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...HOW AN INTERNET WEIRDO TOOK
POP TO A NEW DIMENSION



Rx FOR SUCCESS
Inside Prescription Songs

FAIR PLAY?
The Law That Could
Change Label Contracts

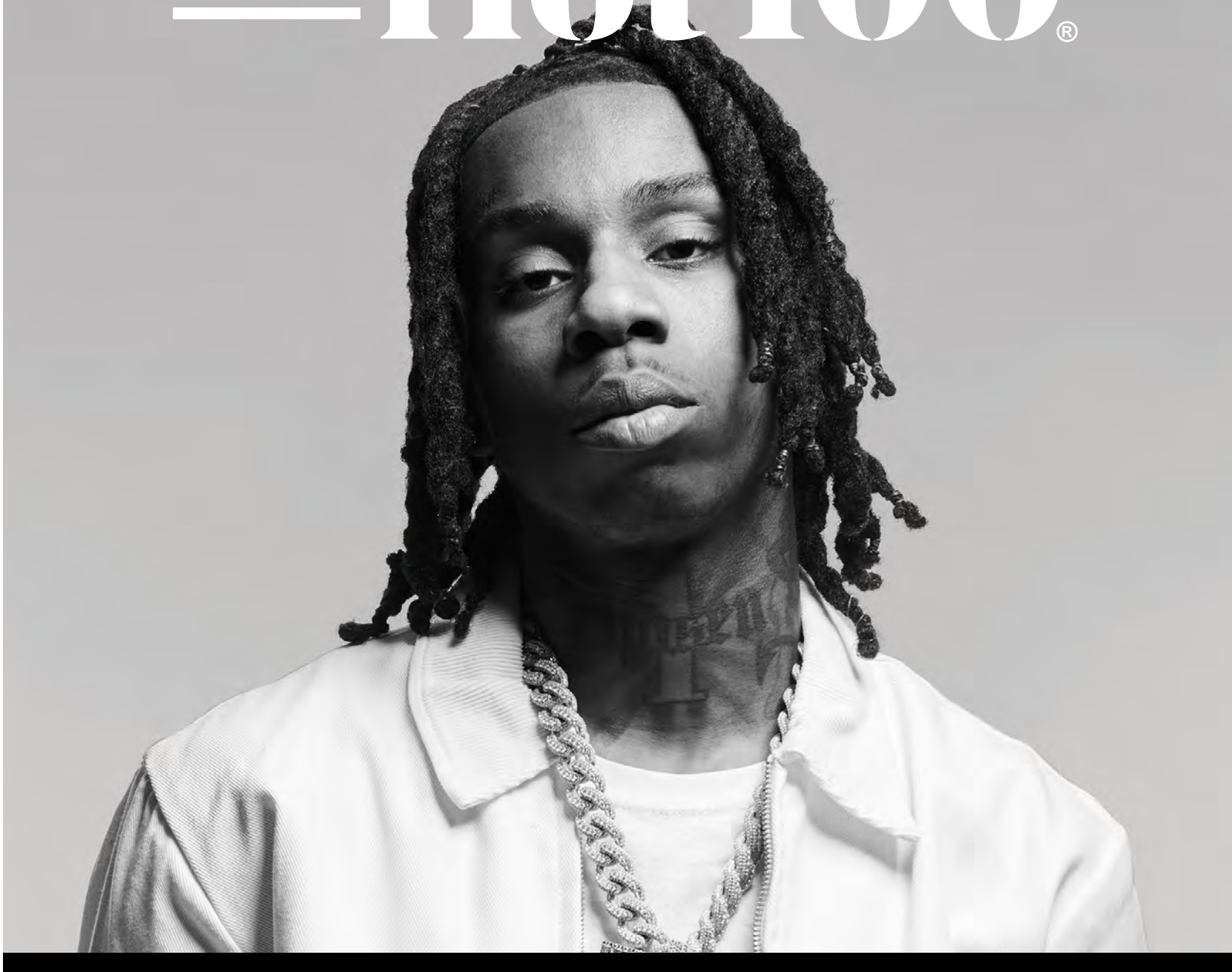


HOWARD WEITZMAN

We are heartbroken at the loss of our dear friend
and celebrate his extraordinary life and career.
He will be in our hearts forever.

**JOHN BRANCA, JOHN McCLAIN AND
THE ENTIRE MICHAEL JACKSON ESTATE TEAM**

billboard Hot 100®



Reigning 'Rapstar': Polo G Notches First No. 1

WHILE POLO G'S "RAPSTAR" SOARS IN STRAIGHT AT No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 — marking his first leader on the chart — the hit has been building buzz for nearly a year. On May 25, 2020, he teased what would later become the full song during a YouTube clip in which he and one of the track's producers, Einer Bankz, perform an acoustic version, with Bankz playing the ukulele.

On the Hot 100 dated April 24, "Rapstar" launches with 53.6 million U.S. streams in its first week (ending April 15), according to MRC Data — the highest weekly streaming total for a male artist in 2021 so far. Likewise, the track starts atop the Streaming Songs chart, where it's also Polo G's first No. 1.

"Rapstar" is the second Hot 100 top 10 for the 22-year-old Chicago native, born Taurus Bartlett, and his first in a lead role. "Hate the Other Side," by Juice WRLD and Marshmello (featuring Polo G and The Kid LAROI), debuted and peaked at No. 10 in July 2020. Before "Rapstar," Polo G had a No. 11 Hot 100 best as a lead artist with "Pop Out" (featuring Lil Tjay) in June 2019 — his first of 20 entries to date. —GARY TRUST

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	CERTIFICATION	Artist IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
		1	#1 RAPSTAR E.BANKZ, SYNCO (T.T.BARTLETT, E.BANKZ, A.WU)		Polo G COLUMBIA	1	1
1	2	2	MONTERO (CALL ME BY YOUR NAME) TAKE A DAY TRIP, O.FEDI, R.LENZO (M.L.HILL, D.M.A.BAPTISTE, D.BIRAL, O.FEDI, R.LENZO)		Lil Nas X COLUMBIA	1	3
3	1	3	LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN BRUNO MARS, D'MILE (BRUNO MARS, B.ANDERSON, D.EMILE II, C.B.BROWN)		Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak) AFTERMATH/ATLANTIC	1	6
2	3	4	AIR PEACHES HARYS WINDO, J.D.BIEBER, A.WOTMANG, DEWANS, B.HARVEY, L.M.MARTINEZ, JR., L.B.BELL, F.KING, M.S.LEON, K.YAZDANI, A.SIMMONS		Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon RAYMOND BRAUN / DEF JAM	1	4
6	6	5	SAVE YOUR TEARS MAX MARTIN, O.T.HOLTER, THE WEEKND (A.TESFAYE, A.BALSHE, J.QUENNEVILLE, MAX MARTIN, O.T.HOLTER)		The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	4	18
7	7	6	LEVITATING KOZ, S.D.PRICE (C.COFFEE, JR., S.KOZMENIUK, S.T.HUDSON, D.LIPA, J.L.KIRK, M.A.ELLIOTT, M.CICCONE)		Dua Lipa Feat. DaBaby WARNER	5	28
		NEW 7	KISS ME MORE YUNG DZA, DJ SWANQO, SEAN ISLAND (CARDI B, J.K.LANIER THORPE, J.D.STEED, E.SELMANI, M.ALLEN, J.BAKER)		Doja Cat Feat. SZA KEMOSABE/RCA	7	1
4	4	8	UP YUNG DZA, DJ SWANQO, SEAN ISLAND (CARDI B, J.K.LANIER THORPE, J.D.STEED, E.SELMANI, M.ALLEN, J.BAKER)		Cardi B ATLANTIC	1	10
5	5	9	DRIVERS LICENSE D.NIGRO (O.RODRIGO, D.L.NIGRO)		Olivia Rodrigo Geffen/Interscope	1	14
12	10	10	ASTRONAUT IN THE OCEAN T.HAPI (H.MICHAEL, T.HAPI)		Masked Wolf TEAMWRK/ELEKTRA/EMG	10	9

THE WEEKS MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY RADIO AIRPLAY, AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY MRC DATA, SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY MRC DATA AND STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY MRC DATA. SONGS ARE DEFINED AS CURRENT IF THEY ARE NEWLY RELEASED TITLES OR SONGS RECEIVING AIRPLAY (AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY) FOR THE FIRST TIME. SEE CHART'S LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND MRC DATA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



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4 WEEKS IN A ROW

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WKS. ABO.	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	CERTIFICATION	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
58	49	51	TIME TODAY REAL, RED, YC (D.D.WHITE, JR., C.PEARSON, J.D.NELSON)		Moneybagg Yo N-LESS/INTERSCOPE	37	10
RE-ENTRY		52	LOVE STORY (TAYLOR'S VERSION) C.ROWE, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	11	2
16	39	53	STREET RUNNER TNTXD, LONDON BLU, KARLTIN BANKZ (R.GREEN, R.BERHE, T.HORTON, L.PAYNE, S.REYNOLDS)		Rod Wave ALAMO	16	5
42	37	54	WHAT'S YOUR COUNTRY SONG D.HUFF, J.FRASURE (THOMAS RHETT, R.AKINS, J.FRASURE, A.GORLEY, P.WELLING)		Thomas Rhett VALORY	29	17
22	46	55	RICHER PLUTOBRAZY, FLYNN (R.GREEN, T.T.BARTLETT, R.HANNAH, F.CRANSTON)		Rod Wave Feat. Polo G ALAMO	22	3
53	51	56	TELEPATIA TAINY, M.LARA, ALBERT HYPE (K.LOAZI, CHRIS CHIL, S.M.PRIMERA, MUSSETT, M.LARA, A.C.MELENDEZ, M.E.MASIS FERNANDEZ)		Kali Uchis EMI/INTERSCOPE	39	8
60	52	57	JUST THE WAY ▲ D.FANNING (M.THOMAS, K.BARD, N.W.SIPE)		Parmalee x Blanco Brown STONEY CREEK	31	16
67	64	58	HELL OF A VIEW J.JOYCE (E.CHURCH, C.BEATHARD, M.CRISWELL)		Eric Church EMI NASHVILLE	58	14
66	62	59	SOMEBODY LIKE THAT A.KLINE (T.ARTS, A.KLINE, A.M.CRUIZ)		Tenille Arts 19TH & GRAND	59	13
45	54	60	LONG LIVE C.CROWDER, T.HUBBARD, B.KELLEY (T.HUBBARD, B.KELLEY, C.CROWDER, D.A.GARCIA, J.MILLER)		Florida Georgia Line BMLG	45	15
74	77	61	DOWN TO ONE J.STEVENS, J.STEVENS (K.FISHMAN, D.DAVIDSON, J.EBACH)		Luke Bryan CAPITOL NASHVILLE	36	16
59	60	62	WILLOW A.DESSNER (T.SWIFT, A.DESSNER)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	1	18
46	57	63	HOLD ON ANDREW WATT, L.BELL (J.D.BIEBER, A.WOTMAN, A.TAMPOSI, J.D.BELLION, L.B.BELL, L.BONFA, W.DE BACKER)		Justin Bieber RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM	20	6
68	55	64	HEADSHOT TNTXD, TAJH, MONEY, DMAC, BORDEAUX, NON NATIVE, IO ISLIDE (LIL TJAY, T.BARTLETT, FIVIO FOREIGN, T.HORTON, T.JVAUGHN, H.MCCOWELL, L.CAMPOZANO, B.WALSH)		Lil Tjay, Polo G & Fivio Foreign COLUMBIA	42	4
NEW		65	FOREVER & ALWAYS (TAYLOR'S VERSION) C.ROWE, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	65	1
52	58	66	LADY ● D.HUFF (B.YOUNG, R.COPPERMAN, J.M.NITE)		Brett Young BMLG	52	14
73	68	67	BREAKING UP WAS EASY IN THE 90'S Z.CROWELL (S.L.HUNT, C.LA CORTE, Z.CROWELL, E.K.SMITH, J.OSBORNE)		Sam Hunt MCA NASHVILLE	67	7
64	65	68	DAMAGE CARDIAK, JEFF GITTY (H.E.R., C.E.MCCORMICK, A.CLEMONS JR., T.THOMAS, T.S.LEWIS, J.S.HARRIS III)		H.E.R. MBK/RCA	44	18
62	59	69	MOMMA'S HOUSE Z.CROWELL (D.SCHNEIDER, M.LOTTEN, R.CLAWSON, J.T.WILSON)		Dustin Lynch BROKEN BOW	59	14
36	53	70	ANYONE ● THE MONSTERS & STRANGERS, ANDREW WATT, J.BELLION (J.D.BIEBER, J.D.BELLION, M.POLLACK, K.JOHNSON, S.JOHNSON, A.WOTMAN, A.IZQUIERDO, R.CUBINA)		Justin Bieber RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM	6	15
NEW		71	FEARLESS (TAYLOR'S VERSION) C.ROWE, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT, L.ROSE, H.LINDSEY)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	71	1
RE-ENTRY		72	YOU ALL OVER ME (TAYLOR'S VERSION) (FROM THE VAULT) A.DESSNER, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT, S.COOTER CARUSOE)		Taylor Swift feat. Maren Morris REPUBLIC	51	2
57	63	73	MY HEAD AND MY HEART CIRKUT, EARWULF (A.A.KOCI, H.R.WALTER, T.ERIKSON, M.E.LOVE, T.SCOLA, A.E.POTEKHIN, S.ZHUKOV)		Ava Max MAX CUT/ARTIST PARTNER GROUP/ATLANTIC	45	10
78	75	74	LA NOCHE DE ANOCHE CHRIS JEDAY, GABY MUSIC, J.E.ORTIZ RIVERA (B.A.MARTINEZ OCASIO, C.E.ORTIZ RIVERA, J.G.RIVERA VAZQUEZ, J.E.ORTIZ RIVERA, R.VILA TOBELL)		Bad Bunny & Rosalia RIMAS	53	12
NEW		75	YOU BELONG WITH ME (TAYLOR'S VERSION) C.ROWE, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT, L.ROSE)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	75	1
90	71	76	SETTLING DOWN J.JOYCE (M.LAMBERT, L.DICK, N.HEMBY)		Miranda Lambert VANNER/RCA NASHVILLE	71	5
76	69	77	HELLCATS & TRACKHAWKS DJ BANDZ (D.D.BANKS)		Lil Durk ONLY THE FAMILY/EMPIRE	69	5
92	85	78	GLAD YOU EXIST D.SMYERS (D.SMYERS, J.REYNOLDS, T.M.PARKS, S.MOONEY, R.L.TAYLOR)		Dan + Shay WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WAR	63	10
-	50	79	RUN IT UP J.PETRUCCIO (LIL TJAY, J.PETRUCCIO, D.D.WHITE, JR., K.CEPHUS)		Lil Tjay Feat. Offset & Moneybagg Yo COLUMBIA	50	2
91	78	80	ALMOST MAYBES P.DIGIOVANNI (J.DAVIS, J.FRASURE, H.LINDSEY)		Jordan Davis MCA NASHVILLE	73	12



7 | **DOJA CAT FEAT. SZA**
"Kiss Me More"

The collaboration bounds in with 23.3 million U.S. streams, 12.6 million in radio audience and 7,600 sold, according to MRC Data. Doja Cat (see story, page 36) notches her second Hot 100 top 10 after "Say So" (featuring Nicki Minaj) topped the chart on May 16, 2020. SZA scores her fourth top 10 and matches her best rank following her featured turn on Maroon 5's "What Lovers Do" (No. 9, November 2017); "All the Stars," with Kendrick Lamar (No. 7, March 2018); and her own "Good Days" (No. 9, February). —G.T.

