFA 2005	Electronic Arts
Gretzky NHL	SCEA
Lumines	Ubisoft
Metal Gear Acid	Konami
MLB	SCEA
MVP Baseball	Electronic Arts
NBA	SCEA
NBA Street Showdown	Electronic Arts
Need for Speed: Rivals	Electronic Arts
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	Electronic Arts
Rengoku	Konami
Ridge Racer	Namco
Smartbomb	Eidos
Spider-Man 2	Activision
Tiger Woods PGA Tour	Electronic Arts
Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix	Activision
Twisted Metal: Head On	SCEA
Untold Legends: Brotherhood of the Blade	Sony Online
Wipeout Pure	SCEA
World Tour Soccer	SCEA

The Continental Drifts Into Releasing Records

I hope nobody minds if I get a little bit local, but around the corner from *Billboard's* office in the East Village in Manhattan is a club called the Continental, which has been mining the same territory as CBGB since it opened in the early 1990s.

It usually puts on four or five bands each night, and New York punk and hardcore bands like **Murphy's Law**, **Agnostic Front**, **L.E.S. Stiches**, **Clowns for Progress** and **D-Generation** have played there through the years. It also was a favorite haunt of the late, great **Joey Ramone**, who lived around the corner on Ninth Street.

The Continental celebrated its 10th anniversary a couple of years back when **Trigger**, the owner, booked all of the club's favorite bands during a couple of days and recorded the shows.

Those performances are finally seeing the light of day. **Trigger** has started **Continental Records** and will release the shows on two albums in May and June through New York-

based **Papoose**, a subdistribution company started by **Celia Hirschman** that goes through **Navarre**.

"The releases are really a testament to an extraordinary venue," Hirschman says. "The albums will be quintessential for the hardcore punk-rock music lover."

Hirschman reports the club will put on a series of shows to promote the releases.

She says her company will focus on retail and online marketing, while street teams will promote the albums in hardcore clubs across the United States. They will also be worked to college and specialty radio shows.

The Continental, by the way, is known for its T-shirts and work-shirts, which feature an anti-music industry logo. Let's hope Continental Records' experience with these two albums doesn't redeem the T-shirt logo in the eyes of **Trigger**.

STOP THE WORLD: Every so often, I am reminded how the world is pass-

ing me by.

On March 3 in New York at the St. Regis Hotel, *Billboard* held its annual Music & Money Symposium, which looks at the big picture in every aspect, including, as its name denotes, financially.

At the time of the conference, I was working on a story about the DualDisc and how it appears to have a good chance of replacing the CD. It is almost a decade since Internet proponents began proclaiming the doom of the physical-goods world, and yet most in the music industry are still wrestling with what will replace the CD as the physical carrier.

What's more, most of us are still caught up in the debate of when digital distribution will surpass physical sales.

But alas, at the conference I learned that the dialogue in the now-now-a-go-go world of digital distribution has moved well beyond that discussion. In that world, the conversation is about when mobile downloads will surpass and replace

computer downloads. Just thought I'd let you know.

DON'T BLINK: When **Universal Records** issued the **Mars Volta** as its JumpStart developing artist with a boxlot cost of \$6.09, it wasn't kidding when it said to get your orders in at that price while you could. Because three days after the album came out,

and time again that whoever is doing the pitching is thinking only of the music industry and its customers.

When I hear such propositions, I remind those doing the pitching that it isn't my job to help them sell their ideas to the music industry. I tell them it is their job to sell their ideas to the music industry, and if they are successful, then they are creating news that I will write about.

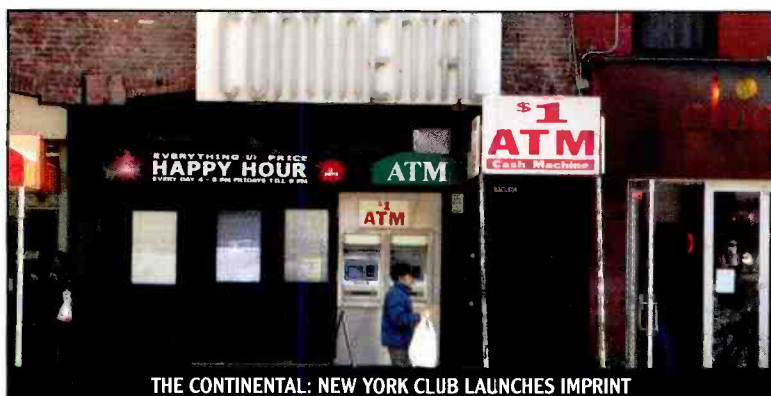
All of which brings me to the many people and companies through the years that have tried to get me to write about why record labels should install tear strips in their CD shrink-wrap.

While I always agreed that it was a splendid idea, I also told them I didn't think the industry would go for it because it was looking for ways to squeeze out costs, not add to them.

Well, I don't know how it has come about, but at the **Billboard Music & Money Symposium**, **Sony BMG Music Entertainment CEO Andrew Lack** said that he was tired of jumping up and down on CDs to get them open and that his company would be incorporating tear strips in its packaging, starting first with the DualDisc and eventually adding them to all CDs.

Hats off to Lack, but I still wonder if anybody else will follow.

Retail Track™
By Ed Christman
echristman@billboard.com



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BDMG2004



No. 8: The Game is AOL's Breaker Artist of the month at No. 8 this week on the audio streams list after an Internet performance of "How We Do."

AOL Music: Total Monthly Streams

TOP AUDIO

1 50 CENT Candy Shop *** INTERSCOPE	4,995,306
2 EMINEM Mockingbird INTERSCOPE	2,456,266
3 AKON Lonely UNIVERSAL	1,385,206
4 50 CENT Disco Inferno INTERSCOPE	1,318,913
5 LIL JON & THE EAST SIDE BOYZ FEAT. USHER & LUDACRIS Lovers and Friends TVT	1,306,238
6 MARIO Let Me Love You J RECORDS	1,152,239
7 JENNIFER LOPEZ Get Right * EPIC	1,082,705
8 THE GAME How We Do ** *** INTERSCOPE	1,081,944
9 GREEN DAY Boulevard Of Broken Dreams *** REPRISE	1,038,340
10 FRANKIE J Obsession No Es Amor COLUMBIA	557,780

TOP VIDEO

1 50 CENT Candy Shop *** INTERSCOPE	2,522,267
2 BRITNEY SPEARS Do Something JIVE	1,624,067
3 JENNIFER LOPEZ Get Right EPIC	1,475,401
4 CIARA FEAT. MISSY ELLIOTT 1, 2 Step ZOMBA	1,468,255
5 GREEN DAY Boulevard Of Broken Dreams *** REPRISE	1,181,204
6 JESSE McCARTNEY Beautiful Soul *** HOLLYWOOD	1,113,507
7 KELLY CLARKSON Since U Been Gone ** *** RCA	1,044,047
8 JOHN LEGEND Ordinary People * ** COLUMBIA	712,867
9 MARIO Let Me Love You *** J RECORDS	653,687
10 FRANKIE J Obsession No Es Amor COLUMBIA	568,355

* First Listen/First View ** AOL Music Live
* Artist of the Month ** Breaker Artist *** Sessions@AOL
Source: AOL Music for four weeks ending March 10



No. 2: With the help of MTV's "TRL," Britney Spears moves to No. 2 on the AOL video streams chart with "Do Something," from her 2004 Live greatest-hits set.

Next Up For Xbox: Personal Soundtracks

BY ANTONY BRUNO

When Microsoft unveils the next version of its Xbox game console later this year, gamers can expect an always-connected entertainment experience that lets them customize virtually every element, including soundtracks.

The company gave videogame developers a brief preview of the next-generation Xbox console, code named Xenon, at the Game Developers Conference this month in San Francisco. This sneak peek focused on a unified interface called "the Guide," an entertainment gateway that connects players to other gamers and digital media.

Content accessible by the Guide includes custom playlists. The Guide will allow users to access their PC-based music libraries via a home network and listen to tracks of their choosing while playing a given game.

Under the new system, game developers can include certain "hooks" or coding that allow users to replace the music shipped with the game with music from their own libraries. According to Microsoft documents, this feature "eliminates the need for developers to support custom music in games." The company compares the musical swap to personalizing a mobile phone with ringtones.

"Now, musicians get to brand their part of the experience in this new connected world, and ultimately, the user gets the payoff because they get to play the music they want to play," Microsoft corporate VP and head of Xbox J Allard said during his keynote address. "This is about the remix generation. What we have now is a consumer generation that wants

to leave their fingerprints on everything they touch and their mark on everything they do, and digital technology gives people that ability to remix content and remix themselves in entirely new ways."

Other features of the Guide include a microtransaction system that allows users to purchase game customizations such as new levels, maps, weapons and skins. Gamers can even buy custom clothes and tattoos for their in-game characters or buy decals and functional upgrades to cars for racing. Theoretically, this one-stop shop could also sell themed music for games or allow gamers to buy content directly from the MSN Music service.

"We've created the gamer-to-gamer connection, but now we have to create the developer-to-gamer connection," Allard said. "Our customers are going to expect to be able to connect to their content wherever they are, whenever they want to."

By placing more control in the hands of users, however, game publishers will have less control over the music included in their releases. Labels recently have been bullish on using videogame soundtracks to promote music and expose new artists. While many details about the new Xbox system will not be known until its unveiling at the E3 conference in May, the music industry so far applauds the new feature.

"It's a good thing," says Ted Cohen, senior VP of digital development and distribution at EMI Music. "We can recommend music and let them use various online retailers to acquire new music legally and replace the music in the game to keep the gameplay fresh."



"What we have now is a consumer generation that wants to leave their fingerprints on everything they touch, on everything they do."

—J ALLARD

NEWTECH

Still stinging from losing its leadership position in the portable music market to Apple Computer's iPod, Sony Electronics is coming back swinging with several flash-memory-based digital players aimed at competing with the iPod shuffle.

The new devices are part of the Network Walkman line Sony introduced last year. Unlike the iPod shuffle, the new Sony players include a three-line display screen for song navigation and information. Perhaps their most significant feature, however, is support for MP3, WMA and WAV formats, in addition to Sony's proprietary ATRAC3 technology. Sony's past digital players have stumbled because of technological incompatibility.

The 100 series comprises three players that are about the size of a poker chip: a 256MB model at \$90, another with 512MB at \$100 and a 1GB version at

\$150. All feature USB connectivity and a 70-hour battery life. They will be available at the end of this month.

The 400 and 500 models are bullet-shaped and feature a 50-hour rechargeable battery and one-handed "Jog-Dial" navigation bar. The 400 series includes a 512MB version for \$130 and a 1GB model for \$180. The 500 series adds an FM tuner to the mix, upping the price to \$150 for 512MB and \$200 for 1GB. The 400 and 500 series are expected in stores in May.

The newest Network Walkman units give users more options but also cost more, on average, than the \$99 iPod shuffle.

Sony introduced its Network Walkman line last year with a 20GB, hard-drive-based player that sells for about \$350. Sony has also extended its Walkman brand to the wireless space through its recent Sony Ericsson mobile phone partnership.

