

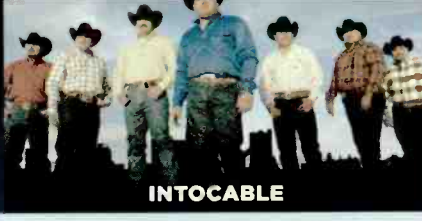
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JENNI RIVERA



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Billboard

REGIONAL MEXICAN CONFERENCE PREVIEW



LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE

ELDER STATESMEN OF AN EXPLODING GENRE

>P.35

PLUS:

FILM & TV

MUSIC GETS LOUDER

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LIVE COMEDY

LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK

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CMA AWARDS

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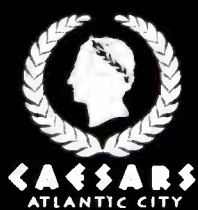


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VOLUME 118, NO. 46

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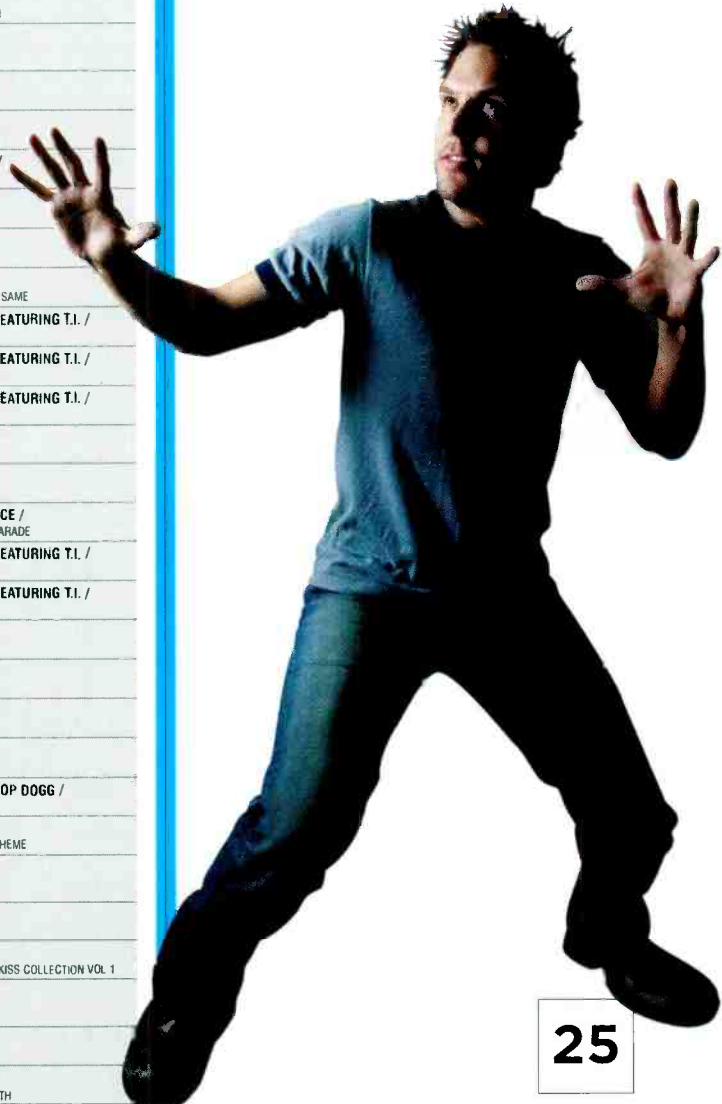
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HOME FRONT

Conferences

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Oliver Stone, Craig Armstrong and Budd Carr will host a keynote Q&A at the **Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference** Nov. 14-15 in Los Angeles. For more information, go to billboardevents.com.

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE

The **DEMMX Awards**, Nov. 29 at Los Angeles' Hyatt Century Plaza, honor the visionaries, entrepreneurs and branding experts in the entertainment media and marketing arena. For registration, go to billboardevents.com.

APM PODCAST

APM Music will provide the official podcast for the **Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference**, featuring panelist interviews via live audio stream, on Nov. 20 at apmusic.com/musiccon.

Blogging

THE JADED INSIDER

The truth about the Victory/Hawthorne Heights lawsuit? The skinny on new albums by Cat Power and Iron & Wine? Delve into these scoops and much, much more on the Billboard blog, only at jadedinsider.com.

TAMARA CONNIFF
Executive Editor/Associate Publisher
Billboard



FILM AND TV NEED MUSIC

I've been turning off the sound on my TV lately as an exercise, to experience the visual medium without its aural partner, music. The longing looks passed between actors on "Grey's Anatomy" seem silly and overacted. The Chevy truck commercials look awkward and amateurish without country-rock rhythms.

I've rented movies as well. Without music, opening credits are just fancy type, love scenes are emotionless, explosions are anything but explosive.

Sadly, in my conversations with music supervisors, composers and songwriters, I hear the same lamentation: "Why is the music budget always the first to be cut?" Perhaps everyone, in order to get a deeper understanding of what music brings to the small and big screens, should conduct their own music-less experiment.

Music is all sensory. Music is emotion. A song has the power to evoke a memory clearly and vividly. Picture this: A couple is taking a carriage ride through Central Park—along comes a group of kids with a boombox blasting Black Sabbath. A first kiss, between the couple, is not likely to happen.

Now, take the same scenario, but replace Black Sabbath with Snow Patrol. The couple seals its fate. Music helps put life into context. The silent films of the early 1920s would have looked like charades without the live orchestrations.

For many people today, music's value appears to be an afterthought. Why is that? An entire generation of music consumers believes music should be free, thanks to

peer-to-peer file-sharing networks. The public school system in the United States has systematically been cutting funding for music programs. Meanwhile, music executives scream, "Where are tomorrow's big stars?" Um, they're roaming school halls, kicking around empty cans, with no creative outlet.

The music industry has been the testing ground for the loss of music's value. The technology bombs began to decimate the music business when the first file was shared on Napster for the price point of "free." The record companies have since been ravaged with consolidation and downsizing, and publicly slain for unfair artist contracts and radio payola schemes.

Indeed, within the world of music, a perfect storm was created. Apple stepped in with the iPod, and CDs are slowly becoming obsolete. Tower Records stores across the nation, adorned with sad-looking "Going Out of Business" signs, are symbols of a bygone era. Marketing dollars at record companies are slim—and meeting quarterly numbers is more pressing.

(I am quite confident that other less sexy industries—cereal companies, for example—engage in similar business practices. Think price-and-positioning of corn flakes boxes on supermarket shelves. Yet, such news is likely not juicy enough to make national headlines for the publicity-hungry.)

Still, music is more popular than ever. And when one door closes, others open. These days, music has a new home: film and TV. Shows like "The OC" and "Grey's Anatomy" are helping break artists—thank

you, Alex Patsavas (see the Billboard Q&A, page 20). Additionally, this year, an unprecedented number of renowned singers and songwriters are using their creativity and talent to craft original songs for films (see story, page 5).

This is having a thrilling and positive effect on today's music and entertainment companies, which are making better creative and business choices, investing in artists that have the potential for longevity instead of simply going after the quick buck. Witness bands like the Fray, My Chemical Romance and Goldfrapp.

Film and TV executives are taking a page from their music industry counterparts. They, too, are building young stars and investing in well-written and smart properties. Music, however, needs to be front of mind.

This year's Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference, which will be held Nov. 14-15 in Los Angeles, will explore such ideas. During the event, director Oliver Stone—a firm believer in music's power to help tell a story—will explore its importance along with music supervisor Budd Carr and composer Craig Armstrong.

Additionally, more than 30 music supervisors, responsible for placing music in all visual media, will discuss solutions, ideas and the future.

There is no better marriage than visual and music. I look forward to seeing these two industries work together as one. And I look forward to seeing you at the Film & TV Music Conference.

Universal Wisdom

A Crucial First Step By UMG, But Will The Majors Walk The Digital Walk?

BY ANTONY BRUNO

Universal Music Group's (UMG) decision to force Microsoft to share revenue gained from the sale of Zune devices sets the stage for a larger battle to extract the same from sales of Apple Computer's iPod (see story, page 5).

But winning concessions from Apple CEO Steve Jobs won't be easy. Microsoft's Zune device and service are new to market and need the label's catalog to mount any kind of challenge to iTunes.

Apple will be tougher to push around. UMG and other labels could threaten to pull their music from the iTunes store, but can they afford not having their product in the most popular digital music service?

Apple is responsible for about 70% of nonmobile digital music sales. According to the IFPI, first-half digital music

revenue worldwide totaled \$945 million. With ringtones contributing about 40% of this total, that leaves about \$380 million in download and subscription revenue. So if the majors want to play chicken with Apple, they do so to the tune of a \$265 million—and rising—gamble.

It's one the majors may be more likely to take if Zune or any other service can capture serious market share, which is unlikely to occur by the time labels begin renegotiating their licensing deals with iTunes early next year.

If labels really want to play hardball with Apple, they could consider deep li-

ensing discounts to iTunes competitors, provide them with exclusive content or even drop their insistence on protecting tracks with digital rights management technology, at least for the short term.

We saw the labels blink earlier this year, in the Apple stare-down over labels' desire for variable pricing. Refusing to license music to iTunes would certainly send a strong message that they're serious this time.

Antony Bruno is a Billboard contributor who writes about digital and mobile.

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>>> LABELS GET CUT OF ZUNE SALES

Barely a week before its Zune digital music player debuts, Microsoft agreed to share revenue from the device's sales with record labels and artists. Forcing the issue was Universal Music Group, which at press time is the only label named in the revenue-sharing program. UMG refused to license its music to the Zune unless it could receive a percentage of each device sold, in addition to standard music licensing fees for downloads and subscriptions. "These devices are just repositories for stolen music, and they all know it," UMG chairman/CEO Doug Morris says. "So it's time to get paid for it."

Microsoft is working with all major and independent labels to establish similar revenue-sharing agreements.

According to published reports UMG is expected to receive more than \$1 for each \$250 device and sources at UMG have confirmed that half of all the proceeds from the device's sales will be shared equally among all its artists.

Morris says UMG will demand a similar revenue-sharing plan for any future music licensing agreement in which the device and its service are integrated, including any future negotiations with Apple Computer. The major labels all signed one-year extensions to their existing licensing deals for the iTunes store earlier this year. Those pacts begin to expire in mid-2007 and negotiations for renewal are expected to begin in early 2007. "We have a very good relationship with Apple," Morris says. "But I'm sure that we will talk with them about [the revenue-share program] when the time comes."

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UpFront

NOVEMBER 18, 2006



SOUNDTRACKS BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

Superstars Seek Soundtracks

Name Artists Are Increasingly Contributing New Music To Films And TV

With soundtrack sales up 18.3% this year over last, more name artists are turning their attention to Hollywood.

Through the week ending Nov. 5, soundtrack sales for 2006 stand at 19.9 million—up from 16.8 million through the same period in 2005. Ten soundtracks have reached the top 10 of The Billboard 200 so far this year compared to four each in all of 2005 and all of 2004. In the face of declining CD sales overall and shrinking terrestrial radio playlists, artists are looking elsewhere for exposure and income. And if an Oscar becomes part of the package, all the better.

Fox Music president Robert Kraft dates the shift in attitude to February's 78th annual Academy Awards, especially the best original song category. "No disrespect, but it was painful to see

that out of all the beautiful film music, the Academy could only find three songs to nominate."

Within 30 seconds of the Oscar going to "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" by Three 6 Mafia from "Hustle & Flow," Kraft—who is responsible for all the music in Fox films and TV shows—believes "every superstar artist realized it was time to make a song for a film."

Fast forward nine months, and the number of mainstream acts making music specifically for the movie industry is alarmingly high. Take a look around. Tim McGraw is appearing in "Flicka," which also features his song "My Little Girl." In coming weeks, Seal's "The Father's Way" debuts in "The Pursuit of Happiness," Sarah McLachlan's "Ordinary Miracle" in "Charlotte's Web," Beyoncé's "Listen" in

"Dreamgirls" and Chris Cornell's "You Know My Name" in the latest James Bond flick, "Casino Royale." Even Prince has a new song in a film ("Happy Feet"). The list goes on and on.

"The ways and means for artists to get heard is slimmer," says songwriter/producer Dave Stewart, who collaborated with Glen Ballard on "Ordinary Miracle." So, Stewart adds, "more artists are looking to film and TV to get their music out there."

Singer/songwriter Sheryl Crow, whose "Try Not to Remember" will be heard in the forthcoming drama "Home of the Brave," concurs. "Everyone is looking for alternative ways to get their music heard," she says.

Crow says it's not her ambition to be a songwriter for films or TV. But she acknowledges, "It is inspiring to write a song for a compelling movie. I get to flex different muscles."

Sony Pictures Entertainment president of worldwide music Lia Vollack says that can lead to creative magic. She cites Paul Westerberg, who wrote several songs, including the ballad "I Belong" (which he performs), for Sony Animation's "Open Season," as a postcard-perfect example. "We needed an artist who had heart and emotion, but not syrupy-sweet emotion," Vollack says. "A sense of humor was also vital. Paul fit the bill."

Music publishers pursue film and TV opportunities for clients as well. "Interscope is not thinking about taking Chris Cornell away from the process of making an artist album," EMI Music Publishing executive VP of U.S. creative Jody Gerson says. "I get to think outside the box and find out what my songwriters will and will not do."

Yet label executives, too, welcome the new doors that can open with Hollywood's help.

Clockwise from top left: BEYONCÉ ('Dreamgirls'), TIM MCGRAW ('Flicka'), PRINCE ('Happy Feet') and CHRIS CORNELL ('Casino Royale').

RCA Music Group VP of soundtracks, film and TV music licensing Karen Lamberton points to McLachlan, who is doing some promotion for "Charlotte's Web." "It's a way for an artist to remain visible between albums," Lamberton says. "It can also open an artist to new communities." In other words, with a pig and a spider at her side, McLachlan's fan base could skew younger.

"As an artist, you want your music heard," says Melissa Etheridge, who contributed a new song to "An Inconvenient Truth." "It's a bonus if you reach new fans in the process. When people hear one of my songs in a movie, they are hearing my voice and words—and not just hearing about that bald lesbian." ...

>>> UMG AWAITS RULING ON BMG PUB BUY

Vivendi's Universal Music Group should learn whether the European Commission approves its purchase of BMG Music Publishing by Dec. 8, the provisional deadline set by the EC to issue its ruling. UMG successfully bid on BMG in an invitation-only auction, offering €1.63 billion (\$2.05 billion). According to sources close to the deal, securing approval by competition regulators is the responsibility of UMG rather than Bertelsmann, the BMG parent corporation that sold the publisher. Although the sale is subject to regulatory approval and other closing conditions, the purchase price is due before the end of the year.

>>> MYSPACE ENTERS JAPAN

MySpace and Tokyo-based Internet service provider SoftBank launched a beta version of a MySpace Japan site Nov. 6. The full version of the site is scheduled to debut in spring 2007. MySpace Japan is a joint venture between the two companies, and MySpace's first joint venture and its first entry into Asia. The new company is headquartered in Tokyo and will hire local operations and staff for technology, development, sales and marketing departments.

>>> XBOX TO OFFER FILM DOWNLOADS

Microsoft will unlock the digital distribution capabilities of its next-generation console, Xbox 360, to Hollywood studios beginning Nov. 22. Xbox 360 gamers in the United States, totaling at least 3 million, will be able to purchase TV shows and download them to their console as well as rent and watch movies. The first wave includes content from such partners as Warner Bros., Paramount Pictures, MTV Networks and CBS. Xbox 360 represents the first console to secure programming from major content providers.

continued on >>p8

UpFront

COUNTRY BY KEN TUCKER

Sony BMG's Big Night

Label Cleans Up And ABC TV Benefits As CMA Awards Return To Nashville

The 40th annual Country Music Assn. Awards, held Nov. 6, are now history. And "history" is an appropriate word to describe the gala since it represented a number of firsts.

It was the first time the show was held at downtown Nashville's Gaylord Entertainment Center rather than at its longtime home at the Grand Ole Opry House. Following its 2005 trip to New York, it was the first CMA Awards event in which the Nashville business community and community at large were heavily involved (Billboard, Nov. 4). And it was the first time the show aired on ABC; it had previously spent 35 years on CBS.

While much has been made of superstar duo Brooks & Dunn's combined four CMA Awards, and rightly so, the buzz backstage and at post-show parties revolved around the dominant role that the Sony BMG Nashville label group played. In some way, shape or form, nine of the show's 12 awards were tied to Sony BMG, which includes the RCA Nashville, Arista Nashville, BNA Records and Columbia Nashville labels.

By one account, label group chairman Joe Galante and his second in command, executive VP Butch Waugh, were thanked more times than God during the show's three-hour broadcast.

Not only did Arista duo Brooks & Dunn host the show, they also performed its opening number. Meanwhile, their gospel-tinged "Believe" won song, single and video of the year honors. They also picked up their 14th vocal duo of the year award.

The night's biggest surprise—and controversy—came when Arista/Arista Nashville artist Carrie Underwood, the 2005 "American Idol" winner, was named female vocalist of the year, beating out superstars Martina McBride and Faith Hill, among others. Immediately fol-

lowing the announcement, Hill's expression of surprise, caught on camera, became the topic du jour in the industry and on Internet chat sites. Hill was shown on ABC shrugging her shoulders, mouthing the word "What?" and then turning away. In what may be another first, YouTube and other viral video sites blasted Hill's reaction around the world, which prompted Hill, her husband Tim McGraw, her manager Gary Borman and even incoming CMA board president Clarence Spalding to insist that Hill's response

was merely playful.

With less drama, Underwood also won the new artist-oriented Horizon Award. It was the first time that an artist has won the female vocalist and Horizon awards in the same year since Alison Krauss in 1995.

Not counting acceptance speeches, Sony BMG artists either performed or presented 11 times during the show.

Meanwhile, eager to capitalize on its investment, ABC brought some of its biggest stars to the show: Eva Longoria and James Denton ("Desperate

Housewives"); Kimberly Williams-Paisley ("According to Jim"), wife of Brad Paisley; Cameron Mathison ("All My Children"); and the Disney Channel's Billy Ray and Miley Cyrus ("Hannah Montana") were all on hand.

It's too early to tell how the deal will benefit both parties in the long term, but in the short term the move paid off. Well, sort of. The awards show led ABC to a nightly win in the adults 18-49 demographic, but the CMAs sank to an all-time low in viewership and tied its lowest adults 18-49 demo rating. The demo rating was identical to last year's telecast on CBS, which was the lowest since at least 1991.

But according to ABC, the show delivered the network's largest audience and strongest Monday night adults 18-49 performance in nearly six months. In addition, ABC's broadcast drew a younger audience than last year's show on CBS, according to the network.

"A younger demo is important to the industry and a factor in our decision to move the awards to ABC," CMA COO Tammy Genovese says. "And we certainly hit our goal of reaching this important consumer base. ABC is happy with the results and so are we."



BROOKS & DUNN and **CARRIE UNDERWOOD**, above, took home multiple CMA Awards.

TOURING BY RAY WADDELL

Boxscore's Big Winners

Stones, Madonna, Sir Elton John Honored At Billboard Touring Awards

The Rolling Stones' Bigger Bang tour was a big winner at the Billboard Touring Awards, which were given out at a reception Nov. 9 in the Grand Ballroom at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York.

The awards, based on box-office figures reported to Billboard Boxscore, wrapped up the third annual Billboard Touring Conference. The Stones' tour was recognized as the top tour, based on gross dollars, and top draw, based on ticket sales. The band grossed nearly \$230 million for the period that the awards cover (Dec. 1, 2005-Sept. 29, 2006), and drew nearly 2 million fans

to shows all over the world.

Sir Elton John was honored at the reception as Billboard's 2006 Legend of Live, recognizing John's significant and lasting impact on the touring industry. John was the first artist to receive this award.

Music Rising, the instrument replacement fund for Gulf Coast musicians founded by Gibson CEO Henry Juszkiewicz, producer Bob Ezrin and U2's the Edge, received Billboard's Humanitarian Award. Former President Bill Clinton recognized Sir Elton and Music Rising in a taped congratulation

played at the reception.

Another multiple winner was Madonna, a finalist in four categories. She won the top boxscore award for her \$22 million, eight-sellout stand at London's Wembley Arena on her Confessions tour. Madonna's team of Guy Oseary and Angela Becker won the top manager award.

For the second consecutive year, Kenny Chesney received the top package nod for his multi-artist Road and the Radio tour. Another significant winner was Nickelback, which picked up the breakthrough act award, given to a band still in its

first decade of touring that breaks Billboard's top 25 tours for the first time.

There were two new awards. Top comedy tour went to Larry the Cable Guy; Cirque du Soleil's "Delirium" won for creative content.

For the third consecutive year, Live Nation (formerly Clear Channel Entertainment) was named top promoter, and Jam Productions of Chicago was given the top independent promoter award. With such mega tours as Bon Jovi's and the Tim McGraw/Faith Hill Soul 2 Soul trek under its steer-

age, Creative Artists Agency was named top agency.

For venues and events, there were three three-time winners: Madison Square Garden in New York for top arena; Bonnaroo Music Festival in Manchester, Tenn., for top festival; and the Colosseum at Caesars Palace for top small venue (resident). The Fox Theatre in Atlanta received the top small venue (nonresident) award for the second straight year. Nikon at Jones Beach Theatre in Wantagh, N.Y., was named top amphitheater, and House of Blues Atlantic City was named top club.

IO CANTO

LAURA PAUSINI

The new album of Grammy Award winner
and multi-million record seller Laura Pausini.

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LATIN BY LEILA COBO

Belt-Tightening Blocks Bashes

Budget Issues Prevent After-Parties At The Latin Grammy Awards

>>>EU RULES ON CHINA

European Union trade commissioner Peter Mandelson has ruled out European action through the World Trade Organization against China over its failure to clamp down on rampant piracy. "I'm not looking for opportunities to take China to the WTO," Mandelson said Nov. 7 in Beijing. "I hope very much it won't be necessary." Mandelson was in Beijing to present a new European Commission strategy for dealing with China, as agreed by the EU executive in October. The EU says China is currently the fourth-biggest supplier to Europe of pirated audio and video software.

>>>ICM AWARDS HONOR BROOKS & DUNN, UNDERWOOD

In addition to winning big at the Country Music Assn. Awards, Brooks & Dunn and Carrie Underwood were also among the winners at the 12th annual Inspirational Country Music Awards held Nov. 9 at the Acuff Theatre in Nashville. Brooks & Dunn's "Believe" was named song of the year and won for top video. Underwood was named top mainstream country artist. Mike Hammock took home entertainer of the year. The ICM Awards concluded the annual Inspirational Country Music Convention held Nov. 5-9 in Nashville. For a complete list of winners, visit billboard.com.

>>>IRON MAIDEN, SANCTUARY SPLIT

Iron Maiden has ended its management contract with Sanctuary Group after 27 years together. The veteran heavy metal act continues to be managed by Sanctuary co-founder Rod Smallwood, who is also leaving the company to manage the band at his new venture Phantom Music Management.

Compiled by Chris M. Walsh. Reporting by Antony Bruno, Susan Butler, Leo Cendrowicz, Juliana Koranteng, Steve McClure, Deborah Evans Price, Ken Tucker, Jeffrey Yorke and The Hollywood Reporter.

The seventh annual Latin Grammy Awards reached an average of 5.7 million viewers, according to Nielsen Media, with a total of 11.3 million viewers tuning in at some point during the three-hour show.

The ratings were the second highest registered for the Latin Grammys since their inception in 1999.

But labels celebrated quietly the evening of Nov. 2. Aside from the official award after-party and an EMI Televisa bash, label post-parties—generally a Grammy tradition—didn't exist. The reasons cited by label after party were basic—lack of budget, and lack of interest.

RIAA midyear shipments for Latin music declined 21% in the first six months of the year, with executives citing the economy, high gasoline prices and immigration crackdowns as primary reasons. Shipments only began to rise in the third quarter.

"At this rate, we'll serve chips and salsa," one executive ruefully said days before the Latin Grammys, citing the high costs associated with a Grammy ceremony in New York. The executive spoke on condition of

anonymity, as did most of the nearly dozen people interviewed for this article.

Most agreed that the Latin Grammy show was an excellent production. But all had major issues with a lack of performances by new or emerging acts, and with having to foot the bill for their acts' performances, including airfare and hotel.

While other Latin award shows, like Univision's Premios Lo Nuestro and Telemundo's Billboard Latin Music Awards, normally share costs with la-

bel for artist performances, the Grammys traditionally do not. When the awards switched from CBS to Univision last year, labels thought they would be spared some of the cost, as happens with other Univision shows. That didn't happen, but labels accepted their due.

This year, label execs were disgruntled for several reasons. The New York location immediately made costs skyrocket, particularly when it came to union fees for musicians, which labels had to shoulder. And for

the first time in Grammy history, tickets were sold to the event with profits divided between Univision and the Latin Recording Academy.

"Our job is to promote and sell albums, and of course, we want our artists on the show," one executive says. "But how much money is Univision making from this show, and how much are we paying to be in it? It's really a question of attitude. At no point do they want to help."

When queried on production costs and profits, Univision declined to comment. "As a company, we do not grant those types of interviews," a representative wrote in an e-mail.

"The industry is going through a difficult period," Latin Academy president Gabriel Abaroa says. "We will do our best in the months to come to sit down with all the parties involved to try to find solutions for the benefit of music."

According to different accounts, a typical Latin Grammy performance costs between \$40,000 and \$120,000. For Latin labels, that's considerable.

"I would have to sell 10,000

CDs to offset the cost of a \$90,000 performance," one executive says. "It won't happen. I can do a lot of other things with that money that will give me more results."

It's undeniable that the Latin Grammy exposure can be invaluable, particularly for those acts for whom the show coincides with new albums. This year, that was the case with Alejandro Sanz, Ricky Martin and Maná, the latter two of whom were not nominated.

The Latin Grammys have also been key to launching new acts. But on this occasion, no new or emerging acts were booked to perform.

Ironically, new artist Anais, originally turned down as a performer, was the heroine of the evening. When fellow labelmate La India waiked out last minute prior to her performance at the salsa medley finale, Anais was asked to step in and sing "Quimbara" with only 15 minutes to spare and no rehearsal. Anais delivered, live and with alacrity, embodying everything good that can come out of a show like the Latin Grammys.



ANAIS, stepping to replace La India, was the heroine of the night.



Making The Brand

MICHAEL PAOLETTA mpaoletta@billboard.com

GOOD HAIR DAY

Pantene Spot Helps Bedingfield's Career Sparkle And Shine

Natasha Bedingfield is no stranger to film and TV music supervisors and ad agency creatives. Songs from her debut album, "Unwritten" (Epic), have been used in "Ugly Betty" promo spots (the title track), the film "Flicka" ("Wild Horses") and a JCPenney spot ("These Words"). In all, the album has spawned about 30 licenses. "The total master-use licenses have been significant," says Paula Erickson, senior VP of music licensing for Sony BMG Music Entertainment. "Natasha will be one of our higher licensed earners of the year."

Guess what? Those numbers have just increased. The album's title track is receiving a new lease

on life, thanks to a just-launching global Pantene campaign, which will roll out during the next 18 months. The song will be used in a variety of 30-second TV spots, tailored to the needs of each region of the world.

At this point, the campaign focuses on TV spots, but we could easily envision it expanding to other areas, including radio, cinemas and the Internet.

This is not lost on Epic VP of worldwide marketing Scott Greer, who says the Pantene campaign could extend its reach by way of other platforms—particularly with the arrival of Bedingfield's sophomore album next year. "The relationship could grow over time," Greer

says. When asked if this could include integrating Bedingfield's likeness into the campaign or a direct tie-in with the new album, Greer says it's too early to say.

The Pantene campaign kicked off in September in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Vietnam. According to Amy Rosen, music supervisor/director of licensing for Grey, each country has song usage rights for one year.

Between now and December, the campaign extends to Eastern Europe, Israel, Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and other territories. By the end of the year, it will hit Western Europe, beginning with the United King-



BEDINGFIELD

dom. The last country in that region to use it will be France (summer 2007). In the United States, the campaign arrives in May 2007, around the same time as the new album. The timing could be ideal for creating album awareness. But again, it's too soon to say, Greer notes.

Since its release last year, the album "Unwritten" has sold 743,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The title track debuted Dec. 10, 2005, on

The Billboard Hot 100. It peaked at No. 5 and spent 42 weeks on the chart. To date, the indefatigable song has sold 1.4 million downloads.

With Pantene at its side, the track is poised to continue selling. "A campaign like this is a perfect solution to help bridge the gap between albums," Erickson says. "It also gives us and Natasha opportunities to discuss the next phase of her career."

A New Concert Film on DVD

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**MAYBE I'M AMAZED,
ELEANOR RIGBY,
DRIVE MY CAR,
TILL THERE WAS YOU,
I WILL,
GOOD DAY SUNSHINE,
HEY JUDE,
PENNY LANE,
YESTERDAY,
GET BACK**

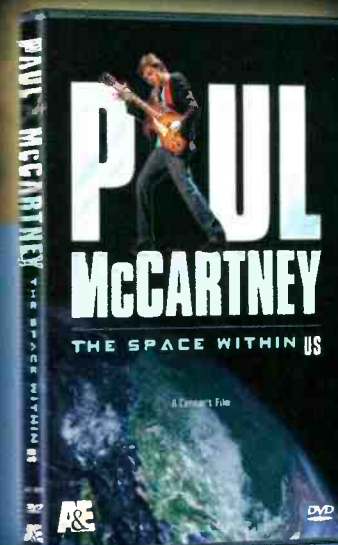
and 21 other Paul McCartney and Beatles' hits

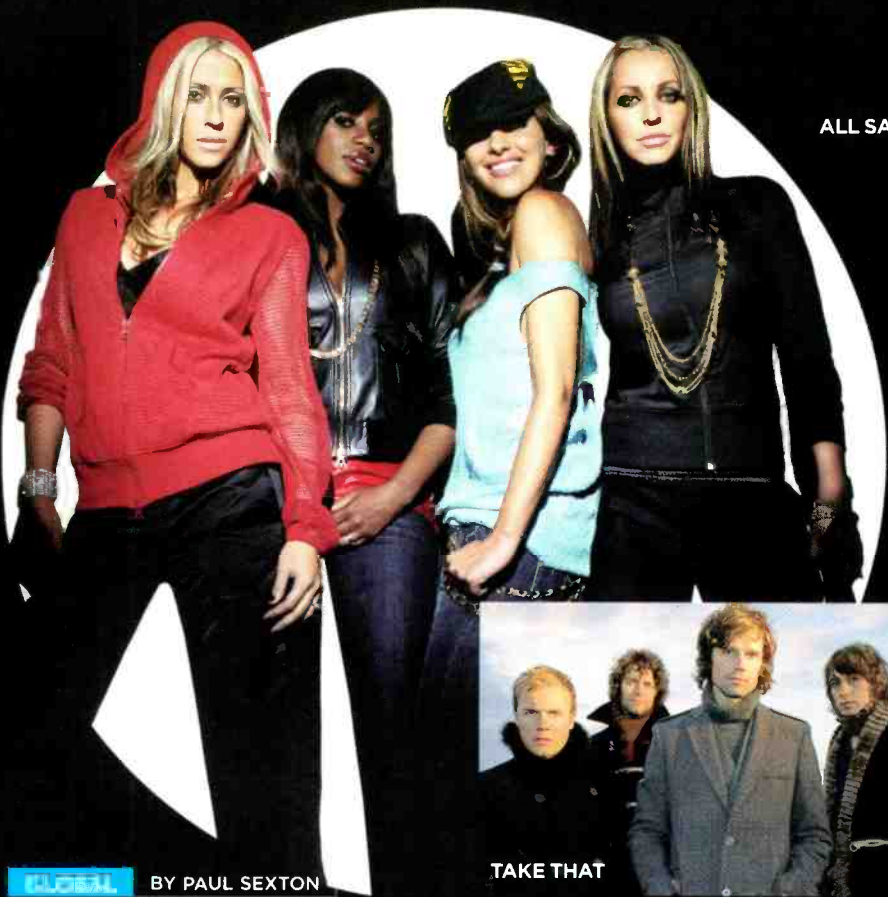
Go on stage, back stage, and into space with this out-of-this-world rock'n'roll journey, filmed in hi-definition and featuring Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound. Exclusive bonus features include soundcheck songs, a new interview with Paul and the band, the US Tour pre-concert film, liner notes from Cameron Crowe and more!

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ALL SAINTS



TAKE THAT

GLOBAL BY PAUL SEXTON

Back For Good?

Take That, All Saints Return To Record Shops

LONDON—Two of the United Kingdom's biggest-selling acts from a previous pop generation are about to find out whether you can go back to the '90s.

Female quartet All Saints, which accrued such major international hit singles as "Never Ever" (1997) and "Pure Shores" (2000), has reconvened for the Nov. 13 U.K./European release "Studio 1," their first album for Parlophone. And Take That, the erstwhile boy band that began reaching a more mature audience just prior to its 1996 split, returns Nov. 27 with the international release of its first album for Polydor/Universal, "Beautiful World."

"The excitement on Take That is quite overwhelming," Universal Music U.K. VP of international marketing Hassan Choudury says. "When I first presented the record I was sure there'd be some cynics out there, but it's been the total opposite."

Capitol Music U.K. international director Kevin Brown says Parlophone is "looking to reawaken [All Saints'] significant fan base from first time round, while aggressively chasing the fans of the many pretenders to All Saints' crown that have come on the block since then."

