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# No. 1

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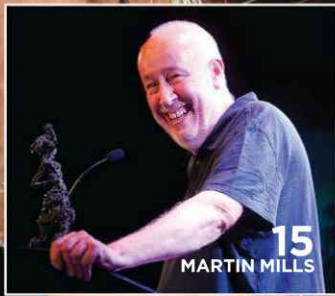
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## 360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD

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We hope you enjoy our special double issue. We'll be back with our next issue on July 14. Please check *Billboard.biz* for 24-7 music business coverage.



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R&B chart-topper **Chris Brown** returns with fifth album *Fortune*. To commemorate its arrival, *Billboard.com* counts down his 20 biggest hits and gives readers a track-by-track review of the anticipated release.

### BEST NEW ARTISTS

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# UPFRONT

TV BY RICHARD SMIRKE

## 'X'-ing Out The Charts

As U.K. 'X Factor' contestants score stateside hits, can the U.S. contingent follow?

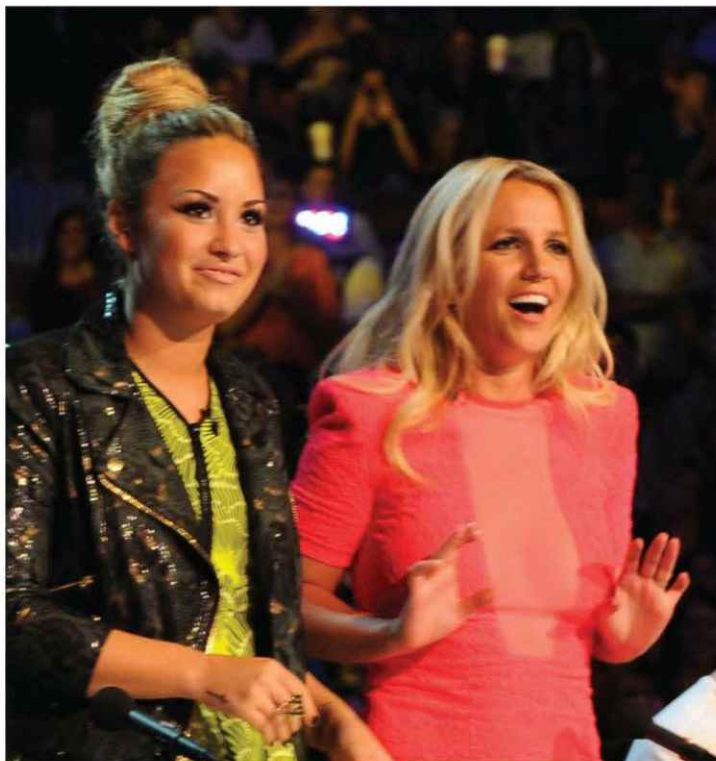
"I've always believed that 'The X Factor' was the best show for finding talent," says the global TV franchise founder, producer and ultimate star Simon Cowell, adding dryly, "But you've got to prove the point occasionally."

What's prompting this discussion isn't the all-conquering ratings of the U.K. show—launched in 2004, last year's eighth season finale was the nation's second most-watched TV show of 2011, attracting 13.5 million viewers (according to the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board), just 130,000 less than the Royal Wedding—or the ratings for the U.S. version, which debuted with an admirable 12.5 million viewers last fall (according to Nielsen), but failed to meet Cowell's projections of 20 million. Nor is it the recent high-profile, PR-generating tinkering with the judging panel of the U.S. edition, which dropped Paula Abdul and Nicole Scherzinger for Britney Spears and Demi Lovato.

Instead, it's the U.S. chart impact of two 2010 U.K. "X Factor" contestants—One Direction and Cher Lloyd—and the hopes that their success enables the U.S. competitors to follow suit.

"We were getting to a point where I questioned how long we were going to make these shows for, because even though they were successful as [TV] shows, it was embarrassing that we weren't creating world stars," Cowell says of the four-year gap between Leona Lewis' U.S. breakthrough in 2008—the first "X Factor" artist to hit big globally—and One Direction earlier this year.

"It validated why we'd been making the shows for so many years," he says of the record-breaking British boy band, whose debut album *Up All Night* bowed



at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in March and has sold 860,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. *Up All Night* also topped the charts in 15 other countries, including Canada, Australia, Sweden, Mexico and Italy. Global album sales are approaching 3 million, while the group has moved more than 5 million singles worldwide, according to Syco

Entertainment, the London- and Los Angeles-based music, TV, film and promotion company that produces "The X Factor" and historically signs its best-performing acts for the United Kingdom and Europe.

When it comes to breaking British "X Factor" artists stateside, Syco—which exists as a joint venture between Cowell and Sony Music Entertainment, each owning a 50% stake—partners with Sony's U.S. labels. One Direction is signed to Syco/Columbia Records. Cher Lloyd, who placed fourth on the



"X Factor" judges **DEMI LOVATO**, **BRITNEY SPEARS** and **SIMON COWELL** (from left). Inset: U.K. "X Factor" runner-up **REBECCA FERGUSON** performing in February in Manchester, England.

2010 series, is signed to Syco/Epic Records. This week, her debut U.S. single, "Want U Back," jumps 24 rungs to No. 51 on the Billboard Hot 100 in its second week. The sassy pop single is also the greatest gainer at top 40 radio and is up 50% in digital sales (56,000).

"It really does feel like it's going to explode and she'll be a big star," Epic Records chairman/CEO and U.S. "X Factor" judge Antonio "L.A." Reid says. The 18-year-old Lloyd—who scored a U.K. No. 1 with her dubstep-flavored single "Swagger Jagger" last year—will

release her debut U.S. album this fall, with Reid confident that she can replicate One Direction's international pop success. "I love her. She's feisty, she's spicy, she's got an attitude, and she has a really unique voice," he says. "She has all those things stardom embodies."

Other British "X Factor" alumni generating U.S. buzz are 2009 series runner-up Olly Murs, who's opening for One Direction and has received early support from Radio Disney and WHTZ New York for debut U.S. single "Heart Skips a Beat" featuring Chiddy Bang

### MIDYEAR NUMBERS

Billboard's coverage of Nielsen SoundScan's midyear sales figures will appear in the next issue.

(Sycos/Columbia)—and 2010 finalist Rebecca Ferguson, whose debut album *Heaven* (Sycos/Columbia) has sold 20,000 units, according to SoundScan.

The power of "The X Factor" to kick-start global pop careers lies in its close synchronicity with the regular record business, says Sonny Takhar, London-based managing director of Syco Music. "That is fundamental to why we've been more successful than other shows in terms of breaking acts, not only domestically, but also internationally," he says, citing 2006 series winner Leona Lewis as a turning point.

"Leona changed the face of the brand globally," Takhar says. Cowell also sees Lewis as a pivotal figure in the evolution of the show. He recalls receiving a phone call from Clive Davis midway through the 2006 series where the Sony Music chief creative officer said, "Win or lose, we're in. We think she's really special."

"I remember thinking at the time, 'That's one of those game-changer telephone calls,'" says Cowell, who credits Davis with helping assemble a world-beating team of producers and songwriters, including Dallas Austin, Ryan Tedder and Stargate, to work on Lewis' debut album. "We were making proper records then," he says.

Released in 2007 in the United Kingdom and 2008 stateside on Syco/J Records, *Spirit* topped the U.K. albums chart and the Billboard 200, making Lewis the first British solo artist to score a U.S. No. 1 with his or her debut effort. U.S. sales stand at 1.7 million, according to SoundScan. Breakthrough lead single "Bleeding Love" also hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot

100 and has sold 4.4 million.

Nevertheless, it would take several years before the U.K. "X Factor" would produce another global star. 2008 series winner Alexandra Burke was a big hit in the United Kingdom, scoring three No. 1 singles and selling more than 1 million copies of her 2009 debut album *Overcome*, according to Syco. But she failed to cross over internationally. As a result, Syco "made a conscious effort to step up the music team's involvement in the TV show" for the 2010 series, Takhar says. He credits an increase in the number of A&R executives and music and vocal producers working on "The X Factor" with producing "better artists within the show."

The high calibre of contestants in 2010, including One Direction, Lloyd, Ferguson and eventual series winner Matt Cardle, also necessitated another major change in how artist's careers would be developed.

At Cowell's instigation, Syco would no longer automatically cherry-pick the show's best artists, with the bidding process opened up to all Sony labels, including Syco, which would in turn outline their proposed campaign strategy to Cowell and each act.

Relinquishing Syco's hold on "X Factor" talent ensured that an artist's team was able to dedicate more A&R resources to developing each act. In the case of One Direction, some of the world's leading pop songwriters and producers were recruited to shape its debut album, including RedOne, Savan Kotecha, Carl Falk and Rami Yacoub. Lloyd, who Syco also fought to sign for the United Kingdom and Europe, worked with RedOne, Shellback and Max Martin, among others, on

her U.K. debut, *Sticks + Stones*.

Takhar credits One Direction with helping Syco and its label partners create a customized marketing blitz built around social media. "The band is the same age as its fans and they were telling us exactly the tone of every part of the campaign," he says.

However, for every One Direction, there are dozens of "X Factor" finalists who fail to translate their TV profile into record sales. Most recently, 2010 winner Cardle was dropped by Syco/Columbia for disappointing sales of his 2011 debut, *Letters*.

Cowell is characteristically forthright in his verdict. "With Matt, unfortunately, I would say, A, the label didn't do a great job," he says. "And B, he made some bad decisions himself. He had an absolute smash, which was written for him and he turned it down."

Nevertheless, the success of Lewis, One Direction and Lloyd in crossing boundaries and establishing global careers on the back of "The X Factor" builds a road, not just for U.S. competitors, such as Melanina Amaro, or 2011 British "X Factor" winner Little Mix (the first group to win) to follow. It also lights the way for the producers and contestants on the 30-plus local versions of "The X Factor" produced around the world, Cowell says.

"We put as much pressure on the smaller territories now to find a global artist as we would in the U.K. or America. Everybody has got to change their attitude now and believe that if they are going to make this show, they've got to find what we found with One Direction." ■■■

## The Judge's Tale

Simon Cowell on the future of 'X Factor,' his dance music move and the Universal-EMI merger

**As the number of TV singing competition shows has increased, does that make it harder to discover talent?**

Not if you know what you are looking for. You have to be a bit more proactive nowadays, so it becomes an extension of what we do at the record label, rather than just sit there as paid judges.

**Has that led to a more hands-on approach to scouting talent for "The X Factor"?**

Yes. All the shows are doing the same thing now. It's no different than how they cast [ABC's] "Dancing With the Stars." There's no accident about how these people get on the show. There has to be, and this is really important, a massive amount of luck, because otherwise it would just become like a game show. But at the same time we have to use the resources at Sony and the people who work for us to constantly scour and find talent, whether that's in clubs, networking or whatever. Part of the reason why we changed the rules this year to allow groups with management to enter is because I wanted it to be as close to the record business as we are in our normal day job.

**Were you pleased with how the first season of the U.S. "X Factor" went?**

For a first year, the show did really well.

But we're going to do better this year. I've got an idea where I want the show to go stylistically and musically this year, which will be different [from] last year. . . . But the most important thing is that you've got to be the show that all the contestants want to audition for because they've got a lot of choices now and you don't want to mop up a lot of also-rans. That's part of the reason why we put the \$5 million [prize] up. To really prove the point that we weren't interested in someone who was going to win a show. We were looking for someone who could have a career, not just in the U.K. or U.S. but all over the world.

**Does Melanie Amaro have the potential to become a global star?**

Yes, with the right material. I don't think it's that different from what we did with Kelly Clarkson in year one [of "American Idol"]. Kelly was an amazing singer. She'd struggled to get a record deal for years—God knows why, because she had an incredible voice—but the secret with Kelly and Carrie [Underwood] is matching the right songs with the singer. Like we did with Leona Lewis and "Bleeding Love," you're looking for that one song that's going to make all the difference.

**What's the status of the DJ talent show that Syco is co-producing**

**with Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith's Overbrook Entertainment and Sony Pictures Television?**

We've partnered with Ultra, who know an awful lot more about this music than I do. They will be our music partners and probably management partners on this show. We have had an offer from a network and we're probably within days of making a formal announcement. They are putting up an awful lot of money, but, again, when we make this show, you have got to have the right people who really understand what they are doing so we can find a star at the end of it, and I'm getting more and more conscious of this now. When you put a production team together, the music teams, the label, you've really got to have success in the business now if you want to make this work worldwide.

**What's your opinion of the Universal-EMI merger and the current state of the music industry?**

I couldn't care less about the Universal-EMI merger. It makes no difference



to me whatsoever. Good luck to them. All I care about is that [Syco is] not a catalog company. We have to make music interesting for the next generation, and there was a time about five or six years ago where I thought it was becoming really boring. Then Lady Gaga emerged and it was like everything had gone from black-and-white into color. It became interesting again. I think everybody is feeling a lot more optimistic about things. —RS

### >>> LIVE NATION PURCHASES GARY RICHARDS' HARD EVENTS

Live Nation has acquired Gary Richards' HARD Events, the electronic dance music (EDM) production company behind the HARD Festivals and Holy Ship! cruise. The sale marks Live Nation's second foray into the EDM space in as many months, following its May purchase of global concert promoter Cream Holdings, which owns and operates the Creamfields Festivals. As part of that deal, Cream founder/CEO James Barton became the first president of Live Nation Electronic Music. Richards will report to Barton in the company's new structure.

### >>> LOUIS C.K. SELLS \$4.5M IN CONCERT TICKETS IN TWO DAYS

Comedian and FX "Louie" creator Louis C.K.'s gambit to sell tickets to his live shows himself is paying off. C.K. said that in the first 45 hours, his tour sold 100,000 tickets and took in \$4.5 million in sales. He's bypassing ticketing services to sell tickets only on his website. The comedian used a similar tactic last December when he put up for sale on his site a digital download of one of his shows that went on to earn \$1 million in less than two weeks.

### >>> MICHAEL COHL, LIVE NATION SETTLE LAWSUIT

Live Nation has settled its lawsuit with former chairman Michael Cohl, saying that it ended "amicably." The two had been embroiled in competing lawsuits since 2010, after Live Nation initiated the battle by suing Cohl for \$5.4 million related to an agreement signed when he left the company in 2008. "We're pleased that we've been able to resolve our differences, and can now get back to working together," Live Nation chairman of global touring Arthur Fogel says. Whether the settlement will lead to a Rolling Stones tour remains to be seen.

Reporting by Andy Gensler, Dan Rys and the Associated Press.

# *From stoplight* **TO SPOTLIGHT.**

For years, Chevy has been ingrained in the music industry, always keeping an eye out for the next great artist. Last year we found it in Chelsea Williams. Discovered performing at the Santa Monica Pier, she was soon cast in a Chevy commercial. Next thing you know, she's on TV, touring and dropping a new album all while never losing that personal connection she has with her fans.

We wanted to capture that personal connection by offering available Bluetooth® wireless technology for select phones<sup>1</sup> and an available USB port<sup>2</sup> in our Chevy Cruze, so you can stay connected to what you love.

For more about Chelsea and Chevy, visit [chevy.com/chelsea](http://chevy.com/chelsea).





RETAIL BY ED CHRISTMAN

# iTunes Gives Indies The Blues

Labels say the retailer forces them to resubmit all data with any distribution switch—but Apple says it's addressing the problem

Indie label executives who want to switch distributors say they are increasingly frustrated by an iTunes problem that has seemingly existed ever since the Apple service launched.

According to numerous sources, whenever a label switches its distributor, iTunes removes the label's entire library of content and forces the new distributor to resubmit the music and its metadata all over again, simply because Apple assigns each title a new code number in its internal system. When that happens, all sales history, listener reviews and outside links to albums are deleted, along with any search algorithm characteristics that the titles have built up.

"It's as if a brand-new unknown album is up there, not one with hundreds of thousands in sales," the GM of one indie label complains.

Consequently, albums lose their rankings and prominent placement in search results, and there's no editorial in the online store to guide shoppers as to why they should buy the title. This information loss can result in sales declines of up to 50% for labels that can afford to change distributors, numerous indie sources complain to Billboard, with as long as two years needed to reach revenue levels achieved before the distributor switch.

While the situation also exists at other digital services, the iTunes problem looms largest because of its prominent role as the industry's top sales account. "Subscription companies also fall victim to this systemic problem," says Bill Wilson, VP of digital strategy and business development at NARM/DigitalMusic.org. "Customers using playlists will suddenly be missing a song because systems treat it like a new song with no historical data."

Apple spokesman Tom Neumayr acknowledges that the company "is aware of the problem and is working to make it better."

While most digital music service providers won't re-map the song to retain its sales and editorial history, Amazon has the ability to match titles to the new distributor, according to label sources. It does so by allowing labels to switch internal codes for each title to the new distributor, which must input the ID information into its system. Amazon did not respond to a request for comment.

At least one indie label, Shanachie, reportedly got around the issue by convincing its former distributor, inGrooves, to continue servicing its back catalog, while asking new distributor eOne Entertainment to distribute

only its new titles. The label didn't return a call for comment.

For the most part, however, indie labels are angered and frustrated by iTunes' lack of haste in resolving the issue.

"I really find it infuriating," one indie distributor owner says. "I don't understand why they don't fix this." An indie label executive suggests that iTunes "doesn't think it's a problem. They simply just don't care." Still another indie label executive gripes, "It's borderline retarded that iTunes makes you take down catalog and redeliver it. I don't understand why they make all the labels do it. It doesn't help anybody, including them."

Label executives say iTunes prefers that labels just go out and promote its albums all over again in order to generate a new sales history. It's not just iTunes ignoring the problem, says a digital executive, adding that all services would rather let suppliers deal with the issue.

Usually, the first step in a label switch sees both the label staff and new distributor staff start writing to populate the label's music with reviews.

The main reason why Apple requires title take-downs and resubmissions of each label's entire catalog is because each title's iTunes ID is tethered to the distributor who paid for that music.

Only if a label is self-distributed to iTunes or allows the new distributor to take over its payee code—or when one distributor or label buys another with the buyer taking over the seller's codes—will a distributor switch occur without a loss of sales.

There are several annoying ramifications from the iTunes situation. When customers use the "Complete my album" feature, that purchase is completed and paid to the previous distributor rather than the new one, leaving the correct label to scramble in order to get its money.

Despite all of this aggravation, there may be relief from this problem, thanks to the industry's own initiatives.

With the music industry investing in new databases and agreeing on protocols through the DDEX initiative (Billboard, June 2), there is hope that this issue may soon be addressed. For example, NARM/DigitalMusic.org is building a database for retailers, and Wilson says the platform "is designed to help solve the persistence problem with take-downs and revocations" so sales and editorial histories won't be lost.



KENNY CHESNEY has performed as part of the "American Express Unstaged" live-stream concert series.

BRANDING BY ANDREW HAMPP

## Card Wars

Beyond VIP access, credit card companies are pulling out all the stops to super-charge concert-loving customers

A new level of intensity in the music-branding wars has hit the concert industry, as credit card companies battle ever more fiercely over touring "exclusives."

For years, American Express and Citi have been ramping up their efforts to offer more exclusive on-sales, VIP perks and custom content to existing and potential cardmembers, creating programs like Citi Private Pass and American Express Unstaged as their launch pads for incentives. This year, a third big player has arrived, with Chase and its no-fee rewards card Chase Sapphire teaming with venue Madison Square Garden and personal online radio service Pandora.

Why the increased interest in music fans? For one thing, their purchasing power is on the rise—concert attendance and ticket sales bounced back in 2011 following a brutal 2010. Despite fewer shows, ticket sales were up to \$2.3 billion last year compared with \$2.1 billion in 2010, according to Billboard Boxscore, a sign that top tours (and premium packages) can still command solid pricing from consumers who've dug themselves out of the recession.

These hardcore fans are also considered among the most active participants in social media, where many of the credit card marketers' efforts are anchored. AmEX's "Unstaged," for example, allows fans to live-stream exclusive concerts from Usher, Kenny Chesney and Coldplay with a chance to directly impact the concert's set list, wardrobe and other elements, all in real time. For Beyoncé's "4 Intimate Nights" held at New York's Roseland Ballroom last summer, Citi hosted exclusive live-stream footage on its Facebook page, continuing its involvement after the exclusive pre-sale offer made by the card company for the quartet of gigs.

When it comes to assessing future exclusives for card companies' rewards programs, the credit firms use focus groups and other consumer research. "We're constantly assessing the sell-through of our ticket assets to determine which genres, artists and locations are driving the most interest," American Express VP of marketing and entertainment sponsorships Deborah Curtis says. "Demand has increased as we

continue to enhance our music and concert platform."

For Chase Sapphire, enhancing its music program means redefining access on multiple platforms, including online radio. Its Pandora partnership, using 14 summer-themed genre stations dubbed Sapphire Summer Sounds, has a limited commercial load and an easily accessible playlist. Its message is an extension of Sapphire's partnership with Madison Square Garden, part of Chase's broader sponsorship of the arena's three-year renovation. (The Seventh Avenue entrance will be called Chase Square, for example.) Ticket sales for this fall's concerts by Madonna (Nov. 12), Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Nov. 27), Justin Bieber (Nov. 28-29), One Direction (Dec. 3) and Leonard Cohen (Dec. 18) were all preceded by exclusive presales with preferred seating.

"Inside access to world-class venues and entertainment enables Chase to offer cardmembers even more access to unique experiences that may otherwise seem unattainable," Chase head of sports and entertainment marketing Steve Pamon said in a statement.

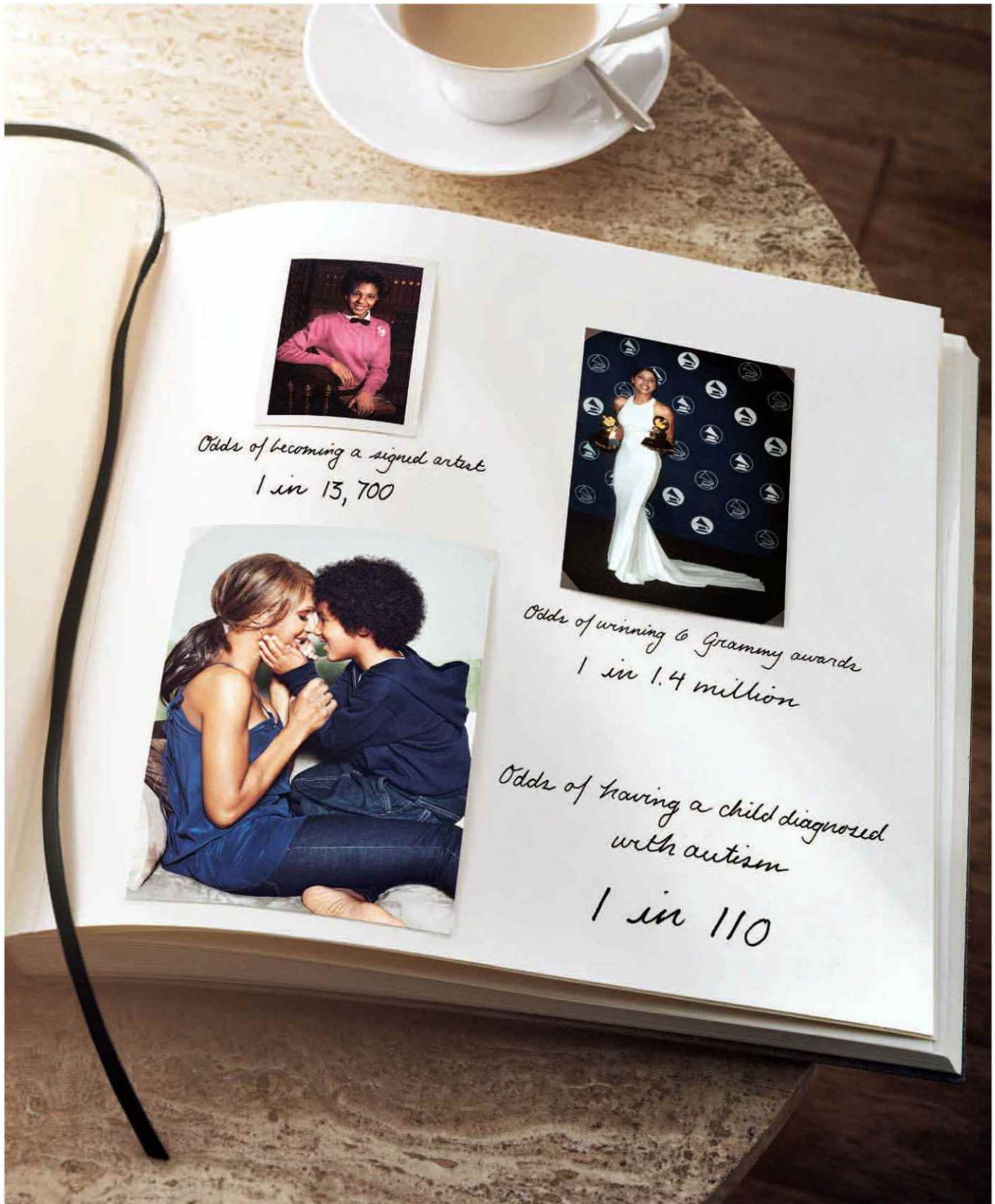
Citi is also doubling down on ticketing offers as part of its expanded pact with Live Nation, from \$20 passes for tours by Jason Mraz, the Fray and Kelly Clarkson to VIP packages for upcoming Gavin DeGraw, Madonna and One Direction shows. That range of experiences—including access to many non-music shows—has become Citi's key area of differentiation in an increasingly crowded field.

"Whether they be sporting events, festivals, the Boston Food & Wine Festival, restaurant events with chefs, breakfast talks with celebrities—we cover our cardmembers' interests like no other [company]," says Ralph Andretta, head of co-brands and loyalty at Citi Cards, adding that Citi also provides exclusive programs for 75 of the year's top 100 tours. "We're constantly going back and forth on acts to partner with for customers. Live Nation looks at its research on what sold well, and we do as well, so we have a pretty good record at this point of what our cardmembers like to do."

### FOR THE RECORD

On page 28, in the Urban Power List entry for the Blueprint Group, Cortez Bryant is misidentified as president of Young Money Entertainment. He is chief visionary officer. Mack Maine is president.





Toni Braxton encourages you to learn the signs of autism at [autismspeaks.org](http://autismspeaks.org)

Early diagnosis can make a lifetime of difference.

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PRINCIPAL,  
YU LESEBERG;  
MANAGING MEMBER,  
NORTH HUDSON MUSIC

## Helen Yu

The music biz attorney on how artists can avoid getting ripped off by their own managers.



**A**n authority on entertainment business strategies, lawyer Helen Yu is a firm believer in building a strong team with managers, business advisers and others to assist musicians, songwriters and producers. When she sees a wrong being committed—as occurred when the Black Eyed Peas' corporation was suspended—she makes it her goal to set a situation straight.

"While deals have gotten better, the same problem persists—artists can be taken advantage of," Yu says over lunch downstairs from her Century City office in Los Angeles near Beverly Hills. "Ethics and backbone. Managers, business managers and lawyers make a commitment to a creator to do what's in their best interest, but only lawyers are bound by a legal code of ethics. Keeping that commitment [to point out misdeeds] is hard to do. But it has to be done."

Yu represented the Black Eyed Peas when the group sued its longtime business manager, Sean Larkin, for failing to file income tax returns covering the band's touring operation. In April, Larkin fled for bankruptcy protection with debts of up to \$1 million.

Yu is the managing member of North Hudson Music, a boutique publishing administration company, and a principal at the law firm Yu Leseberg, where her clients include songwriters, producers, musicians and the estate of T-Rex's Marc Bolan. She hopes to spread the word among artists that they need to better protect themselves, even as it becomes tougher to keep an eye on every deal.

### How did you discover the financial inequities with the Black Eyed Peas?

I was doing a deal for [band guitarist George Pajon] and I needed documents from the business manager, and he failed to provide them to me. It was a very simple document—the articles of incorporation. I needed to verify the client's corporate status, and when I couldn't get them through the business manager, I had to order them from the state. The state said it was suspended, which means the corporation is invalid. But there are several reasons a corporation can be invalid and, in their particular case, taxes had not been paid.

### This led to lawsuits, the band firing Larkin and countersuits between you and Larkin, whose suit was tossed before Larkin filed for bankruptcy. Is this kind of negligence commonplace but just doesn't make it into the news?

I've become more conscious of it because I've seen it become relevant to my clients. I would say, without fail, creative clients are in need of guid-

ance when it comes to their business and their finances. They're prey. They can be easily exploited by people who don't have their best interests at heart. Even if you've been in the business for a long time, it does not mean you know how finances work. People like Steven Tyler have had a lot of trouble.

### It used to be that there would be news of unscrupulous managers running off with a band's money—even Mickey Hart's father ripped off the Grateful Dead. Are business managers the culprits that musicians need to look out for the most?

When a band picks their business manager, they need to be careful. They really have to do their homework. Some business managers are not licensed certified public accountants and their function becomes extremely important in tax situations, especially if you are a touring artist. You need a CPA. But I'm not trying to pick at business managers. I don't like people who are ethically challenged in any field, whether it's

the dry cleaner or the mechanic who fixes my car. When you cross a line, I have an issue. It's not necessarily a legal issue, but a moral one.

### What's your best advice for a musician or producer or songwriter?

An artist should look at their team the way the United States government works. There are three branches of government, with a checks and balances system. The three branches would be analogous to the manager, the business manager and the lawyer. They can all cross-check and double-check each other: That's really how to be protected. But an artist can still get in trouble, because too often there's a quid pro quo that happens.

### You do a lot of business with songwriters and producers. Is it any different for them?

The publishing administrator becomes important. Writer/producers don't have endorsements or touring income, but they do have publishing and writer royalties, so you have to have a four-member team.

### Obviously, the needs of any of these people shift over time. Is there a barometer for knowing when an artist needs to make a change?

There's something to be said for loyalty, and for growing with an artist. When you're in the trenches and growing as a brand-new artist, there are not many people willing to help. If someone is willing to help you at that stage and they're smart, it's good to be loyal to those people. But all too often, whenever a client needs a new business manager or a lawyer or a manager, sometimes the other [members of the team] put their head in the sand.

### It seems that it's often the artists who put their own heads in the sand, correct?

I had one client say to me, "I knew this guy was a shark, but he was our shark." So they knew he was doing things that were unscrupulous, but they thought those things were done to benefit them. A manager should help artists filter out some of the other people who come

in. It's basic research. I had an artist who once went to a lawyer's office for a 10 a.m. meeting, and the lawyer said, "Hey, do you guys want to do shots?," thinking that this is what the band wanted. Do you really want an attorney who is doing shots at 10 a.m.?

### That sounds like something you would have heard about 20 or 30 years ago.

It's much less so now than before, but plenty of artists do drugs or drink heavily. The artist or creative person overspends on partying, so there isn't enough left to pay the bills. If you don't have businesspeople with the highest level of ethics, you can easily be victimized. Predators gain the trust and then start to press the lines. Once they push that line, maybe they push a bit more.

### That seems to be the sort of thing that can happen with more established artists, people like Leonard Cohen or Billy Joel. You have to wonder if they ever looked at any of their financial statements.

They don't. And even if they did, they wouldn't know what they were looking at. These relationships are so close in a lot of instances, the employees can become like family to you. George Pajon said he couldn't believe what [Larkin] was doing to him because he gave a toast at the guy's wedding. [Artists] don't want to believe it. People get comfortable with what they know and they don't like any disruptions. Even if they have an instinctual feeling that they need to change, they might bury that instinct and not face the change just so they can remain comfortable. ♦♦♦

Even if you've been in the business for a long time, it does not mean you know how finances work. People like Steven Tyler have had a lot of trouble.



