

singers Tim O'Brien for *You're Dead to Me* and Alison Krauss for the title track and *Draw Me a Map*. Chris Thile appears on a version of Bob Dylan's *Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)*, while Kris Kristofferson pops up for his own *Bottle to the Bottom*. Vince Gill adds vocals to *Fiddlin' Around*, *Bad Angel* gets assists from Miranda Lambert and Jamey Johnson, and Del McCoury and the Punch Brothers join Bentley on a cover of U2's *Pride (In the Name of Love)*.

## Drake

*Thank Me Later* (June 15)

**Lowdown:** Drake has been hip-hop's superstar-in-waiting for the past couple of years. The Canadian rapper/singer/actor, signed to Lil Wayne's Young Money label, has built an impressive résumé of guest appearances and hot mixtapes. His star-studded, seven-song EP, *So Far Gone*, which features hit singles *Best I Ever Had* and *Successful*, has sold 432,000 copies since its release in September. He's currently headlining the *Away From Home* tour of college campuses, which wraps up in May.

**Highlights:** First single *Over* is already scooting up the pop and urban charts and whetting appetites for *Thank Me Later*, which will feature collaborations with Jay-Z, Kanye West and Lil Wayne.

## Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers

*Mojo* (June 15)

**Lowdown:** After 34 years, Petty and company haven't lost their rock 'n' roll mojo or their loyal 'n' patient fans, who haven't had a studio fix since 2002's *The Last DJ*. The band has sold 60 million records since its 1976 debut and remains a powerhouse on the road, racking up its biggest tour grosses to date in 2008. They'll add *Mojo* tunes to the hit-laden set list on a tour that runs June 25 through October.

**Highlights:** Inspired by his early band Mudcrutch, Petty recorded live in the studio with no overdubs or studio gimmicks. On Southern-tinged electric and acoustic songs, the band moves from rock and country to romantic balladry and an unexpected reggae romp. Petty's tales include a blues-rocker about Thomas Jefferson's dalliance with slave Sally Hemings.

interim, she has occupied herself with raising her 2-year-old son, Max, and filming the upcoming movie musical *Burlesque*. On *Bionic*, she's shooting for a futuristic, electronic vibe.

**Highlights:** Pulsating lead single *Not Myself Tonight* was produced by Polow da Don, one of several collaborators, who include M.I.A., Santigold, Goldfrapp, Le Tigre, Linda Perry and Ladytron.



By Alix Malka

## Jack Johnson

*To the Sea* (June 1)

**Lowdown:** After backing away from the beach motif, Hawaii's surfing son of a surfer again rides the wave that initially galvanized fans. Johnson's green sensibility extends beyond his lyrics. His fifth solo disc is packaged in recycled paper and was recorded in a solar-powered studio. All his profits from a tour starting in June will go to environmental groups and other charities. Johnson's broad, loyal fan base should ensure a No. 1 debut (2008's *Sleep Through the Static* topped the chart for three weeks) and multiplatinum future.

**Highlights:** Likening the ocean to the subconscious, Johnson sings warm, heartfelt pop-rock tunes in praise of truth, self-expression and nature. First single *You and Your Heart* is friskier than his usual acoustic fare. And while many songs are deeply personal, all 13 tracks bear Johnson's breezy stamp.

## Game

*The R.E.D. Album* (June 15)

**Lowdown:** The hard-core L.A. rapper announced his retirement after 2008's *LAX*, which sold more than 700,000 copies. He's back with a star-studded affair that he's co-executive-producing with Pharrell Williams, one that promises to be packed with trunk-rattling jams.

**Highlights:** Game gets contributions from his idol, Dr. Dre, in addition to collaborations with Snoop Dogg, Rick Ross, Lil Wayne, Gucci Mane, Nicki Minaj and Lady Gaga. The venomous street anthem *It Must Be Me* is the lead single. He's joined by Justin Timberlake on *Ain't No Doubt About It*.



By Michael T. Larsen for USA TODAY