Parlophone puts global shipments of All Saints' two previous studio albums on London Records at 10 million, while Polydor estimates Take That's career total at 25 million albums. However, neither act's new album has firm release

plans in the United States, where each group managed just one top 10 single entry on The Billboard Hot 100: Take That's "Back for Good" sold 427,000 units in 1996 in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, while All Saints' "Never Ever" scanned 470,000 two years later. The 1998 album "All Saints" sold 1.2 million stateside, and Take That's 1995 set "Nobody Else" 287,000.

Whereas All Saints' album arrives after several years of group inactivity while its members embarked on solo projects with limited success, Take That boasts the considerable momentum of a best-selling compilation and hugely successful reunion tour.

"Never Forget—The Ultimate Collection," released internationally by Sony BMG on Nov. 2, has sold close to 1 million units worldwide, according to London-based director of catalog marketing Phil Savill. Between April and June 2006, the group drew 500,000 fans to U.K. and Irish arena/stadium shows in which former member Robbie Williams—who left the band in 1995—was featured as an onstage hologram. The group's three original albums were also recently reissued in expanded versions.

Sony BMG will spend £100,000 (\$190,000) on U.K. TV promotion of "Never Forget" and two Take That DVDs in late November/early December. However, a representative for Warner Music U.K., which holds the

rights to All Saints' London catalog, says the label has no current plans to repromote it.

In the run-up to Christmas, Brown says Parlophone is focusing its efforts on continental Europe. "Studio 1" will appear outside Europe during 2007, he adds. "Radio play is building in key territories," Brown says, "and we're booking high-profile mainstream TV performances over the next two months."

Choudury says Take That is currently undertaking hands-on promotion "for nearly every major world market."

At U.K. radio, the acts' opening singles are winning early acceptance from programmers. All Saints' Nov. 6 release "Rocksteady" and Take That's "Patience" (Nov. 20) have been rising fast on the U.K. radio airplay chart compiled by Nielsen Music Control. In the chart for the week ending Oct. 28, "Rocksteady" was No. 3, while "Patience" was the week's highest climber, rising 61-20.

Graham Caplin is head of music at London station Capital Gold, which regularly adds new releases by acts compatible with its oldies format. He says fresh material can be a useful programming tool and particularly approves of "Patience."

"As a programmer, of course I'm concerned with the heritage of an artist," he says. "But that's academic if the music is unsuitable or of poor quality. Take That has scored on both counts." ***

UpFront

GLOBAL BY ROBERT THOMPSON

TELCOS DIAL INTO DIGITAL

Bell, Telus And Rogers Vie For A Piece Of Emerging Canadian Market

TORONTO—As Canada braces itself for legal changes that could curtail peer-to-peer (P2P) downloading, the country's telecommunications companies are finding ways to position digital music services as a competitive advantage.

On Oct. 18, Heritage Minister Bev Oda told the Canadian Heritage Standing Committee that the Conservative government would introduce a proposal in parliament before the end of the year to make free downloading clearly illegal—and Canada's

internet services for Bell Canada, the country's largest telecommunications company. "But getting the value proposition to customers given the environment where people aren't concerned about the legal implications of piracy has been a challenge."

The main rivals for the emerging digital music market in Canada are Bell, Vancouver-based Telus and Toronto cable giant Rogers. All three companies are positioning themselves to offer a variety of music services to customers, especially given Canada's high rate of broadband penetration, which was pegged at 49% by Toronto-based Solutions Research Group versus 36% in the United States.

Progress for their new business models has been slow, however, as digital music downloading over P2P networks remains rife in Canada. According to a recent survey for the music industry by Toronto research firm Pollara, 1.4 billion songs were traded for free over P2P networks in Canada in 2005, with 17% of Canadians downloading music for free over the Internet.

The Canadian music industry has blamed piracy for its paltry digital music sales figures, which accounted for only \$18 million in 2005 or 3% of the market's trade value, according to the IFPI. In contrast, digital music sales in the United States accounted for 9% of total trade value.

Earlier this year Bell Canada acquired a majority stake in Puretracks, a Canadian digital music business that competes with Apple Computer's iTunes. Puretracks CEO Alistair Mitchell says the acquisition of his company by Bell is simply the first step in a larger evolution as communications companies search for ways to deliver music to an audi-

ence increasingly plugged in to the Internet through computers and handheld devices.

Puretracks boasts 1 million tracks from Canada's major and independent label catalogs, retailing at 99 cents Canadian (87 cents) per track. So far, Bell has not altered Puretracks' business model, though it has cross-promoted the service to its 2.3 million consumer Internet customers and used its media properties to market the company.

Though neither Puretracks nor iTunes have disclosed Canadian sales or market share figures (Napster also operates in the country), iTunes is generally considered by industry executives to be the dominant player in the sector.

Rogers, which has 1.25 million broadband customers, has partnered with U.S. Internet giant Yahoo to provide them with a branded downloading service and other music offerings. Telus, which has 763,000 high-speed Internet customers, uses Puretracks technology to provide its customers with exclusive music offerings and downloads.

Warner Music Canada expects more consumers will embrace digital music, especially over mobile phones (which accounted for 29% of Canadian digital music sales in 2005, according to the IFPI). Charlie Millar, Warner Music Canada's manager of digital business development, says Rogers, Bell and Telus have a unique consumer offering.

"Canada's players can offer a three-screen approach—TV, wireless and Internet—that is pretty unusual in other parts of the world," Millar says. "That potentially means someone hears the new Sean Paul single, downloads the song using their cell phone and immediately it is transferred to their computer and digital set-top box." ***



MILLAR



MITCHELL

top companies in the consumer communications sector are preparing for a renewed push behind digital music once the copyright issues are resolved.

"The interest in digital music is certainly on the upswing [in Canada]," says Pat McLean, VP of consumer In-



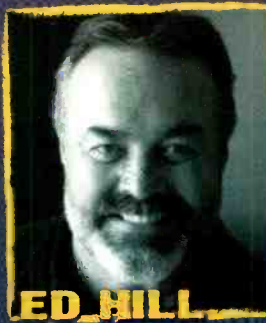
TOBY KEITH

Songwriter of the Year
Song of the Year
"As Good As I Once Was"



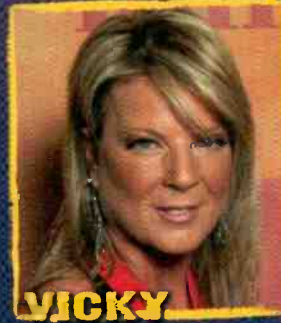
SCOTTY EMERICK

Song of the Year
"As Good As I Once Was"



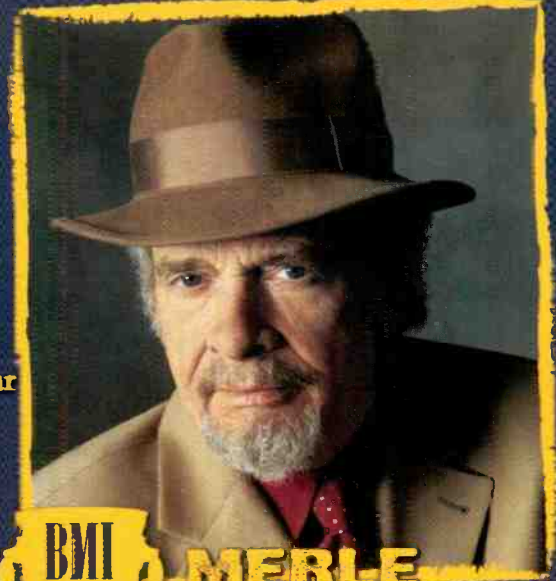
ED HILL

Songwriter of the Year



VICKY MCGEHEE

Songwriter of the Year



MERLE HAGGARD

BMI COUNTRY AWARDS 2006

PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR
SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING NASHVILLE

ALL JACKED UP

Vicky McGehee
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Oklahoma GTR Music

AS GOOD AS I ONCE WAS

Scotty Emerick
Toby Keith
Big Yellow Dog Music
Florida Cracker Music
Sony/ATV Tree
Tokeco Tunes

BELIEVE

Ronnie Dunn
Showhilly Music
Sony/ATV Tree

BETTER LEE

Keith Urban
Guitar Monkey Music

BIG BLUE NOTE

Scotty Emerick
Toby Keith
Big Yellow Dog Music
Florida Cracker Music
Sony/ATV Tree
Tokeco Tunes

BILLY'S GOT HIS BEER

GOGGLES ON
Phillip White
Katank Music
Murrah Music Corporation
Texabama Music

BOONDOCKS

Karen Fairchild
Wayne Kirkpatrick
Kimberly Reed
Phillip Sweet
Jimi Westbrook
Still The Cow Music
Tower One Music
Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp.

CLASS REUNION (THAT USED TO BE US)

Richie McDzald
Frank Myers
Frank Myers Music
Sixteen Stars Music
Sony/ATV Tree

COME A LITTLE CLOSER

Brett Beavers
Run The Troline Music
Sony/ATV Tree

DO YOU WANT FRIES WITH THAT

Casey Beathem
Lavender Zee Music
Sony/ATV Acuff-Rose

DON'T ASK ME HOW I KNOW

Bart Butler
Bobby Pinson
Toby Keith
Bill Butler Music
Bobby's Song and Salvage Music
Songs of Stage Three

DRUGS OR JESUS

Aimee Mayo
Troy Jergs
Careers-BMG Music Publishing
Silveratus Music
Songs from the Engine Room
Songs of Universal, Inc.

FAST CARS AND FREEDOM

Wencell Mobley
Lexi's Palm Tree Music
Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp.

GEORGIA RAIN

Ed Hill
Karya Roenelle
Big Yellow Dog Music
Careers-BMG Music Publishing
Sagreboux Songs
Sony/ATV Tree

GOE'S WILL

Tom Douglas
Sony/ATV Tree
TomDouglasMusic

GOCE RIDE COWBOY

Richie Brown
Jerrold Niceman
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
First Wind Music
New Songs of Sea Gypsy

GOODBYE TIME (2nd Award)

James Dean Hicks
Roger Murrah
Sony/ATV Acuff-Rose

HELP SOMEBODY

Kip Raines
Jeffrey Steele
3 Ring Circus Music
Jeffrey Steele Music
Songs of Windswept Pacific

HOCKTOWN

Biz Kenny
Vicky McGehee
Bry Love Music
Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp.

HOMEWRECKER

George Teren
House of Full Circle Music

HONKY TONK BADONKA-DONK

Dallas Davidson
Randy Houser
Jarney Johnson
Big Borassa Music LLC
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Songs of Windswept Pacific

HONKYTONK U

Toby Keith
Tokeco Tunes

(I NEVER PROMISED YOU A) ROSE GARDEN (7th Award)

Joe South
Sony/ATV Songs LLC

IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN

Dan DeMay
Atlantic Bridge Music
Music of Stage Three

I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES (THE HOT TUB SONG)

John McElroy
Vance Melamed
Seror Vicena Music
Songs of Mighty Isis
Vasa Larga Music

LIKE WE NEVER LOVED AT ALL

Vicky McGehee
Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp.

LONG, SLOW KISSES

Jeff Bates
Gordon Bradberry
New Works Music Co.
Smith Haven Music
Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp.

LOT OF LEAVEN' LEFT TO DO

Brett Beavers
Run The Troline Music
Sony/ATV Tree

ME AND CHARLIE TALKING

Miranda Lambert
Heather Little
Nashville Star Music
Sony/ATV Tree
Tiltwheel Music

MY GIVE A DAMN'S BUSTED

Joe Dillie
Tony Martin
Tom Shapiro
Diffuses
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Mike Curb Music
Music of Stage Three
Sony/ATV Tree

MY OLD FRIEND

Steve McEwan (PRS)
Careers-BMG Music Publishing

MY SISTER

Amy Dalley
Music of Stage Three

NOBODY BUT ME

Shawn Carrp
Phillip White
Big Yellow Dog Music
Murrah Music Corporation
Sony/ATV Tree
Travelin' Ackensoy Music

PLAY SOMETHING COUNTRY

Ronnie Dunn
Terry McBride
Showhilly Music
Sony/ATV Tree
Still Working For The Man Music, Inc.
Turn Me On Music

PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE THIS WAY

Tamara Kidd
Irving Music

SHE DON'T TELL ME TO

Bob DiPiero
Tom Shapiro
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Love Monkey Music
Piano Wire Music LLC
Sony/ATV Tree

SHE LET HERSELF GO

Deanna Eillon
Sony/ATV Acuff-Rose
Unward Music

SKIN (SARABEND)

Doug Johnson
Mike Serb Music
Sweet Radical Music

SOMEBODY'S HERO

Ed Hill
Shayne Smith
Careers-BMG Music Publishing
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Sagreboux Songs
Shayne Smith Music

SOMETHING MORE

Kristian Bush
Dirkat Music

SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF

Jeffrey Steele
Gott Shovable Music
Songs of Windswept Pacific

SONGS ABOUT ME

Ed Hill
Shayne Smith
Careers-BMG Music Publishing
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Sagreboux Songs
Shayne Smith Music

STAY WITH ME (BRASS BED)

Jedd Hughes
Terry McBride
Still Working For The Man Music, Inc.
Terry McBride Music
Whittington Road Publishing

THE TALKIN' SONG REPAIR ELUES

Dennis Linde
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Fishing Gorge Music

TEQUILA MAKES HER CLOTHES FALL OFF

Gary Hannan
John Wiggins
Chote Music
Fiddle Stock Music
Heavy Leather Music, Inc.
More Write Music

TONIGHT I WANNA CRY

Keith Urban
Coburn Music, Inc.
Guitar Monkey Music

WHEN I GET WHERE I'M GOING

George Teren
House of Full Circle Music

WHO YOU'D BE TODAY

Eill Lather
Aimee Mayo
Careers-BMG Music Publishing
Evansville Music
Little Blue Typewriter Music

YOU'LL BE THERE

Cory Mayo
Coburn Music, Inc.

YOUR MAN

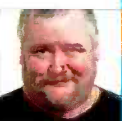
Jace Everett
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.

BROADCAST MUSIC, INC.



On The Road

RAY WADDELL rwaddell@billboard.com



Crowd Control

IAAM Partners With HOB, Live Nation For Chapter Meetings

The International Assn. of Assembly Managers (IAAM) is partnering with concert promoters House of Blues and Live Nation to organize local chapter meetings in a number of U.S. cities.

The meetings are geared to provide educational and networking opportunities for venue managers and their employees (billboard.biz, Oct. 31).

"Our partnership with House of Blues and Live Nation will provide opportunities for our members and non-members alike to attend and participate in meetings detailing public assembly management," says IAAM president Larry Perkins, GM of the RBC Center in Raleigh, N.C.

ical and other service providers is a key component of the chapter meetings as well as mentoring college students," he says. "Moreover, often the communities in which our facility members are located are not aware of the IAAM and the network of people, resources and services that our members have at their disposal."

The first chapter meeting to be held under the new partnership is set for Nov. 6 at the House of Blues in New Orleans, sponsored by HOB and Live Nation.

"This will be our first industry meeting since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina hit this region," Perkins says.

Chicago, New York and Philadelphia, and will be the band's final outing in support of "All the Right Reasons."

In 2006, Nickelback grossed nearly \$32 million and sold almost 800,000 tickets to 80 shows reported to Billboard Boxscore.

Like last year's tour, the 2007 dates will primarily be promoted by Louis Messina, president of TMG/AEG Live in Houston. "I saw Nickelback years ago, and I never could understand why they weren't a major arena headlining act," Messina says. "Once we convinced them that they were a major arena headlining act, they became one."

Nickelback is a "blue-collar,

'This will be our first industry meeting since Hurricane Katrina hit the region.'

—LARRY PERKINS, RBC CENTER



"This initiative between Live Nation and the IAAM is important because it provides the leaders of our industry opportunities to interact with young people and expose them to the different career avenues available to them in our business," says Live Nation's Bruce Eskowitz, president/CEO of Global Venues and Alliances. "Hopefully, events like this will energize the future leaders in the live event business."

Perkins says the chapter meetings can enhance IAAM members' credibility and profile in the market. "Networking with other members, community officials, service providers such as police, security contractors, fire, med-

"We have a great program planned and I'm looking forward to helping our members recapture the spirit of a beloved city and return to full operation."

Subsequent meetings will be held in other House of Blues or Live Nation-owned venues to be announced.

BACK FOR MORE: Nickelback, winner of the breakthrough act award at this year's Billboard Touring Awards Nov. 9 in New York, will embark on another North American headlining arena tour that runs Feb. 8-March 19.

Three Days Grace and Breaking Benjamins will support. The tour will swing through such markets as Seat-

hardworking, in-your-face rock'n'roll band," Messina says. "This band is going to be around for a long time. There's nothing but talent on that stage, and beyond that, they're just great people."

The Nickelback team, including manager Bryan Coleman and agent Steve Kaul at the Agency Group, is a formula for success, he adds.

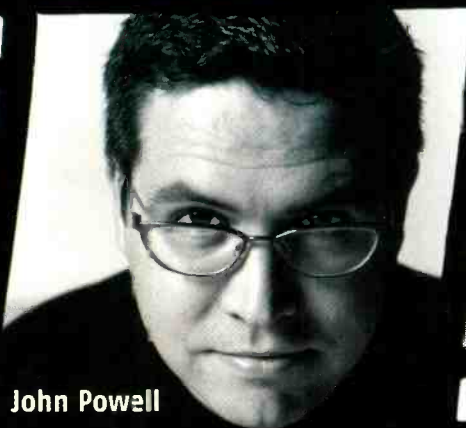
"This is a great example of what I've been talking about for years—about how the management, agency, band and promoter are all on the same page," Messina says. "That's how the business needs to be. Everybody's honest with each other, no surprises, play with the cards face up."

BOXSCORE Concert Grosses

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	GROSS/ TICKET PRICE(S)	ARTIST(S) Venue, Date	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
1	\$3,626,856 (39,200,777 pesos) \$35.23	ROBBIE WILLIAMS Foro Sol, Mexico City, Oct. 21-22	102,956 108,414 two shows	OCESA Presents
2	\$2,696,628 \$225/\$175/ \$127.50/\$87.50	CELINE DION Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nov. 1-5	19,364 20,740 five shows three sellouts	Concerts West/AEG Live
3	\$2,447,055 (\$2,745,474 Canadian) \$91.25/\$71.25	DIXIE CHICKS, THE DAMNWELLS Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Oct. 28-29	31,914 two sellouts	Concerts West, The Messina Group, Moore Entertainment/AEG Live
4	\$1,882,614 \$63.10/\$61.10	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, THE MARS VOLTA Wachovia Center, Philadelphia, Oct. 23-24	30,024 two sellouts	Live Nation
5	\$1,284,051 (\$1,450,201 Canadian) \$132.37/\$58	ELTON JOHN John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario, Nov. 6	10,057 sellout	House of Blues Canada
6	\$1,258,382 \$110/\$69.50	CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S DELIRIUM Freedom Hall Coliseum, Louisville, Ky., Oct. 27-29 includes matinee	16,073 32,199 four shows	Live Nation, Cirque du Soleil
7	\$1,034,865 \$270/\$55	BARRY MANILOW Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Ill., Oct. 21	9,528 12,643	Live Nation
8	\$919,080 \$80/\$40	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, ERIC CHURCH Madison Square Garden, New York, Oct. 14	12,171 sellout	Live Nation
9	\$884,549 \$61.10/\$41.10	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, THE MARS VOLTA Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 5	15,547 sellout	Jam Productions
10	\$873,450 \$171/\$20.75	AEROSMITH, MÖTLEY CRÜE Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, Virginia Beach, Va., Oct. 21	15,197 19,559	Live Nation
11	\$847,250 (\$950,572 Canadian) \$86.75/\$66.75	DIXIE CHICKS, THE DAMNWELLS Scotiabank Place, Ottawa, Ontario, Oct. 27	11,839 sellout	Concerts West, The Messina Group, Moore Entertainment/AEG Live
12	\$836,384 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, ERIC CHURCH Wachovia Center, Philadelphia, Oct. 13	14,176 sellout	Live Nation
13	\$807,762 (\$915,607 Canadian) \$86.50/\$66.50	DIXIE CHICKS, THE DAMNWELLS Credit Union Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Nov. 2	11,584 sellout	Concerts West, The Messina Group, Moore Entertainment/AEG Live
14	\$727,293 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, TAYLOR SWIFT Qwest Center, Omaha, Neb., Oct. 19	12,327 sellout	Live Nation
15	\$726,310 \$75/\$55/\$35	BOB DYLAN, FOO FIGHTERS Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minn., Oct. 29	12,142 sellout	Jam Productions
16	\$669,001 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, TAYLOR SWIFT FedEx Forum, Memphis, Oct. 28	11,399 sellout	Live Nation
17	\$620,503 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, TAYLOR SWIFT The Mark of the Quad Cities, Moline, Ill., Oct. 20	10,517 sellout	Live Nation
18	\$614,367 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, TAYLOR SWIFT Ervin J. Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio, Oct. 21	10,413 sellout	Live Nation
19	\$595,658 \$77.50/\$37.50	BOB DYLAN, KINGS OF LEON The Forum, Inglewood, Calif., Oct. 20	9,419 12,435	Nederlander
20	\$586,594 (\$667,883 Canadian) \$59.35/\$34.75	IRON MAIDEN, BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Oct. 16	10,852 sellout	House of Blues Canada
21	\$584,277 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, TAYLOR SWIFT CenturyTel Center, Bossier City, La., Oct. 27	9,903 sellout	Live Nation
22	\$579,963 (\$657,160 Canadian) \$66.19/\$48.54	BOB DYLAN, FOO FIGHTERS John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario, Nov. 3	9,268 sellout	House of Blues Canada
23	\$561,126 \$51	IRON MAIDEN, 3 INCHES OF BLOOD Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, Irvine, Calif., Oct. 21	16,073 sellout	Live Nation
24	\$559,835 \$61.50	DAVE MATTHEWS, TIM REYNOLDS Santa Barbara Bowl, Santa Barbara, Calif., Oct. 28-29	9,103 two sellouts	Nederlander
25	\$557,215 \$125/\$35	PAUL SIMON, JERRY DOUGLAS Radio City Music Hall, New York, Oct. 21	5,961 sellout	Live Nation
26	\$546,820 \$171/\$20.75	AEROSMITH, MÖTLEY CRÜE Alltel Pavilion, Raleigh, N.C., Oct. 23	11,914 19,883	Live Nation
27	\$534,952 \$177.50/\$44.50	JIMMY BUFFETT Santa Barbara Bowl, Santa Barbara, Calif., Oct. 19	4,121 4,391	Nederlander
28	\$526,013 \$97/\$47	JAMES TAYLOR Chicago Theatre, Chicago, Oct. 20-21	7,083 7,108 two shows	Live Nation, in-house
29	\$502,031 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, TAYLOR SWIFT Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas, Oct. 26	8,509 9,967	Live Nation
30	\$500,953 \$54.50/\$38.50	SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE LIVE TOUR Madison Square Garden Theatre, New York, Oct. 4-5	10,290 10,977 two shows	AEG Live
31	\$499,081 \$59	RASCAL FLATTS, GARY ALLAN, ERIC CHURCH Verizon Wireless Arena, Manchester, N.H., Oct. 12	8,459 sellout	Live Nation
32	\$464,908 \$62/\$26.50	JOHN MAYER, SHERYL CROW, MARJORIE FAIR White River Amphitheatre, Auburn, Wash., Sept. 23	11,580 19,508	Live Nation
33	\$461,828 \$75.50	CHRIS BROWN, NE-YO, LIL' WAYNE & OTHERS Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, Irvine, Calif., Sept. 29	8,542 10,080	Live Nation, Haymon Entertainment
34	\$461,221 (1,083,870 reales) \$105/\$15	RBD, DIEGO Marina Hotel, Fortaleza, Brazil, Sept. 22	20,595 21,000	Roptus, Mondo, Evenpro/Water Brother
35	\$454,323 \$75/\$38	DEF LEPPARD, JOURNEY, STOLL VAUGHAN Fargodome, Fargo, N.D., Oct. 21	7,887 11,772	Live Nation

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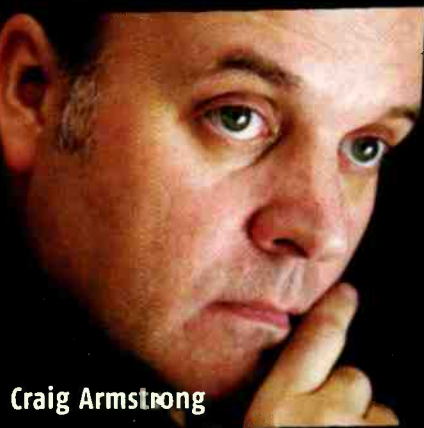
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GARAGE ROCK

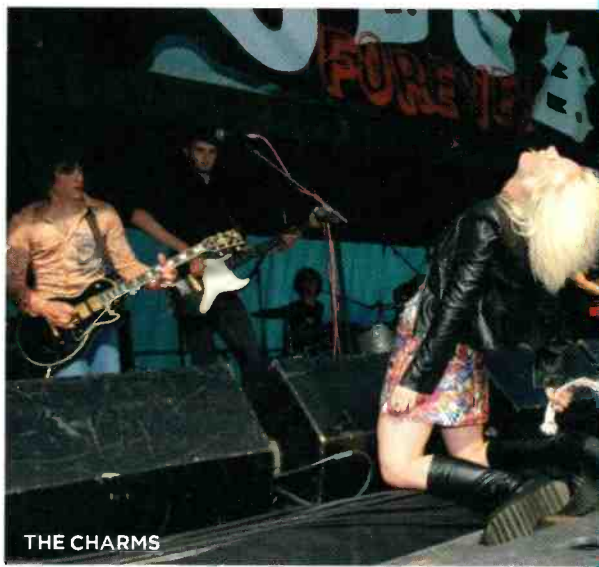
The Charms out of Boston grab the coolest song in the world this week.

Voted coolest new band by the Underground Garage listeners a few years ago (their fourth release "Strange Magic" will be out Nov. 21) their career is instructive as to how a new traditional rock'n'roll band survives in a hip-hop/pop-driven hard rock world. Interestingly, so far, new school has been old school: Their philosophy has been to release consistently great records and perform consistently great shows and eventually radio and record sales will catch up. That is the philosophy that Frank Barsalona and his Premier Talent Agency had and how he built the business we're all in. He did it with the Who, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band and U2. Emphasizing live performances over having "hits" was a radical and innovative idea at the time. It will be interesting to see if consistent greatness can still win over a fragmented and distracted audience.

In other news, the nine nominees for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame are the Dave Clark Five, R.E.M., Van Halen, the Stooges, Patti Smith, Chic, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Joe Tex and the Ronettes. I wish all nine would go in. That's all I'm gonna say.

Speaking of the Hall, three out of the four essential punk bands are in (the Dead Boys will get in when I'm buying Stiv Bators a drink in rock'n'roll purgatory), and there is a special fabulous Clash exhibit you do not want to miss running until April 15. You can't beat Cleveland for the holidays is what I always say!

And, finally, a note to Rosalie Druyan who filed a \$51 million class-action lawsuit accusing the Stones of fraud and acting in bad faith for postponing their Oct. 27 Atlantic City, N.J.,



THE CHARMS

show until Nov. 17. She's upset about the late cancellation costing her the hotel bill.

Now Rosalie, a few things.

First of all, I've stayed in some nice hotel rooms in my time but \$51 million? That must include some serious room service!

Secondly, I respectfully suggest you consider that these guys don't need to tour anymore. Trust me, their rent is paid. They do it because they love it and because they love you. They're not postponing dates for any reason other than they had to. Since they don't need to be there in the first place, what else makes sense?

If it's all about the hotel bill, you've definitely got a point. If the hotel was the Borgata, the guys promoting the concert, knowing them like I do, I guarantee they will reimburse you for the room. And if by some chance they won't, I will.

So please take this into consideration. Our courts are busy enough, and we shouldn't let this magnificent tour end on such a negative note. Don't take it so personal!

See you on the radio. ...

COOLEST GARAGE SONGS

- 1 **SO ROMANTIC**
Wicked Cool
THE CHARMS
- 2 **DANCE LIKE A MONKEY**
Roadrunner
NEW YORK DOLLS
- 3 **RIDIN' THE HOOK**
Nick Records
SPONGEBOB & THE HI-SEAS
- 4 **WRECK THIS HEART**
Capitol
BOB SEGER
- 5 **STRANGER IN THE HOUSE**
Savage Jams
THE PAYBACKS
- 6 **WANNA**
Acid Jazz
THE STABILISERS
- 7 **NEVER GONNA DIE**
Sire
THE SHYS
- 8 **PINK CADILLAC**
Artist
JERRY LEE LEWIS WITH BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
- 9 **IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT I WANT (IT'S WHAT YOU GOT)**
Wicked Cool
THE WOGGLES
- 10 **PUNKROCKER**
Big Beat
TEDDYBEARS

Little Steven's Underground Garage column is produced exclusively for Billboard. For more information go to UNDERGROUNDGARAGE.COM.



The Indies

TODD MARTENS tmartens@billboard.com

Playing The Field

Wind-Up Tests Out Staggered Release For Stars Of Track & Field Album

There are already at least two release dates for every album. There's the day a new CD is leaked online, and then there's the day it's made available at retail.

Wind-up Records found a way to create even more. On Nov. 1, the label will release the debut for electronic pop act Stars of Track & Field, "Centuries Before Love & War," to indie retailers via Junketboy, the distribution arm of the Coalition of Independent Music Stores (CIMS). This comes a couple of months after the Aug. 22 iTunes release date, where it is available for \$7.99.

Indie outlets around the country will then

Graham says. "It's not just about setting a street date and shipping a bunch of records. There's an entire audience that doesn't listen to the radio and finds music digitally and through file-sharing. It's important to cover all of those distribution bases."

It also becomes tougher to get new rock acts on retail shelves without Tower Records. The cost of setting up positioning programs at large chains and mass merchants quickly runs into the tens of thousands. Ideally, Wind-up's staggered approach will allow the band to build an audience and a reputation so it isn't lost on a Best Buy rack.

"You have to applaud a label like Wind-up to take this kind of approach," says Terry Carrier, who runs Portland, Ore.-based Music Millennium. Carrier counts the Stars of Track & Field as one of his favorite local acts, and helped persuade Junketboy to take on the album.

"Wind-up is a big record label," Carrier says. "They're a smaller big record label, but they work things in a big record label way. And to step back and understand that a band needs to start at the indie level is a much better situation. It gives the band an opportunity to get some credibility before the big marketing machine kicks into gear."

Wind-up executive VP of marketing Andrew Schneider says the mass-merchant release will not be any different than the indie version. He doesn't want to speculate about the label taking such a multitiered release-date tactic in the future, and insists the band doesn't have to graduate, so to speak, from retailer to retailer.

Schneider says there's not "a specific benchmark in mind" for "Centuries" before it's taken into wider release, and he doesn't anticipate the Jan. 16 date changing.

But with more labels launching their own digital outlets, and the help of targeted distribution channels such as Junketboy, labels may have the opportunity to test-market artists before they're made available to mass merchants.

For his part, Junketboy and CIMS head Don Van Cleave doesn't believe that's the path the industry is on. "I don't get that," he says. "It's more about the band having every possibility of breaking. It's too hard right now." CIMS and Junketboy did it before with James Blunt.

"This is stuff we've been fighting for a long time," he says. "How do you take a totally unknown band and grow them correctly? If we like it, and if it makes sense to do something early on the indie level, we're all ears."



STARS OF TRACK AND FIELD

have a few months' lead time on larger stores. On Jan. 16, the album is slated to be made available to chains and mass merchants.

Wind-up, which is independently owned and distributed by Sony BMG, signed the band to a multi-album deal this summer. Before that, the album was to be released by SideCho Records.

So far, "Centuries" has sold about 2,000 copies digitally in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Wind-up senior VP of sales Derek Graham says the label will have about 2,000 units pressed up for CIMS, which sells to indie stores and such small chains as Brighton, Mass.-based Newbury Comics.

"The way we market a record is changing,"

STARS OF TRACK AND FIELD: PIPER FERGUSON; THE CHARMS: STEPHEN LOVEKIN/WIREIMAGE.COM

Retail Track

ED CHRISTMAN echristman@billboard.com



Navigating The Landscape

CMJ Panelists Ponder Indie Competitiveness In A Changing Marketplace

At the CMJ convention, held Nov. 1-4 in New York, music merchandisers from the digital spectrum to the independent-sector wrestled with the changing industry landscape.

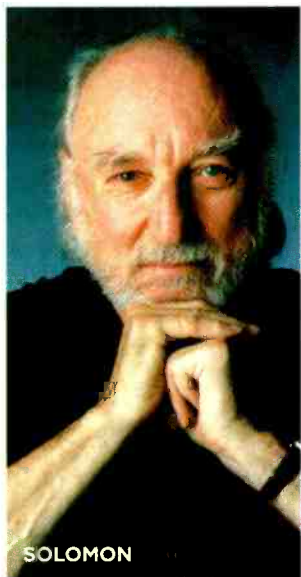
In a number of different seminars, panelists emphasized the emergence of blogs as a music-marketing vehicle.

"The marketplace has changed," Wind-up Records senior VP of marketing **Andrew Schneider** said. One of the first things the label does now is "seed the blogs," he said.