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JOTDOG will be among the featured acts at the LAMC confab.

# Alt Entry

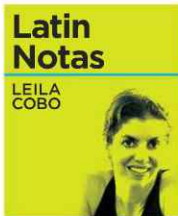
LAMC continues to champion Latin alternative acts despite dearth of radio airplay

As it enters its "lucky" 13th year, the Latin Alternative Music Conference (LAMC), taking place July 11-14 in New York, faces an odd dilemma. More artists than ever before are vying to perform at the event, and yet never have the U.S. Latin charts been so devoid of the alternative pop sounds that were so prevalent in the marketplace when the conference first launched.

"We used to have more major-label representation, but now we have more press, more touring reps and a lot of artists signed with real booking agencies playing big festivals and shows," says conference co-founder **Tomas Cookman**, who is also president of Nacional Re-

cords. "Just because it's not working for the major labels doesn't mean this business is not working."

LAMC was created at a time when Latin rock and alternative music were a major force, both creatively and commercially. Such acts as



**Latin Notas**  
LEILA COBO

**Molotov, Café Tacvba** and **Julieta Venegas** topped the charts, and cable channels including mun2 were serving as tastemakers for a younger audience. Most important, perhaps, U.S. Spanish-language radio was open to playing different kinds of music, so acts like Venegas and, later, **Juanes**, built massive fan bases mostly from airplay.

Today, programming vari-

ety continues to be a given in many Latin countries—most predominantly in Mexico—but not in the United States, where Spanish-language radio plays hardly any new pop music.

"If you look through YouTube, you will find dozens of unknown Latin acts that have over 500,000 views of their videos," says **Maximo Aguirre**, president of Maximo Aguirre Music Publishing in Los Angeles, who now scours the website for potential new signings.

This year's LAMC will feature top-sellers including **3BALIMTY**; LAMC alumni who became major stars, such as **Calle 13**; well-known Latin alternative acts **Mala Rodriguez**, **Kinky** and **Los**

**Autenticos Decadentes**; and up-and-coming artists ranging from Los Angeles' **La Santa Cecilia** to Venezuela's **La Vida Bohème**. The size of the shows varies, from free performances at Central Park SummerStage to smaller club appearances. "There are so many different genres of music, and not all are in Spanish," Cookman says. "It's not like we're championing a genre per se. It's more a sentiment."

One featured act is alt-pop duo **JotDog**, which is well-established in its native Mexico, but has had a tough time breaking in the United States. Originally licensed through EMI, JotDog released its new album, *Turista de Amor*, on Mexican management/

entertainment company Seitrack's label. Stateside, however, it's only available digitally. "A lot of people could potentially listen to their music here, but it's very hard to do so," Seitrack U.S. head **Luana Pagani** says. "So LAMC becomes one of our few avenues to reach U.S. audiences."

Beyond established acts like JotDog, "it's exciting to see as many independent artists from the U.S. who will make the sacrifice to get on a bus and attend," Cookman says. "We need to keep on growing the U.S. scene, and LAMC is a place to say, 'Hey, it's possible for us to be many different things.'"

**biz** For 24/7 Latin news and analysis, see [billboard.biz/latin](http://billboard.biz/latin).

# EN BREVE

## HOLLYWOOD BOWL COURTS LATINOS

The Hollywood Bowl is set to draw Latin music fans this summer when Juanes, Juan Luis Guerra and Ruben Blades appear at Los Angeles Philharmonic music director Gustavo Dudamel's Americas & Americans Festival. The series opens Aug. 14, when Guerra will perform a selection of his songs backed by conductor Dudamel and his orchestra. Juanes will make his first appearance with a full symphony when he appears with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and the Philharmonic's youth chamber orchestra on Aug. 17 and 18. —*Judy Cantor-Navas*

## MIAMI'S ROMANCE GOES BILINGUAL

Latin pop WRMA (Romance 106.7) Miami, a mainstay of romantic and more adventuresome Latin pop, flipped to a bilingual format. The Spanish Broadcasting System station, now called DJ 106.7 FM, plays mostly urban-leaning, uptempo fare—from Drake, Rihanna and Jennifer Lopez to Don Omar, Wisin & Yandel and Prince Royce—with roughly 30% of the tracks in Spanish. The shift follows a similar move by SBS in Los Angeles, where KXOL (Latino 96.3 FM) became the more Spanglish LA 96.3 FM in May. LA 96.3 FM also hired former WPOW (Power 96) Miami personality DJ Laz to host its morning show, which will also air on DJ 106.7 FM beginning July 4.

—*Leila Cobo*

## ACTS RUMBLE FOR ROCKAMPEONATO

Rockampeonato Telcel is looking for the best Mexican act to play at this year's talent competition, now in its seventh year, that will feature a series of concerts in Mexico. The battle of the bands contest, which launched in late June, has producers searching for talent in nine cities. Nearly 100 bands will be seen but only 10 will ultimately become finalists, with the winning act able to record its work in a studio and next year take part in the Rockampeonato tour. Café Tacvba and Hello Seahorse! are currently involved with the Rockampeonato trek, while previous participants include the Flaming Lips and the Hives.

—*Justino Águila*

# Reventon Revs Up

Latin music festival is among the hottest radio-sponsored events in the U.S.

Hours after tickets went on sale for this year's Reventon Super Estrella concert in Los Angeles, taking place Aug. 10 at the Staples Center, all were gone by the end of the day.

The main reason the show sold out so quickly was its lineup, which includes the biggest Latin indie acts from around the world: Mexican band Café Tacvba, Argentine rock trio Los Enanitos Verdes, Chilean singer Beto Cuevas, Spanish icons Hombres G, vocalist Mikel Erentxun, Mexican glam-rock act Moderatto, electronica band Kinky and Long Beach, Calif.-born songstress Julieta Venegas.

All day long at KSSE (Super Estrella 107.1 FM), the staff was celebrating the ticket sales, continuing Reventon's reputation as one of the most successful radio-sponsored



CAFÉ TACVBA is part of the lineup for the Reventon concert.

concerts in the United States.

"We felt that the core sound of the Angelino was missing," concert co-founder Nestor "Pato" Rocha says. "We wanted to celebrate a music revolution, and rock en Español was the way to go. The buzz has been phenomenal."

Super Estrella, owned by Entravision Communications, has long broadcast Latin rock and pop music,

and it currently reaches about 1 million listeners, Rocha says. In 1998, the team behind the radio station decided to create a live show that might help it compete on the Southern California airwaves.

"The concept was to put together a strong enough lineup so we could sell out the show in a short period of time, hold back some tickets

and give away those tickets on the air," Entravision radio division president Jeffrey A. Liberman says.

Launched in 1998 at the Universal Amphitheatre (now the Gibson) at Universal CityWalk in Los Angeles, the first show featured Mexican pop singer Cristian Castro. The annual event was always meant to be an intimate party, complete with DJs, dancers and a revolving stage, resulting in an easy-flowing concert experience.

Through the years, Reventon has showcased major acts ranging from Ricky Martin to now-defunct pop act RBD. The latter group attracted more than 50,000 music fans who flocked to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in the summer of 2006, where the band was introduced by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

The series has proved to be quite successful during its extensive run, even though last

year's showcase—featuring the reunited band Caifanes, which broke up in the mid-'90s—was scaled down considerably. In 2010, for example, the bill featured Enrique Iglesias, Chino y Nacho and Nelly Furtado, among others, and generated more than \$1 million in ticket sales, according to comments made during a company conference call in March.

Entravision has been affected by a sluggish economy, says Liberman, who oversees 49 properties spread throughout California, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and a few stations in Florida.

"Every advertiser has cut back a little bit," the executive says. "Times have been challenging, but we're dealing with it. We're working with advertisers, and—just like everybody here in the United States—we see the economy coming back slowly."

—*Justino Águila*

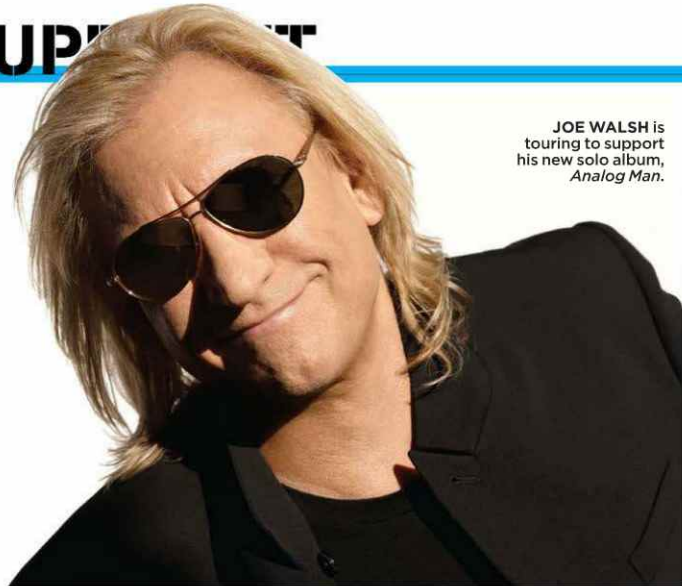
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**GO KINGS GO!**



**JOE WALSH** is touring to support his new solo album, *Analog Man*.

# Life In The Slow Lane

Road warrior Joe Walsh shifts gears—from stadiums with the Eagles to smaller solo gigs

“I live in hotels, tear out the walls/I have accountants pay for it all,” **Joe Walsh** sang in his 1978 hit “Life’s Been Good.” The lyric may be a cliché of rock-star excess, but Walsh’s charismatic delivery and trademark power riffs have made the song a staple on heritage rock radio, alongside his work with the **Eagles** and **James Gang**.

While Walsh remains an unrepentant road dog, it’s doubtful he tears up many hotel rooms these days, and even if he does, it likely wouldn’t result from any overindulgences. An epic partier in his day, Walsh has been clean for years. He’s been busy as well. On the heels of his latest road work with the Eagles (one of the most successful touring bands ever), Walsh’s newest record and his first solo album in 20 years, *Analog Man*, arrived June 5. And, yes, Walsh is touring internationally to support it throughout 2012.

On this latest tour, however, Walsh moves from playing arenas and stadiums with some of the most famous bandmates in the world to working festivals, fairs, theaters, casinos and even high-profile clubs like the Belly Up in Aspen, Colo. Most rooms and stages he’s playing are much smaller, obviously, than what the Eagles command, but he’s not ruffled at all.

“I love smaller venues,” Walsh says. “I’ve missed it. The interaction with the audience is much better, everybody has a good seat, there are a lot less variables than playing an outdoor summer gig and, in general, the music is better for it. It reminds me of the old days.”

Walsh’s butterscotch Stratocaster makes a huge noise in stadiums, so one can imagine what it sounds like in a smaller performing arts center or, better yet, a sweaty rock’n’roll club. “I know how to do this really good,” Walsh says. “I play best in a small venue, when the bass drums are kicking me in the pants. I’ve got a great band and some new music to play, so I’m excited.”

The veteran musician and notorious show-stealer—even when merely a “member” of a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame band—is clearly stoked about the Austin-based group of sidemen he’s assembled for the *Analog Man* tour. “Austin is

a great little island in the middle of Texas where music is alive and well,” Walsh says. “There are some great players around there. Any given night, you can hear a good band, and there are lots of places to play. So I signed up these guys, and they’re really kicking me.”

With a career that stretches back to the late ‘60s and has placed Walsh in more than a few different outfits, the artist has built up a diverse fan base. “In my audience there’s one of everything,” he says. “The people that have been with me for the whole journey, most of them live in the woods, I guess.”

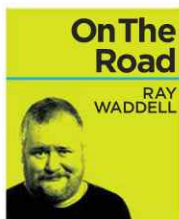
But there’s also a new generation of younger fans that developed, “maybe because their parents played my music when they were growing up,” Walsh says.

One of those artists who feeds off the crowd, even with the Eagles, he’s capable of upping the energy quotient. And the Walsh newcomers keep the artist from phoning in “Rocky Mountain Way” when he plays it for the 100th time.

“I’ve got to bear in mind that a little section of the audience is coming to see me for the first time,” he says. “They’re kind of curious. I can’t look at my songs like, ‘Oh, God, I’ve got to play all these again!’ I’ve got to perform it differently with the new crowd. But it’s great energy, and I’m grateful for the longevity.”

The longevity speaks to the fact that Walsh is, and always has been, a “consummate professional,” according to manager **Irving Azoff**, who has worked with Walsh for nearly 40 years. “Forgetting he’s an incredible person and like my brother, when you look at his talent, if he didn’t have that nose, he might be recognized as the best guitar player in history,” Azoff says, adding, “And how great is this new record?”

Very great, according to opinions thrown this way, so that part of the Joe Walsh Handbook hasn’t changed. His backstage rider, however, has: “Just that the alcohol’s not on it got rid of a couple of pages,” Walsh says.



**biz** For 24/7 touring news and analysis, see [billboard.biz/touring](http://billboard.biz/touring).

ANDREW MACPHERSON

# BOXSCORE Concert Grosses

	GROSS/ Ticket Price(s)	ARTIST(S) Venue, Date	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
1	\$7,294,307 (\$305/\$64.50)	<b>ELECTRIC DAISY CARNIVAL</b> MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, N.J., May 18-20	100,000 10,000	Pacha, Insomniac
2	\$4,971,750 (\$3,342,307) \$106.20/\$82.18	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN &amp; THE E STREET BAND</b> Estadio Santiago Bernabéu, Madrid, June 17	54,639 sellout	Doctor Music Productions
3	\$4,601,284 (\$2,964,475) \$93.13/\$85.37	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN &amp; THE E STREET BAND</b> City of Manchester Stadium, Manchester, England, June 22	52,546 sellout	Live Nation
4	\$3,693,333 (\$2,379,725) \$93.12/\$85.36	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN &amp; THE E STREET BAND</b> Stadium of Light, Sunderland, England, June 21	41,564 52,900	Live Nation
5	\$3,622,116 (\$250/\$135/ \$79.50/\$20)	<b>KENNY CHESNEY &amp; TIM MCGRAW, GRACE POTTER &amp; THE NOCTURNALS, JAKE OWEN</b> LP Field, Nashville, June 23	49,869 52,332	The Messina Group/AEG Live
6	\$3,404,455 (\$250/\$129.50/ \$74.50/\$29.50)	<b>KENNY CHESNEY &amp; TIM MCGRAW, GRACE POTTER &amp; THE NOCTURNALS, JAKE OWEN</b> Bank of America Stadium, Charlotte, N.C., June 24	44,482 47,835	The Messina Group/AEG Live, Panthers Stadium
7	\$2,685,809 (\$250/\$175/ \$140/\$55)	<b>CELINE DION</b> The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, June 19-20, 23-24	16,285 four sellouts	Concerts West/AEG Live, Caesars Entertainment
8	\$2,232,817 (\$1,788,400) \$112.37/\$62.43	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN &amp; THE E STREET BAND</b> Stadio Nereo Rocco, Trieste, Italy, June 11	28,109 sellout	Barley Arts Promotion
9	\$1,748,020 (\$53.91 bolivares) \$807.79/\$68.58	<b>JENNIFER LOPEZ</b> Parque Musical Evenpro, Valencia, Venezuela, June 16	4,858 6,000	Evenpro/Water Brother
10	\$1,301,350 (\$1,032,818) \$112.14/\$88.20	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN &amp; THE E STREET BAND</b> Park&Suites Arena, Montpellier, France, June 19	13,289 sellout	Gérard Drouot Productions
11	\$1,271,520 (\$1,205,789 Canadian) \$57.94/\$38.46	<b>STAR ACADÉMIE</b> Colisée Pepsi, Quebec City, June 15-17	23,022 23,980 five shows	Evenko, Productions J
12	\$1,246,200 (\$358,290 bolivares) \$430.26/\$174.43	<b>FRANCO DE VITA</b> UNIMET, Caracas, Venezuela, June 10	3,856 4,439	Evenpro/Water Brother
13	\$926,971 (\$95,953 Canadian) \$67.68/\$57.94	<b>RADIOHEAD, CARIBOU</b> Bell Centre, Montreal, June 15	13,984 sellout	Evenko, Live Nation, Greenland Productions
14	\$891,199 \$69.50	<b>RADIOHEAD, CARIBOU</b> Verizon Center, Washington, D.C., June 3	12,823 sellout	Live Nation
15	\$890,504 \$69.50	<b>RADIOHEAD, OTHER LIVES</b> HP Pavilion, San Jose, Calif., April 11	12,813 sellout	Another Planet Entertainment, AEG Live
16	\$861,671 \$99.50/\$25	<b>SCORPIONS, TESLA</b> Staples Center, Los Angeles, June 22	12,767 sellout	Goldenvoice/AEG Live
17	\$794,226 \$90/\$40	<b>NICKELBACK, BUSH, SEETHER, MY DARKEST DAYS</b> American Airlines Center, Dallas, June 1	10,879 14,051	Live Nation
18	\$772,671 (\$326,417 bolivares) \$458.76/\$66.67	<b>IL VOLO</b> Forum de Valencia, Valencia, Venezuela, April 11	3,630 sellout	Evenpro/Water Brother
19	\$764,906 \$175/\$39	<b>MANÁ</b> Save Mart Center, Fresno, Calif., April 22	10,881 sellout	Live Nation
20	\$761,089 \$39.50/\$38.50	<b>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, LITTLE DRAGON</b> KFC Yum! Center, Louisville, Ky., June 7	13,186 15,299	NS2
21	\$749,558 \$65/\$35	<b>BRAD PAISLEY, THE BAND PERRY, SCOTTY MCCREERY &amp; OTHERS</b> DTE Energy Music Center, Clarkston, Mich., June 16	15,679 sellout	Live Nation
22	\$748,944 \$250/\$50	<b>MICHAEL JACKSON THE IMMORTAL WORLD TOUR BY CIRQUE DU SOLEIL</b> Ervin J. Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio, June 6-7	7,635 16,470 two shows	Cirque du Soleil
23	\$741,346 (\$418,7175 kroner) \$123.05/\$105.35	<b>ANDRÉ RIEU</b> Forum, Copenhagen, April 21	6,457 6,632	André Rieu Productions
24	\$734,250 \$89.50/\$39.50	<b>NICKELBACK, BUSH, SEETHER, MY DARKEST DAYS</b> BOK Center, Tulsa, Okla., June 7	10,750 sellout	Live Nation
25	\$715,338 \$65/\$30	<b>RASCAL FLATTS, LITTLE BIG TOWN, ELI YOUNG BAND, EDENS EDGE</b> Comcast Theatre, Hartford, Conn., June 15	24,997 sellout	Live Nation
26	\$710,662 (\$72,564 Australian) \$86.35/\$80.49	<b>FLORENCE &amp; THE MACHINE, BLOOD ORANGE</b> Riverstage, Brisbane, Australia, May 26	8,829 9,000	Chugg Entertainment, Lunatic Entertainment, XIII Touring
27	\$703,558 \$69/\$30	<b>RASCAL FLATTS, LITTLE BIG TOWN, ELI YOUNG BAND, EDENS EDGE</b> Comcast Center, Mansfield, Mass., June 16	19,789 sellout	Live Nation
28	\$701,344 \$69/\$25	<b>BRAD PAISLEY, THE BAND PERRY, SCOTTY MCCREERY &amp; OTHERS</b> Blossom Music Center, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, June 15	21,568 sellout	Live Nation
29	\$691,251 (\$531,041) \$109.34/\$52.07	<b>ANDRÉ RIEU</b> Wiener Stadthalle, Vienna, May 8	8,528 9,329	André Rieu Productions
30	\$661,170 \$119/\$23.75	<b>KMEL SUMMER JAM: RICK ROSS, WIZ KHALIFA, TYGA, J. COLE &amp; OTHERS</b> Oracle Arena, Oakland, Calif., June 10	13,889 sellout	AEG Live
31	\$658,963 (\$566,517 pesos) \$37.70	<b>LUPITA D'ALESSIO</b> Auditorio Nacional, Mexico City, May 25-26	17,479 19,040 two shows	OCESA-CIE
32	\$658,496 (\$501,074) \$47.31/\$42.05	<b>I LOVE THE 90'S</b> Ethias Arena, Hasselt, Belgium, April 14	16,458 18,000	Benelive
33	\$647,339 (\$509,651) \$63.51/\$53.35	<b>DAVID GUETTA</b> O2 World, Hamburg, May 19	11,933 12,725	FKP Scorpio Konzertproduktionen
34	\$645,649 (\$493,925) \$75.82/\$39.22	<b>NKOTBSB</b> O2 World, Berlin, May 7	13,492 sellout	Concertbüro Zahlmann, United Promoters
35	\$632,398 \$58/\$38	<b>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, LITTLE DRAGON</b> Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich., May 26	11,021 11,176	Live Nation

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# Beat Crazy

Electronic dance music making strides with product tie-ins

The night of the 2012 summer solstice, June 20, marked a turning point for the electronic dance music scene (EDM). On that night in New York, three of the genre's biggest celebrities—**Steve Aoki** and **Swedish House Mafia's Sebastian Ingrosso**, with special guest **Skrillex**—performed some of their most pivotal gigs to date at two different parties. It was a true sign that the genre had reached full commercial viability, not because the artists played to the most packed crowds of their fast-moving careers, but because each was booked by a major brand—Aoki for Kraft's Trident gum and Ingrosso and Skrillex for Samsung's Galaxy S11 phone launch.



**With The Brand**  
ANDREW HAMPP

For Aoki, the Trident "See What Unfolds Live" event and accompanying online campaign with **Duran Duran** (which was a surprise guest at a June 20 Terminal 5 concert) marked his second tie-in with a blue-chip brand in the past month. In late May, a series of commercials from Beam Global's Pucker Vodka started airing, featuring a new mix

of his single "Ladi Dadi" that is already giving the DJ/producer more exposure than any other song has.

"I'm not writing commercial dance music, so the way fans of mine find out about my music isn't through the radio but through alternative sources," Aoki says of the TV spots. "This commercial is another way for people watching TV to hear my music."

Many branding and touring executives cite Swedish House Mafia's sold-out December 2011 show at New York's Madison Square Garden, sponsored by Absolut Vodka, as a watershed moment in EDM's marketability to fans and brands. Though radio-friendly acts like **David Guetta** and **Calvin Harris** have

scored deals with Coca-Cola and Pepsi, respectively, the more endemic acts are gaining just as much traction.

In recent months, EDM artists have attracted brand interest from companies as diverse as Adidas (which recently hosted a live music session with Swedish electro duo **Dada Life** and next week hosts **Araab-Muzik**) and Ralph Lauren (**Avicii** will be the face of its Denim & Supply fall 2012 campaign), as well as Beats by Dre (a new TV campaign features **Nero's "Promises"**) and Sonos (current spokesman: **Deadmau5**). Coming this fall, Pepsi is prepping a remix campaign for its support of the 25th anniversary of **Michael Jackson's Bad** featuring custom remixes from some of EDM's biggest names.

But Absolut's evolving partnership with Swedish House Mafia continues to establish a new model for EDM branding deals. The most recent extension, an original song, music video and drink project called "Greyhound," has garnered more than 10 million video views and had the DJs perform the song at the opening of its jam-packed set at Coachella.

Absolut brand director **Afdhel Aziz** credits the promotion as contributing to its current sales health. "Absolut in the U.S. is seeing really positive growth in the business and the brand," he says. "Music helps us connect on an emotional and visceral level like few other things do. We're really committed to supporting and partnering with artists in new and exciting ways. EDM is blowing up in the U.S. at the moment, but we're keen to work in all genres of music."



DJ **STEVE AOKI** performed at Trident's "See What Unfolds Live" event in New York on June 20.

For every cutting-edge liquor, apparel or beverage brand that starts to embrace EDM in its marketing, a separate crop of brands looking to borrow equity from the next big craze has started to circle the genre with mixed results.

EMI senior VP/head of brand partnerships **Ron Pence** cautions that "non-culturally forward" brands won't find success unless they create campaigns and artist connections that speak to the "empowerment" of EDM culture. "That consumer is all about hope for the future, personal integrity and power as an individual," Pence says. "If a brand can't capture that, it's not going to work."

# Give Me Libbies...

Inaugural Libera Awards cap A2IM Indie Week

On the afternoon of June 21, Beggars Group founder/chairman **Martin Mills** was on Capitol Hill, where he let a U.S. Senate subcommittee know his opposition to the Universal Music Group-EMI merger. But he had to leave the Senate hearing early, as he was due in New York that night to be honored at the first American Assn. of Independent Music (A2IM) Libera Awards.

"Some of you know what my second worst nightmare is," Mills joked, accepting a lifetime achievement award from Sire Records co-founder **Seymour Stein**. "It's making a speech. My first worst nightmare? Making two in one day."

The Libera Awards (or "Libbies," as some dubbed them) capped off A2IM's seventh annual Indie Week in New York. Held at Le Poisson Rouge, the awards reflected the ethos and humor of the indie world—not just in the banter between co-hosts (and former prom dates) **Portia Sabin** (a A2IM board member and owner/president of Kill Rock Stars) and actor **John Ross Bowie** (better-known as **Barry Kripke** of CBS sitcom "The Big Bang Theory"), but also in the awards themselves. Where else would you find two winners for label of the year, one for labels with five employees or fewer (Daptone Records) and one for six employees or more (Jagjaguwar)? And in keeping with the artisanal aspect of independent music, no two Libera statues are exactly alike.



Kill Rock Stars' **PORTIA SABIN** and actor **JOHN ROSS BOWIE** co-hosted the awards.

By night's end, a wide range of indie biz folks gathered by the just-closed open bar, including Beggars Group marketing executive **Adam Farrell**, the Orchard's trophy-carrying **Scott Ambrose "Bullethead" Reilly** (who kept saying he won for "third best bald head"), attorney **Elliot A. Resnick**, Big Machine Records' **Allison Jones**, Redeye's **Jim Logrando** and, of course, A2IM president **Rich Bengloff**, who by then was grinning ear to ear.

—*Andy Genster*



A2IM's **RICH BENGLOFF**, Beggars Group's **MARTIN MILLS** and Sire's **SEYMOUR STEIN** (from left)



Jagjaguwar co-owner **DARIUS VAN ARMAN** and Daptone GM **CATHY BAUER**

# The Future Is Unwritten

Are catalog moves killing or saving the CD format?

It's becoming obvious that music specialty merchants—such as independent stores and retail chains including Trans World Entertainment, Hastings Entertainment and Newbury Comics—will likely be the last stores to carry physical CDs. Yet the major labels, trying to manage the CD in the final phase of its life cycle, appear to be making decisions based on what's happening at the big boxes.

One tactic to appease the big boxes has produced a positive result: Prices dropped dramatically during the last five years, with the deepest depreciations coming in just the last two years. "We applaud [the majors] for bringing product to lower prices," an indie merchant says. "We are seeing a resurgence in sales. It energizes the customers and brings more of them into the store."

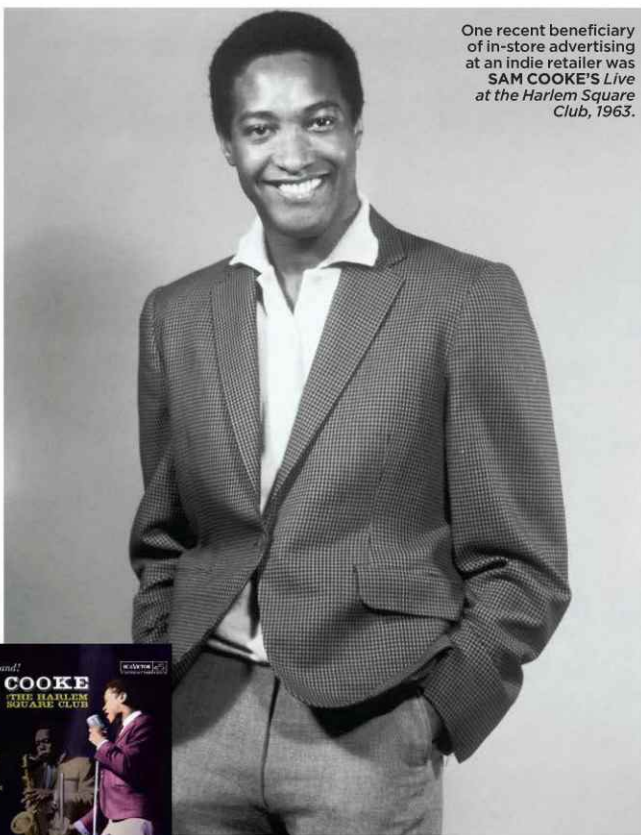
These days, front-line titles (e.g., new releases, classic catalog) tend to be priced so CDs sell between \$10 and \$13, while mid-line titles are shrinking dramatically. Budget product, believed to be the primary catalyst of the slowdown of declining CD sales in the United States, now carries wholesale costs in the range of \$3.25-\$3.75. There are often discounts on top of those prices, depending on specific deals struck between the trading partners or catalog promotions.

Merchants say the majors have depreciated thousands of titles to budget prices, which also are now sold "one-way," i.e., without any return privileges. However, when a lack of big-box sales no longer justifies a CD's continued inclusion in the catalog, majors often follow up by cutting such titles out completely, or making them available solely for manufacturing on demand (MOD).

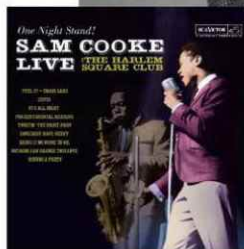
Indie merchants complain that, just because big boxes aren't selling catalog, doesn't mean their own sales for those titles are falling. Moreover, they contend two problems with MOD product. First, a CD that might sell well at wholesale in the \$3 range can be discontinued, then return as an MOD product with a wholesale cost of \$10 or \$11, which translates into a prohibitive \$14.98 list price. In addition, consumers still buying CDs at music specialty shops don't like the cheaper MOD type of CDs and inferior packaging. (Some label distribution executives disagree, with one explaining that MOD titles "almost" match the quality of bulk-manufactured CDs, except for those albums featuring elaborate packaging.)

A different problem, according to the indies, is how the majors select specific titles to depreciate and move to one-way. "There have been SKU reductions at big boxes, so the majors will say they're not getting enough volume to continue keeping a title active, and yet we indies are selling the crap out of it," another independent merchant says. "It is disconcerting to have it disappear, or come back at a much higher price."

A different indie retailer says, "I can appreciate the majors' need to follow overall demand and go to one-way in sales or delete titles when appropriate. But I'd hate to see a major label's accountant



One recent beneficiary of in-store advertising at an indie retailer was **SAM COOKE'S Live at the Harlem Square Club, 1963.**



driving this process based on what business he sees at big boxes."

Moreover, indie stores fear that moving to one-way or MOD signals that a title will soon be cut out completely. The major-label distribution executive indicates that, if indie-store coalitions or chains like Newbury and Hastings could identify key catalog titles, labels will respond with special manufacturing runs, as long as those CDs sell immediately and don't linger in warehouses.

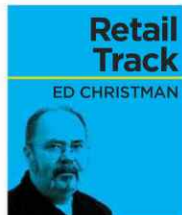
While the majors are rightfully protecting themselves from being financially hurt by a dying format, the indies believe marketing opportunities will drive catalog sales and they employ the majors to offer some assistance. For example, when titles go one-way, indies would prefer extra dating (that is, more time to pay for product than the standard 60 days). Also, when the major labels drop their prices, the indies would like some notice so they can alert customers about the potential savings.