DOJA: JAMAL PETERS. DMX: JEROD HARRIS/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES. PILOTS: ASHLEY OSBORN.

WKS. ABO.	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	CERTIFICATION	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
NEW		81	BIG GANGSTA ● F.LEONE (M.K.J.GILYARD, D.PATTON)		Kevin Gates BREAD WINNERS' ASSOCIATION/ATLANTIC	81	1
77	72	82	MASTERPIECE D.A. GOT THAT DOPE (D.A. GOT THAT DOPE, J.B.THOMAS, C.TORPEY, J.L.KIRK)		DaBaby SOUTHCOAST/INTERSCOPE	55	12
86	74	83	THE BUSINESS Tiesto, HIGHTOWER (T.M.VERWEST, J.KARLSSON, A.RUNDBERG, J.BELL)		Tiesto MUSICAL FREEDOM/ATLANTIC	69	8
-	67	84	4 DA GANG TAY TAY MADELT (D.M.HAYES, R.W.MOORE, JR., T.D.CARTER, R.SCHENKER, K.MEINE)		42 Dugg & Roddy Ricch CMG/INTERSCOPE	67	2
83	73	85	QUICKSAND MORRAY, ANT CHAMBERLAIN (M.RUFFIN, A.J.PHILLIPS)		Morray PICK SIX/INTERSCOPE	73	10
84	79	86	PICK UP YOUR FEELINGS DZL (J.SULLIVAN, M.HOLMES, B.C.CONEY, D.ANDREWS, K.C.COLEMAN, A.M.BUTTS)		Jazmine Sullivan RCA	75	12
NEW		87	SHY AWAY T.JOSEPH, J.DUN (T.JOSEPH)		twenty one pilots FUELED BY RAMEN/EMG	87	1
NEW		88	FIFTEEN (TAYLOR'S VERSION) C.ROWE, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	88	1
69	82	89	BIG PURR (PRRDD) KIDHAZEL, P.GUNDRY (C.L.COLLINS, L.WILLIAMS, A.BAILEY, P.GUNDRY)		Coi Leray & Pooh Shiesty REPUBLIC	69	3
-	89	90	FAMOUS FRIENDS C.YOUNG, C.CROWDER (C.YOUNG, C.R.BARLOWE, C.CROWDER)		Chris Young + Kane Brown RCA NASHVILLE	89	3
99	91	91	NOBODY M.ALDERMAN, C.GIBBS, J.E.NORMAN (D.SCOTT, M.ALDERMAN, D.WILSON)		Dylan Scott CURB	85	7
-	93	92	LIL BIT J.M.SCHMIDT (T.HUBBARD, J.M.SCHMIDT, B.REFERRIN, C.HAYNES, JR.)		Nelly & Florida Georgia Line RECORDS/COLUMBIA	92	4
-	61	93	MET HIM LAST NIGHT TBHTIS, XAVI (T.L.BROWN, C.X.HERRERA, A.GRANDE, A.STANAJ)		Demi Lovato Feat. Ariana Grande ISLAND/REPUBLIC	61	2
NEW		94	THE WAY I LOVED YOU (TAYLOR'S VERSION) C.ROWE, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT, J.D.RICH)		Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	94	1
80	86	95	MONSTERS ● A.GASKARTH, Z.CERVINI, A.M.GOLDSTEIN (A.GASKARTH, J.BARAKAT, A.M.GOLDSTEIN, K.R.FISHER, M.T.MUSTO, D.LOVATO)		All Time Low Feat. Demi Lovato & blackbear FUELED BY RAMEN/EMG	55	16
95	88	96	ONE TOO MANY K.URBAN, PHD, CUT FATHER (D.H.DAVIDSEN, P.WALLEVIK, M.H.HANSEN, J.NORTON, C.TIGHE)		Keith Urban Duet With P!nk HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE	62	18
79	80	97	WASTED ON YOU J.MOI, J.DURRETT (M.WALLEN, E.K.SMITH, J.THOMPSON, CHARLIE HANDSOME)		Morgan Wallen REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	9	14
-	56	98	DANCING WITH THE DEVIL M.ALLAN (D.LOVATO, B.ATTERBERRY, J.HO, M.ALLAN)		Demi Lovato ISLAND/REPUBLIC	56	2
-	97	99	GONE D.GARCIA (N.GALYON, B.JOHNSON, N.MOON)		Dierks Bentley CAPITOL NASHVILLE	97	5
82	83	100	REAL AS IT GETS ATL JACOB BY CRAZY (D.A.JONES, D.L.J.AVERY, J.CANADY)		Lil Baby Feat. EST Gee MOTOWN/CAPITOL	34	6



16
DMX
"Ruff Ryders' Anthem"

Alongside gains for the late rapper's catalog following his April 9 death, the track becomes his highest-charting Hot 100 hit. It first reached No. 94 in February 1999.



87
TWENTY ONE PILOTS
"Shy Away"

The lead single from *Scaled and Icy*, due May 21, arrives with 6.2 million in airplay audience and 5.6 million streams. The duo's last album, 2018's *Trench*, has earned 1.2 million equivalent album units.

THE WEEK'S HOT 100 AIR CURRENT POSITIONS, ARTISTS, SONGS, ALBUMS, AND WEEKS ON CHART. *SEE CHARTS FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS. **SEE CHARTS FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND THE MUSIC BUSINESS GROUP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



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LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST	CERTIFICATION	IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
HOT SHOT DEBUT	1	#1 TAYLOR SWIFT	REPUBLIC	Fearless (Taylor's Version)	1	1	
73	2	GREATEST GAINER DMX	RUFF RYDERS/DEF JAM/UMG	The Best Of DMX	2	8	
1	3	JUSTIN BIEBER	RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM	Justice	1	4	
4	4	MORGAN WALLEN	BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	14	
3	5	ROD WAVE	ALAMO/GEFFEN/JGA	SoulFly	1	3	
17	6	ARIANA GRANDE	REPUBLIC	Positions	1	24	
6	7	THE WEEKND	XO/REPUBLIC	The Highlights	2	10	
5	8	LIL TJAY	COLUMBIA	Destined 2 Win	5	2	
7	9	POP SMOKE	VICTOR VICTOR WORLDWIDE/REPUBLIC	Shoot For The Stars Aim For The Moon	1	41	
9	10	DUA LIPA	WARNER	Future Nostalgia	3	54	
NEW	11	BROCKHAMPTON	QUESTION EVERYTHING/RCA	Roadrunner: New Light, New Machine	11	1	
11	12	LIL BABY	QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN/CAPITOL	My Turn	1	59	
2	13	DEMI LOVATO	ISLAND/REPUBLIC	Dancing With The Devil...The Art Of Starting Over	2	2	
10	14	LUKE COMBS	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	What You See Is What You Get	1	75	
12	15	POOH SHIESTY	1017 GLOBAL/ATLANTIC/AG	Shiesty Season	3	10	
16	16	JUICE WRLD	GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Legends Never Die	1	40	
15	17	GIVEON	NOT SO FAST/EPIC	When It's All Said And Done... Take Time	5	5	
14	18	POST MALONE	REPUBLIC	Hollywood's Bleeding	1	84	
21	19	POLO G	COLUMBIA	The GOAT	2	48	
24	20	BAD BUNNY	RIMAS	El Ultimo Tour del Mundo	1	20	
13	21	LIL DURK	ALAMO/GEFFEN/JGA	The Voice	2	17	
18	22	HARRY STYLES	ERSKINE/COLUMBIA	Fine Line	1	70	
194	23	PACE SETTER LUKE BRYAN	CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN	Born Here Live Here Die Here	5	25	
19	24	MEGAN THEE STALLION	ISO1 CERTIFIED/300/AG	Good News	2	21	
23	25	THE KID LAROI	COLUMBIA	F*ck Love	3	38	
22	26	QUEEN	HOLLYWOOD	Greatest Hits	8	434	
36	27	BAD BUNNY	RIMAS	YHLQMDLG	2	59	
28	28	JUICE WRLD	GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Goodbye & Good Riddance	4	152	
33	29	TAYLOR SWIFT	REPUBLIC	Evermore	1	18	
25	30	DOJA CAT	KEMOSABE/RCA	Hot Pink	9	76	
20	31	BILLIE EILISH	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/JGA	When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?	1	107	
26	32	LUKE COMBS	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	This One's For You	4	202	
29	33	TAYLOR SWIFT	REPUBLIC	Folklore	1	38	
8	34	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN	My Savior	4	3	
34	35	MACHINE GUN KELLY	EST19XX/BAD BOY/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Tickets To My Downfall	1	29	
NEW	36	MO3	HSM/EMPIRE	Shottaz-†4Eva	36	1	
35	37	ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST	HAMILTON UPTOWN/ATLANTIC/AG	Hamilton: An American Musical	2	290	
27	38	FLEETWOOD MAC	WARNER/RHINO	Rumours	1	420	
46	39	EMINEM	SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Curtain Call: The Hits=	1	524	
44	40	JUICE WRLD	GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Death Race For Love	1	110	
38	41	BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS	TUFF GONG/ISLAND/UMG	Legend: The Best Of...	5	674	
41	42	TRAVIS SCOTT	CACTUS JACK/GRAND HUSTLE/EPIC	ASTROWORLD	1	141	
43	43	CHRIS STAPLETON	MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN	Starting Over	3	22	
39	44	CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL	FANTASY/CONCORD	Chronicle The 20 Greatest Hits	18	519	
40	45	MORGAN WALLEN	BIG LOUD	If I Know Me	10	133	
RE	46	DMX	RUFF RYDERS/DEF JAM/UMG	It's Dark And Hell Is Hot	1	102	
42	47	JACK HARLOW	GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG	That's What They All Say	5	18	
54	48	SZA	TOP DAWG/RCA	Ctrl	3	201	
45	49	ELTON JOHN	ROCKET/ISLAND/UMG	Diamonds	7	179	
48	50	POST MALONE	REPUBLIC	beerbongs & bentleys	1	155	

50	51	DRAKE	YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC	Scorpion	1	146
51	52	DABABY	SOUTHCOST/INTERSCOPE/JGA	BLAME IT ON BABY	1	52
52	53	ROD WAVE	ALAMO/JGA	Pray 4 Love	2	54
56	54	LIL UZI VERT	GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG	Eternal Atake	1	58
57	55	KENDRICK LAMAR	TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA	good kid, m.A.A.d city	2	442
37	56	KAROL G	UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATINO/UMLE	KG0516	20	3
55	57	CHRIS STAPLETON	MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN	Traveller	1	292
31	58	NF	NF REAL MUSIC	Clouds (The Mixtape)	3	3
32	59	YOUNG DOLPH & KEY GLOCK	PAPER ROUTE EMPIRE	Dum And Dummer 2	8	3
59	60	JOURNEY	COLUMBIA/LEGACY	Journey's Greatest Hits	10	664
58	61	POST MALONE	REPUBLIC	Stoney	4	227
64	62	SUMMER WALKER	LVRN/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Over It	2	80
72	63	2PAC	AMARU/DEATH ROW/INTERSCOPE/UMG	Greatest Hits	3	366
86	64	GABBY BARRETT	WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	Goldmine	27	43
49	65	24KGOLDN	RECORDS/COLUMBIA	El Dorado	22	3
65	66	LEWIS CAPALDI	VERTIGO/CAPITOL	Divinely Uninspired To A Hellish Extent	20	100
61	67	AC/DC	COLUMBIA/LEGACY	Back In Black	4	459
68	68	J. COLE	DREAMVILLE/ROC NATION/COLUMBIA/LEGACY	2014 Forest Hills Drive	1	332
47	69	AJR	AJR/BMG	OK Orchestra	10	3
96	70	SPOTEMGOTTEM	SPOTEMGOTTEM	Final Destination	70	11
63	71	RODDY RICCH	BIRD VISION/ATLANTIC/AG	Please Excuse Me For Being Antisocial	1	71
69	72	BRUNO MARS	ELEKTRA/EMG	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	3	515
71	73	YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN	NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ARTIST PARTNER GROUP/ATLANTIC/AG	Top	1	31
70	74	TAYLOR SWIFT	REPUBLIC	Lover	1	86
67	75	EMINEM	SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Music To Be Murdered By	1	64
60	76	VARIOUS ARTISTS	ONLY THE FAMILY/EMPIRE	Only The Family Presents: Loyal Bros Compilation	12	6
74	77	GUNS N' ROSES	GEFFEN/UMG	Greatest Hits	3	525
75	78	ED SHEERAN	ATLANTIC/AG	÷ (Divide)	1	215
66	79	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	BMLG	Life Rolls On	21	9
62	80	BILLIE EILISH	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/JGA	Dont Smile At Me	14	173
82	81	DRAKE	YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC	Take Care	1	424
85	82	KENDRICK LAMAR	TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA	DAMN.	1	209
79	83	THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.	BAD BOY/RHINO	Greatest Hits	1	270
78	84	FUTURE	FREEBANDZ/EPIC	High Off Life	1	48
76	85	FUTURE & LIL UZI VERT	FREEBANDZ/EPIC/GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG	Pluto x Baby Pluto	2	22
80	86	LIL DURK	ALAMO/GEFFEN/JGA	Just Cause Y'all Waited 2	2	49
77	87	JHENE AIKO	2 FISH/ART CLUB/ARTIUM/DEF JAM	Chilombo	2	58
53	88	THE BEATLES	APPLE/CAPITOL/UMG	1	1	468
88	89	TAYLOR SWIFT	BIG MACHINE/BMLG	1989	1	331
112	90	POLO G	COLUMBIA	Die A Legend	6	96
91	91	XXXTENTACION	BAD VIBES FOREVER	?	1	161
84	92	KHALID	RIGHT HAND/RCA	American Teen	4	215
90	93	LIL UZI VERT	GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG	Luv Is Rage 2	1	190
81	94	TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS	MCA/GEFFEN/UMG	Greatest Hits	2	405
89	95	GUNNA	YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/AG	Wunna	1	47
102	96	NIRVANA	SUB POP/DGC/GEFFEN/UMG	Nevermind	1	520
97	97	GLASS ANIMALS	WOLF TONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC	Dreamland	7	23
99	98	SOUNDTRACK	WALT DISNEY	Moana	2	227
150	99	BILLY JOEL	COLUMBIA/LEGACY	The Essential Billy Joel	15	232
98	100	MICHAEL JACKSON	EPIC/LEGACY	Thriller	1	466



Fearless, Revisited

Over 12 years after Taylor Swift topped the Billboard 200 for the first time with the 2008 album *Fearless*, she makes a ninth trip to the peak with her rerecorded rendition of the set, *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*. The album, the first of her planned series of rerecorded Big Machine titles, bows with the year's biggest week for an album in both equivalent album units earned (291,000) and album sales (179,000) in the United States during the week ending April 15, according to MRC Data.