But earlier, during the indie-store panel, it was noted that you can have too much of a good thing. While Internet marketing heats up and drives awareness, "Nowadays with all the blog buzz, there can almost be an oversaturation of the blogs, where too much buzz can become flash in the pan," said **Jamie Granuto**, music buyer for Mondo Kim's on St. Mark's Place in Manhattan. Whatever band the blogs are touting doesn't last long, he said, because a new band soon takes its place.

Granuto's perspectives came during a panel that looked at how independents, who are not a part of retail coalitions, remain competitive. But coalitions are not everywhere. **Brian O'Neill**, metal buyer/promotions at Columbus, Ohio, indie store Magnolia Thunderpussy, argues that his shop is "really the only game in town." What's more, the only other competition was the Virgin Megastore, which closed two years ago. "We put Virgin out of business in Columbus, or at least I'd like to think so," O'Neill joked.

The coalitions don't impact New York either. In Manhattan, Fatbeats owes its livelihood to its focus as a dance-lifestyle store, which wound up becoming a part of—and starting—a scene, store manager **Eric Winn** said. "Everyone who works in the store is involved in the industry in some other way," whether it's as a DJ at a club or on the radio, he said.



While some see Tower's liquidation as beneficial for independent stores, "It will be interesting to see what happens to Other Music," which is across the street from the liquidating chain's downtown store, Granuto observed. Other Music, in addition to having its own loyal customers, also benefited from Tower traffic. Will it get a windfall, or will its business erode with the Tower shuttering?

While Magnolia Thunderpussy picked up traffic from the closing of the Virgin Megastore, stores just can't rest on their laurels. "The good news is we are in a college town, but every time school starts Columbus gets 10,000 new people in the market who don't know about the store," O'Neill said. So the store has to be particularly aggressive to market itself. On the other hand, Magnolia Thunderpussy "started in 1970, which is like 400 dog years in independent retail," he added. "We are an institution in the market where fathers and sons shop us together."

Another factor the staff attributes to the store's success: "We also figure having a name with the word 'pussy' in it helps," he says.

Prior to the indie-retail panel, during a seminar on merchan-

disers' relationships with indie artists, **Jerry Steller**, director of operations/A&R at 2024 Records, noted that the Internet levels the playing field from the artist's point of view. Before the Web, if an unsigned act did something great, there wasn't a chance it would get known. But Gotham Records president **Patrick Arn** reminded us that Internet marketing and other grass-root efforts can only get an act to a certain level, and "then artists need labels to heighten exposure."

Later in the day during a panel on the downloading dilemma, Napster director of music programming **Matthew Adell**, while touting the growing digital marketplace, warned acts, "I wouldn't forego CD sales anytime soon. Use digital to grow your fan base and then sell CDs to them to make more money," he said, noting the difference between a 99-cent download and a CD, which can be priced between \$12-\$15.

A HELPING HAND: Tower Records may soon be gone, but its people are trying to find ways to keep its selling culture alive. In Sacramento, Calif., Tower founder **Russ Solomon** is looking for investors to help him start an operation that would open a couple of stores to show that brick-and-mortar business still works.

In New York, some Tower store managers are trying to save the Lincoln Center store currently being liquidated by looking for investors among independent niche labels. **Ira Rosenblum**, former main floor manager/product specialist (asharu2@aol.com), and **Julian Cavanna**, former world music buyer (jgcavanna@msn.com), are working with Gotham's **Patrick Arn**. They're trying to develop a business plan that would incorporate lifestyle marketing to rescue the store, which does some \$25 million-\$30 million per year, mostly in niche genres and catalog. ♦♦♦

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MOBILE BY ANTONY BRUNO

Chaos Theory

Alternative Rock Tour Mastermind Sets His Sites On Mobile

Being a music mogul is not enough for Kevin Lyman anymore.

The brains behind the phenomenally successful Warped and Taste of Chaos tours wants to be a mobile mogul as well.

Lyman and Taste of Chaos co-organizer John Reese of Freeze Artist Management are preparing to launch Chaos Mobile, a youth-oriented mobile content portal designed for fans of both tours.

It is the most recent evolution of an ongoing trend to add mobile content, messaging and marketing features to today's music festival business. For a touring industry still struggling with reduced ticket sales, it presents a new revenue stream that contributes to promoter's profits while keeping ticket prices in check.

What sets Chaos Mobile apart is its focus on content: ringtones, custom voicetones, graphics, videoclips, artist profiles and other content from acts participating in this year's Rockstar Taste of Chaos tour, as well as other artists that Lyman and Reese feel fans will appreciate.

"If we can zero in on the half a million kids that are really interested in what Taste of Chaos is about and deliver stuff directly to them, it'll help the bottom line of the show," Lyman says. "Then we don't have to raise our ticket prices, or at least [we'll] be able to maintain them for longer."

Lyman and his partners hope to

replicate the one-day music festival experience onto mobile phones, extending it to a 24/7 ongoing relationship that not only deepens fans' connection to the Taste of Chaos brand, but also results in greater sponsorship and revenue opportunities.

"These are the kinds of kids that use this technology," Lyman says. "If we can bring them relevant content on a year-round basis through Chaos Mobile, it furthers our scene along, it furthers what they're interested in and cuts down on the clutter."

The "clutter" he refers to is how mobile operators organize entertainment content on their phones today. Fans of alternative rock have a hard time shifting through all the best-selling hip-hop content that dominates carrier music sites today.

So Lyman and Reese instead are doing it their way, much like how they produce live events—with a laser-focus on their core audience of alternative rock fans.

"Fans who attend the tour see it as a lifestyle, and it makes sense for their mobile content to reflect their way of life," Reese says.

Other music festivals, including the Vans Warped tour, focus on providing wireless services at their events in a similar effort to capture mobile phone information that can later be used for marketing purposes.

During the last 12



KEVIN LYMAN, the brains behind the Warped and Taste of Chaos tours, is preparing to launch Chaos Mobile.

months, music festivals like Bonnaroo, Coachella, Vegoose and others have added some sort of mobile information service providing text message alerts on show schedules, lineup changes and autograph sessions. The success of these programs has led to additional mobile applications like exclusive live ringtones from the event and photo blogging, and organizers are now looking at how to monetize these mobile services through corporate sponsorships.

"It's the corporate tie-in to these programs that's really where the revenue generation is," says Chad Issaq of Superfly Productions, which produces the Vegoose and Bonnaroo festivals with AC Entertainment. "As far as incremental revenue from ringtones and text messages go, the margins aren't great. So for us, if we can provide these as an added value and tie in a corporate partner, that's where the value is to an event producer."

This is why Chaos Mobile won't be available from any wireless operator. Interested fans instead must either send a text message requesting the application or register their phone number on the service's Web site to either buy content à la carte or sign up for the Chaos Nation \$5-per-month subscription plan. Both op-

tions will be heavily advertised at the Taste of Chaos and future Warped tours.

This direct-to-consumer approach allows Chaos Mobile to own all the contact details and demographic information about their customers, which the company then will use to continually market not only the Chaos tour brand, but also that of its sponsors.

Chaos Mobile is operated by MangoMobile, which specializes in conducting mobile marketing campaigns. President T.J. Person says MangoMobile will use the demographic information it gets to attract potential advertisers that wish to target these kids with specific products and services, much like all the booths at Warped tour locations.

And the mobile integration doesn't stop there. Concert promoters are interested in adding text-message ticketing capabilities—where fans receive a barcode on their phone for entry to events—as well to announce future tour lineups, dates and locations.

But for any of these promotions to work, the event must still take center stage.

"For me it'll always be about the live show and the tour," Lyman says. "If you're not delivering a great show to kids, you got nothing."

BITS & BRIEFS

TWO-TIMING YOUR IPOD

When Microsoft introduces its Zune digital music player on Nov. 14, the big question on everyone's mind is whether anyone will buy it. According to ABI Research, there's a good chance they will. The research firm conducted a survey that found 59% of current iPod owners saying they likely would buy the Zune, based on a description of its capabilities. Another 58% of those who own a different brand of MP3 player say the same. "Our conclusion is that iPod users don't display the same passionate loyalty in iPods that Macintosh users have historically shown for their Apple products," principal analyst Steve Wilson says.

OPENING THE MOBILE-GAME FLOODGATE

Sony BMG is delving further into the mobile games market. Not long after agreeing to co-publish mobile role-playing

game "The Shroud" with Your World Entertainment, the record label is now co-publishing "Mo-Pets" with Floodgate Entertainment. The interesting thing is that neither game has anything to do with music. Sony BMG instead is looking to leverage its relationship with wireless operators in the ringtone space to sell other types of mobile content.

CRACKING THE RINGTONE CODE

Artists looking to sell their ringtones can now do so with their own SMS shortcode. Normally too expensive for independent artists to register on their own, mVisible Technologies has created a program called MyxerCodes that artists can use instead. The company provides a common shortcode number, and each act can then register for a unique code to give fans to send to that number for its ringtone. Charges for each purchase are then added to the fan's mobile phone bill.

HOT RINGTONES™ NOV 18 2006 Billboard

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHART	TITLE ORIGINAL ARTIST
1	2	108	#1 SUPER MARIO BROTHERS THEME KOUJI KONO
2	1	108	HALLOWEEN JOHN CARPENTER
3	13	13	TUBULAR BELLS MIKE OLDFIELD
4	3	16	SEXY LOVE NE-YO
5	4	7	CRAZY BITCH BUCKCHERRY
6	6	35	MS. NEW BOOTY BUBBA SPAROOX FEATURING YING YANG TWINS & MR. COLLIPARK
7	7	32	WHAT HURTS THE MOST RASCAL FLATTS
8	12	3	ROCKSTAR NICKELBACK
9	5	10	THRILLER MICHAEL JACKSON
10	11	26	RIDIN' RIMS DEM FRANCHIZE BOYZ



In its third week on the chart, Nickelback's "Rockstar" vaults 12-8. It's the group's third appearance in the top 10.

11	9	51	LAFFY TAFFY D4L
12	13	96	MISSION-IMPOSSIBLE LALO SCHIFRIN
13	8	10	THE PINK PANTHER THEME HENRY MANCINI
14	15	60	MY HUMPS THE BLACK EYED PEAS
15	20	91	CANDY SHOP 50 CENT FEATURING OLIVIA
16	10	11	FAR AWAY NICKELBACK
17	16	78	BECAUSE I GOT HIGH AFROMAN
18	18	105	SWEET HOME ALABAMA LYNYRD SKYNYRD
19	17	9	LABIOS COMPARTIDOS MANA
20	14	10	LIPS OF AN ANGEL HINDER

Based on polyphonic ringtones data provided by, in alphabetical order: 9square, Faith West Modtones, Infospace Mobile, MIDIRingtones/AG Interactive, XRingtones, Zingy and Zango, A WiderThan Company. Chart endorsed by CTIA - The Wireless Association and Mobile Entertainment Forum.

ACCESSORIZING YOUR ZUNE

Microsoft's Zune wireless-enabled digital music player is set for release on Nov. 14, and in preparation the company has taken the wraps off a variety of accessories for the closely watched item.

The Zune Home A/V Pack comes with a range of accessories designed to integrate the device into users' home entertainment systems, including a dock, wireless remote, output cables, AC adapter and sync cable. The Zune Car Pack features an FM transmitter to stream Zune-stored music through a car stereo, as well as a cigarette lighter charger adapter. The Travel Pack includes noise-reduction earphones, dual headphone jacks and a travel case.

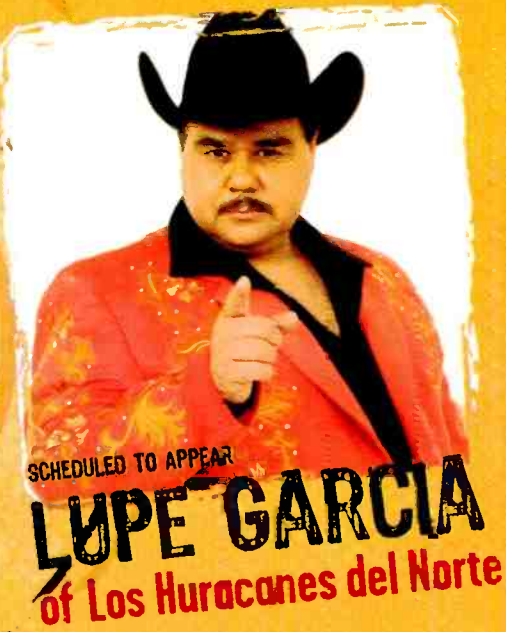
All three accessory packs will be available the same day. The Home Pack retails for \$100, the Car Pack for \$80 and the Travel Pack for \$100.

—Antony Bruno

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Latin Notas

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Two Firsts

Billboard Unveils Latin Page And Regional Mexican Music Summit

There was a time when Latin music really was a niche market. When Latin albums were confined to small corners inside music stores. When mass merchants would not have dreamed of making Latin music part of their limited offering on store shelves.

How times change. Ever since the U.S. census determined that Latinos were the fastest-growing population group and the biggest minority, marketers, retailers and businesses in general are racing to catch up with that growth. Today, an ever-expanding number of people are looking for entertainment—music included—that appeals to a “Latin” sensibility, whatever that may be. It is no coincidence that in the last few months alone, iTunes launched its iTunes Latino music store, MTV launched a Latin music U.S. channel, the number of Spanish-language radio stations is multiplying or that a Latin-themed TV series, “Ugly Betty,” is the No. 1-rated show in America in its time slot.

Billboard’s coverage and commitment to Latin music and its industry predates these events, and indeed, has been integral in making them happen. Reinforcing our commitment, this week we celebrate our first Regional Mexican Music Summit, taking place Nov. 13-14 in Los Angeles, and the launch of a stand-alone page in the mag-

azine dedicated exclusively to the Latin music business.

Our passion for all things Latin is not a fad. We have charted the growth of Latin sounds from the very beginning, long before the many “Latin explosions” of the late 20th century, and long before Jennifer Lopez, Shakira or Enrique Iglesias became part of mainstream consciousness.

Today, no other mainstream media outlet dedicates as much space to Latin music as Billboard, and still, we continue to see growth in Latin music sales and in all business that derives from Latin music.

As with our other specialized sections—touring, digital and indie music—Latin stories will continue to be part of Billboard magazine as a whole, with Latin artists and news featured in our music, global, touring and news pages.

But the Latin page will be your destination for Latin Notas, deals, profiles, analysis, marketing and branding, and news from north and south of the border. From Los Angeles, our new Latin correspondent, Ayala Ben-Yehuda, will keep you up to date on West Coast comings and goings.

We hope you’ll help us keep you informed, by contacting us with your news and deals. That is, if we don’t contact you; we like to be the first to know.

As for our first Regional Mexican Music Summit, we

are proud to say this the only convention in the world dedicated solely to regional Mexican music, the top-selling Latin music genre in the United States.

Largely ignored by mainstream media, regional Mexican is recognized here at Billboard as the fundament of the Latin music industry.

Although regional Mexican has always been an important part of the programming of Billboard’s annual Latin Music Conference, we realize that this is a genre whose particularities and tremendous possibilities also merit a specialized symposium.

We hope you will join us at the first summit of its kind in America and that you will join us weekly in our pages. Bienvenidos!



THE BILLBOARD Q&A?

Argentine producer Cachorro Lopez took home the Latin Grammy Award for producer of the year, besting stiff competition from countrymate and favorite Gustavo Santaolalla.

Or maybe, not so stiff. For during the past several years, Lopez has played an integral part in the evolution of Latin pop, moving it from the longtime, accepted standard of romantic music with sweeping, dramatic arrangements to a mix of styles and beats that is often hard to define. Indeed, Lopez’s win is for widely different work, including standard pop albums like Christian Castro’s “Dias Felices” and more alternative fare like Bela Nova’s “Dulce Beat” and Julieta Venegas’ “Limón y Sal.” After his Latin Grammy win, Lopez answered three questions for Billboard.



Do you think Latin audiences are finally getting used to new sounds in pop?

Artists like Juanes and Julieta Venegas, [whose sound is more alternative], are now the mainstream. The audience’s taste has changed.

You’ve produced not only Venegas, but also more “traditional” pop acts, like Christian Castro and Belanova.

Yes, but my contribution in those projects is more towards the “artsy” tracks. I began as a rock musician and I’m still a rock musician. I’ve never softened my sound. Christian Castro once called me an alternative pop producer. It’s just an expression, but I liked it.

Many lovers of alternative and rock still see “pop” as a dirty word. There has even been talk of having a “traditional” pop category in the Latin Grammys. What do you think?

I don’t see the barrier between one thing or the other. It’s a very fine line. I don’t think there should be a traditional pop category. Pop includes everything.

LATIN BY AYALA BEN-YEHUDA

Fronterizo’s Grass-Roots Game Plan

New Label Promotes Edgy Urban Regional Mexican Music

Independent marketing and distribution company Urban Box Office, known for its aggressive grass-roots promotion and provocative music, is throwing its sombrero into the regional Mexican ring with a new record label.

Fronterizo Records’ first signed artist is expected to be producer/performer David “D” Elizondo from Austin, winner of a UBO-sponsored talent competition.

President/CEO Adam Kidron says about 600 contestants submitted their own versions of UBO’s “Nuestro Himno,” the Spanish-language version of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” As winner of the competition, Elizondo has been offered a three-album contract, with a first album likely due next summer.

Kidron says Fronterizo Records will not try to duplicate the traditional sounds and nostalgic themes that dominate the regional Mexican genre. Instead, the label will focus on an edgier urban style. Kidron describes his first prospective act as “Kumbia Kings meets Akwid.”

Fronterizo’s acts will “have something to say about the experience in the States and the experience where they came from, like the first flowering of hip-hop where you had groups like N.W.A and Public Enemy.”

Kidron says the reworked national anthem drew strong interest from “younger Mexican-Americans [who] were more politicized than the other Latino groups that we were encountering during the

promotion.”

Based in New York, UBO has had its greatest success thus far with reggaetón, particularly “Chosen Few: El Documental,” a compilation and DVD documentary featuring Don Omar and other stars. The album has sold 337,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and its

sequel is set for release Nov. 14.

Noting that the major Latin music chains are located in mostly Mexican-American neighborhoods, Kidron says his company’s marketing model—in which street teams direct consumers to nearby retail stores—“will work even better for Mexican regional than it

does for reggaetón and bachata.”

A hallmark of UBO’s street teams is the Freedom Girls, a team of women who not only “take the records and thrust them at people” outside stores, but also “can actually explain why somebody should buy the record,” Kidron says.

To promote Fronterizo, the company is making “green cards” with discount offers for a major retailer on the flip side.

In areas without a Latin music retailer, UBO employs a nontraditional distribution model in which bodegas and barbershops carry its product for as little as \$6 per album.

Keeping the new label’s ear to the ground for new urban regional talent will eventually require UBO to open a Los Angeles office as early as next year, Kidron says.

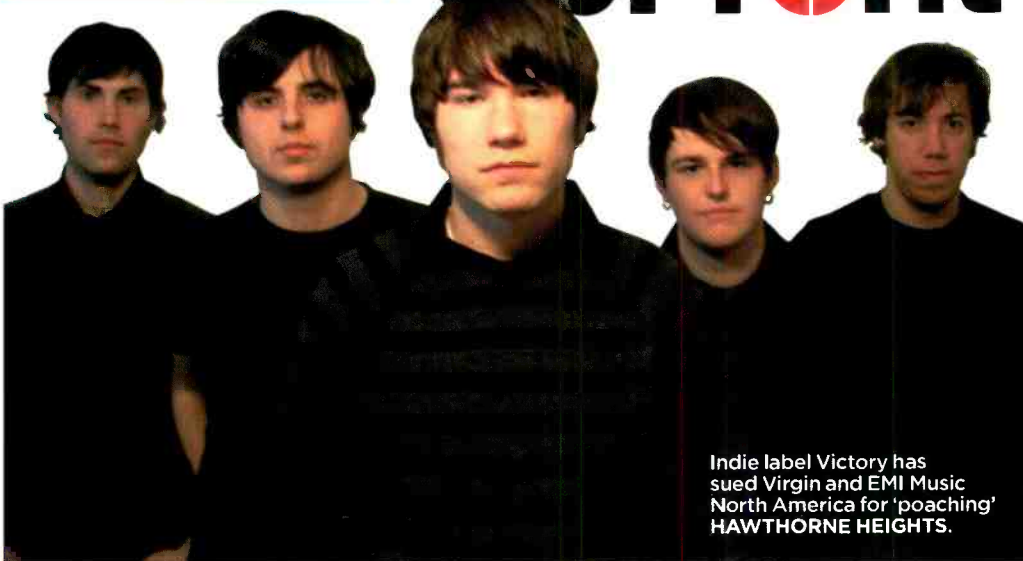


KIDRON

ELIZONDO



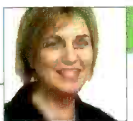
UpFront



Indie label Victory has sued Virgin and EMI Music North America for 'poaching' HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS.

Legal Matters

SUSAN BUTLER sbutler@billboard.com



Indie Label Sues Major

Will Hawthorne Heights Be Corralled?

Right about now, members of the band Hawthorne Heights must be feeling a little like property. Indie label Victory has sued major label Virgin and EMI Music North America for "poaching" the band from the label. Victory wants the band exclusively, or at least their dollar value, plus another \$10 million.

The complaint makes this the second time in a week that I've heard the word used. In my mind, poachers are amateur hunters trespassing on private property to steal livestock for the dinner table. Thinking of acts as property isn't a pleasant thought. But then record companies typically spend huge sums of money to turn a bunch of kids into artistes.

Executives can be property, too. For example, a departing executive could try poaching his fellow top execs and employees, persuading them to join him in a new gig. This is why employment contracts often prohibit executives from encouraging any co-workers to leave their jobs and work with the departing executive. The company could lose valuable assets, aka smart, talented people.

The bottom line is that it all comes down to a legal claim called "tortious interference with a contractual relationship"—often misspelled by a Freudian slip as torturous rather than tortious (like a tort, which is the kind of law that covers injury to person or property).

And that's just what Victory claims that Virgin-EMI did—orchestrate a campaign to induce Hawthorne Heights to breach its contract with Victory so the major could sign the band.

In its complaint filed Nov. 2 in the federal District Court in Chicago, Victory argues that the situation with Hawthorne Heights and Virgin-EMI is "an all-too familiar story in the music business." An unknown band earns a shot at success by signing with an indie, which devotes huge amounts of money, time and effort for the group. When the band achieves commercial and critical success, "unscrupulous would-be poachers," aka major labels, lure the band with "visions of greater fame and fortune."

I don't know any experienced indie label executive who would deny that a major label can

take an act to certain levels of success that are unattainable by an indie. But Victory's point made in the complaint, "is that these artist acquisitions should be accomplished through voluntary agreements with the independents." In other words, the indie label wants a cut. Sometimes indies are realistic in their demands when a major comes calling. Other times they are not, which can hold back a band's potential.

Regardless, it all comes back to the contract terms. The anti-poaching clause in executive employment contracts often clearly spells out what the exec may not do. On the other hand, though the familiar story of an indie band wanting to jump to a major also can be covered in the indie artist-label contract by clearly locking up rights, it all too often is not.

Nowhere in the Victory contract does the word "exclusive"—as in the exclusive rights to the band's recording services—appear. The band sued Victory in August, asking the court to declare that the contract does not grant Victory exclusive right to the band's recording services, and that the contract could be terminated "at will" by the band (among other claims).

Recently, a court magistrate dismissed the claim that the contract could be terminated at will, since it would be absurd to assume that the band could end the contract at any time and then demand all further distribution of previously recorded CDs stop. The magistrate referred back to the judge the question of whether the contract granted any exclusive rights. That issue has not yet been decided.

Sadly, the case is another cautionary tale for indie acts and labels to pay attention to the details from the beginning. Someday, the artists may want to leap to a major—and when they do, no one should land in court.

MORE KAZAA: Music publishers reached a tentative \$10 million settlement with Sharman Networks and other Kazaa-related parties in the MGM Studios vs. Grokster case. It is subject to National Music Publishers' Assn. board and court approval.

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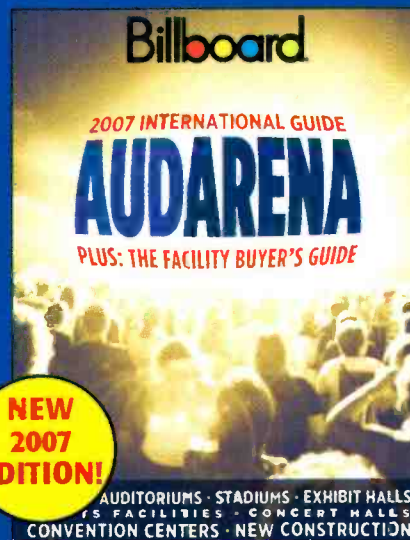
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Alexandra Patsavas

Fans of 'The OC' and 'Grey's Anatomy' have music supervisor Alexandra Patsavas to thank for the shows' deft soundtracks.



Do you feel that? Consider it a breath of fresh air in the soundtrack industry, provided by music coordinator Alexandra Patsavas. Since opening the doors to Chop Shop Music Supervision in 1997 in Los Angeles, Patsavas has helmed volumes of successful soundtracks for popular TV shows like "The OC" and "Grey's Anatomy." Along the way, she has managed to bring bands like the Killers and Modest Mouse to broader audiences.

First dipping her toes in the music business by promoting bands while in college at the University of Illinois, the Chicago native moved to Los Angeles in 1990 and worked in the film/TV department at BMI. Soon thereafter, famed B-movie director Roger Corman at Concorde Films recruited Patsavas to coordinate music for "Caged Heat 3000," her first film job. Three years later, she had nearly 50 films listed on her résumé.

If Patsavas has a signature "sound," it is the deft way she brings independent and lesser-known acts into shows for mainstream TV audiences, like pairing Beulah and Album Leaf with Death Cab for Cutie and Interpol on "Music From the OC: Mix 2." The five volumes in "The OC" compilation series, by the way, have collectively sold more than 1 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

These days, Patsavas is working on a sixth "OC" volume as well as the film soundtrack to "The Invisible," due in January via Hollywood Pictures. On the eve of the fifth annual Film & TV Music Conference, presented by Billboard and The Hollywood Reporter, Billboard chatted with Patsavas about the ins and outs of her musical world.

What's the process for starting each new project?

Music can be combined with picture in so many ways. Sometimes we start reading over the early drafts of the scripts so that I can get an early handle of what kind of music will be required. I'll look to see if there's a party scene or something unique and then try to get music into the directors' and producers' hands early. I'll also pitch ideas for already edited scenes. That way, I can actually see what's happening in the scene. Producers come prepared with a general idea of what they want for a certain part.

If producers come prepared, what do you bring to the table?

Producers have a very clear idea of what kind of music they're interested in for their project, but I might find unreleased or lesser-known music—and then we work together for a sound.

How easy or difficult is it to license music on time and within budget?

All great ideas go by the wayside

unless you can cater to those two things. For television, time frames are condensed. You might have to correspond overseas. Sometimes, you're given only a week to do what you must. We normally have a lot more time at the beginning of the season to plan, so we might have a few months to clear songs that are scripted. But typically, we have a week.

How have artists' attitudes changed regarding having their music used in film and TV or on an accompanying soundtrack?

In the past, bands were much more reluctant to license to TV because they maybe thought it didn't lend anything to their credibility. Now, it's different. They're making more money and broadening their audience, finding some new fans because their song was heard [in a TV show or film]. The only issues bands have had with associating their music with a television show is when it's about content, like some bands aren't about violence and don't want to be paired with violent imagery.

Similarly, have record companies had to re-evaluate and rethink the soundtrack landscape, too?

It's already clear that the record business is having to change the ways bands reach their fans. So suddenly, it's perfectly cool to have your song synched in an advertisement or TV show because [the labels] know what kind of power that brings. The music industry needs to be more adventuresome, and bands want to be part of it.

How many slots for music need to be filled, on average, for an episode of a TV show?

It can be as many as eight songs, depending on where the scenes are set. A show like "Rescue Me" has three songs per episode. A show like "Supernatural" is really great, because it's all classic metal and rock from the '70s. I now have a place for my expansive Cheap Trick collection.

Is it ever hard shoving music into a soundtrack, or do the shows lend themselves to music easily?

It's so interesting to put together a

soundtrack for TV, especially "The OC" and "Grey's Anatomy," because they're so music-heavy. We have the opposite problem of a lot of television shows, in that we're not lacking material. We have a hard time narrowing down the song selection to a 15-song CD instead of trying hard to fill it up.

These aren't just songs "inspired" by the series—they're actually in there. And that's incredibly rewarding. It was very rewarding to see the Killers and Modest Mouse blow up. Putting together the Fray videos and others was also fun. A soundtrack's definition is really limitless. The music is prominently featured in the projects, and it acts as a companion piece for the fan.

You are known to champion bands from independent labels or lesser-known corners of the majors. Are they cheaper to work with, or is it the quality of their music?

I've always supported independent music, and there are some strong indie labels out there. It's

a myth that all indie music is cheaper. They might have major [music] publishers or unique licensing deals, so it all depends. These are artists that are not so easily relegated to any single category. It's also that [film and TV] producers are interested in finding and exposing new music. They want their viewers to hear it for the first time on their show.

How big is your budget for shows like "Grey's Anatomy"? Does it change much?

I'm not at liberty to say what we get, but let's just say it's a healthy budget. The "Grey's Anatomy" executive producers, Shonda Rhimes and Betsy Beers, always intended that source music be a character on the show so they budgeted accordingly. We also go for all media rights on this show—a much bigger chunk of rights that comes with a heftier price tag.

What is the greatest misconception about your job?

I work very closely with all sorts of creatives—the writers, director, sales, everybody. The misconception is that you're in a dark room by yourself, in a laboratory, with headphones on your head and that's it. The job is all about communication and collaboration—and not just a cool record collection. Then there's the less-fun administrative side to the job, too.

How do you find music? How does music get to you? How does a band get picked?

I'd just say, send it in. I listen to so much. I read blogs. I see shows. I go through MySpace. I check out showcases. I'm just interested in finding out about new music. I am not interested in the 35 follow-up calls.

The job [of being a music supervisor] is all about communication and collaboration—and not just a cool record collection.

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LIBERA



LABELS DREAM OF A CLASSICAL CROSSOVER CHRISTMAS

As Winter Sets In, Il Divo's New Album Leads A Stockingful Of Releases That Straddle The Pop/Classical Divide

BY STEVE ADAMS

Simon Cowell—judge, executioner and one of the masterminds behind starmaking vehicles including “X-Factor” of the United Kingdom and its U.S. counterpart “American Idol”—knows a thing or two about placing bets on music ideas that work. So when he assembled Il Divo, the four-piece operatic boy band, little more than two years ago, skeptics generally kept quiet.

Still, it's likely no one anticipated just how successful the band would be. The act has shipped nearly 13 million copies of its first two albums, according to label Sony BMG, posted sold-out notices at concert venues across the globe (including 86 shows in 2006 alone) and earned the prestigious opening act slot on Barbra Streisand's current record-breaking U.S. tour. According to Dave Shack, London-based VP of international at Sony BMG U.K. & Ireland, who has worked with the act since day one, Il Divo was Sony BMG's biggest-selling act in 2005, with worldwide sales of around 9 million—more, he says, than Britney Spears or Shakira.

Artists who straddle the classical and pop disciplines—or “classical crossover” acts as they have become known—are nothing new. The line stretches from Enrico Caruso and Mario Lanza through to the Three Tenors and Sarah Brightman. But the music is enjoying something of a boom, with a glut of new releases due in the lead-up to Christmas.

According to the BPI, classical sales were actually down a few percentage points year over year in the United Kingdom from 2004 to 2005. But sales for Il Divo and other crossover acts are classified as MOR (middle of the road), a boom sector that has increased its market share from 4.6% in 2000 to 8.5% in 2005, largely thanks to classical crossover artists.

Il Divo can certainly expect its crossover to continue, thanks to Streisand. “She gives us exposure to an audience we wouldn't necessarily reach on our own,” Il Divo member David Miller says. “She's presenting us just as Liberace presented her.”

The group is releasing its new album, “Siempre,” on Nov. 21 (Nov. 27 in the United Kingdom), and it couldn't come at a better time. Shack says the label expects to ship 2 million copies of “Siempre” by Christmas, with the United States—where the act has sold 2.5 million units to date, and where sophomore set “Ancora” made No. 1 on The Billboard 200 and has scanned 717,000 units—hopefully becoming a bigger market, courtesy of Streisand.

“Barbra's been incredibly gracious to the band, and the [number of influential] people she gets to her shows has been incredible,” he says. “TV show bookers, radio programmers . . . Oprah Winfrey led a standing ovation for their set [at Madison Square Garden] in New York.”

This exposure is crucial, Shack says: “The critics will never really love Il Divo because we straddle two disciplines, so it's about getting to the consumer and retailer.”

“Our music is weird,” Miller says. “It has a little of this and a little of that, so it doesn't really fit into any one place.

We don't get radio play. Our massive exposure comes from guesting on TV shows.”

Classical crossovers come in many styles. Such rock stars as Sting and Paul McCartney have recently enjoyed classical crossover success (see story, page 24). And for the past three weeks, “Aria II” (EvilLive/Megaforce) by heavy metal howler Danzig, has been a surprising entry in the Classical Crossover chart's top 20.