ANTONY BRUNO



50's Got Game

After turning down the opportunity to voice the lead character of last year's massive hit "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas," 50 Cent will enter the videogame space by starring in "50 Cent: Bulletproof" from Vivendi Universal Games.

The action title, due this fall, will follow the rapper as he battles New York crime families, corruption and conspiracies. Aside from his likeness and voice, 50 Cent will contribute original music, under an agreement between VU Games and Interscope Records. Players will be able to create custom mixes from the soundtrack using the integrated "music lab."

The "Bulletproof" script was written by "The Sopranos" executive producer Terry Winter, who also wrote the screenplay for 50's upcoming film, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'."

VU Games will unveil "Bulletproof" at the E3 conference in Los Angeles this May. The company has not announced which platforms the game will support.

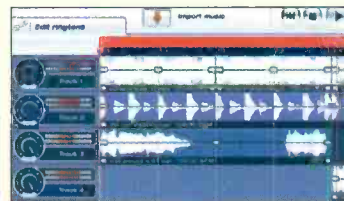


Napster's Trip

Napster is embarking on a nationwide promotional tour for its Napster to Go portable subscription service. The company is tapping music, film and TV celebrities to appear as it visits venues in New York, Austin, Los Angeles and Nashville.

Each venue will be converted into a "Napster to Go Café," offering free coffee and free "refills" of digital music for MP3 players compatible with the Napster to Go service. In addition, the company will give away MP3 players and subscriptions.

The recent New York event drew such artists as **Lindsay Lohan**.



Custom Calling

Video and music editing software vendor Magix has unveiled Ringtone Mixer, a program that allows users to convert digital audio files into ringtones, and vice versa. The software—which supports MP3, OGG Vorbis, WAV and WMA formats—includes more than 500 music loops and other sounds like animal noises and voices.

It also features 4-track capability for recording custom ringtones that blend music and speech. Once users create a ringtone, the software facilitates uploading the file to compatible mobile phones. The Magix Ringtone Mixer will be available at the end of this month for \$19.99.

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Independent Music
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May 14 issue

MUSIC & MONEY:
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Songwriters & Publishers

D.C. Hears Copyright Debate

Representatives of music publishers, songwriters, labels and digital media companies testified March 8 before members of Congress, discussing their views on necessary changes to the Copyright Act's compulsory mechanical license provision.

The oversight hearing on digital music licensing and section 115 of the Copyright Act, held by the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property, is one step in the process of determining whether legislation is necessary to change the current law.

In the past, music publishers have said there was no need to change the licensing provision. Now, they are taking a new position.

David Israelite, president/CEO of the **National Music Publishers' Assn.**, told the subcommittee that publishers are working with the **Digital Media Assn.**, which represents online music services, and the **Recording Industry Assn. of America** to formulate solutions that will ensure the availability of songs for subscription services and guarantee a level playing field in determining mechanical royalty rates.

To show publishers' commitment to the new technology, Israelite noted that NMPA members and **Harry Fox Agency** affiliates have issued more than 2.85 million licenses to 215 licensees for digital delivery of compositions. He also said publishers have underwritten legitimate music services since their inception by licensing on a "use now, pay later" basis to allow tethered downloads and on-demand streams even though rates had not yet been determined.

Israelite also pointed out the disparity under copyright law between owners of compositions and owners of sound recordings. He reminded the members that publishers are subject to the compulsory mechanical license provisions—requiring them to license mechanical rights to all users, including online music services—and that **ASCAP** and **BMI**, because of the consent decree under which they operate, must license nondramatic public performance rights to any user who requests them.

This places publishers at an inherent disadvantage in negotiating rates, since labels have no compulsory license, no collective agency and no obligation to license, with the limited exception of the compulsory license for public performance by non-interactive digital transmissions, Israelite said.

He added that publishers are sim-

ply asking for "fair compensation comparable to that received by other music copyright owners." He noted that if the statutory mechanical royalty rate had increased in an amount commensurate with the Consumer Price Index since it was first introduced at 2 cents per song in 1909, the rate today would be 40 cents per song. As a result of controlled composition clauses in recording contracts, however, the average actual rate paid for songs is significantly less than even the current 8.5 cents.

lenging, since the publishers' agent typically issues separate licenses for each configuration—CD, DVD, download, etc.

UMG needs to obtain or verify rights to more than 30,000 musical works each year for more than 2,000 new album or compilation releases. In 2004, UMG requested more than 130,000 individual mechanical licenses in the United States, Kenswil said.

As a result of the current licensing model, transactional costs for licensing have become an obstacle to making recordings available, he said.

Jonathan Potter, executive director of DiMA, said his group's members seek four amendments to the compulsory mechanical license law.

First, they want to replace the "dysfunctional" compulsory license with a simple, transparent, comprehensive statutory blanket license that can be triggered on one notice.

Second, they seek clarity in the scope of music publishers' licensable rights regarding "ephemeral" and incidental reproduction of compositions associated with streamed performances. He said it is time to end "infamous royalty double-dipping" wherein publishers claim a mechanical and a performance right.

Third, they want clarity in the definition of interactive services regarding sound recording performance rights. Online music services want to ensure that Internet radio programming based on user preferences falls within the statutory license as long as the programs do not violate certain restrictions.

Songwriter **Wood Newton** echoed this concern. "If you consider inflation, we are earning less today than we did a century ago." Yet with all things considered, he said, "I can attest that there are two words songwriters fear hearing: 'controlled composition.'" He called on the members to end the practice of asking a songwriter to accept a reduced rate on a song as they did in 1995 for digital phonorecord downloads.

Newton, whose credits include **Kenny Rogers'** "20 Years Ago" and **the Oak Ridge Boys'** "Bobbie Sue," spoke to the members about the life of a songwriter. He said that the system for collecting royalties has become so complex that it is almost impossible for individual songwriters to get a full and accurate accounting of their royalties and to track those royalties. He urged the members to consider requiring disclosure requirements for anyone who collects royalties on behalf of songwriters.

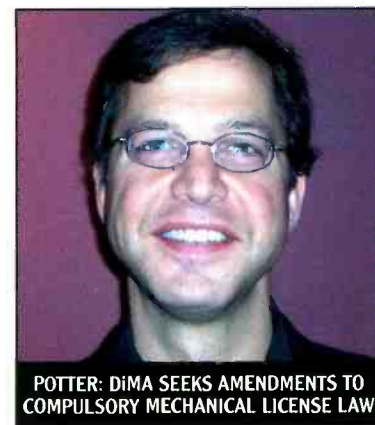
Larry Kenswil, president of **Universal Music Group's UMG/eLabs**, also took a new position on behalf of labels. He told the members that labels are OK with online music services licensing mechanical rights directly from publishers. In the past, most services paid labels an all-in rate so labels would then pay publishers, a practice that most publishers did not prefer.

However, Kenswil urged the members to introduce blanket licensing of compositions and to provide greater royalty rate flexibility—a royalty more responsive to the marketplace.

Kenswil said the antiquated structure of compulsory license procedures—one song at a time, one publisher at a time—is frustrating the introduction of new products. Even licensing through HFA is chal-

Notable
News

By Susan Butler
sbutter@billboard.com



POTTER: DIMA SEEKS AMENDMENTS TO COMPULSORY MECHANICAL LICENSE LAW

Finally, the services seek to equalize sound recording performance royalty standards so that all radio competitors—broadcast, cable, satellite and Internet—pay the same royalty to artists and record companies.

Subcommittee chairman **Lamar Smith**, R-Texas, has said he hopes to have a bill presented this year, but some executives believe the members may wait to draft any bill until the various industries can negotiate some rates. After May 31, recent legislation will permit the industries as a whole to negotiate rates on physical goods without violating antitrust regulations.

RCA U.K. has something to crow about with classic rock foursome Rooster



Global



Canadian dance/soul singer Esthero finally follows up her 1998 debut album

UNITED KINGDOM / EUROPE / ASIA / JAPAN / AUSTRALIA / AFRICA / CANADA

FIMI Enjoys Its Return To Sanremo Festival

BY MARC WORDEN

SANREMO, Italy—Never say never again. Viewing figures for this year's televised Sanremo Festival appear to vindicate the decision by local labels to rejoin the Italian music industry's biggest annual event.

The 55th Sanremo Festival of Italian Song took place March 1-5. The return to Sanremo by Italian labels' body FIMI after a boycott in 2004 also brought back the viewing public. Organizers say the final night attracted an average of 13.6 million viewers, up dramatically from the 9.27 million who tuned in last year.

FIMI director-general Enzo Mazza says the organization is "satisfied" with its return to Sanremo after the resolution of a dispute with the event's organizers, state broadcaster RAI and the local government of the city of Sanremo.

"The ratings are back up at the levels of 10 years ago," Universal Italy president/CEO Piero La Falce says. Universal was the only major among FIMI's members that offered cooperation, albeit limited, to the festival in 2004.

Sanremo traditionally attracts a massive TV audience over its five nights, and for decades Italian labels planned their release schedules around the event. However, in recent years, labels have complained that the festival was failing to generate sales at the same levels as before.

After years of friction between FIMI and the organizers, the smoldering dispute finally caught fire when the trade group withdrew its participation in 2004 (*Billboard*,

July 19, 2003).

The catalyst was a disagreement between FIMI and RAI over expenses the labels body said were owed from previous shows. Those differences were resolved after the 2004 event.

TUNING IN AFTER A NIGHT OUT

FIMI VP Mario Limongelli—who is also owner/GM of Milan-based independent label Nar International—suggests the trade group's return to Sanremo and a revamp of the competition have changed the viewing demographic. "Sanremo usually has an older TV audience," he claims, "but this year, market research suggests that it attracted younger viewers, many of whom watched the later phases after coming home from a night out."

Each year, the show runs from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. on each of its five nights. Details of the viewing demographics for 2005 are not yet available.

This year's edition took place under the artistic directorship of Italian TV presenter Paolo Bonolis.

With his musical director, Gianmarco Mazzi, Bonolis produced a new look for the festival's competition element, in which performers

are rewarded for their interpretation of a song written specifically for the event.

Sanremo has traditionally included two contests: the main event and one for new performers, who are referred to as "youngsters." Instead, this year's fes-

(Continued on page 40)



MAZZA: LABELS SATISFIED WITH SANREMO PARTICIPATION



Universal artist Francesco Renga won the overall prize and the men's award at the 55th annual Sanremo Festival.

German Market Showing Signs Of Health

BY WOLFGANG SPAHR

BERLIN—The sick man of Europe may be getting better.

The dramatic decline of Germany's recorded-music market since the end

of the '90s is slowing, according to new figures from labels body BPW.

The retail value of shipments in 2004 fell 3.6% from the previous year to 1.59 billion euros (\$2.12 billion). In 2003, the decline was 19.8%. Volume in 2004 dropped 2.6% to 178.5 million units; the previous year, the downturn was 18.2%.

Berlin-based BPW chairman Gerd Gebhardt predicts that the German market—the world's fifth-biggest—will stabilize by the end of this year and will grow significantly from 2006 onward.

Gebhardt believes a strong showing by local repertoire was key to the 2004 results. "The success of German artists is outstanding," he says.