Fearless (Taylor's Version) scores the biggest week for a country album since Luke Bryan's *Kill the Lights* bowed with 345,000 units (Aug. 29, 2015).

Swift also becomes the first woman to achieve three new No. 1 albums in under 12 months, as it has been only a Swift eight months and two weeks between the first frames at No. 1 for *folklore* (Aug. 8, 2020) and *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*, with *evermore* ruling the chart on Dec. 26, 2020.

Lastly, Swift now ties Madonna for the second-most chart-toppers among women. Barbra Streisand leads the pack, with 11.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

THE BILLBOARD 200 CHART RANKS THE MOST POPULAR ALBUMS OF THE WEEK, AS COMPILLED BY MRC DATA, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION (BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUM SALES, AND STREAMING-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS). SALES DATA COMPILED BY MRC DATA.

A TORNADO OF JOY. HIS LEGACY IS UNMATCHABLE AND WILL LIVE ON FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. — ED SHEERAN FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS A MUSIC MAN. I'VE TOURED THE WORLD FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS AND NEVER MET A BETTER PROMOTER. — BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN ONE OF A KIND AND FOREVER FAMILY. IRREPLACEABLE AND UNFORGETTABLE, I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 'THE BIG G'. — KYLIE MINOGUE WE WILL CHERISH HIS MEMORY; WE'LL MISS HIM. AND WE'LL TAKE WITH US THE FACT THAT HE LOVED WHAT HE DID AND HE LOVED HIS ARTISTS. — ELTON JOHN EVERYONE IN THE BAND AND CREW LOVED AND RESPECTED HIM. ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S GREAT MUSIC MEN. — PAUL MCCARTNEY OUR EARLIEST BELIEVER AND MOST ARDENT SUPPORTER. STRAIGHT-FORWARD, FULL OF PASSION AND FULL OF LOVE. THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER LIKE HIM. — GARBAGE THANK YOU FOR GIVING US AND COUNTLESS OTHERS THE BEST NIGHT OF OUR LIVES. OVER AND OVER AGAIN. ROCK & ROLL WILL MISS YOU DEEPLY. — FOO FIGHTERS A GIGANTIC AND UNIQUE SOUL BRIMMING WITH ENERGY AND PASSION FOR MUSIC, LIFE AND FUN, AND FRANKLY IRREPLACEABLE. — STING A JOY TO WORK WITH AND A GREAT SUPPORTER OF ALL THINGS OZ. — BILLY JOEL A FRIEND AND A DOWNRIGHT BADASS WHO DRANK ME UNDER THE TABLE. WHAT AN ABSOLUTE WEAPON. — TASH SULTANA THANK YOU FOR YOUR INFECTIOUS PASSION, YOUR LOVE & FOR ALWAYS MAKING OUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME FEEL LIKE HOME. — QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE. — VANCE JOY IF I WANTED TO GO TO OZ, MANAGEMENT WOULD SAY "I'LL CALL GUDINSKI!" A GREAT LEGEND. — NEIL YOUNG A LARGER THAN LIFE FIGURE, YOU CAME FROM AN ERA THAT LEFT TALES OF LEGENDARY PROPORTIONS. — FAITH NO MORE HIS LAUGH WOULD LIGHT UP THE ROOM. HIS SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY, COMPASSION AND TOGETHERNESS A BEACON. HE FOUGHT TIRELESSLY TO HELP YOU MAKE DREAMS A REALITY. — THE TEMPER TRAP

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
93	101	MICHAEL JACKSON	▲	The Essential Michael Jackson	31	352
100	102	CARDI B	▲	Invasion Of Privacy	1	158
94	103	21 SAVAGE & METRO BOOMIN	●	Savage Mode II	1	28
95	104	AVA MAX	●	Heaven & Hell	27	26
110	105	DRAKE	▲	Views	1	257
83	106	KALI UCHIS	▲	Sin Miedo (Del Amor y Otros Demonios)	52	8
RE	107	DMX	▲	Flesh Of My Flesh Blood Of My Blood	1	56
104	108	ARIANA GRANDE	▲	Thank U, Next	1	114
106	109	DRAKE	●	Dark Lane Demo Tapes	2	50
107	110	POP SMOKE	●	Meet The Woo, V.2	7	62
115	111	SAM HUNT	●	SOUTHSIDE	5	50
103	112	MONEYBAGG YO	●	Time Served	3	66
119	113	BTS	▲	MAP OF THE SOUL : 7	1	60
121	114	METALLICA	▲	Metallica	1	603
153	115	BAD BUNNY	●	X 100PRE	11	120
109	116	KHALID	▲	Free Spirit	1	106
92	117	BTS	▲	BE	1	21
101	118	LYNYRD SKYNYRD	▲	All Time Greatest Hits	56	122
114	119	HALSEY	▲	Manic	2	65
113	120	KING VON	▲	Welcome To O'Block	5	24
87	121	LANA DEL REY	▲	Chemtrails Over The Country Club	2	4
108	122	ZAC BROWN BAND	▲	Greatest Hits So Far...	20	300
118	123	LIZZO	▲	Cuz I Love You	4	104
105	124	BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND	▲	Greatest Hits	8	371
120	125	TWENTY ONE PILOTS	▲	Blurryface	1	299
111	126	THE BEACH BOYS	▲	Sounds Of Summer: The Very Best Of The Beach Boys	16	248
116	127	LEE BRICE	▲	Hey World	45	21
131	128	KID CUDI	●	Man On The Moon: The End Of Day	4	170
123	129	ARCTIC MONKEYS	▲	AM	6	143
130	130	DRAKE	▲	Nothing Was The Same	1	370
122	131	DABABY	▲	KIRK	1	80
126	132	LIL TJAY	▲	True 2 Myself	5	77
RE	133	NICKELBACK	▲	The Best Of Nickelback: Volume 1	21	41
179	134	KANYE WEST	▲	My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy	1	129
139	135	HARRY STYLES	▲	Harry Styles	1	81
143	136	DRAKE	●	More Life	1	205
133	137	RIHANNA	▲	ANTI	1	264
151	138	FRANK OCEAN	▲	Blonde	1	225
137	139	KANYE WEST	▲	Graduation	1	167
146	140	SOUNDTRACK	▲	Frozen II	1	74
RE	141	THE BEATLES	▲	Abbey Road	1	406
NEW	142	CHEAP TRICK	▲	In Another World	142	1
117	143	BON JOVI	▲	Greatest Hits: The Ultimate Collection	5	203
142	144	NF	▲	The Search	1	89
135	145	HOZIER	▲	Hozier	2	206
RE	146	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	▲	Greatest Hits	18	272
127	147	EAGLES	▲	Hotel California	1	130
141	148	GEORGE STRAIT	▲	Straight Out Of The Box	43	47
144	149	IMAGINE DRAGONS	▲	Evolve	2	199
147	150	SOUNDTRACK	▲	The Greatest Showman	1	175



2

DMX
The Best of DMX

In the wake of DMX's death on April 9, his album catalog earned 125,000 in equivalent album units (up 503%) in the week ending April 15, according to MRC Data. *The Best of DMX* is his seventh top 10 and highest-charting album since 2006.



6

ARIANA GRANDE
Positions

Its April 9 vinyl and cassette release spurs its 17-6 leap, with 54,000 units (up 138%); 35,000 of that sum is in album sales (up 1,613%). It sold a little over 32,000 vinyl copies — the third-largest vinyl sales week since MRC Data began tracking sales in 1991.



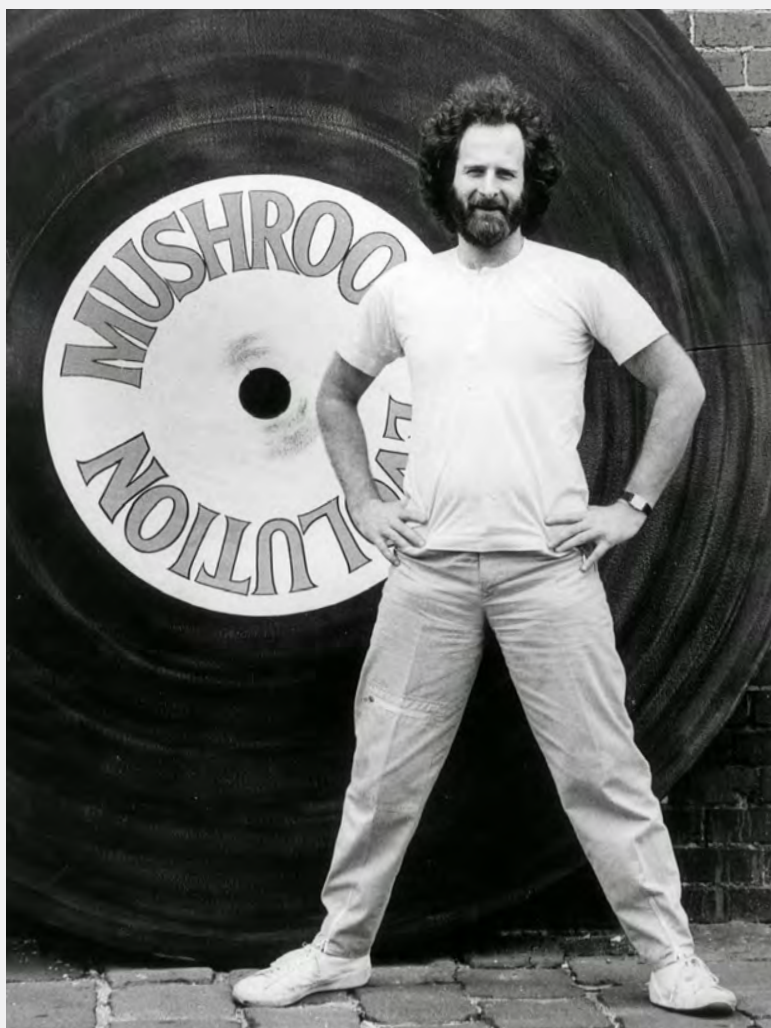
23

LUKE BRYAN
Born Here Live Here Die Here

The original 10-song album was reissued with six bonus tracks, helping the set's 194-23 leap. It earned 21,000 units for the week (up 203%), with 8,000 of that in album sales (up 1,695%). On Top Country Albums, it rebounds 27-4.

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
138	151	LANA DEL REY	▲	Born To Die	2	389
132	152	BRUNO MARS	▲	24K Magic	2	169
152	153	TRAVIS SCOTT	▲	Birds In The Trap Sing McKnight	1	237
140	154	ELVIS PRESLEY	▲	The Essential Elvis Presley	42	88
155	155	ROD WAVE	●	Ghetto Gospel	10	75
162	156	YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN	▲	AI YoungBoy 2	1	77
129	157	MAC MILLER	▲	Swimming	3	136
159	158	CHRIS BROWN	▲	Indigo	1	92
124	159	PLAYBOI CARTI	▲	Whole Lotta Red	1	16
161	160	PITBULL	▲	Greatest Hits	159	11
128	161	JAZMINE SULLIVAN	▲	Heaux Tales	4	14
149	162	TYLER, THE CREATOR	●	IGOR	1	82
163	163	YOUNG THUG	▲	So Much Fun	1	85
169	164	TAYLOR SWIFT	▲	reputation	1	140
148	165	YUNG BLEU	▲	Love Scars: The 5 Stages Of Emotions (EP)	82	15
156	166	DARYL HALL JOHN OATES	▲	The Very Best Of Daryl Hall, John Oates	34	124
177	167	TOBY KEITH	▲	35 Biggest Hits	2	85
180	168	H.E.R.	▲	H.E.R.	23	171
166	169	FUTURE	▲	DS2	1	143
174	170	XXXTENTACION	▲	17	2	188
168	171	JACKBOYS	▲	JACKBOYS	1	67
178	172	A BOOGIE WIT DA HOODIE	▲	Hoodie SZN	1	114
165	173	INTERNET MONEY	●	B4 The Storm	10	33
134	174	TATE MCRAE	▲	Too Young To Be Sad (EP)	94	3
173	175	LIL BABY	▲	Harder Than Ever	3	125
158	176	LADY GAGA	▲	The Fame	2	241
181	177	VARIOUS ARTISTS	▲	Dreamville & J. Cole: Revenge Of The Dreamers III	1	89
RE	178	KID CUDI	▲	Man On The Moon III: The Chosen	2	16
RE	179	RASCAL FLATTS	▲	Twenty Years Of Rascal Flatts: The Greatest Hits	87	8
182	180	LINKIN PARK	▲	[Hybrid Theory]	2	253
167	181	ABBA	▲	Gold: Greatest Hits	25	165
191	182	PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION	▲	Purple Rain (Soundtrack)	1	140
176	183	TIM MCGRAW	▲	Number One Hits	27	175
192	184	DDG X OG PARKER	▲	Die 4 Respect	61	4
186	185	KANE BROWN	▲	Kane Brown	5	212
190	186	KANE BROWN	▲	Mixtape, Vol. 1 (EP)	15	34
145	187	LIL NAS X	▲	7 (EP)	2	71
RE	188	50 CENT	▲	Get Rich Or Die Tryin'	1	112
170	189	TYLER CHILDERS	●	Purgatory	106	47
164	190	MILEY CYRUS	▲	Plastic Hearts	2	20
RE	191	TAYLOR SWIFT	▲	Red	1	168
125	192	EARTH, WIND & FIRE	▲	Greatest Hits	40	24
199	193	MIRANDA LAMBERT	▲	Wildcard	4	32
RE	194	TAYLOR SWIFT	▲	Speak Now	1	139
184	195	BLAKE SHELTON	▲	Reloaded: 20 #1 Hits	5	199
185	196	EAGLES	▲	Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975	1	359
RE	197	WHITNEY HOUSTON	▲	I Will Always Love You: The Best Of Whitney Houston	14	51
RE	198	LIL WAYNE	▲	Tha Carter III	1	164
RE	199	FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH	▲	A Decade Of Destruction	29	142
160	200	FLEETWOOD MAC	▲	Greatest Hits	14	184