"They can get a lot of CD titles priced at \$4.99-\$7.99," an indie merchant says. "But we need to let the customers know that these cheaper prices exist." By offering wholesale pricing promotions, merchants can offer two CDs for as low as \$8.

"We're willing to lose margin so we can bundle product," the merchant says. "Consumers love that stuff."

As the indies will attest, marketing still works when selling product in-store.

"Over the last year, we sold seven copies of Sam Cooke's Live at the Harlem Square Club, 1963, and then we featured the title in-store and sold 19 copies in one month," says **Terry Currier**, owner of Music Millennium in Portland, Ore. "It's really about working the catalog to make it sell. The labels need to help retailers keep the catalog alive. We're seeing a renaissance opportunity for selling CDs, thanks to the lower pricing."



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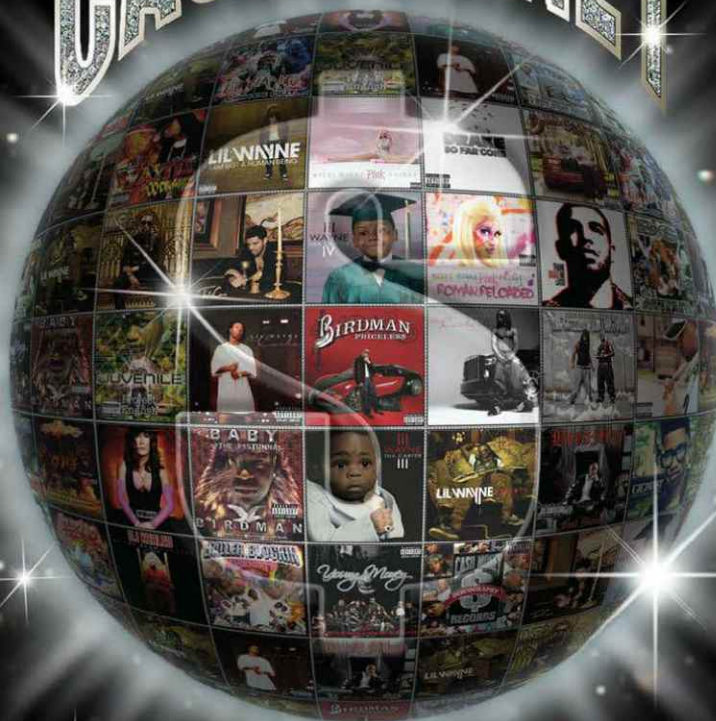
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URBAN  
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During the last 21 years, the Williams brothers have built **Cash Money** into not just the world's biggest hip-hop label, but arguably the most powerful brand name in the industry today. Now, with their Universal deal up for negotiation, they talk about their plans for the future, which includes the words "billion" and "dollars."

BY BENJAMIN MEADOWS-INGRAM  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFERY SALTER

# THE BOSSSES OF ALL BOSSSES

GROOMING BY CLAUDIA FORZA

Ronald "Slim" Williams &  
Bryan "Birdman" Williams  
CO-CEOS, CASH MONEY RECORDS GROUP

L

**S**pend any time talking to Bryan “Birdman” Williams about his business these days and you’ll quickly come to understand that he has two immediate goals: Releasing 100 albums in one calendar year and growing Cash Money Records Group, the company he founded with his older brother Ronald, aka “Slim,” in 1991, into the record industry’s first billion-dollar independent brand. Talk to those around him, like Cash Money’s longtime business manager Vernon Brown, say, or even the elder Williams, and you’ll get the sense that one of those goals may be just a bit out of reach, at least at the moment. And it might not be the one that you’d think.

“He’s not putting out 100 albums per year,” Brown says while sitting in his office high above Midtown Manhattan. “I’m putting that on the record: No, he is not.”

Slim’s initial reaction is different only in tone. It arrives, first, with a whistle. “That’s wild,” he says, his towering frame folded into a rolling chair in the control room of Studio E at the Hit Factory in Miami, which has served as Cash Money’s de facto home base since the label relocated there from New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Two smartphones rest on the edge of the mixing board to his right, at least one of them set to a ringtone of the “Godfather” theme song that rattles off every five minutes or so. “If I could get 16, something like that, I’ll be great. But 100? I don’t think that’ll happen. But, you know, he’s got big goals. Has it ever been done?”

Certainly not by the likes of a label like Cash Money, meaning that no rap-rooted label has ever released anything even approaching 100 albums in a calendar year. The closest any similar operation is believed to have ever come is when Percy “Master P” Miller’s No Limit Records dropped 23 albums in 1988. And just to put that number in perspective: Last year Cash Money released a grand total of three albums. Universal, the global music conglomerate and Cash Money’s longtime distributor, released 700-plus albums in the United States across all of its brands.

Not that the younger Williams has any interest in backing down from his goal.

“It’s a challenge, and I love challenges,” he says while riding through the streets of South Beach in the back seat of a black SUV. It’s a Friday afternoon in early June. The Miami Heat, the local NBA franchise he’s adopted as his own, aren’t yet world champions, and one of his marquee artists, the chart-topping rapper Aubrey “Drake” Graham, is still days away from being implicated in an incident involving Chris Brown that left several injured and turned a New York nightclub upside down. The streets are flooded, the South Florida skies are open, and it’s pounding rain.

“I look at the charts,” he continues, taking a piece of gum from the center console. “On iTunes’ top 25, we have 13. On the top 10, we got six. I figure if I can get half of [the chart], I can get all of it. If I can get the top 10, I can get the top 20. If I can get the top 20, I can get the top 50 . . . It’s an exciting challenge for me because I know we can do it.”

Birdman is dressed all in black. Black on black YMCMB hooded sweatshirt (the logo represents his label’s core brands, Young Money and Cash Money; the “B” is for “Billionaires”) and black sweats. His shoes, a pair of Air Force 1 mids, are icy white. Among his many tattoos, the word “Pricece\$\$” floats above his left eye. He smiles with conviction as he talks.

“We have so many acts and, at some point, everybody is going to be popping at the same time,” he says. “We’ve got rap, rock, we’re expanding into the R&B area. We just signed our first reggae artist. We’re also opening a YMCMB West Coast [operation]. I need more acts. We know that.”

“We’re going to put out more music. We’d like to be able to put out 35 albums in one year. It’s like putting a pyramid together. I’m trying to figure out how we can put out 100 albums. I ain’t even done 20 yet, let alone 100. I’m trying to figure that out.”

As for that billion-dollar business?

IT’S BEEN 21 YEARS SINCE THE Williams brothers first founded Cash Money Records, and 14 years since they signed their initial pressing and distribution deal with Universal. Widely reported to be valued at \$30 million with \$3 million in advance, the P&D deal, finalized in May 1998, gave the label

85% of its royalties, 50% of its publishing and ownership of all masters. In the rap community, the stakes and the terms were regarded as unprecedented.

“I refused to let them take anything from us—that’s how we got my deal,” says Birdman, who credits Rap-A-Lot CEO James Smith for bringing the label to Universal. (Before the deal, Cash Money had been relying on independent regional distributors like Houston’s Southwest Wholesale.) “I wasn’t one of those people coming to Universal trying to live off their money. We wasn’t really tripping on being with a major. I was making a million dollars a month, shipping 100,000 each album—that’s at \$10 [each]. And I dropped three or four of them a month.”

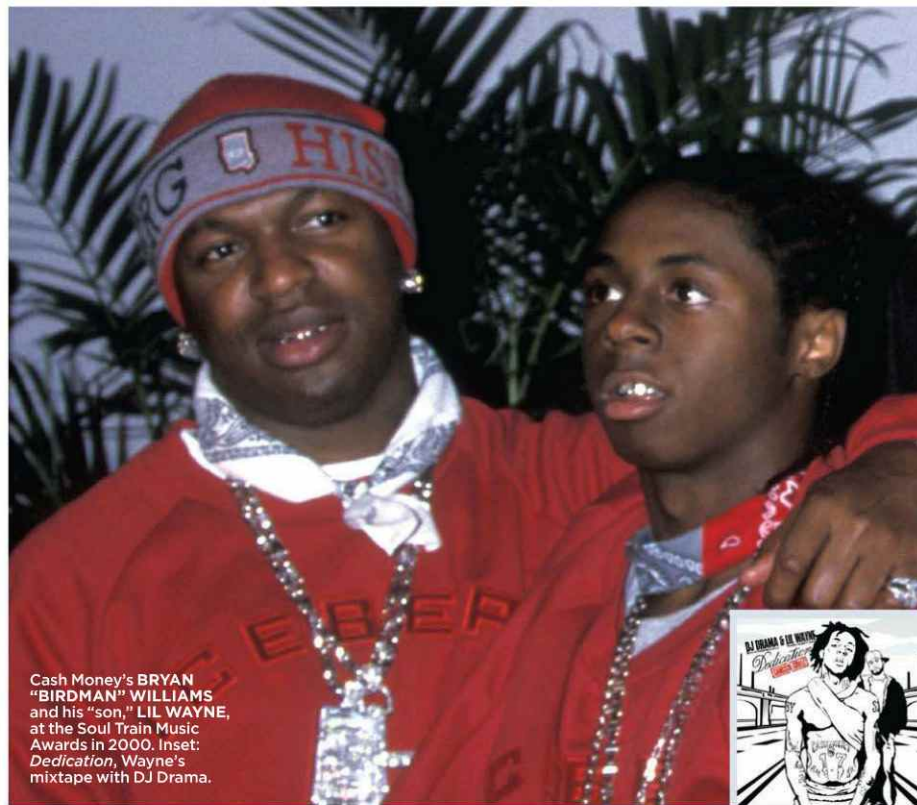
But the terms of the deal proved too good to ignore. Once in the Universal system, Cash Money’s success continued and any doubts about the deal’s viability, on all sides, were quickly put to rest. Building on New Orleans’ musical tradition and the

Southern gangsta rap blueprint laid by crosstown rival No Limit, Cash Money strung together a rope of platinum hits led by the label’s first release through the Universal system, Juvenile’s *400 Degreez*, which rode a pair of singles, “Ha” and “Back That Thang Up,” to the top of Billboard’s 1999 year-end rap chart and sold 4.8 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

A series of significant releases immediately followed, including B.G.’s *Chopper City in the Ghetto* (released in 1999, it has sold 1.1 million); the Hot Boys’ *Guerrilla Warfare* (1999, 1.5 million); Lil Wayne’s debut, *Tha Block Is Hot* (1999, 1.4 million); and the Big Tymers’ *I Got That Work* (2000, 1.5 million). But even that early success couldn’t forecast the label’s growth during the past four years.

That growth has been propelled by the breakout success of Lil Wayne, who famously took to the mixtape circuit in the mid-’00s to stoke a demand that exploded

continued on >>p22



Cash Money’s BRYAN “BIRDMAN” WILLIAMS and his “son,” LIL WAYNE, at the Soul Train Music Awards in 2000. Inset: *Dedication*, Wayne’s mixtape with DJ Drama.

## YOUNG MONEY

**A**New Orleans native like the Williams brothers, Lil Wayne made his Cash Money Records debut in 1995 with *True Story*, as half of the duo the B.G.’z with Christopher “B.G.” Dorsey. Wayne was 12 and B.G. was 14. His solo debut, *Tha Block Is Hot*, arrived in 1999, bowing at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 with 229,000 sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan. He was 17. When key artists left the label amid contract disputes, Lil Wayne stayed, and starting in 2004 began an underground mixtape onslaught (including collaborations with DJ Drama, pictured above, like 2005’s *Dedication*) that eventually turned him into the most in-demand rapper of the late

2000s. His 2008 release, *Tha Carter III*, posted the first million-plus sales week since 2005. In 2009, Wayne signed breakout rap acts Drake and Nicki Minaj to his Young Money Entertainment imprint through Cash Money Records. Last month, Cash Money extended its business relationship with Wayne and Young Money for a rumored \$100 million–\$150 million. “Everything is going to start with Wayne,” says Birdman, who frequently refers to Wayne as his “son.” “We ain’t nothing here without Wayne—he’s the key part. It’s personal with me, so whatever he wants, he gets. Hopefully one day, I can give him a billion dollars. That’s one of my goals in life, to give my son a billion dollars.”

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from >>p20 into a firestorm of commercial success. When his sixth studio album, *Tha Carter III*, bowed in June 2008, it posted the first million-plus sales week since 50 Cent's *The Massacre* in 2005. Since that tipping point, Cash Money has grown from regional rap curio to R&B/hip-hop (and increasingly pop) radio powerhouse and retail juggernaut. The label's core roster of young superstars—led by Wayne and including the Canadian actor-turned-rapper Drake as well as Billboard's 2011 Rising Star Nicki Minaj (both signed to Cash Money through Wayne's Young Money imprint)—is in the middle of such a dominant run on all of the major charts that most any comparison falls well short.

"I don't think anyone in the urban field is on par with them now," says Sony Music Entertainment chairman/CEO Doug Morris, who as Universal Records chairman/CEO (1995-2011) oversaw the original Cash Money-Universal pact.

The stats are staggering. For while there are urban labels

with arguably bigger marquee artists—Roc-A-Fella with Jay-Z and Shady Records with Eminem come to mind—even that is an argument to be had. Jay-Z may hold the record for most No. 1 albums by a solo artist on the Billboard 200 (12) and Eminem may be the seventh-best-selling artist of the SoundScan era with more than 41 million units sold, but Lil Wayne has been gaining ground on them both.

With *Tha Carter III* and 2011's *Tha Carter IV*, he's posted two of the biggest single sales weeks of any project of the past four years besides Taylor Swift's *Speak Now* and Lady Gaga's discount-driven *Born This Way*. In that same period, he's out-sold both Eminem and Jay-Z, as well as Kanye West. And Wayne is also a force on the road, with \$59 million earned from 98 shows (966,196 tickets sold) since 2007, according to Billboard Boxscore. It's a series of accomplishments all the more impressive considering that Wayne spent 10 months of the past four years in jail for felony gun possession in New York.

But Lil Wayne is only one part of the Young Money Cash Money picture. Since signing with YMCMB in 2009 following the release of his breakout mixtape, *So Far Gone*, Drake has fast become one of music's most bankable stars. His first two charting singles, his own "Best I Ever Had" and Young Money's "Every Girl," on which he's featured, bowed in the top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100, making him only the second artist to achieve such immediate commercial success.

Today, Drake has more No. 1s on Billboard's Rap chart (12) than any other artist in the history of that tally. He has logged nine No. 1s on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, the most of any other rap artist besides Jay-Z, who also has nine. And Drake's two studio albums, *Thank Me Later* and *Take Care*, have both bowed atop the Billboard 200, with the latter logging the third-biggest sales week of any release of 2011, behind Lady Gaga and Lil Wayne.

And then there's Nicki Minaj. With dramatic flair, the Trinidad-born, Queens-raised rapper has transcended genres to become a globally recognized pop icon, mentioned in the same breath as Lady Gaga and sharing stages with both Madonna and Britney Spears. Like her labelmates, her chart stats boom. She sent her debut, *Pink Friday*, to the top of the charts, becoming the first female hip-hop artist to claim the top spot on the Billboard 200 in a decade. And when her recent *Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded* accomplished the same feat, she became only the second female hip-hop artist to top the Billboard 200 twice.

Her singles are also quick to catch on. In June 2010, Minaj broke the record for the most concurrently charting Hot 100 singles by a female hip-hop artist with four simultaneous hits, a record she's since broken numerous times—most recently with seven simultaneous hits on the Jan. 7 chart. She's only the second woman to chart three simultaneous top 10s on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs since the tally began using Nielsen data to power its rankings in December 1992. And runaway smash "Super Bass" is the highest-charting Hot 100 rap hit by a solo female (without the aid of a featured artist) since Missy Elliott's "Work It" spent 10 weeks at No. 2 in 2002-03. "Super Bass" reigned for two weeks at No. 3 in August 2011. And she's even more of a force on the branding end. Minaj recently became the face of a new Pepsi global campaign for a reported seven-figure deal. Lil Wayne signed his own multimillion-dollar soda endorsement deal—with Mountain Dew—in March.

Today, across all of its properties, Cash Money Records Group counts 29 artists in its stable, including the younger Williams, who records under the Birdman name, as well as recent additions Busta Rhymes, Mystikal, Fred Durst and Limp Bizkit, R&B singer Christina Milian and DJ Greg Street, all signed within the last eight months. In addition to its Young Money Cash Money artists, Cash Money also recently entered into joint-venture label deals with Def Jam executive

DJ Khaled's We the Best Records (Khaled is also signed to Cash Money as an artist) and Billboard's 2009 top Hot 100 producer RedOne's 2101 Records.

Taken in aggregate, the label's social media footprint is monstrous: 44.3 million Twitter followers and 106.5 million Facebook fans. And its sales figures also measure up. Since signing with Universal in 1998, the label has lodged 59 titles on the Billboard 200 and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums charts that have sold more than 43 million albums, according to SoundScan. And that's just domestic sales for the releases that made the major charts. According to Cash Money, worldwide sales for all releases since the deal top out at nearly 60 million albums and more than 130 million singles sold.

In urban music, there is no parallel. No other hip-hop company, ever, has remained as fiercely independent for as long as Cash Money while experiencing so much sustained success. Def Jam, Death Row, Bad Boy, No Limit, Shady, Aftermath, Roc-A-Fella—all were born in partnership with a major, eventually married their business to a major or, in the case of No Limit and Death Row, proved unable to maintain operations on their own. For the past three years, Cash Money Records Group has ranked as the second-biggest non-Latin indie label in the United States with close to 1.4% market share, just behind Disney and Hollywood and ahead of Concord and Big Machine/Valory Music.

"Their success is extraordinary," says Universal Republic CEO Monte Lipman, who carries the label under his Universal Republic banner. "These guys are writing the record book as we speak.

The artistry, the executive chops these guys have, the ability to thrive in where we're at in this industry is the greatest thing I've been associated with. When the dust settles, you got to put them right up there with Motown and Island Records and certainly Columbia, Epic and Atlantic."

Sylvia Rhone, who worked with Cash Money as president of Universal Motown from 2006 to 2011 and presided over much of the label's crossover success, beginning with the release of Wayne's *Tha Carter III*, agrees. "All of these other people who had labels—be it Bad Boy or [whomever] . . . Nobody had the longevity or success that they've had," she says. "Nobody. And they're the best in the game. There's nobody hotter and smarter than Cash Money right now."

As for the Williams brothers, Rhone says simply, "They're talented cats. Period."

FOR CASH MONEY RECORDS, ALL OF the recent success couldn't have come at a better time. After 14 years within the Universal system, the label's current contract is set to expire soon. Though those close to the deal are reluctant to discuss the actual date ("That's something you should probably speak to Vernon Brown about," Lipman says; "Can't expose the date," Brown responds), Cash Money is perfectly positioned to use its next move to redefine the very idea of the power play.

With its roster running up the charts like a cheetah at a track meet and recent shake-ups at the top of the major-label system, most notably the installation of Cash Money's longtime business partner/mentor Morris as CEO of Sony Music Entertainment, it's hard to imagine the Williams brothers passing on the opportunity to pit the majors against each other in a bidding war almost certain to get Birdman that much closer to his billion-dollar goal.

Not that those involved are going to come right out and say that. Talk to the major players and what you'll get instead is a healthy dose of diplomacy and the sense that those involved would like to downplay the significance of the deal and its potential stakes even as they allude to cards they're holding.

"I don't think the guys are re- **continued on >>p24**

## DESTROY AND REBUILD



Cash Money's BIRDMAN and SLIM with the Hot Boys at the Source Hip-Hop Music Awards in 1999. From left: Birdman, LIL WAYNE, B.G., Slim, JUVENILE and TURK.

**T**he early 2000s saw an exodus of many of Cash Money Records' early hitmakers, beginning with Terius "Juvenile" Gray citing contract and financial disputes in 2001. (Juvenile's 1998 release, *400 Degrees*, was the first album released by Cash Money in partnership with Universal and continues to reign as the label's best-selling album.) Rapper B.G.—who along with Juvenile, Lil Wayne and Tab "Turk" Virgil formed the label's late-'90s supergroup the Hot Boys—soon followed. Then, in 2005, the label's longtime in-house producer Mannie Fresh also left the fold, leaving Wayne and Birdman as the only artists remaining from the label's roster when it signed the Universal deal. Looking back now, Birdman calls the experience a gift and a curse.

"I never had no wrong intentions to take nothing from [anyone]," he says. "It was an experience that taught me. I knew I had to get better attorneys if I don't want to go through this shit. I have to get better CPAs—better in all aspects—to function and run well as an independent brand. The breakup got us to where we are today."

Though the label has been subject to several claims through the years, including a lawsuit settled with EMI earlier this year over unpaid royalties stemming from Wayne's *Tha Carter III*, Cash Money business adviser Vernon Brown says such claims are inevitable and only reflect the size and scope of Cash Money's business.

"You turn around and every other record is a Cash Money record," Brown says. "How could that happen if these two guys did not take care of their business? You haven't had a complaint or seen any disgruntled artists at Cash Money in probably seven or eight years now. That's a long time."

**"I wasn't one of these people coming to Universal trying to live off their money. I was making a million dollars a month, shipping 100,000 each album."**

—CASH MONEY CO-FOUNDER BRYAN "BIRDMAN" WILLIAMS ON THE LABEL'S 1998 DEAL WITH THE MAJOR.

THE  
ONLY THING  
BETTER  
THAN COUNTING IT,  
IS LISTENING  
TO IT.

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
BIRDMAN & SLIM  
ON THE AMAZING DOMINATION OF  
CASH MONEY RECORDS.

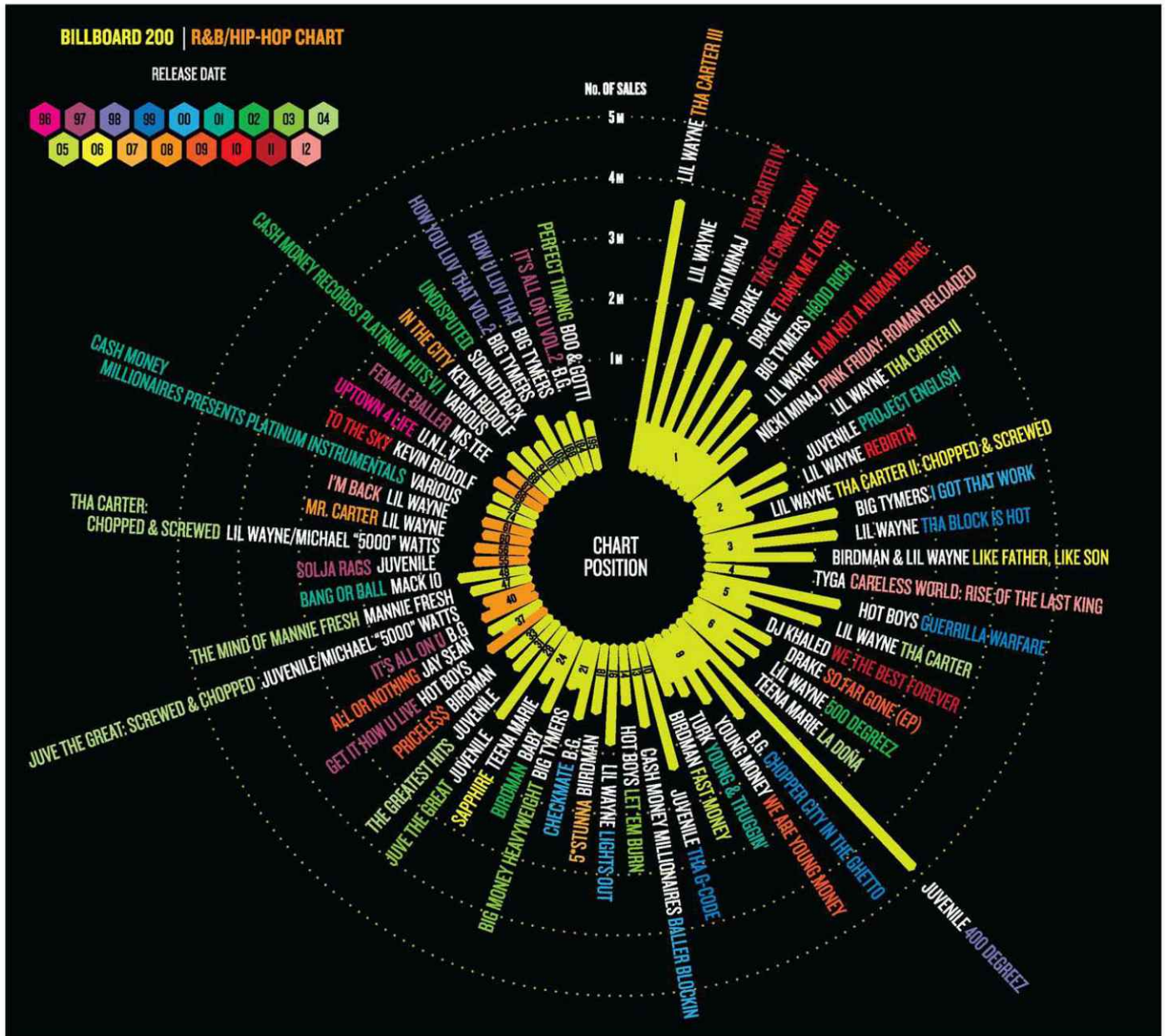
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ANTONIO L.A. REID



epic.

# CASH MONEY MAKERS

Here, a look at the sales and chart performance of every album Cash Money Records has placed on the Billboard 200 and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums charts since partnering with Universal in 1998.



from >>p22 ally in the mode of wanting to make a decision on this," Brown says. "We've been with Universal for 14 years. For the foreseeable future, I don't see a change. There is no reason. The guys are financially beyond [where they were] four or five years ago. I don't think Universal or any other label can dangle money around as a way of saying, 'Come here.' Once you take the money off the table, now you can sit back and think about what's best for us, our artists, our fans, what we do now. You have to think: 'Is there anything wrong with what [Universal has] been doing the last one or two years?' I've seen some of the biggest releases ever. I've seen our international side flourishing even more because of a greater push by the corporation... There's so much conversation about this massive \$100 [million] or \$200 million deal—I'm thinking, 'Do they know how many records these guys sell?' No \$100 [million] or \$200 million is going to

make Cash Money any different than it is at this point in time." Slim says, "When we get to that, we'll deal with that. Right now, we're just focusing on doing what we have to do, moving forward like we have and enjoying our time with Universal. We're happy where we're at. Everything's been working great. And [Universal Music Group chairman/CEO] Lucian [Grainge] is a great guy. He didn't come in and knock everything down. He just said to us, 'Continue doing what you've been doing,' and I respect him for that. Everything's going well, we're very excited, company's doing great, so no changes yet." Brown agrees. "We're very supportive of the management and people at Universal," he says. "They've done everything right. If we were blessed with great people in the past and we weren't now, this conversation wouldn't even have to happen. But everything has been really seamless, and since it's

not going to be based on money, one has to ask, 'Who can get the job done best? What distributor gets the best job done?'" If distribution is the only determining factor, Universal certainly has an advantage. The company has been the top urban distributor, and top distributor overall, based on market share, for more than 10 years. "I always tell my clients, 'Step back from the people themselves and think about the organization,' because people change, people can leave," Brown says. "You've got to look at the underlying operations, you got to look at your client, the artists, the international [landscape], where you are going, and make a decision based on that." "Right now, I sit in a room with my clients and they are like, excuse my language, 'Deal? Fuck a deal. We ain't going to worry about [that]. We don't need to do a

continued on >>p26



**From Vernon Brown & V. Brown & Company**

**16 =**

INTERNATIONAL  
WORK ETHIC PLANNING  
LOYALTY INTEGRITY RESPECT  
LEADERSHIP OWNERSHIP FAMILY  
CREATIVITY GLOBAL HAPPINESS  
INSPIRATION HUMBLE SUCCESS  
EDUCATION BROTHERHOOD  
MAVERICKS EMPIRE  
INDEPENDENCE

**Congratulations Ronald and Bryan  
Thank you for 16 great years, and here's to 16 more**

from >>24 deal. I ain't got to worry about it as long as my man keep doing what he is doing for us, and let's keep making money together.' I don't think [Grainge] is losing sleep at night worrying about us wanting to run out the door. And I don't think my clients are sitting around each night with checks running through their heads on how much money they could get to go somewhere else."

Maybe not, but that doesn't mean the money isn't a factor. This is Cash Money after all.

"It's a big decision," Birdman says. "But to me, money does matter. I love what [Universal has] done for us. I love them [even] when I'm mad, too. It's going to have to be the money to make it."

Asked what that money would look like, Birdman simply says, "A real number." When pressed to throw a real number in the air, he adds, "I really don't know. In the 100s, though—300, 400, easy."

It's an astronomical figure for the music industry, the kind of number that gets attached to mid-tier publishing companies, not independent record labels, especially not ones with Southern gangsta rap roots. But there's no denying Cash Money's strengths.

Universal Republic's Lipman calls Cash Money "the most valuable asset in the music industry today." Sony's Morris calls signing Cash Money "one of the best signings I've ever made," adding, "I hope that we work with them again one day in the future." (As for any attempts on Morris' part to try to bring Cash Money into the Sony fold, he says, "There's nothing to talk about. They either will or they won't. They have a lot of records under their contract that they have to deliver. You want to know the truth? Whatever works for them is good to me.")

In other sectors, though, a half billion dollars for a proven, explosive operation isn't as uncommon, as Brown is well aware. Stressing that Cash Money isn't "up for sale," he says that the attitude of the company toward conversations about equity deals has changed a bit. "Over the years, there were many opportunities to entertain sale offers for Cash Money [and] there was a conscious decision by the Williams brothers to stay the course," Brown says. "Today is a different story because of the evolution of the company. If we had someone who worked as a partner, probably

in some ways it could be better for us. When the time is right, I'll have that conversation. Is it today? I don't think so. Is it next year? Who knows? You just know when it's the right moment.

"We've expanded into business [beyond music] 100% on our own," he continues. "It'll be that day when the two of them sit down with me and we realize that to get to a certain point will require help that we can't do on our own."

**"Their success is extraordinary. At the end when the dust settles, you got to put them right up there with Motown and Island Records and certainly Columbia, Epic and Atlantic."**

— UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC CEO MONTE LIPMAN

As to any ideas of what that suitor might look like: "Ten years ago I would [have said it's got to] be a record company," Brown says. "I still think so, but with all the tech companies and phone carriers, there might be some people sitting somewhere in Silicon Valley thinking of a plan that my clients become a meaningful part of. If that call came, I wouldn't be surprised."

INTERNALLY, THE YOUNG MONEY CASH MONEY team is focused on aggressive acquisition, flexing its might and expanding the brand's reach, with a sharp eye on opportunities

overseas. And Brown hints at "contracts on my desk right now" and "a proposal [that] just went out today for another major [international star]," as pointing the way forward for the label.

"Two-thirds of music sales in dollars and volume occur outside the U.S.," he says. "It never really sank in [until] when the new chairman of Universal [Grainge assumed the post in 2011], who was [its] international head, really started pounding it across. Then it gets easy to see that you don't have to compromise anything you are doing at all to increase your business 25%-50% just by focusing on spreading the branch."

Slim also credits Grainge for opening up the world. "We discussed that when he first got in there, and our international [presence] with our U.S. artists has picked up tremendously. I respect that."