According to BPW, the album market share of German acts climbed to a record 30.3% in 2004, versus 29.5% in

2003. Local repertoire accounted for 51.5% of singles shipped, down from 54.7% in 2003.

Total album shipments slipped 2.1% to 146.1 million units in 2004 from 149.2 million the previous year. Within that total, CD albums fell slightly (0.4%) to 133.1 million units. BPW does not break out value figures for album shipments.

Singles dropped 13% to 21.3 million units from 24.4 million.

A bright spot was music DVD, which climbed 11% to 10 million units. The format has doubled in volume since 2002.

RINGING UP SALES

BPW is also upbeat about the digital and mobile music market, for which it offered figures for the first time. The

body says 8 million legal downloads generated sales of 10 million euros (\$13.34 million) during 2004. Ringtones delivered a similar amount.

Berlin-based Universal Music Germany chairman/CEO Frank Briegmann notes, however, that master ringtones account for only 25% of the German ringtones market. He says the record industry must "significantly improve" that figure in the near future.

Briegmann agrees that the 2004 BPW figures are grounds for optimism, but cautions: "We can only be really pleased with our market again when growth starts." Briegmann concurs that this is not likely to happen until 2006 at the earliest.

According to Briegmann, the local industry is beginning to see a payoff from investment in local artist devel-

opment. He points to the 2004 success of Universal acts Juli, Rosenstolz, Rammstein and Söhne Mannheims as evidence of this trend, saying they jointly shipped more than 1.5 million albums last year.

(Continued on page 40)



BRIEGMANN: MORE MASTER RINGTONES



GEBHARDT: GROWTH WILL RESUME IN '06



JAPAN		UNITED KINGDOM		FRANCE		GERMANY	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
(SOUNDCAN JAPAN) 03/16/05		(THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS CO.) 03/14/05		(SNEP/FDP/TITE LIVE) 03/15/05		(MEDIA CONTROL) 03/15/05	
SINGLES		SINGLES		SINGLES		SINGLES	
1	NEW	1	NEW	2	NEW	1	NEW
2	1	2	NEW	1	1	2	1
3	2	3	NEW	3	2	3	2
4	3	4	1	4	3	4	3
5	6	5	2	5	4	5	4
6	5	6	4	6	5	6	5
7	NEW	7	5	7	NEW	7	6
8	10	8	NEW	8	7	8	7
9	NEW	9	NEW	9	9	9	8
10	7	10	8	10	10	10	9
ALBUMS		ALBUMS		ALBUMS		ALBUMS	
1	NEW	1	NEW	1	NEW	1	NEW
2	NEW	2	1	2	2	2	2
3	1	3	NEW	3	139	3	1
4	NEW	4	3	4	4	4	4
5	NEW	5	2	5	5	5	NEW
6	4	6	5	6	3	6	7
7	2	7	6	7	8	7	6
8	3	8	66	8	6	8	8
9	NEW	9	NEW	9	9	9	NEW
10	5	10	15	10	7	10	3

CANADA		ITALY		SPAIN		AUSTRALIA	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
(SOUNDCAN) 03/26/05		(FIMI/NIELSEN) 03/14/05		(AFYVE/MEDIA CONTROL) 03/16/05		(ARIA) 03/14/05	
SINGLES		SINGLES		SINGLES		SINGLES	
1	1	1	NEW	1	1	1	NEW
2	3	2	NEW	2	2	2	1
3	2	3	1	3	3	3	4
4	5	4	3	4	4	4	3
5	4	5	2	5	5	5	6
6	6	6	5	6	7	6	7
7	7	7	NEW	7	6	7	5
8	8	8	3	8	9	8	2
9	RE	9	4	9	NEW	9	10
10	RE	10	NEW	10	NEW	10	9
ALBUMS		ALBUMS		ALBUMS		ALBUMS	
1	1	1	2	1	NEW	1	1
2	4	2	1	2	NEW	2	NEW
3	3	3	NEW	3	NEW	3	2
4	2	4	NEW	4	NEW	4	6
5	5	5	NEW	5	1	5	4
6	9	6	3	6	3	6	5
7	8	7	5	7	NEW	7	3
8	RE	8	14	8	11	8	12
9	7	9	8	9	5	9	8
10	NEW	10	7	10	2	10	7

THE NETHERLANDS		SWEDEN		NORWAY		SWITZERLAND	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
(MEGA CHARTS BV) 03/11/05		(GLF) 03/11/05		(VERDEN'S GANG NORWAY) 03/14/05		(MEDIA CONTROL) 03/15/05	
SINGLES		SINGLES		SINGLES		SINGLES	
1	1	1	NEW	1	11	1	2
2	2	2	5	2	NEW	2	1
3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3
4	NEW	4	NEW	4	NEW	4	5
5	9	5	2	5	4	5	4
ALBUMS		ALBUMS		ALBUMS		ALBUMS	
1	2	1	NEW	1	1	1	NEW
2	NEW	2	1	2	2	2	NEW
3	1	3	NEW	3	NEW	3	NEW
4	6	4	NEW	4	NEW	4	1
5	3	5	3	5	5	5	3

Hits of the World is compiled at Billboard/London.

NEW = New Entry RE = Re-Entry

Esthero Puts Finishing Touch On 'Wikked' Set

BY LARRY LeBLANC

TORONTO—It has been seven long years, but Esthero is back with a new album at last.

"Wikked Lil' Grrls" will be released May 24 in North America by Reprise Records. The Esthero name now represents the Toronto singer (real name Jenny-Bea Englishman) as a solo artist; she previously worked under that moniker with guitarist/MIDI programmer Doc (real name Martin McKinney). Her new album is the follow-up to their 1998 acid-jazz/trip-hop debut, "Breath From Another" (Work Group).

"I'll be glad when the album is finally out," 26-year-old Esthero admits. "It's been done for over a year, except for one track."

"This is more than a sophomore record; this is a coming-of-age record," declares Orlando Puerta, director of dance and lifestyle marketing at Warner in the United States.

Dale Kotyk, director of marketing for Warner Music Canada, says the label's initial focus will be "making sure whoever is aware of Esthero know that she has product out." He adds, "We're going to try to reconnect her with her fan base."

"Breath From Another" has sold 118,000 units in the United States and 50,000 in Canada, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

In November, Reprise released Esthero's six-song EP "We R in need of a musical ReVoLuTiOn!" a month after her house-music track "O.G. Bitch" hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hot Dance Music/Club Play chart. The EP features three tracks—"This Lull-a-Bye," "I Drive Alone" and "Amber & Tiger's Eye"—that are not on the album.

The EP's provocative title track—which Esthero wrote last year with fellow Canadians Jully Black, Spooky Rueben and James Robertson—also kicks off her album. The track packs a terrific wallop, containing the opening lines "I'm so sick and tired of the shit on the radio and MTV."

Puerta says, "When she played us 'musical ReVoLuTiOn!' at a marketing meeting, everybody went, 'That's the missing piece of the puzzle that ties everything together.' Her album is a musical revolution."

The song, Esthero says, "made everything make sense. I felt that if I made it the first track on the record, people would understand why I do so much genre-hopping, and why the album is so manic. It just put a nice little bow on the record."

The 14-song "Wikked Lil' Grrls"—recorded over four years—features production and/or co-writing collaborations with André 3000 of OutKast, Cee-Lo Green, Camara Cambon, Sean Lennon and Adam-12, as well as Canadians Jelleestone, MC Shakari Nyte, Doc, Jemeni and Track & Field. Esthero co-produced all tracks except "Thank Heaven for You," which was helmed by Cambon.

Hampered initially by writer's block and taking so long to complete the album, Esthero lost perspective at times. "At one point, I felt what I had done sucked," she says with a laugh. "Then I listened to a bunch of the tracks and realized that it is pretty good. It is



ESTHERO: HAD TO OVERCOME WRITER'S BLOCK

a perfect set of photographs of the last seven years of my life."

Raised in rural Ontario, Esthero moved to Toronto in her early teens. She met Doc in 1996; the pair's self-penned demos, which he produced, sparked interest from several major labels before the duo signed with the Sony-affiliated Work Group in the United States. Four months after the release of their album, Doc departed. Soon afterward, Epic Records Group absorbed Work Group, and Esthero was released from her contract.

However, her managers, Zack Werner and Beau Randall of Toronto-based Venus Management, found her a home in 1999 at Reprise.

"The people that signed her are no longer here anymore," Puerta notes. "Somehow she persevered, and she is special enough for us not to let go of her."

Sanremo

Continued from page 37

tival had five categories with 32 contestants. Each section was voted on by viewers gathered in 20 RAI TV studios throughout the country.

The individual winners were Francesco Renga, with "Angelo" (Universal), in the men's category; Antonella Ruggiero, with "Echi d'Infinito" (Universal), women; Toto Cutugno & Annalisa Minetti, "Come Noi Nessuno al Mondo" (Dito/Edel), classic; Nicky Nikolai & the Stefano Di Battista Jazz Quartet, "Che Mistero L'Amore" (EMI), group; and Laura Bono, "Non Credo Nei Miracoli" (EMI), youngsters.

Section winners were announced March 5; telephone votes from viewers then selected Renga as the overall winner.

A RAI-selected media panel gave the

annual critics' prize to veteran jazz crooner Nicola Arigliano for his competition performance of "Colpevole" (NunFlower/Rai Trade).

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

"This year, the music and the ratings were impressive," Edel Italy president Paolo Franchini says. "I'm delighted that the classic and critics' prizes both went to indie artists. My only concern is that the format confirmed that the modern Sanremo is a TV event where there also happens to be music."

EMI VP of A&R Fabrizio Giannini also applauds the new show. "My only complaint," he says, "is that the new format tends to be detrimental to artists in the youngsters section, who are at a disadvantage in competing with the bigger names [in the new categories]."

Mazza says it is "too early" to judge the impact this year's festival will have on record sales.

Two "official" Sanremo compila-

tions, featuring songs included in the competition, were released to coincide with the show: a 14-track set on Columbia, retailing for 20.60 euros (\$27.75), and a 21-track EMI/Universal co-production for 12.60 euros (\$17). The latter album is distributed to retail by EMI; Universal distributed a version as a cover mount with the magazine TV Sorrisi e Canzoni.

Mazzi suggests labels need to be "a bit more flexible" in taking advantage of the sales opportunities Sanremo offers. "Thanks to [satellite channel] RAI Sat," he says, "the festival is followed by Italian communities from the U.S.A. to Australia. In future editions, a special [international] festival song download operation could be organized."

La Falce acknowledges there is room for improvement on the labels' side. "Sanremo is still a massive TV event," he says. "If we can't use it to sell records, then that's our problem, rather than RAI's."

NEWSLINE

THE INTERNATIONAL WEEK IN BRIEF

Rock quartet Nephew collected Danish Music Awards in all five categories in which it was nominated at a March 5 ceremony in Copenhagen. The annual awards are organized by the Danish affiliate of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

The Copenhagen Records band won for best album ("USADSB"), act, rock album, video ("Superliga") and single ("Movieclip").

A local representative of Amnesty International accepted the award for best international album on behalf of U2 for "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb" (Island). Domino act Franz Ferdinand collected international awards for best single ("Take Me Out") and best new act.

The awards were decided by a jury of media representatives and members of music industry organizations.

Performers at the show included Danish acts DMA, D-A-D, Saybia and Junior Senior as well as Nephew.