VALE MICHAEL GUDINSKI



1952

—

2021

FOREVER #1




INDEPENDENT MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT LEADERS

BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200

billboard

APR. 24 2021

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
2	1	1	#1 MONTERO (CALL ME BY YOUR NAME)	Lil Nas X	1	3
 <p>The song reigns with 107.1 million streams a week after it drew 109.3 million. Only one other 2021 release has passed 100 million in weekly streams: Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license," for three consecutive weeks in January and February.</p>						
1	2	2	PEACHES	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	1	4
HOT SHOT DEBUT						
4	3	3	RAPSTAR	Polo G	3	1
3	4	4	LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	2	6
6	6	5	ASTRONAUT IN THE OCEAN	Masked Wolf	3	12
NEW	NEW	6	LEVITATING	Dua Lipa Feat. DaBaby	6	28
5	7	7	KISS ME MORE	Doja Cat Feat. SZA	7	1
-	8	8	SAVE YOUR TEARS	The Weeknd	2	15
11	11	9	DEJA VU	Olivia Rodrigo	8	2
8	10	10	HEARTBREAK ANNIVERSARY	Giveon	10	9
7	9	11	BLINDING LIGHTS	The Weeknd	2	32
9	12	12	DRIVERS LICENSE	Olivia Rodrigo	1	14
13	14	13	UP	Cardi B	4	10
14	13	14	DYNAMITE	BTS	1	32
12	15	15	THE BUSINESS	Tiesto	12	23
32	23	16	TELEPATIA	Kali Uchis	10	8
20	17	17	FIEL	Los Legendarios, Wisin & Jhay Cortez	17	5
-	114	18	GG MR. PERFECTLY FINE (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	19	2
10	16	19	HOLD ON	Justin Bieber	4	6
15	18	20	DAKITI	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez	1	24
19	20	21	GOOSEBUMPS	Travis Scott & HVME	15	16
16	21	22	MOOD	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	2	32
17	19	23	WELLERMAN	Nathan Evans	16	12
18	22	24	STREETS	Doja Cat	8	14
22	25	25	FRIDAY	Riton X Nightcrawlers Feat. Mufasa & Hypeman	22	8
NEW	NEW	26	RUFF RYDERS' ANTHEM	DMX	27	1
21	24	27	WITHOUT YOU	The Kid LAROI	12	21
40	26	28	BEAUTIFUL MISTAKES	Maroon 5 Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	26	6
25	27	29	BANDIDO	Myke Towers & Juhn	11	16
44	31	30	HEAT WAVES	Glass Animals	31	15
NEW	NEW	31	X GON' GIVE IT TO YA	DMX	32	1
38	34	32	BEST FRIEND	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat	33	14
29	28	33	DANCE MONKEY	Tones And I	16	32
RE-ENTRY	RE-ENTRY	34	LOVE STORY (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	7	3
31	32	35	WATERMELON SUGAR	Harry Styles	9	32
30	36	36	LA NOCHE DE ANOCHE	Bad Bunny & Rosalia	7	20
68	63	37	BEAT BOX	SpotemGottem Feat. Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby	38	11
50	43	38	ARCADE	Duncan Laurence	39	11
33	33	39	WE'RE GOOD	Dua Lipa	21	9
NEW	NEW	40	FOREVER & ALWAYS (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	41	1
47	42	41	SOMEONE YOU LOVED	Lewis Capaldi	24	32
27	30	42	WHAT'S NEXT	Drake	1	6
45	44	43	DON'T START NOW	Dua Lipa	30	32

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
46	41	45	MY HEAD AND MY HEART	Ava Max	32	11
24	35	46	ANYONE	Justin Bieber	3	15
42	39	47	GOOD DAYS	SZA	7	16
37	40	48	YOUR LOVE (9PM)	ATB x Topic x A7S	37	10
-	130	49	RUNAWAY	AURORA	49	2
41	37	50	34+35	Ariana Grande	2	24
NEW	NEW	51	YOU BELONG WITH ME (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	51	1
NEW	NEW	52	PARTY UP (UP IN HERE)	DMX	52	1
NEW	NEW	53	FEARLESS (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	53	1
-	5	54	FILM OUT	BTS	5	2
23	38	55	WHOOPTY	CJ	10	25
55	52	56	PERFECT	Ed Sheeran	30	32
61	57	57	911	Sech	57	7
36	46	58	WANTS AND NEEDS	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	2	6
52	49	59	BACK IN BLOOD	Pooh Shiesty Feat. Lil Durk	29	13
48	45	60	YOU BROKE ME FIRST.	Tate McRae	16	32
51	48	61	POSITIONS	Ariana Grande	1	25
53	53	62	ROSES	SAINT JHN	14	32
72	68	63	BATOM DE CEREJA	Israel & Rodolfo	63	5
39	47	64	HOLY	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper	3	30
-	29	65	MET HIM LAST NIGHT	Demi Lovato Feat. Ariana Grande	29	2
59	58	66	ROCKSTAR	DaBaby Feat. Roddy Ricch	8	32
56	59	67	HAWAI	Maluma	3	32
57	61	68	HEAD & HEART	Joel Corry X MNEK	17	32
71	72	69	LIFE IS GOOD	Future Feat. Drake	39	32
65	60	70	SAVAGE LOVE (LAXED - SIREN BEAT)	Jawsh 685 x Jason Derulo	1	32
64	62	71	WHAT YOU KNOW BOUT LOVE	Pop Smoke	11	32
NEW	NEW	72	OTRA NOCHE SIN TI	J Balvin & Khalid	72	1
NEW	NEW	73	SHY AWAY	twenty one pilots	73	1
66	65	74	LEMONADE	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	4	32
62	66	75	WAP	Cardi B Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	1	32
67	77	76	BAILA CONMIGO	Selena Gomez With Rauw Alejandro	22	11
58	64	77	PARADISE	Meduza & Dermot Kennedy	30	23
70	71	78	SUNFLOWER	Post Malone & Swae Lee	47	32
97	81	79	BED	Joel Corry X RAYE X David Guetta	79	6
77	75	80	SHAPE OF YOU	Ed Sheeran	68	32
82	56	81	HEADSHOT	Lil Tjay, Polo G & Fivio Foreign	42	4
109	90	82	COVER ME IN SUNSHINE	P!nk + Willow Sage Hart	82	6
35	142	83	YOU ALL OVER ME (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift Feat. Maren Morris	35	3
NEW	NEW	84	FIFTEEN (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	84	1
69	73	85	GIRL LIKE ME	Black Eyed Peas X Shakira	39	19
74	76	86	FOR THE NIGHT	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	7	32
95	108	87	EL MAKINON	Karol G & Mariah Angeliq	87	3
87	83	88	BABY SHARK	Pinkfong	38	31
85	82	89	SHALLOW	Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper	59	32
43	74	90	RICHER	Rod Wave Feat. Polo G	43	3
79	79	91	YORU NI KAKERU	YOASOBI	16	32
73	70	92	OLD TOWN ROAD	Lil Nas X Feat. Billy Ray Cyrus	70	32
NEW	NEW	93	THE WAY I LOVED YOU (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	93	1
60	78	94	ELLA NO ES TUYA	Rochy Rd X Myke Towers X Nicki Nicole	39	9
28	54	95	AS I AM	Justin Bieber Feat. Khalid	13	4
83	86	96	ON ME	Lil Baby	53	19

THE BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200 CHART RANKS THE TOP SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FROM OVER 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD — INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES — AS TRACKED BY MRC DATA. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A WEIGHTED FORMULA INCORPORATING OFFICIAL ONLY STREAMS ON BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED TITLES OF LEADING AUDIO AND VIDEO MUSIC SERVICES, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS.LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA, LLC AND MRC DATA, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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"At **CONTROVERSIA** I have the freedom to create and invest in what I see as great potential. Together with **Altafonte**, we were able to join efforts and amplify the results. This joint synergy takes us to a whole new level that goes beyond just the release of a single", says **Alok**.

3B
streams on
Spotify

18.8M
monthly
listeners

1.6B
views on
YouTube

5.8M
subscribers

24.7M
followers on
Instagram

2.4M
followers on
Twitter

8.8M
followers on
Facebook

9.6M
followers on
TikTok

CONTROVERSIA is exclusively distributed by Altafonte in Latin America, Spain and Portugal



Photo: Gabriel Wickbold

 **altafonte**
CONTROVERSIA



49

AURORA
"Runaway"

Sparked by an interactive, colorful TikTok filter and a subsequent viral challenge, the Norwegian singer-songwriter's 2015 single — which was also released on her 2016 debut album, *All My Demons Greeting Me As a Friend* — surges by 57% to 23.7 million streams worldwide, according to MRC Data. It also leaps into the top 40 (99–34) on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart.



135

TOM ODELL
"Another Love"

Soundtracking a variety of TikTok clips with its swell from bare piano to full band, the 2012 ballad is enjoying a 2021 resurgence. The track from the British singer-songwriter debuts with a 46% jump to 13.4 million global streams. Aiding his momentum, Odell's fourth studio album, *Monsters*, is due June 25. He performed the forthcoming project's "Numb" on CBS' *The Late Late Show With James Corden* on April 12.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
141	101	97	TALKING TO THE MOON	Bruno Mars	97	3
26	69	98	TOMBSTONE	Rod Wave	26	3
84	88	99	BAD GUY	Billie Eilish	54	32
81	92	100	LA CURIOSIDAD	DJ Nelson Presenta Jay Wheeler & Myke Towers	40	32
188	91	101	TAKE A PICTURE	NiziU	91	3
88	94	102	CIRCLES	Post Malone	49	32
91	97	103	BELIEVER	Imagine Dragons	70	32
92	96	104	BEFORE YOU GO	Lewis Capaldi	32	32
NEW	NEW	105	HEY STEPHEN (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	105	1
49	55	106	ON THE GROUND	ROSE	1	5
78	85	107	AT MY WORST	Pink Sweat\$ Feat. Kehlani	78	13
63	84	108	LONELY	Justin Bieber & benny blanco	5	26
75	67	109	DREAMS	Fleetwood Mac	10	29
80	87	110	THEREFORE I AM	Billie Eilish	2	22
NEW	NEW	111	WHITE HORSE (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	111	1
98	99	112	FOLLOW YOU	Imagine Dragons	66	5
164	133	113	MARTIN & GINA	Polo G	107	23
54	89	114	BICHOTA	Karol G	7	25
173	155	115	THE GOOD ONES	Gabby Barrett	115	7
102	105	116	SWEATER WEATHER	The Neighbourhood	62	29
101	104	117	LOVELY	Billie Eilish & Khalid	70	32
86	93	118	PRISONER	Miley Cyrus Feat. Dua Lipa	12	21
34	80	119	STREET RUNNER	Rod Wave	34	5
93	100	120	WHATSPOPPIN	Jack Harlow Feat. DaBaby, Tory Lanez & Lil Wayne	17	32
115	107	121	TRACK STAR	Mooski	107	6
90	98	122	NO MORE PARTIES	Coi Leray Feat. Lil Durk	70	8
126	50	123	DANCING WITH THE DEVIL	Demi Lovato	50	3
108	136	124	MONSTER	YOASOBI	87	13
-	51	125	RUN IT UP	Lil Tjay	51	2
100	109	126	RELOJ	Rauw Alejandro & Anuel AA	41	24
105	112	127	MEMORIES	Maroon 5	71	32
94	103	128	YOU'RE MINES STILL	Yung Bleu Feat. Drake	67	17
NEW	NEW	129	SLIPPIN'	DMX	129	1
NEW	NEW	130	THAT'S WHEN (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift Feat. Keith Urban	130	1
146	111	131	BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY	Queen	111	28
120	116	132	CLOSER	The Chainsmokers Feat. Halsey	100	28
NEW	NEW	133	BREATHE (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift Feat. Colbie Caillat	133	1
119	115	134	SEÑORITA	Shawn Mendes & Camila Cabello	67	32
NEW	NEW	135	ANOTHER LOVE	Tom Odell	135	1
NEW	NEW	136	WHERE THE HOOD AT	DMX	136	1
99	106	137	WILLOW	Taylor Swift	2	18
125	128	138	RIDE IT.	Regard	86	31
124	152	139	GIRLS LIKE US	Zoe Wees	124	7
138	126	140	SICKO MODE	Travis Scott	70	30
137	117	141	TIME TODAY	Moneybagg Yo	70	10
122	119	142	RAIN ON ME	Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande	22	32
123	120	143	DIOR	Pop Smoke	61	32
131	127	144	MY EX'S BEST FRIEND	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear	25	32
128	132	145	ALL OF ME	John Legend	97	30
117	123	146	GO CRAZY	Chris Brown & Young Thug	26	32
106	102	147	LUT GAYE	Jubin Nautiyal Feat. Emraan Hashmi	47	7
140	137	148	SAY YOU WON'T LET GO	James Arthur	96	28

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
NEW	NEW	149	AM	Nio Garcia X Flow La Movie	149	1
162	138	150	INTENTIONS	Justin Bieber Feat. Quavo	65	31
110	121	151	HECHA PA' MI	Boza	43	18
165	144	152	TAKE ME TO CHURCH	Hozier	129	14
NEW	NEW	153	ANYWHERE AWAY FROM HERE	Rag'n'Bone Man & P!nk	153	1
145	147	154	SAY SO	Doja Cat	50	31
136	122	155	DESPACITO	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee Feat. Justin Bieber	122	28
118	118	156	ADORE YOU	Harry Styles	68	31
152	124	157	STARTING OVER	Chris Stapleton	79	18
134	150	158	DRY FLOWER	Yuuri	48	16
151	149	159	GOOSEBUMPS	Travis Scott	102	29
127	134	160	THE BOX	Roddy Ricch	66	32
168	131	161	FOREVER AFTER ALL	Luke Combs	4	17
135	156	162	TRAVESURAS	Nio Garcia X Casper Magico X Ozuna X Wisin X Yandel X Myke Towers X Flow La Movie	100	5
130	145	163	BREAKING ME	Topic & A7S	21	32
163	146	164	I DON'T CARE	Ed Sheeran & Justin Bieber	105	28
NEW	NEW	165	YOU'RE NOT SORRY (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	165	1
154	140	166	DEATH BED	Powfu Feat. beabadoobee	43	31
157	157	167	BREAK MY HEART	Dua Lipa	47	30
147	139	168	LAUGH NOW CRY LATER	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	5	32
159	153	169	LUCID DREAMS	Juice WRLD	103	31
144	158	170	TAPAO NA RABA	Rai Saia Rodada	94	8
NEW	NEW	171	TELL ME WHY (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	171	1
114	135	172	AFTERGLOW	Ed Sheeran	13	17
121	129	173	CUPID'S CHOKEHOLD/BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Gym Class Heroes Feat. Patrick Stump	118	5
148	154	174	KINGS & QUEENS	Ava Max	31	32
155	175	175	BIG GANGSTA	Kevin Gates	132	5
139	164	176	WASURENA	Awesome City Club	89	8
174	159	177	ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST	Queen	159	6
182	171	178	SOMEBODY THAT I USED TO KNOW	Gotye Feat. Kimbra	141	10
149	148	179	MIDNIGHT SKY	Miley Cyrus	15	32
113	151	180	LOCATION	Karol G, Anuel AA & J Balvin	63	9
NEW	NEW	181	SLUMBER PARTY	Ashnikko Feat. Princess Nokia	181	1
111	141	182	KAIKAI KITAN	Eve	111	16
-	110	183	4 DA GANG	42 Dugg & Roddy Ricch	110	2
160	162	184	COUNTING STARS	OneRepublic	154	10
177	174	185	THE HILLS	The Weeknd	44	10
176	170	186	SOMETHING JUST LIKE THIS	The Chainsmokers & Coldplay	166	19
166	167	187	STARBOY	The Weeknd Feat. Daft Punk	52	10
172	168	188	HIGHEST IN THE ROOM	Travis Scott	83	31
178	161	189	DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'	Journey	150	26
112	143	190	USSEWA	Ado	41	13
185	176	191	THINKING OUT LOUD	Ed Sheeran	103	27
89	113	192	LEMON PEPPER FREESTYLE	Drake Feat. Rick Ross	4	6
161	160	193	GUNJOU	YOASOBI	44	10
180	169	194	HOTEL CALIFORNIA	Eagles	149	26
143	163	195	GOLDEN	Harry Styles	62	24
-	188	196	GIRLS LIKE YOU	Maroon 5 Feat. Cardi B	138	15
196	183	197	SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT	Nirvana	167	15
150	165	198	BANG!	AJR	84	28
RE-ENTRY	RE-ENTRY	199	I HOPE	Gabby Barrett	77	28
183	179	200	SWEET CHILD O' MINE	Guns N' Roses	176	15

THE BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200 CHART RANKS THE TOP SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FROM OVER 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD — INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES — AS TRACKED BY MRC DATA. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A WEIGHTED FORMULA INCORPORATING OFFICIAL ONLY STREAMS ON BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED TIERS OF LEADING AUDIO AND VIDEO MUSIC SERVICES, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATION. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND MRC DATA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



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This year, Warner Music Group is donating ad space in Billboard to elevate voices of activists, organizations, and charities that are creating real change. Our 2021 International Power Player honorees — Allassane Konaté, Alfonso Perez-Soto, Ben Larsen, Bernd Dopp, Chee Meng Tan, Dan Rosen, Eric Wong, Gustavo Mendendez, Inigo Zabala, Jess Keeley-Carter, Jonathan Serbin, Juan Paz, Kaz Aida, Mark Fry, Mathieu Tessier, Sander Stijnen, Santiago Mendendez-Pidal, Sergio Alfonso, Shant Gonzalez, Simon Robson, Tomas Rodriguez, Tony Harlow, Torsten Luth, and Victor Aroldoss — selected shesaid.so for their dedication to building a more equitable music industry through promoting intersectional feminism, breaking down gender stereotypes, educating allies, and empowering women and gender minorities.