In December, Lil Wayne did a series of dates in Australia, including two concerts with Eminem, and played shows in South Africa with Drake. "If I was a betting man, I would bet that five years from now, no matter what age you are or what part of the world you're at, odds are you're going to be touched by some type of Cash Money music," Brown says. "Projecting out to the next 24-36 months, I can't imagine there won't be any less than six to 10 international acts alone."

In May, Birdman confirmed that the label had officially renewed its longstanding relationship with Lil Wayne and Wayne's Young Money imprint for a deal said to be worth \$150 million and to include Wayne's next four album cycles. (Like all Cash Money artist deals, the pact was done without Universal's knowledge, input or financial backing.)

Combined, all the recent moves have increased Cash Money's roster by nearly 30% and made a loud statement about the label's ability to attract and retain talent. Not to mention that if the \$150 million for Lil Wayne is firm, it establishes a guidepost to just how much the label might be worth to anyone who might be eyeing the Cash Money business. As such, it's hard not to see all of the moves as the savvy positioning of a label in the middle of a contract year, not unlike a franchise player running up stats the season before his next big deal. But even if that's the case, stats are stats and, anyway, can you blame them?

## SO WHAT'S THE DEAL?

**T**hough no one close to the Cash Money deal will talk specifics, several sources inside Universal suggest that if the deal isn't already done, it will be soon. These sources cite the deep ties between the two companies and point to a new Cash Money conference room under construction at Universal's New York office as evidence of a relationship that will continue well beyond 2012.

In 2010, Cash Money Young Money and Universal Music Publishing Group entered into a worldwide administrative partnership, giving UMPG rights to administer all catalog interests from Birdman and his brother Slim, as well as older copyrights from Lil Wayne, Mannie Fresh and B.G. and any new writers that Birdman and Slim sign, such as Nicki Minaj. Considering Cash Money's stocked roster of young talent, led by Wayne, Minaj and Drake, the thought of an ongoing relationship with the label is a promising one to Universal Republic CEO Monte Lipman.

"I'd bet on Birdman every day of the week, and we put our money where our mouth is," he says. "I'm just hitching my wagon to his success because he's bringing us into uncharted waters, whether it's Cash Money content with the books, whether they decide to go into the film industry, continue to expand their roster with new ventures and artist signings—it just feels bigger than ever. My intention is to work with these guys for another 15 years."



TOP: Flexing their publishing muscle in 2010 are (from left) Universal Music Publishing Group chairman/CEO DAVID RENZER, Cash Money's SLIM, UMPG executive VP/head of creative affairs TOM STURGES, Cash Money's BIRDMAN, UMPG executive VP of creative, East Coast EVAN LAMBERG, Cash Money business manager VERNON BROWN, UMPG VP of business affairs and business development DAVID KOKAKIS and senior VP/head of urban music ETHIOPIA HABTEMARIAM. BOTTOM: NICKI MINAJ, LIL WAYNE and DRAKE during the festivities for Super Bowl XLIV in 2010.

"I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT and not be killed," Birdman says of his initial motivations behind starting the label as a young teenager born and raised in New Orleans' Magnolia Housing Projects. "I wanted to help my little niggas before they got killed. We chose music. People not in the projects know nothing—money and murder all day, every day. I wanted out of the project life. I wanted to buy my mom something. I never understood why nobody had a car, nobody had a house, why we all in this motherfucking project, selling dope, toting guns."

Things are definitely different now. Wherever Cash Money ends up—at the moment at least, all signs point to Universal—the Magnolia Projects are in the extreme rearview, and the goals, for Birdman, Slim and the entire Cash Money operation, have changed. In addition to new albums expected this year from Lil Wayne, Bow Wow, DJ Khaled and Jay Sean (which, if they all arrive, will give the label seven releases for 2012), there are books to publish (Cash Money Content, the label's publishing imprint through Simon & Schuster's Atria Books, has already scored two New York Times best-sellers since its launch last year), movies to shoot (in May, the label announced the first Cash Money Films release, "Rich Gang"), a tour bus company to run (Millionaire Tours) and YMCMB merch to move. Basically, there's money to be made.

"The Def Jams, the Interscopes, all of them, they're my competitors," Birdman says on his way back from checking out a storefront in South Beach that will soon house a YMCMB-branded shop. "I'm out to outdo every last one of them. I don't care who you are, I'm going to outdo you, to keep outdoing you at a constant, consistent basis."

As for that billion?

"We will definitely have a story about them getting there," Brown says. "The question will be how long it takes—whether it's two years, four years, five years, six years. Projection-wise, I could show it in any one of those ways. But you know, anybody can create a standpoint. Projections are useless."

It's true. After all, it's the performance, and the money, that talks.

A collage of US \$100 bills, featuring Benjamin Franklin, with various serial numbers and signatures visible. The bills are layered and slightly offset, creating a sense of depth.

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# URBAN POWER LIST

**Deal makers, rule breakers, beat creators — these are the 25 most powerful players in the space, the men and women who define the game, direct its flow and determine its outcome**



**DR. DRE'S** Beats line commanded 53% of the \$1 billion headphones market in 2011.

## Cortez Bryant & Gee Roberson

CO-CEOS, THE BLUEPRINT GROUP

### GLOBAL THEORISTS

**I**n early 2012, Cortez Bryant's Bryant Management and Kyambo "Hip Hop" Joshua and Gee Roberson's Hip Hop Since 1978 joined forces as the Blueprint Group, bringing superstars like Lil Wayne, Nicki Minaj, Drake and T.I. under the same management umbrella. Bryant and Roberson, who serve as Blueprint's co-CEOs (Joshua is president and head of artist development) have already inked several high-profile deals, including a partnership between Lil Wayne and Mountain Dew (valued in the multimillions) and a global Pepsi campaign for Minaj reported to be in the seven figures. "International is one of the biggest things on our radar because our artists are not only national—they're global, so their music is touching all parts of the world," says Bryant, who's also president of Lil Wayne's Cash Money imprint, Young Money Entertainment. (In addition to his Blueprint role, Roberson is chairman of Geffen Records.) Through 2012, Blueprint intends to set up TV and film opportunities for the company's clientele, with plans for Drake, Minaj and T.I. to entertain big-screen roles, as well as launch a clothing line for Minaj by year's end. "We're not satisfied with what we have," Bryant says. "It's probably bigger than what most people are doing out here in hip-hop, but there are plenty more opportunities out there for our artists." —Steven J. Horowitz

## Sean "Diddy" Combs

FOUNDER/CEO, BAD BOY WORLDWIDE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP;  
BRAND MANAGER, CIROC

### CIROC STAR

**I**n 2007, Sean "Diddy" Combs put his name to his biggest hit in years, and the rest of the music biz has been racing to re-create it. Only instead of a single, it was a business deal—a 50/50 stake in Diageo's Ciroc vodka that effectively made him "brand manager" of the then-struggling spirit. Nearly five years later, the little vodka that could has ballooned in sales to No. 2 in its category (ahead of No. 3 Belvedere) and achieved a 38% year-over-year increase in 2011 alone, according to Beverage Information Group. It's also netted Combs more than \$100 million in revenue, a sum large enough to inspire copycat liquor branding deals by everyone from Pitbull and Fergie (Voli) to Enrique Iglesias (Atlantico Rum), Ludacris (Conjure cognac) and Ne-Yo (Malibu Red rum tequila). Though his 2010 Diddy-Dirty Money album was considered a disappointment, Combs' Bad Boy imprint has been on a signing binge of late—French Montana, Cassie, MGK (Machine Gun Kelly), Los, Red Cafe and newcomer Megan Nicole are among the names recently added to its roster. Next, look for Combs to put his media muscle to the test when he launches music entertainment network Revolt with Comcast in early 2013. —Andrew Hampp

## Dr. Dre

CO-FOUNDER/BEATS BY DR. DRE  
FOUNDER, AFTERMATH ENTERTAINMENT

### SOUND ADVISER

**D**r. Dre has got the beat in more ways than one. What started out as a mission to elevate headphones' audio performance has evolved into a multifaceted sound empire. Launched in 2008 in partnership with Monster Cable Products, Beats by Dr. Dre is the brainchild of R&B/hip-hop producer extraordinaire Dre and Interscope Geffen A&M Records chairman Jimmy Iovine. Since locating this relatively untapped musical vein, Dre and Iovine have watched a host of competitors jump onboard: Skullcandy with Roc Nation, Quincy Jones and AKG, 50 Cent's SMS Audio line, Soul by Ludacris and RZA's Chambers venture. But Beats still holds the commanding edge. According to NPD Group, the company was the leader in the headphone category with 53% of 2011's \$1 billion market. And

although Beats is parting ways with Monster at year's end, the franchise shows no signs of slowing down. Within the last four years, the Beats technology has expanded beyond headphones into cars (Chrysler's 300 S sedan and Dodge's 2012 Charger), computers (Hewlett-Packard PCs and laptops) and, most recently, smartphones (HTC, which purchased a \$300 million majority stake in Beats last August). Late last year, Dre proclaimed his intention to take a hiatus from music, leaving fans to wonder if his long-awaited *Detox* will ever be released. But Dre still has his finger on the pulse of what's happening. His latest protégés at his label, Aftermath Entertainment, are Slim the Mobster and Kendrick Lamar.

—Gail Mitchell

## Shawn Gee

PRESIDENT OF MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT, SEFG

### KING OF THE ROAD

**S**hawn Gee has mastered the full package. With a background on Wall Street, Gee parlayed his interest in finance into music and entertainment, becoming a central figure in the touring market for hip-hop artists. Last year, he served as tour manager for Lil Wayne's

Ciroc has earned SEAN "DIDDY" COMBS more than \$100 million.



I Am Still Music tour, which ranked No. 14 on Billboard's top 25 tours of 2011 with a gross of \$46.3 million, according to Billboard Boxscore. Most recently, he lent his expertise to Nicki Minaj and J. Cole for their respective *Pink Friday* and *Cole World* international treks, as well as serving as executive producer of the Roots Picnic music festival and the upcoming Philly Fourth of July Jam, billed as the "largest free concert" in America.

For Gee, who also serves as touring consultant for the Blueprint Group, a successful tour hinges on three Ps: packaging, pricing and performance. "We never want to put anything out that the consumer has to think about. You want something that overdelivers to them," says Gee, who oversaw Kanye West's celebrated *Glow in the Dark* tour (\$30.8 million gross from 49 shows reporting to Boxscore). "We look at where we want to be, where we want to end up on the next album cycle, and [consider] what direction or steps we take with this album to get there. It's that strategic view of the touring business that differentiates me from my contemporaries."

—Steven J. Horowitz

## Benjy Grinberg

PRESIDENT, ROSTRUM RECORDS

### SOCIAL FORCE

**S**ince establishing his independent label, this Pittsburgh native and former executive assistant for Antonio "L.A." Reid has built a mini empire by banking on a core of young, Internet-savvy artists committed to active social engagement, a heavy touring schedule and free mixtapes to help encourage fans to buy both albums and concert tickets.

Grinberg lets Rostrum artists handle their social media accounts entirely on their own, and the strategy has proved successful: Wiz Khalifa's debut, *Rolling Papers*, was one of only a handful of hip-hop releases in 2011 to sell more than 500,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and late last year, Mac Miller's debut, *Blue Slide Park*, worked a successful preorder campaign to become the first independent album to bow atop the Billboard 200 since 1995. Both artists have established themselves on the road, with Khalifa grossing \$3.3 million from 28 shows and Miller pulling in \$1.2 million from 23 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore. "Fans are smart," Grinberg says, explaining his label's hands-off approach to social media management. "Fans know when they're being marketed to. And that's why we never really do it."

Snowballing off a successful 2011, Khalifa and Miller will embark on the joint Under the Influence summer tour, which features opening acts Kendrick Lamar, Chevy Woods and Boaz. Khalifa recently appeared on Maroon 5's "Payphone," which entered the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 3 and set a record for digital sales by a group with 493,000 singles sold. Khalifa's sophomore album, *O.N.I.F.C.*, arrives Aug. 28 on Rostrum/Atlantic. "We're committed to growing the infrastructure of Rostrum so we can better-serve our artists," Grinberg says. "I want to make sure that we have enough bandwidth for that." —Steven J. Horowitz

## Jay-Z, Jay Brown, John Meneilly & Tyran "Ty Ty" Smith

THE ROC NATION TEAM

### TURNING MULTIPLE STREAMS INTO A FLOOD

**T**he Roc Nation team—CEO Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, president Jay Brown, TK John Meneilly and TK Tyran "Ty Ty" Smith—has spent the past four years forming partnerships, management ties, a label presence and a publishing arm to help Roc Nation become a fully rounded company that's not exactly a "360 deal" organization. Since Jay-Z partnered with Live Nation in 2008, Roc Nation has run up a winning streak of betting on the right artists, companies and tours.

Three years ago, Roc Nation formed the StarRoc label and



BENJY GRINBERG lets his artists handle their own social media accounts.

publishing company with pop production duo Stargate, which has helmed hits for Rihanna and Nicki Minaj. Last year, the company got in on the electronic dance music craze on the early side by partnering with U.K. management company Three Six Zero, which represents superstar DJs like Deadmau5 and Calvin Harris. The label roster includes J. Cole, Rita Ora and Jay Electronica. On the management side, Roc Nation has Shakira, Rihanna, Wale and M.I.A.

"Our company can provide services from every stream," Brown told Billboard earlier this year. "From the merch side to the touring side, publishing, producer management, artist management or a label—basically every venture that an artist is a part of or not a part of, we can offer that."

Of course, Jay-Z has merged his Roc Nation success with his own hip-hop career—*Watch the Throne*, his joint album with Kanye West, arrived on Roc Nation/Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam last year and has moved 1.5 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. And in addition to the *Watch the Throne* European tour earlier this year, Roc Nation will handle the Budweiser Made in America festival, the inaugural Jay-Z-curated fest to be held Sept. 1-2 in Philadelphia.

—Jason Lipshutz

### THE INAUGURAL URBAN POWER LIST

Defining power and who possesses it is an ever-changing equation. It's a challenge that Billboard editors revisit each year with the Power Players series, which includes Women in Music, Latin Power Players, this year's inaugural Power 100 and the upcoming 40 Under 40. To that roster, add this issue's inaugural Urban Power List, profiling the 25 biggest players in the industry. The unranked tally targets executives whose concentration is urban, not executives who have oversight of urban music but also substantial responsibilities with other genres.

Rounding out the list: salutes to Urban Power Cities and the first Hall of Fame inductee. As with any such tally, numerous accomplished executives didn't make the cut. However, the selected honorees represent the collective judgment of Billboard's editors. Congratulations to the 25 game-changing executives who comprise our first Urban Power List.



**MICHAEL KYSER**  
is Atlantic's  
first president  
of black music.

## Magic Johnson

OWNER, MAGIC JOHNSON ENTERPRISES

### BUSINESS BALLER

The Los Angeles Lakers and NBA legend is still playing ball: He's part of the Guggenheim Partners-backed group that purchased the Los Angeles Dodgers this year. But Earvin "Magic" Johnson is also prepping for a formidable slam-dunk in urban entertainment. No stranger to that arena, Johnson once hosted a short-lived late-night talk show—"The Magic Hour"—on Fox in 1998. Two years later, he launched Magic Johnson Music. A joint venture with MCA Music, the label scored several hits with R&B singer/songwriter Avant. Fast-forward 12 years and Johnson is now rolling out his own cable channel, *Aspire*. Focusing on family-driven content and positive images of African-Americans, the channel went live June 27 to 7 million Comcast and Time Warner Cable homes in 16 of the top 25 African-American markets, including New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Among the personalities helming its prime-time programming blocks: Grammy Award winner Esperanza Spalding, who will host *Aspire*'s "Groundbreaking Music" lineup on Friday nights. Aside from TV, Magic Johnson Enterprises has an interest in Inner City Broadcasting, parent to New York urban radio institution WBLS. Also under the Johnson umbrella: *Vibe* magazine and the "Soul Train" franchise, whose annual awards show airs on BET's Centric channel.

—Gail Mitchell

## Michael Kyser

PRESIDENT OF BLACK MUSIC, ATLANTIC RECORDS GROUP

### EXPANSION PLAYER

Signaling a redoubled commitment to expand its stake in R&B and hip-hop, Atlantic appointed Michael Kyser as its first president of black music at the top of last year. At the time, Warner Music Group's 14.2% share of 2010 U.S. R&B album sales (which include hip-hop) was a distant third behind Universal Music Group (47.8%) and Sony Music Entertainment (26.7%), according to Nielsen SoundScan. That still represented a sizable gain from 9.8% in 2005. Meanwhile, Atlantic accounted for most of WMG's 2010 R&B albums tally, with a 9% share of the market. By the end of 2011, Atlantic accounted for 6.7% of U.S. recorded-music sales, ahead of Warner Bros. (5.8%) and rivals RCA (6.6%) and Universal Republic (6.3%). Contributing to Atlantic's banner year was rapper Wiz Khalifa, whose debut album, *Rolling Papers*, bowed at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 thanks to such hits as the platinum-selling "Roll Up" and "Black and Yellow."

Previously a VP at Def Jam, Kyser joined Atlantic as executive VP of urban music in 2004. "When I came into Atlantic, we were kind of all over the place in R&B/hip-hop," Kyser told *Billboard* last March. "The one thing I wanted to focus on was putting together a tight lineup—not more than 20 artists on the urban roster." Kyser's tight lineup includes Lupe Fiasco, Tank, Estelle, Janelle Monáe, Musiq Soulchild, Andre Harrell's Harrell Records and B.o.B, whose newly released sophomore set, *Strange Clouds*, debuted at No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. On tap are high-profile releases by Flo Rida, Trey Songz and T.I.

—Gail Mitchell

## Bryan Leach

CEO, POLO GROUNDS MUSIC

### THE TALENT DEVELOPER

During his 11-year stint with indie label TVT Records—first as director of artist development in 1995 and then as VP of urban A&R beginning in 1998—Bryan Leach signed crunk master Lil Jon, the Ying Yang Twins and Cuban-American rapper Pitbull. Of that period, Leach has said he "learned how to slow-bake and develop talent as opposed to microwaving it; to focus on signing stars and choosing shots." Building on that philosophy, Leach established Polo Grounds Music in 2006, a joint venture with RCA Records. In the six years since, Polo Grounds has built a name for itself, thanks to chart-

## JOIE MANDA

PRESIDENT, DEF JAM RECORDINGS

### GOING FOR THE WORLD TITLE

In March, Joie Manda left his two-year tenure as head of urban music at Warner Bros. Records to become president of Def Jam Recordings. It marked the first time the position had been filled since Jay-Z ended his three-year reign in 2007. At WBR, Manda was responsible for signing Common, Maybach Music Group and Waka Flocka Flame to the imprint, building a strong roster before exiting.

Now three months on the job at Def Jam, Manda is settling into his duties as head of the decades-old imprint, founded by Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons in 1984. Overseeing upcoming albums from Nas, Rick Ross, 2 Chainz and Kanye West's G.O.O.D. Music, Manda explains how realizing an artist's vision is of foremost importance as he tries to turn Def Jam from one of the premier labels in hip-hop into the most successful imprint in the world.

#### What did you take from Warner Bros. and apply to Def Jam?

Patience. You have to be patient, and you also have to remember why we're here: to help new artists. We really work for the artist. That's the mantra and ethos.

#### What's your goal as president of the label?

To have all of our artists facilitate their vision, to bring their music to market in the right way and to do their creativity justice. My other goal is to revive the Def Jam brand. Forget about the No. 1 label in urban music; it needs to be the No.

1 label in the world. It should be the premier destination for any artist. I think it still is, but I want to reinvigorate it and really work on the branding of Def Jam. I want to remind people how important it is.

#### What's the most important thing Def Jam can do to continue its 30-year legacy?

What Def Jam needs to do, and will do right now, is think of nontraditional ways to put artists and music out. That's where Def Jam came from. When Russell and Rick started this company, there was no blueprint for a rap label. We're thinking of nontraditional ways. Radio is important, obviously. That's how we get our music to the masses. But we really are trying to think of different ways.

#### Radio is obviously an integral focus of any label, but hip-hop doesn't have as strong a grip on pop radio as it once did. How do you hope to bring that back?

I think that music, not just hip-hop, has become homogenized lately. We're not scared to sign artists that don't fit inside of a box and aren't commercial or commercially marketable. We're looking for the 2012 N.W.A., the 2012 Public Enemy. Stuff that other labels would probably say, "What are we going to do with this? This isn't commercial, this isn't going to cross over." That's what we're looking for.

#### Where do you see the biggest potential for growth and opportunity that could use nurturing at the label?

Right now, all the people who are involved in artist development here, we're all going to take steroids. We're going to be the best in the world at artist development. If you're a new artist, you're going to want to be on Def Jam, because we're going to be patient and we're going to spend the time and the money to really develop new artists.

—Steven J. Horowitz



# ETHIOPIA HABTEMARIAM

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF URBAN MUSIC, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP; SENIOR VP, MOTOWN RECORDS

## WONDER WOMAN

**W**ithout a doubt, one of this year's hottest unfolding stories is the unveiling of the new Motown. Tapped last September to revamp the iconic brand, Ethiopia Habtemariam—No. 15 on Billboard's 2011 Women in Music Power Players list—called the appointment “a huge opportunity and a lot of responsibility.” And much more so in her particular case: Habtemariam concurrently serves as executive VP/head of urban music at Universal Music Publishing Group. In that role, she has proved to be a savvy talent forecaster, with signings such as Justin Bieber, Chris Brown, J. Cole, Ester Dean, Cash Money (Nicki Minaj, DJ Khaled) and Hit-Boy (Kanye West and Jay-Z's “Ni<sup>o</sup>tas in Paris”). Her latest is female songwriter Phoenix, who's working with Shakira and other artists.

To begin shaping her Motown vision, Habtemariam signed singer/songwriter/producer Ne-Yo to the roster and appointed him senior VP of A&R earlier this year. His fifth release, *R.E.D.* (Sept. 18), will mark the new Motown's formal debut. She talked to Billboard about what it takes to relaunch such an iconic brand and what to expect from it in the near future.

### Ne-Yo overseeing A&R—how did that come about?

He has his own label, Compound, and has always been into identifying talent. With him being such a phenomenal song-

writer, his goal was to build something. So I asked him to be part of what we are building at Motown, and he thought it was a perfect fit. He's really involved. It's not a vanity position. Not only does he find and sign talent, but he serves as a mentor to our newer acts on the roster and writes for them as well. Ne-Yo exemplifies what we want to build: great R&B/pop global superstars. We're trying to build a synergy between the new and the history that is Motown.



### Besides Ne-Yo, who else comprises the label's roster?

As far as new acts are concerned, our flagship artists are B. Smith and Kevin Ross. I signed them both at the end of last year. B. Smith is a 19-year-old singer/dancer from Fort Lauderdale . . . We plan on dropping a single from him within the next couple of months and an album in the first or second quarter of 2013. Kevin Ross, a 22-year-old musician/songwriter from Washington, D.C., is signed to both Verve and Motown. He was part of BET's Music Matters campaign, and we have him signed to the publishing company as well.

There's clearly a void in the marketplace for a great male group. Along those lines, we have Imprint, a four-member male group from Philadelphia that's somewhere between Boyz II Men and Jagged Edge. The act was signed through Pop Wansel's production company; Pop is one

of Universal's writers. And remember B5? They're all grown up, between the ages of 18-24. They're also on the roster, as are Kem, India.Arie, Erykah Badu, Babyface and Stevie Wonder.

### Define the new Motown.

My goal is to just have quality music—nothing that's for the moment or following a trend. If there's a rock act or a cool electronic pop act that fits into what we're building, I'd look at it. I don't want to put boundaries on what it is. We're talking about a brand and label that affected music around the globe. I've been learning a lot about the history of Motown and its other labels like Tamla and Gordy. [Founder Berry] Gordy was right in not limiting what Motown could do. It was really the voice of the youth and that was his direction for it. We just want to find new, cool things that inspire people.

### How is it juggling both gigs?

I'm between New York and L.A. I like to be as close to the recording process as I can and a lot of that happens in L.A., and also between Atlanta and Miami. I can't front—it's been difficult to find my rhythm. But I've found it now. It's literally been hiring the staff, signing new artists, making records . . . all at the same time. But it's coming together faster than I thought it would. I know the label will be established and defined by the new acts we break, so we're paying close attention to that. And while we're making these records, we're also doing artist development: vocal training, choreography, media training. Figuring out exactly who the artist is through their sound, look and image. We're doing all of that just like the old Motown—but doing it in our new way.

### How do you define power in today's music industry?

Two words that immediately come to mind are influence and responsibility. Power equals the ability to make or cause a change, and I believe that is something we all have within ourselves. —Gail Mitchell

climbing releases by Hurricane Chris (“A Bay Bay,” “Halle Berry”) and Pitbull. The latter's 2011 Mr. 305/Polo Grounds album, *Planet Pit*, has sold 443,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan, powered by the single “Give Me Everything,” featuring Ne-Yo, Afrojack and Nayer. And that's in addition to Pitbull's 2009 smash “I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)” and his high-profile cameos on Enrique Iglesias' “I Like It” and Usher's “DJ Got Us Fallin' in Love.” Aside from Pitbull's burgeoning presence, Polo Grounds signed hot rap newcomer A\$AP Rocky in 2011. The Harlem native's debut album, *Long Live A\$AP*, is due later this year. “I haven't seen anybody with this hustle and spirit since I signed Lil Jon and Pitbull,” Leach told Billboard last year. “Or since I witnessed the beginnings of Kanye West as an artist.” Leach also doubles as senior VP of urban music at RCA and has a joint venture with Sony/ATV for signing writers. —Gail Mitchell

**Debra Lee** CHAIRMAN/CEO  
**Stephen G. Hill**  
PRESIDENT OF MUSIC PROGRAMMING AND SPECIALS  
BET NETWORKS

### DYNASTIC DUO

**C**onsistency has become the hallmark of Black Entertainment Television. The cable channel's leader, Debra Lee, has been with the Viacom-owned company for more than 25 years. Meanwhile, Stephen G. Hill has handled music programming and specials for BET for 13 years.

Under Hill as an executive producer, the BET Awards have become the No. 1 black family event on cable TV, the No. 1 awards show among adults on cable and the No. 1 event in social media. The BET Awards have shown the greatest growth in the number of sponsors they attract, with this year's July 1 telecast bringing in Cadillac, Coca-Cola, Ford, State Farm and

Subway. Highlighting the broadcast will be the first televised performance from D'Angelo in a dozen years.

The 2011 BET Awards was watched by 7.7 million viewers, up from 7.4 million in 2010, according to Nielsen. It was the No. 2 broadcast in the network's history, trailing the 2009 awards held soon after the death of Michael Jackson.

In April, flagship show “106 & Park” registered its 15th consecutive quarter as the No. 1 music variety show on cable among adults ages 18-49, according to Nielsen data, and has been integral in launching the careers of numerous hip-hop and R&B

artists. Among other hits that will continue this year are “Bobby Jones Gospel,” gospel singing competition “Sunday Best” and comedy “The Game.” —Phil Gallo

## Cara Lewis

MUSIC AGENT, CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY

### TOUR MAVEN

**N**amed Billboard's 14th most powerful woman in the music industry in 2011, Cara Lewis made even bigger headlines earlier this year when she jumped ship from William Morris Endeavor to join the Creative Artists Agency. Based in New York, she is now a member of the team led by CAA managing partner/head of music Rob Light. During her 23-year WME tenure, Lewis oversaw a lineup that included some of the biggest established and emerging artists in R&B and hip-hop, including Eminem, Kanye West, Rihanna, 50 Cent, B.o.B, Lupe Fiasco, Tinie Tempah, Jill Scott, Common and the Roots. Last year proved to be one of Lewis' most successful. In addition to West closing out Coachella and joining fellow powerhouse Jay-Z on the much-talked-about *Watch the Throne* tour, Lewis' client Eminem announced his first Australian tour in a decade. While Eminem has followed Lewis to CAA, there's no official word about other clients on her roster. Given Lewis' track record, however, it's a safe bet she'll continue along the same path she has winningly forged. In fact, CAA is teaming with BET Networks to present the BET Music Matters live showcase on July 2 at its Los Angeles office, spotlighting Michael Jackson's nephew Austin Brown, Leah LaBelle and three other aspiring singer/songwriters. When news broke about Lewis coming onboard, Light said, “Cara has built a remarkable career cultivating the careers of some of the most acclaimed artists in music today. Her expertise in the urban market, ability to innovate and keen eye for talent will be great assets to our continued growth.” —Gail Mitchell



Rapper Eminem followed CARA LEWIS to CAA after she left WME.



**STEVE STOUTE**  
CEO/FOUNDER, TRANSLATION

### THE BRANDER IN CHIEF

**W**hen the piano line from Kanye West's "Runaway" rang out during the first commercial break of this year's Super Bowl (for Bud Light Platinum), it signified more than just a rare commercial synch of a West song. It was one of 2012's first "tanning moments," as Steve Stoute would refer to it in his book, "The Tanning of America: How Hip-Hop Created a Culture That Rewrote the Rules of the New Economy." It was also a spot produced by Stoute's agency, Translation, which he co-founded in 2008 with Jay-Z after a 10-year career in the record industry that included high-profile stints at Sony and Interscope.

Stoute credits his close ties to the hip-hop community for changing the tone of Anheuser-Busch's Super Bowl ads, which also included a mashup of Flo Rida's "Good Feeling" with the Cult's "She Sells Sanctuary." "They were too busy doing frat humor to do something like 'Runaway' as a soundtrack," he says. "If it wasn't for the work I'd done, Kanye would have never trusted me to use that song. We understand this 'tan' mind-set, we understand this cross-cultural landscape of this generation that doesn't see color."

Specializing in multicultural marketing, Translation has had a strong focus on music, from creating a campaign with Wrigley's Doublemint that became the basis of Chris Brown's "Forever" to an upcoming hip-hop initiative for Sprite. Up next, Stoute reteams with Anheuser-Busch for September's Made in America festival, to be held Labor Day weekend in Philadelphia with a cross-genre lineup set to include Skrillex, D'Angelo, Pearl Jam, Odd Future and headliner Jay-Z, who also curated the festival.

**What's been your proudest moment in the last 12 months?**

One of my proudest moments was at my book-release event. Reverend Run from Run-D.M.C. gave me his

*Raising Hell* gold plaque. It was a proclamation that what I was doing was the right thing. He was part of a generation that formed a culture, and I made him proud. If you look at my interviews for "The Tanning Effect," you'll see me and Pharrell and Will.i.am and Gwyneth Paltrow and Lady Gaga speaking about how music, culture, hip-hop culture is impacting suburban households and how that has affected corporate America.

**What was the mission of Translation when you founded it in 2008, and how has it evolved?**

I'd seen that brands needed to be closer to pop culture and cool, and that the record business needed partners that could underwrite initiatives. I've always seen that as the perfect marriage, which is why I named the company "Translation" from the beginning. Culturally they don't see each other the same; they speak two different languages. This year, we worked on this the festival for Jay-Z, which took eight months to put together. We're putting together a festival with a great roster of talent that's going to be groundbreaking and it's created by Budweiser—so is that a record business initiative or is that a branding initiative? Seeing those lines blur is where we want to be.