Back in the United Kingdom, Il Divo's male competition includes Angelis, another act off the Simon Cowell assembly line; South London boy band Libera; and Australia's Ten Tenors, which released its sixth album “Here's to the Heroes” (Warner Classics/Rhino) Oct. 2 in the United Kingdom and Sept. 12 in States, where it has sold 6,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Libera's “Angel Voices” and Angelis' self-titled debut came out Nov. 6 in the United Kingdom, but are not yet scheduled for U.S. release.

The Ten Tenors have clocked up career global shipments of 800,000 units, according to the label, but the new album is expected to up the ante courtesy of the involvement of film score icon John Barry as executive producer. Barry and longtime lyricist Don Black provided three new songs for the album, as well as rearranging film themes including “Dances With Wolves” and “You Only Live Twice.”

The album debuted at No. 8 on the Australian Recording Industry Assn. (ARIA) chart after its Aug. 26 release, and has also charted in Germany, Holland and New Zealand. It was released Sept. 12 in the United States, where the act is currently on tour.

“This album has widened our audience,” says D-J Wendt, co-director of Ten Tenors management company DMand, based in Brisbane, Australia. “John Barry and Don Black fans, who are probably older given the length of their careers, are interested in listening to the record when previously they possibly wouldn't have considered us.”

WHO'S BUYING

Attracting older fans is rarely a problem for the classical crossover market. BPI figures for 2005 show more than two-thirds of traditional classical music in the United Kingdom was bought by people over age 50 while in the crossover market, audiences are predominantly female, age 35-plus, according to Costa Pilavachi, president of London-based EMI Classics.

According to the NPD group, in the United States this year, the over-50 age group comprises 36.8% of classical purchasers, while the 36-50 age group consists of nearly 20% of the genre's purchasers, and the 26-35 age group equals 18.5% of purchasers. That means that the 25-and-under age group consists of about 24.8% of purchasers.

“As a rule in the Anglophile countries—the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada, New Zealand—the market is more female-driven, and as a result many of the crossover successes have been male,” Pilavachi says.



NATASHA MARSH



BRIGHTMAN: SIMON FOWLER; BOCELLI: MORENA BRENGOLA/GRAZIANERI; KIRI: JOHN SWANNELL

The balance could shift, though, given the current crop of glamorous female talent, all of whom aim to emulate Sarah Brightman, the world's best-selling female classical singer, whose career sales top 25 million. Her "The Classics—Best Of" (EMI Classics) was released in October in the United Kingdom, while her "Diva—the Singles Collection," released the same month in the United States, has scanned 36,000 copies. Other key new female U.K. releases include Katherine Jenkins' fourth album "Serenade" (Universal Classics and Jazz, Nov. 6) and the self-titled debut by All Angels (Universal Classics and Jazz, Nov. 13). U.S. releases by Jenkins (a compilation) and All Angels are expected in early 2007, but their release dates have not yet been confirmed. February 2007 will also see the U.K. debut by EMI Classics' hotly tipped soprano Natasha Marsh, who will perform at a number of prestigious classical shows in the United Kingdom by year's end.

The labels are hoping younger acts like Marsh will help attract a younger audience.

"It's all about how it's presented," Pilavachi says. "We realize we're never going to displace pop music and high fashion in the eyes of many young people, and we shouldn't want to. But there's no reason why a large proportion of these kids can't also be attracted by a young artist."

The United Kingdom's recent National Music Week (NMW) schools campaign was designed to attract younger consumers across all genres and Marsh visited schools to talk to children about her music.

London-based Warner Classics GM Stefan Bown applauds the NMW campaign but insists more needs to be done.

"That there's not enough music in schools means there won't be an audience for our future [classical] concerts and records," he says.

As well as courting the younger market, classical and crossover labels are ramping up releases and marketing efforts for the fourth quarter, a period especially critical to a genre where holiday purchasing plays a major role in sales, according to Tony Shaw, specialties and classical manager at market-leading U.K. retailer HMV in London.

"You often have family members going out to buy their mum or gran an album for Christmas or Mother's Day, and they're look-



TEN TENORS

ing for some guidance or one big name they've got from TV," he says. "Highly targeted marketing and in-store/online merchandising become hugely important in optimizing sales at such peak trading times."

The audience may be there, but marketing to it isn't easy, according to EMI's Pilavachi, who knows many traditional classical music fans sneer at crossover.

"We don't go after the traditional core classical market, we go after a broader adult market which is neither classical nor pop [but] more amorphous, which makes it a little harder to get to," he says.

London-based Universal Classics and Jazz GM Dickon Stainer agrees: "It's about trying to identify access points for the public to have interface with your artist. For a lot of classical crossover acts, TV promotion is the lead vehicle for that to happen."

It seems to be a truth for many "classical crossover" acts; critics aren't easily moved by such releases, so marketers need to work extra hard to be able to move sales. Billboard's Classical Crossover chart has been dominated this year by Andrea Bocelli, whose album "Amore" has spent 36 weeks at No. 1 on the chart. The album debuted and peaked at No. 3 on The Billboard 200, and has sold 1.3 million copies in the States so far,

according to Nielsen SoundScan. His career U.S. SoundScan total stands at 14.7 million. On Nov. 7, Decca/Sugar released "Under the Desert Sky," a CD/DVD package featuring cameos by such artists as Chris Botti and Stevie Wonder; a fall tour kicks off Nov. 30 at New York's Madison Square Garden.

To help promote Bocelli's recent releases, Sugar/Decca has partnered him with the Winter Olympics in Torino, JCPenney, Starbucks and the NBA All-Star Game, says Paul Foley, GM of Universal Music Classics Group. The artist also appeared on numerous TV shows, including "Today," "Good Morning America," "American Idol" and, most recently, "Extreme Makeover."

"Every time he appears on TV, we see a spike in CD sales," Foley notes. "We see immediate results. People will see him on TV, then be inside a Starbucks or JCPenney, and see the CD there, which results in more incremental sales for him."

Placing music in TV adverts and film soundtracks may be a useful marketing ploy, but many classical music fans argue this debases the original work.

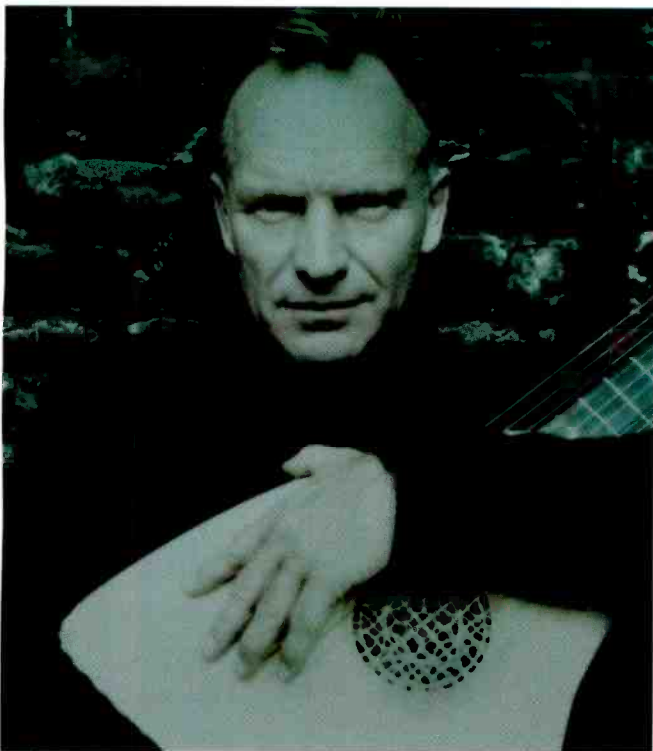
Independent classical music retailer Jerry Monks belongs firmly on this side of the fence, and claims crossover is too often a case of style over substance. "Most of the major record companies seem more interested in the artists than the actual repertoire," says Monks, who has co-owned Wales-based Hancock & Monks for more than 30 years.

"As far as introducing people usually not interested in classical music, [crossover music] can be a good thing, but . . . when the labels work on that, they start neglecting the more serious repertoire."

Marsh says that you can't please everyone. "There are people in the opera community who frown upon artists who move from core classical into commercial [recordings]," she says.

"But for me crossover also means classic music—not just classical music. I have a pop song on my album as well. In some ways, it can be a dangerous thing and difficult for some people to understand. But if you sing it from your heart and give a true interpretation, it can hopefully reach an audience that will hear something that they might otherwise never hear."

Additional reporting by Juliana Koranteng and Tom Ferguson in London, Christie Eliezer in Melbourne and Michael Paoletta and Ed Christman in New York.



CLASSICAL ROCKS!

Sting, McCartney And Danzig Take A Walk On The Mild Side

New releases by two popular music legends offer another twist to the classical crossover tale. Paul McCartney and Sting have literally "crossed over" from their traditional pop-rock leanings to classical material on "Ecce Cor Meum (Behold My Heart)" (EMI Classics) and "Songs From the Labyrinth" (Deutsche Grammophon/Universal), respectively.

McCartney's work—his fourth classical album—was released Sept. 25 and peaked at No. 2 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. (OCC) classical albums chart. In the United States, it has spent six weeks on the Top Classical Albums chart, where it is now No. 6, and has scanned 8,000 copies. An oratorio in four movements, the choral piece was originally commissioned in 1998 and premiered in 2001 but was only finally recorded in March this year.

At a London press reception to mark the album's launch McCartney admitted it had been a huge learning curve.

"I knew harmonies from the Beatle days, and I'd loved harmonies since I'd been a kid, but this length of work is a completely different ballgame," he said. "I think I learned enough to produce a decent record in the end—I'm

very proud of it."

Costa Pilavachi, president of EMI Classics, says that because McCartney does not perform on the album it was crucial that the music receive as much exposure as possible.

"The main promotion we can do is to get people to hear the music," he says, highlighting concert performances Nov. 3 at London's Royal Albert Hall and Nov. 14 at New York's Carnegie Hall. "We are working with the publisher and the management to arrange performances around the world."

In contrast to McCartney's contemporary piece, former Police frontman Sting resurrects 16th century music by Elizabethan songwriter John Dowland.

Sting calls Dowland "the first English singer/songwriter," saying in a statement: "For me they are pop songs written around 1600, and I relate to them in that way—beautiful melodies, fantastic lyrics and great accompaniments."

The album might not be considered "pop" in 2006, but that didn't stop it entering the OCC classical charts at No. 1 and the mainstream U.K. albums chart at No. 24. In the United States, "Songs From the Labyrinth" has sold

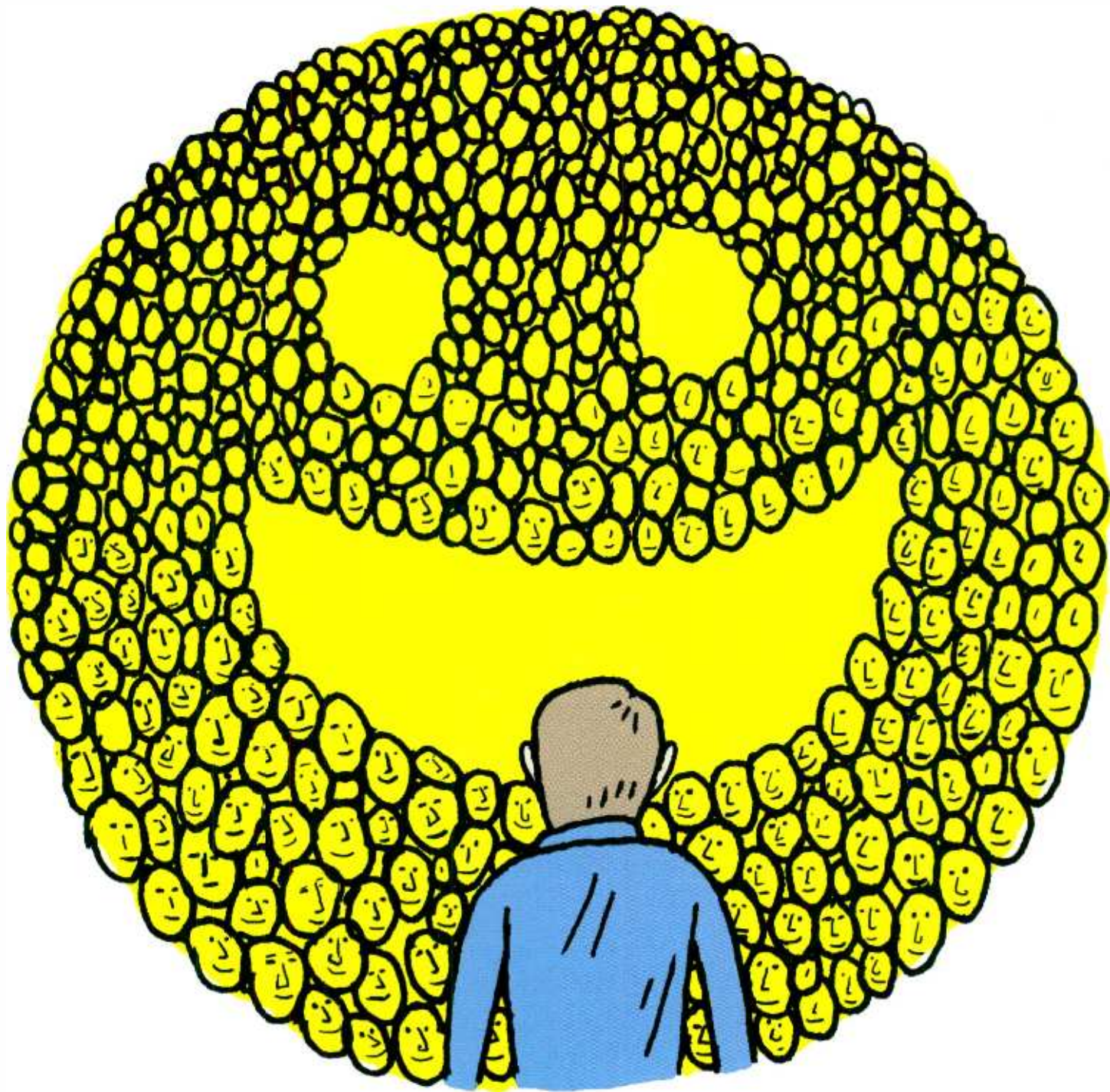
87,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It peaked at No. 25 on The Billboard 200 and at No. 1 on Top Classical Albums.

"It's the first time John Dowland has got anywhere near the top 10," Universal Classics and Jazz GM Dickon Stainer says. "I'm sure from somewhere beyond the grave he's very grateful."

Meanwhile, in recent weeks, metal stalwart Danzig's "Aria II" (EvilLive/Megaforce) has nested in the Classical Crossover chart's top 20. Danzig finds this weird. "I mean, I'm on the chart next to Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli," he says.

Danzig says fans discovered the new album's 1993 predecessor, "Black Aria"—which featured a disclaimer telling fans it wasn't a rock record—on their own, and told friends. So far, "Aria II" has scanned 4,000 units.

Danzig says he has often listened to classical music when he chills out. "The same things I like about Black Sabbath . . . I like about Wagner," he says. "Loud, heavy rock music is very similar to classical. Wagner was like a rock musician. There were riots at his shows." —Steve Adams



BIG LAUGHS, BIGGER BOX OFFICE

Touring Comedians As The New Rock Stars By Mitchell Peters

So, did you hear the one about why stand-up comedians are like Zamboni drivers?

They both clean up in hockey rinks!

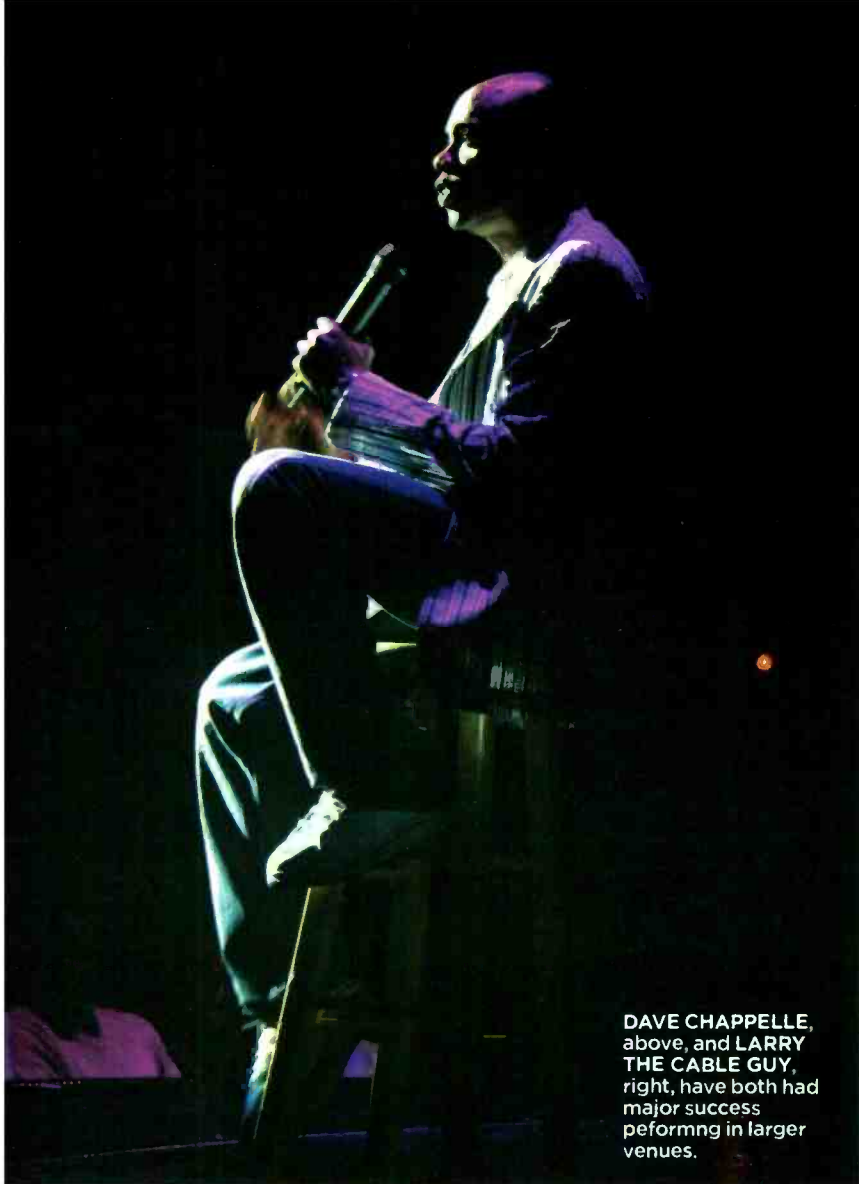
OK, so we won't quit our day jobs, but a growing number of comedians may, thanks to their explosive success in the touring world.

With heavy exposure through TV, films, the Internet and radio programming, along with a growing ability to target niche audiences, comics like Larry the Cable Guy, Dane Cook, Dave Chappelle and George Lopez are having major success performing in larger venues, from theaters and arenas to, yes, even hockey rinks.

With \$71.7 million reported in 2005, total gross dollars for live comedy have more than doubled in a five-year period, according to Billboard Boxscore. So far this year, more than \$66 million has been reported, with plenty of activity—and punchlines—still to come.

John Graham, director of the 17,000-seat Frank Erwin Center in Austin, says comics are taking a page from the rock'n'roll playbook by constantly revisiting the same markets to enlarge their fan bases, a process made easier thanks to social networking Web sites like MySpace. "These guys build this up the way rock acts used to, and by the time they're playing an arena, they have a solid foundation behind them," Graham says. "That gets catapulted into a whole new level if you have a television show like [George] Lopez or if you're on HBO or Comedy Central. That makes it a must-see thing."

Lopez, who co-created and stars in a self-titled ABC sitcom, can attest to TV's role in helping him sell out gigs in casinos, theaters, amphitheaters and arenas. Creative Artists Agency's Nick Nuciforo, who books Lopez's personal appearance dates, says, "The reach of television is allowing him to expand beyond the core Latin audience."



DAVE CHAPPELLE, above, and **LARRY THE CABLE GUY**, right, have both had major success performing in larger venues.



Another reason for stand-up's success in larger venues is that many fans are either too young to attend comedy clubs—or they simply don't want to. "As the consumer is getting older, I think they enjoy the experience better in a theater or larger venue," Nuciforo says. "Some of these demographics expand once [the comedian] becomes a concert act."

Others chalk up the rise of arena-level acts to simple hard work. According to Brian Dorfman, co-owner/operator of Nashville's 250-capacity Zanies Comedy Club, acts that succeed beyond the club circuit have done so for good reason. "Besides being funny, they've worked hard and have taken advantage of opportunities," he says. "The people who treat this as a job—eight hours a day and not just 45 minutes a night—usually go further in the business."

Indeed, before Larry the Cable Guy hit it big with the Blue Collar Comedy Tour, the comedian worked long after-hours to boost his popularity. "When [Larry the Cable Guy] was playing the clubs for \$1,500 a week, and when other comics were going out afterward and drinking and partying, he would go back to his hotel room and write for radio," Dorfman says, adding that the comedian always established one-to-one contact with fans. "He would stand outside of the merch table for an hour or two at the end of shows and thank every person for coming out." Larry still hosts meet-and-greets at nearly every concert. "Half the fun is meeting everyone at shows," the comic says.

Nuciforo predicts that within the next couple of years, live comedy will grow more internationally. "Right now we're seeing that interest grow at a very fast pace," the agent says, adding that Canadian comic Russell Peters has had major success in Singapore, the United Kingdom and Australia. In late spring, Larry the Cable Guy will head to Europe. Nuciforo says that exposure through MySpace, YouTube and syndicated U.S. TV are all factors that help spread the word overseas.

Two comedians to keep an eye out for are Lisa Lampanelli and Carlos Mencia. Outback Concerts president Michael Smardak, who books Larry the Cable Guy, says Lampanelli is the "next breaking act" and will tour

theaters next year, while Live Nation senior VP of touring Geoff Wills predicts Mencia, who stars in Comedy Central's "Mind of Mencia," can make the jump from large theaters to arenas.

Below, Billboard takes a closer look at five comedians making their presence felt well beyond the world of smoky clubs and two-drink minimums.

He is currently on the road (with his newborn riding along on the tour bus) and has dates scheduled through next October.

Larry The Cable Guy

Anybody wanting an appointment with Larry the Cable Guy better be prepared to wait in line. Along with touring—he has grossed more than \$13 million this year, according to Billboard Boxscore—the comic acts in films like "Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector" and the upcoming "Delta Farce." But his first priority is performing live.

"The other stuff is icing on the cake," he says. "I like being onstage in front of people because that's what I do best." For a show with an average ticket price of \$42.50, the comic tries to keep his live material fresh. "When I go back into a city," he says, "I make sure it's a ton of fresh material that keeps them wanting to come back."

Larry's good-ole-boy persona—some have instead called it racist or homophobic—is not every comedy connoisseur's cup of tea, but manager J.P. Williams says the comedian is a guilty pleasure for many. Indeed, Larry's last album, 2005's "The Right to Bare Arms," debuted in the top 10 of The Billboard 200, scanning more than 90,000 copies in its first week; at the time, it was the first comedy album to debut in the top 10. "People want to laugh because they're so sick and tired of not being able to say something funny without somebody getting offended," Williams says. "There are a lot of people who watch porn that don't tell you they watch porn, and there are a lot of people who are Larry the Cable Guy fans that don't want you to know they're Larry the Cable Guy fans."

Larry took his live act to Canada for the first time this year, and Williams says, "We knocked it so far out of the park it blew our minds," citing crowds ranging from 13,000 to 15,000 a night in Calgary and Edmonton. In late spring of 2007, Larry will head to Europe.

Dave Chappelle

It's well-known that Dave Chappelle rejected a \$50 million offer from Comedy Central to continue production of his popular TV series, "Chappelle's Show." Live Nation's Wills, who produces almost all of Chappelle's live dates in the United States and Canada, remembers meeting Chappelle when the comedian was an 18-year-old doing stand-up in clubs. "Believe it or not, way back when, we had a crappy-ass tour with him," Wills says.

But those days are long over. In 2006, Chappelle grossed \$2.3 million from 11 shows reported to Billboard Boxscore. The year prior, he grossed slightly more than \$2 million for seven reported gigs. Wills says the comic prefers performing in smaller venues, but has already sold out several arenas this year. "He's typically much happier with his show and the rapport he has with the audience when he's in an 1,800-seater," he says. "We could get a much higher ticket price, but he doesn't want to. He's very cognizant and sensitive about who his fans are."

Dorfman says Chappelle is "one of the hardest-working comedians I've seen, and that's why he succeeds." On many occasions, the club owner has observed Chappelle perform in a large venue earlier in the night, then follow with an unannounced late-night show at a smaller comedy club. "He'll do a midnight show in countless markets just because he loves the clubs," Dorfman says.

Future touring plans for Chappelle were unknown at press time. Rick Greenstein, the comedian's booking agent at the Gersh Agency, declined to comment for this article.

George Lopez

In December 2004, Lopez sold out seven consecutive performances at Universal City, Calif.'s Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal Citywalk, drawing 42,000 fans



GEORGE LOPEZ says he decided to raise ticket prices for bigger venues, because of the larger draw he was getting. His tickets now run from \$80 to more than \$100.



DANE COOK sold out a Nov. 12 show at New York's Madison Square Garden within nine days of its on-sale and added a second show for later that night.

and grossing \$2.3 million, according to Bob Shea, senior VP of talent at House of Blues Concerts. "It speaks volumes for George's popularity," Shea says, noting the shows hold the record for live comedy at the amphitheater. The comedian will revisit the amphitheater this winter after performing theater and arena dates throughout November and December. "He's the king. Watch what he does at the Gibson this year," Live Nation's Wills says. "I think he'll end up playing eight shows."

Lopez admits that, compared with most comedians, his tickets aren't cheap. "Mine are \$80 to over \$100. Economically, we decided to raise the price for the bigger [venues] because of the larger draw I was getting," he says, "but also to get the respect as a major concert attraction and not just a comedy show." Lopez says his brand of comedy appeals to fans beyond the Latino community. "Because of the television show it's more white, African-American and Asian," he says.

Nuciforo says Lopez will continue touring throughout 2007, but the comedian, who in September released the Oglia Records album "El Mas Chingon," says he could eventually step away from stand-up. "It is more aggressive now, and I'm not that aggressive of a dude," Lopez says. "At some point I'd actually like to move away from it and produce more and act in movies, and be more of an identity on TV and in products."

Dane Cook

In mid-April of this year, with no advertising whatsoever, Dane Cook sold out back-to-back performances

(one of which was filmed for the HBO special "Vicious Circle") at Boston's TD Banknorth Garden, says manager Barry Katz, an executive at New Wave Entertainment. Together the shows grossed \$2.1 million and drew nearly 36,000 fans, according to Billboard Boxscore. Katz, a former comedian and comedy industry vet, says for any individual to move up in his or her career, "you have to do things where people say, 'Holy shit, I can't believe this just happened.' Dane Cook is where he is now because he is a 'holy-shit-moment' kind of comedian."

Cook's box-office and album sales numbers attest to that. His July 2005 album "Retaliation," released on Comedy Central's label, has sold 923,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The comedian also sold out a Nov. 12 show at New York's Madison Square Garden within nine days of its on-sale and added a second show for later that night, which was also expected to sell out, Katz says.

Then there is the comedian's popular HBO series "Dane Cook's Tourgasm." The weekly documentary-style show, which premiered June 11, follows Cook and fellow comics Gary Gulman, Jay Davis and Robert Kelly through stand-up gigs in college theaters around the country. "Dane came to me and said, 'I want to do 20 shows in 30 days,'" Katz says. "The key to Dane is thinking outside the box."

Cook recently starred alongside Jessica Simpson in the film "Employee of the Month" and has numerous film projects in the works. Katz says the comic doesn't have shows booked beyond the Garden gigs, but notes there will definitely be a 2007 tour. "[The shows] will all be NBA arenas in the round," he says.

Ron White

With a cigar in one hand and a cocktail in the other, Ron "Tater Salad" White is selling out casinos, theaters and amphitheatres nationwide. This year, White grossed \$3 million for 35 performances, according to Billboard Boxscore. In 2005, the comedian grossed \$6.6 million for 57 reported shows. "Ron prefers to go into a town with a 2,400- or 2,500-seat theater and do two shows, versus going to an arena and doing 5,000 or 6,000," says manager John MacDonald of MacDonald-Murray Management. "For him it's a better experience. He thinks it's a better way to see comedy."

White, who delivers his act with a storytelling style, skipped several steps in going from a nightclub headliner to performing in theaters because of his affiliation with the Blue Collar Comedy Tour, back in 2000. These days, he performs about 125 days per year. The comedian has particular success in the Northwest, but has played "everywhere from New York City to Dothan, Ala.," MacDonald says. White has also enjoyed big support from syndicated radio shows like "Bob & Tom" and "John Boy & Billy." "When you can go on one of those shows and reach many cities quickly, it makes a big difference," MacDonald says.

Along with doing stand-up on the road, White is pitching an animated series to networks and has been auditioning for small roles in films, MacDonald says. Jim Gosnell, president/CEO at the Agency for the Performing Arts, adds, "When the right thing comes around that [White] feels comfortable with and he has time to do, I'm sure he'll do it." ♦♦♦



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SPECIAL FEATURE

DIGITAL WRAP-UP

New Choices Abound In Consumer Electronics And Digital Entertainment For The Holiday Season

BY ANTONY BRUNO

As attention turns to the holiday season, consumer electronics and digital entertainment products again rise to the top of must-have items on any savvy gift list.

Consumer spending on electronics gifts is expected to reach \$21 billion during the holiday-spending spree, a 21% jump from the \$17 billion spent on consumer electronics last holiday season, according to the Consumer Electronics Assn.

For the second year in a row, MP3 players topped the consumer electronic wish list for gifts among both adults and teens, according to a CEA poll. And this year is especially interesting.

Apple Computer is expected to retain dominance over the portable media market with its new line of iPods and online movie download service. But the company also faces its greatest competition yet from Rhapsody, SanDisk and Microsoft. Even the satellite radio providers are jumping into the portable player game.

The result: more choices for consumers and hopefully more marketing behind these new products as well. NPD predicts portable media players will exceed the \$497 million they generated in 2005.

Also affecting the holiday landscape is the long-awaited introduction of two new videogame consoles: Sony's PlayStation 3 and Nintendo's Wii (pronounced "we").

Following the launch by Microsoft of the Xbox 360 last year, all three new platforms will compete at once this season.

Finally, wireless operators aggressively get in the game as well. Music- and video-enabled mobile phones are expected to lead the marketing push this holiday season, as Sprint, Verizon and Cingular push entertainment initiatives.

With that, Billboard counts down 10 top digital entertainment products and categories for the 2006 holiday season.

NINTENDO WII

The dark horse of the next-generation consoles is Nintendo, which looks to climb out of the market-share cellar with its Wii platform.

The demo wowed users at this year's Electronics Entertainment Expo, generating the longest lines at the show to try out the innovative system. The greatest buzz is over the Wii's controller, which essentially is a wand that players can wave around to control the action on the screen.

Nintendo systems and games traditionally are better-known as being more suitable for children, but the Wii is positioned as much more of a grown-up product. At \$250, half as much as the cheapest PlayStation 3, there's certainly a good chance that Nintendo can eat into Sony's dominance.

Unlike the PS3, fewer shortages are expected. The company plans to ship 4 million of the devices by the end of the year. Unlike the PS3, the Wii is aimed not at hard-core gamers, but rather at videogame newcomers, with both the lower price and easier-to-play games.

IPODS AND ITUNES

Whether it's the new line of Nanos, the new-and-improved video iPod or the new iTunes Movie service, Apple's digital entertainment products break new ground each year.