About 5,000 tickets were sold for the event, which was broadcast live by national public broadcaster DR1 TV.

CHARLES FERRO

Sydney DJs Chris Kross and Pee Wee Ferris were ordered to pay damages and costs totaling \$819,000 Australian (\$655,000) in a copyright-infringement case that concluded March 11.

The federal court in Sydney found that Kross (real name Chris Fraser-Smith) and Ferris (Peter Ferris) used unauthorized tracks on eight remix albums in 2002. The albums were released on Fraser-Smith's indie label Tower Records. The copyrights in the recordings had not been cleared by owners Sony Entertainment Australia, Universal Music Australia and Central Station Records & Tapes.

Fraser-Smith told the court that he had applied for permission for all the works used in the remixes; Ferris testified that he thought Fraser-Smith had gained clearance for the tracks he remixed.

Justice Peter Jacobsen said Fraser-Smith had shown "a culture of contempt for copyright restrictions."

CHRISTIE ELIEZER

Britain's Mechanical-Copyright Protection Society has appointed rights administration veteran Jeremy Fabinyi executive director and board member.

As executive director, Fabinyi succeeds Sandra Cox, who takes the same title at sister collecting body the Performing Right Society. Cox replaces John Axon, who is retiring after 22 years at PRS.

Fabinyi will be responsible for MCPS' day-to-day operations, including audio-product licensing and new-business development. He will relocate in April to London from Paris, where for the past three years he has worked with international authors' bodies BIEM and CISAC as coordinator of technical committees.

Previously, he was CEO of the Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society and managing director of Festival Mushroom Records.



FABINYI

Germany

Continued from page 37

Other insiders remain cautious about the immediate future of the German market. According to BPW, the music retail sector lost 1,100 jobs in 2004 as a result of closures and insolvencies, while the market share of specialist music stores fell to a historic low of 27.8%.

Lutz Wentscher, treasurer of Cologne-based music retail trade body GDM, says labels must pay particular attention to the concerns of small music stores, which face ever-tougher competition from mass merchants and other nontraditional retailers.

"These small retailers played their part in recent years in representing domestic repertoire and breaking new artists," he says. Wentscher calls for "new marketing concepts" by labels to ward against the disappearance of such

retailers nationwide.

Gebhardt acknowledges that, despite the high profile afforded digital distribution, "store-based retail sales still account for the greatest part of music-recording sales."

However, he warns that "there is a danger that dealers will reduce their racking space for music and that customers will find less and less music in the stores. The fact that [many] dealers concentrate on hits reduces the presentation of the enormous variety still produced by the music industry."

BPW has blamed widespread personal CD copying and illicit downloading for the dramatic decline in the market since 1999.

"We have to fight against the illegal business with all the power we have," Gebhardt says.

According to BPW, its members' sales account for 91% of the German music market in value terms. It bases its value figures on members' shipments, factoring in taxes and retail margins.

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USE BILLBOARD MAGAZINE TO GET NATIONAL EXPOSURE

Beck

Continued from page 1

according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Propelled by a sing-along chorus and funky beat (as well as a sample of the Beastie Boys' "So What'cha Want"), first single "E-Pro" is off to Beck's strongest start at radio in years.

The song moves to No. 2 on this issue's Modern Rock Tracks chart. It is Beck's highest chart position since "Loser" hit No. 1 in 1994. It also is his first top five at modern rock since 1996's "Where It's At."

"It will probably be the biggest hit this year, because all formats in rock genres can play it," says Sean Demery, PD for KITS San Francisco. "I haven't been this excited about a Beck song since the '90s. This works at active rock, alternative, modern AC and at some level, at AC, because it's just such a palatable record."

That is true of the entire "Guero" album, which melds rock, rap, atmospheric pop, folk and Latin rhythms.

The songs on "Guero" sound fresh because Beck created most of them in the studio with the Dust Brothers. "I just go in with some vague idea or no idea at all," Beck says. "You're just putting yourself on the spot on a daily basis."

'BURIED ALIVE'

Now married and with a small son, Beck says making music remains sacred. "At home, there's so much going on all the time," he says. When recording, "the world disappears in a way that only happens in the studio where you're breathing the same oxygen for days on end. Sometimes to really get inside the music and it's flowing out of you, you have to bury yourself alive."

Such vivid imagery is present in "Guero." Upbeat melodies often tan-

gle with downbeat lyrics, as on "Girl," a Beach Boys-reminiscent tune with dark lyrics.

"Originally, the lyrics to 'Girl' were really upbeat, and then it didn't work for me somehow," Beck says. "You need the dichotomy. If you're doing something happy and light, you need the shadows. That was something that the Pixies did so well. Frank Black is a genius at these happy songs, and then you listen to the lyrics and they're based on [Spanish film director Luis] Buñuel films of cows' eyes getting cut."

"Guero," which loosely translates into "white boy," was a neighborhood name for Beck when he was growing up in primarily Hispanic East Los Angeles. One track, "Qué Onda Guero," specifically refers to his past.

"There's all these ideas dancing, they're always looking for an opening for the right place to come out," Beck says. "It's one whose time had come."

As a potential way to reach a new generation of fans, Fox TV series "The O.C." featured five Beck songs, including "E-Pro" and "Girl," on its March 10 episode. An ad card at the teen drama's conclusion tagged the music.

"Usually I'm a little bit wary of TV shows or licensing songs," Beck admits. "I didn't know much about the show, but there were all these bands whose music was on the show who I never thought would be on the show and apparently, the gentleman who puts the music together has excellent taste."

That gentleman is "O.C." executive producer Josh Schwartz. Interscope came to Schwartz with a slew of music from upcoming releases. "We heard the Beck album, and we didn't want to play just one song," Schwartz says. In fact, he says the plan was to use only Beck music in the episode, but there were scenes where different sounds were needed.

"Guero" follows 2002's "Sea Change," an often-somber, confessional album



BECK: 'IF YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING HAPPY AND LIGHT, YOU NEED THE SHADOWS'

that reflected on a lost relationship. That title sold 612,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Beck had two ideas of where to go next, according to his Interscope A&R executive, Mark Williams. "One was a lot of music he'd started from scratch with [producer] Nigel Godrich, the other one was musical ideas he'd had around that he wanted to work with the Dust Brothers on." The Dust Brothers set rose to the top.

"The Dust Brothers thing has been something we'd been talking about for years," Beck says. "We worked together on two songs on [1999's]

Japan

Continued from page 1

Japan exist, sources say that Japan's 10 services have sold just a few hundred thousand tracks.

Chaku-uta Full is operated by KDDI, Japan's second-largest mobile services provider. Takashi Kamiyama, senior manager of the media business department at KDDI's content and media business division, estimates that by year's end, 25 million tracks will have been downloaded from the service.

Since Chaku-uta Full's launch, industry professionals in the world's second-biggest music market have been suggesting that mobile is better-positioned than online distribution to win the favor of Japanese consumers.

"At least for the near future, mobile music distribution is more promising than online distribution," says Steve Myers, president of Tokyo-based software developer Theta Music Technologies.

There are several factors working in favor of mobile music services in Japan. These include widespread consumer familiarity with the offerings, due in part to marketing and promotion by the mobile operators; simple billing systems that do not require credit cards; and the rapid rate of adoption of third-generation phones.

"I feel that the mobile phone has the edge at the moment," says Andrew Dunbar, GM of new media at Warner Music Japan. "Mobile phones in Japan will fully match the functions and specifications of dedicated music players in the very near future. Mobile phones are fully accepted as entertainment devices in Japan. Ultimately, though, there will be a convergence of the mobile and online areas."

'Midnite Vultures,' but we didn't really get to dig in together."

The good news is the other record, with Godrich, has been rattling around Beck's brain, and he says it will surface sooner than the usual two or three years between projects.

The marketplace has been sprinkled with Beck bits for months. In February, a remix EP featuring four songs from "Guero" was offered exclusively on iTunes before going to other digital outlets and then to traditional retail as a 12-inch. "The O.C." Web site features the "E-Pro" video (as does iTunes and several other sites); a clip for "Black Tambourine" is airing on United Airlines' in-flight programming.

"Beck approaches videos differently, we don't just make one big video," Interscope head of new media and strategic marketing Courtney Holt says. "We try to have him have a video outlet for all his music."

While Beck does not direct his videos, he often comes up with the concepts. Additionally, he is involved in all the visuals for his projects, including the packaging.

A special edition of "Guero" will come packaged with a DVD. While on tour for "Sea Change" in Japan, Beck came across compelling graphics by a British visual arts company called D-Fuse. He hired it to do a visual

interpretation of "Guero."

"The consumer can put in the disc and there are weird, quirky visuals, shapes and patterns. There are cool, trippy graphics with hundreds of visual combinations the user can create," Holt says.

The DVD, which is meant to play on computers and DVD players, includes hidden video content and a 5.1 mix of the album. The CD/DVD combo will retail for \$29.98.

For Beck, the motivation for uniting with D-Fuse was artistic, but he also sees it as a way to keep albums vital.

"Everyone's talking about what the future of recorded music is in terms of downloading songs and the implications of people not buying CDs and what happens to the artwork," he says. "But if you're breaking music down to where it's encoded files, you can easily put visual information into that. The artwork isn't something that's printed on the CD case, it's something that exists in the music. That's the whole concept behind the DVD."

Beck, who is booked by Creative Artists Agency, plans to hit the road in June; before that he will play a few surprise gigs in Los Angeles. He is managed by John Silva.

Additional reporting by Ashley Christensen in Los Angeles.

NOTICES/ANNOUNCEMENTS

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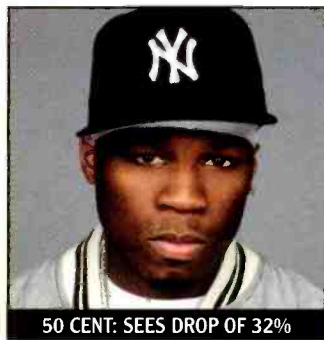


SALES / AIRPLAY / TRENDS / ANALYSIS

6-Digit Club: 50 And Jack

Call it one of those good news/bad news weeks. On the happy side, the second-week decline on the new **50 Cent** album is relatively minor, and **Jack Johnson** sees a title sell 100,000-plus in multiple weeks for the first time in his career.

The bad news is that those two are the only artists to exceed 100,000 copies on The Billboard 200.



50 CENT: SEES DROP OF 32%

While albums that start with large numbers often decline by as much as 50%, even 60% or more in the second week, 50's "The Massacre" drops by a relatively minor 32%. Given that he started at 1.14 million during a rushed and abbreviated opener, the album still moves a handsome 771,000 units, a total that would easily lead the big chart in most weeks, as illustrated by the numbers behind this issue's chart.

To wit, runner-up Johnson trails by more than 600,000 copies.

The singer/songwriter's "In Between Dreams" exhibits the more typical sophomore-week plunge we see from albums in the six-figures club. But, since Johnson began with his best-yet week of 229,000, the slide still leaves him standing tall with 118,000, the third-largest Nielsen SoundScan week for any of his three Universal-distributed albums.