**You haven't worked full-time in the music industry in more than a decade. What excites you about music right now?**

What's getting my juices flowing is the combination of electronic and hip-hop. Those are both the most intense forms of music that speak to the youth. The opportunity to bring them closer together excites me more—that's why you'll see Skrillex and Calvin Harris at the same festival with people like Jay-Z and Odd Future. When you listen to electronic music and listen to hip-hop, they sound really far apart sonically, but they appeal to the same audience. People feel they're more far apart than they are, but I want to bring them together. —Andrew Hampp

**Larry Mestel** CHAIRMAN/CEO  
**Chris Lighty** COO  
**Michael "Blue" Williams**  
PRESIDENT  
PRIMARY VIOLATOR MANAGEMENT

### SUITE KINGS

**I**n the nine months since Larry Mestel's Primary Wave Music merged with Chris Lighty's Violator Management in September to form Primary Violator Management, the new company has been busy leveraging the proven experience of its executive team, which includes president Michael "Blue" Williams (formerly of Primary Wave Talent Management), and a roster of blue chip talent to build a branding powerhouse. Recent deals include helping 50 Cent establish his Street King energy drink and accompanying initiative to feed 1 billion kids, teaming Busta Rhymes with Google Music for a unique digital distribution deal for the artist's upcoming album *E.L.E. 2: End of the World* and working with Cee Lo Green to expand his presence beyond music through Primary Violator's in-house Brand Synergy Group and Lighty's Brand Asset Group.

"Branding is what we do," Williams says. "And because we're able to flow in and out of the urban and hip-hop world and back into the pop world, we're able to do branding on a number of different levels and work any type of artist."

Next on the agenda? Brokering even more brand extensions for their clients and breaking artists on multimedia platforms. "We're constantly trying to move the culture forward," Lighty says. —Steven J. Horowitz

**Mark Pitts**  
PRESIDENT OF URBAN MUSIC, RCA RECORDS  
CEO, BYSTORM ENTERTAINMENT

### THE A&R GURU

**I**n an interview last August after being appointed CEO of RCA Music Group, Peter Edge told Billboard there is "a definite plan to expand our dominance in R&B and grow hip-hop." Overseeing that mandate is Mark Pitts, formerly president of urban music for Jive before distributing parent RCA's restructuring last year. Edge, president/COO Tom Corson and Pitts most recently celebrated Usher's No. 1 debut with his seventh album, *Looking 4 Myself*—which Pitts A&R'd—on the Billboard 200 and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums charts. Gunning for the same momentum are upcoming albums by R. Kelly (*Write Me Back*, June 26), Chris Brown (*Fortune*, July 3) and Brandy (*Two Eleven*, Aug. 28). RCA's urban roster also includes Monica, T-Pain, Anthony Hamilton, Mario, Marsha Ambrosius and CJ Hilton. Also under Pitts' purview are RCA artists signed to his Bystorm Entertainment: Miguel and Jawan Harris. Newcomer Miguel scored two No. 1 R&B/hip-hop singles ("Sure Thing," "Quickie") from last year's debut album, *All I Want Is You*, which has sold 392,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The New York-based Pitts possesses close to 20 years of A&R experience. His first gig: working with Sean "Diddy" Combs at Bad Boy Records in 1992. From there, he segued into management (the Notorious B.I.G. and Nas). Pitts circled back into the label arena as a senior A&R executive at Arista, where he first worked with such acts as Usher, Hamilton, Cee Lo Green and TLC. —Gail Mitchell

**Paul Rosenberg**  
CO-FOUNDER, SHADY RECORDS  
CEO, GOLIATH ARTISTS MANAGEMENT

### MR. BIG

**T**hirteen years ago, Paul Rosenberg appeared in a skit on Eminem's debut album, *The Slim Shady LP*, in which the "faithful attorney at law" asked the upstart rapper to tone down his lyrics ("because there's only so much I can explain"). Luckily, Em didn't listen then (or



to any of the similar skits that followed), and his now-celebrated career span has helped Rosenberg, 40, become more than just his comic foil and business partner. Rosenberg has made his own moves in the digital space, serving as executive producer of Shade 45, Eminem's uncensored hip-hop channel on SiriusXM, as well as co-founder of hip-hop site RapRadar.com. He also acts as the CEO of Goliath Artists Management and has forged a partnership with Deckstar, a management company affiliated with acts like Steve Aoki and Holy Ghost! But Rosenberg's most high-profile project is the Universal Music Group-affiliated Shady Records, which added Alabama MC Yelawolf and underground supergroup Slaughterhouse to its roster in early 2011 and released *Hell: The Sequel*, the best-selling debut album from Eminem side project Bad Meets Evil, last June.

The Detroit rapper is still at the center of Rosenberg's power equation—though with Eminem as the seventh-best-selling artist of the Nielsen SoundScan era (41 million) and *Recovery* the best-selling album of 2010 (3.4 million), it's not a bad position for the manager to be in. Eminem revealed in June that a new solo album is slowly coming together, and with Slaughterhouse's debut Shady LP and with Yelawolf's sophomore disc on the way, the label has committed to developing its growing stable of hip-hop artists—and this time, Rosenberg doesn't need to be in any skits.—Jason Lipshutz

## Rick Ross

FOUNDER, MAYBACH MUSIC GROUP

MIAMI STREET MACHINE

In just three years, chart-topping Def Jam rapper Rick Ross (born William Leonard Roberts III) has built a label, a franchise and a movement powered by a sharp ear, a signature sound and a strong Internet presence. Through Maybach Music Group, Ross' reach stretches from Def Jam, where he's signed as an artist, to Warner Bros., which signed on to distribute MMG in February 2011 and houses the bulk of the label's roster, including rappers Wale, Meek Mill and Stalley. In a show of strength, the label's recent press conference announcing the signing of R&B singer

Omarion and detailing a packed summer release schedule, including a new release from Ross himself (fifth album *God Forgives, I Don't* arrives July 31), as well as the debut from fire-starter Meek Mill (*Dreams and Nightmares* is due Aug. 28), was attended by the heads of Def Jam and Warner Bros.

Online, the label's strength shines bright with in-house video production team Maybach Films consistently producing music videos, and a strong social media presence across the brand. "Ross is a trendsetter when it comes to the viral game," Warner Bros. VP of A&R Dallas Martin says. "We get content out there for all of the music that we do." And interaction on the Web translates offline. Wale's 2011 sophomore LP, *Ambition*, bowed at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and has sold 434,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan. According to Martin, the collective is in talks with "one of the biggest touring companies" to hit the road later this year. "We're pretty much the first brand that took it to this level with social media," he says. "I feel like we reaped all the benefits from it, just by how active everyone is and connected they are to their fans."  
—Steven J. Horowitz

## Reggie Rouse

VP OF URBAN PROGRAMMING, CBS RADIO  
PD, WVEE ATLANTA

TUNED IN

Reggie Rouse's small-market days are a thing of the past. A native of Hopkinsville, Ky., Rouse paid his dues at a series of stations, including WQKS Montgomery, Ala., building his reputation and his résumé with stops at WAEG and WAFJ Augusta, Ga., and WBLN New York. But it was at WPGC Washington, D.C., that he made his name, first as producer for the station's "Donnie Simpson Show," then as OM. In 2005, he moved to WVEE Atlanta, where he still serves as PD, and in 2007, he made the leap to VP of urban programming for CBS Radio. "Reggie isn't bound by an urban single versus an urban adult single," Capitol Records VP of urban promotion Craig Davis says. "He plays what works for his stations. Winning is the only way with Reggie."  
—Karinah Santiago



TYLER, THE CREATOR'S Odd Future collective broke out of Los Angeles in 2011.

## THE CITY OF ANGELS SPREADS ITS WINGS

# POWER CITY: LOS ANGELES

After nearly a decade of relative quiet (following a dominant and era-defining run in the '90s), Los Angeles is in the middle of an urban music resurgence led by a creative crop of young artists marked by their social engagement, commitment to touring and independent approach. And now, after building brands and buzz on their own, many of them are cashing in.

Last year, the Odd Future collective led by frontman Tyler, the Creator and including breakout singer/songwriter and R&B star Frank Ocean turned an online following into a distribution deal with Sony RED (in March, group compilation *The OF Tape Vol. 2* debuted at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 with 40,000 sold), as well as a development deal with Cartoon Network's *Adult Swim*, which resulted in hit show "Loiter Squad." Los Angeles producer Chauncey "Hit-Boy" Hollis signed with Kanye West's G.O.O.D. Music and delivered his breakout hit—Jay-Z and Kanye West's chart-topping "Ni\*\*as in Paris," which reached No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and No. 5 on the Billboard Hot 100.

And earlier this year, Los Angeles indie Top Dawg Entertainment inked a joint distribution deal with Interscope Records and Aftermath Entertainment for its flagship artist Kendrick Lamar and his Black Hippy crew (rappers Schoolboy Q, Jay Rock and Ab-Soul). "No one is waiting for the major labels or radio," Top Dawg Entertainment president Punch says. "The L.A. area needed an example to follow. When you're true to yourself, there are people all over the world that can relate to it. Our messages are spreading."  
—Steven J. Horowitz



RICK ROSS will deliver his artist album *God Forgives, I Don't* on July 31.



DJ KHALED (left) and RICK ROSS are part of Miami's hot local music scene.

## THE MAGIC CITY HAS THE SCENE SPELLBOUND

# POWER CITY: MIAMI

**M**iami is on fire. From the international reach of home-grown superstar Pitbull (20 million singles sold worldwide, according to RCA Records) to the single-slinging hit machine Flo Rida (seven top 10s on the Billboard Hot 100, including two No. 1s) to the street-rap dominance of local heavy hitters DJ Khaled and Rick Ross, the city's quickly become a hotbed of urban talent. Young Jeezy recorded the bulk of his latest album, *TM:103*, there, and Cash Money Records has been using the city, along with local recording studio Hit Factory, as its home base since Hurricane Katrina forced the company to relocate from New Orleans in 2005. According to Cash Money's Bryan "Birdman" Williams, the move has been a positive one. "The cars, the life, the clubs—this is like an entertainment city to me. It's great for music," he says.

And according to WEDR (99 Jamz) Miami PD Derrick Baker, the popularity of the city—particularly of local clubs like Mansion, Amnesia and LIV, which hosts one of the hottest hip-hop parties in the country every Sunday night—has in turn affected the music. "We've seen our core artists going in that dance, rhythmic direction. If you look at what Rihanna and Nicki Minaj have done, these aren't your typical mainstream cuts," he says. "A lot of that is the influence that they're getting from hanging out from soaking up some of that culture and vibe and international flavor of South Florida." —Steven J. Horowitz

## Jay Stevens

SENIOR VP OF PROGRAMMING, RADIO ONE

### MULTI-MARKET MASTER

"Jay really understands urban and urban AC," says Jerry Boulding, urban editor/department manager at AllAccess.com. As he should. After two decades as VP of programming at WPGC Washington, D.C., Stevens segued crosstown to Radio One in 2007, where he oversees 53 stations in 15 markets. Personifying the belief that knowledge has no color, Stevens began playing DJ when he was just 5 years old. His first full-time radio job out of college was with a top 40 station in Rochester, N.Y. The cornerstones of his programming philosophy: Play the hits and continually foster community involvement. "Music is the star—that's the foundation of any music radio station," Stevens told *Radio & Records* when he first joined Radio One. "Talent and community involvement come second. That makes the difference in how local your radio station is. Contesting and those types of things are just the icing on the cake. The reality is, if you are giving back to your community, your audience and listeners will be fiercely loyal to your radio station." —Gail Mitchell

## Tech N9ne

ARTIST; FOUNDER, STRANGE MUSIC

### UNDERGROUND KING

**M**otor-mouthed Missouri MC Tech N9ne might have surprised some casual rap watchers when his latest underground hip-hop opus, *All 6's & 7's*, debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard 200 last June with 56,000 copies sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan, despite lacking a radio-friendly single or major-label promotion. (The album has sold 200,000 to date.) But anyone paying attention to the 40-year-old rapper's public outreach—his fans call themselves "Technicians" and identify as both rock and rap supporters—and touring efforts for his Kansas City, Mo.-based independent Strange Music during the past decade understood Tech N9ne's ability to peddle his own unique brand. Founded by the rapper (born Aaron Dontez Yates) in 2000, Strange Music has given him a platform to release 10 albums in 11 years while accruing fresh talent like Krizz Kaliko, ¡Mayday! and Prozak. All three artists were featured on Tech N9ne's *Hostile Takeover 2012* tour, which features 90 U.S. performances in 99 days, has included rising Bad Boy/Interscope rapper Machine Gun Kelly and will conclude July 6.

The *Hostile Takeover* trek is the latest example of Tech N9ne's relentless road work (he played 82 shows in 85 days supporting *All 6's and 7's* in 2011)—and, with MGK onboard, another instance of the artist massaging his ties to commercial rap. Tech N9ne snagged guest appearances from B.o.B, Busta Rhymes, T-Pain and Snoop Dogg on *All 6's & 7's* and popped up on Lil Wayne's mega-selling *Tha Carter IV* last year with a flashy guest verse. Frequently awash in face paint and ignoring choruses, Tech N9ne is still a hip-hop oddball, but his relentless, highly respected drive has made him a profitable one. —Jason Lipshutz

## T.I. & Jason Geter

CO-FOUNDERS, GRAND HUSTLE ENTERTAINMENT

### RUBBERBAND MEN

**I**n April 2011, with its star rapper and co-CEO Clifford "T.I." Harris Jr. still serving a 10-month prison stint for violating terms of his probation stemming from gun charges, the Atlanta-based, Atlantic Records-distributed Grand Hustle was rumored to be in the process of self-combusting. "Grand Hustle is definitely not dismantled," co-CEO and T.I.'s longtime manager Jason Geter told *Billboard* at the time. "We unfortunately did downsize [the staff] and relocate. We're doing business, just in a lighter way, a smarter

way, due to our current situation." Fast-forward 14 months, and that situation has changed. Since T.I. was released from prison last August, Grand Hustle has issued Atlanta rapper B.o.B's sophomore album, *Strange Clouds*, which spawned three top 20 singles on the Billboard Hot 100 and has moved 164,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Meanwhile, T.I. previewed his eighth studio album, *Trouble Man*, due Sept. 4 on Grand Hustle/Atlantic, with the single "Love This Life," which has sold 93,000.

T.I., who partnered with management firm Hip Hop Since 1978 last year, remains admirably diversified, putting his energies into his upcoming album, his VH1 reality show ("T.I. and Tiny: The Family Hustle"), his next literary venture (his second novel through HarperCollins, "Trouble & Triumph: A Novel of Power & Beauty," arrives Sept. 18) and film opportunities (he was cast in the Jason Bateman comedy "Identity Thief" last month). And Grand Hustle continues to expand through a new deal with Houston rapper Trae Tha Truth's ABN Entertainment and upcoming projects from Australian MC Iggy Azalea, English rapper Chip and teen girl group OMG Girlz. "More than anything for Grand Hustle, we've just been rebuilding the brand and bringing in fresh young talent," says Geter, who has also been expanding his power base as an A&R consultant for Epic Records. —Jason Lipshutz

## Chang Weisberg

FOUNDER/CEO, GUERRILLA UNION

### INDEPENDENT ROAD WARRIOR

**H**e's the intrepid entrepreneur behind two of hip-hop's venerable festival franchises: Rock the Bells and Paid Dues. Chang Weisberg launched the former in 2004 and expanded it into a touring festival in 2007. And hip-hop heads have been treated to a hell of a ride ever since—from the final full Wu-Tang Clan reunion including Ol' Dirty Bastard to Lauryn Hill and other icons performing classic albums in their entirety to this year's headliners Missy Elliott, Timbaland and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony. Always part of the mix: a choice selection of new school by such up-and-comers as Wiz Khalifa, Yelawolf, Kendrick Lamar and J. Cole. Paid Dues wrapped its seventh annual



TECH N9NE debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard 200 with *All 6's & 7's*.

fest in April in San Bernardino, Calif., with co-headliner Wu-Tang Clan and brash newcomer Odd Future. Last year's slate featured Black Star, Immortal Technique (in its first appearance) and Dues co-founder Murs. Social activism also took center stage. Murs, Guerilla Union staffers and other festival artists participated in the first Paid Dues Habitat for Humanity project.

Despite his commitment to and solid reputation within the hip-hop community, Weisberg took hits from critical fans when Rock the Bells downsized from eight markets to four in 2010. Rolling with the punches, the indefatigable Weisberg teamed with Live Nation in 2011 to also take Bells on a House of Blues tour, promising 150 dates in 18 months. "Intimate versions of Rock the Bells need to exist to continue to build up the genre," Weisberg told the Hollywood Reporter last July. "So here's a classic example of indie promoter working with the machine in the best interest of good music."  
—Gail Mitchell

## Bryan "Birdman" Williams & Ronald "Slim" Williams

CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOS, CASH MONEY RECORDS GROUP

MONEY. POWER. RESPECT.

It's been 21 years since Bryan "Birdman" and Ronald "Slim" Williams founded Cash Money Records as an independent rap label in New Orleans, and 14 years since the Williams brothers signed their initial pressing and distribution deal with Universal for a reported \$30 million. In the years since, Cash Money Records Group has grown into an urban—and increasingly, pop—music powerhouse, racking up a staggering stack of chart stats on its way to nearly 54 million albums and more than 107 million singles sold in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. With a crop of young talent including Lil Wayne, Drake and Nicki Minaj in its stable, a rapidly expanding roster and significant international growth within sight, the Williams brothers are holding all of the cards, and they're playing for keeps (see story, page 18).  
—Benjamin Meadows-Ingram

## Doc Wynter

BAND MANAGER FOR URBAN/URBAN AC, CLEAR CHANNEL

THE PROFESSIONAL

With 24 years at Clear Channel under his belt, including 13 years in his current post, Doc Wynter is an urban radio vet. And in his time on the job, he's seen the format vastly evolve. "Early on, you would rarely ever hear a Southern-grown hip-hop song on the radio in New York," says Wynter, who plays a major role in roughly 40 stations nationwide, including WWPR New York. "Now the lines are blurred and nothing is out of the realm of possibility. The hits can come from anywhere." As can the listeners: "Our terrestrial stations are still our priorities, but our digital stations are of equal importance now," says Wynter, who also oversees the urban stations on Clear Channel's iHeartRadio.

Wynter "is a very, very sharp man," says Jerry Boulding, urban editor/department manager at AllAccess.com. "He recognizes trends, is really familiar with [Arbitron's Portable People Meter] and is deeply involved with Clear Channel's voice-tracking project, Premium Choice." Capitol Records VP of urban promotion Craig Davis adds, "Doc is a triple threat in the radio game. He has vast knowledge of every market in the country. He knows music and understands the artists very well."

He also understands something else. "We are keenly aware today that great relationships between the labels and the radio stations are crucial to our mutual survival," Wynter says.  
—Karinah Santiago



CHANG WEISBERG is the driving force that propels the Paid Dues and Rock the Bells fests.

## CLARENCE AVANT

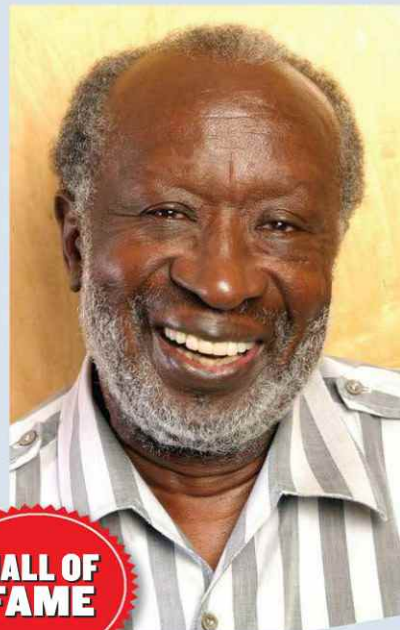
PRESIDENT, AVANT GARDE AND INTERIOR MUSIC

THE GODFATHER

"He's the perennial godfather of our business. Everyone in this business has been by Clarence's desk—if they're smart." That insightful comment from longtime friend Quincy Jones explains in a nutshell why Clarence Avant remains the go-to guy for executives both veteran (Doug Morris, Jimmy Iovine, Antonio "L.A." Reid) and rising (Jon Platt, Ethiopia Habtemariam) alike—not to mention artists and producers. At a time when mentoring has become a lost art in a shrinking industry chasing first-week sales, the spry 81-year-old stands out as a tireless advocate of opportunities for African-Americans.

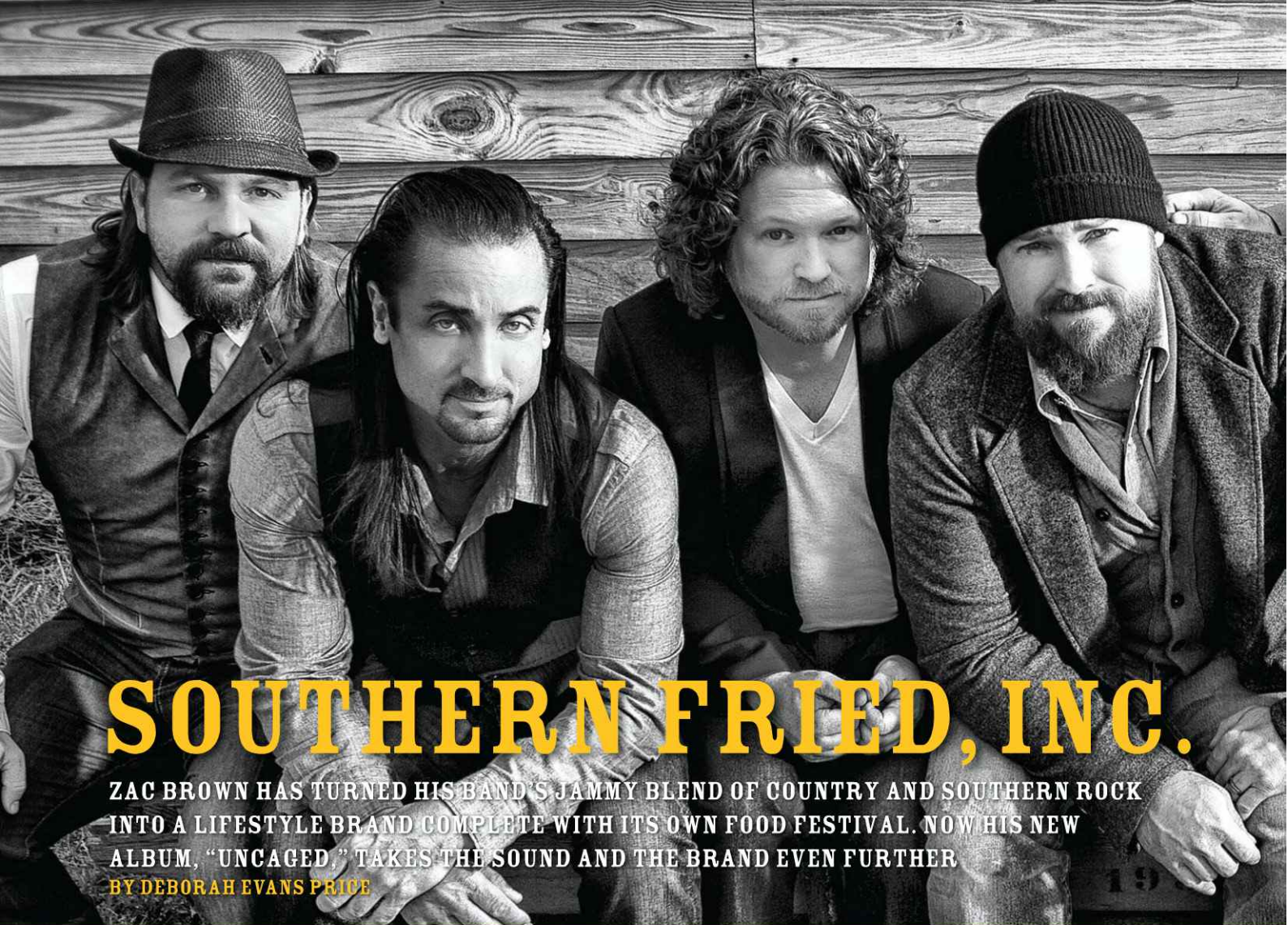
President of Avant Garde and Interior Music, administered worldwide by Universal Music Publishing Group, Avant shuns the spotlight. But his diverse career, entrepreneurial endeavors, social/political activism—and attendant relationships—speak volumes. As a manager early on, he represented '50s R&B singer Little Willie John ("Fever") and jazz producer Creed Taylor. He launched two record companies, Sussex and Tabu, cultivating rosters that included Bill Withers, Dennis Coffey and the S.O.S. Band. The lattermost act sparked a fortuitous introduction to emerging songwriting/production duo Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis. Avant played an instrumental role in the pair's success (as well as that of another hit-making duo, Reid and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds), offering lessons on everything from negotiating contracts to organizing budgets.

Named Motown chairman in 1993, Avant became the first African-American to serve on the International Management Board for PolyGram four years later. In-



HALL OF FAME

involved in the social and political arenas, his relationships range from the presidential (Bill Clinton, Barack Obama) to the entrepreneurial (Oprah Winfrey). Although well-known for not mincing words when voicing his opinion, Avant is a humble and funny man fueled by a passion for helping others. "Clarence is our deal-making Renaissance man. Our pope. Our rebel. Our consigliere," veteran label executive Sylvia Rhone told Billboard in 2006. "He's been a great mentor . . . creating a world of opportunity for others to follow."  
—Gail Mitchell



# SOUTHERN FRIED, INC.

ZAC BROWN HAS TURNED HIS BAND'S JAMMY BLEND OF COUNTRY AND SOUTHERN ROCK INTO A LIFESTYLE BRAND COMPLETE WITH ITS OWN FOOD FESTIVAL. NOW HIS NEW ALBUM, "UNCAGED," TAKES THE SOUND AND THE BRAND EVEN FURTHER.

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

**S**ince debuting on the national scene in 2008 with the chart-topping single "Chicken Fried," the Zac Brown Band has become an unstoppable juggernaut, placing eight No. 1 singles on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart and selling nearly 6 million albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The Georgia-based outfit looks to continue the momentum with the July 10 release of its third studio album, *Uncaged*, on Southern Ground/Atlantic.

"It's more than what I would have imagined," Zac Brown says of the band's success. "It's really fun to build things with people you care about. The team we have is a pretty amazing village of folks, and I'm really proud of our entire team."

That team has come to define the very essence of eclecticism, not only through the band's sound—a mix of country, folk, Southern rock, bluegrass and reggae played with an unfettered jam-band mentality—but also with the expansion of the Southern Ground brand, which includes Southern Grind (knives), Southern Hide (leather goods) and the record label Southern Ground Artists, whose roster (distributed through RED) includes Sonia Leigh, Levi Lowrey, the Wood Brothers, Blackberry Smoke, Nic Cowan and the Wheeler Boys. (Zac Brown Band is distributed through Atlantic.) The group's website also sells Southern Ground Grub, Brown's line of cooking sauces, rubs and cookbooks. Last year, the team expanded on ZBB's "eat-and-greats"—preshow dinners with fans at four stops—and launched the Southern Ground Music & Food Festival in Charleston, S.C. This year it adds a Nashville event Sept. 21-22 and returns to Charleston Oct. 20-21.

"We're able to add a lot of value to the music by making it a lifestyle," Southern Ground Artists GM Lynn Oliver says. "Everybody feels involved because Zac's favorite things—food, knives, leather goods, music, family, fellowship—all come together at a show. We have a lot of creativity under one roof at our office in Atlanta. It helps his record sales because people are just so interested in everything that he's working on. He's passionate about those things and wants to give back to his fans."

In addition to all the other Southern Ground ventures, Brown recently bought a studio in Nashville and has plans for a restaurant and bar in Music City. "He's a younger version of Jimmy Buffet and the Grateful Dead combined," says radio programmer John Shomby, OM for Max Media of Hampton Roads in Virginia Beach, Va.

"As an artist, if I don't feel like I'm growing, I feel like I'm dying," Brown says. "That's why I have a lot of different creative outlets. I have to keep those things going. They all service each other and there's 110 or so employees that are all my friends. We all believe in each other and help each

other and work hard every day to make it successful."

At the center of Brown's creative vortex is the music he creates with bandmates Chris Fryar (drums), Coy Bowles (guitar/organ), Daniel de los Reyes (percussion), Jimmy De Martini (violin/vocals), John Driskell Hopkins (bass/vocals) and Clay Cook (guitar/organ/mandolin/pedal steel/vocals).

Brown says the band took a different approach to recording *Uncaged*.

"We brought a lot of songs that were unfinished to the table," he says. "In previous years, we had been playing a lot of the songs live that we were going to put on the record. With this record, there was more collaborative arrangement because the songs hadn't been around as long. There are seven songs that nobody has ever heard us play before, and that's rare for us because we're usually out playing songs for a long time in our shows and then they go on the album."

This is the first album to include De los Reyes, the band's newest member. A third-generation musician, he has performed with Don Henley, Sting, Ricky Martin and Earth, Wind & Fire. "Danny is one of the best percussionists in the world," Brown says. "He's all over the record. It's like when you see a house and it's a beautiful house. Danny is the trim man. Until there's trim on the floor and ceilings, you didn't know it was unfinished. He really fills in all the little cracks—not too much, not to make you dizzy—but he adds a border around all the songs."

*Uncaged* features guest appearances by Amos Lee and Trombone Shorty. "I'm a huge fan of Amos Lee," Brown says. "It was an honor to have him sing a song with us. And Trombone Shorty is one of the best entertainers out there, period. He's an incredible horn player."

Trombone Shorty is featured on "Overnight," which Brown describes as "a straight-up R&B song." Lee can be heard on "Day That I Die." "It's about a musician's journey and the love for the music going till the day that you die with your guitar in your hands." As for lead single "The Wind," response has been strong. Released June 5, the track rises 26-24 in its third week on the Hot Country Songs chart. "I really like it. It kind of reminds me of a kick-ass Charlie Daniels song," says Adam Jeffries, PD at KJUG-AM-FM Tulare, Ca.

"It is very cool to hear a bluegrass kind of song on country radio," says Nate Deaton, GM at KRTY San Jose, Calif. "At this moment in country radio, Zac is probably the only act that could get away with it. Our listener response has been mixed, which is usually the sign of a hit."

Ginny Rogers, assistant PD/music director at WKLB Boston, says the single reflects the band's roots: "Their fusion of country, bluegrass and folk with a dash of rock is enormously popular. This song just takes the bluegrass element of the band and really pushes the envelope for country radio. I like it, but am still trying to figure out how it fits in our contemporary mix. It will work



The Zac Brown Band, from left: COLIN BOWLES, DANIEL DE LOS REYES, CHRIS FRYAR, ZAC BROWN, JIMMY DE MARTINI, JOHN DRISKELL HOPKINS and CLAY COOK

though, because it's the Zac Brown Band and he's at a point where he can take a few chances with his singles."

*Uncaged* is the Zac Brown Band's third studio album, following 2008's *The Foundation*, which has sold 2.9 million units, according to SoundScan, and 2010's *You Get What You Give*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 and has sold 1.5 million. The group also released its *Live From Bonnaroo* EP in 2009 and another live set, *Pass the Jar: Live From the Fabulous Fox Theater in Atlanta*, in 2010.

During street week, the group is set to promote the new record with appearances on "Late Show With David Letterman" (July 11), the "Today" summer concert series (July 13) and "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" (July 16), as well as NPR's "Morning Edition." There will also be a video on Spotify featuring Brown in the label's warehouse showing fans all the things that Southern Ground is producing. Following a June 7 Nashville performance at the Country Music Assn. Music Festival, fans leaving the stadium were given a flier touting the *Uncaged* street date. Southern Ground also gave away 10,000 Sonia Leigh CDs and 10,000 copies of a compilation featuring Southern Ground acts.