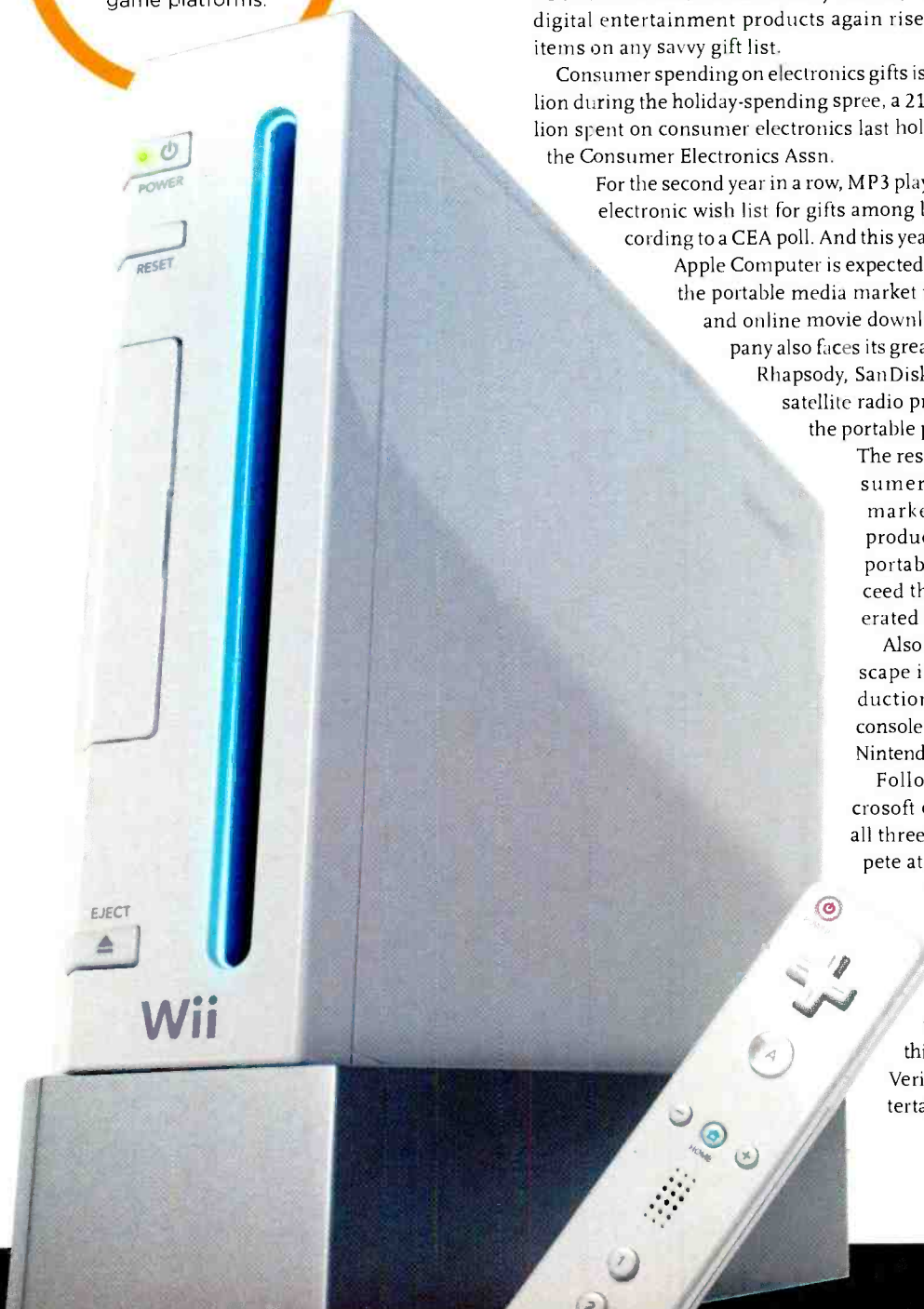
Apple's best-selling Nano line has undergone a makeover, featuring a thinner design, better display and battery life, and a range of five colors available in 2GB (\$150), 4GB (\$200) and 8GB (\$250). Additionally, the revamped video iPod holds a whopping 8GB of capacity, good for 20,000 songs, 25,000 photos or 100 hours of video, and features a brighter screen that now supports casual games downloaded from iTunes. And the iPod Shuffle has been downsized.

But this year all eyes are on whether Apple's Midas touch will extend to downloading movies to the iPod as well. The company has begun selling full-length movies from Disney divisions Pixar, Touchstone and Miramax for \$10 a pop.

SIRIUS STILETTO

Satellite radio providers unleashed the ire of the music industry with the introduction of portable receivers that doubled as **continued on >>p32**

Nintendo Wii's innovative wand will help it compete against other new game platforms.





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from >>p29

MP3 players and allowed users to record and store individual songs from the radio stream. The satcasters called it "timeshifting." Labels called it stealing.

But Sirius Satellite Radio struck a deal with the labels to avoid a lawsuit, and the result is the Stiletto 100, which can store up to 100 hours of broadcast music or 10 hours of individual songs. Favorite songs can be separated from the mix by pressing a "Love" button on the device and later bought from Yahoo Music using a bookmarking function.

The device also allows users to pause and rewind up to an hour of programming. If no satellite signal is available, the Stiletto has a Wi-Fi connection, so users can continue streaming music from the Internet.

SONOS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM

The next battleground for the digital music customer may likely be the home, and few competitors are better lined up to take advantage of this than Sonos. Its high-end digital music system lets users stream music stored on their PCs through their home-entertainment system and/or powered speakers using an existing Wi-Fi wireless home network.

The modular system allows users to stream different songs in separate rooms at the same time, all controlled via a high-tech, large-screened remote control that lets users view each room simultaneously.

This fall, Sonos introduced a new version of the system that can connect directly to the Rhapsody digital music service. This allows users to stream music directly from the Internet without the need for a PC, although a Rhapsody subscription is still necessary.

ZUNE

There is going to be a lot of noise this holiday around the latest attempt to take a bite out of Apple's market share—Microsoft's Zune. The combination device and service is backed with a marketing campaign valued in the hundreds of millions, as Microsoft aims to set the Zune apart as a community-based music-sharing experience.

The 30GB device most notably features a wireless connection that lets users immediately share songs with one another. Shared songs can be played three times and stored for up to three days before users are prompted to either buy the track or subscribe to the Zune service for unlimited listening.

The debate rages over how big a draw this functionality will be, but already Microsoft has succeeded in capturing a great deal of awareness over the product, something Apple is accustomed to having all to itself.

SANSA RHAPSODY

From nowhere, SanDisk has emerged to become the second-biggest seller of MP3 players with its Sansa, boasting a market share of slightly less than 20%. The company hopes to make an even bigger dent this holiday with a unique marketing ménage à trois along with RealNetwork's Rhapsody service and big-box retailer Best Buy.

Don't discount the ability for big retailers like Best Buy to make a real difference here. Retailers aren't big fans of the iPod because they make little or no money on each sale due to Apple's revenue sharing/profit margins.

SONY PLAYSTATION 3

After many delays and technical difficulties, the much anticipated PlayStation 3 is available at retailers in North America. The videogame console features not only the most advanced graphics display and processing power yet, it also has Internet connectivity, a 20GB or 60GB hard drive, and doubles as a Blu-ray DVD player.

But it doesn't come cheap at \$500 for the basic version and \$600 for the more advanced unit. Additionally, available games for the system could run as high as \$75, including launch titles "Metal Gear Solid 4," "Killzone," "Devil May Cry" and "Final Fantasy."

Almost everyone expects a major distribution shortage throughout the holiday season, similar to what occurred during the Xbox 360 launch. Game retailer GameStop had a preorder window on Oct. 10, and all 3,500 stores sold out within minutes. The company expects to ship about 2 million devices by the end of the year.

LOGITECH WIRELESS DJ MUSIC SYSTEM

Another home music-streaming service comes from Logitech. Unlike the Sonos, which relies on a Wi-Fi wireless connection to stream music, the Logitech Wireless DJ Music System uses Bluetooth technology to extend the PC's soundcard to speakers. This means that users must play music on their PCs for the audio to extend to the speakers.

One drawback is that users then can't play different songs in different rooms. The advantage, however, is that it works with iTunes, something the Sonos system can't do.

Past versions of Logitech's system required users to be at their computer to pause, stop or play songs. The new system features a remote control.

MOBILE PHONES

No gadget wrap-up would be complete without mention of the new generation of mobile phones, which this year packs a bigger multimedia punch than ever. A number of music industry experts believes the mobile phone will eventually replace the iPod and other stand-alone music players as the portable device of choice.

While that will take some time, music is expected to be the defining sales driver for phones this holiday season, just like camera phones were two years ago.

The more notable devices:

- Verizon Wireless' Chocolate, from manufacturer LG. Verizon has positioned Chocolate as the flagship handset for its VCast Music Store and is heavily marketing the hardware in print, TV and radio.
- Sprint Nextel's Samsung a920. Hardly the sexy name of the Chocolate, but the a930 features surprisingly clear external speakers and works very well with Sprint's Music Store.
- Nokia's N80, positioned not as a phone but a "portable computer" by the Finnish handset king, the N80 includes an FM radio receiver and a miniSD memory card slot. It also boasts a Wi-Fi wireless connection that among other things will let users stream music and video directly off their home PCs via special software from Orb Networks.

BLUE-RAY/HD-DVD PLAYERS

The first round of high-definition DVD players will hit retail shelves this year, although with steep price points.

Cooling the market a bit is the ongoing standards war, with Sony leading the charge for the Blu-ray format, while Microsoft and Toshiba rally the flag for the HD-DVD format. Also stunting immediate mass adoption are the prices, expected to average around \$800.

In the Blu-ray camp are Sony, Panasonic, Philips, Samsung, Pioneer, Sharp, JVC, Hitachi, Mitsubishi, TDK, Thomson, LG, Apple, HP and Dell. The HD-DVD camp consists of far fewer manufacturers, but has the support of most major movie studios.

The benefits of these next-generation DVD systems are fairly straightforward: better storage, clearer pictures and better digital rights management. But with the entertainment market moving increasingly toward digital delivery, the future of even the most sophisticated physical distribution format seems a bit limited.

Such music players as (clockwise from top) the **Nokia N80**, **Sansa** and **Logitech DJ** system will lure buyers during the holidays.



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NORTEÑO ICONS LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE HAVE

an unbreakable rule. If anyone in their respective families has a special occasion to celebrate and they want them to be there, the celebration has to be in June.

That is the only month of the year in which the five brothers get a break from touring or promotion. Otherwise Los Tigres are doing a marathon of weekend shows, weekday promotion and recording that, through three decades, has yielded album sales of more than 30 million copies.

Such is the life of the regional Mexican star. While other genres of Latin music have cycles of peaks and valleys, regional Mexican music is an endless train of activity, seamlessly linking a constant supply of albums—typically one studio set per year plus catalog reissues—with a constant stream of shows.

The achievements and challenges of artists and executives in the genre will be in the spotlight as Billboard debuts its Regional Mexican Music Summit Nov. 13-14 at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles.

Driven by an expanding and extremely loyal customer base, regional Mexican music has, for years now, been the best-selling subgenre of Latin music, accounting for more than 50% of all Latin music sales in the United States.

This remains true even in the face of a particularly trying nine months for the genre.

For the first time since 2003, the year in which the RIAA started tracking Latin music sales by genre, regional Mexican sales are down.

According to preliminary RIAA numbers, total unit sales, after shipments, dipped from 15.9 million units for the first six months of 2005 to 11 million for the first six months of 2006.

The 30% drop was particularly felt in the second quarter, and is overwhelmingly attributed to a troubled economy, a spike in gasoline prices and a surge of anti-immigrant sentiment that has many of the genre's target audience leery of spending or going out.

Now, however, labels and artists say they are beginning to see a change in the air.

"We've seen returns stabilize, and I think there's confidence returning," says José Behar, president/CEO of Latin market-share leader Univision Music Group, which owns Univision Music, Fonovisa and Disa, the biggest regional Mexican music labels in the market.

"And that's based on what I'm actually seeing, not a gut feeling," Behar says. "Regional Mexican music continues to be good business. It is a very, very consistent genre."

Already, the Billboard charts are starting to show the difference.

While reggaetón titles have dominated the top 10 slots on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart since the beginning of the year, for the week ending Oct. 31, there were three regional Mexican titles in the top 10, including Intocable's "Crossroads," debuting at No. 1, and Marco Antonio Solís' "Trazos de Mi Alma 2," which was No. 1 the week before.

A new album by duranguense group K-Paz de la Sierra, due Nov. 14, is also expected to debut in the top five, while a slew of big regional Mexican albums, including titles by Los Temerarios, Conjunto Primavera and Alfredo Ramirez, are slotted for first-quarter 2007.

Likewise, even if sales of front-line catalog have dipped, regional Mexican music has sustained itself through the year thanks to strong movement of budget and mid-price lines of product that mine its deep catalog.

"People want more bang for their buck," says Freddie Martínez Jr., VP of indie Freddie Records. This year, he says, Freddie began putting out its new "Antología" series, a double-disc format of 30 tracks.

Other labels, like Disa, are also putting out similarly long collections.

"I tried to make this a really special retrospective career package of Ramón Ayala," Martínez says. "Initially, sales were just so-so. But once the public became aware of its release, it suddenly caught on like wildfire. We were very aggressive in the retail promotion and that's what helped us really push it over the top."

Martínez says he's close to submitting for RIAA Latin platinum certification, for shipments of 400,000. He has already released "Antologías" by Los Terribles del Norte and Little Joe, among others.

Likewise, Sony BMG has struck gold with a series of double-discs titled "La Historia," which the label promotes via infomercials.

Univision has been successful with its budget "Linea de Oro" releases and its mid-price "Nuestra Historia" releases. For a long time, Univision also benefited from a CD/DVD audio format that it has now largely forgone in favor of the double-disc format and a new CD/DVD configuration where the DVD offers additional video content rather than high-resolution audio.

Such is the case with Los Tigres del Norte's recently released "La Banda del Carro Rojo," which includes a CD of music from and inspired by the movie and a DVD of the film.

Mining the catalog, Behar says, requires finding the right format for the moment. "You have to go about it the right way," he says. "It really is a science."

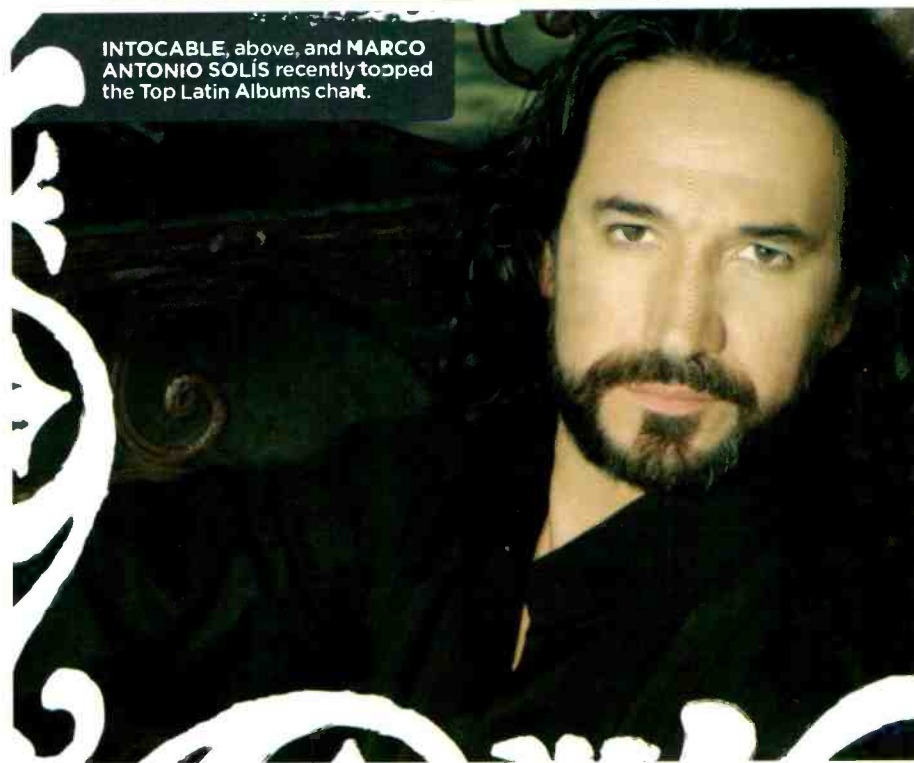
One of the reasons Disa Records stopped releasing the CD/DVD combos that included videos, for example, is because cost became an issue.

"There was a \$3-\$4 difference in the price for a few videos," says Francisco Rosales, national director of sales and marketing. "And the consumer is more price-conscious. We've seen an increase in our catalog, especially lower-priced titles."

Pricing, many in the industry say, has become increasingly important to the regional



INTOCABLE, above, and MARCO ANTONIO SOLÍS recently topped the Top Latin Albums chart.



Mexican consumer in particular.

Many of the people that buy regional Mexican music are immigrants who often work minimum-wage jobs that require them to drive for long stretches. When gasoline prices hit their high several months ago, "the way I saw it, it was a CD for every fill-up," one executive says. "That's a lot of discretionary income."

Labels are also looking at new ways of promotion to move product. EMI Televisa, for example, has begun to promote CDs directly at its artists' shows.

"We're going directly to where the audience is," says Miguel Garrocho, senior marketing director of EMI Televisa. With Los Originales de San Juan, for example, EMI had leader Chuy Chavez sign fliers with the album cover at the end of the show to encourage fans to buy the album.

Promotions tied to touring are smart because regional Mexican bands tour relentlessly, despite an anti-immigration climate in some parts of the country.

"The rise in gas prices and the immigration issues, they pressed on the market," says José Angel Medina, leader of duranguense group Patrulla 81. "But we really think this will pass."

Patrulla 81, for example, continues to play approximately 100 shows per year in the United States alone. So do Los Tigres del Norte.

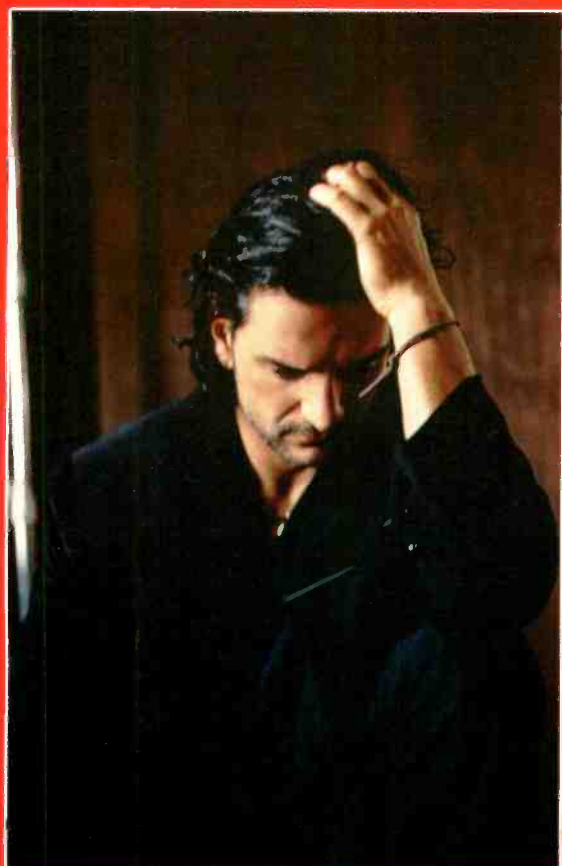
In the meantime, labels keep seeking the next big regional Mexican thing. Many are looking at the romantic banda of the likes of Mariano Barba or the música sierrana—also called música de guitarras—of the likes of Los Cuen de Sianloa or Los Alegres de la Sierra, where the sound is driven by acoustic guitars, compared with more electronic duranguense music that has been the rage for the past three years.

And, there have been multiple success stories in the year, including noteworthy debuts by the likes of Los Elegidos (on Fonovisa), establishment names like Jenni Rivera (Fonovisa), such breakout bands as Alacranes Musical (Univision) and duranguense stalwarts like K-Paz de la Sierra, Patrulla 81 and Horoscopos de Durango.

"The regional Mexican market has grown so much, it's like the stock market," says Jeff Young, senior VP of sales and marketing for Disa. "When it grows so much there has to be a correction. But I have a feeling that 2007 can be a very great year again. I think we're going to turn this around."

—Leila Cobo

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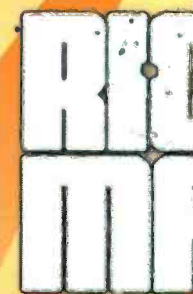


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Renown Band Members To Speak At Billboard's Regional Mexican Music Summit

After more than three decades of performing and more than 32 million albums sold, Los Tigres del Norte embody everything that is hip and traditional about regional Mexican music. ■ In a marketplace overflowing with norteño bands, Los Tigres del Norte reign as cool elder statesmen who not only make music but speak fearlessly for their fans, tackling just about any subject—from immigration reform to drug trafficking to politics—in their legendary corridos. ■ Given their status in the regional Mexican world and beyond, the members of Los Tigres del Norte have been selected for the featured Q&A slot at Billboard's first Regional Mexican Music Summit taking place Nov. 13-14 in Los Angeles. ■ Billboard spoke with Los Tigres following the release of their latest album, "La Banda del Carro Rojo," out on their longtime label Fonovisa Records.

You routinely perform abroad, not only throughout Latin America but in places like Japan, France and Germany. And yet your music is very Mexican. What is the connection?

Jorge Hernández: Each country has its own stories, but they coincide with the ones we live here. Our stories are very real. We sing about social issues. We sing [about] politics, drama, religion, cumbia, merequetengues, boleros, ballads. We are a bit of everything, so we have a direct link with the audience.

Mexico recently went through a political soap opera with the presidential election. Will that become a Tigres song?

JH: There is a lot to tell about what's happening in Mexico, and we'll document it as close to reality as possible.

Sometimes songs are recorded too quickly after the facts. But we always try to wait until the end of the story to really know what we'll sing about. In this case, since the



LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE



PHOTOGRAPH BY SEBASTIAN ARTZ

new album is set for release in March, we still have time to see the outcome.

You have a reputation for being truthful to your songs and for voicing what others can't say. This is a big responsibility, isn't it?

Hernán Hernández: Our songs have to do with how we live and how people around us live. In the United States, we lived the experience of being illegal immigrants. Then we became legal. But all those experiences help us sing the truth to our people. That we suffer to get here, that we suffer in our home countries. That's why most of us come here, no? Because we want to improve, we want to help our own, and the music of Los Tigres has a lot of that.

Is it frustrating to see that 30 years later so many people are still going through that very same struggle?

Luis Hernández: Many people have been here for years and can't become legal, even though we only want a better life for our families, for those who came with us or maybe those who stayed behind.

The marches and other peaceful demonstrations we've been doing help us advance slowly but surely. And through our songs, I think we can motivate people in the good sense of the word, so they fight for their rights.

Your current album, "La Banda del Carro Rojo," includes the famous corrido "Contrabando y Traición" with the character Camelia la Tejana. Who was she?

JH: The songwriter, Angel González, told us a little bit about this woman who lived in the Los Angeles area who was very daring and strong.

But the most beautiful aspect is it's a love story. There was drug trafficking involved with her boyfriend, Emilio Varela. They left San Isidro from Tijuana, and crossed the border with drugs inside the tires of their car. But it was a love story. When he tells her he doesn't want to be with her anymore, she's destroyed and thinks, "If you're not with me, you're not with anyone." And that's when she decides to kill him.

Spanish novelist Arturo Perez Reverte took Camelia's story and turned it into his best-selling book, "La Reina del Sur," where the character was renamed Teresa la Mexicana. How did that come about?

JH: Arturo Perez Reverte told us he was at a bar in Mexico City the first time he heard the song and began to investigate its origins. He came to us and spent some time in the state of Culiacán documenting the story of Camelia and created the character of Teresa la Mexicana.

What is the biggest change you've seen in regional Mexican music since you started in 1973?

JH: We've seen the rise of many, many different groups with different styles. Of course, different genres crop up, like duranguense. But norteño music has very strong roots. In our case, Los Tigres have always remained faithful to our style. We've always been very careful about what we record. That we actually have something to say. And we've always tried to have our music be respected, accessible to all social groups.

What is the story behind the name Los Tigres del Norte?

JH: When we were little, we went to Mexicali in Baja California to live with an aunt. We were already playing as a group. One day, singer Tito Guizar asked us on stage. His agent invited us to the United States to play a gig at a prison in Soledad, Calif. They got us passports to travel, and when we got to immigration, the agent asked for the name of our group and we didn't have one.

So, we asked him to name us. He said, "In this country, we affectionately call children 'little tigers,' so I'll name you the Little Tigers of the North." And then he thought about it and said, "You'll be growing up, so I'll call you the Tigers of the North," and that's what he put on our paperwork.

We then finally reached Northern California and began to work, and we kept that name, Los Tigres del Norte.

—Leila Cobo

AN ENDURING CATALOG

Regional Mexican Songs Show Perennial Appeal

IF YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING

Billboard's Hot Latin Songs chart for the past few weeks, you'll have seen two tracks by Marco Antonio Solís among the top 25. The first, "Antes de Que Te Vayas," is from his new album, "Trozos de Mi Alma 2." The second, "Que Vuelva," was recorded by Grupo Montez de Durango in pasito duranguense style.

Both songs were penned years ago, and are now once again seeing the light of day in new versions.

They exemplify the durability and innovation of regional Mexican song catalogs, even as the genre's publishing business itself undergoes a dramatic change from its traditional model.

"It's still a market where artists and audience have an extraordinary pact of fidelity," says Nestor Casonú, regional managing director of Latin America and U.S. Latin for EMI Music Publishing. "It goes back through generations, who need to stay close to the music of their parents and grandparents, and it goes all the way down to new generations, who continue that tradition."

At a business level, however, the tradition has changed, with more and more writers and publishers attempting to formalize a business that for a long time relied on personal relationships and handshakes.

"The regional Mexican composer is no longer a little farmer from a little [village] who sends his little song on a tape recorder to see what happens," says Edmundo Monroy, GM of Vander Music Group/Edimusa Publishing. "He's a knowledgeable guy. He travels. He visits different labels. We've had to innovate the business to give him what he needs."

That means not simply paying for a song, but working out creative administration or co-publishing deals, as an increasing number of regional Mexican artists, managers and producers launch their own publishing companies.

For example, Warner/Chappell Music Latin America is in the midst of negotiations with producer Jesús Guillén—who also handles Conjunto Primavera—to establish a joint venture to develop and place new and established writers.

Warner closed a similar deal this year with José Luis Terrazas, the leader of Grupo Montez de Durango, who writes and signs other writers to his company. Other major acts that have their own publishing ventures include Banda El Recodo, Intocable and Los Tigres del Norte.

"What I see is an increasing institutionalizing of the business," says Gustavo Menéndez, regional managing director of Warner/Chappell

Music Latin America. "People definitely see [regional Mexican] as a big business.

"One of our priorities is to broaden that catalog," Menéndez adds.

A look at revenue from the collecting societies shows that regional Mexican music is the dominant force, much as it is in sales.

At ASCAP, senior VP of Latin membership Alexandra Lioutikoff calculates that regional Mexican accounts for approximately 40% of her revenue, more than any other Latin genre. This is despite the fact that regional Mexican's power has waned a bit in the past year, buffeted by the inroads made by reggaetón and by the fallout from anti-immigration measures that have made many buyers leery of going to record stores or dances.

For this very reason, companies like Univision Music Publishing are making a concerted effort to expand sales of regional Mexican beyond the traditional physical formats.

"We are definitely transitioning to a digital format," says Nestor Rodriguez, the company's VP of administration. "Of course, this is a slow process, and it will take several years for the technology to become more accessible to the buyer of this music."

Univision last year created a new technology department that focuses on mobile, music placement in film, karaoke, jukeboxes and digital downloads.

Despite the changes surrounding the regional Mexican publishing business, much of it continues to defy convention.

Among the top Mexican writers so far this year, according to data from Billboard's regional Mexican airplay charts, the top five writers in the genre include two stalwarts: Joan Sebastian and Solís.

Sebastian, who charted with songs recorded by him and with a cover by Jenni Rivera, is administered by Edimusa. But Solís administers his own catalog and says he has no plans to change that.

In contrast, Cuauhtemoc González, the lead singer for tierra caliente band Beto y Sus Canarios, and the writer of two of the group's hits, "No Puedo Olvidarte" and "Pensando en Ti," has his publishing signed through his label, Disa Records.

Likewise, the other newcomer to the quintet of top regional Mexican writers, Mariano Barba, also has his publishing signed through his label, indie Three Sound Music.

Another top songwriter, Jaime Velázquez Aguilar, who has charted thanks to two songs recorded by Montez de Durango, actually wrote those songs years ago for his own group, Los Super Sol. (He now belongs to Los Dueños del Sol.)

The fact that the tracks, relatively unknown in the United States, were rediscovered and made hits in a different format, underscores duranguense's penchant for the proven. A good chunk of all duranguense albums are covers, both of regional Mexican songs as well as pop standards, a fact that has breathed new life into regional Mexican standards.

"Regional Mexican is a constant," Lioutikoff says. "Other genres, if you have a new hit, you make money. But with regional Mexican it's always steady."

—Leila Cobo

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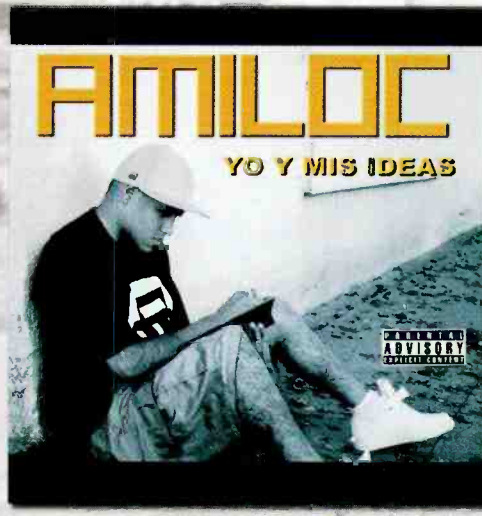
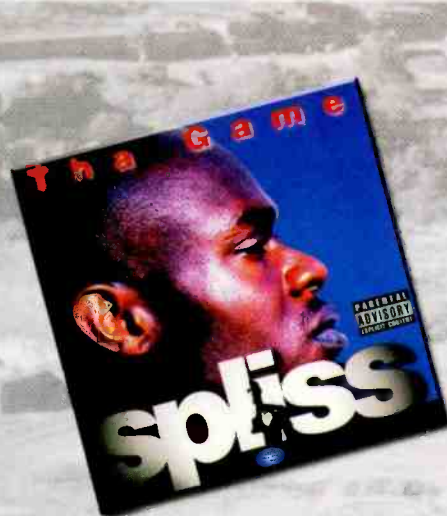
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ARTISTS ON TAP

Who's Who Among Summit Performers And Panelists

Artists representing all subgenres of regional Mexican music will be at the forefront of Billboard's inaugural Regional Mexican Music Summit, which takes place Nov. 13-14 in Los Angeles. ■ Artists will perform at the opening-night showcase and will also be featured speakers throughout the day's activities. ■ Here's a look at who's who at the summit:

LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE

Los Tigres del Norte, aka Los Jefes de Jefes (The Chiefs of Chiefs), are widely regarded as the premier norteño group in the marketplace.

With a 35-year career that spans more than 30 studio albums, 32 million albums sold, multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards, one platinum album (for 1 million copies sold of "Jefe de Jefes") and eight gold albums (for sales of more than half a million copies each in the United States alone), Los Tigres del Norte are not just another popular musical act.

Instead, they're widely viewed as the voice of the people, capable of making you dance to a cumbia one instant, weep the next with a woeful immigrant's tale or grip the edge of your seat as bullets whiz by the heads of drug dealers and heroes immortalized in their songs. And if everything they sing about rings true, that's because it is.

"Since the beginning of our career, we've sung what people live, what's currently happening," bass player Hernán Hernández says. "And the audience themselves gives us the stories. They're the ones who say, 'Sing about this. No one else dares to do so.'"

With so many stories to tell, it is fitting that Los Tigres del Norte will be the featured Q&A act at the inaugural summit. The "Interview With History" takes place Nov. 14.

ALACRANES MUSICAL

Together since 1996, duranguense group Alacranes Musical first broke ground in 2004 when it signed with Univision Music Group and its album "A Cambio De Qué?" rose to No. 4 on Billboard's Regional Mexican chart.

Since then, Alacranes Musical has been on a roll, and earlier this year, it achieved a double coup.

In January, a greatest-hits album, "Simplemente Lo Mejor," de-



BANDA EL LIMÓN, playing opening night, traces its roots to the 1960s.

buted at No. 1 on the same chart. Six months later, new studio album "A Paso Firme" did the same.

With its lead members born in Chicago to parents from Durango, Mexico, Alacranes Musical strays from standard duranguense fare by incorporating more brass, including sax and tuba, and by experimenting with other styles, like ballads and hip-hop.

"We want to show our audience that we are well-rounded musicians," singer Guillermo Ibarra says. "We are not only about duranguense, but also about opening new doors."

Alacranes Musical will headline the opening-night showcase.

LA ARROLLADORA BANDA EL LIMÓN

With a history that dates back to the 1960s, La Arrolladora Banda El Limón takes its name from Limón, a small town in the Mexican state of Sinaloa. Founded and led by René Camacho, the band is an institution with more than 25 studio albums to its name.

The 17-man troupe has served as a training ground for some of the leading acts in the genre, including singers Julio Preciado and José Angel Ledesma, who both launched solo careers after stints with the group.

After signing with Disa Records in 2002, El Limón began to export its sound into the United States and landed its first Billboard chart entry with a live album, "En Vivo."

El Limón is currently promoting "La Otra Cara de la Moneda," also on Disa.

The act performs Nov. 13 at the opening-night showcase.

GRACIELA BELTRÁN

Considered one of regional Mexican music's premier voices, Graciela Beltrán, aka La Reina del Pueblo (The People's Queen), has been singing professionally since she was a mere 6 years old.

A versatile singer who is equally at home with banda, ranchera and ballads, Beltrán released her first album in 1989 and recorded 10 discs before signing with EMI. Her first album on the label, 1995's "Tesoro," spent 26 weeks on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart.

Since then, Beltrán has charted nine albums. Now signed to Univision Music Group (led by José Behar, who originally signed Beltrán to EMI), Beltrán's most recent studio album is "Rancherísimas Con Banda," which debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Regional Mexican chart earlier this year. Bel-

GRACIELA BELTRÁN, also known as La Reina del Pueblo (the People's Queen) plays the opening-night showcase.



trán performs at the opening-night showcase.

CARLA DE LEÓN

A California baby, Carla de León made her professional debut at 9 years old, performing at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. Her first album was "Para Qué Quiero Rosas," produced by Rubén Polanco. It was followed by "Al Ritmo de la Tambora" and later, a mariachi album, "El Sueño Americano." Her current release, "Como Una Leona," is out on La Sierra Records/Cima Road Records. De León performs Nov. 13 at the opening-night showcase.