The next two albums top 80,000, the bigger of those belonging to **the Game**, who moves 87,000 during the tracking week in which he and 50 Cent called a press conference to settle their public feud (see story, page 5). That is down 13% from the prior week, after a 5% drop in the week before that.

Jennifer Lopez follows, with a steep second-week decline of 67%. That leaves her with 86,000, and drops her down two places to No. 4.

Over the Counter

By Geoff Mayfield
gmayfield@billboard.com



LOW PRESSURE AND A HIGH OF 50: For the second time in four weeks, not one album enters the top 10. We think the culprit this time is the same as the one that caused our last fruitless top 10: **50 Cent**.

The sales week that paved charts for *Billboard's* March 5 issue included the release date of Feb. 15, which had been the original street date for 50's "The Massacre."

It appears that labels stayed clear of that date, as well as the date to which it had been moved, March 8. That date falls within the sales week reflected by this issue's charts, and again, it seems labels were not eager to stand in 50 Cent's shadow.

Such maneuvering was of no help to albums on March 1, as piracy concerns rushed "The Massacre" to the off-cycle street date of March 3.

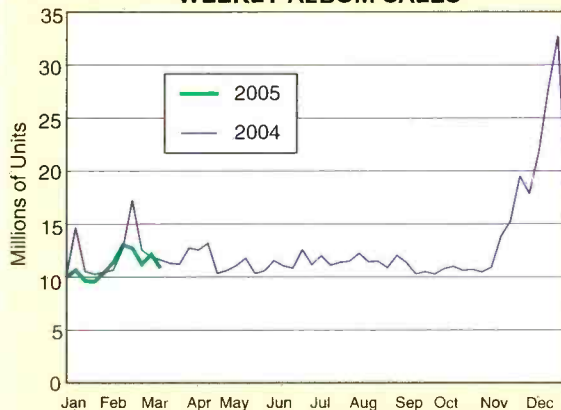
The Hot Shot Debut this time stands much higher than it did in the last issue when that award fell outside the top 10.

(Continued on page 46)

Market Watch

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

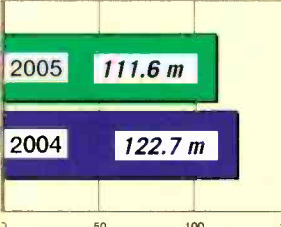
WEEKLY ALBUM SALES



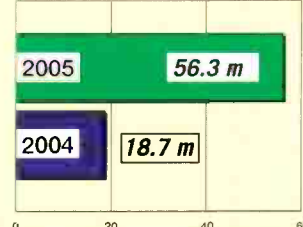
WEEKLY UNIT SALES

	Albums	Store Singles	Digital Tracks
This Week	10,809,000	87,000	6,273,000
Last Week	12,144,000	82,000	6,067,000
Change	◇ 11.0%	◇ 6.1%	◇ 3.4%
This Week 2004	11,627,000	125,000	1,983,000
Change	◇ 7.0%	◇ 30.4%	◇ 216.3%

YEAR-TO-DATE ALBUM SALES (millions)



YEAR-TO-DATE DIGITAL TRACK SALES (millions)



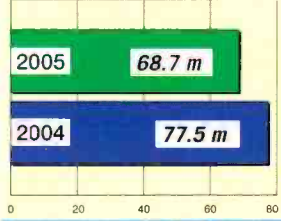
YEAR-TO-DATE OVERALL UNIT SALES

	2004	2005	Change
Total	142,972,000	168,736,000	◇ 18.0%
Albums	122,720,000	111,628,000	◇ 9.0%
Store Singles	1,530,000	837,000	◇ 45.3%
Digital Tracks	18,722,000	56,271,000	◇ 200.6%

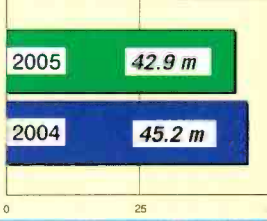
YEAR-TO-DATE SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT

	2004	2005	Change
CD	119,670,000	110,662,000	◇ 7.5%
Cassette	2,661,000	728,000	◇ 72.6%
Other	389,000	238,000	◇ 38.8%

YEAR-TO-DATE CURRENT ALBUM SALES (millions)



YEAR-TO-DATE CATALOG ALBUM SALES (millions)



YEAR-TO-DATE SALES BY ALBUM CATEGORY

	2004	2005	Change
Current	77,480,000	68,716,000	◇ 11.3%
Catalog	45,240,000	42,912,000	◇ 5.1%
Deep Catalog	31,741,000	29,502,000	◇ 7.1%

Nielsen SoundScan counts as current only sales within the first 18 months of an album's release (12 months for classical and jazz albums). Titles that stay in the top half of The Billboard 200, however, remain as current. Titles older than 18 months are catalog. Deep catalog is a subset of catalog for titles out more than 36 months.

For week ending 3/13/05. Rounded figures.

Compiled from a national sample of retail store and rack sales reports collected and provided by



Wonder Kicks Up A 'Fuss'

He was considered a genius at age 13 when he made his *Billboard* chart debut and now, at 54, he can still command enough airplay to earn Hot Shot Debut honors. **Stevie Wonder** extends his chart span on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks into a fifth decade and a second century by opening at No. 36 with "So What the Fuss" (**Motown**).

Wonder made his R&B chart debut when "Fingertips—Pt. 2" entered the week of June 29, 1963. Issued on Motown's **Tamla** imprint, the single spent six weeks at No. 1. It also spent three weeks at the pinnacle of The *Billboard* Hot 100 that summer. That means Wonder's chart span extends to 41 years and nine months.

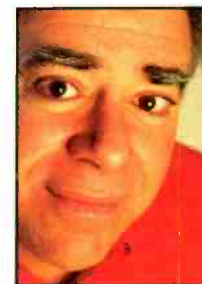
"Fuss" marks the first appearance by Wonder on this chart in six years and two months. "Happy Birthday" spent one week on the tally in January 1999, peaking at No. 70.

The new song is Wonder's highest-debuting and highest-charting title since "For Your Love" opened at No. 26 and peaked at No. 11 in first-quarter 1995.

ONE-WAY ROAD: **Green Day's** "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" (**Reprise**) is No. 1 on Modern Rock Tracks for the 16th week, equaling the record for the longest-running chart-topper on this list. "Scar Tissue" by **Red Hot Chili Peppers** and "It's Been Awhile" by **Staind** also had 16-weeks reigns, in 1999 and 2001, respectively. The follow-up to "Boulevard" makes its own chart news. "Holiday" leaps 9-4, making Green Day the first act in the history of the Modern Rock chart to have two top five hits at the same time.

Chart Beat

By Fred Bronson
fbronson@billboard.com



'SMALL'-VILLE: The highest debut on the Adult Contemporary chart is "In Some Small Way" (**Epic**) by **Celine Dion**. It is the 34th AC chart entry for Dion, and her 13th this decade. Before "Small," Dion was tied with **Clay Aiken** for having the most charting titles in the 2000s. Now she is in the lead by herself. She also led the list in the '90s, with 14 chart entries.

'GONE' BREAKS AWAY: **Kelly Clarkson** has adjacent hits on the Adult Top 40 chart, as "Breakaway" (**RCA**) holds at No. 5 and the follow-up, "Since U Been Gone," jumps 11-6. That makes Clarkson the first female artist to have two simultaneous top 10 hits on the Adult Top 40 survey since **Avril Lavigne** did it in January 2003 with "Complicated" and "I'm With You."

'LOVE' IS ON THE AIR: After a six-year break, **Garbage** is back on The *Billboard* Hot 100. "Why Do You Love Me" (**Almo Sounds/Geffen**) bows at No. 94. It is the act's first track to chart since "Special" went to No. 52 in May 1999. On Modern Rock Tracks, "Love" leaps 13-10, giving Garbage its first top 10 hit since "I Think I'm Paranoid" reached No. 6 in September 1998. "Love" is the act's fifth top 10 hit on the Modern Rock list out of 10 entries.

FOUR TIMES 50: **50 Cent** has four songs in the top 10 of Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and is poised to duplicate this feat next issue on The *Billboard* Hot 100, where he has three songs in the top 10 and one at No. 11.

MARCH 26 2005

Billboard TOP BLUES ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, ARTIST, IMPRINT & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL, Title. Top entry: GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS, Capitol 38430, Greatest Hits: 30 Years Of Rock.

MARCH 26 2005

Billboard TOP CHRISTIAN ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, 2 WKS. AGO, ARTIST, IMPRINT & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL, Title. Top entry: VARIOUS ARTISTS, Word-Curb/Provident-Integrity 106/EMICMG, WOW Hits 2005.

MARCH 26 2005

Billboard TOP REGGAE ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, ARTIST, IMPRINT & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL, Title. Top entry: VARIOUS ARTISTS, Chosen Few Emerald 1015/Urban Box Office, Chosen Few: El Documental.

MARCH 26 2005

Billboard TOP GOSPEL ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, 2 WKS. AGO, ARTIST, IMPRINT & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL, Title. Top entry: VARIOUS ARTISTS, Word-Curb/EMICMG/Verity 65344/ZOMBA, WOW Gospel 2005.

MARCH 26 2005

Billboard TOP WORLD ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, ARTIST, IMPRINT & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL, Title. Top entry: CELTIC WOMAN, Manhattan 60233, Celtic Woman.

Albums with the greatest sales gains this week... Recording Industry Assn. Of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 album units (Gold)...

Indeed, Vogel says the lack of a natural buyer or merger partner for the company could have a negative impact on the value of WMG stock in the long run.

Barry Sosnick, an independent media and retail analyst, says that minus a deal with EMI, the company faces an uphill battle to drive market-share growth when facing pressure from the two supermajors: Universal Music Group and Sony BMG.

"In a concentrated business you don't want to be the holder of the third business in the space," he says. "What makes it particularly perilous is that any time you have the marketshare of the top two players at parity, the industry becomes increasingly competitive."

WEA's U.S. market share declined last year to 14.7%, down from 16.4% in 2003—a loss that can be partially attributed to smaller volume from the consolidation of Atlantic and Elektra into the Atlantic Group. WEA scanned about 100 million units for the year, down 7% from 107.6 million in 2003.

THE DIGITAL STORY

In the short term, observers say that minus growth, investor belief in the promise of the digital distribution market will be a key driver of the WMG IPO and its forward stock performance. Label forecasts estimate that digital sales will account for as much as one-quarter of all industry revenue within five years—up from 2% in 2004.

"It's critical for any investor coming into this space to believe in the digital story," the competing label executive says.

In the prospectus for the IPO, WMG says it is focused on several new-media initiatives: supporting existing and new online services

in the United States and abroad, working with legitimate peer-to-peer providers, influencing the evolution of new mobile services and formats and simplifying the clearance of its content for digital distribution.

WMG management anticipates that as cellular networks and phone handsets become more sophisticated, music will be increasingly available through mobile and other wireless service providers as ringtones, ringback tones and audio and music video downloads.

Some think the digital element of the story will be attractive to investors who have come of age in the dotcom economy and are comfortable speculating on technology-driven potential.

"The music industry is clearly in transition and WMG is trying to position itself for that transition," says Bishop Cheen, an analyst with Wachovia Securities. "WMG is building a whole new business and a new economic model."