Brown is always mindful of opportunities to promote other Southern Ground acts and products, and the musician/entrepreneur also has another project dear to his heart, Camp Southern Ground. "We're building a pretty amazing healing place for kids who have developmental disorders," he says. "I've been a camper and a counselor and staff member at camp myself and we're working on building an amazing state-of-the-art camp in Georgia that will give lots and lots of kids a place to come."

WKLB's Rogers sees Brown's amalgam of interests providing longevity for the band. "Zac is a very smart businessman, and he is looking at all the things he's passionate about and using his celebrity status to put them in motion," she says. "Right from the start, Zac didn't do a meet-and-greet, he had an eat-and-greet. His love of food as well as music could be experienced at the shows."

"Zac is a fine human being and he lights up when you talk to him about kids and Camp Southern Ground," Rogers adds. "Zac isn't waiting until he 'peaks' to make a difference, he's building an empire now, which includes the charity element. [The Zac Brown Band] is more than just a band. It's a lifestyle of good music, good food and giving to our future, the children who perhaps need a little help through Camp Southern Ground."

## TEAM ZBB

### ALBUM TITLE

*Uncaged*

### LABEL

Southern Ground/Atlantic

### RELEASE DATE

July 10

### MANAGEMENT

Bernie Cahill, Will Ward, Matt Maher, Liz Norris and Kristina Tanner, ROAR

### PRODUCERS

Keith Stegall, Zac Brown  
A&R: Gregg Nadel, Atlantic Records

### PUBLISHING

Weimerhound Publishing/Southern  
Ground Artists (BMI)

### PUBLICITY

Elizabeth Lutz and Rebecca Shapiro,  
Shore Fire Media

### DIGITAL MARKETING

Jennie Smythe, Girilla Marketing

### LEGAL

J. Reid Hunter, Serling Rooks Ferrara  
McKoy & Worob

### BOOKING

John Huie, Scott Clayton and Matthew  
Morgan, Creative Artists Agency

### SITE

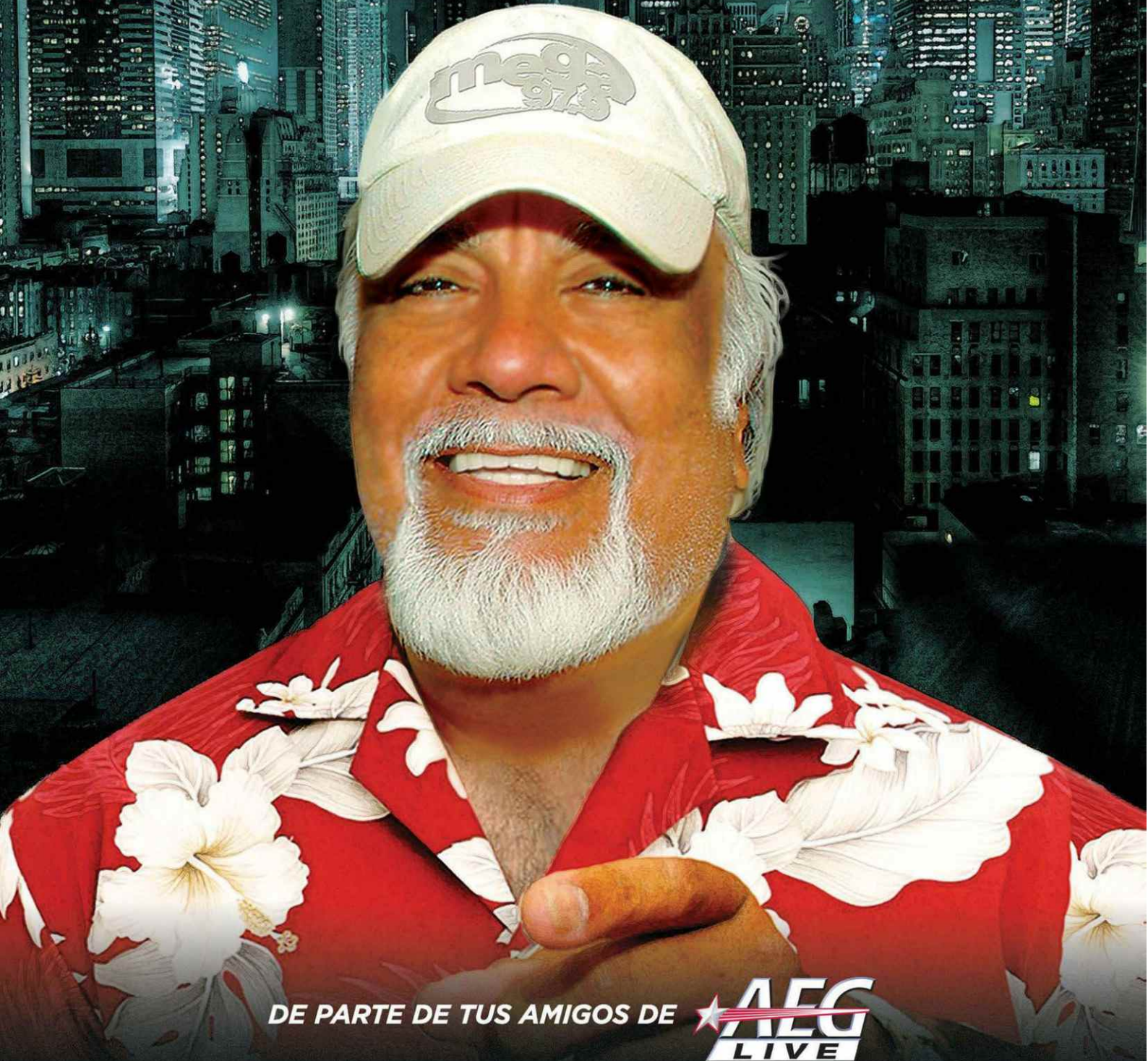
ZacBrownBand.com

### TWEETS

@zacbrownband

# POLITO VEGA

TU PASIÓN, DEDICACIÓN Y TALENTO TE HAN HECHO UNA  
LEYENDA DE LA RADIO. FELICIDADES POR 53 AÑOS DE MAGIA!



DE PARTE DE TUS AMIGOS DE 

# Polito Vega Never Goes Out Of Style: *El Rey!*

THE MEGA  
RADIO VET HAS  
SEEN MANY  
VOICES RISE  
AS HE, TOO,  
BROUGHT A  
FRESH TAKE TO  
THE AIRWAVES

BY LEILA COBO



Radio personality **POLITO VEGA** was feted by his peers at a 50th-anniversary celebration at New York's Madison Square Garden in 2009.

GUSTAVO CABALLERO/GETTY IMAGES

**T**he joke goes like this: Two friends are standing on Fifth Avenue in New York as Polito Vega and the Pope stroll by, talking together. One of them asks, "Who's that?" The other replies, "I don't know who the old guy with the white robe is, but he must be important if he's that friendly with Polito!"

Polito, as in Polito Vega, the longtime PD of WSKQ (Mega 97.9 FM) New York, the top-rated Spanish-language station in the country, and longtime host of his own weekend show, "Polito Vega y Su Equipo."

There are few more recognizable radio personalities in New York—likely in any language—and probably none that's been as celebrated for more than five decades on the air.

Three years ago, Vega sat atop a throne in a backstage dressing room at Madison Square Garden as a troupe of A-list talents—Enrique Iglesias, Laura Pausini, Luis Fonsi, among many others—got ready to perform in his honor. He was dressed in his traditional white trousers and white, starched shirt, his ever-present baseball cap replaced by a makeshift crown. A steady stream of visitors—label executives, managers, artists—filed past his throne, paying their respects in a scene that seemed out of a movie, but was fitting for the short man with the bigger-than-life persona and booming, recognizable tenor.

Vega was celebrating 50 years as an icon of Spanish-language radio in New York, and the scene—despite its comic and entertainment value—was no joke. Vega was a force to be reckoned with and was being honored with two massive shows at the Garden, one featuring just tropical acts—Vega's signature genre—and one featuring pop.

It was enough to call it a day, and Vega had actually done so. Five years before, he predicted he would retire by 2009. Instead, he seems to have gotten bigger with age.

On Sept. 30, Vega will celebrate 53 years on the air with what promoters SBS Entertainment and Felix Cabrera

**POLITO VEGA** on the TV show "El Club de la Juventud," which aired 1967-70 in New York.

have dubbed "El Megatón Mundial de Polito Vega" (The Polito Vega World Megathon), a show at the Citi Field stadium in Queens featuring performances by Gloria Estefan, Don Omar, Alejandro Sanz, Juanes, Ricardo Arjona, Daddy Yankee, Paulina Rubio and Tito "El Bambino," among many others.

The concert is an ambitious endeavor whose roster of performers is only possible thanks to the clout and good will Vega exerts as a proven tastemaker in Latin radio.

"He's a Latin music institution," says Gloria Estefan's husband, entrepreneur/producer Emilio Estefan, who's known Vega for years. "He's done so much for us—not just Gloria and I—but for the industry as a whole. As musicians, our first relationship with the industry is through radio programmers and DJs, and it's important to be thankful."

As part of WSKQ for 29 years, Vega's opinion has long counted—a lot—and given La Mega's ratings, countless artists, in some measure, owe their hits to him.

"Above all else, Polo is the personification of the word 'friend,'" says SBS president/chairman/CEO Raúl Alarcón Jr., who grew up listening to Vega on the air. "He is that rarest of rarities: a man who wields enormous power and yet has no enemies. He contributes integrity, knowledge, friendship, experience, judgment, expertise, notoriety, honesty, authenticity, visibility, camaraderie, veracity, enormous recognition and fun. Stated simply, SBS owes an enormous debt to Polo, and I am honored to call him my friend and colleague."

Many artists who will be performing at the Megaton show agree.

"It's a double honor to be part of this celebration because Polito is from my country. He's a radio great and I believe his understanding of music is deep and wise," Tito "El Bambino" says. "But most importantly, he's been my friend for many years."

Vega's influence also rings true for a new generation of singers.

"I grew up listening to Polito," young bachata singer Prince Royce says. "He was one of the first to support my music, and the first time I heard one of my songs on the air it was on his show."

Conversely, if Vega's opinion counts it's because he has the ratings to back it.

"He is New York City's most important radio personality," SBS Entertainment senior VP Lucas Piña says. "He's spent 50 uninterrupted years on the air. The audience has grown with him and he's been with them generation after generation. I think that out of respect, admiration, tenacity and perseverance, he is someone that deserves to be recognized by New York and by Latins in New York."

Tickets to the event, which seats approximately 35,000, range from \$39 to \$199.

The show will be promoted locally on SBS stations La Mega and WPAT (La Variedad 93.1 FM). Mega TV, SBS' TV channel, will also run Vega specials on its flagship shows, including "Paparazzi Magazine" and "Esta Noche Tu Night Con Alexis Valdés."

"No one has ever done something this ambitious in New York City," SBS COO Albert Rodríguez says. "We want to make it a yearly event."

Born in Hipólito Vega Torres in Puerto Rico, Vega came to New York harboring artistic ambitions. He wanted to become a singer, but in-



stead, he found his calling behind the mic inside a radio booth rather than on the stage. In New York, and indeed—most of the country—Spanish-language radio was a fledgling business where broadcasts had part-time slots on AM stations, and Vega's first job was as a DJ on a half-hour show called "Fiesta Time," which aired on now-defunct WEVD-AM.

He eventually landed at WBNX, where he met senior PD Raúl Alarcón Sr. It was the beginning of what would be a lifetime and life-changing relationship. Alarcón, who'd had radio stations in Cuba before fleeing after the revolution and had big ambitions of his own, would soon purchase his first station in the United States, launching

what would become SBS. Twenty-nine years ago, he hired Vega, who never left.

As for Vega, he developed his voice—the signature booming, resonant instrument that remains emblematic to this day—and a reputation for defending the music he was passionate about. Vega was the first to play a record by a Fania artist on the radio, and he still hosts "Polito Vega y Su Equipo," playing salsa on weekends from noon to 8 p.m.

"He has that rare and unique combination of personal assets and experiences that make him a veritable expert where Latin music is concerned," Alarcón Jr. says. "He has seen and heard it all, and he retains an uncanny ability to judge what's

good and what's lacking, despite the constant change in musical trends and the whims of an extremely fickle public. He has a golden ear that can't be fooled, and he is as unfailingly relevant today as he was 50 years ago."

In a Q&A with Billboard, Vega reflects on his lengthy career.

**In addition to being Mega's PD, you are also programming WPAT (93.1 FM) [now La Variedad]. How do you like this programming role?**

I've always assisted, but I never had the official programmer responsibility until a little over a year ago. I've seen pro- **continued on >>p42**



POLITO,  
TODAY WE CELEBRATE  
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
LATIN RADIO.

THANKS FOR YOUR  
CONTINUOUS SUPPORT!

¡ANDANDO!



MARC ANTHONY

A white signature scribble, likely representing Marc Anthony's signature, positioned below the name.

**POLITO VEGA** (second from right) rose through the SBS ranks with colleagues **MANOLO IGLESIAS, PUPI HURTADO** and **RAUL ALARCON SR.** (from left).

from >>p40 grammers come and go, and many are arrogant; many, not all. And I always thought, "If I were a programmer, I'd like to keep the cool attitude I have." It's my mother's DNA. Gentle. I can't stand obnoxious people. If an artist brings me a song, and the song doesn't have the quality to go on the air, it's not my place to say that. That would leave such a bad taste in the person's mouth. I always try to provide constructive criticism. And we're programming the music people want to hear. We're programming bachata and reggaetón. And the ratings are rising. Mega is doing very, very well. La Variedad is a romantic station, and we're trying to define its personality.

**You've been on the air 53 years. What's a major difference in how you do your job?**

Programming in New York is very difficult. Forty years ago, you were programming to Dominicans or Puerto Ricans. Now, it's full of Colombians and Peruvians, too. You need to program music that grabs their ear even if it's not from their own country. And La Mega is the best-known station in the country, and we get music from all over the world and it's very good music. But obviously you can't play everything. It's difficult.

**What's the trend today?**

Reggaetón is still strong and bachata is stronger than ever. Bachata **continued on >>p44**



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Pop singer **PAULINA RUBIO** was among the performers at **POLITO VEGA'S** anniversary concert in 2009.

**from >>p42** wasn't accepted in New York 15 years ago. You couldn't play back-to-back bachatas because they had strings, guitars. It wasn't an orchestra. But time went by and the genre got better, and new artists like Frank Reyes, El Torito, Romeo [Santos] came up. Now everybody likes bachata. It's made Santo Domingo fashionable, like merengue did before. Now it's all bachata and reggaeton, and once in a while some salsa. What I love is salsa, but I can't deny reality.

**I see more and more music in English on the Latin charts. How much are you playing on your stations?**

We compete here with stations like [WHTZ] Z100 and many of our listeners are Nuyorican, they're bilingual and comfortable in English and Spanish. So we're trying to pinpoint our format. We may play some English tracks, but I don't have any English music in La Mega. Zero. It's a purely tropical station. But we experiment on Amor.

**Talk about your relationship with SBS.**

I started in radio with Raul Alarcón Sr. I was trying to get a job at WVNX at the same time he arrived from Cuba and went to see the owner of the station. And he knew so much to begin with, he was hired right away, and I came in about the same time. There were only two Spanish-language stations at the time, and they were both AM and part-time. Alarcón began to do jingles and contests on that station, and he would tell me

that one day he'd have an FM station. He ended up having 24 of them. And when he died, his son, Raulito, stayed with the company, and our relationship remains unchanged.

**When was the first time you sat behind a microphone?**

That was around 1962 or 1963. The station was a part-time station but then it went to 24 hours, and they asked me to do the midnight to 6 a.m. shift. And I was so eager, I felt I'd gone to heaven because I could program and I had my own format and the show was a hit. That's when I first got a taste of what it felt like to have the liberty to speak and express myself in the same way I do now.

**You've had such a long career, but is there a day or moment that's particularly memorable?**

When I was crowned "King of Radio" for the first time. [Late promoter] Ralph Mercado and two or three other promoters produced this huge dance and they wanted to tie it to a gimmick. They said, "You're the favorite, so we're going to include you on the promotional material and crown you." It was a beautiful day and I was crowned the king of New York radio. It was a huge moment. And Ralph Mercado remained my friend until he died. But my biggest ambition was that Mega get the respect it deserves. And it has. It's the top station in the country.



RUBIO: GUSTAVO CABALLERO/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: ALBERTO TAMARGO/STUDIOS.COM

To: Polito,

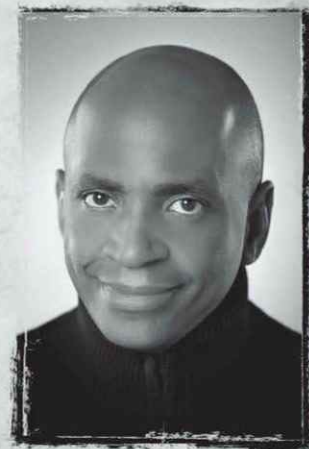
Congratulations on your amazing career in the music business and thank you for being a dear friend for many years.

I wish you much more success, health and happiness.

Sincerely,

Sergio George

(President of Top Stop Music)





**DARK KNIGHT**  
Twin Shadow steps slowly into the light

46



**HITS GONE 'WILD'**  
Flo Rida talks smash singles, new release

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**RESURRECTION**  
P.O.D. returns after management reboot

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**'ROCK' ROCKS**  
'80s soundtrack soars as film fizzles

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**DANCING ON MY OWN**  
Toni Braxton steps out with DIY releases

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# MUSIC

RAP BY KEITH MURPHY

## GOT IT GOOD

Nas opens up about divorce and other issues on his 10th album, "Life Is Good"

Nearly a decade ago, celebrated hip-hop lyricist Nasir "Nas" Jones discovered Marvin Gaye's divorce masterpiece, *Here, My Dear*. Detailing the late soul legend's crumbling marriage—and literally recorded as part of its financial settlement—the 1978 double album was a raw, personal portrait of love, jealousy, adultery and bitter courtroom battles. "What could I do, the judge said/She got to keep on living the way she customized to," a defeated Gaye sung on the little-known LP, which sold poorly upon its initial release but has picked up critical acclaim in the decades since then.

Nas became intrigued by the honesty and genius of Gaye's work. "I thought *Here, My Dear* was brave, beautiful, honest, scary and daring," he says. "I remember putting several artists on to it, from Maxwell to Jay-Z. I couldn't imagine what Marvin was going through when he was recording it. And I couldn't imagine me being in a similar position, years later."

It's tempting to describe Nas' 10th studio album, *Life Is Good*, as an updated, hip-hop version of *Here, My Dear*. Early promotion for the highly anticipated July 17 release found the rapper sharing intimate details of his 2009 divorce from R&B vixen Kelis, who was seven months pregnant at the time. "She took her stuff out the house and left her green wedding dress, and that was all she left," he recalled of the split during an interview with VH1's "Behind the Music."

In early June, Def Jam revealed *Life Is Good*'s cover photograph: a somber Nas—wearing a white, unbuttoned suit—seated with the aforementioned green dress draped over his knee. An online video announcing the new album blasted headlines of the couple's tumultuous divorce and Nas' tax troubles, as well as negative criticism

of his most recent work. It was the kind of naked vulnerability rarely exhibited in the alpha male world of rap.

"When I started working on the record, I tried to avoid it," the usually private Nas says of the personal tone on *Life Is Good*, which features glimpses of a marriage falling apart, followed by redemption. "The timing was just calling for me to not avoid all the shit that was going on out there. It was like a 10,000-ton gorilla in the room watching me. This is the way I got it off of my chest. This album talks about life, love and money. It talks about the fact that marriage is expensive. *Life Is Good* represents the most beautiful, dramatic and heavy moments in my life."

In hip-hop circles the album is being viewed as the grizzled bookend to Nas' game-changing 1994 debut, *Illmatic*—a work held up as the standard for all New York rap releases to follow. *Life Is Good* avoids the ham-handed political statements of *Hip-Hop Is Dead* (2006) and *Untitled* (2008), instead addressing more universal topics. Nas was ready to open up.

"When I sat down with [producers] No I.D. and Salaam [Remi] and originally told them what I wanted to do, we felt like we were waking up a certain fan that doesn't buy rap anymore," Nas recalls. "Our goal on the album was to just do what's real. No I.D. has been married twice. Swizz [Beatz] has also been married twice and has gone through baby-mama drama. So the conversation between all of us was great."

The album's personal moments are indeed startling. "Did counseling, couldn't force you to stay," Nas raps on the closer, "Bye Baby," on which the MC finally finds closure to his turbulent union with Kelis. "We was friends, we had it all/Reason that you don't trust men, that was your daddy's



The usually private NAS discusses his divorce from singer Kelis on his new album.

fault/He in the grave, let it go, he no longer living."

"We take Nas' albums very seriously," Def Jam president Joie Manda says. "The fact that he's as secure in himself as a man, that he can be this honest, says a lot." As for rumors that *Life Is Good* marks Nas' final release on Def Jam, Manda dismisses such talk. "Definitely not . . . we are going

to continue to be in the Nas business."

And the business of Nas is picking up. There's a three-week June/July European tour and a headlining slot on the Rock the Bells festival, as well as appearances on "The Colbert Report," "Late Show With David Letterman," "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and BET's "106 & Park."

But platinum albums and interna-

tional sellout treks aren't all there is to life. A more mature Nas is finding happiness in the little things that people often take for granted.

"Success is my 3-year-old son having full-on conversations with me," Nas says. "This is coming from the guy that first told you 'life's a bitch.' I just enjoy life now. I just enjoy every morning I get to wake up." ■■■

Fired up for summer: Colombian band **Bomba Estereo** will tour the United States, including **Club Helsinki** in Hudson, N.Y. (July 21), the **Howard Theatre** in Washington, D.C. (July 25) and **World Cafe Live** in Philadelphia (July 27), as well as numerous shows in California, such as San Francisco's **Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival** (Aug. 10-12)... Sure to thrill: Canadian electro-pop band **Dragonette** gears up for a North American tour on July 1, with a free show at **Mississauga (Ontario) Celebration Square** for Canada Day. The three-piece group will also appear during the two-week **Ottawa Blues Festival** (July 5) and the three-day **Summer Playland Festival** in Vancouver (July 6-8). Among the band's U.S. dates: the **Paradise Rock Club** in Boston (Sept. 14) and the **Triple Rock Social Club** in Minneapolis (Sept. 19)... As the crowd flies: Americana group **Old Crow Medicine Show** will march through a U.S. tour, first stopping at the **ROMP: Bluegrass Roots & Branches Festival** in Owensboro, Ky. (June 28-30), then moving on to the **Palace Theater** in Louisville, Ky. (July 26), the **Taft Theatre** in Cincinnati (July 27), the **9:30 Club** in Washington D.C. (Aug. 2-3) and a New York show at Central Park's **SummerStage** (Aug. 6)... A lovely tour: **Wilco** will perform as part of **Big Sky Brewery's** concert series in Missoula, Mont. (June 28), the scenic **Bayfront Festival Park** in Duluth, Minn. (July 1), a free show at the **Saturday in the Park Festival** in Sioux City, Iowa (July 7), the **Forecastle Festival** in Louisville, Ky. (July 13-15) and Prospect Park's **Celebrate Brooklyn!** festival (July 23-24)... Long summer haul: New Jersey's **the Gaslight Anthem** will play WKRL Syracuse, N.Y.'s **K-Rockathon Fair** (July 29), travel overseas for shows in Belgium (Aug. 16-18) and the United Kingdom (Aug. 24-26), then return stateside for **Riot Fest** in Chicago (Sept. 14-16) and opening for **Rise Against** in Denver (Sept. 24-25).

—Gregory Gondek

## MUSIC

ROCK BY JUSTIN JACOBS

## Complicated Shadow

For his sophomore set, art rocker Twin Shadow gets a different kind of billboard hit

Twin Shadow premiered the video for "Five Seconds," the first single off second album *Confess*, in the biggest way possible—on a billboard in the middle of Times Square.

On June 20, art promotion company Artists Wanted took over the most famous intersection in New York, filling its historic billboards with different art and videos, including the Twin Shadows clip. As for the artist himself, Twin Shadow (aka George Lewis Jr.) was unaware of his video's premiere. Not that he didn't care; his mind simply focused on the art, not its delivery. "Sometimes you just say 'yes' and don't ask questions," he says.

Lewis' team at 4AD has worked to ensure he says "yes" to the right things leading up to the July 10 release of *Confess*. The tactic has been to give fans just a taste of the new set by concentrating on a solitary song. While many acts release track after track leading up to a new album, "we've had all this success from literally putting one song out there," 4AD's U.S. GM Nabil Ayers says. "Radio picked it up. It went to No. 1 on [blog] Hype Machine. All the good things we wanted to happen, happened right away."

When Lewis released his Twin Shadow debut, 2010's *Forget*, the album was a redemptive move. In the early 2000s, he'd sung for Boston punk band Mad Man Films. When that chapter closed, a new location beckoned. "I provoked a bunch of people who were really bored with Boston to move to New York together," he says. "But when you move to a new place with your old friends, it's just not the same anymore."

His new life didn't click, and by the time he moved to Berlin, he had all but given up on music. "I was almost look-

ing down on it," Lewis says. "I was lost in a bad way."

However, an informal meeting with an online admirer, Eddie Bezael, changed everything. "He'd heard a few songs on my Myspace page and wanted to help me make music," Lewis recalls. "So I lied and said I had a bunch of songs." Bezael became his manager.

Lewis returned to New York that week, wrote all new music and recruited some musician friends for what he now calls "a disaster," noting that he "just pissed away a bunch of money and time." Out of the experience came a new identity, however, and Twin Shadow was born.

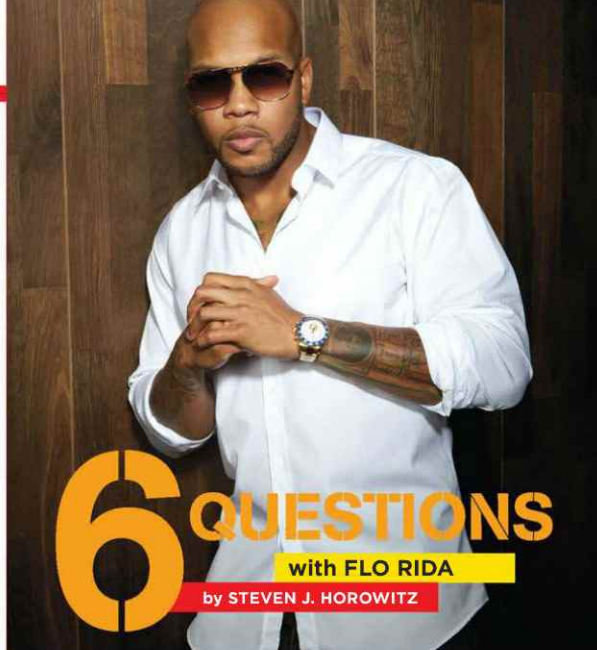
He set to work by himself on *Forget*, a dark, shadowy collection of pop songs made with just the production help of Chris Taylor, bassist for Brooklyn band Grizzly Bear. Finally, Lewis found his niche. The record was an indie hit.

To create *Confess*, Lewis went to Los Angeles, where he joined with keyboardist Wynne Bennett at a proper studio. Twin Shadow was no longer a bedroom pop project. Largely inspired by long, fast rides on his motorcycle, *Confess* is a more aggressive and upbeat record than *Forget*, which has sold 24,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It sounds brighter while maintaining Twin Shadow's dark edge. Despite the more accessible sound, Ayers is optimistic it won't "jilt the fan base. We don't want to remove him completely from his world."

Still, the hope is to push Twin Shadow past "indie pop sensation."

"There's a difference between playing [New York club] Piano's and playing on 'Good Morning America,'" Ayers says. "We don't want to take any shortcuts." ■■■

One of TWIN SHADOW'S videos debuted on a video screen in Times Square.

6 QUESTIONS  
with FLO RIDA  
by STEVEN J. HOROWITZ

Flo Rida isn't so concerned with album sales. With 2010's *Only One Flo (Part 1)* (Poe Boy/Atlantic), the Carol City, Fla., native scored Billboard Hot 100 hits with "Club Can't Handle Me," featuring David Guetta (No. 9; 2.9 million sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan), and the Akon-assisted "Who Dat Girl" (No. 29; 868,000). Yet the album stalled on the Billboard 200, debuting at No. 107 with 11,000 sold.

But for fourth album *Wild Ones* (Poe Boy/Atlantic), the 32-year-old (born Tramarc Dillard) focused more on crafting nine guaranteed smashes. So far, Flo Rida has produced one of his biggest hits with the Sia-assisted title track, which peaked at No. 5 on the Hot 100 and has sold 2.8 million copies. This summer, he'll tour with B.o.B and Cee Lo Green on the R You on the List trek. Here, Flo, who hopes to shoot a video for every track on the LP, discusses why he thinks he's still a growing artist and why he considers *Wild Ones* his version of *Thriller*.

**1 You have huge success with singles, but *Only One Flo (Part 1)* underperformed. Why did it fail to connect?**

For the most part, I'm still a growing artist. I definitely have proven myself as far as coming back with big records every time. It's a great thing because I'm given the chance to really capitalize on all the different places my music has reached out to. You can't just focus on one part of the world when it comes down to the music. You have to focus on everything and have a strategy. This time around, if someone just wants to buy singles versus the album, you have to wind up buying the album because each record is huge.

**2 Why do you feel you're still a growing artist?**

Because a lot of people, they reach a plateau. When I say "growing," I mean "dreaming." When you lose the dream, everything stops. I always want to take my fans on a new journey. I'm a big fan of OutKast, and they always take their fans on a new journey. You never want to

stop growing. I'm a guy who really loves and feels very passionate about music. You don't want to get to a level where you think, "This is big." I'm the kind of guy who looks forward to taking my music to different heights. Every album, I take my music to different heights. That's why I'm still growing.

**3 *Wild Ones* has nine tracks. Why not make it longer?**

When you think of classic albums like *Thriller*, it has only eight or nine [songs]. I realized that in trying to shoot videos for every record, if you have 16 [tracks], you can't shoot every video. So this time, I wanted to make sure that every [song] has a video. That's why we kept the number down.

**4 Do you care more about the album's success or the singles that are on it?**

My concern really, with six years in the game, is to put a smile on people's faces. I have a charity, Dream for Kids. I love when I'm at a concert and I see people really enjoying themselves. At this point, I'm good financially with everything and I love to go out and keep my fans happy.

**5 Are there any differences between the amount of people who come to shows in the United States versus overseas?**

As far as myself, I just did a show recently in London. It was like 100,000 people. They've got cricket and soccer stadiums versus the football stadiums in the States. That's a major difference, in the amount of people who come out.

**6 How will this album expand the Flo Rida brand?**

Prior to the album even dropping, it's taken me to the next level. So far, there's no pressure, nothing like that. I got more of them in the bag. Honestly, I got so many records in the bag that I can just choose one. People are big fans. Radio loves my music. I just can't wait for the album to drop. I want people to party it up. ■■■

# AESOP'S FABLE

Rapper Aesop Rock overcomes struggles to release powerhouse album

**E**nigmatic underground rapper Aesop Rock is about to release one of the best albums of his career, and he's been rolling with the punches. He didn't expect that a temporary move back to San Francisco from his hometown of New York would become permanent. He didn't expect that his label, Def Jux, would close "indefinitely." He didn't expect that his latest solo album, *Skelethon*, would take five years to record. And he certainly didn't expect to end up as its sole producer.