LOS HURACANES DEL NORTE

Chart-toppers Los Huracanes del Norte are one of the leading norteño groups in the world. The group has maintained its star status thanks to constant innovation and an infusion of new members in its ranks. Los Huracanes del Norte is also one of the few regional Mexican groups that has been as actively involved in digital endeavors. Participating in the digital music panel will be saxophonist Guadalupe "Lupe" García.

GRUPO IMÁN

Romantic sextet Grupo Imán is billed as a norteño group with youthful appeal and youthful members; lead singer José Angel Cortez is only 18 years old.

But the band already has five albums to its name, including the recently released "Frente a Frente" on Univision Records.

Grupo Imán has been gaining further traction thanks to a string of 40 shows opening for icon Conjunto Primavera.

LOS NIETOS

Youthful trio Los Nietos began in 2000 at a family party in Sinaloa, Mexico, where the three grandchildren sang for their grandfather, Rogelio López Reyes. Five years and five albums later, including their most recent live release on Universal Music Mexico, Los Nietos are established in Mexico and are well on their way to solidifying their U.S. career.

JOSÉ LUIS TERRAZAS

The charismatic founder and leader of Grupo Montez de Durango, José Luis Terrazas was at the forefront of the duranguense explosion of 2003. But Montez de Durango remains one of the top regional Mexican groups today, with its latest album, "Borrón y Cuenta Nueva," having debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart earlier this year. At the summit, Terrazas will wear his songwriter and executive hat as one of the speakers on the publishing panel.

—Leila Cobo

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HANDSHAKES BEAT HIGH-TECH

Traditional Promotion Still Dominates Regional Mexican Radio

BY RAMIRO BURR

DESPITE HIGH-TECH ADVANCES

like computerized playlists and Web sites, radio programmers say old-fashioned research and pressing the flesh still works best.

As the Latin population of the United States continues to grow, the market for regional Mexican music expands; as radio ownership consolidation continues, competition among regional Mexican radio stations has intensified.

"In radio we've always had the basic tools: research, marketing, promotions," says Raul Brindis, PD of KLTN-FM (La Tremenda) Houston. "What's important to us is making a direct connection to the regional Mexican audience." Brindis is the station's morning-show host, and his program is simultaneously broadcast on other Univision stations like San Antonio's No. 2-rated KROM-FM (Stereo Latino).

With the Latin population of the United States growing five times faster than the general population, according to the U.S. Census, and immigration continuing from Mexico, advertisers are drawn to the spending power of regional Mexican music fans.

At the same time, the rise in popularity of regional Mexican radio has come during an unprecedented consolidation of station ownership.

In the Latino market, major players include Clear Channel Communications, Univision Radio, Spanish Broadcasting System, Hispanic Broadcasting Corp., Liberman Broadcasting and Border Media Partners.

Rudy Ramos, PD of Broadcast Media Partners outlet KLEY-FM (La Ley) San Antonio, says street and event promotions are a given, but new technology is increasingly important.

"One thing is certain, this is not your grandparents' radio. Now we have more innovative tools that used to be only in general market," he says. "For example, the way music is played. We use Selector, which is really good at keeping the music in rotation and fresh. And now we have [Nielsen BDS] reports, which helps us see what other stations are playing."

According to Ramos, KLEY was quick to play rising duranguense bands like Montez de Durango, K-Paz de la Sierra and Los Horoscopos. And outlets including

KLEY sister station KSAH-AM (Norteno 720) and Liberman's KBUE-FM/KBUA-FM (Que Buena) Los Angeles offer hardcore banda, duranguense and corrido programming by playing the likes of Alacranes Musical, Chalino Sanchez and Jenni Rivera.

In Dallas, at the top-rated KDXX-FM (La Picuda), assistant PD Jesus "Chuy" Espiricueta says that for him and show co-host Cristina Zuniga, it's all about constant communication and pressing the flesh.

"We're constantly on the phone, taking requests, making greetings," he says. "We're also at the special events, meeting people, taking pictures, shaking hands."

Veteran broadcast consultant Bob Prado says that with the ever-growing competition from TV, videos, movies and the Internet, the right research is crucial.

"When we make those phone calls [to Hispanic households] we make sure we get the right age group we're targeting, continuously," he says.

Staying on top is more critical than ever in today's fast-paced world, he adds.

"We've seen how quickly those movements like duranguense, reggaeton, oldies and others shifted in the market. You just have to stay abreast of it daily."

For Albert Davila, VP/GM of KEDA-AM San Antonio, staying true to his audience base has worked for more than four decades. This is true despite that the family-owned station (with sister stations KBOS-FM and KCCT-AM Corpus Christi, Texas), founded in 1966, does not have the big budget, high-tech tools of corporate radio.

"We try to constantly reach out to listeners with greetings, shaking hands and kissing babies," he says.

"We also put on seven festivals each year, where the fans get to see more bands than they would normally at one club, and in a family atmosphere."

The KEDA Conjunto Stampede series usually features a dozen conjuntos at Mission County Park where admission is always free. "We also spotlight young artists," Davila says. "For example, Ariel Johnson, son of pioneer Chalito Johnson, who has a new CD, and the new group Los Enmascarados."

According to Brindis, there's nothing really new under the sun when it comes to radio ratings.

"All these years radio has had the same structure," he says. "All stations offer the same music and information. But we have found a way to give our listeners what they enjoy."

Brindis adds: "We give them information, a little entertainment and especially, we just give them a good time in the morning." ■■■



RAUL BRINDIS of KLTN-FM Houston connects with his audience.

PLAYING DIGITAL CATCH-UP

REGIONAL MEXICAN MUSIC HAS LAGGED

behind pop and reggaeton in digital music sales. But as more music in the nation's top-selling Latin genre becomes available online, fans are discovering regional Mexican sites, and labels are slowly but surely keeping up with demand.

In June 2005, the top labels in the genre, Univision and Fonovisa, made their catalogs available through the iTunes Music Store for the first time. Univision.com launched its own digital store in June. In October, online store MisRolas launched its regional Mexican radio station La Onda. And on Nov. 1, the iTunes Latino mini-store went live with its own regional Mexican category.

Regional Mexican is the fastest-growing subgenre within walmart.com's Latin downloads catalog, where digital purchases have grown by nearly 200% in the last year, a representative for the retailer says.

"What's amazing about digital retail is that there is endless shelf space," says Angela Sanchez, director of online sales and marketing for Universal Music Group Distribution (UMGD). "There's no reason if we're selling something well in the physical world that we shouldn't be trying to mimic it in the digital world as well."

Regional Mexican Music Seeks Greater Impact With Online Buyers

BY AYALA
BEN-YEHUDA

In May, Disa Records made about 50 tracks available, first exclusively on walmart.com and then in wider release. Purchasers of Grupo Montez de Durango's physical album received a card redeemable for a free bonus track at walmart.com.

Jeff Young, senior VP of sales and marketing at Disa, says his company's first foray into digital yielded "no more than a couple hundred" purchases.

"I don't think our customer is in the digital world yet to a large degree," Young says. "I think it's a different ballgame with reggaeton or hip-hop or urban regional. A lot of our music is the older demographic. It's not the second- or third-generation kids."

"A lot of our customers are new immigrants," he adds, "and [downloads are] not something they've come across at this point. It's just the beginning."


On its first day, the new Spanish-language iTunes Latino featured Alicia Villareal and Intocable on its home page. The store's regional Mexican shelf features subcategories like new releases, compilations and corridos, in addition to essential playlists of norteño and ranchera.

As downloading options expand, so do other ways to find regional Mexican music online. AOL Latino has a dedicated page for the genre on its music channel. Latin music Web site batanga.com has three regional Mexican radio stations, which together accounted for nearly 800,000 hours of listening time in September, CEO Rafael Urbina says.

The company recently acquired digital retailer ELatinMusic "and [is] still early in the process of integrating the download store into our video and radio products," Urbina says.

Acts, too, are turning to the Web to connect with their younger fans, such as the veteran norteño act Los Huracanes del Norte, which recently overhauled its Web site with music clips, video streams, news and member bios. Several Fonovisa acts, such as Rivera, Los Rieleros del Norte and Los Elegidos, now have MySpace profiles.


UMGD's Sanchez, who coordinates digital promotions between labels and retailers, says, "The key thing with us is trying to get to the market as soon as possible and being aggressive. We might not sell a million downloads today, it might not be tomorrow, but it's shifting in that direction." ■■■



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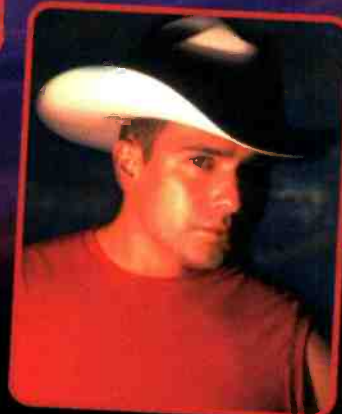
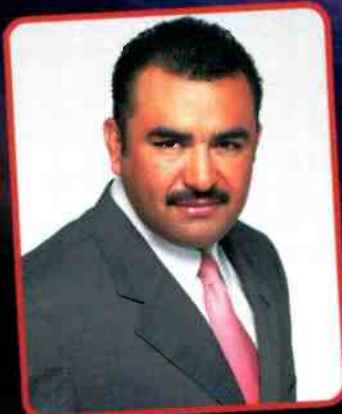
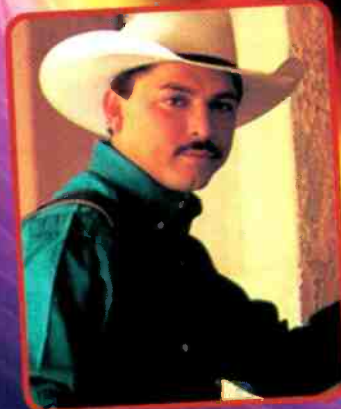
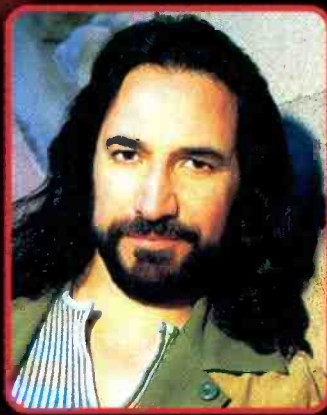
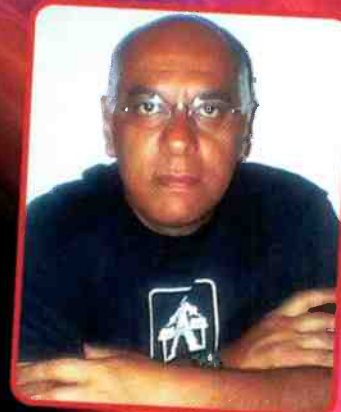
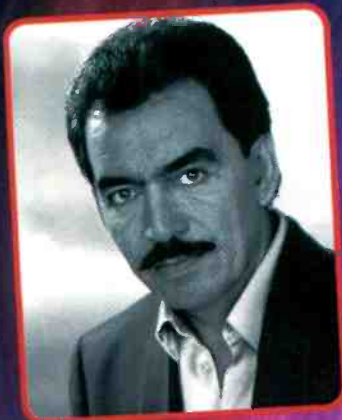
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Lady Of The '80s
Ciara connects with the Jheri-curl decade



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'Dreamgirls' Team
R&B producers the Underdogs take off

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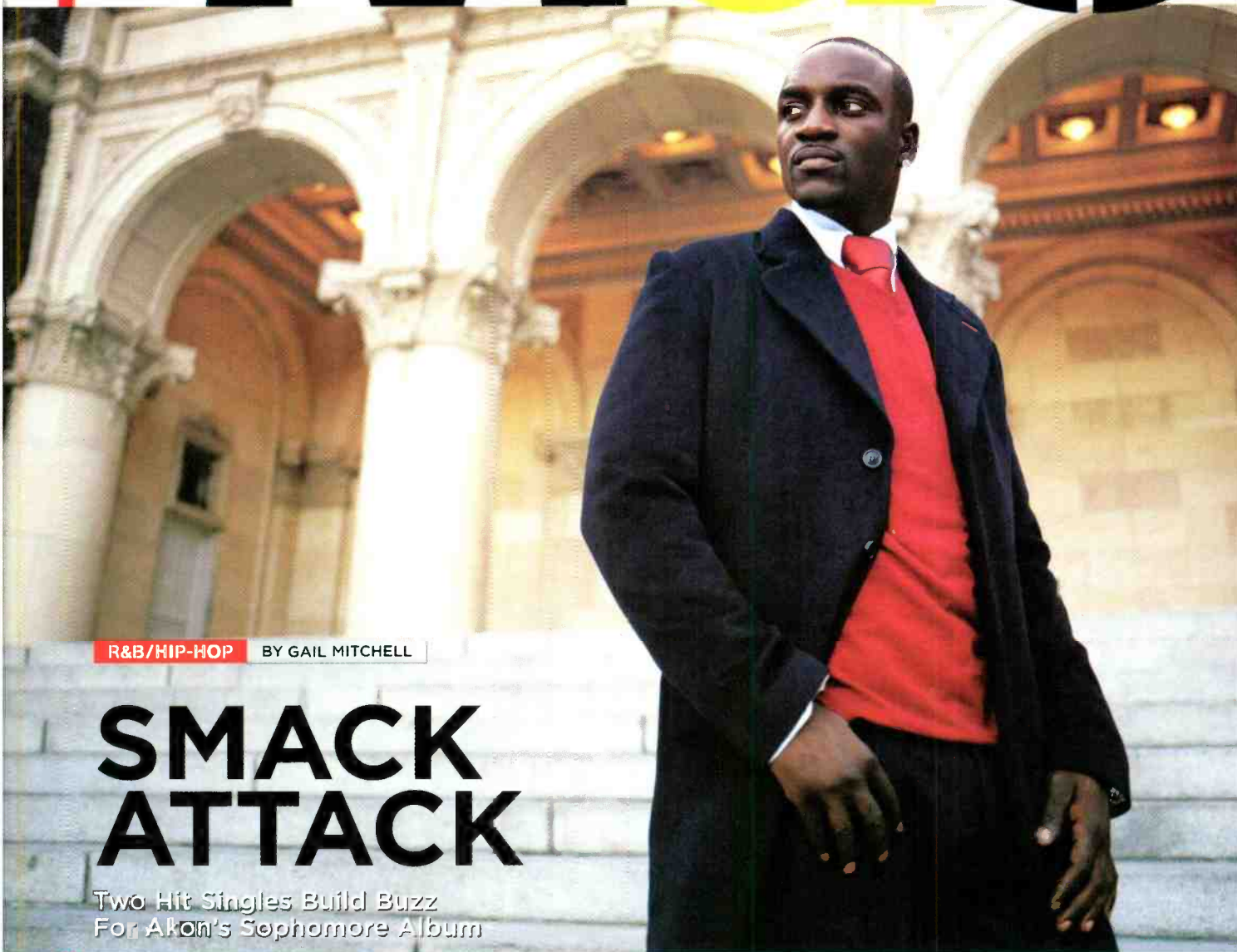
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NOVEMBER 18, 2006

MUSIC



R&B/HIP-HOP BY GAIL MITCHELL

SMACK ATTACK

Two Hit Singles Build Buzz For Akon's Sophomore Album

Waiting at New York's JFK Airport to hop a plane to the United Kingdom, Akon would much rather be flying to Atlanta to spend a weekend in his own bed.

"I have never worked so hard or lost so much sleep," the Senegalese-born singer says, as his engaging laugh gets lost in the static of a flight announcement. "It sometimes seems like I have less freedom than I did when I was actually locked up."

But chilling at home won't happen anytime soon. The release date for the artist's sophomore set, "Konvicted" (SRC/Upfront/Konvict/Universal Motown) was advanced from Dec. 12 to Nov. 14. That's because the buzz factor has ratcheted up significantly thanks to the tight chart race between his dual singles, "Smack That" featuring Eminem and "I Wanna Love You" featuring Snoop Dogg.

Two up-trending singles from the same album is a rare feat, especially since pop and R&B/hip-hop records share a lot of the same audience. SRC president Steve Rifkind says that at first he

lost his mind when "I Wanna" was leaked.

"We had asked ourselves who was Akon's audience, the 'Locked Up' and 'Soul Survivor' [Young Jeezy] audience or the 'Lonely' audience," Rifkind recalls of early strategy sessions. "We needed a bridge between the two and felt the Eminem record was the best one."

Upfront Entertainment CEO Devyne Stephens says the company, which signed Akon to SRC in 2003, intended to release the Snoop track. "The Eminem record was crossover pop. But we also needed something to support us organically at urban," he notes.

But the gamble is paying off. "I Wanna Love You" and "Smack That" occupy Nos. 4 and 5, respectively on the Nielsen BDS radio airplay chart. "Smack That" sits at No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100 and No. 52 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, while "I Wanna" claims No. 20 on the former chart and No. 13 on the latter.

Rifkind and Stephens predict first-week numbers for "Konvicted" will range between 200,000 and 250,000. That's a signifi-

cant jump from the 24,000 units logged by Akon's 2004 debut "Trouble." It has sold 1.4 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"Konvicted" picks up where "Trouble" left off. The latter was the first chapter in Akon's redemption following a jail sentence for car theft. The new album finds the artist on the rebirth trail, but this time, more of his knack for fusing R&B/soul, hip-hop, pop, jazz and reggae is exposed.

"I want people to say, 'Here's a true artist, not someone pigeonholed into one genre,'" says Akon, the son of jazz percussionist Mor Thiam.

Hence, club banger "Smack That" gives way to the live piano and violins lacing the ballad "Never Took the Time." Then there's funky jazz via the love song "I Can't Wait" before Akon's past rears up on the anti-gangsta "Tired of Runnin'." Tying it all together are Akon's soothing vocals.

That combination, plus additional cameos by T-Pain and Styles P., will keep "Konvicted" selling well into 2007 and beyond, says Violet Brown, director of urban music for Trans World Entertainment.

"This is one of the best albums I've heard in a long time. Having Eminem and Snoop helps, but you can just about put this on a dart board and score a radio single," she says.

Akon is also a major priority internationally; "Trouble" hit No. 1 twice last year in the United Kingdom.

Universal Motown Republic senior VP Kirk Harding notes that the use of local rappers from six key European markets on a "Locked Up" remix "helped entrench Akon there, especially in France, which has a large Senegalese population."

Ted Cockle, marketing director for Universal Music U.K., says Akon's African roots give him an authenticity not normally found in the hardcore urban community. But,

on the other hand, these "extra elements meant a few eyebrows were raised among those who thought he was lightweight."

Challenging that perception, Akon has done guest stints with Young Jeezy and India.Arie and collaborated with Gwen Stefani and Elton John.

"I don't just guest," he says. "If I don't produce it, I won't get on the record. The main reason for a collaboration is to bring something new and help you expand your audience."

But guest stints are on the back burner now as he wraps the "I Wanna" video and starts an East Coast promo swing. Then it's back to the United Kingdom in early 2007 when "I Wanna" officially launches there. While there's no rest in sight, a circumspect Akon doesn't mind this lock on his time.

"So many people are banking on this situation happening," he says. "And I am too. I just don't want the hype to separate me from my goal: making music."

AKON: JONATHAN MANNION

>>> MARY J.'S NEW RIDE

Mary J. Blige will be the subject of "Reflections—A Retrospective," due Dec. 12 via Geffen. In addition to hits, the album sports four new songs, including the single "We Ride (I See the Future)," which was written and produced by Bryan Michael Cox and Johnta Austin. Meanwhile, the Blige/Aretha Franklin duet "Never Gonna Break My Faith" will appear on the soundtrack to "Bobby," due Nov. 21 via Island Def Jam.

—Jonathan Cohen

>>> STRUMMER LIVES

"The Future is Unwritten," Julien Temple's new film on the life and career of late Clash frontman Joe Strummer, will have its U.S. premiere in mid-January at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. The movie includes interviews with such Strummer disciples as Bono, actors Johnny Depp and John Cusack, and members of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and the Clash.

—Wes Orshoski

>>> WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

On Dec. 19, rapper Trick Daddy will issue his seventh studio album, "Back By Thug Demand," via Slip N Slide/Atlantic. The set boasts collaborations with Trina, Jaheim, Lil Wayne, Baby and Chamillionaire. It's the follow-up to 2004's "Thug Matrimony: Married to the Streets," which bowed at No. 2 on The Billboard 200 and has sold 910,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

—Clover Hope

>>> A CLEAN 'BREAK'

U.K. electronica duo Underworld teams with "Cold Mountain" composer Gabriel Yared on the soundtrack for the Anthony Minghella film "Breaking & Entering," due Dec. 5 via V2. The movie, which stars Jude Law and Juliette Binoche, opens Dec. 8 in limited U.S. release.

—Jonathan Cohen



Real Talk

HILLARY CROSLY hcrosley@billboard.com

The Wedding Singer

Straight Out Of Cleveland, Al Fatz Scores Under Another Name

Earlier this year, I was in Akron, Ohio, for a wedding and I heard a stripped-down song called "I Came Down" by a mystery man named Fat Al. The song was playing in passing cars, on the radio, at the local club and my friend's wedding reception.

Then, a few weeks ago, I received a mixtape, "Core DJs (Retreat Special V Special) Mixtape III/ Ladies Night Edition," by KEXP Seattle's Girl 6, WJHM Orlando, Fla.'s Kaye Dunaway and WIZF Cincinnati's DJ Dimepiece, which included the track. And then I met with Damon Eden, an Atlantic A&R executive, who said, "I've got this new artist from Ohio. . ."

"Not Fat Al?" I asked. "Well, Al Fatz. Bill Cosby won't let us use the name," he replied, surprised. "But how do you know him?" "Long story," I said with a laugh.

Fat Al, né Aljaray Gaston, it turns out is a 19-year-old recent graduate of Cleveland's Glenville High School. Atlantic signed him via Leonard "LB" Brooks, who is part owner of Cleve-

land Cavaliers star LeBron James' label, Dreamlife Productions. Brooks also heard Fat Al's "I Came Down" at an Ohio wedding reception and quickly agreed to manage the MC.

Raised by his grandmother, Fat Al says he began rapping at a young age and blames booze for his talent. "I've got a lot of drunk singing uncles," he says. "So I know a lot of old soul music."

Performed at a local talent show, his song "Hold Up Hold Up Mane" was so well-received that he recorded it. Working with his friend and co-producer Ralph "RJ" Worley Jr., the pair built a studio in Worley's room. Using the closet as a booth and a blanket to keep out the noise ("We thought it would soundproof the closet, but it didn't really work"), the duo recorded Fat Al's accidental hit "I Came Down." Laying his half-singing, half-spoken lyrics over a straightforward beat, a few piano chords with hard bass stabs, the minimalism harkens Cassie's hit single "Me & U." Simple but genius.

"The song just took off on its own," Fat Al says. "It's really because it doesn't have an age bracket. People tell me their 3-year-old little brother loves it, and other people say their grandmother listens to it in her car." And thanks to Fat Al's entrepreneurial skills, "I Came Down" spread from Ohio to places like WAMO Pittsburgh. "I started selling my CDs in school," Fat Al says. "I sold, like, 1,000 CDs at school, and the song got to Akron, Toledo, Canton. It spread from high schools to the colleges. So when we had our first show, there were almost 2,000 kids there. People's mamas were in there, it was crazy."

The young MC is recording his Atlantic Records debut now and already has songs with Akon and Lil Wayne. He also has a song on the "Madden 2007" videogame soundtrack, is recording the theme song for another game, EA's "NBA Street Homecourt," and will record a song for LeBron James' 2007 Sprite campaign.



Though Fat Al, or Al Fatz, does have a lot going for him, there has been one glitch, and its name is Bill Cosby. Turns out the name Fat Al is too close to the cartoon character Fat Albert, and though the Atlantic camp tried to reason with the Cosby camp, Atlantic reps say, Cosby wouldn't yield. (Cosby's people could not be reached for comment by press time.)

Atlantic changed Fat Al's name to Al Fatz, a moniker reminiscent of Biggie Smalls—which is what everybody still called the deceased MC, though his stage name was the Notorious B.I.G.

"I guess he doesn't like rappers," Fat Al says of Cosby's claim. "I'm just trying to come up and Bill Cosby was hating. I know one thing, I won't be buying anymore Jell-O pudding."



Global Pulse

EDITED BY TOM FERGUSON tferguson@eu.billboard.com

U.K. Alt-Rockers Agree 'Print Is Dead'

Irish Quartet Thrives On Rural Retreats; Italian Songster Back From A Break

For an overview of the United Kingdom's thriving alternative music scene, one place to start is "Print Is Dead Vol. 1" (V2), released Nov. 6 in the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Japan and Australia.

This is no ordinary compilation. The 11-track collection is a collaborative effort dreamed up by Newcastle Upon Tyne, England-based quintet Yourcodenameis:milo, which invited new British acts including the Automatic, Bloc Party, Maximo Park and the Futureheads into the studio for one day apiece. "They would meet Milo at the studio and write, record and mix

the track in a single day," says manager Craig Jennings of London-based Sanctuary Group. "With the nature of the project, it took a lot of time and effort to get all the [publishing] authorizations, but we got there."

Jennings says Yourcodenameis:milo's 2005 debut set "Ignoto" (Polydor/Fiction) shipped 15,000 copies in the United Kingdom, but claims dissatisfaction with the major's level of international support prompted a switch to V2. The act's second "official" album, "They Came From the Sun," is due in March 2007. Jennings says a second volume of "Print Is Dead" will follow, which "will include more U.S. bands."

Yourcodenameis:milo will tour globally in 2007 to promote "They Came From the Sun," Jennings adds. Live bookings are through the Agency.

—Steve Adams

DIRECT SALES: The title of Dublin alternative rock quartet Director's debut album "We Thrive on Big Cities" (Atlantic/Warner) is a touch misleading.

The "thriving" part is clearly accurate, as the album entered the IRMA chart at No. 2 in Ireland one week after its Oct. 6 release. But while some of the album was recorded in Dublin and London, most of it was laid down in the rural Irish retreat of Grouse Lodge Studios, County Westmeath.

The album has already spawned two top 30 singles in Ireland, "Reconnect" and October's "Come With a Friend"—a song about "sexual promiscuity, a fast-paced lifestyle and ultimate disappointment," according to guitarist Eoin Aherne.

The past 18 months have seen the band support such names as Snow Patrol, the Fratellis and Hard-Fi in the United Kingdom. After a one-off Nov. 21 London show with U.S. alternative act Modest Mouse, the band will undertake its second major Irish tour of the year in December. Director is booked for Ireland by Dublin-based MCD and internationally by X-Ray Touring in London.

Band manager Richard Mc Donogh says a U.K. album release is due summer 2007. "We're trying to concentrate on one territory at a time," he says. "All our efforts will now be spent in the U.K. until we break the band there." The band is unsigned for publishing.

—Nick Kelly

FIVE YEAR PLAN: Taking a five-year break from recording can be a risky strategy, but it's one that has paid off for 44-year-old Italian singer/songwriter Luca Carboni.

His 12th studio album, "Le Band si Sciogono" (RCA/Sony BMG), debuted at No. 3 on the FIMI album chart one week after its Sept. 29 release and remains in the top 10.

The gap between 2001's "LU.CA" and the new set was filled by the in-concert "Live" set in 2003. "There wasn't a precise reason for the delay," Carboni says. "I guess I subconsciously needed to take a break. When I finally got round to recording, I also decided to produce and it was almost like making a record for the first time."

Carboni, who released his first album in 1984, says that "Le Band si Sciogono" has shipped 70,000 units in Italy. It will also be released later this year in Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, territories where Carboni has an established fan base.

Carboni is published by his own Bologna-based La Casa del Baraccos company. Live dates are through Milan-based Friends & Partners. —Mark Worden

FAT AL: K.T. PEDRIZZI





Rhythm & Blues

GAIL MITCHELL gmitchell@billboard.com

Women Beneath The Radar

Conya Doss, Lynn Fiddmont
And Tamia's '06 Albums Deserve To Be Noticed

Where would R&B be today without the likes of such heart-stirring pioneers as Ruth Brown, Etta James, Tina Turner and Aretha Franklin? This year has borne witness to an array of albums by a female contingent ranging from seasoned vets to wet-behind-the-ears newcomers. That list includes Beyoncé; Janet Jackson; Monica; LeToya; Corinne Bailey Rae; India.Arie; Mary J. Blige, who actually released her popular comeback late last year; Gladys Knight; and Natalie Cole.

Laboring under the mainstream radar, however, are several 2006 releases that warrant attention. Some of those (Amel Larrieux, Hil St. Soul) were profiled here earlier this year. But please take note of three more albums by tal-

sheet is dotted with such well-known names as Seal, Stevie Wonder, Babyface, Bill Withers, Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston. Now she's stepped to the forefront with the self-released "Flow" (on the revealingly monickered MidLife Records).

Traditional yet jazzy soul is Fiddmont's province, and the sultry singer gets right to the point on this nine-song collection. Though it may be short in its number of songs, this album doesn't stint on pleasure. "Holiday," the samba-juiced opening track, makes you want to jump in the car and drive up the coast top-down, face in the wind. Fiddmont shifts from sexy ("Feels So Right") to romantic ("Cupid") to sassy ("No Regrets") without forcing the

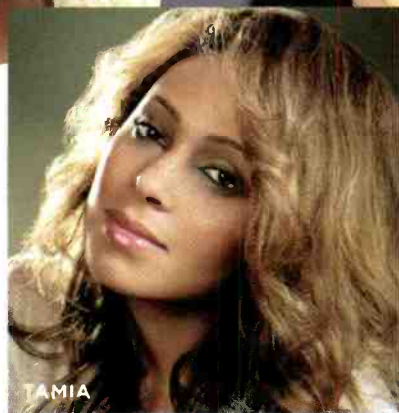


ented R&B/soul singer/songwriters as I continue my ongoing series about 2006 releases (Billboard, Nov. 4) that deserve attention.

First up is Conya Doss. Her "Love Rain Down" (ConyaDossSongs) is the artist's biographical follow-up to two earlier albums, "A Poem About Ms. Doss" and "Just Because." For those unfamiliar with Doss, the melodic lead single "Tell Me Why" is a strong introduction to a nontraditional soul singer whose style leans more to cool, sensual grooves than the gut-wrenching style of other soul purveyors.

Hook-filled tunes drummed incessantly on the radio aren't in abundance here. But don't take that to mean the Cleveland-bred Doss' understated music and thoughtful lyrics lack punch. Her versatility as an arranger and writer pour forth on such songs as the jazz-infused "Why Did You?" and the ballad "Sign." Listen—then listen again and again.

Lynne Fiddmont has supported everybody and his brother during her career. Her credits



issue—a welcome respite from today's many over-emoting chanteuses.

R&B fans will recall that Tamia got her big break when she bowed on Quincy Jones' 1995 top 20 R&B hit "You Put a Move on My Heart." Since then the Canadian singer/songwriter has charted several hits, including "Spend My Life With You" with Eric Benét. Tamia hasn't released an album since 2004 in the aftermath of Elektra, her former label, merging with Atlantic, and an earlier diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (now in remission).

The singer, who recently debuted on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart with the single "Can't Get Enough," returns Nov. 14 with "Between Friends," the first album on her own Image Entertainment-distributed label (Plus 1). The album's 12 songs are produced and/or written by Rodney Jerkins, Shep Crawford and herself. The result is the most cohesive and satisfying set of Tamia's career. Beyond the single, her voice glides gracefully over tracks that alternate between soulful ballads ("Me") and bouncy rhythms ("Sittin' on the Job").



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BeatBox

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Ranking The DJs

Dance Music's Unscientific Annual Popularity Contest

At 5 a.m. on Sept. 4, after culminating a long tour with a poolside set at Las Vegas' Palms resort, Dutch super DJ Tiesto had a moment of self-sacrifice. He logged on to his Web site and posted a message to his legions.

"[When] I went out with the promoters of the cities I was in, most of them were bringing up the DJ magazine 'Top 100' voting," he wrote. "It's a big thing . . . and most of them will book DJs who are high on this list." He went on to ask his fans not to vote for him this year—he has topped the annual chart three times since 2002—and to select up-and-comers instead.

"If I win a fourth time, it wouldn't make a difference for my career," he wrote. "For the new talented DJs around the world, it could."

In his own earnest manner, Tiesto (who finished third behind Paul Van Dyk and Armin van Buuren) offered fans a window into one of dance's primary stumbling blocks. Without album sales of any consequence or a standardized way to gauge touring success, promoters, venue owners and artist representatives must turn to unscientific methods to measure an artist's popularity. And the one with the most reach and history is U.K.-based DJ magazine's 10-year-old "Top 100" poll. This year, more than 217,000 fans voted online for their favorite DJs, a 57% increase from 2005. But as the chart gets more popular and DJs from across the globe lobby hard for a spot, some argue that it's losing the little accuracy it once had.

"Tom" on MySpace could easily be the world's No. 1 DJ," Billboard reporting DJ Joe Bermudez says. "It's about who has the most online friends." No one is immune from solicitation. Jocks as far up the food chain as Roger Sanchez and Deep Dish sent out "vote for me" e-mails this year.