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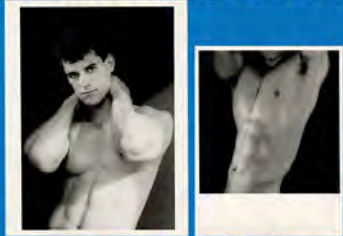


A once-in-a-lifetime experience
with Rickie Lee Jones!

Gotta Have Rock and Roll



Led Zeppelin Signed
"Led Zeppelin II" Album



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Photograph Collection

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Jim Morrison 1962
Original Painting
Signed and Titled
"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"
JSA



Elvis Presley "Blue Hawaii"
Film Worn U.S. Army G.I.
Uniform Shirt



Prince "Little Red Corvette"
Music Video Worn Jacket
and Stage Worn Costume



Ringo Starr 1963
D.A. Millings
Custom Collarless
Suit Jacket



The Beatles 1963 Signed
"Please Please Me" Album
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Finest Example Known



Rudolph Valentino
"The Four Horsemen
of the Apocalypse"
Film Worn Shirt



Def Leppard Rick Allen
Stage Worn Union Jack Shorts
From The Rick Allen Collection
to Benefit the Baladi Foundation
(Featuring over 50 items)



Elton John
Stage Worn
Iconic
Mozart Suit



Diego Maradona 1982
World Cup Match Worn
and Signed Jersey



Jimi Hendrix Owned &
Stage Worn Beaded
Leather Concho Belt



Albert Einstein
Historic 1935
Signed
Typewritten
German Letter
Warning
About Hitler



Chris Cornell
Owned and
Heavily
Stage Played
Fender
Jazzmaster Guitar



Kurt Cobain
Owned, Played, and
Signed (4x)
Acoustic Guitar
LOA from His Father



Bob Dylan Personally Owned,
Played and "Blonde on Blonde"
Recording Used Fender XII
String Electric Guitar

Eddie Van Halen
Personally Owned, Signed and
Heavily Stage Played Custom
1986 Kramer Striped Guitar



Eddie Van Halen Stage Played,
Hand-Striped & Signed
"Tic Tac Toe" 2004 Charvel Series Guitar



Eddie Van Halen Played
& Signed 1985 Custom Kramer
Striped Guitar with His Cigarette Butts



Eddie Van Halen
Studio Played & Signed
"No Bozos" Guitar



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GENE SMITH

...An Ad Man...



Billboard mourns the loss of our colleague. He will be missed and remembered by the entire industry for his dedication, passion and love of the business and our brand.

billboard

REMINDER

what happened to us?



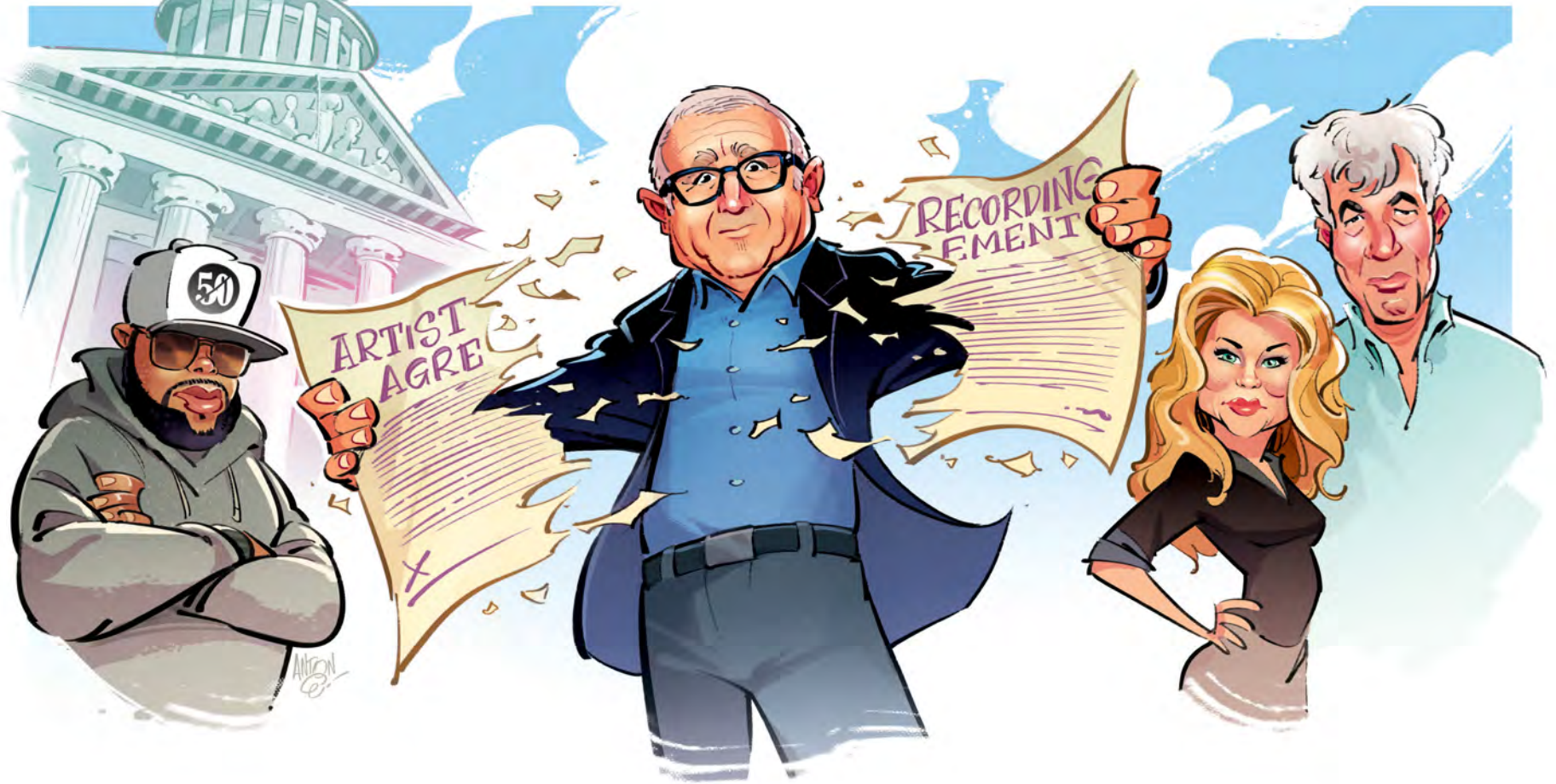
#blacklivesmatter
#antiracist



HIPCNOSIS

The Market

PG. 20 TICKETS BOUNCE BACK * PG. 22 BILLIE HOLIDAY'S ESTATE * PG. 24 A TALE OF TWO EUROPE



FAIR Play?

Artists and managers are pushing a California law that would let acts get out of recording contracts after seven years without penalty, reviving a decades-old legislative battle

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

AS THE ONGOING MUSIC industry boom puts labels under renewed pressure to make recording contracts more equitable and transparent, the next battle over creators' rights will be fought in Sacramento, Calif., where artists, managers and their allies are lobbying to change the state's "Seven-Year Statute."

Enacted in 1937 after the judgment in actress Olivia de Havilland's lawsuit against Warner Bros. Pictures, California Labor Code Section 2855 limits personal services contracts for state residents to seven years. In 1987, however, the law was amended, with the major labels' support, to allow record companies to sue for damages (including potential revenue) if an artist attempts to leave after seven years but before delivering the required number of albums in a contract. In

2001, a group of artists and managers including Irving Azoff and backed by the Recording Artists' Coalition he co-founded with Don Henley and Sheryl Crow attempted to repeal the 1987 amendment, without success. Now, two decades later, they're trying again.

Assembly Bill 1385 — the Free Artists From Industry Restrictions (FAIR) Act, introduced March 18 by Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, D-San Diego — would repeal that amendment, as well as allow artists to terminate contracts if a label hasn't exercised its option to pick up a recording within a half year after it's delivered. (The legislation was scheduled for an April 22 vote before the California State Assembly's Committee on Labor and Employment but was pulled from the calendar the day before and now won't be heard until January 2022 to give legislators more time to research

the issues.) Azoff is again leading the charge, this time with the Music Artists Coalition advocacy group he co-founded in 2019 with Henley, Maren Morris and manager Coran Capshaw, among others. Joining the effort are the Black Music Action Coalition (BMAC), Songwriters of North America and SAG-AFTRA. (The bill also includes a provision requiring TV production studios to exercise an option to renew a deal within a year after an actor completes work on a previous season.) The Recording Academy and Future of Music Coalition have also expressed support.

This push is occurring while labels are flush with streaming dollars. The U.S. recorded-music business is now worth \$12.2 billion, up 9.2% since 2019 and 82% over the last five years, according to the RIAA. And while the legislation will face vociferous

label opposition, the inevitable debate surrounding it will give artists and managers an opportunity to highlight other issues with recording contracts, including the more favorable cost structure of a streaming business that doesn't have manufacturing or distribution expenses.

At a time when artists of color often dominate the streaming charts and the Black Lives Matter movement has drawn attention to issues of racial inequity, representatives for creators think social issues could frame this conversation as well. "This nation is in a different place than it was 19 years ago," says BMAC co-founder/co-chair Prophet, who manages Asian Doll and Money Marr. "It's that energy that can be used to fuel the engine necessary to get this particular law changed."

Early last year, many of the same artist groups pushing for this law

● RESERVOIR MEDIA BECAME THE FIRST STAND-ALONE PUBLISHER TO GO PUBLIC ON A U.S. STOCK MARKET. ● WARNER MUSIC GROUP AND SPOTIFY STRUCK A PODCAST DEVELOPMENT DEAL.

were working with the RIAA and the labels it represents to successfully push a music-business exemption for Gonzalez's AB 5 legislation, which limits the use of independent contractors. Finding that Gonzalez was sympathetic, groups that represent creators continued to work with her to craft the FAIR Act. "We got phone calls after the bill had been introduced," says RIAA chairman/CEO Mitch Glazier.

If the bill passes, says Glazier, it "could make a label think twice about signing a California artist." And without a means to recover damages, "you're going to crumble the entire economic model" that lets labels invest in unproven acts. (Label sources estimate that 10% of acts make the money that funds the other 90%.)

Artist managers essentially argue that their acts should be treated the same as athletes and actors under California law, while the RIAA and the labels say that comparison doesn't make sense for artists, who divide their time between recording and touring. "If you are an athlete, you're signed for a certain number of seasons. If you're an actor, filming [a series] is going to last a certain amount of time," says Glazier. "An artist is asked to make a record and expected to tour — and the better the records do, the longer the tour." Setting contract terms by time instead of productivity, he says, would be bad for both sides.

There are other issues. Artist advocates say that the way labels count the number of albums delivered is outdated, which makes it hard for artists to fulfill their contracts. In particular, Prophet says mixtapes, which once weren't counted as album releases because they were promotional endeavors, now generate revenue on streaming services but still don't

"count toward your commitment." Same with guest features and soundtracks, says fellow BMAC board member and artist manager Caron Veazey. The FAIR Act does not address these issues, but managers say it would provide the means for artists to exit their deals — or, more likely, renegotiate them. "Let's have a look at those pieces," says Veazey.

(Acts including Metallica, Henley and Courtney Love have challenged the existing statute by suing their labels to avoid paying the damages it sets out, and Warner Bros. Records sued Avenged Sevenfold when the rock act attempted to leave after seven years while still needing to deliver albums. All of those cases were settled out of court.)

If it does pass, the FAIR Act would give the biggest boost to artists who are on a label for seven years and presumably achieved at least some success during that time. (Big labels generally drop artists who aren't profitable by then.) But acts who do very well usually renegotiate their contracts well before they expire, receiving more favorable terms — usually in exchange for adding more albums to their existing contracts. If this law makes it easier for artists to leave, it will give them more leverage in these negotiations.

If the FAIR Act passes the Committee on Labor and Employment next year, it would then go to the State Assembly's Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism and Internet Media for another hearing, followed by an Appropriations Committee hearing. If the bill passes all three of these committees, it would go to the assembly floor for a vote — and, if it passes, move to the state Senate. **D**

GENE SMITH 1932-2021

EUGENE "GENE" SMITH, the charismatic advertising executive who during nearly four decades at *Billboard* was instrumental in building the brand's Latin and international businesses, died April 17 of cardiac arrest. He was 88. A gregarious figure, immediately recognizable for his impeccable fashion style and shock of white hair, Smith

sold ads for *Billboard* until the week of his death.

Smith began his run at *Billboard* in 1985 as associate publisher and directories publisher but is best known for his role as managing director of Latin. Although he wasn't Latin and barely spoke Spanish, Smith co-founded the long-running *Billboard* Latin Music Conference and Awards, the



brand's longest-running event. "Gene Smith," says concert promoter Phil Rodriguez, "was, unquestionably, one of the good guys in our business." "He will be missed."

—LEILA COBO



Sonic Boom?