Others in the industry are hopeful of the deal's success. "It will be good for the industry to have a successful IPO and have another publicly quoted company," EMI chairman Eric Nicoli says. "Currently, EMI is the only barometer of investor sentiment of industry dynamics."

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

- During the 10 months ended Dec. 31 that new management has been operating WMG, the company has lost \$202 million on revenue of \$2.86 billion. The prospectus does not show corresponding numbers for the 10-month period in the previous year.

- During the 10-month period ended Dec. 31, WMG made interest payments totaling \$118 million.

- WMG's EBITDA during the 10-month period was \$348 million, which suggests the company will accommodate its loan covenant of maintaining a 2-to-1 EBITDA to interest ratio.

Selena's hits recorded in the studio; the other features the hits performed live.

Also on March 29, EMI will release "Duetos," an album by the Kumbia Kings—led by Selena's brother A.B. Quintanilla. The album includes two duets with Selena.

A week later, EMI will release "Selena Unforgettable—The Ultimate Collection," a commemorative four-disc collector's edition that includes the two "Unforgettable" CDs and two DVDs.

Then there is "Mexico Recuerda a Selena," an all-star tribute featuring such artists as Palomo and Liberation. It was released March 15 on Univision Records.

Yet another EMI release is scheduled for May 10. This CD/DVD will be based on "Selena: Vive!," the all-star tribute scheduled for April 7 at Houston's Reliant Stadium. Guests include Pepe Aguilar, Gloria Estefan, Aleks Syntek, Thalía, Alejandra Guzman, Bobby Pulido, Carlos Vives, Ana Gabriel, Lucero, Banda el Recodo, Fey and Montez de Durango.

The concert will be broadcast live as a three-hour special on the Univision network.

Selena's father Abraham Quintanilla, who runs Q Productions in Corpus Christi, Texas, is looking forward to "one of the biggest productions" Univision has ever mounted.

Quintanilla says the 70,000-seat Reliant Stadium will be configured as a 55,000-seat concert venue for the show, which will feature broadcast performances by 24 artists.

"We are having a celebration of the Selena legacy," says Jorge Pino, president/CEO of EMI Latin USA. "This year is a celebration and a major event. We are releasing the ultimate collections and magnificent packages on Selena."

According to Pino, EMI is running major marketing campaigns including radio and TV promotions and aggressive positioning in Wal-Mart and Kmart stores.

Univision Music Group president/CEO Jose Behar, who signed a 17-year-old Selena to EMI Latin in 1988, says the release of six CD titles on one act is probably unprecedented—but hardly surprising, considering the artist.

"Nobody can predict or mastermind a phenomenon," Behar says. "And phenomenon comes from greatness and talent and humility and goodness. They are all things Selena was, and still is about."



"She had such a unique style, a beautiful look and such a fresh optimistic outlook about everything. It was just very combustible and it made her into the phenomenon she turned out to be."

CROSSOVER HISTORY

Selena was shot and killed in a Corpus Christi motel by Yolanda Saldivar, the ex-president of her fan club, now serving a life sentence.

Since her death, five of Selena's albums have hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* Top Latin Albums chart. They include her English-language crossover set, "Dreaming of You," which debuted at No. 1 on The *Billboard* 200, making Selena the first Latin artist to achieve that feat.

Selena remains one of the top five Latin recording acts of all time, according to Nielsen SoundScan, despite the fact that she was only 23 when she died.

The prospect of selling six major releases in a tight time frame seems daunting. But Chano Elizondo, owner of San Antonio's CE Distributing, has no doubts about the potential.

"I don't think it is overkill. I think the people never get tired of her," Elizondo says. "Selena is a catalog seller. I think when the radio stops playing her, her music might stop selling."

Mando San Roman, PD at KKPS/KNVO McAllen, Texas, says Selena is still among the most requested artists at Hispanic radio.

"There isn't anybody that's been able to replace her," San Roman says. "She was one of a kind—loved by both young and old, male and female. Many have tried to become the next Selena without success."

Rudy Trevino, host of the weekly syndicated Corpus Christi-based "Tejano Gold" radio show, says fans continue to hunger for Selena.

"The impact she had in the Tejano market in her short life made a big impression, and her music is timeless," he says. "And as Latinos, we feel we have a very positive role model that we're very proud of, and we want to hold on to her legacy."

Just like 10 years ago, Selena seems omnipresent, with her face adorning the covers of countless publications. Additional all-star tribute concerts are scheduled for Corpus Christi and San Antonio.

In Corpus Christi, there is a steady stream of visitors to her life-size statue on the Bayfront gazebo and her gravesite at Seaside Memorial Cemetery.

On a recent visit, the Q Productions complex in northwest Corpus Christi was a beehive of activity as Quintanilla and his staff prepared for the upcoming tribute concert. Approximately 30,000 visitors pass through the complex's Selena Museum each year.

"We get parents and their kids coming in here almost every day," Quintanilla says. "It is amazing how almost everybody from different parts of the country always say, almost word for word, the same thing: They love Selena, the kids want to be like her. I don't know, I can't explain it."

diversify. We don't bring in someone that doesn't fit, even though they're a hit."

According to Rob Light, principal and head of Creative Artists Agency's music division, "Ozzfest never, ever deviates from what they do. Ozzy as an artist, since Black Sabbath, has not changed who he is and how he does what he does. That kind of commitment lets audiences know what they can expect."

It helps that metal music continues to thrive. "This music was always one of those things that people thought was going to go away, and it won't," Sharon Osbourne says. "It's a genre of music that's here to stay."

Light adds, "There's always going to be that 18- to 22-year-old kid want-

ing to wear a black T-shirt and pump his fist in the air. Radio and MTV may go a different direction, [but] there will always be that community that wants to go out and rock. As an art form, this music is all about live."

NUTS AND BOLTS

Ozzfest will begin July 15 at the Tweeter Center in Boston and play 26 cities, wrapping Sept. 4 at the Sound Advice Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach, Fla. Ticket prices range from \$35 (lawn) to \$85 (gold circle).

The Hot Topic Second Stage will be headlined by Rob Zombie and will feature some of hard rock's top emerging acts, including As I Lay Dying, Mastodon, the Haunted, In Flames, Arch Enemy, the Black Dahlia Murder, Bury Your Dead, Soilwork, Trivium and MTV's "Battle for Ozzfest" victor A Dozen Furies.

Holman feels the diversity of this year's lineup is its strength. "We have the godfathers of metal with Sabbath

and Iron Maiden and Rob Zombie, then we have the newer acts in Shadows Fall, [Black Label Society] and Killswitch Engage, plus all the emerging bands for the Hot Top Second Stage."

Given Ozzfest's fairly strict no-repeat policy and the large number of up-and-coming bands on the scene (see story, page 14), booking Ozzfest remains a challenge.

"There are two levels of talent on Ozzfest," Light says. "There are the headliners, the acts that bring bodies to the tour, and they are always paid what they're worth in the marketplace. The up-and-coming acts really benefit from their association with Ozzfest, and they may go a little lighter [on the guarantee] in order to be playing in front of so many people."

Beyond the financial challenges of programming Ozzfest, "the toughest part is coming up with the right mix and trying to determine which

bands will hit this summer," Holman says. "You have to look at what's on the horizon."

"One of the things I'm really proud of is we've given a platform for young bands to perform in front of thousands of people when they wouldn't normally," Sharon Osbourne says.

John Fenton of Sharon Osbourne Management oversees the second stage lineup, but CAA's Light stresses that Ozzfest's organization is set up like a de facto "board of directors."

"And Sharon is the CEO," Light adds. In addition to Hot Topic, returning sponsors include FYE, Sony PlayStation and Trojan.

Light is bullish on the festival's prospects at the box office in 2005. "Ozzfest has been one of the most consistent summer tours every year," he says. "And this summer will be the first summer in a long time where there really isn't a big hard rock or metal tour out there competing with Ozzfest."

The Osbournes see Ozzfest continuing for the foreseeable future. "We're sort of like the Grateful Dead, we're this festival that goes under the radar, people look for it, and every year we'll be there," Sharon says.

And Ozzy still loves the live performance, even if the grind of touring takes its toll. "If every Wednesday you had a party, you'd go, 'Fuck me, it's Wednesday again.' We all do good shows, we all do shows that fucking suck. I've done plenty of them."

So how long will Ozzy keep mounting major tours? "I don't know. I retired about 15 years ago and that lasted a fucking year. What I learned from that retirement thing was you have to retire to something else. If you sit on your arse watching TV you're gonna drop dead."

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Beefs

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hip-hop is good as long as it's wholesome and not destructive."

The most high-profile out-of-studio rivalry was the East Coast/West Coast war, which resulted in the deaths of the Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur. Then came a public feud between 50 Cent and Ja Rule. Since then nothing major occurred until 50 Cent and the Game's Feb. 28 fracas stemming from the Game refuting 50 Cent's assertion that his contributions to the former's debut, "The Documentary," were why the Game's album is selling.

Radio station interviews feature each artist verbally attacking the other. And gunplay ensued in New York outside WQHT (Hot 97) and Violator Management, which handles 50 Cent. The artists called a truce at a March 9 press conference.

In the week leading up to the truce, additional responsibility for the media-hyped feud was aimed at several sources. Some believed the feud was a marketing/publicity ploy concocted to boost album sales, while radio stoked the fire by continually rehashing what said and did what.

Addressing the publicity stunt angle, KKBT Los Angeles interim PD Tawala Sharp says the consensus among listeners is that the rappers "don't have to hype us up. We know your music is good enough, and we know you're coming" with a new album.

Those dismissing the conflict and ensuing truce as publicity stunts were seemingly vindicated when the four-day sales figure for 50 Cent's sophomore album, "The Massacre," was announced March 9.

50 Cent's sophomore project had sold 1.14 million units, claiming the biggest Nielsen SoundScan total in an abbreviated sales week and breaking his own sales record set in 2003 when his debut, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," sold 872,000 during a similar four-day period.

Then in the wake of the week's events, community activist the Rev. Al Sharpton proposed a 90-day ban on radio and TV airplay for any artist who uses violence to sell their music.

"We are all responsible," says Troy Carter, co-president of ErvingWonder/Sanctuary Urban Management. His company's roster includes rapper Jadakiss who, along with Fat Joe, remain on 50 Cent's list of enemies. "We as managers and record labels support and promote violence when something like a shooting happens and we stand around looking ridiculous."

REALITY VS. HYPE

Some contend that while rappers battle, radio stations and labels smudge the line between marketing and music much in the way that TV creates entertainment from reality programming.

"Marketing seems to be taking precedence over whether or not there's good music," hip-hop journalist/activist Davey D says. "In the age of reality shows... the formula is being laid out for you. If you want to get on, you have to be controversial."

There is no denying the media focused on New York rapper 50 Cent's hardcore past. When he first hit the scene, stories in various publications (including this one) invariably mentioned his surviving nine gunshot wounds. Then just before the early release of his latest Interscope album, "The Massacre," media attention intensified when 50 Cent declared he had ousted the Game from G-Unit.

In addition to guesting on the Game's "The Documentary"—also on Interscope—50 Cent served as executive producer on the album with Dr. Dre.