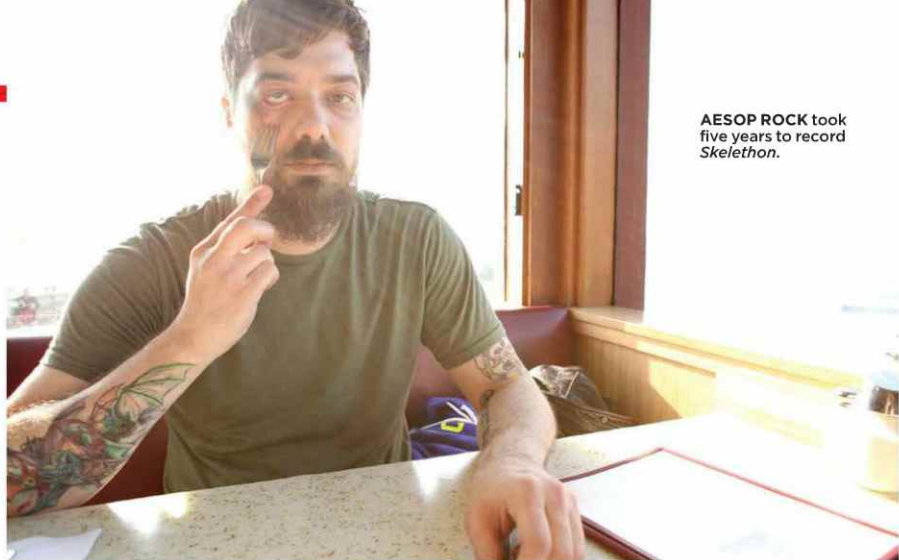
But it's all good for Aesop Rock, who lives by a strong set of beliefs. Among them: Do what feels right. Fight what feels wrong. Struggle with what feels bad. Let it take as long as it needs to.

Struggle is all over *Skelethon*, due July 10—from the rapper's own unnerving, doomsday beats to his introspectively scathing lyrics. It's a highly anticipated record for Aesop Rock, who created the album without any help. "I wanted to say, 'I wrote and produced this record myself,'" he says. "Maybe this is what I needed after

such a long time gone. Maybe it was something to prove—the realest way to express myself."

Aesop Rock has been uniquely expressing himself for years. With 2001's *Labor Days*, he became the Def Jux poster child of underground East Coast hip-hop—grungy, basement beats and skewed, stream-of-consciousness points of view. But after *None Shall Pass* in 2007, he took a step back, producing a collaboration between rappers Murs and Slug, forming rap group Hail Mary Mallon, working with Kimya Dawson and programming tracks for Dirty Ghosts. "[Side projects] are less pressure than a solo record," he says. "And touring, for me, is fun on one level, but I'm an anti-social dude. It was nice to put that spotlight off me for some time."

He never stopped writing original material. In his free time, he'd toy with lyrics and beats, he says, and send them to longtime co-producer Blockhead. Living on opposite coasts, however, the erstwhile collaborators never found a groove.



AESOP ROCK took five years to record *Skelethon*.

"It started to feel difficult," Aesop Rock recalls. "So at some point in the last two years, I just gathered what I had and focused on finishing it [on my own]."

The process also helped him purge himself of the previous years' struggles, including the death of his best friend, and led to music with striking depth. When he raps the couplet, "I have been completely unable to maintain any semblance of relationship on any level/I have been a bastard to the people who have actively attempted to deliver me from peril," in album closer "Gopher Guts," the emotional clarity is jarring.

While the album took shape, Aesop Rock intentionally held off signing with a new label until the record was all but finished. "The best labels are the ones where I don't know they exist while I make my music," he says.

When the day came, the rapper went with longtime associates at Rhymesayers. Label president/CEO Brent "Siddiq" Sayers says, "We were on Instant Message late one night and the topic just came up. It was that simple."

"It was 4 or 5 a.m., and he was the only one up," Aesop Rock says with a laugh.

That the artist is fiercely nocturnal

shouldn't come as a surprise, especially judging by the music of *Skelethon*. Its densely knotted, esoteric wordplay vocalized over crackling, dirty, live drum-kit beats is perfect material for late-night headphone listening.

With first single "Zero Dark Thirty," Sayers says he's excited to rebuild any momentum lost in the last five years. True fans, of course, haven't forgotten. "I get recognized at the local doughnut shop and get free doughnuts," Aesop Rock says. "That's the best thing about being me. It should be a life goal for everyone." ■■■

# Still 'Alive'

Hard-rock band P.O.D. resurrects with sixth album after lengthy hiatus

**W**hen you're a member of a '90s/early '00s hard-rock band like P.O.D., finding your footing in 2012 can be tricky.

But the San Diego-based group, which exploded into mainstream consciousness through radio hits and caller vote-in shows like MTV's "Total Request Live," has always been a proponent of fan outreach. "[Before the Internet] I'd sit at the merch table with something called the Warrior List," frontman Sonny Sandoval says, describing how he'd collect contact information from fans. "That was our Internet."

After a five-and-a-half year hiatus, a complete upheaval of its management in 2010 and a record deal on the rock-oriented Razor & Tie label, the group is releasing its sixth studio album, *Murdered Love*, on July 10.

The album was recorded at NRG Studios in West Hollywood with producer Howard Benson. Known for his work with "American Idol" alums like Kelly Clarkson and Chris Daughtry, Benson's earliest success came as producer of P.O.D.'s 1999 platinum *The Fundamental Elements of Southtown*, then the 2001 smash *Satellite* (3.2 million sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan). "We're kind of like his illegitimate children" Sandoval says.

Razor & Tie senior VP of marketing John Franck feels a charge coming from the new work. "It's [three] singles deep, and we're going to be working this album for the next 18 months," Franck says. "This is a band that had multiformat, culture-changing hits. The [fourth single] is 'Beautiful,' which we feel could potentially be another culture-changing record."

Early singles "On Fire" and "Eyez" didn't gain traction, but "Lost in Forever" is No. 12 on Billboard's Active Rock chart. P.O.D.'s biggest hits—"Youth of the Nation" and "Alive" off *Satellite*—both went top five on the Alternative and Active Rock lists and reached Nos.



Razor & Tie plans to "heavily license" the new P.O.D. album.

28 and 41, respectively, on the Billboard Hot 100.

Though the band was an arbiter of a shift-change in popular rock—namely, that a Christian-leaning act can make heavy music—the culture of the industry has evolved since the group's downtime started in 2008. The Internet is a more powerful entity and artists in other genres are becoming more prolific through single-track

freebies distributed on Twitter and Tumblr. It could make the pace at which P.O.D. is releasing singles seem sluggish, with "Beautiful" slated for August and its follow-up not coming until winter.

Manager Sarah Deibel of Career Artist Management knows that's how rock radio works, though. "Active rock radio is still a format," she says. "Lost in Forever" went to radio in April... [it's] jumping up higher on the charts now, but it's a slow climb. We'll keep pushing it. We'll keep doing radio. We'll keep doing acoustic in-studios."

Team P.O.D. understands that a legion of marketing solutions helps bolster awareness. It's not just radio appearances, preorder bundles and connecting with fans through Instagram and Twitter. The team knows licensing is paramount to boosting the group's profile and reaching new audiences.

"We're going to heavily license this album," Franck says. Early synchs include "Higher" during coverage of the 2012 NFL draft and "West Coast Rock Steady" on ESPN's "SportsCenter." "Beautiful" will appear on Comedy Central's "Workaholics" in tandem with the album's release.

For the band's fans, however, the live show is what's most important. P.O.D.—which includes guitarist Marcos Curiel, bassist Traa Daniels and drummer Wuv Bernardo—will play a few one-off gigs starting June 30, including an album-release show at the Roxy in Hollywood. August and September will be spent headlining a side stage on metal-leaning touring festival Uproar. While happy to connect with fans through social media, Sandoval knows how important these concerts can be.

"When we play shows, we're cheek to cheek with the kids who love our music," he says. "Someone turns 14 every day. They've got to experience it for themselves." ■■■

# ALBUMS

## ROCK

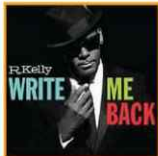
### THE FLAMING LIPS

**The Flaming Lips and Heady Fwends**

**Producers:** *The Flaming Lips, Dave Fridmann*  
*Lovely Sorts of Death/*  
*Warner Bros.*

**Release Date:** June 26

Originally released in April as a Record Store Day vinyl exclusive, *The Flaming Lips and Heady Fwends* offers pretty much what its title suggests: typically off-kilter collaborations between the veteran Oklahoma City psych-pop band and such far-flung pals as Nick Cave, Yoko Ono and Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeros. (One bummer: "I Don't Want You to Die," featuring Coldplay's Chris Martin, didn't survive the transition to this wide-release version of the album.) Like most Lips releases, the result is something of a mixed bag. The Neon Indian hookup "Is David Bowie Dying?," for instance, feels like a fuzzed-out drum loop in search of a song. But many of *Fwends'* more unlikely pairings—including the Bon Iver-assisted "Ashes in the Air" and "2012 (You Must Be Upgraded)," with Ke\$ha and Biz Markie—demonstrate the tune craft at work beneath the Lips' ultra-zany exterior. And their 10-minute version of "The First



### R. KELLY

**Write Me Back**

**Producer:** *R. Kelly*  
*RCA Records*

**Release Date:** June 26

R. Kelly's penchant for doing things in

chapters (cue "Trapped in the Closet") remains a resonating factor in his work. *Write Me Back* is the latest example. Whereas Kelly's 2010 *Love Letter* paid homage to '50/'60s icons like Sam Cooke and Jackie Wilson, follow-up chapter *Write Me Back* oozes with '70s/'80s R&B/soul: Think Marvin Gaye, Teddy Pendergrass and Barry White. Embracing love—his favorite subject—Kelly jumps straight to the heart of the matter on the vibrant, rumba-esque opener "Love Is." The teasing "Feelin' Single" finds Kelly at his stepping best before he shifts into confessional mode on "When a Man Lies." Additional winners: harmony-driven apology song "Clipped Wings," the earnest "Believe in Me" and the set's hit first single, "Share My Love." Kelly calls to mind R&B masterminds Smokey Robinson and the Isley Brothers, respectively, on "Fool for You" and "Green Light." However, the singer/songwriter/producer loses a bit of traction when he dabbles in rock'n'roll on "All Rounds on Me" and "Party Jumpin'." But those minor missteps don't detract from the fact that *Write Me Back* marks another winning phase in Kelly's long-running career—and underscores why the title "King of R&B" is no misnomer.—GM



songs written by Donnie. The record goes nowhere and the boys grow up to be farmers, but they took a shot at a dream, however naïve that shot may have been. *Dreamin' Wild* is a unique piece of outsider art influenced by commercial music. A balance of the tender—you might swear their ballad "Dream Full of Dreams" was played at your prom—and the torrid, Donnie presents an impressive absorption of the Commodores, Steve Miller, Elton John and Bread that extends beyond his writing and impressive guitar chops to include production and mixing. *Dreamin' Wild* is the home run hit on a musical "Field of Dreams."—PG

## JAZZ

### RAVI COLTRANE

**Spirit Fiction**

**Producers:** *Ravi Coltrane,*  
*Joe Lovano*

*Blue Note Records*

**Release Date:** June 19

For his first album on Blue Note, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane employs two bands—his current quartet and a quintet of older musicians who appeared on second album *From the Round Box* (2000). So it's remarkable that *Spirit Fiction* is as cohesive as it is, with both ensembles taking turns on heavily improvised numbers and meditative compositions. The performances emphasize communicative powers, opening with "Roads Cross," a free interaction between Coltrane and pianist Luis Perdomo that blossoms once bassist Drew Gress and drummer E.J. Strickland provide solid footing. The striking ballad "The Change, My Girl" features the same band playing assuredly with a level of control one might associate with the quintet of trumpeter Ralph Alessi, pianist Geri Allen, bassist James Genus and drummer Eric Harland. Not surprisingly, the veteran group pushes Coltrane into exploratory territory as well. Compositionally, Coltrane favors themes that recall the post-modal styles of father John, Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock. His modern twist is in their use: keeping themes short and improvisations long.—PG

Time Ever I Saw Your Face," with Erykah Badu on freak-soul vocal duty, reminds you of what a sentimental softie Wayne Coyne can be.—MW

### THE DIRTY HEADS

**Cabin by the Sea**

**Producers:** *Mario C, Lewis Richards*  
*Five Seven Music*

**Release Date:** June 19

There are any number of reasons why it took the Dirty Heads four years to deliver their sophomore album, *Cabin by the Sea*. And there's a certain Afroman hit whose title offers a plausible reason. Suffice it to say, the Southern California quintet hasn't changed course too much from 2008's *Any Port in a Storm*, as it's still celebrating the explicit joys of weed, whiskey, wine and music. The Dirty Heads declare them to be "eternity" on the new album's most fully realized jam, "Hipster." Relaxed reggae grooves drive most of the set's 15 tracks, which sound generally tighter and more polished than their predecessors. But "Smoke Rings," featuring Del the Funky Homosapien, is a decidedly non-chill rager, and "Disguise" marries hip-hop cadence with mariachi horns. Sublime's Rome Ramirez guests on the electro-flavored, fast-flowing "Mongo Push," while "Burn by Myself" bemoans the lack of a partner in puff amid laid-back folk stylings and rich vocal harmonies. All of that makes this *Cabin by the Sea* a hospitable joint for an overdue hang with the Dirty Heads.—GG

## NEW & NOTEWORTHY

### DONNIE & JOE EMERSON

**Dreamin' Wild**

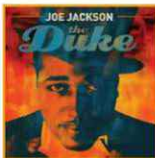
**Producers:** *Donnie Emerson,*  
*Matt Sullivan*

*Light in the Attic Records*

**Release Date:** June 26

Donnie & Joe Emerson's lone album, *Dreamin' Wild*, a self-released eight-song collection from 1979 that has gained cult

status, gets its first national release from the label behind reissues of Betty Davis, Rodrigouez and the subgenre of country funk. The Emersons' story belongs in a movie: Living remotely 70 miles northwest of Spokane, Wash., their father finances a \$100,000 home studio on their farm for the teenage brothers to rehearse, record and perform



### JOE JACKSON

**The Duke**

**Producer:** *Joe Jackson*  
*Razor & Tie*

**Release Date:** June 26

Like his fellow ex-new waver Elvis

Costello, Joe Jackson has spent much of the past three decades transitioning from angry young man to mellow old crooner. It's an evolution that feels complete with *The Duke*, a warmhearted tribute to big-band giant Duke Ellington on which Jackson tackles such indelible standards as "Caravan," "Take the A Train" and "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)" with help from a varied assortment of peers, including Steve Vai, Sharon Jones and Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson of the Roots. For "It Don't Mean a Thing" he's joined by Iggy Pop, who knows something himself about moving between aggression and ease. Jackson has said he intentionally gave himself wide stylistic latitude in reinterpreting the material on *The Duke*, and indeed several cuts take on appealingly unexpected flavors, as in a samba-scented "I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good)" and "I'm Beginning to See the Light," the latter of which could pass for something by U.K. art-pop crew Scritti Politti. Jackson may be tending to tradition, but he's doing it his way.—MW



### THE OFFSPRING

**Days Go By**

**Producer:** *Bob Rock*  
*Columbia Records*

**Release Date:** June 26

Two decades after the lift-off

*Ignition* and 18 years following the breakthrough of *Smash*, it's time to classify the Offspring as something more than a punk band. The quartet's sound was actually more diversified than that genre from the get-go, and recent sessions with producers like Brendan O'Brien and Bob Rock have only broadened the group's reach while honing its ferocity—to particularly good effect on its latest album, *Days Go By*. The title track may ape Foo Fighters' brand of polished-but-hip hard rock, but there's plenty of galloping urgency and social commentary on "The Future Is Now," "Secrets From the Underground," "Turning Into You" and "Dividing by Zero." The hip-hop-flavored "Cruising California (Bumpin' in My Trunk)" is the album's schtick change of pace, while "O.C. Guns" mixes reggae and mariachi and "All I Have Left Is You" takes the Offspring unironically into pop ballad territory. Early on frontman Dexter Holland declares, "I'm not gonna go away/I got something more to say." The Offspring makes it well worth hearing.—GG



# REVIEWS

## SINGLES



### CAT POWER

**Ruin (4:34)**

**Producer:** Chan Marshall

**Writer:** C. Marshall

**Publisher:** Matitude (BMI)

Matador Records

Following 2006's *The Greatest*, Chan Marshall (better known as Cat Power) was riding high on her brightest and boldest collection of songs. But the time since hasn't been as kind: Reports of a mental breakdown swirled around only one new album, the 2008 covers collection *Jukebox*, in a six-year period. In that context, no one could have anticipated a comeback single as triumphant as "Ruin," a grooving engine of funk bass, dance melodies and criss-crossing piano lines that unfurl into jaggedly gorgeous cohesion. As always, Marshall is deceptive in her craft: "Ruin" may be sonically upbeat, but its lyrics are full of social angst and delivered in a disconnected drone that undercuts the flurry of rhythms. "We're sittin' on a ruin," Marshall observes with a half-sigh. "What are we doin'?" Some questions only lead to more questions—but at least Marshall is asking them again.—RR

### R&B

### OMARION FEATURING RICK ROSS

**Let's Talk (4:08)**

**Producer:** not listed

**Writer:** not listed

**Publisher:** not listed

Maybach/Warner Bros.

Hot on the heels of signing with Rick Ross' Maybach Music Group imprint on Warner Bros. Records, R&B personality and former B2K member Omarion heats up

the game with his Ross-assisted single "Let's Talk." As snippets of sampled Notorious B.I.G. vocals echo atop the production, the crooner informs a female club patron, "I'm the one that you should leave with/Girl I got a thing for you, but it ain't no secret." Meanwhile, Ross rumbles in to hold his own, rhyming "Rev Run bubble bath" with "blow-

ing out her back" with nary a pause of consideration. The result is an inherently hummable slow jam in the vein of Kelly Rowland and Lil Wayne's 2011 throwback smash "Motivation." Given the opportunity of a high-wattage comeback by one of the heavy hitters of rap music, Omarion makes a strong opening statement in the revitalization of his R&B career.—BC

### ROCK

### IMAGINE DRAGONS

**It's Time (4:00)**

**Producer:** B. Darner

**Writer:** Imagine Dragons

**Publisher:** Imagine Dragon

Publishing (BM)

Kid Ina Korner/Interscope

Las Vegas group Imagine Dragons' recent six-song *Continued Silence* EP is an upbeat collection of indie rock that features a surprisingly full, original sound. The first single, "It's Time," has managed to slowly win over alternative radio by best demonstrating the group's pop songwriting sensibilities. The track immediately grabs the listener's attention by beginning with hand claps and a whimsical mandolin riff. Meanwhile, its



### OWL CITY FEATURING CARLY RAE JEPSEN

**Good Time (3:26)**

**Producer:** Adam Young

**Writers:** A. Young,

M. Thiessen, B. Lee

**Publishers:** various

Universal Republic

Following a surprise smash No. 1 single is never an easy feat for a debut artist—just ask Crazy Town, James Blunt, Daniel Powter and Los Del Rio. Determined to not meet a similar one-hit wonder fate, the makers of 2009's "Fireflies" and this year's inescapable "Call Me Maybe" have joined forces for a duet that utilizes the zeitgeist-y sound of chunky electronic pop. Though Owl City's distinctively robotic vocals actually lend the summer song a bit of character, Jepsen's breathy pipes get lost amid all of the fist-pumping. There's also the minor problem of the lyrics, which consist primarily of the refrain "Whoa-oh-oooh-oh-oh/It's always a good time" before the singers simply throw up their hands and conclude, "We don't even have to try/It's always a good time." The song is a much-needed profile boost for Owl City in advance of the act's upcoming fourth album, but it's an odd choice for Jepsen to follow up her massive debut single. Here's hoping this song doesn't put her on the fast track to becoming the next Donna Lewis.—AH



### THE LUMINEERS

**Ho Hey (2:43)**

**Producer:** Ryan Hadlock

**Writers:** W. Schultz,

J. Fraites

**Publishers:** The

Lumineers/Songs of

Kobalt Music Publishing

America (BMI)

Dualtone

A placement in a Chevy Sonic ad helped unveil an earnest alt-rock gem, fun-'s "We Are Young" (featuring Janelle Monáe) to top 40 radio. Could the same thing happen to Denver trio the Lumineers, whose single "Ho Hey," from their self-titled debut album, was recently featured in a TV spot for Bing? The song may not feature as mammoth of a chorus as "We Are Young," but "Ho Hey" is just as arresting in its straightforward celebration of storybook romance. Singer/guitarist Wesley Schultz remains desperate to snap out of his "lonely



life," and quickly paints a portrait of his lifelong love taking a bus to Chinatown, where she'll find him waiting "on Canal and Bowery." It's the way that Schultz desperately wants things to be, and as a tinny acoustic strum counteracts the continuous exclamations of the two title words, the singer's personal desire latches onto a universal emotion. "Ho Hey" has been given extra exposure through its commercial use, but a song this polished would have eventually found an audience either way.—JL

lyrics are clearly spoken without being overbearing: Frontman Dan Reynolds touches upon the deep-seated anxiety of leaving behind too-familiar

surroundings in order to accomplish lifelong goals. After all, Reynolds declares that it's time "to begin, isn't it?," as if checking his gut one last time before setting out on a journey. Just like most things in Vegas, Imagine Dragons are aiming at winning big, and quickly.—DL

### POP

### MATT & KIM

**Let's Go (3:31)**

**Producers:** Matt & Kim

**Writers:** Matt & Kim

**Publisher:** Matt & Kim

(ASCAP)

Fader Label

From getting naked in Times Square for a video shoot to tweeting about their love of hip-hop, married duo Matt & Kim have been a breath of fresh air in the alternative music scene during the past

few years. The first single off their forthcoming studio record, *Lightning* (due this fall on Fader Label), is a change of pace from past rattle-rousing hits like "Daylight" and "Block After Block." At a glance, "Let's Go" sounds a bit melancholy, but as it progresses, it proves to be the good-natured pick-me-up you'd expect from its title. Although the pair's rather minimal setup (Matt Johnson on vocals and keys, Kim Schifino on drums) continues, the song's sunny melody, alongside Johnson's typically cheery vocal performance, make up for the lack of bandmates. And with another clever viral video—featuring basketball wizard Patrick "Pat the Roc" Robinson—accompanying the new track, Matt & Kim have again given fans what they crave.—CP

## LEGEND & CREDITS

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

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Brennan Carley, Phil Gallo, Gary Graff, Andrew Hump, Danielle Levy, Jason Lipshutz, Gail Mitchell, Chris Payne, Ryan Reed, Mikael Wood

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Mitchell Peters at Billboard, 5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90036 and singles review copies to Jason Lipshutz at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Seventh Floor, New York, NY 10003, or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.



TOM CRUISE'S signature song in the film, Guns N' Roses' "Paradise City," is on a sales climb.

SOUNDTRACK BY PHIL GALLO

## 'Rock' Flops, Songs Sell

'80s tribute 'Rock of Ages' is box-office poison, yet track sales sing a different tune

The Tom Cruise film "Rock of Ages" has taken a pounding at the box office since it opened June 8, grossing only \$28.4 million in its first two weeks of release (according to Box Office Mojo), but the soundtrack for the '80s rock musical spoof is charting a different course. In its third week of release, the WaterTower album rose four slots to reach No. 5 on the Billboard 200 with 49,000 sold (according to Nielsen SoundScan), a 34% gain in sales. It debuted at No. 15 with 18,000 units sold, then jumped to No. 9 in the week that ended June 17 with sales of 36,000.

While "Rock of Ages" is definitely a thorn on the Warner Bros. studio's rose, the film has also been making jukebox heroes out of the original artists whose music is featured in the picture. In the first few weeks of the soundtrack's release, total sales of the 26 songs used in the movie are up 64%.

Songs by the original "Rock of Ages" artists sold 146,000 copies for the week that ended June 24, according to SoundScan. That was up 23% (118,000) from the week before, following another increase of 33%.

Taking the lead—by quite a healthy distance—is the one rock anthem that didn't need a boost: Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'," which sold 17,000 copies last week after selling 16,000 copies in each of the previous weeks. Its tally was up 14% from the week prior to the film's release.

This week, Bon Jovi's "Wanted Dead or Alive" became the second track to sell more than 10,000 copies since the movie came out. It hit 11,000 downloads after registering sales of 7,900 and 6,000 in the two respective previous weeks. Foreigner's "Juke Box Hero," which peaked at No. 26 when first released in 1981, was right behind Bon Jovi, selling 9,200 copies in the week ended June 24, up from 6,700 and 5,100 in the previous two

weeks. In the film, the Foreigner song is mashed up with Joan Jett's biggest hit, "I Love Rock 'N' Roll," which cracked the 7,000 barrier this week, after moving 6,100 the previous week.

Thirteen of the tracks sold more than 5,000 copies in the soundtrack's third week of release, after only nine songs passed that threshold in week two, and four tunes topped that figure in week one.

Def Leppard timed the release of its rerecordings of "Rock of Ages" and "Pour Some Sugar on Me" to the film's debut. "Sugar" hit 7,600 last week after selling 6,500 during the movie's first week and 6,600 the second. A new live version of "Sugar" sold 5,800 in the last frame, 5,200 in its second stanza and 3,200 in its first. The song "Rock of Ages," which is surprisingly not on the WaterTower soundtrack, sold another 2,000 copies in the third week of sales, but was the only song of the 26 to dip in week two, selling only 2,000 after debuting with sales of 2,800.

Whitesnake's 1987 Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 "Here I Go Again" is indeed going again, selling 8,500 copies in the third week since the soundtrack's release, representing a spike of 40% after an initial 54% jump from the first week.

The film has perked up sales for two other ballads. Poison's "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" blossomed from 2,700 to 4,300, then jumped to 6,700. And Extreme's "More Than Words" rose from 1,500 to 2,600 before reaching 3,500. Meanwhile, Journey's "Any Way You Want It" has been on a similar upward trajectory, going from 4,000 to 5,500 to 7,400.

Cruise's showcase song, Guns N' Roses' "Paradise City," continues to spike as well. The original sold 6,600 downloads in the latest sales period, rising from 5,200 and 3,700 in previous weeks.

## BREAKING GOOD

The Smashing Pumpkins celebrate Billboard 200 top 10s in three decades

Twenty-one years into the band's Billboard 200 career, the Smashing Pumpkins continue to pile up top 10s, as new release *Oceania* bows at No. 4 with sales of 53,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album marks the act's first visit to the tally since *Zeitgeist* debuted and peaked at No. 2 in 2007.

In 2009, the Smashing Pumpkins began releasing songs individually from *Teargarden* by *Kaleidoscope*, a 44-song album designed to be released one free MP3 download at a time as each track was recorded. Instead, the band—frontman Billy Corgan, bassist Nicole Fioren-

tino, guitarist Jeff Schroeder and drummer Mike Byrne—decided to offer the more conventional *Oceania*.

"I reached a point where I saw that the one-song-at-a-time idea had maxed itself out," Corgan, the only remaining member from the band's original lineup, told Billboard last year. "I just saw that we weren't reaching the sort of casual person who still gets their information from traditional sources. So, I thought, 'What do I need to do?' and then I thought, 'OK, I'll go back to making an album.'"

On July 26, the Smashing Pumpkins will play the first of four concerts in Australia before performing in New Zealand, the Philippines and Korea through mid-August.

—Gary Trust

STILL SMASHING A recap of the Smashing Pumpkins' seven Billboard 200 top 10s. Dating to the 1991 advent of Nielsen SoundScan, the band has sold 16.7 million albums in the United States.



Debut Date	Peak (Weeks At No. 1)	Title	Debut Sales	Sales To Date
Aug. 14, 1993	No. 10	"Siamese Dream"	72,000	4.9 million
Oct. 22, 1994	No. 4	"Pisces Iscariot"	116,000	1.3 million
Nov. 11, 1995	No. 1 (1)	"Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness"	246,000	4.9 million
June 20, 1998	No. 2	"Adore"	174,000	1.2 million
March 18, 2000	No. 3	"Machina/The Machines of God"	165,000	607,000
July 28, 2007	No. 2	"Zeitgeist"	145,000	426,000
July 7, 2012	No. 4	"Oceania"	53,000	53,000

## ON A NEW NOTE

Tenor Noah Stewart preps to bring chart-topping U.K. debut home

The classical world may have found its next breakout star in Noah Stewart.

The New York-born, Juilliard-trained operatic tenor is the first African-American artist to top the United Kingdom's classical chart: His debut album, *Noah*, hit No. 1 upon its release in April, and entered the U.K. albums chart as the second new entry, behind Madonna's *MDNA*. It's out July 3 in the United States on Verve.

The U.K. chart debuts "were phenomenal and helped us plan the release here," Verve Music Group GM Robert Smith says. "But long before his CD came out, there was a palpable buzz about him throughout the company and a strong desire to expose him to the world. As all real artists are, he's unique. His appeal crosses genres."

Indeed, *Noah* isn't a staid collection of expected, introductory tenor arias. Next to

"Ave Maria" and Puccini's "Recondita Armonia" is Leonard Cohen's classic "Hallelujah," spiritual standards like "Deep River" and "This Land Is Mine," ABBA's "I Have a Dream" and the Moody Blues' "Nights in White Satin," sung in Italian. Stewart's breathtakingly powerful, yet dynamic voice sounds genuinely suited to each.

"Being born and raised in Harlem, with my family from New Orleans, I've been inspired by many different genres of music, from spiritual to pop to Puccini," Stewart says. "I wanted to express their influence on me in this album."

Raised by a single mother, Stewart graduated from New York's famous LaGuardia High School before going to Juilliard—but an opera-only career was never his goal. He did stints singing backup for Mariah Carey and Coolio, and is still a fan of popular music, in-

# Braxton's Back

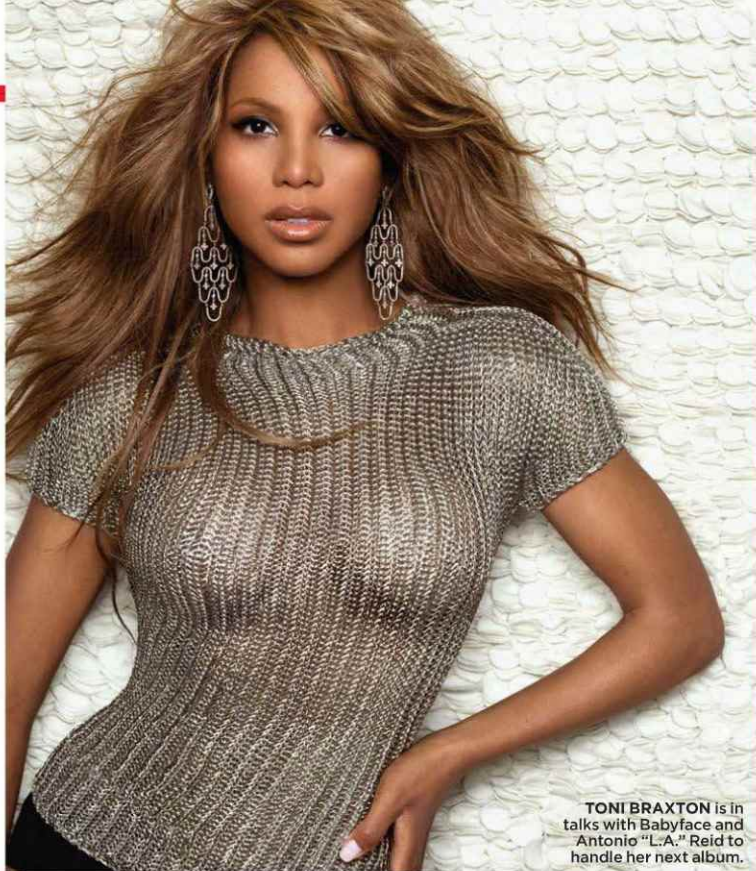
Going indie and recovering from illness, R&B singer mounts dance chart again

**T**oni Braxton is back on top. A dozen years since her single "Spanish Guitar" peaked at No. 1 on the Dance Club Songs chart, the 44-year-old singer made her return to the top spot last week with her latest anthem, "I Heart You." Unlike her previous releases, however, Braxton decided to go the independent route with this track, taking advice from Prince on handling the recording, distribution, marketing and promotion budget on her own.