BAD BUNNY JUMP-STARTS
THE CONCERT BUSINESS

THE LIVE BUSINESS has a new champion: Bad Bunny. His 35-date North American

El Último Tour del Mundo sold over 480,000 tickets at presale and more after for a total of \$84 million in under a week after going on sale April 15, according to promoter Henry Cárdenas — Ticketmaster's fastest-moving series of shows since Beyoncé and JAY-Z's 2018 *On the Run II* Tour — kick-starting a concert business that has been closed for over a year. The Latin star brought in an average of \$2.4 million per show (in 2019, only Metallica's *WorldWired* tour had a higher per-show average), with most tickets priced at a face value of \$240. Now tickets are selling for an average of 10-times face value on the resale market, higher than any tour ever, according to ticket data and distribution company TicketIQ.

These numbers suggest significant demand for live music, presumably among young people in particular. Live-business executives

have been predicting a strong return for touring since early in the pandemic, citing low refund-request rates for outings that were postponed or rebooked. Now, promising sales for shows by The Weeknd, who sold over 1 million tickets for his 104-date 2022 *After Hours* tour in the days following his Super Bowl halftime performance, as well as quick sellouts for festivals such as the 55,000-capacity *Life Is Beautiful* and *Insomniac's* new *Day Trip*, suggest consumers can't wait to see concerts — and that they have the money to do so.

The next test will be the return of acts that tend to attract older concertgoers, including Fleetwood Mac, the Eagles and Elton John, all three of which have makeup dates scheduled for 2021 and 2022 but haven't yet put tickets on sale. One good sign: A January 2022 *Dead & Company* weekend in Cancún, Mexico, that went on sale in April sold out so fast that organizer CID Entertainment added a second weekend.

—DAVE BROOKS

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UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP



An Elvis tribute artist performed at the Juan Pablo II Park Vaccination Center in Santiago, Chile, on April 15.

Live Tonight: The Labs

A few promoters are using their expertise to distribute COVID-19 vaccinations, giving the global effort a shot in the arm

BY LEILA COBO

ALFREDO ALONSO, THE entertainment director for Chile's biggest concert promoter, Bizarro Entertainment, was considering other ways to bring in money during the pandemic when he saw Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino's Jan. 16 Instagram post: "If the live event industry was tasked with vaccination distribution we would have it done in a weekend, sold T-shirts and beer and a meet n greet with Fauci."

Alonso took this to heart. "We have the know-how to put together massive events," he says, "so why not run massive vaccination sites?"

Since February, Bizarro has worked under contract with local governments across Chile to coordinate vaccination efforts at four sites, including La Florida stadium in Santiago, overseeing nonmedical logistics like crowd management, catering and parking. It has even introduced production elements more common at concerts, including live music in waiting areas and novelty proof-of-vaccine

"diplomas." Averaging 15,000 shots a day across all four sites, Bizarro has helped vaccinate nearly 1 million people — roughly 5% of the country's population. (Chile is third in per capita vaccinations worldwide, according to Oxford University.) The company has also been able to hire back about 500 employees and musicians who lost work during the pandemic.

"We took everything we know," says Alonso, "and applied it to the vaccination process."

He's not the only one. In Niel, Belgium, the producers of the Tomorrowland festival have been running crowd management at a vaccination center; and in Vallejo, Calif., independent promoter Hammond Entertainment has been managing a site since February for Kaiser Permanente, for which Hammond regularly promotes charity events. Owner Bill Hammond says he now has 180 employees to coordinate the administration of 1,500 to 4,400 vaccination shots per week, with 85,000 vaccinations administered so far.

"We know how to build an operation," he says. "Logistics are 90% of my work anyway. That's what we do."

Alonso says touring executives in other countries have reached out to him for advice on how to set up similar projects but, so far, those ideas have not materialized. In the United States, a group of industry leaders including Live Nation, AEG, Oak View Group and the National Independent Venue Association sent a Jan. 26 letter to President Joe Biden offering to help but didn't book the gig. **b**

Additional reporting by Taylor Mims.



Staff members handed out water to patients at the Juan Pablo II Park Vaccination Center.



Holiday in 1957.

'An Afterlife Of Tragedy'

BILLIE HOLIDAY'S ESTATE WENT TO HER ABUSIVE THIRD HUSBAND, THEN HIS WIDOW. NOW IT'S OWNED BY CONCORD, WHICH IS BENEFITING FROM NEW FILMS

THERE'S A SCENE IN *THE UNITED STATES vs. Billie Holiday* when the iconic jazz singer — played by Andra Day, a contender for best actress at the Academy Awards on April 25 — is dying in bed, contemplating her legacy. "He's trying to control my estate," she says of her abusive third husband, Louis McKay.

When Holiday died in 1959 without a will — but with a roll of \$50 bills strapped to her leg, as the story goes — McKay did end up inheriting her estate, including her recording royalties, rights to her image, her publishing to songs including "God Bless the Child" and "Fine and Mellow," and her autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*. (McKay even served as an adviser on the film of the same name, in which he was flatteringly portrayed by Billy Dee Williams.) And when McKay died of a heart attack in 1981, Holiday's estate went to his heirs, including his widow, Bernice McKay, who in 2012 sold it to the independent publisher Bicycle Music — which three years later merged with Concord Music Group.

The last year has been unusually active for Holiday's estate. She's the subject of two movies: *The United States vs. Billie Holiday* and the *Billie* documentary that started streaming on-demand in December. Her haunting recording of the civil rights classic "Strange Fruit" took off during last summer's Black Lives Matter protests, growing from 3.5 million U.S. streams in 2018 to 5.2 million in 2020, according to MRC Data. Since Holiday was primarily a singer and never owned her recordings, most of the value of her estate lies in the name and likeness rights that movie producers usually need to make a film. And at a time when publishing assets have increased in value, investors like Irving Azoff's Iconic Music Group have entered this market.

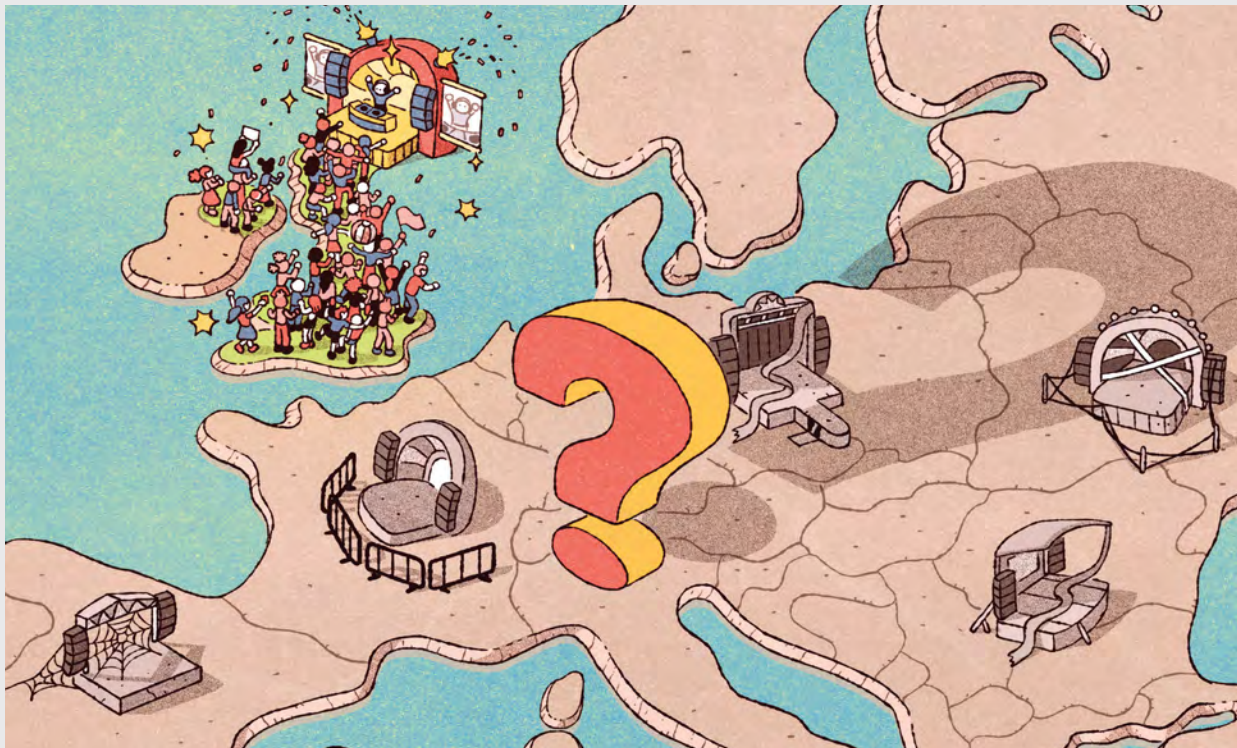
As the owner of Holiday's estate, Concord has an interest in protecting her legacy. "We're here to shine a light on the parts of her story that the world has failed to recognize," says Concord vp estate and legacy brand management Michele Smith.

At the same time, Holiday's posthumous loss of control over her work and legacy has been a cautionary tale for other major artists. "It's painful to read that she died with a few pennies in her bank account," says Jay Cooper, a music attorney who represents the estates of Etta James, Glen Campbell and John Denver. "She had a life of tragedy, and she had an afterlife of tragedy." —STEVE KNOPPER

A portrait of Donny Novakovic, a man with dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark blue crew-neck sweater. The background is a light, textured wall.

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A Tale Of Two Europes

Brits could be going to concerts as soon as this summer, but it's still the worst of times for continental promoters struggling with pandemic restrictions

BY RICHARD SMIRKE

 **LONDON** — In February, when the United Kingdom suffered its third national lockdown, Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the beleaguered live sector that concerts could resume after June 21 — without restrictions — if certain virus-related health conditions are met. Within days, two of the United Kingdom's biggest festivals — the 185,000-capacity dual-site Reading and Leeds festivals headlined by Liam Gallagher, Stormzy and Post Malone, and the 70,000-capacity Creamfields — sold out their late-August dates. Since then, nearly two-thirds of British adults have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine shot, and U.K. shows scheduled for July and beyond are reporting strong ticket sales, fueling optimism that Europe's largest touring market will at least partially reopen by mid-summer.

In the rest of Europe, however, where vaccination programs have faced delays and infection rates are on the rise, industry executives are less optimistic. France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy have either extended or introduced new restrictions as governments battle a third

wave of infections. That has led to cancellations of Germany's Rock am Ring and Hurricane festivals, France's Hellfest and Spain's Primavera Sound, among other events. "Large-scale touring or major festivals are going to be compromised this summer in the majority of European markets," says Mike Greek, the co-head of Creative Artists Agency in London.

While the United Kingdom appears poised to resume full-capacity outdoor shows this summer, many other European markets will be forced to wait until at least the fall. Greek doesn't expect indoor shows to resume in continental Europe before the end of the year, but he does expect them in the United Kingdom by September. And with most U.S. artists choosing not to tour Europe due to a paucity of tour dates and the possibility of new virus restrictions, local U.K. and European acts will take center stage as headliners.

Dieter Semmelman, CEO of Berlin-based Semmel Concerts, sees "no chance" of a return to live music events in Germany this summer and, instead, is focused on saving about 300 concerts scheduled for October through December. "It's not a good

feeling" that other markets are ahead of continental Europe, he says. "The only advantage we see in this situation is that all these full-capacity show tests will be made in the U.S., the U.K. and Israel, so our authorities will have some examples to study."

Still, not everyone is giving up. A small number of marquee European festivals are pressing ahead with plans for July and August, including the Mad Cool Festival in Madrid, Exit in Serbia and Tomorrowland in Belgium. "We're in full-force programming," says Eric Van Eerdenburg, director of Lowlands Festival, which sold out its 60,000 tickets for the August event in the Dutch village of Biddinghuizen, about an hour from Amsterdam.

Van Eerdenburg says he was able to proceed due to the Dutch government's 380 million euros insurance fund, which covers 80% of the costs to cultural events canceled as a result of the pandemic. "With that backing, I have the courage," he says. "Without it, it would have been too big a risk."

Even with the prospect of a summer free from virus restrictions in the United Kingdom, organizers there are reluctant to risk their businesses

without insurance covering the cost of potential cancellations, says Paul Reed, chief executive of the Association of Independent Festivals. U.K. touring executives fear that without insurance policies like those in the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Denmark, more promoters will be forced to cancel events in the months ahead after having already paid upfront costs to suppliers. "As it stands," says Reed, "the majority of our members are not going to be able to go ahead in 2021 without government intervention."

Concern over future restrictions on travel from the United States has let European artists dominate this year's Lowlands lineup, including British acts Stormzy and The Chemical Brothers, and Dutch rap group The Opposites, who are headlining the event for the first time. In the United Kingdom, where unresolved travel issues resulting from Brexit have contributed to a higher reliance on homegrown talent, Red Light Management has lined up U.K. summer shows for British acts including Corinne Bailey Rae, The Cribs and Kaiser Chiefs, says James Sandom, the company's U.K. managing director.

The shrinking European touring map has led some artists to charge more because they can only do a few shows. "For a number of acts we had lined up, it wasn't viable to book them anymore unless we [tripled] the fee," says Keith Miller, who books London's Wide Awake festival in September and the new South Facing Festival. To compensate for the scarcity of shows in neighboring markets, Lowlands is guaranteeing some acts extra travel and production expenses, which the performers have agreed to pay back if additional European shows get booked. Other acts have accepted a discounted fee in recognition of promoters' financial challenges, says Van Eerdenburg.

In the United Kingdom, progress on vaccinations has given some promoters the confidence to try launching new events, like South Facing Festival, which is scheduled for Aug. 5-29 in London's Crystal Palace Park with a capacity of up to 8,500 people. The concert series will feature Dizzee Rascal, Supergrass and The Streets. "If everything stays on course," says Miller, "we'll be in good shape."

With plans in place to have South Facing run at a reduced capacity if required, Miller says, "Our aim is that we'll be able to go ahead without any social distancing restrictions." **B**

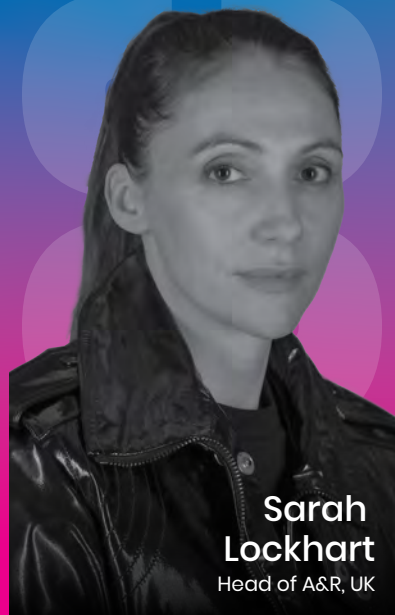
Additional reporting by Alexei Barrionuevo.



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Habtemariam photographed April 1 at her home office in Los Angeles.

FROM THE DESK OF

ETHIOPIA HABTEMARIAM

Chairman/CEO, Motown

BY GAIL MITCHELL PHOTOGRAPHED BY FLO NGALA

WHEN ETHIOPIA HABTEMARIAM was appointed chairman/CEO of Motown Records in March, she became the third woman — and only the second one of color — ever to hold the title at a major label.