Like other rappers, the Compton, Calif.-based Game draws creatively from his street background, which in his case includes surviving five gunshot wounds. Released in January, "The Documentary" has sold 1.6 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"It seems as if these days, if someone comes out and says, 'I got shot,' it becomes the theme of their whole marketing plan," Carter says. "I have heard from all the staff at Interscope, and everyone was legitimately concerned with the outcome of this."

Interscope, 50 Cent and the Game declined to comment for this story. At the press conference—which coincided with the eighth anniversary of the Notorious B.I.G.'s death—both pledged to end the violence and negativity. Charitable donations were also made to the Boys Choir of Harlem and the Compton Unified School District music program.

"What we did was good for hip-hop. It was the best move to make," Game manager Jimmy Henchmen says of the truce. 50 Cent is managed by Chris Lighty of Violator Management.

"You kind of know when [the rivalry] is going to stay healthy and when you can go toe to toe on a record," Henchmen adds. "It gets delicate when you have the potential for violence as we had in this case."

VISITATION RIGHTS

The potential for violence noted by Henchmen has reportedly prompted changes at Hot 97 in terms of artist visits. The station is no stranger to artist altercations. In February 2001, there was a shooting outside the station. A decision is pending in a federal perjury case against rapper Lil' Kim tied to that incident.

According to New York's Daily News, Hot 97's landlord sent a letter asking for artists to limit their entourage to just one person, and also asks the station to give a one-week notice before artist visits so appropriate security measures can be taken.

Emmis Communications, which owns Hot 97, released a statement that said, in part, "We in no way condone acts of violence."

KKBT's Sharp admits the beef "has put us a little more on edge as to how we handle guests." But he says there was no problem when 50 Cent visited the station just before the beef broke.

Adult R&B WQQK Nashville PD DC contends that in New York and Los Angeles, "everything is polarized. The masses don't have that issue. We're right in the middle of it since Young Buck [of G-Unit] is from here. He hasn't been anything other than upstanding with us when he's visited

[former R&B/hip-hop sister station WNPL]." Young Buck has, however, been indicted on a charge of assault in the stabbing that occurred at the Vibe Awards last year. He has since pleaded innocent.

Davey D is among those who see a deeper problem with the media rehashing rap feuds. "You have kids who don't know who Abraham Lincoln is but know how many times 50 was shot."

"Radio stations [are] quick to replay the interviews with 50 Cent and Game, but then blank out President Bush's name in Jadakiss' 'Why?'," Davey D continues. "If we're going to highlight beefs, let's air all the beefs: political, educational, economic."

BET's Hill says the network's "106 & Park" strives to have artists account for their actions. On that show, co-host Free asked 50 Cent about the value of pushing his conflict with the Game. "When 50 Cent and the Game had their meeting, we devoted as much time to that as we did to how it started. We wanted to show how two grown men can come together and resolve their differences," Hill says.

SHARPTON'S CALL

Sharpton proposes to grind beef violence down to nothing by imposing a 90-day radio and TV ban on artists promoting violence. He told Billboard Radio Monitor that he has had conversations with radio groups Radio One, Clear Channel and Emmis. Also supporting Sharpton's proposal is The Source magazine.

"We hope to take away the incentive of an artist engaging in actual violence because of anger or thinking it will help their records using [Federal Communications Commission]-regulated airwaves," Sharpton says. "We aren't trying to get a ban on all artists; only if an artist actually engages in violence."

Some believe Sharpton's proposal smacks of censorship.

"Censorship or FCC intervention is not an appropriate solution," says attorney Kenneth Meiselas of law firm Grubman, Indursky. "In fact, it can be very counterproductive in the long term for not just rap but all forms of music and radio. However, radio can be a positive force by advocating peaceful solutions and not participate in conduct that leads to an escalation of violence."

Others question the ultimate harm

such a ban would have on rap music.

"With freedom comes responsibility," HSAN's Chavis says. "When we see a beef happening, we go behind the scenes and try to get it resolved through dialogue. The Game and 50 Cent coming out on their own volition with a public reconciliation shows that hip-hop artists are responsible people who want to take the high road to resolve disagreements."

"We also defend hip-hop from player haters who unjustifiably criticize hip-hop music without knowing the facts," he continues. "There are a lot of people who call themselves leaders in the black community who want to criticize hip-hop. These leaders should not hinder an industry that is giving people the opportunity to empower themselves."

Martin

Continued from page 5

the Republican Martin has been a sitting FCC commissioner since July 3, 2001, under congressional rules he will not have to face a Senate confirmation hearing.

Martin succeeds Republican Michael K. Powell, who announced his retirement in January after a four-year term rife with divisiveness over such issues as media ownership and broadcast indecency.

Powell congratulated his successor in a written statement, which read, in part: "His wide knowledge of telecommunication policy issues and insight into the rapidly changing nature of communications technology will serve the agency well."

Not everyone is content with the Martin announcement. Reps. Maurice Hinchey, D-N.Y., chair of the Congressional Media Reform Caucus, and caucus co-chairs Diane E. Watson, D-Calif., and Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., said they were troubled by the selection.

They said in a statement that the nomination "once again demonstrates this administration's commitment to media consolidation, which is against the best interests of the American people."

Given Martin's background, they added, "it is very likely he will be a

Artist need people to embrace them, not player hate."

Sharpton notes, "You can reflect society and not engage in violence. How is it other people come from the same neighborhoods as some of these rappers and don't behave that way?"

ErvingWonder/Sanctuary Urban Management's Carter concurs. "Rappers and executives use the defense of violence in movies. But the difference is you don't see Arnold Schwarzenegger shooting people when he's out promoting a picture. There's a clear separation between his character and the person. But in hip-hop that line has become blurred."

Additional reporting by Raegan Johnson and Minal Patel in New York.

'yes' man for the White House."

Before joining the FCC, Martin was a special assistant to the president for economic policy, served on the Bush-Cheney transition team and was deputy general counsel for the Bush campaign.

Prior to working on the Bush campaign, Martin was an adviser to former Republican FCC commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth.

Insiders suggest that Martin, a low-key North Carolinian, may be a less polarizing figure than Powell, although his deregulation agenda may be more aggressive than that of the departing chairman. Some say that conservative Martin may also be more responsive to the religious right.

Martin and Powell had their share of disputes. The biggest battle was in 2003 when Martin sided with the FCC's two Democrats on a key vote over phone competition rules.

Bush must still nominate a commissioner to the five-member FCC, which under the current political structure has three Republican and two Democratic slots. The open seat is a Republican slot. The Senate would have to approve that nomination.

Earl Comstock, a former aide to Stevens, is a possible nominee. Stevens said in a written statement, "It is my continued hope and recommendation that Earl Comstock be named to fill the now vacant [commissioner] seat."

The Beat

Continued from page 11

throughout December.

The break-even point for "Vox"? An almost-guaranteed 20,000 copies. "I think we can do better than that, but if we sell that, we're happy," Vining says. "We've made a fair deal where we can all experience an upside, but the majors just aren't interested in those numbers."

Similarly, **Adventure Music**, which has focused on Brazilian and South American artists, has bowed **Adventure Music America**, a label devoted to all forms of acoustic music ranging from bluegrass to folk and jazz.

The first release will be "Now Hear This" from **Psychograss**, which includes mandolin player (and Adventure principal) **Mike Marshall**, fiddler **Darol Anger** and banjoist **Tony Trischka**. **Burnside** distributes Adventure releases.

A NEW TREND? **Melissa Etheridge** and **Joss Stone's** electrifying **Janis Joplin** tribute from this year's Grammy Awards will be available for purchase exclusively through **iTunes** until April 15. Proceeds from the track, priced at 99 cents, go to **City of Hope** and the **Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation**. This is the second performance from the 2005 Grammys, following the Tsunami Relief effort, to go on sale via iTunes.

Although it could be overdone, we hope this is a trend that continues. It's a wonderful way to raise money for good causes with little extra effort.

Atlantic Records Group chairman/CEO **Jason Flom** will be honored by the **T.J. Martell Foundation** May 11 in New York. The foundation raises money for leukemia, cancer and AIDS research.

Continue that St. Patrick's Day celebration by buying a copy of "Peace for Ireland... One Child at a Time," a new compilation that features tracks from **U2**, **Mary Black**, **James Galway**, **the Corrs** and others. Proceeds go to **Project Children**, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in Northern Ireland. The CD is available through projectchildren.com.

'It Disturbs Me That This Country Is So Seriously Divided Over This War'

BY RAY WADDELL

NASHVILLE—Grammy Award winner, Country Music Hall of Famer, the Poet of the Common Man, Merle Haggard for many is country music. And while his accomplishments in the genre are second to none, Haggard is still a risk-taking live performer and remains prolific in the studio.

The 67-year-old star has just begun a major tour with another legend, Bob Dylan. His recent collection of standards, "Unforgettable Merle Haggard," on the Capitol label—where he saw his greatest success—has been critically hailed. Now Haggard is putting the final touches on a new Capitol release, a much-anticipated project that reunites "Hag" with legendary producer Jimmy Bowen.

"Merle is one of the few left from the era when country music really started to expand and radio went from 300 stations to 3,000 stations," Bowen says. "To see where he is at this point in his life, and what he wants to say and sing about, has been a great experience. Merle is a poet, and what he thinks is what he sings about."

Q: Singer, songwriter, guitar player, live performer—which part of your game is most rewarding to you?

A: Personally, probably the guitar playing. It's very important to me. That's what started this whole thing, my interest in that instrument. I've been playing it since I was 10. It's like golf to some other people; it's important to me that I play good.

Q: It seems you've always been aware that less can be more when it comes to guitar playing. Is that a fair assessment?

A: Oh, yeah. I learned that from Grady Martin. Lay in the weeds and wait, and when you get your chance to say something, say something good. Then there's what you call a "band-man guitar player," where I try to put my guitar in where it should be and stay out of where it shouldn't be and reinforce the condition. We play off the cuff, we don't walk onstage with any idea of what we're going to do. We go out there and spend that hour-and-a-half havin' a good time.

Q: You've been in the record business for many years. Do you think you've been treated fairly by record companies?

A: I think a guy would be foolish to think he's been treated fairly. [He chuckles] I've been treated a lot of different ways, but I don't think "fairly" would be one of the descriptions.

But I'm back with the only label I ever enjoyed being with. As far as the financial gain of being with Capitol, we'll leave that on one side of the picture. But the creative association has been absolutely wonderful being back with Capitol. I have a merger with 'em, it's not just an artist deal. It's Hag/Capitol now. They're the second-largest record company in the world, and they don't sell iceboxes. They sell records, and they really know what they're doing.

[Capitol is] owned by an English firm, EMI... It's a great entertainment conglomerate to be involved with, No. 1. And we started with 'em, No. 2, and now 40 years later, we've got this excitement going there at the Capitol Tower and all over the world. They're calling it the year of the Hag.

Q: What has it been like working with Jimmy Bowen again?

A: Jimmy Bowen is probably one of the smartest men in the studio alive, and one of the most talented, and has more gold records on his wall than you can count, ranging from Bing Crosby to Merle Haggard. It's really a privilege to get Bowen off the golf course. He came in with a lot of gusto. I asked him if he'd produce an album on me, and he said, "Naw, I'll produce a great album on you, but not just an album."