The move has had its drawbacks. But after years of dropping albums on major labels, she clearly relishes her newfound freedom. "It's expensive, I can tell you that, but it's also rewarding," Braxton says about her indie status. "Prince warned me that it's really expensive. He said, 'Just don't bite off more than you can chew. A single is fine to begin with. You're not going to have the machine behind you. You're the machine now, so it's going to take a second. Be patient.' But I'm glad I did it."

Coming off of *Pulse*, her 2010 album on Atlantic Records, the six-time Grammy winner isn't getting ahead of herself. Keeping a high profile over the past few years with her reality show "Braxton Family Values," she sees the popularity of "I Heart You" as a springboard for other new opportunities. The Severn, Md., native is in contact with producer RedOne to sign a new label deal, and has been in talks with Babyface and Epic Records chairman/CEO Antonio "L.A." Reid to handle her next album. But the indie songstress is taking time to learn the business side of the music industry, entertaining the idea of partnering with a major strictly for printing and distribution.

"I'm considering doing a P&D as opposed to a straight record deal," she says. "I was not educated [in the business end of things] as a performer. I was just being an artist. Now, being on the other side, it's



TONI BRAXTON is in talks with Babyface and Antonio "L.A." Reid to handle her next album.

a lot of work but I find that I'm enjoying it a lot. I'm finally learning the music business. You have to look at the [established] record companies and realize a lot of work and dedication are involved, as well as money, to promote an artist."

With the surging popularity of electronic dance music, the husky-voiced vocalist is flirting with branching out into more uptempo fare. "I'm thinking of adding a little bit to it, not just doing that type of music," explains Braxton, citing the late Donna Summer as inspiration for "I Heart You."

Braxton, whose career slowed in recent years due to her battle with the autoimmune disease lupus, is taking advantage of her resurgence. She's discussed a duets album with Babyface: "Because we're older, we want to do something like 'Eat, Pray, Love,' only

we'd call it 'Love, Marriage, Divorce,'" she says. Outside of music, she's continuing her acting career and is set to star in a Lifetime movie that begins shooting in August, playing a singer opposite her youngest son, Diezel. She also lent her voice to the upcoming animated children's film "The Oogieloves in the Big Balloon Adventure."

For now, however, the industry veteran is easing into her business shoes, a bit out of place but artistically feeling confident. "People were thinking, 'Oh, I forgot about Toni Braxton. What's she doing? I heard she was sick and not working,'" she says. "I don't want people to think of me as a sick person. I don't want that to define my image. So people have opened that up to, 'Oh, she's working again! It's good!' That's what I've been trying to do."

STEWART: MITCH JENKINS/DECCA



NOAH STEWART'S summer plans include playing the role of Radames in Verdi's "Aida."

cluding Lady Gaga and Kelly Clarkson: "I can't go anywhere without listening to the radio," he says. He helped fund his education by working as a receptionist at Carnegie Hall, before winning a spot in the renowned Adler Fellowship Program at the San Francisco Opera in 2008, which kick-started his career.

Calling pop artist/matinee idol/tenor Mario Lanza one of his idols, Stewart is about to embark on what he calls a "triple-threat summer" of his own: "Showing off [his] opera chops" in the leading role of Radames, in Verdi's epic opera "Aida," at the prestigious Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, N.Y.; preparing "Sultry Summer Nights," a more intimate concert performance featuring standards as well as arias, also at Glimmerglass; and appearing in indie documentary "Detropia," which was featured at the Sundance Film Festival this year.

"Word-of-mouth is a key to his growth in the U.S., especially outside of the classical world," Smith says. "It will take time and exposure—through live shows, print and online activity, and television—to reach his true potential. We don't know what that potential is yet, but there is no one else quite like him."

—Kerri Mason

## BUBBLING UNDER

### >>>MAYNARD MAKES WAY TOWARD U.S.

The latest young British hopeful taking aim at the American charts is 19-year-old YouTube star Conor Maynard. The Capitol Records singer/songwriter has already claimed a No. 2 hit on the U.K. singles chart with "Can't Say No" and now he's unveiled his first U.S. single, "Vegas Girl." The cut has early support from SiriusXM's 20 on 20 and KMVQ San Francisco, while its video premiered on Vevo and YouTube on June 25. "Vegas Girl" previews his debut album, *Contrast* (Sept. 18).

### >>>CAMRYN CONNECTS WITH ONE DIRECTION

Twelve-year-old Camryn is approaching the Mainstream Top 40 chart with "Set the Night on Fire" (5280 Media). The Denver native impressed her earliest audiences at a first-grade talent show when she covered Gwen Stefani's "Hollaback Girl." More recently, she's sung for greater crowds: Last year she played U.S. dates with Cody Simpson and Greyson Chance (while also performing at approximately 100 schools) and in May and June opened the first six shows of One Direction's U.S. tour.

### >>>SEBASTIAN FINDING 'ROOM' AT COUNTRY

Coached by Blake Shelton on the second season of NBC's "The Voice," Gwen Sebastian has her sights on the charts with "Met Him in a Motel Room." Sebastian left nursing school to move to Nashville and released two independent singles in 2009-10. She continues on the indie path (Flying Island) with her new track, which, while its title suggests a tryst in a rented room, delivers an unexpected storyline about an unlikely religious conversion. After leaving "The Voice," she performed on Shelton's *Well Lit & Amplified* spring tour.

### >>>PURE'S 'STARS' KEEPS SHINING

R&B singer PURE is making inroads at radio with his love song "The Stars." Adult R&B WJMI Jackson, Miss., leads all Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs reporters with 28 plays in the chart's tracking week and 240 spins to date, according to Nielsen BDS. The song appears on his digital-exclusive sophomore album, *Raw & Uncut*, released in May on indie label Venture Brotherz.

Reporting by Keith Caulfield, Wade Jessen, Karinah Santiago and Gary Trust.

# MARKETPLACE

## HELP WANTED

### JOB OPENING

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Middle Tennessee State University invites applications for the position of Recording Industry Department Chair. Must hold degree in appropriate area represented by one of the programs in the department or distinguished record of professional achievement. Must be eligible to hold rank of full professor with tenure upon appointment. Strong industry connections and ability to work closely with development director in areas of fundraising and development are preferred. Visit <https://mtsujobs.mtsu.edu> to apply.

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# THE HOT BOX

A WEEKLY ROUNDUP OF NOTABLE CHART ACHIEVEMENTS



## FROM A CHERRY...

>>Neneh Cherry, absent from any chart since 1994, returns—debuting at No. 9 on *Traditional Jazz Albums* with *The Cherry Thing*. It's a collaboration with free-jazz trio the Thing that includes covers of Ornette Coleman, MF Doom and the Stooges.

## ...TO AN APPLE

>>After a nearly seven-year hiatus, singer/songwriter Fiona Apple is back on the Billboard 200. The artist nets her highest-charting album, and second top 10, as *The Idler Wheel...* debuts at No. 3, moving 72,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan.



## FLYING SOLO

>>Fresh off the success of the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical "Once"—his music is the basis of the show's story—Glen Hansard makes his solo debut on the Billboard 200 with *Rhythm and Repose* bowing at No. 21. He has previously charted with the Frames and the Swell Season.

# CHART BEAT

>>LMFAO keeps right on partying. As the duo's former six-week Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 "Party Rock Anthem," featuring Lauren Bennett and GoonRock, logs a 66th week on the survey, the song passes Adele's "Rolling in the Deep" (65 weeks, 2011-12) for the longest residence by a former leader in the chart's 54-year history. Among all titles, only Jason Mraz's No. 6-peaking "I'm Yours" (76 weeks) and LeAnn Rimes' "How Do I Live" (No. 2; 69 weeks) have remained on the list longer. "Party" has even outlasted two follow-up singles: two-week No. 1 "Sexy and I Know It," which departs the chart this week after 42 frames, and the No. 49-peaking title track from the songs' parent album, *Sorry for Party Rocking*.

Read Chart Beat every week at [billboard.com/chartbeat](http://billboard.com/chartbeat).

# CHARTS

## Bieber's 'Believe' Debuts At No. 1 With 374,000

Justin Bieber's *Believe* crashes in at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, selling 374,000 in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It garners the 18-year-old his fourth No. 1 album in the two-and-a-half years since he first bowed on the tally in December 2009. No other act has racked up that many chart-toppers in that span of time.

*Believe* registers the biggest debut sales week for an album this year, surpassing the 359,000 start of **Madonna's** *MDNA*. The last set to earn a larger launch was **Drake's** *Take Care* on Dec. 3, 2011. It started with 631,000.

(**Adele** earned the best sales frame overall in 2012 for an album with blockbuster set *21* in the wake of her multiple Grammy Award wins in February. It sold 730,000 in the week after the Grammy show.)

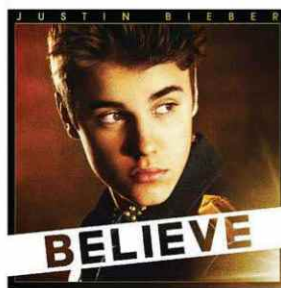
Bieber also notches his own personal best sales week, beating the 291,000 that *My World 2.0* sold in its second week in April 2010.

Some might say that *Believe's* launch is a bit softer than had been anticipated, especially when the number 500,000 was banded about the day *Believe* arrived. On its first day of release (June 19), some industry sources thought the set—based on how well it was doing out of the box—could approach the half-million mark. However, by the next day, prognosticators estimated it would launch with 410,000-440,000. That figure was scaled back to 390,000-

410,000 by June 22 and then down to 360,000-380,000 by June 24. Basically: *Believe's* original forecast was inflated by the set's huge first-day sales and significant number of preorders. Everything came back down to earth midway through the week, after its eye-popping first day.

Bieber previously led the Billboard 200 with *My World 2.0*, 2011's *Never Say Never: The Remixes* and *Under the Mistletoe*. *Believe* is his sixth top 10 effort overall—he's only missed the No. 1 rung with his *My World* debut (No. 5) and *My Worlds Acoustic* (No. 7).

*Believe* was led by the hit single "Boyfriend," which debuted and peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100. The



set's second official single is "As Long As You Love Me," and its radio promotion will begin July 9.

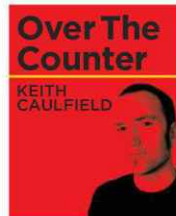
During release week, Bieber was in full-on promotion mode to tout the new

album. NBC aired a two-night special dedicated to the star (June 20-21), while he also sat down for a live YouTube chat with NBC personality **Jimmy Fallon** (June 21). He stopped by MTV on June 19 for a "TRL"-style "Bieber Live" show and visited CBS' "Late Show With David Letterman," BET's "106 & Park" and ABC's "The View" (all on June 20).

'WELCOME' TO A NO. 1: At No. 2 this week on the Billboard 200, country king **Kenny Chesney** bows with *Welcome to the Fishbowl*, moving 193,000 copies. It's his best sales week since 2007's *Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates* started with 387,000 at No. 3. The country star's last album, 2010's *Hemingway's Whiskey*, debuted with 183,000 at No. 1. All told, *Welcome to the Fishbowl* marks his 10th top 10 album on the Billboard 200. On the Top Country Albums chart, the new effort enters at No. 1—his 11th leader on that tally.

The new album's first single, "Feel Like a Rock Star," missed the top 10 on the Hot Country Songs chart, topping out at No. 11. The superstar duet with **Tim McGraw** got off to a fast start, debuting at No. 13 on the tally (the second-highest bow since the chart began using Nielsen BDS data in 1990). It climbed to No. 11 in its sixth week on

the list and then dove to No. 18 on June 2—the same week Chesney's solo cut "Come Over" bowed at No. 24. While "Feel Like a Rock Star" operated like a quickie superstar event single, "Come Over" is performing like a traditional hit. This week, it rises 10-6.



'21' DIRECTION: **Adele's** *21* falls out of

the top five for only the second time in its 70 weeks on the chart, as it drops 3-7 with nearly 47,000 (down 24%). Its lone other non-top-five week was on Dec. 10, 2011. Meanwhile, **One Direction's** *Up All Night* descends two spots to No. 8 with 41,000, marking the album's 15th straight week in the top 10 (its entire chart run). The last set to spend its first 15 frames in the top 10? **Adele's** *21*. Previous to Adele, **Taylor Swift's** *Speak Now* racked its first 15 weeks in the top 10 between Nov. 13, 2010, and Feb. 19, 2011.

**LINKIN PARK 'LIVING' LARGE?** Early prognostications from those wise industry sources suggest that **Linkin Park** will claim its fifth No. 1 on the Billboard 200 next week with *Living Things*. The set may sell around 220,000. **Maroon 5's** newest, *Overexposed*, will likely start in the runner-up slot, with perhaps 190,000-210,000.

## Market Watch A Weekly National Music Sales Report

### Weekly Unit Sales

	ALBUMS	DIGITAL ALBUMS*	DIGITAL TRACKS
This Week	5,940,000	2,377,000	25,168,000
Last Week	5,809,000	2,163,000	25,383,000
Change	2.3%	9.9%	-0.8%
This Week Last Year	5,924,000	2,012,000	25,289,000
Change	0.3%	18.1%	-0.5%

\*Digital album sales are also counted within album sales.

### Weekly Album Sales (Million Units)



### Year-To-Date

	2011	2012	CHANGE
<b>OVERALL UNIT SALES</b>			
Albums	149,120,000	144,712,000	-3.0%
Digital Tracks	635,349,000	672,732,000	5.9%
Store Singles	1,355,000	1,621,000	19.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>785,824,000</b>	<b>819,065,000</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
Albums w/TEA*	212,654,900	211,985,200	-0.3%

\*Includes track equivalent album sales (TEA) with 10 track downloads equivalent to one album sale.

### ALBUM SALES

'11	149.1 million
'12	144.7 million

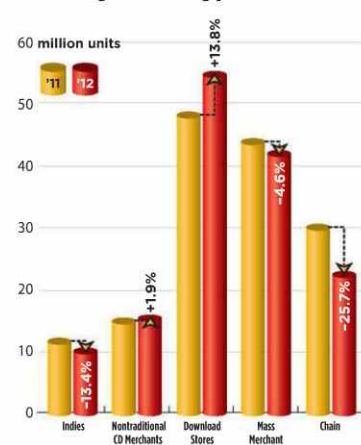
### SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT

CD	99,054,000	87,699,000	-11.5%
Digital	48,221,000	54,887,000	13.8%
Vinyl	1,816,000	2,085,000	14.8%
Other	29,000	40,000	37.9%

For week ending June 24, 2012. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail store and track sales reports collected and provided by



### Year-To-Date Album Sales By Store Type













THE BILLBOARD HOT 100

Table with columns: Wk, Last Wk, Weeks on Chart, Title, Producer (Songwriter), Artist, Imprint / Promotion Label, Peak Position, and Rank. Lists top 100 songs including 'Call Me Maybe', 'Payphone', 'Wide Awake', 'Greatest Gainer/Airplay: Where Have You Been', and 'Greatest Gainer/Digital: Lights'.

10 The crooner collects his 18th Hot 100 top 10, extending his mark for the most top 10s among male singers dating to his first week in the top tier (Sept. 6, 1997).

42 Ahead of the set's likely lofty launch on next week's Billboard 200, the Overexposed preview track enters Hot Digital Songs at No. 12 with 95,000 downloads sold.

51 The fourth-place finalist on U.K. TV competition "The X Factor" last year (when One Direction placed third) claims Greatest Gainer honors on Heatseekers Songs (6-1) and Mainstream Top 40 (27-23). The cut bounds 48-30 on Hot Digital Songs (\$6,000, up 50%).

72 & 95 As Believe storms the Billboard 200's summit with the year's largest debut sales total (see Over the Counter, page 53), the album's fifth and sixth Hot 100 entries bow with digital sales of 53,000 and 31,000, respectively.

93 After registering her longest-reigning Hot 100 No. 1 with former three-week leader "Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)" (No. 21), the follow-up lifts 20-17 on Adult Top 40 and 38-34 on Mainstream Top 40.

BETWEEN THE BULLETS

'LIGHTS' SHINES IN TOP 10 AT LAST

Ellie Goulding's "Lights" leaps 12-6 in its 27th week on the Billboard Hot 100. That's the longest ascent to the region in the chart's 54-year history for a song by a female that wasn't aided by crossover airplay from country to pop and adult radio. It's the longest journey by any song since Shinedown's "Second Chance" also took 27 frames to reach the tier in 2008-09. "Lights" jumps 9-5 on Hot Digital Songs (149,000 downloads sold, up 23%, according to Nielsen SoundScan), 14-12 on Hot 100 Airplay and 8-7 on On-Demand Songs. —Gary Trust

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 50 rows of chart data.

ROCK™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 15 rows of chart data.

COUNTRY™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 15 rows of chart data.

R&B/HIP-HOP™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 15 rows of chart data.

LATIN™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 15 rows of chart data.

HOT DIGITAL SONGS™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 30 rows of chart data.

WORLD™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 15 rows of chart data.

DANCE/ELECTRONIC™ chart table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, TITILE, ARTIST, IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL, CERT. Contains 15 rows of chart data.

Vertical text on the left margin: HOT 100 AIRPLAY MONITORED BY...



HOT COUNTRY SONGS™

Table of Hot Country Songs chart for week of July 7, 2012, listing titles, artists, and chart positions.



Singer logs his fourth and fastest No. 1 (20 weeks) with the third radio single from his Tailgates & Tanlines (No. 2 on Top Country Albums).

Band achieves its fourth top 10 in five tries. Two of the trio's tracks eventually reached No. 1: "I Die Young" in 2010 and "All Your Life" earlier this year.

Table of Hot Country Songs chart for week of July 7, 2012, listing titles, artists, and chart positions.

TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS™ BLUEGRASS ALBUMS™

Table of Top Country Albums and Bluegrass Albums charts for week of July 7, 2012, listing titles, artists, and chart positions.

Table of Top Country Albums and Bluegrass Albums charts for week of July 7, 2012, listing titles, artists, and chart positions.

BETWEEN THE BULLETS WILLIAMS RETURNS. Veteran crooner Don Williams returns to Top Country Albums with his first charted studio set in almost 14 years, as And So It Goes opens at No. 20 with 5,000 sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan.





HOT R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS™

Chart table with columns: RANK, LAST WEEK, WEEKS ON CHART, TITLE, PRODUCER (SONGWRITER), Artist, LABEL, DEBIT, PEAK POSITION. Includes songs like 'Mercy', 'Thinkin Bout You', 'Put It Down', 'Pop That', etc.

Big week for the rapper, who doubles up in the top 10 with the Greatest/Gainer/Airplay winner and the list's new No. 1 (See between the Bullets, below). "No Lie" is the lead rapper's third top 10 and 25th for the ubiquitous featured act, Drake.



With a 30-spot blastoff, the R&B stunner (right) posts the chart's largest jump for a male singer since Miguel rose by 46 positions with "Quidde" (98-52) in July 2011. Song more than doubles its audience impressions from 4.2 million to 9.4 million.



The Hot Shot Debut is by a songwriter-turned-artist who steps into the spotlight with a self-written R&B joint off her upcoming album. The Texas native's story and songwriting history are detailed on a free mixtape available on her site, TamiLaTrell.com.



Young Money's newest—and youngest—member debuts for the first time with this fun rap jam. At only 14 years old, this Lil is reminiscent of boss Lil Wayne in his nascent era, and has already released six mixtapes as part of the YMCMB crew.

Continuation of the chart table from rank 56 to 100, including songs like 'Thinkin Bout You', 'Put It Down', 'Pop That', 'Let's Talk', etc.

BETWEEN THE BULLETS

'MERCY' MOVES IN AT NO. 1



The hard-hitting "Mercy" by Kanye West, Big Sean, Pusha T and 2 Chainz hits No. 1 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, giving Usher the boot after 10 weeks at the top with "Climax." "Mercy," which refers to the uber-expensive Lamborghini Murcielago, is West's sixth No. 1 on the survey, Sean's second and the first for Pusha and 2 Chainz. West is the common denominator on both of Sean's leaders, having been credited as a featured act on the rapper's "Marvin & Chardonnay," which led in November. The tune is the first single from the forthcoming G.O.O.D. Music compilation album due later this year. —Karinah Santiago

CHRISTIAN SONGS™ chart with columns for week, title, artist, and label. #1 'THE HURT & THE HEALER' by MercyMe.

CHRISTIAN ALBUMS™ chart with columns for week, title, artist, and label. #1 'MERCYME THE HURT & THE HEALER' by MercyMe.

CHRISTIAN AC SONGS™ chart with columns for week, title, artist, and label. #1 'THE HURT & THE HEALER' by MercyMe.

GOSPEL ALBUMS™ chart with columns for week, title, artist, and label. #1 'CHARLES JENKINS & FELLOWSHIP CHICAGO' by Charles Jenkins.

GOSPEL SONGS™ chart with columns for week, title, artist, and label. #1 'AWESOME' by Pastor Charles Jenkins.

Singer/acress Tamela Mann scores her first Billboard chart-topper as "Take Me to the King" (featuring Kirk Franklin) opens at No. 1 on Gospel Digital Songs...



With his ninth set of new material, veteran worship singer Byron Cage claims his fifth top five start on Gospel Albums with 'Memoirs of a Worshipper'...



See Charts Legend on Billboard.biz for Christian Albums, Gospel Albums, and Gospel Songs. Airplay monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week...



DANCE CLUB SONGS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 THE NIGHT OUT by Martin Solveig.

DANCE CLUB SONGS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 GOIN' IN by Jennifer Lopez.

DANCE/ELECTRONIC ALBUMS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 BLOOD ON THE DANCE FLOOR by Skrillex.

DANCE/MIX SHOW AIRPLAY™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN by Rihanna.

TRADITIONAL JAZZ ALBUMS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 MELODY GARDOT by The Absence.

TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL ALBUMS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 DANIEL BARENBOIM by Various Artists.

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ ALBUMS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 GERALD ALBRIGHT/NORMAN BROWN by Brian Culbertson.

CLASSICAL CROSSOVER ALBUMS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 IL VOLO by Il Volo.

SMOOTH JAZZ SONGS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 YOUR SMILE by Brian Culbertson.

WORLD ALBUMS™

Table with columns: This Week, Last Week, Peak, Title, Artist. Top entry: #1 VARIOUS ARTISTS by Cafe Con Musica.



EURO	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	4
2	1
3	3
4	2
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	10
9	17
10	8

JAPAN	
BILLBOARD JAPAN HOT 100	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(HANSHIN/SOUNDCSCAN JAPAN/PLANTECH) JULY 7, 2012
1	NEW
2	12
3	34
4	18
5	16
6	8
7	9
8	1
9	27
10	39

GERMANY	
SINGLES	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(MEDIA CONTROL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	9
3	2
4	3
5	8
6	6
7	5
8	10
9	4
10	RE

UNITED KINGDOM	
SINGLES	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS CO.) JULY 7, 2012
1	NEW
2	1
3	2
4	NEW
5	4
6	5
7	6
8	10
9	8
10	RE

FRANCE	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	3
3	5
4	8
5	2
6	4
7	10
8	6
9	7
10	NEW

CANADA	
BILLBOARD CANADIAN HOT 100	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN/BDS) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	8
3	2
4	3
5	15
6	7
7	9
8	4
9	6
10	5

KOREA	
BILLBOARD KOREA K-POP HOT 100	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(BILLBOARD KOREA) JULY 7, 2012
1	NEW
2	1
3	8
4	NEW
5	2
6	NEW
7	3
8	NEW
9	NEW
10	NEW

AUSTRALIA	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(ARIA) JULY 7, 2012
1	3
2	NEW
3	1
4	4
5	2
6	NEW
7	5
8	6
9	9
10	(RE)

NETHERLANDS	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	6
6	10
7	5
8	7
9	8
10	9

ITALY	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	6
6	7
7	NEW
8	10
9	8
10	5

BRAZIL	
ALBUMS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(APPO/NIELSEN) JUNE 3, 2012
1	NEW
2	1
3	2
4	NEW
5	3
6	NEW
7	RE
8	RE
9	5
10	4

SPAIN	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	2
3	4
4	8
5	3
6	5
7	6
8	9
9	7
10	RE

SWITZERLAND	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	5
5	10
6	4
7	6
8	8
9	9
10	7

BELGIUM	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	6
5	4
6	7
7	5
8	8
9	10
10	9

SWEDEN	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	4
5	6
6	7
7	10
8	7
9	9
10	NEW

MEXICO	
AIRPLAY	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN BDS) JULY 7, 2012
1	2
2	3
3	14
4	NEW
5	4
6	5
7	NEW
8	1
9	8
10	9

AUSTRIA	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	2
2	1
3	3
4	6
5	4
6	7
7	8
8	5
9	10
10	NEW

NORWAY	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	4
5	8
6	6
7	7
8	10
9	9
10	RE

DENMARK	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	4
2	1
3	2
4	8
5	5
6	7
7	10
8	NEW
9	RE
10	9

FINLAND	
DIGITAL SONGS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
	(NIELSEN SOUNDCSCAN INTERNATIONAL) JULY 7, 2012
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	8
5	6
6	RE
7	5
8	8
9	7
10	10



## REDEFINING OWNERSHIP

Discussing music ownership versus streaming, **SEAN PARKER** (right)—former Facebook president and current executive general partner of Founders Fund—participated in a special Q&A session during the New Music Seminar (June 17-19) at New York's Webster Hall. "The idea of ownership never goes away, it only gets redefined," Parker told NMS founder/executive director **TOM SILVERMAN** (left). PHOTO: CHRIS OWYOUNG



**1 TONY CORNELIUS**, son of late "Soul Train" founder **DON CORNELIUS**, hosted a June 23 screening of "Don Cornelius: Visionary, Trailblazer & Cultural Icon." The one-hour special premiered later that evening on cable channel Centric; a rebroadcast is slated for July 4. Talking iconic legacies and the launch of the Don Cornelius Foundation at Los Angeles' Grammy Museum are (from left) Cornelius, BET Networks VP of talent and casting for original programming **ROBI REED** and Miles Davis' nephew, **VINCE WILBURN JR.** PHOTO: EARL GIBSON

**2 CLASSICAL-MEETS-CLUB IS** the concept behind Yellow Lounge, launched seven years ago in Berlin. The United States got its first taste of the innovative experience on June 19 when the party came to New York's 82 Mercer in SoHo. Inaugurating the stateside classical jam were (from left) rising stars **AVI AVITAL** and **NICOLA BENEDETTI** and Decca/Deutsche Grammophon U.S. GM **PAUL FOLEY**, whose company sponsored the event with Karlson's Gold Vodka. PHOTO: ROBIN MARCHANT/GETTY IMAGES

**3 THE BACK** and sleeve of **BILL COSBY'S** shirt say it all. The 34th annual Playboy Jazz Festival (June 16-17) at the Hollywood Bowl signaled the comedian/jazz fan's final turn as MC of the Hugh Hefner-founded event. Cosby is pictured conducting his Cos of Good Music—including members **TIA FULLER** (left) and **INGRID JENSEN**—for the last time. PHOTO: LEROY HAMILTON

**4 SESAC LATINA'S MUSIC AWARDS** took place June 20 at Los Angeles' infamous pink landmark, the 100-year-old Beverly Hills Hotel. SESAC senior VP of writer/publisher relations **TREVOR GALE** (left) and SESAC Latina VP of writer/publisher relations **J.J. CHENG** (right) flank the evening's top honorees (from left): songwriter of the year **JOEY MONTANA**; EMI Latin America CEO **NESTOR CASONU** and EMI Foray Music VP of creative/U.S. Latin **LESLIE AHRENS**, who represented publisher of the year EMI Foray Music; and **LEO JAMES**, co-writer of song of the year "Dandole." PHOTO: TEAL MOSS

**5 DEAN ALEXANDER** recently signed a worldwide publishing agreement with Warner/Chappell Music and Parallel Music Publishing. The songwriter is currently recording his country debut album for Elektra Nashville. Taking a minute for a photo op are (from left) Warner/Chappell senior director of A&R **ALICIA PRUITT** and VP of A&R **STEVE MARKLAND**, Parallel Music's **TIM HUNZE**, Alexander, Warner/Chappell VP/GM **PHIL MAY** and senior director of A&R **BJ HILL**, and Parallel Entertainment manager **C.T. WYATT**. PHOTO: KAREN HARRISON-HITE, WARNER/CHAPPELL

## Katy Perry Shuts Down Hollywood Boulevard



1

Pop star **KATY PERRY** brought traffic to a standstill at the kickoff of Pepsi and Billboard's Summer Beats concert series on June 26. Perry rocked through a vibrant eight-song set in with the evening's U.S. premiere of her Paramount Pictures film, "Katy Perry: Part of Me." The movie hits theaters on July 5.

**1 HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD WAS SHUT DOWN** between Highland and La Brea Avenues for Katy Perry's early evening concert. PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE



2

**2 PERRY'S OUTFIT PAID TRIBUTE TO HOLLYWOOD** with film reels affixed to her top instead of her usual pinwheels. PHOTO: JOSEPH LLANES



3



4

**3 AEG LIVE PRESIDENT/CEO RANDY PHILLIPS** (left) chats with Paramount Pictures vice chairman **ROB MOORE** alongside the red carpet. AEG Live promoted Perry's last tour and was among the film's producers. Paramount is distributing the film. PHOTO: ALEX J. BERLINER/ABIMAGES

PHOTO: ALEX J. BERLINER/ABIMAGES



5



6

**4 POSING WITH HER BILLBOARD COVER ISSUE IS** **CARLY RAE JEPSEN**. PHOTO: GAIL MITCHELL

**5 TRACK MARKETING GROUP VP STACY PILLERSDORF** joined a crew from Summer Beats partner Pepsi. On hand from the beverage company were (from left) brand director **JAIME MAHONEY**, senior marketing manager **JUSTIN TOMAN**, brand engagement senior manager **KATE BRADY** and music and entertainment marketing director **BOZOMA SAINT JOHN**. PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE

PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE

**6 JUSTIN BIEBER** and **SELENA GOMEZ** (right) celebrate with **KATY PERRY** and her grandmother, **ANN HUDSON**. PHOTO: MARK HUNTER/THECOBRASNAKE.COM

PHOTO: MARK HUNTER/THECOBRASNAKE.COM

**7 JOINING THE CROWD FOR THE CONCERT** and movie premiere at Grauman's Chinese Theatre were (from left) Paramount president of motion picture music **RANDY SPENDLOVE**, real estate agent **CONNIE BLANKENSHIP**, producer **DEBORAH SIEGEL**, Billboard editorial director **BILL WERDE** and publisher **TOMMY PAGE**, and Advanced Alternative Media principal **MARK BEAVEN**. PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE

PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE



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