Her ground-breaking appointment also signaled a full-circle moment for Motown: It is once again a stand-alone label, with Habtemariam reporting directly to Universal Music Group (UMG) chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge. (Previously, she reported to Capitol Music Group chairman/CEO Steve Barnett, who retired at the end of 2020.)

Founded by Berry Gordy in 1959, Motown achieved unprecedented mainstream success through standard-bearers such as Smokey Robinson, The Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and The Temptations. Over the years, its roster

evolved to include The Jackson 5, Lionel Richie, The Commodores, Rick James, Boyz II Men, Erykah Badu and India.Arie.

Since overseeing Motown's move from New York to Los Angeles as the label's president in 2014, Habtemariam, 41, has led entrepreneurial ventures such as the label's 2015 alliance with Atlanta-based Quality Control, which has yielded hits by Lil Baby, Lil Yachty, Migos, City Girls and Layton Greene. Motown is also home to Blacksmith Recordings (Ted When, Vince Staples) and Since the 1980s (Asiahn, Njomza) as well as Erykah Badu, Kem, Tiana Major9 and Nigerian star Tiwa Savage.

During Habtemariam's almost seven years at the label, Motown has logged 28 top 40 songs on the Billboard Hot 100 from Lil Baby, Migos, Ne-Yo and others, as well as 28 top 40 albums on the Bill-

board 200, including projects from Erykah Badu, Kem, Lil Yachty, City Girls and Migos.

Motown's market share has risen, too, growing from 0.4% in 2017 to 0.59% in 2020 to 0.85% so far this year, thanks to the success of Lil Baby's *My Turn*. The Grammy Award-nominated rapper's second album closed out 2020 as the most popular album of the year in the United States, with 2.63 million equivalent album units, according to MRC Data.

What's significant about the label's market-share growth in 2020 and 2021 is that it is largely attributable to recent releases. In the past, catalog has driven Motown's performance, while current market share — essentially the performance of music released in the 18 months prior to the measurement period — averaged 0.14% from 2015 to 2019, according to *Billboard* calculations based on MRC data. In 2020, however, Motown more than doubled that number to 0.32%, and as of mid-April 2021, its current market share was just shy of 1%.

Before joining Motown, Habtemariam began pushing against the glass ceiling in music publishing. She took her first full-time job in the industry in 2001 at Edmonds Publishing, where she worked as a creative manager. She moved to Universal Music Publishing Group in 2003, where she signed Justin

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Bieber, J. Cole and Chris Brown, and rose to president of urban music and co-head of creative.

She kept her publishing gig when she took on the additional challenge of relaunching Motown, initially as senior vp of the label, in 2014. She continued doing double duty after she was promoted to label president and departed UMPG in 2016.

Habtemariam says she's ready to use her new-found autonomy to fully execute the vision she had for Motown when she arrived. She has spent the last several months staffing up, and, she says, "creating a blueprint" for the label's future as a global force in recorded music. Last September, Motown opened its first U.K. branch, headed by managing director Rob Pascoe, and in February revived its Black Forum label by reissuing Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1971 Grammy-winning album for best spoken word, *Why I Oppose the War in Vietnam*. On the music side, Motown's 2021 release slate includes Migos' long-awaited *Culture III* album as well as projects by two new signees, singer Bree Runway and hip-hop artist Elhae.

Moving forward, Habtemariam says Motown's approach to A&R will be "signing talent that we think can be the next generation of superstars." She adds that the label is looking for "career artists. It's not just about one song or a couple of tracks here and there. There is so much music out there that you must find talent that you believe will cut through."

How has your job changed now that you are chairman/CEO and reporting to Lucian Grainge?

When I was first approached about Motown, my vision was to return it to operating like a full-fledged stand-alone label and to honor the legacy of the talent that was on the label in the 1960s through the early 2000s. Lucian agreed with me, but at the time we were a team of just four people attempting to accomplish a very ambitious goal. We were part of Island Def Jam, and it wasn't the right structure, focus and support.

What's the size of your staff now, and do you still share services with Capitol Music Group and UMG?

I have a team of about 25. Everything is Los Angeles-based, aside from the U.K. office, and an A&R person in Atlanta. And we do share some services through Universal and are still using Capitol's radio promotions team.

You've come a long way.

I now have autonomy and authority over our budgets, how we are developing our artists and building out the Motown team. I'm also thinking more holistically about global strategy for the company.

Did you feel stifled by the constraints placed on you before you became CEO?

I wouldn't say I was stifled. I was challenged, and I've always liked challenging myself. Joining Motown was a real learning curve for me because, for one thing, I was coming from music publishing. A&R at a label is very different from A&R on the publishing side. Also, there were a lot of changes happening structurally within UMG, so there was a learning curve across the board. I don't have any regrets, though, because I learned more about the way labels work and artist development.



1

You've had great success with Lil Baby. Is pop success topmost in your mind as you sign and work artists?

We're not pushing our acts to be something they're not. In the case of Lil Baby, as he's attained more success, he wants more. His goal is not necessarily to go pop but to be an international superstar. And he understands what he needs to do to get there.

Tory Lanez recently was charged with felonies tied to his alleged shooting of Megan Thee Stallion, and video footage surfaced of a physical altercation between Migos' Quavo and Saweetie. What responsibility does a label have when it comes to incidents like these?

It's our responsibility to be there for the artists, no matter what they're going through. It affects the music they create, and we all do our due diligence to help guide artists in the right direction by educating them about their responsibilities and how their actions can affect their careers and their lives.

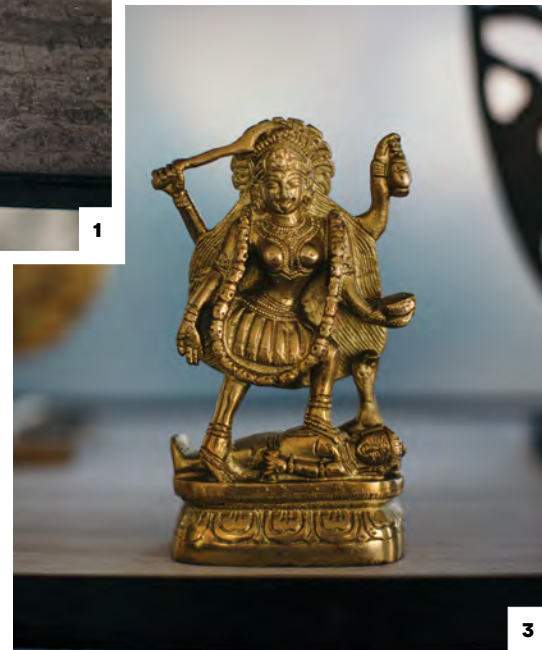
What's your response to those who say Motown's current success is largely tied to its alliance with Quality Control?

It's important to highlight where Black music was at the time I did the QC deal in 2015. We were going through a transition from iTunes to streaming, and with hip-hop and R&B, you could have a No. 1 record at urban radio, but it didn't equate to sales. We were investing in talent and not seeing a return. It was a tough scenario.

I had known [Quality Control COO] Coach K for a long time and seen what they had done with Migos. But because of where the industry was then, it was easier to develop things externally. In 2016, when QC discovered Lil Yachty, we signed him together. That coincided with the time when the major music companies made their deals with Spotify and we began to get data that showed how prominent R&B and hip-hop were. That's when we started to see a real shift in our industry as it pertains to Black music. So, what do I say? Stay tuned. **■**



2



3



4

1. The Royalty Pack, designed by an Ethiopian American artist. "During this past year, we all needed games to play," says Habtemariam, "and I thought these cards were fly." 2. Connect Four: "It's a game I've always loved and have reclaimed; I've gotten really good over the quarantine." 3. A figurine of the Hindu goddess Kali, which was given to her by a good friend. "She's the ultimate protector against evil and the quintessential embodiment of female power. A warrior." 4. The mug's message is from philosopher Chuang Tzu. "I've always loved that quote and thought it was fitting given the state of the world."

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The Sound

PG. 32 ONE TO WATCH: GIRL IN RED ✦ PG. 34 WHY LATIN STARS LOVE THIS SONGWRITER

THROWING A CHANGE-UP

After six years spent battling anxiety,
Porter Robinson turned his
outlook — and sound — around to finish
his anticipated second album

BY KATIE BAIN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY LINDSAY ELLARY

Robinson photographed
April 7 in Los Angeles.

IT WASN'T LONG AFTER the release of Porter Robinson's lauded 2014 debut full-length, *Worlds*, that he convinced himself he would no longer be able to make music. The album had hit No. 18 on the Billboard 200, debuted at No. 1 on Dance/Electronic Albums and established Robinson, then 22, as a pioneer of a fresh, smart style of electronic music made for kids raised on the internet and anime.

The pressure to make an equally innovative follow-up was crippling. By 2016, Robinson had been working on a new album for two years and had maybe two ideas to show for it. Thinking that he just wasn't working hard enough, he cut out everything in his life that didn't

nod for best dance recording.

But his fan base — a group Robinson says he's very sensitive to — was still hungry for the *Worlds* sequel. After releasing the *Virtual Self* EP, the music that would become his second album began flowing more easily. He was intent on making songs with pop structures; he just had to figure out how. "I had been writing drops only for 10 years," he says of *Worlds* and the dubstep-leaning output that preceded it. "I had never written a chorus." Robinson fixated his waking hours on lyrics, song construction and learning to record his own vocals, with "so much of the album focused on this idea of making music, because that was the only thing happening in my life."

Originally intended for a September 2020 release date, *Nurture* was pushed back due to the pandemic, giving Robinson additional time to more or less remake the project. He wrote new songs, replaced existing music and expanded the album from 11 to 14 tracks. Writing on a piano, he composed, recorded and sang every song himself, pitching up his vocals to often sound childlike and feminine.

Robinson performed his only set of 2020 during his livestream festival, Secret Sky, a 14-hour event he produced from the guest bedroom of his parents' house. ("My mom was making pancakes; we had all sorts of snacks going," he says. "It felt like the Super Bowl.") Featuring artists like

Madeon and G Jones, the show drew 4 million viewers, according to Robinson's team. (A second iteration of Secret Sky is scheduled for April 24, with a lineup including REZZ, Boys Noize and Baauer.) Two hundred and fifty thousand people watched Robinson's set, which closed with the buoyant single "Look at the Sky," a song currently getting airplay on adult contemporary radio.

But as Aaron Greene, Robinson's co-manager at Slush, says: "There isn't a goal of being a pop star or transcending electronic music. Porter is always trying to discover what he's most passionate about and follow that passion."

The last song Robinson wrote for *Nurture*, "Musician," is anchored by the line "I get so excited/When I finally find it/It just gets brighter from now on," which arrives over ecstatically chopped production. It effectively sums up his creative process, his improved sense of well-being, his brother's remission and the global mood.

"Throughout the album, you can really sense some of the trepidation, worry, anxiety and fear I'm feeling," he says. "On 'Musician,' I wasn't feeling it at all. I just felt pure unbridled joy and excitement. That was the goal: I was trying to get to this place where I could write music in a way where I could be vulnerable and just do this thing I love with the confidence I used to have." **B**

have to do with music — friends, fun, life experiences that might actually give him inspiration. It didn't help. Circumstances grew darker later that year, when his younger brother Mark was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer.

"This is when I was at my most unhealthy," recalls Robinson over Zoom from his Chapel Hill, N.C., home. "I was just severely depressed and very anxious. I was terrified of the idea of moving out of my parents' house." But while he had become "extremely tied" to the idea that he was stuck, it wasn't entirely true. In late 2017, Robinson released a five-track EP under an alias, *Virtual Self*: an homage to late-'90s and early-'00s rave music. Its single, "Ghost Voices," earned a Grammy Award

Then he met his girlfriend, Rika Mikuriya, and his approach to life and art evolved. "One of the themes on this album is meeting someone you love so deeply that you become afraid to die for the first time in your life," he says. "It's so clear to me that I can't die at the altar of art here." Robinson started spending time outside the studio, not looking at his phone first thing in the morning, wrapping his workdays earlier and seeing his friends again. The balance helped foster the aptly titled *Nurture*, out April 23 on Mom + Pop.

The album's punchy, soaring lead single, "Get Your Wish," arrived in early 2020, with a second, "Something Comforting," following on March 10, just as much of the world went into lockdown.



ONE TO WATCH

Girl In Red

FROM Horten, Norway

AGE 22

LABEL AWAL

FOUNDATION The singer-songwriter born Marie Ulven grew up loving The Smiths, The Shins and David Bowie but always thought she would be a teacher. Yet once her grandfather gifted her a guitar for her 13th birthday, she thought, "I want to pursue music, but if I pursue music, will I be poor forever?" I knew it would be hard, but I decided to go down that path." By 16, Ulven — who was then experimenting with pseudonyms like Lydia X and Lyfsuxx — was uploading original songs to SoundCloud and quickly gaining traction for her lovelorn, queer-coded songwriting.

DISCOVERY In early 2018, Ulven's single "I Wanna Be Your Girlfriend" had captured the attention of millions of listeners thanks to its front-facing, explicitly LGBTQ lyrics — and she needed help capitalizing on the moment. That summer, AWAL senior director of A&R Will Hunt met Ulven over coffee in Oslo to see if the label would be a good fit for her. She ended up working with AWAL for her *Chapter 2* EP and its breakout single, "We Fell in Love in October," before signing a worldwide recording contract with the label in December 2019. "My gut was just telling me that it felt right," she says. "And it has all been worth it."

FUTURE After two years of writing and recording, Ulven is releasing her official debut album, *If I Could Make It Go Quiet*, on April 30 on AWAL. Lead single "Serotonin" earned the singer her first entries on *Billboard's* Hot Alternative Songs and Emerging Artists charts. It also marked a milestone for her: working with her favorite producer, FINNEAS. "Serotonin" best illustrates how the album expands on the shoegaze-adjacent bedroom-pop that defined so much of Ulven's early music, with alt-pop jams that she cannot wait to perform on the road. "It's really just the musical progression that has been going on behind the scenes that sort of led to what it is right now," she says, "which is a banger album."