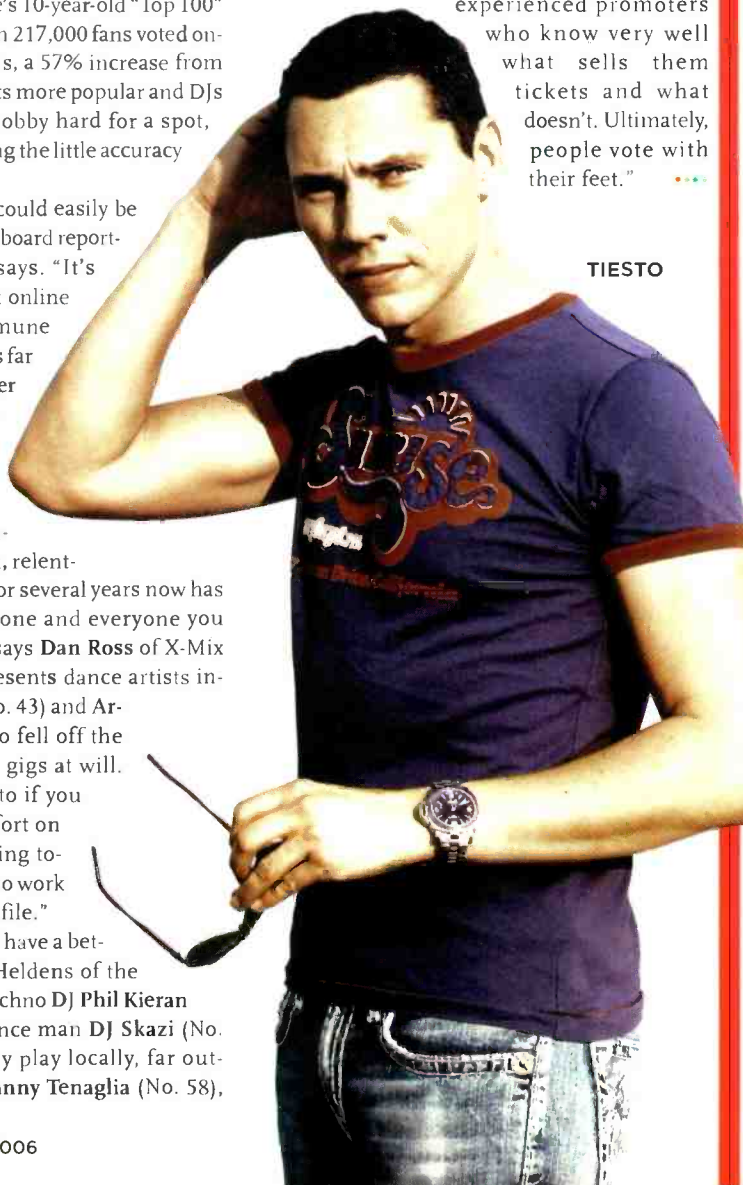
"You have to have a Barnum & Bailey mentality of round-the-clock, relentless promotion, which for several years now has included lobbying anyone and everyone you know to vote for you," says Dan Ross of X-Mix Productions, who represents dance artists including Bad Boy Bill (No. 43) and Armand Van Helden, who fell off the chart this year but still gigs at will. "It really comes down to if you focus your time and effort on making hits or on putting together a team of people to work on keeping up your profile."

Motivated unknowns have a better shot than the Van Helden of the world. This year, Irish techno DJ Phil Kieran (No. 35) and Israeli trance man DJ Skazi (No. 37), both of whom only play locally, far out-ranked powerhouse Danny Tenaglia (No. 58),

who tours the globe and commands some of the highest fees in the biz. "This year's chart has highlighted a flaw in the data collection, which is the ability of a local DJ with a huge and active fan base to canvas enough votes to beat a more established international DJ with a bigger, but perhaps less-motivated fan base," says Tony McGuinness of U.K. trance outfit Above & Beyond (No. 9). "It needs to be used with other measures, like any research. Perhaps DJ [magazine] can think of a weighting system."

What we really need is promoters who are willing to report the stats of their gigs—like ticket prices, number of tickets sold and venue capacity—to a centralized body like, say, Billboard Boxscore. Or maybe, since typical dance events are not large enough to rank with mainstream concerts, someone could launch a similar independent reporting entity just for us.

Until then, the unauditible "Top 100" will continue to command attention. But, says Simon Clarkson, owner of booking agency Mainstage Artists, which represents 2006 chart-topper Van Dyk in the United Kingdom, it is not "the be-all, end-all. There are many experienced promoters who know very well what sells them tickets and what doesn't. Ultimately, people vote with their feet." ■■■



TIESTO



CIARA

R&B/HIP-HOP BY CLOVER HOPE

'Evolution' Of The Groove

Ciara Takes Inspiration From The '80s On Sophomore Album

Ciara Harris hearts the '80s, and it shows on the 21-year-old singer's sophomore album, "Ciara: The Evolution," due Dec. 5 via LaFace/Zomba Label Group. With its body-rocking dance jams, the disc looks to revive the decade of leg warmers and Jeri-curl 'dos, not unlike successful efforts by Fergie ("The Dutchess") and Gwen Stefani ("Love. Angel. Music. Baby").

"There was a certain way a record used to groove back in the day. I wanted to go back to what I really loved growing up," says Harris, who co-produced the album. "With my last album [2005's "Goodies"], I was going with the flow, but here I was able to start from scratch. It started with me just having a clear vision of where I wanted to go."

First, that meant drawing from fellow danceholics like Prince, Madonna, Michael Jackson and TLC. Second, Harris wanted to get more personal. "I challenged myself to think deeper and open up more to my fans, because I've been a very private person," she says.

The Atlanta-bred singer explains that "Goodies" (Sho'Nuff/LaFace), which has sold 2.6 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, kept things "fun and simple," spawning energetic cuts like "1, 2 Step" and the title track, which topped The Billboard Hot 100 for seven straight weeks.

But "Evolution" pulls a bait-and-switch, leading with the

sensual ballad "Promise," produced by Polow Da Don. "I didn't know what people expected me to do with this record because of the [slow] tempo," Harris says of the song's sultry music video, which finds her gyrating with a microphone. "I wanted to make sure you felt like you were still watching a Ciara video, but that you also felt the evolution."

"Everyone knew that song would set her apart from all the comparisons she gets all the time," says Ethiopia Habtemariam, VP of urban creative affairs at Universal Music Publishing Group. "At a certain point you can't get stuck just targeting kids. Her music spoke for itself and went beyond just a young demographic."

The '80s vibe of the album is one way in which Harris attempts to escape the links to artists like Aaliyah and Janet Jackson. "Janet definitely inspired me when I was younger but getting so many comparisons to her really motivates me to become my own artist," Harris says. "Some things are similar, but I don't think it's forced. Our songs are different—from the production to the videos."

Excluding "Promise" and a handful of ballads, including the Pharrell-helmed "I'm Just Me," "Evolution" is filled with bass-heavy tracks, some of which Harris has been previewing on a 25-city U.S. tour. Producers include Rodney Jerkins ("Make It Last Forever"), Lil Jon ("That's Right," "C.R.U.S.H."), Will.i.am ("Get In, Fit In") and Bryan Michael Cox ("So Hard").

"I wanted to make sure we didn't just get a bunch of songs from people that work with any other R&B artist," says Habtemariam, who serves as the album's A&R executive. "[Ciara] was part of every track that was conceived. Going in, the producers all thought they had what they were going to work with but everyone tailored the track to what she wanted. Nothing was really contrived."

However, the sole contribution from Harris' frequent collaborator Jazze Pha, who released "Goodies" via his Sho'Nuff imprint, is "Get Up," which also appears on the film soundtrack to "Step Up." Both parties dodged questions about their dwindling relationship, and Harris declined to clarify whether the reasons are legal. "It's not the same situation as it was when I first came out," she says. "There's not too much I can say at this moment, but things have definitely changed."

Pha adds, "I did a couple of songs, [but] I didn't really work on this album as much. She's basically doing her own thing."

Much of Harris' thing involves dance. In fact, the singer recently founded the Atlanta-based Universal Dance Agency, and "Evolution" comes with an accompanying DVD of do-it-yourself lessons. "One thing that keeps coming back to us from consumers is how to learn more about her dancing," Harris' manager Phillana Williams says. "Her name has become synonymous with dance, so it was a natural thing to do." ■■■



Deaf Jam

Experimental Composer, MacArthur Grant Winner John Zorn Makes Himself Heard

Notorious for not granting interviews, John Zorn, one of 25 artists awarded MacArthur Fellowship grants this year, lets his music speak for him—whether it is his avant-garde alto saxophone screeching, his lyrical compositions based on Jewish scales performed by his jazz band Masada or his experimental new music works, four of which premiered Oct. 26 at Columbia University's Miller Theatre as part of its Composer Portraits series.

Zorn did not take the stage for the five idiosyncratic through-composed pieces that included "Éloges," an evocative memorial for free-improv guitarist Derek Bailey. The performance featured Marc Ribot scratching and scurrying his fingers up and down his guitar neck while accompanied by a medieval ensemble playing harp, viola da gamba, hurdy gurdy and percussion. Former Faith No More singer Mike Patton screamed, shrieked and belched his way through a rendition of Zorn's solo-vocal work, "Fourth Litany for Heliogabulus," that was at turns audacious, discomfiting, shrill and poignant. The show ended with a whispered-to-deafening piece featuring an 18-person choir, two percussionists, a harpist and a contrabassoonist.

After the finale, Zorn, in a black hooded sweatshirt and gray camouflage slacks, bolted from the shadows of the audience and bounded onto the stage to applaud the musicians and conductor Brad Lubman as well as bask in the appreciation of his decidedly avant material.

The eclectic Zorn, who says he is not a jazz musician but a musician who sometimes plays jazz, has tread in deep jazz waters as one of the pioneers of the '80s and '90s New York downtown scene,

setting up residence at such clubs as the Knitting Factory and Tonic. He also recorded such late-'80s skronk classics as "Spy Vs. Spy" and "Naked City" (both in the Elektra/Nonesuch catalog). More recently, he revisited his Masada project of the '90s with new material and albums and released multiple volumes of his "50th Birthday Celebration," all on his own Tzadik Records label.

Founded in 1995, Tzadik now boasts more than 460 releases dedicated to radical Jewish culture, composers, oracles (women artists) and film works, among others. The label is Web-distributed by the Bowery record store Downtown Music Gallery, co-owned by Bruce Lee Gallanter, who notes that Zorn "does not believe in promotion," which means Tzadik's discs, while available in most retail stores, are rarely reviewed.

The same no-promotion philosophy fuels Zorn's artist-centric club of experimental music, the Stone, founded in 2005 in New York's Lower East Side. He does not advertise the 100-person-capacity club; gives 100% of the door's proceeds to the musicians; and doesn't serve "refreshments or merchandise . . . only music," according to the club's Web site thestonenyc.com. Each month a different artist serves as curator, with November programmed by the remarkable koto improviser Miya Masaoka. She joins guitarist Fred Frith and saxophonist Larry Ochs for three nights of shows with their stunning improv trio Maybe Monday. The Nov. 17-19 stint features a special guest sitting in for each of the six sets.

As for the MacArthur "genius" grant, with its no-strings-attached prize of \$500,000, expect Zorn to continue to defy music industry models and stylistic boundaries. That's good news. As Jonathan Fanton, MacArthur Fellowship president, said in announcing this year's awardees in September, the grant allows artists to continue to "reflect, explore and create. Talented and creative individuals, free to follow their insights and instincts, will reveal new discoveries and make a difference in shaping our future."

MAKE WAY FOR MASTERS: In October, National Endowment of the Arts chairman Dana Gioia announced the Class of 2007 NEA Jazz Masters: bandleader Toshiko Akiyoshi, trombonist Curtis Fuller, pianist Ramsey Lewis, vocalist Jimmy Scott, flutist/saxophonist Frank Wess and saxophonist/composer Phil Woods. The A.B. Spelling NEA Jazz Masters Award for jazz advocacy is given to journalist/historian/archivist Dan Morgenstern. The award is the most prestigious for jazz artists in the United States. The Jazz Masters program, boasting 87 honorees, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. The seven new members will officially receive their awards at the International Assn. for Jazz Education's annual conference Jan. 12 in New York.



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R&B/HIP-HOP BY GAIL MITCHELL

Underdogs Overload

Dreamgirls' Soundtrack Kicks Off
Busy Breakout Year For R&B Production Duo

One telltale movement signals that a recording has passed final muster with the Underdogs: The production duo's heads bob in unison throughout the song.

Harvey Mason Jr. and Damon Thomas' double head-nodding was very much evident recently at their Hollywood studio as they played Beyoncé's "Listen" and other selections from the forthcoming "Dreamgirls" soundtrack. With this project, the new Aretha Franklin and Mary J. Blige single "Never Gonna Break My Faith" (from Island

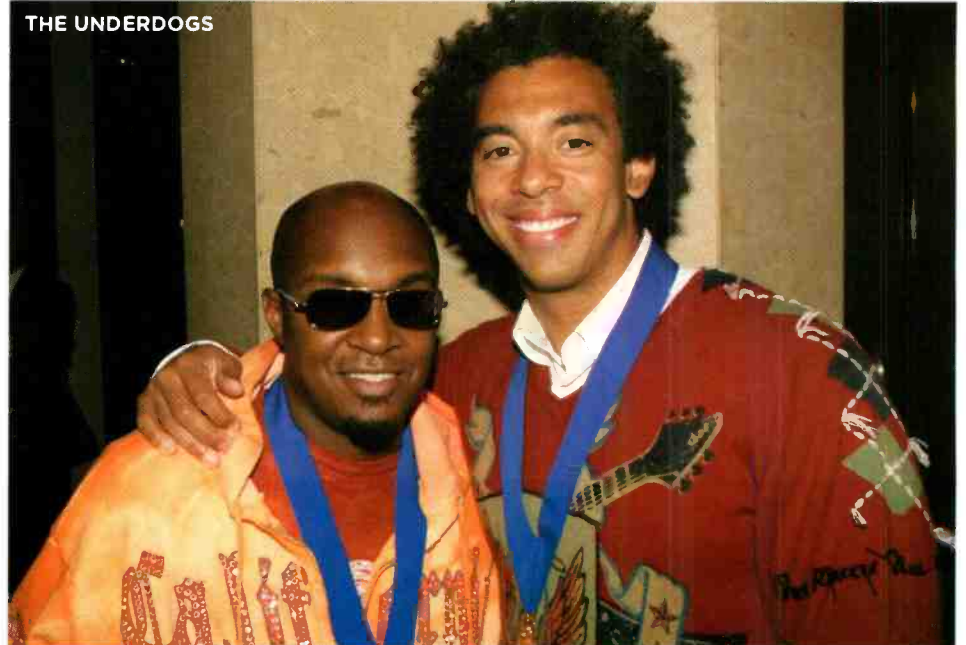
month span, the duo worked on more than 40 songs and musical snippets for the DreamWorks/Paramount film. Adapted from the Tony Award-winning Broadway play about career highs and lows of a fictional girl group, the film—starring Beyoncé, Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy and Jennifer Hudson—will debut nationwide Dec. 21, nearly to the day (Dec. 20) the play bowed 25 years ago.

The Music World Music/Sony Urban/Columbia soundtrack is set for release Dec. 5 in

drummer Harvey Mason earned his writer stripes with Rodney Jerkins' Darkchild Entertainment camp, penning songs for Brandy, Toni Braxton and others.

"We searched to find exactly how to achieve the balance between respecting the original songs and the time period [1962-1975]," Mason adds. "while updating the material for today's audience."

Condon cites new song "Patience" as a prime example. "Hearing that Marvin Gaye-like



Def Jam's Nov. 21 "Bobby" soundtrack) and collaborations with Mario, Chris Brown, Fantasia and "America Idol" finalist Katharine McPhee, 2007 is shaping up to be a breakout year for the Underdogs.

During the five years since the partnership took off with Tyrese's "I Like Them Girls" and subsequent R&B and pop hits with Ruben Studdard, Omarion and others, the Underdogs were offered work on various soundtracks. But the timing and desire didn't click until the pair was asked to lend its production talents to "Dreamgirls."

"We knew we wanted to do films," says Thomas, nicknamed "the motivator" by Mason. Before the Underdogs, Thomas wrote songs with Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds for Pink and Faith Evans, among others. "But we wanted to wait for a great opportunity."

The Underdogs' first soundtrack venture was an ambitious undertaking. During a 14-

both a single-CD version and a double disc featuring 37 songs. The lineup includes "Listen" and three more new tracks, plus updated versions of songs from the original production, most notably the signature "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going." All the work was done at the Underdogs' complex, which occupies two floors and eight rooms in the Edmonds Building on Cahuenga Boulevard.

Working with the duo were the film's director Bill Condon ("Chicago"); original "Dreamgirls" composer Henry Krieger, who co-wrote the new songs; and music supervisors Randy Spendlove and Matt Sullivan. Thomas and Mason say their expertise as musicians and their penchant for incorporating live instruments in their productions helped them sonically interpret Condon's vision.

"It took some experimenting," Mason says of the challenge. Tagged "the general" by Thomas, the son of noted jazz

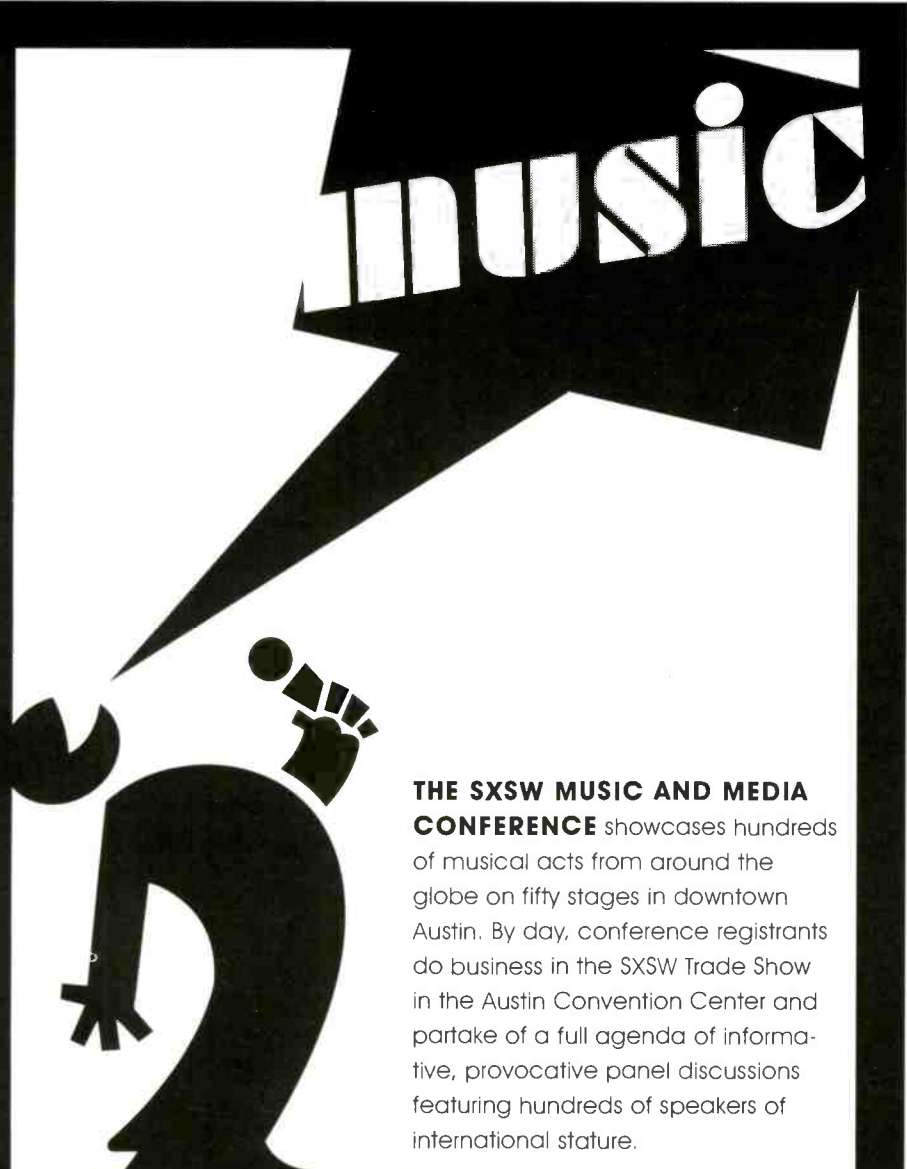
song grow into a moving big track under their guidance shows how brilliant they were at shaping the music dramatically but still keeping within the storyline."

Beyond the "Dreamgirls" and "Bobby" projects, Mason and Thomas oversee a crew of 10 songwriter/producers, J Records-distributed Underdog Records and Underdog Publishing via Universal Music Publishing. More pressing, though, is getting their two heads nodding together again.

While talking to Billboard, the pair was busy tweaking the bridge on a new Chris Brown track, "Let Me Take You Down," before the singer returned to record the chorus and ad-libs.

"Whatever we do, it's a two-step process," Mason says as Thomas switches places with him at the keyboard. "If something bothers one, it bothers the other. It's got to excite us both."

THE UNDERDOGS: HABILING HARWARD



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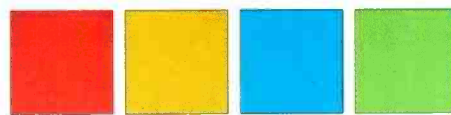
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REVIEWS



SPOTLIGHTS

Releases deemed by the review editors to deserve special attention on the basis of musical merit and/or *Billboard* chart potential.

ALBUMS

ALBUMS



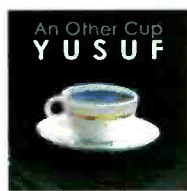
JOSH GROBAN

Awake

Producers: various
143/Reprise

Release Date: Nov. 7
Reprise certainly had its work cut out for it five years ago when it

aimed to break a young pop-classical singer named Josh Groban. Sixteen million copies of two albums later, it would be simple enough for the 25-year-old to rest easy with more of the same. But on "Awake," Groban bounds forward via a handful of innovative collaborations with Dave Matthews, John Ondrasik of Five for Fighting, Herbie Hancock, Imogen Heap and, most notably, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, whom he met while touring in South Africa. There's still plenty here to soothe and seduce his sweeping fan base. "Don't Give Up (You Are Loved)," breathtaking Italian "Un Giorno Per Noi (Romeo Y Guilietta)" and melancholy "February Song" are destined to join his greatest hits, but this collection proves that the momentous talent is just finding his footing. Already No. 1 at amazon.com based on pre-orders a week before release, "Awake" is a retail and artistic titan.—CT



YUSUF

An Other Cup

Producers: Yusuf
Islam, Rick Nowels
Ya/Atlantic

Release Date: Nov. 14
Twenty-eight years is a long time between

drinks, even if it is only tea you're sipping, but the artist formerly known as Cat Stevens (and, significantly, billed as

such on U.S. album sleeves) still knows how to make a decent brew. His voice is seemingly unchanged by the best part of three decades away from the music biz, and the songs, while clearly informed by his faith and his unique experiences in the time off, retain much of the freshness and pop sensibility that made albums like "Tea for the Tillerman" such an inspiring presence in the '70s. It doesn't all hit home, but at its best ("Heaven/ Where True Love Goes," "In the End," "Green Fields, Golden Sands"), this record is uplifting enough to satisfy even a 30-year thirst.—MS



KEITH URBAN

Love, Pain & the Whole Crazy Thing

Producers: Dann Huff,
Keith Urban
Capitol Nashville

Release Date: Nov. 7

"I don't have any aspirations to be a pop star or a rock artist." That's what Keith Urban recently told *Billboard*, and while it may be true, he could be either if he wanted to. The proof is in this CD, which rocks harder and is more diverse than its three predecessors. Few artists have the vision to see that country music isn't simply defined by fiddles and steel guitar (although this album has both), and even fewer have the talent to fulfill that vision. Urban does. Whether it's one of the 10 songs he wrote or the one he didn't (the Billy Nicholls-penned "I Can't Stop Loving You," previously a hit for Leo Sayer and Phil Collins), Urban sells every song with passion. It's fitting that he closes this varied set with "Got It Right This Time." Indeed.—KT

HIP-HOP

THE GAME

Doctor's Advocate

Producers: various
Black Wall Street/Geffen

Release Date: Nov. 14

After getting booted from 50 Cent's G-Unit crew and losing Dr. Dre as the main collaborator for this sophomore album, the Game is sporting quite a chip on his shoulder. The against-the-odds mentality is set on a backdrop of menacing percussion ("It's Okay [One Blood]") and brooding soul samples (the groupie-bashing "Wouldn't Get Far," featuring Kanye West). The defensive approach can be great lyrical fodder ("Why You Hate the Game" featuring Nas and Marsha Ambrosius), but the Compton, Calif.-bred rapper is at his best on pensive cuts like "O! English" and the Dre-aimed title track featuring Busta Rhymes. Clichéd lady-pleasers like "Around the World" featuring Jamie Foxx are inconsequential, but even though "Doctor's Advocate" has its failings, it's a prescription that comes recommended.—CH

FAT JOE

Me, Myself and I

Producers: various
Terror Squad/Imperial/EMI

Release Date: Nov. 14

Having split with Atlantic in favor of a distribution deal with EMI's Imperial Records, Fat Joe offers quintessential Don Cartagena rhymes on "Me, Myself and I," particularly during "Breathe and Stop," where he claims he could "play it like Kanye and let my chest hair show, but that just ain't Joe." His spat with 50 Cent continues on that Bob Marley-sampling cut, produced by Nu Jersey Devil and featuring the Game. Beats by producer LV stand out on songs like "Damn" and "Jealousy," marked by vintage '70s soul horns and layered vocals. But ironically, the tracks exhibiting personal emotion for his mother and his wife fall flat. Indeed, Joe's at his most excited when he's threatening to "run up in your crib and butt f**k your wife." Happiness.—HC

SOUNDTRACK

TENACIOUS D

The Pick of Destiny

Producer: John King
Epic

Release Date: Nov. 14

▶ Tenacious D insists it is the greatest band in the world, and on a couple occasions during this soundtrack to the duo's upcoming film of the same name, you kinda believe it. Simultaneously mocking and paying homage to metal, tracks like "Master Exploder" (cue the Judas Priest-style harmonized guitar solos) and "Car Chase City" (with a speed-addled Motörhead riff) is the D at its best—unapologetically obnoxious and having a ball. Beyond some amusing genre parodies (power ballads on "Dude I Totally Miss You," flute-flavored '60s pop on "Papagenu (He's My Sassafras)," Jack Black and Kyle Gass unite in rock with such idols as Meat Loaf and Ronnie James Dio ("Kickapoo"), and deliver their life story in anthemic fashion (the title cut). Best of all: Black scatting atop Gass' acoustic renditions of "Für Elise" and "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" on "Classico."—JC

ROCK

... AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

So Divided

Producer: Mike McCarthy
Interscope

Release Date: Nov. 14

▶ "So Divided," the third Interscope release from ... And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead, offers a more diverse song mix than one might expect from these Texas-based rockers. There are still moments of gripping rock drama, particularly on "Sunken Dreams," which most resembles 2002's amazing "Source Tags & Codes." But the set veers into alt-country territory on the bluesy "Naked Sun" and "Witches Web," which features Dresden Dolls' Amanda Palmer on backing vocals. There's also a streamlined pop flair on display via the Beach Boys-style harmonies of "Eight Day Hell" and the

propulsive major-key riff of opener "Stand in Silence." Still, the standout is "Wasted State of Mind," whose frantic piano melody and singalong chorus is a reminder that change, though unanticipated, can often be a good thing.—JM

DAMIEN RICE

9

Producer: Damien Rice
Vector/Warner Bros.

Release Date: Nov. 14

★ Damien Rice's 2004 debut, "O," had its darling moments of innocence and whimsy, but "9" keeps both feet on the ground. Addressing jealousy, sex, loneliness, cheating, exhaustion and unfulfillment, Rice's fragile voice whimpers and moans through heart-on-sleeves like "9 Crimes" and "The Animals Were Gone." Just like on the first album, the pretty string arrangements and angelic harmonies with cohort Lisa Hannigan don't exactly bring peace to his troubled guitar songs, just as tracks like "Rootless Tree" begin pastoral, then bum-rush into chaos and anger. The refreshing/frustrating aspect of Rice's capital-D dumped state of disrepair is that the album doesn't attempt to be bigger than it is—no token social commentary, no distracting deviation to a commercial single or lighter subject matter. It is simply miserable, heavy, repetitive and cathartic.—KH

POP

BOWLING FOR SOUP The Great Burrito Extortion Case

Producers: various

Jive

Release Date: Nov. 7

▶ Doling out another dose of quirky pop/rock a la prior radio hits like "1985" and "Ohio (Come Back to Texas)," the new Bowling for Soup album should elicit smiles and snickers all around. First single "High School Never Ends" is a hilarious social commentary with biting wit, a bit of truth and an

continued on >>p56

SINGLES



DEPECHE MODE

Martyr (3:07)

Producer: Ben Hillier
Writer: M. Gore
Publisher: EMI
Blackwood, BMI
Mute/Sire/Reprise

During the past 25

years, Dave Gahan, Andy "Fletch" Fletcher and Martin Gore have personified—defined—electronica around the globe, with the occasional dip into arena rock. Now, Depeche Mode celebrates a notable anniversary with its "The Best of, Volume 1," which collects memorable moments from 11 studio albums. New track "Martyr" certainly makes the mark, with its hypnotizing, synthesizer-driven imprint; urgent guitars; and a sound so retro that you at first wonder if the track was pulled out of a safe, where it has been collecting dust for two decades. Fun, reminiscent and yet fresh enough to prove that these guys are relevant as ever.—CT



ROCKIE LYNNE More

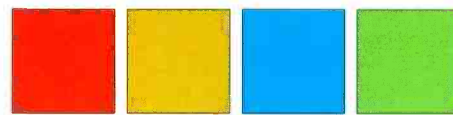
(3:54)

Producers: Blake Chancey, Tony Brown, Kevin Law
Writers: R. Lynne, D. Morgan
Publishers: Carolina

Blue Sky/Little Shop of Morgansongs, BMI
Universal South

This is quite simply one of the most beautiful country ballads to come along this year. Country programmers would be crazy not to spin this heavily, especially during the holiday season. Rockie Lynne and Music Row vet Dennis Morgan have crafted a sweet, poignant love song filled with such great lines as "I'd give you my seat on the train to heaven, if only one of us could go." Love and devotion never sounded more honest and tangible than when Lynne's emotion-filled voice delivers the eloquent lines of this gorgeous ballad. His previous efforts have garnered attention, but this should be the single that shifts this talented artist's career into high gear.—DEP

REVIEWS



SINGLES

from >>p55

absolutely infectious chorus. Lead vocalist Jaret Reddick has an engaging, personality-packed voice that makes every song an event. On "I'm Gay," the band deflates rockers who take life a little too seriously, then implores "Don't hate us cause we're happy!" Though most tunes lean toward the satirical, the band tackles more serious fare on "Much More Beautiful Person," about the challenges some young people battle. Throughout, clever songwriting, solid musicianship and manic energy combine to roll a perfect strike.—*DEP*

JOAN OSBORNE
Pretty Little Stranger
Producer: Steve Buckingham
Vanguard

★ While a far cry from Joan Osborne's breakthrough, the delectable "Relish," recorded more than a decade ago, "Pretty Little Stranger" sets the singer in Nashville, where she soulfully transplants her roots music into fertile country soil. At times, producer Steve Buckingham gives the sessions a classic feel, a la Owen Bradley's signature steel guitar shadings and bright piano tinkles, on such sumptuous readings of Kris Kristofferson's "Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends" and Beth Nielsen Chapman's "Time Won't Tell." But Osborne breaks out of the Patsy Cline mode with folk-inflected tunes and more contemporary country fare like the lyrical title track. Split down the middle between covers and originals, the CD's best tracks come from Osborne's portfolio, including the sweetly swaying "Holy Waters," the skipping "Shake That Devil" and the funky "Dead Roses."—*DO*

LATIN

INTOCABLE
Crossover
Producers: Ricky Muñoz, René Martínez, Lloyd Maines
EMI Televisa
Release Date: Oct. 24
"Crossover" is an apt description of Intocable's music, which often veers from regional Mexican into pop. However, this album is not totally revolutionary for the band, which has been pushing the envelope of the norteño sound for some time while keeping close to its basic root. Both extremes are heard on the single "Por Ella." The original version is romantic norteño to the core, built on swiveling accordion lines, while the pop version (produced by Lloyd Maines) is country and Western, the accordion traded for twangy guitars and fiddle. Otherwise, Intocable sounds like evolved norteño. Some tracks, like "Libertad" and "La Palabra Amor," are robust and danceable, while others like "Lo Que Callas," accordion notwithstanding, could easily fall into a pop format thanks to long melodic lines and big, breakout choruses.—*LC*

WORLD

THE IDAN RAICHEL
PROJECT
The Idan Raichel Project
Producers: Idan Raichel, Gilad Shmueli
Cumbancha
Release Date: Nov. 7
★ This disc is surely one of the most fascinating titles to emerge in world music this year. Israeli keyboardist/composer Idan Raichel, who has become quite an item among Israel's and Ethiopia's music fans, collaborates here with Ethiopian immigrants in Israel, particularly vocalist Cabra Casey. The tunes are terribly alluring, and each song definitely has a life of

its own. Make note of the superb, haunting groove of "Mi'Ma'amakim," an exquisite blending of a Raichel lyric and "Nanu Nanu Ney," a traditional Ethiopian song. "Brong Faya," sung by Suriname native Sergio Braams, boasts a strong hint of reggae, while "Azini," featuring Arab-Israeli vocalist Mira Anwar Awad, is a dramatic ballad with a pronounced Middle Eastern feel. Raichel's U.S. debut is a multi-ethnic tour de force.—*PVV*

VITAL REISSUES

NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE
Live at the Fillmore East
Producer: Paul Rothchild
Reprise

★ The long-awaited first salvo from Neil Young's long-rumored archives series, "Live" captures the original Crazy Horse (the late Danny Whitten, Billy Talbot and Ralph Molina) plus producer Jack Nitzsche, who sits in on electric piano, during a four-shows-in-two-nights stand from March 1970 at the legendary New York venue. Only six tunes made the cut, but the 43 minutes of music offered features everything a fan could hope for—superbly jammed-out epics ("Down by the River," "Cowgirl in the Sand"), lesser-known gems ("Winterlong," "Wonderin'") and solid versions of signature tracks ("Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere," "Come On Baby Let's Go Downtown"). The fiery 16-minute "Cowgirl" takes top prize, but the whole set shines. All we need now is more—lots more.—*SV*

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ADDITIONAL REVIEWS:
• Craig Morgan, "Little Bit of Life" (Broken Bow)
• Joanna Newsom, "Ys." (Drag City)

POP

GOO GOO DOLLS **Let Love In (4:15)**
Producer: Glen Ballard
Writers: J. Reznik, G. Ballard, G. Wattenberg
Publishers: various
Warner Bros.