We're 99% done. I've got one song I've got to sing on I didn't finish, and it just went wonderfully. We had four great musicians, a drummer named J.R.—I don't even know his last name



The Last Word



A Q&A With Merle Haggard

Merle Haggard: Career Highlights

- 1960: Paroled from San Quentin Prison after serving time for a series of petty crimes
- 1963: "Sing a Sad Song" charts in *Billboard*, the first of Haggard's 104 charting singles.
- 1964: Forms his touring band, the Strangers
- 1965: Signs with Capitol Records
- 1970: Wins Country Music Assn. male vocalist and entertainer of the year
- 1984: Wins Grammy Award for country vocal performance, "That's the Way Love Goes"
- 1994: Inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame
- 2004: Returns to Capitol for "Unforgettable Merle Haggard"

—the best goddamn drummer I ever heard in my life. Reggie Young on guitar and Billy Joe Walker on guitar, and the great Leland Sklar on bass. I'm really excited about it.

Q: How did this tour with Bob Dylan come about?

A: I had my itinerary set to do some light touring in the spring and ease my way through the year, and Bob Dylan calls and wants me to tour America with him. And he's not just talking about once and awhile, it's 40 out of the next 60 days. But it's Bob Dylan,

and Bob Dylan's the Einstein of music. He calls and wants you to be on his show and your name is Merle Haggard, you're honored.

Q: I've heard that most people who tour with Dylan don't get a chance to talk to him, but I imagine he'll talk to you at some point.

A: I don't know. I've rubbed shoulders with him before and he just sorta grunts.

Q: You spoke out in defense of the Dixie Chicks during the controversy a couple of years ago. How do you reconcile that with your "Fightin' Side of Me" and "Okie From Muskogee" fans?

A: What knocked my hat off was the way people attacked them. My response didn't come until some time later. I let it all go down and watched it happen and thought, "Now, wait a minute. Is this not America? Are we not at war for freedom?"

It disturbs me that this country is so seriously divided over this war. I don't think since the Civil War have we been so divided about something. Since when is it new for grandma to be against war? These girls were against war, and only in today's times would we have enough nerve to jump on somebody like that. What's new about entertainers being against war? They've always campaigned against war.

Q: In the Vietnam era, you, or at least your songs, seemed more aligned with the more conservative folks.

A: Well, now, wait a minute. I open my shows by saying, "Good evening, friends and conservatives." Listen, I was raised in a family that voted for Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and he was a Democrat. My grandpa was a hard-nosed Republican, and he voted for Dewey when Truman ran. I'm Merle Haggard, and I believe in backing the commander in chief. I don't agree with him. There's a lot of things he did that I don't like and a lot of things he didn't do that I don't understand. But I'm not in a position to criticize, because I don't have all the facts. And they're certainly not going to give 'em to me.

If you're looking for somebody that will stand up and fight for you, I'm your man. But I think if there's anything that's disrespectful about this whole thing with the Dixie Chicks, it's America itself for jumping on some little ol' girls about having a goddamn opinion.

Q: What are you listening to these days?

A: Well, yesterday I went to the dentist, and I listened to Bob Dylan all the way down there and was just amazed at what talent I was gonna be associated with the next couple of months.

Q: What would you say is the most important lesson you've learned in the music business?

A: Keep your opinions to yourself. I think it's important that I stay neutral on politics and remain hard to understand. I don't want to be pigeonholed as conservative, liberal, independent or anything. I back the man for the things the man believes in, not whether it says "R" or "D" down there beside his name.

There's some things that have got to happen. We've got to regain control—the people. "For the people, of the people," all that—that's not the current situation. We are under control, and if people don't realize that, they haven't looked around. And if they're not paranoid, they haven't thought about it.

Q: What accomplishment are you most proud of?

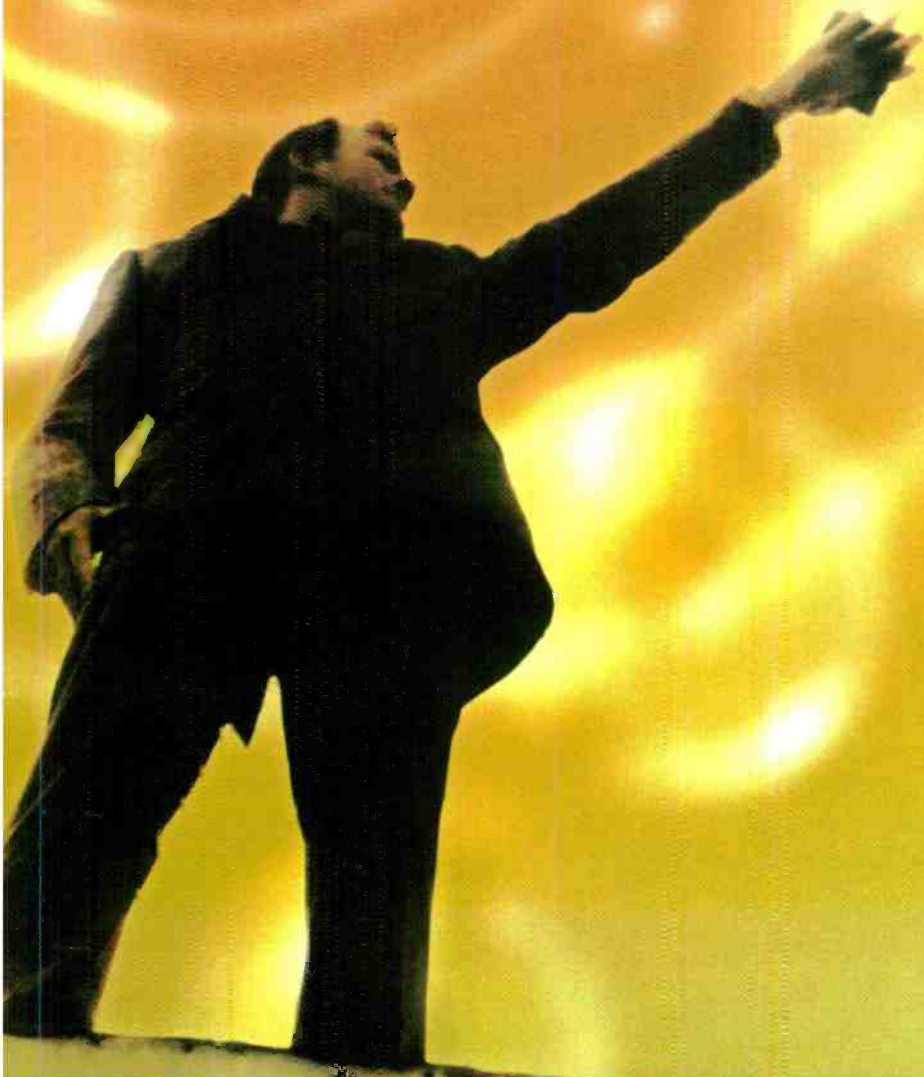
A: I guess the longevity of it all is probably the most exciting thing. We've been doing this for 40 years as a group. Merle Haggard & the Strangers started in 1965 on the road. To go this long and still have top-drawer acceptance is about all a guy can ask for.

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Kryptonite/ **3 Doors Down** /REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL

700,000 SPINS

It's Been Awhile/ **Staind** /ELEKTRA/ATLANTIC
With Arms Wide Open/ **Creed** /WIND-UP
Time Of Your Life (Good Riddance)/ **Green Day** /REPRISE
Wherever You Will Go/ **The Calling** /RCA

600,000 SPINS

Unwell/ **Matchbox Twenty** /ATLANTIC

300,000 SPINS

Hey Baby/ **No Doubt** /INTERSCOPE
Most Girls/ **Pink** /LAFACE/ZOMBA

200,000 SPINS

1, 2 Step/ **Ciara Feat. Missy Elliot** /LAFACE/ZOMBA
I Don't Want To Be/ **Gavin DeGraw** /J RECORDS
Live Like You Were Dying/ **Tim McGraw** /CURB
Boulevard Of Broken Dreams/ **Green Day** /REPRISE
Dare You To Move/ **Switchfoot** /COLUMBIA
I Love This Bar/ **Toby Keith** /DREAMWORKS
The Impossible/ **Joe Nichols** /UNIVERSAL SOUTH
Courtesy Of The Red, White And Blue (The Angry American)/ **Toby Keith** /DREAMWORKS
Me Myself And I/ **Beyonce** /COLUMBIA/SONY URBAN

100,000 SPINS

How We Do/ **Game Feat. 50 Cent** /AFTERMATH/G-UNIT/INTERSCOPE
Disco Inferno/ **50 Cent** /AFTERMATH/G-UNIT/INTERSCOPE
Awful, Beautiful Life/ **Darryl Worley** /DREAMWORKS
Back When/ **Tim McGraw** /CURB
Getting Away With Murder/ **Papa Roach** /GEFFEN
Duality/ **Slipknot** /ROADRUNNER
Balla Baby/ **Chingy** /CAPITOL
Beautiful Soul/ **Jesse McCartney** /HOLLYWOOD
8th World Wonder/ **Kimberley Locke** /CURB/REPRISE
Dirrty/ **Christina Aguilera Feat. Redman** /RCA
Southside/ **Lloyd feat. Ashanti** /THE INC/DEF JAM/IDJMG
45/ **Shinedown** /ATLANTIC
Vitamin R (Leading Us Along)/ **Chevelle** /EPIC
Have You Ever Been In Love/ **Celine Dion** /EPIC
Charlene/ **Anthony Hamilton** /SO SO DEF/ZOMBA
Going Under/ **Evanescence** /WIND-UP

50,000 SPINS

Caught Up/ **Usher** /LAFACE/ZOMBA
Mockingbird/ **Eminem** /SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
Nothin' To Lose/ **Josh Gracin** /LYRIC STREET
Karma/ **Alicia Keys** /J RECORDS
Rich Girl/ **Gwen Stefani** /INTERSCOPE
Let Me Go/ **3 Doors Down** /REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL
Home/ **Three Days Grace** /JIVE
Sunday Morning/ **Maroon 5** /OCTONE/J RECORDS
Somewhere Only We Know/ **Keane** /INTERSCOPE
Scars/ **Papa Roach** /GEFFEN
Mr. Brightside/ **The Killers** /ISLAND
Let Them Be Little/ **Billy Dean** /CURE
Baby Girl/ **Sugarland** /MERCURY
Who I Am/ **Casting Crowns** /BEACH STREET/REUNION/PLG
Some Cut/ **Trillville Feat. Cutty** /WARNER BROS.
Collide/ **Howie Day** /EPIC
You Are My King (Amazing Love)/ **Newsboys** /SPARROW
I May Hate Myself In The Morning/ **Lee Ann Womack** /MCA
Neva Eva/ **Trillville** /B.M.E./WARNER BROS.
Light In Your Eyes/ **Sheryl Crow** /A&M
Blessed Be Your Name/ **Tree63** /INPOP
Surrender/ **Laura Pausini** /ATLANTIC
Gasoline/ **Seether** /WIND-UP
Did My Time/ **Korn** /EPIC
Fallen/ **Mya** /INTERSCOPE
Ordinary/ **Train** /COLUMBIA

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