▶ By the stats, Goo Goo Dolls are the most popular adult top 40 act in history, and as usual, John Reznik and company deliver a comfortable fit for the format, with a midtempo pop/rock romp big on hooks and hip enough to keep moms feeling youthful. For a while there, Reznik's DIY accord on making records had put him in a rut, but thanks to some able collaborative skills from producer Glen Ballard, the title track to the Goos' latest album is well-crafted, plenty melodic and stands a good chance at topping the adult top 40 list. For good measure, a "rock" version is also included on the promo single, which turns up the guitars for hipper-leaning stations. It's preferred, but either way you slice it, this mild cheddar meets the taste test.—*CT*

MAT KEARNEY **Nothing Left to Lose (4:26)**
Producers: Robert Marvin, Mat Kearney
Writer: M. Kearney
Publishers: EMI Blackwood/Façade Aside, BMI
Aware/Columbia

Singer/songwriter Mat Kearney leaves his hip-hop rhymes behind and mainstreams it on "Nothing Left to Lose," the soft-rocking title track from his major-label debut and second album. The introspective single chronicles his journey from his Eugene, Ore., hometown to Nashville, offering an acoustic-led, sensitive-guy ballad that is catchy and relaxed. "To a kid from Oregon by way of California/All of this is more than I've ever known or seen," he admits, then launches into a Coldplay-ish falsetto for an understated, mildly infectious chorus. While "Nothing Left" is a highly personal statement that lacks true personality, it is already garnering hot AC airplay and should make Kearney a serious contender for a

spot on the next "Grey's Anatomy" soundtrack.—*SP*

ROCK

P.O.D. **Going in Blind (3:46)**
Producers: Travis Myrick, P.O.D.
Writer: P.O.D.
Publishers: Ripped Off Publishing/Jason Truby Publishing, ASCAP
Atlantic

▶ Was the nu metal era really so long ago? The pending arrival of greatest-hits sets from Staind and P.O.D. mark almost a decade since Korn's "Follow the Leader" officially ushered in the polarizing trend when it debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Staind and Korn have long distanced themselves from that label, and it's now becoming harder to lump P.O.D. in that category. The band has always kept melody firmly in hand and doesn't automatically rely on rapped vocals. "Going in Blind" finds P.O.D. settled into a style that mixes radio-ready structures with dramatic choruses and weighty lyrics. The band's Christian roots are also heard in words like, "In his eyes you can live again/Free within." "Going in Blind" has a sad message about not knowing where to turn in a time of need, but the midtempo number still feels inspiring.—*CLT*

TRIPLE-A

JOHN MELLENCAMP **Our Country (3:30)**
Producers: John Mellencamp (rock)/Tony Brown (country)
Writer: J. Mellencamp
Publishers: Belmont Mall/Sony/ATV, ASCAP
Universal Republic

▶ Longtime super trooper and Billboard Century Award winner John Mellencamp returns in early 2007 with his first album of new material in six years led by "Our Country," an appreciable fable of tolerance, hope and empowerment. Without sounding preachy, he implores, "There's room enough here for science to live/And there's room enough here for religion to forgive/And try to understand, all the people of this land, this is our country."

Vocally, melodically, lyrically, Mellencamp remains a master—if more for triple-A stations now than the faraway land that is today's top 40. It's also trendy nowadays for pop/rock artists to cross to the country charts, but as one of the original heartland performers of the past 20 years, his potential there is organic—and mighty. For the people, by the people. A jubilant return.—*CT*

AC

ENYA **The Magic of the Night (3:29)**
Producer: Nicky Ryan
Writers: Enya, R. Ryan
Publisher: EMI Blackwood, BMI
Reprise

As AC prepares for its annual flip to all-holiday music (four radio stations have already made the transition before Halloween pumpkins even began to sag), Enya releases a number of apropos tunes from her "Sounds of the Season" EP, including this secular selection, "The Magic of the Night." Because this is an artist that appears only every couple years, we're forgiving that it's more or less a paint-by-numbers production of the airy, plucky new age sound that has always defined the singer/songwriter. There are still shades of Christmas to the track, with its references to bells and angels, but it nonetheless possesses an all-year charm on par with her many previous hits at the format. Not particularly novel, but lovely all the same.—*CT*

CHRISTMAS

KIMBERLEY LOCKE **Jingle Bells**
Curb
SARAH McLACHLAN **Happy Xmas (War Is Over)**
RCA
BETTE MIDLER **From a Distance (Christmas version)**
Columbia
DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES **Home for Christmas**
U-Watch
VONZELL SOLOMON **It's Gonna Be a Cold Cold Christmas**
Breaking Records
LEANN RIMES **Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree**
Curb

LEGEND & CREDITS

EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS) AND CHUCK TAYLOR (SINGLES)
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PICK ▶: A new release predicted to hit the top half of

the chart in the corresponding format. **CRITICS' CHOICE** ★: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Sixth Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

THE HOT BOX

A WEEKLY ROUNDUP OF NOTABLE CHART ACHIEVEMENTS



'HURTS' SO GOOD

>> Rascal Flatts' "What Hurts the Most" becomes the first single by a group in the 45-year history of the Adult Contemporary chart to top that list after a No. 1 run on Hot Country Songs. In the Nielsen BDS era (since 1993), only three solo artists—Shania Twain, Lee Ann Womack and Faith Hill—have managed that feat.

DANCING QUEEN

>> Madonna's "Jump" ascends to No. 1 on the Hot Dance Club Play chart, becoming her fourth straight chart-topper from "Confessions on a Dance Floor" and her 37th Club No. 1. In a distant second place on the overall Club tally: Janet Jackson, with 16.



PUCKER UP

>> "Kissology: The Ultimate Kiss Collection Vol. 1 1974-77" is Kiss' fifth No. 1 on Top Music Video. All four of the quartet's SoundScan-era chart-toppers debuted at No. 1. Overall, Kiss has reached the top 10 with 12 of its 17 charted video titles.

CHART BEAT

READ FRED BRONSON EVERY WEEK AT BILLBOARD.COM/FRED

>> It has been more than two years since a hit from Hot Country Songs occupied the pole position on the Adult Contemporary chart. "What Hurts the Most" (Lyric Street) by Rascal Flatts is the first country tune to be an AC No. 1 since Martina McBride's "This One's for the Girls" held that honor in the summer of 2004.

>> Female "American Idol" singers are topping the country singles and albums charts. Carrie Underwood carries on for a second week with "Before He Cheats" (Arista), while Kellie Pickler collects the 104th No. 1 for the "Idol" franchise with her debut album, "Small Town Girl" (BNA).

Billboard

CHARTS



Over the Counter

GEOFF MAYFIELD gmayfield@billboard.com

'Hannah' Edges Manilow's Best SoundScan Frame

Two weeks in a row may not seem like much of a win streak, but in the merry-go-round that has been 2006, a second chart-topping frame for the "Hannah Montana" soundtrack resembles outright domination.

The Disney Channel series album is the first since Justin Timberlake's September release, "FutureSex/LoveSounds," to lead the chart for two weeks. In a year where a chart-record 34 albums have reached No. 1, "Hannah" is only the seventh title to spend more than one week atop the page.

Of those seven, only two led the big chart for more than two weeks. Rascal Flatts' "Me and My Gang," released April 4, was No. 1 during its first three chart frames. Hits compilation "Now 22," which hit stores June 27, was the kingpin in three nonconsecutive weeks.

For whatever it's worth, both of those albums, like "Hannah," have been driven largely by department store traffic. According to Nielsen SoundScan, mass merchants account for 83% of the 1.4 million "Now 22" has sold so far, 76% of the 2.7 million to date on the Flatts title and 84% of the 485,000 that the Disney soundtrack has posted in two weeks.

A modest second-week decline of 27.6% helps "Hannah" fend off a strong

charge by Barry Manilow's newest. The margin between the two is less than 2,000 copies, the smallest gap between No. 1 and the runner-up since the week ending Aug. 6, when DMX's "Year of the Dog Again" trailed "Now 22" by about 1,500 pieces. The dip for "Hannah" is also the smallest second-week drop by an album that started in the top 10 since another Walt Disney soundtrack, "The Cheetah Girls 2," eroded 7% in the week that ended Aug. 27.

In all, "Hannah" is only the sixth album in 2006 to drop 28% or less after starting in the top 10. Two others, the soundtracks to "Cars" and "Step Up," actually posted gains in the second week, as each arrived before their movies hit screens.

The two smallest second-week declines by a top 10 album were both softened by Valentine shopping: Andrea Bocelli's "Amore" (down 3%) and Manilow's "The Greatest Songs of the Fifties" (down 9%).

The "Hannah" series, which stars daughter/father team Miley and Billy Ray Cyrus, also looms large in home video. "Hannah Montana, Vol. 1—Livin' the Rock Star Life" bows at No. 1 on Top Kid DVDs at billboard.biz. The DVD arrived the same day as the album, but

charted a week later because the tracking period for Nielsen VideoScan's final lists lags SoundScan's by a week

OLD FRIENDS: Sports teams entertain fans with turn-back-the-clock nights, which just might be the theme for this week's top 10.

Barry Manilow, who first dented The Billboard 200 in 1974, garners the Hot Shot Debut at No. 2. He just misses scoring his third career No. 1 and his second chart-topper of the year.

With 202,000 sold, "The Greatest Songs of the Sixties" marks Manilow's biggest Nielsen SoundScan week yet. Although it begins 48,000 taller than his "Greatest Songs of the Fifties" did when it opened at No. 1 in February, the competition is tougher this time.



MANILOW

Thanks in large part to an appearance on QVC, about 35% of Manilow's first-week sales come from the nontraditional sector.

If this album cycle continues at its current pace, I imagine we'll see "The Greatest Songs of the Eighties" about this time next year. Can't wait to hear Manilow cover Depeche Mode and Guns N' Roses.

Also lending the top 10 a throwback flair are bows by the Who (No. 7) and Meat Loaf (No. 8), each with about 81,000 sold. The former first inked the album chart in 1967, while Mr. Loaf's debut hit the list in 1977.

Even Deftones (at No. 10) have been around a while. Their first album entered Top Heatseekers 10 years ago, meaning they have at least an outside shot to be represented on Manilow's "The Greatest Songs of the Nineties," should one hit stores in 2008.

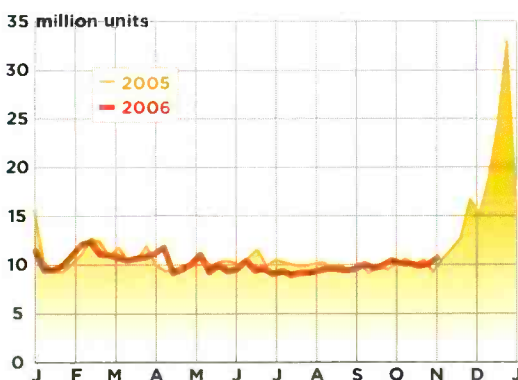
ON DECK: Don't expect a third straight week for the "Hannah Montana" album. The new Keith Urban set and "Now 23" will be in a tug of war for next issue's crown, with each having a shot at 350,000. Chains' first-day numbers also lead chart soothsayers to predict 200,000-plus starts for Sugarland and Josh Groban.

Market Watch A Weekly National Music Sales Report

Weekly Unit Sales

	ALBUMS	STORE SINGLES	DIGITAL TRACKS
This Week	10,675,000	53,000	10,130,000
Last Week	10,034,000	48,000	10,436,000
Change	6.4%	10.4%	-2.9%
This Week Last Year	10,898,000	61,000	6,434,000
Change	-2.0%	-13.1%	57.4%

Weekly Album Sales



Year-To-Date

	2005	2006	CHANGE
OVERALL UNIT SALES			
Albums	467,310,000	444,237,000	-4.9%
Digital Tracks	277,660,000	468,690,000	68.8%
Store Singles	4,432,000	3,209,000	-27.6%
Total	749,402,000	916,136,000	22.2%
Albums w/TEA*	495,076,000	491,106,000	-0.8%

*Includes track equivalent album sales (TEA) with 10 track downloads equivalent to one album sale.

ALBUM SALES



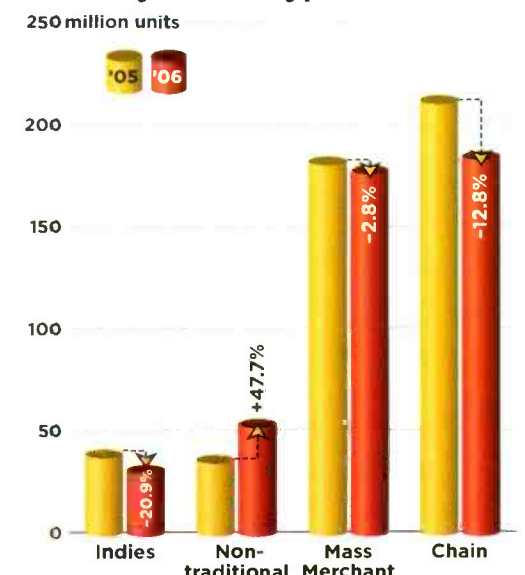
SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT

	2005	2006	CHANGE
CD	451,717,000	416,549,000	-7.8%
Digital	12,460,000	25,937,000	108.2%
Cassette	2,201,000	985,000	-55.2%
Other	932,000	766,000	-17.8%

For week ending Nov. 5, 2006. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail store and rack sales reports collected and provided by

Nielsen SoundScan

Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type



Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 57



NOV 18 2006 THE Billboard 200



Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, 2 Weeks Ago, Weeks on Chart, Artist, Title, Cert., Peak Position. Top entries include Soundtrack (Hannah Montana), Barry Manilow (The Greatest Songs Of The Sixties), Birdman & Lil Wayne (Like Father, Like Son).

The lead album with its studio album since 1982's "It's Hard." New set starts with 31,000.

3rd's last studio release in 2003 ranked at No. 2 how with 67,000. New one starts with 76,000.

Willie Nelson's collaboration with Ryan Adams lands at No. 87 with a debut of 12,000.

Faisty English opener at No. 43. It's played Letterman, opens at No. 7 on Top Rap Albums at 13,000.

Mat Mat's deluxe version of the set, which last week, pushes a big 70% gain for the album.

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, 2 Weeks Ago, Weeks on Chart, Artist, Title, Cert., Peak Position. Top entries include Newsboys (Go), Tim McGraw (Greatest Hits Vol 2: Reflected), Various Artists (Now 22).

THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX: A grid of artist names and their chart positions, including Alan Jackson, Kanye West, and others.

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BIRTHS Boy, William Douglas Turcotte, to Brad Turcotte and wife Susan Nov. 1 in Houston. Father is founder and president of Compadre Records.

DEATHS Gerald Cook, 85, eminent pianist, composer, musical director and arranger, died Oct. 22 in Chicago. His health had been failing for several years.

After studying piano with Ray Lev and composition with Nadia Boulanger, Cook performed in concert halls with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, and in nightclubs starting out in a duo piano act with Margaret Bonds, and went on to accompany many singers and personalities, including Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, Carmen McRae, Shirley Jones, Johnny Hartman, Sammy Cahn, E.Y. Harburg and Libby Holman. But perhaps he is best-remembered for his remarkable association with the late Alberta Hunter, whose comeback in later life was largely due to his efforts.

From 1978 until her death in 1984, Cook appeared nightly as accompanist and musical arranger for Hunter at the Cookery in New York and toured with her in Brazil, Paris and Berlin. He was her accompanist when she sang for President Carter at the White House and was responsible for her musical arrangements for the soundtrack to "Remember My Name" (a film by Robert Altman), as well as "The Glory of Alberta Hunter," "Amtrak Blues" and "Look for the Silver Lining," albums produced by John Hammond for Columbia Records.

Prior to his association with Hunter, Cook worked with Holman for almost a quarter of a century (1947-1971) and was pianist and musical director for her one-woman show, "Blues, Ballads and Sin-Songs," which opened in October 1954 at the Bijou Theatre. He was her accompanist and

musical arranger for "The Legendary Libby Holman" and "Something to Remember Her By" (both albums by Monmouth-Evergreen) and her accompanist on concert tours of Europe and North Africa, as well as a tour of the United States, where she performed with the famed guitarist and folk singer Josh White.

Cook is survived by two sisters, Marion Hewlett and Elizabeth Daugherty, both of Chicago, and a niece, Lynne Hewlett, of Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rudy Taylor, 52, longtime Gap Band producer and songwriter, died of a heart attack Oct. 28 in Baton Rouge, La., while on tour with Bobby Womack, for whom he acted as musical arranger.

Taylor co-produced, arranged and co-wrote many of the Gap Band hits including "Oops Upside Your Head," "You Dropped a Bomb on Me" and "Early in the Morning," the last of which also gave Robert Palmer a top 20 U.S. hit when he covered it. Taylor also played bass on Snoopy Dogg's worldwide hit, "Signs."

He is survived by his wife Sonia and his daughter Ernestina.

Larissa Stolarchuk, aka Larissa Strickland, 46, died of an apparent drug overdose Oct. 9 in Port Charlotte, Fla., according to those who knew her. Stolarchuk sang and played guitar in early-'80s Detroit punk bands L-Seven (no relation to L-7) and the Laughing Hyenas, both of which recorded for Chicago's Touch & Go Records. A funeral for Stolarchuk was held Nov. 8 in Passaic, N.J., where both of her parents are buried. She is survived by her husband, brother and sister. "Larissa blazed her own trail and paved the way for the growing numbers of talented women in real rock bands in the '90s and '00s," Touch & Go founder Corey Rusk wrote on his label's Web site.

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BMI COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS: Country's biggest stars were out in force at the 54th annual BMI Country Music Awards, held Nov. 4 in Nashville.

ABOVE LEFT: BMI Icon Merle Haggard, left, and BMI president/CEO Del Bryant walk the red carpet at BMI's 54th annual Country Awards dinner. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAY WILLIAMS

ABOVE: Billboard executive editor/associate publisher Tamara Conniff smiles with Toby Keith at the BMI Country Awards. PHOTO: COURTESY OF STEVE LOWRY

ABOVE RIGHT: Legendary singer/songwriter Kris Kristofferson, left, poses with BMI VP Jody Williams at the BMI Country Awards. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAY WILLIAMS

RIGHT: BMI president/CEO Del Bryant finds himself flanked by two of country's biggest names: Brooks & Dunn's Ronnie Dunn, left, and Toby Keith. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAY WILLIAMS

LEFT: From left, Warner Bros. recording artist Big Kenny and wife Christie Alphin are shown with Angel Cropper and her legendary guitarist husband, Steve Cropper. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAY WILLIAMS



SESAC NASHVILLE MUSIC AWARDS: SESAC honored such songwriters as Justin Pollard and Sam and Annie Tate during the SESAC Nashville Music Awards, held Nov. 5 at the company's headquarters in Nashville.

ABOVE LEFT: SESAC honored songwriter Justin Pollard for his contribution to Pat Green's "Feels Like It Should" project. From left are SESAC directors of writer/publisher relations Shannan Neese and John Mullins. Pollard and SESAC associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAY WILLIAMS

ABOVE RIGHT: Americana band the Greencards performed at the awards ceremony. From left are Eamon McLaughlin on fiddle, Kym Warner on mandolin, Carol Young on bass and special guest Jedd Hughes on acoustic guitar. PHOTO: COURTESY OF FIM CAMPBELL

RIGHT: Songwriter Ashe Underwood, left, catches up with artist Trent Tomlinson at the SESAC Nashville Music Awards. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TIM CAMPBELL

LEFT: Standing in back, from left, are SESAC associate VP of writer/publisher relations Tim Fink, SESAC president/COO Pat Collins and SESAC VP of writer/publisher relations Trevor Gale. In front are song and songwriter of the year winners Sam and Annie Tate. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAY WILLIAMS



INSIDE TRACK

EDITED BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

For more INSIDE TRACK go to www.billboard.biz

SOUL SISTER

Joss Stone is delving deeper into R&B and soul on her new, as-yet-untitled album, due March 6 via Virgin. Track has learned that the set was produced by Raphael Saadiq, whose résumé includes Angie Stone, Jill Scott, Kelis and the Grammy Award-winning Erykah Badu and Common duet "Love of My Life."

The 19-year-old Stone hit Compass Point Studios in the Bahamas to record the album, which will feature such tracks as "Headturner," "Tell Me What We're Gonna Do Now," "Music," "Tell Me 'Bout It," "Nothing Better Than (The iPod Song)" and "I Wish I Never Met You." The disc is the follow-up to 2004's "Mind Body & Soul," which debuted at No. 11 on The Billboard 200.

Meanwhile, Stone will make her big-screen debut in the fantasy film "Eragon," which opens Dec. 15 in U.S. theaters. Based on the novel of the same name by Christopher Paolini, it also stars Jeremy Irons and John Malkovich.

ELECTION DAY MUSICAL CHAIRS

Nov. 7 was a good night for the Democratic Party. Democrats took control of the House and Senate from Republicans. Now, enquiring minds might be asking themselves, what does this election have to do with music? Wave hello to John Hall, Eliot Spitzer and Deval Patrick.

Anti-war candidate Hall won the race for congress in upstate New York. He defeated Republican incumbent Sue Kelly 51% to 49%. As you may or may not know, Hall was the guitarist of '70s pop-rock group Orleans, which scored top 10 hits with "Dance With Me" and "Still the One." At the end of his victory speech, Hall, an environmental activist, sang Steven Van Zandt's "I Am a Patriot." While on the campaign trail, Hall received support from several fellow artists, including Steve Earle, Pete Seeger and Bonnie Raitt.

With more than 70% of the votes, Spitzer was elected governor of New York, beating Republican candidate and former assemblyman John Faso. Those in the entertainment industry are quite familiar with Spitzer, who, as New York State Attorney General, led a sweeping payola probe.

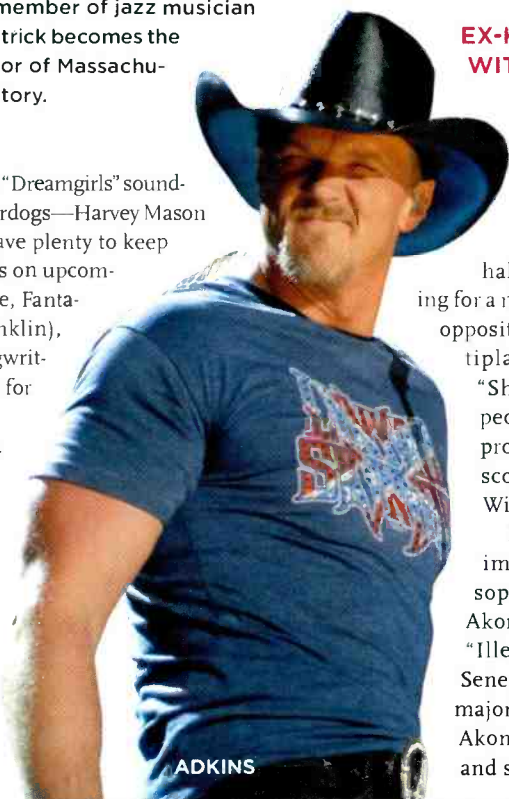
The result? All four major-label groups have agreed to monetary settlements and reforms that dramatically alter how they interact with radio stations. More recently, Spitzer reached his first settlement with a radio chain, CBS Radio. Spitzer is in negotiations with other radio conglomerates, all of which have stations in New York state.

Patrick became the governor elect of Massachusetts, defeating Republican nominee Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey, Independent Christy Mihos and Green-Rainbow Party nominee Grace Ross. So, what's Patrick's musical connection? His father, Pat Patrick, was a member of jazz musician Sun Ra's band. With this win, Patrick becomes the first African-American governor of Massachusetts and the second in U.S. history.

UNDERDOGS NO MORE

Having wrapped production on the "Dreamgirls" soundtrack (see story, page 54), the Underdogs—Harvey Mason Jr. and Damon Thomas—still have plenty to keep busy. In addition to collaborations on upcoming albums by Katharine McPhee, Fantasia (who duets with Aretha Franklin), Mario and Chris Brown, the songwriting/production duo is gearing up for its own label's inaugural rollout.

New Orleans R&B duo Luke & Q are set to release their first album next year on Underdog Records through distributor J Records. The pair's first single will be the club joint "Turn It Around" featuring Young Dro. Besides Luke & Q, the Underdog roster also boasts a girl group called—appropriately—Girlfriend and former Epic R&B crooner Glenn Lewis.



ADKINS

NASHVILLE STORMS MANHATTAN

Sure, New York is lacking a country music radio station. But that doesn't mean the city lacks country music fans. On Nov. 8, they jammed the Nokia Theatre Times Square for the latest stop on Trace Adkins' Dangerous Man trek. The country superstar was ably supported by openers Billy Currington and Jason Aldean.

The fact that New York is without a country station was not lost on the strappin' Adkins. Early in his set he joked, in that deliciously deep voice of his, that everyone knew his music from country radio—except, of course, those who live in New York, which was pretty much everyone in the room. But that's why we have CMT, he added. "That's where you hear all my music."

While Adkins performed all the hits, as well as a handful of tracks from his new album ("Dangerous Man"), his cover of Ronnie Milsap's "Stranger in My House" was an incredibly cool surprise. But he wasn't the only one that night successfully tackling songs made famous by others. Currington rocked out to AC/DC's "You Shook Me All Night Long," while Aldean did the same with Guns N' Roses' "Paradise City" and "Sweet Child O' Mine." Sweet, indeed.

EX-KONVICT CHILLS WITH CHILLI

Besides T-Pain (whose second Jive/Zomba-distributed album is due next year), Akon's Konvict Muzik label includes TLC founding member Rozonda "Chilli" Thomas. Akon, who is working on half the album with her, says he's aiming for a mid-2007 release. "This will be totally opposite from when she was with the multiplatinum group," Akon tells Track. "She's an incredible artist and I want people to reconnect with her." Lending production guidance on Thomas' Interscope-distributed set are Missy Elliott, Will.i.am and Timbaland.

In addition to this—as well as the imminent release of his anticipated sophomore set (see story, page 49)—Akon will begin casting in February for "Illegal Alien," a film inspired by the Senegalese-born singer's life story. "The majority of the film is basically true," adds Akon, who will write, produce, co-direct and score the movie.



STONE

Executive TURNTABLE

EDITED BY MITCHELL PETERS

RECORD LABELS: Universal Republic Records names **Bill Richards** VP of marketing. He was senior director of marketing at Universal Records.

Sanctuary Records in Los Angeles appoints **Jeremy Hammond** to senior VP of A&R for North America. He was senior VP of artist development at Sanctuary Group.

Concord Music Group in Beverly Hills, Calif., names **Jonathan Bender** senior VP of operations and digital media. He was head of the asset management division at Universal Music Group.

Warner Music Group in New York appoints **Dan Pelson** to senior VP of global consumer marketing. He was a co-founder of uPlayMe.

Universal South Records taps **Mark Wright** as president. He is under contract as executive VP of A&R at Sony BMG Nashville until early next year.

Sony BMG Nashville promotes **Renee Bell** to executive VP. She was senior VP of A&R.

PUBLISHING: Chrysalis Music Group in Los Angeles names **Jonathan Poe** director of business affairs. He was a contract attorney at Morrison & Foerster.

Cherry Lane Music Publishing in New York promotes **Brooke Primont** to senior director of film and TV, **Gabrielle Fastman** to manager of publications and **Erik Tomlin** to coordinator of synchronization licensing.

DISTRIBUTION: Caroline Distribution in New York names **Thomas Enright** VP of sales and marketing. He was national director of sales at Rykodisc.



TOURING: MSG Entertainment in New York names **Jonathan Hochwald** executive VP of productions. He was owner/president of Madstone Productions.

RELATED FIELDS: Shout Factory in Los Angeles names **Dayna Talley** director of promotion. She did radio promotion and talent relations at Astralwerks.

Send submissions to exec@billboard.com.

GOODWORKS

HELPING THE HUNGRY

With the release of the multiartist compilation "Serve," Hard Rock International and Sony BMG are raising awareness and funds for World Hunger Year, the nonprofit organization that fights against hunger and poverty in America. The CD features some rare and/or unreleased tracks, including a string version of "Secret Garden" by Bruce Springsteen, a home recording of "Alone, Together" by the Strokes, an acoustic mix of "Jaded" by Aerosmith and a live acoustic version of "A Favor House Atlantic" by Coheed and Cambria. The disc retails for \$12 and is available through worldhungeryear.org and hardrock.com. Net proceeds go directly to Artists Against Hunger & Poverty, an artist-directed program of WHY.

ACTS DONATE ITEMS FOR DARFUR

On the eve of the third annual Darfur Charity Auction, a cross-section of acts has already donated signed posters, CDs, lithographs and other memorabilia. They include Patti Smith, Tori Amos, Brian Wilson, Panic! at the Disco, Common, Goldfrapp, Kanye West, Peaches, Evanescence, Fall Out Boy, Gorillaz and Big & Rich. The online auction will be conducted the first week of December on eBay—with 100% of the proceeds going to Oxfam America and Human Rights Watch.

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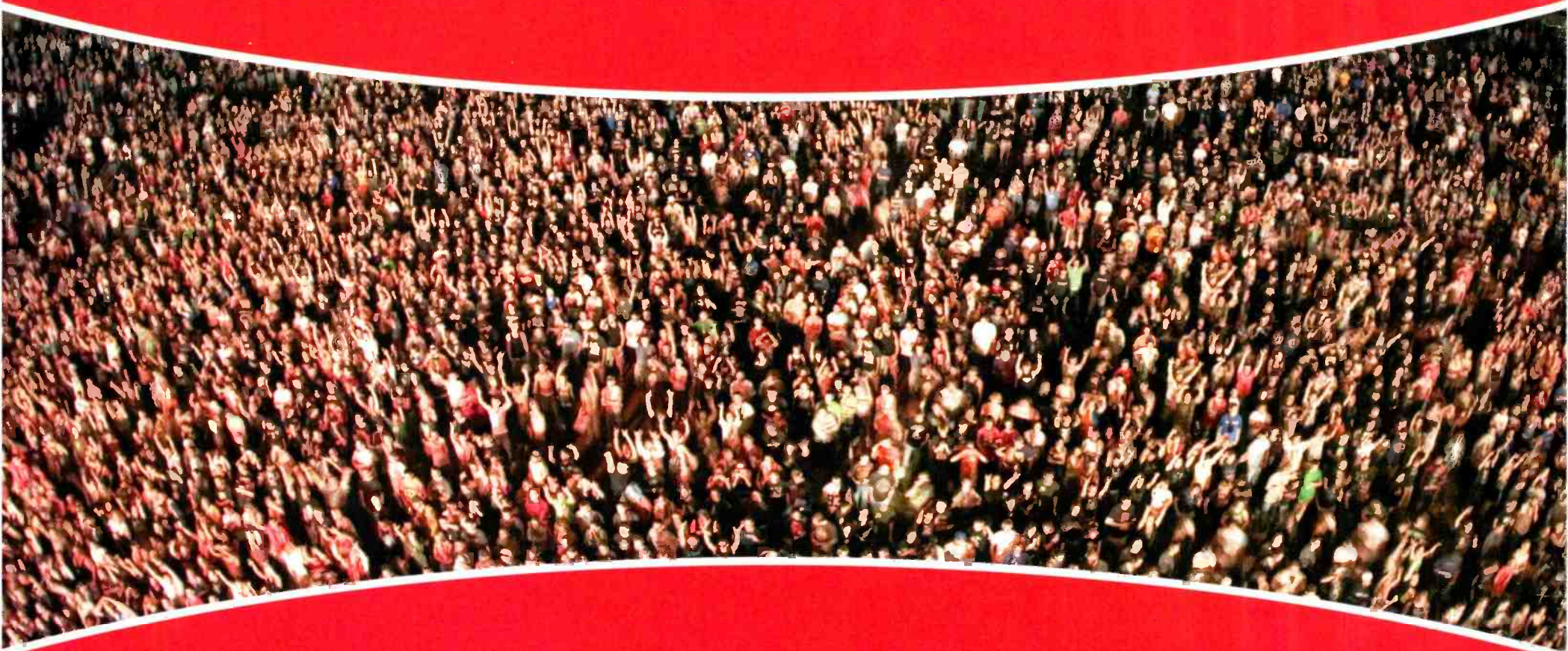


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