—STEPHEN DAW



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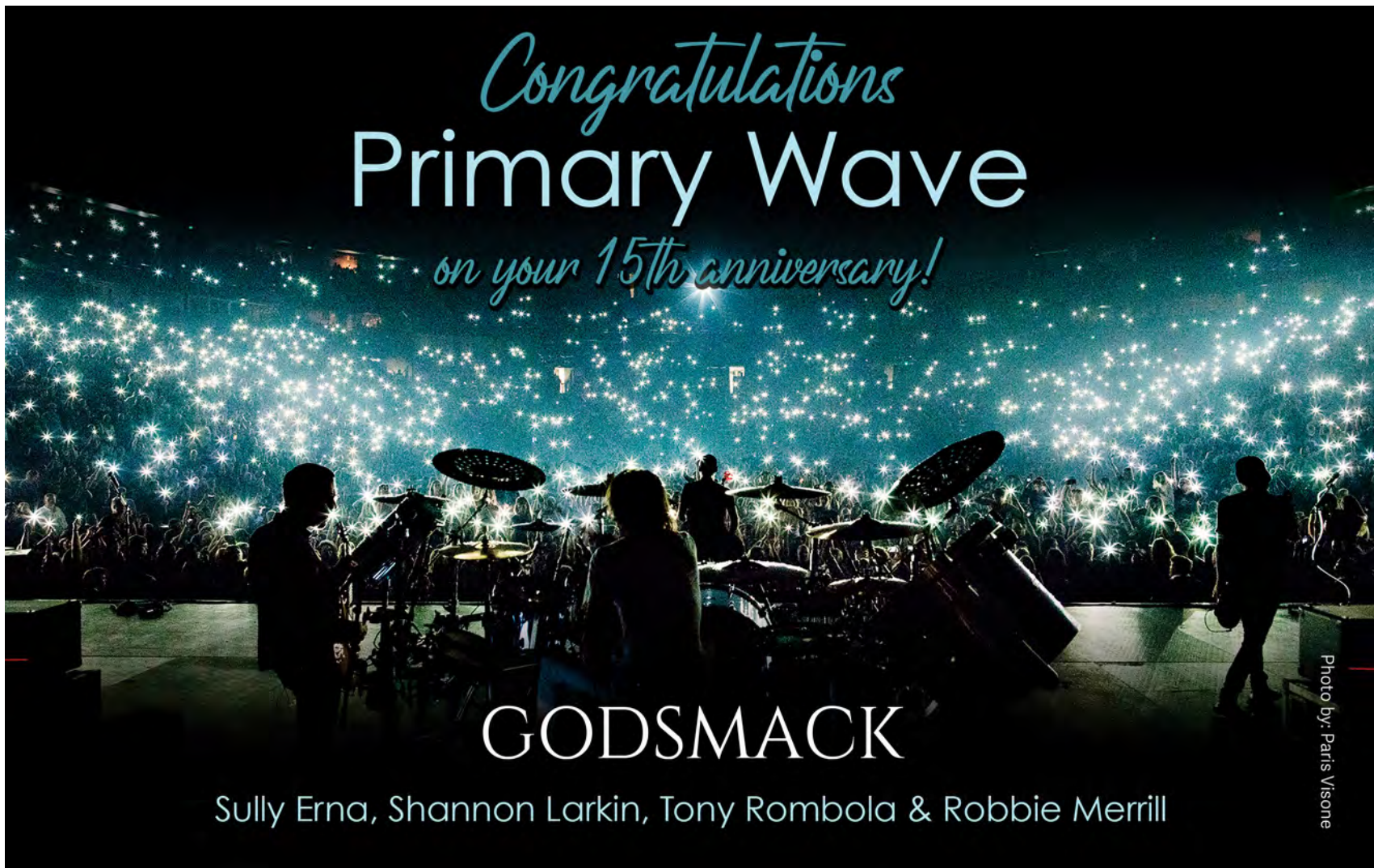
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Sully Erna, Shannon Larkin, Tony Rombola & Robbie Merrill

Photo by: Paris Visone

IN DEMAND

ELENA ROSE

SONGWRITER

Elena Rose dressed up as Jennifer Lopez for Halloween at 8 years old and told her mother: “I want to be a singer, and one day J.Lo will know who I am.” Seventeen years later, the songwriter (born Andrea Elena Mangiamarchi) co-wrote the Lopez-Maluma hit “Pa’ Ti” (alongside Edgar Barrera) that peaked at No. 9 on *Billboard’s* Hot Latin Songs chart in October. Since, the 26-year-old has landed work with Selena Gomez and Marc Anthony while focusing on her upcoming solo project. The album includes R&B-tinged pop singles like “Fenomenal” and “La Ducha” that were released last year, while the more experimental track “Pimienta” will arrive April 23. Rose, who cites writing Becky G’s 2019 hit “Dollar” as her big break, says that her collaborators “have taught me how to be an artist and be in the spotlight. If I had started as a singer instead of a songwriter, I wouldn’t have been prepared. They’ve given me more than I have given them.”

—GRISELDA FLORES



JENNIFER LOPEZ and MALUMA



“Pa’ Ti” became the first song the co-writing team of Rose and Barrera penned together, crafted at a Sony songwriting camp a few years ago. “The session flowed so well that we didn’t even stress about it landing on the project or not,” remembers Rose. By 2020, it arrived as the first half of the

two-part track “Pa’ Ti + Lonely,” which will appear on the soundtrack to the upcoming romcom *Marry Me*, starring Lopez and Maluma. “The night the song dropped, my mom told me, ‘Baby, you are a living example that dreams do come true.’”

SELENA GOMEZ



Rose co-wrote five of the seven songs on Gomez’s first Spanish project, *Revelación*, which arrived in March. “I felt I had to prove myself because it’s the biggest project I’ve ever worked on,” says Rose. She, Barrera and Kris Floyd started writing for the album in late 2019, and one of the first songs she co-penned

was the single “De Una Vez,” which peaked at No. 4 on Hot Latin Songs. The track was inspired by a past breakup with a producer. “He made me believe that without him, I was nothing,” says Rose. “Then I thought, ‘De una vez por todas’ [Once and for all], I am stronger alone.”

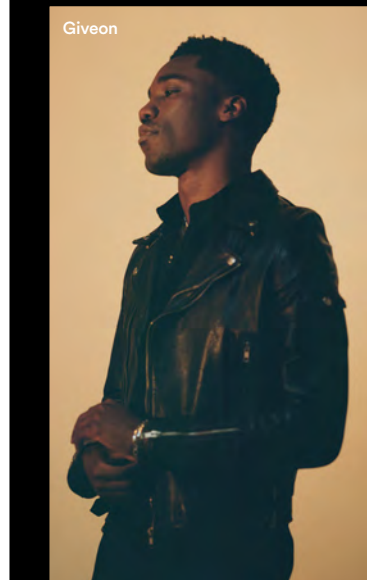
MARC ANTHONY and DADDY YANKEE



Before *Revelación* arrived, Rose and Barrera had scored another co-write for a pair of superstars. She had written one song for Anthony, “but for some reason, it wasn’t going to be recorded, so I told Edgar, ‘Bro, we have to write another song, like, right now.’” The pair emerged from a Miami studio 90 minutes later

with the salsa anthem “De Vuelta Pa’ la Vuelta,” which became Anthony and Yankee’s first-ever collaboration. It climbed to No. 6 on Hot Latin Songs. “When I met Marc in the studio, he told me, ‘You are the future of the industry,’” recalls Rose. “I’ll never forget those words.”

Giveon



BEHIND THE HIT

‘HEARTBREAK ANNIVERSARY’

IN 2019, GIVEON AND HIS longtime producer, Sevn Thomas, and a friend walked into a sports bar to watch a Toronto Raptors game when the friend spotted a reminder of his ex-girlfriend. The three were all going through breakups at the time, and after the game Giveon and Thomas decided to use that as inspiration in the studio. “That’s when the whole

‘Heartbreak Anniversary’ idea came about,” says Thomas.

At the studio, the two began reflecting on their own heartbreak. “It was almost like a therapy session,” recalls Thomas. “We let our guard down completely with each other and just talked about real-life situations.” The sessions resulted in *Take Time*, Giveon’s 2020 debut EP on Epic Records. “I had just left a [five-year] relationship while working on this project,” says Giveon. “There were so many stories I wanted to express, and [“Heartbreak Anniversary”]

was one of my favorite ones [because] I’ve never heard this perspective before.”

Once the R&B artist laid down his first verse over a loop from co-producer Maneesh, he says he knew it was special right away due to the lyrical vulnerability and minimal, melancholy production. Adds Thomas: “I wanted Giveon’s voice to be the main instrument.” After initially breaking out in Asia, the song gained traction on TikTok, where it has since been used with a set of choreography in over 2 million videos.

Now, thanks in part to a March deluxe edition, *When It’s All Said and Done... Take Time*, the track has reached No. 4 on *Billboard’s* Hot R&B Songs chart and returned to the top 10 on Streaming Songs with 155.2 million on-demand U.S. streams through April 8, according to MRC Data.

“I love that people caught on late, because it just goes to show the staying power of the record,” says Thomas. “Maybe 10 years from now, we’re going to look back and refer to this song as a classic.”

—NEENA ROUHANI

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THE GLOW- UP

With a string of chart-scaling singles and showstopping performances, **DOJA CAT** didn't just ride out the pandemic — she proved an internet weirdo can become a pop star

BY MEAGHAN GARVEY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAMONA ROSALES



Doja Cat photographed April 2
in Topanga, Calif.

Styling by Brett Alan Nelson
Sun Woo dress and gloves, United
Nude shoes, Corey Moranis jewelry.





Robert Wun top and pants,
Alan Crocetti earrings, Corey Moranis
and Lorette Colé Duprat jewelry.



DOJA CAT HAS A MOUTHFUL OF SAND. Two days ago, she had a photo shoot in the desert for an upcoming fashion line collaboration, and she still can't seem to get the stuff out of her teeth. "That's what I look like..." she deadpans as she pops up on Zoom from her Los Angeles bedroom one recent afternoon, cracking herself up at how exhausted she appears. The scene feels familiar: Over the last year, Doja has streamed all sorts of oddball activities from the same bedroom — Shakespearean-style recitations of trap lyrics, dramatic lip-syncs to old *Tyra Banks Show* episodes, pop-and-locking routines to Justin Timberlake songs.

When she wasn't goofing around on the internet, the 25-year-old singer-rapper-producer spent the pandemic experiencing a glow-up many likely wouldn't have seen coming had they been introduced to her (as many were) through the video for 2018's "Mooo!," in which Doja twerked in cow-print couture to an off-the-cuff freestyle about the joys of being a bovine. The Doja Cat who has dominated radio and owned awards show stages during the past year-and-a-half is on a whole new level, sparked by the breakthrough success of her 2019 album, *Hot Pink*. That record — a playful, polished collection of freaky rap and R&B — spawned four Billboard Hot 100 hits over two years, including "Say So," the TikTok smash whose remix featuring Nicki Minaj landed both artists their first Hot 100 No. 1. Her biggest tour yet, planned for last spring, sold out in 10 minutes. You can probably guess what happened next.

"I luckily didn't have too many expectations," says Doja of the COVID-19 lockdowns that upturned her plans. "I was just like, 'If the world's going through it right now, I don't want to add to that by freaking out over my tour.' It's a big deal, but it's not as big of a deal as getting everybody healthy and getting the world back to not such a fucky place. I'll put down my tools for that."

Instead, she doubled down creatively with a run of clever music videos, star-powered collaborations and showstopping performances, including at last October's Billboard Music Awards, where she delivered a three-song medley referencing the musical *Chicago*. Meanwhile, she wrote the songs that would become her third album, *Planet Her*, which will mark her official transition from viral internet weirdo to full-on pop star.

None of this came as a surprise to Doja's tight-knit crew, which includes a four-person co-management team, creative director Brett Alan Nelson, choreographer Fullout Cortland and labels RCA Records and Kemosabe Records. That holistic group of managers — comprising 10Q Management's Lydia Asrat and Josh Kaplan, and SALXCO's Gordon Dillard and Wassim "Sal" Slaiby — knows Doja in and out. Asrat, for one, has worked alongside her since 2016, when the then-20-year-old was camping out for months on a tour bus shared with another then-underground multihyphenate. (Perhaps the name Lizzo rings a bell?)

Behind that infrastructure is something of a paradox: Despite the experience the co-managers bring to the table, each seems keenly aware that the best strategy is usually to let Doja be Doja. "I felt from the moment I met her that she was going to be a superstar, because she has this drive and vision about her music that no one can modify," says Asrat. "Doja, from the beginning, has been the mastermind behind everything."

On occasion, letting Doja do her thing involves getting a phone call where she announces, "Hey, I'm going to make a song about cows." Asrat laughs remembering that day in 2018: "She was like, 'I ordered a burger, a milkshake, a cow suit,' and I was like... 'OK? Go crazy? I don't fucking know!'" Cue Doja on Instagram Live, LARPing as a cow for an audience of 60 viewers. By the end of the day, she had written full lyrics ("Got milk, bitch? Got beef? Got steak, hoe? Got cheese?"), produced a beat, recorded it all and filmed a music video in her bedroom complete with a DIY green screen, in which she shoved French fries in her nose as pixelated cheeseburgers and anime bosoms bounced in the background. The video almost instantly exploded online, and "Mooo!" became the hot topic on the internet for weeks. The YouTube video now clocks in at nearly 85 million views.

What seemed like viral marketing genius could more accurately be chalked up to a whim and a craving for cheeseburgers — though, as Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road" proved seven months later, no one knows virality better than a troll. And letting Doja be Doja has not always led to such fortuitous moments. In the wake of her breakthrough with "Mooo!," old tweets of hers using homophobic slurs resurfaced; her apology included musings such as, "Do I hate gay people? I don't think I hate gay people. Gay is OK." Last year, videos leaked from an alt-right-adjacent Tinchat chatroom showing Doja unleashing racial slurs.

In a 2019 interview with *Paper*, she owned up to her "shitposter" habits: "People would pick on me and use horrible, horrible language ... So I became the person who would make offensive jokes and do things sort of out of the box." Those controversies have mostly seemed to slide off her back — maybe because, in a landscape of ghostwritten Notes app screenshots, her apologies (such as they are) feel immediate and, well, real. "I just don't want to be the person who fucking bullshits you," said Doja on Instagram Live following the chatroom scandal. "Because I know that what makes me happy is that you guys are happy, and you know what the fuck is real."

"Doja's ultimately a native of the digital space," says John Fleckenstein, who has been with RCA since 2015 and became COO early this year. "The whole 'Mooo!' exercise was a great example of her nailing the thread in the conversation that was going on with her fan base, diving into that culture — which is cut-and-paste and crazy and weird and trolling and all of the stuff that goes on online," he adds with bemused admiration. "That's where the groundswell came around her. And then the second part of the story is about what started to happen after that."

If there's any doubt that an avowed shitposter can become a top-tier pop singer, it hasn't occurred to Doja, who certainly doesn't think it's incompatible with, say, appearing on Instagram Live dressed as Joan of Arc while reciting Roddy Ricch lyrics in a medieval-sounding British accent. "I feel like people separate the pop star from the very humane, normal internet teen goofball kind of girl," says Doja. "And I feel like they complement each other. There is no separation, in my opinion. I always looked at myself like, 'I can do it.' But I feel like people thought I was this goofy girl, and that's all I could ever really be."

Despite her affection for what she calls "meme music" — she once made a song devoted to the timeless question of waffles versus pancakes — Doja's archive of pop, R&B and hip-hop bona fides well predates her viral breakout. Before "Mooo!," she had amassed a small but devoted fan base who hung upon her every upload, allowing her to sell out all but one stop of a 50-city club tour supporting *Amala*, her 2018 full-length debut. Making absurdist novelty freestyles served as a useful creative counterpoint to more serious songwriting. "To get me out of this weird, cocky mindset, I felt like I needed to do goofy shit to level my mind and keep myself sane, in a way," says Doja. "I've been obsessed

with comedy my whole life — I grew up on Jim Carrey films and stuff like that. So I knew I wanted to incorporate that and make other people feel like they had something to go watch when they needed a laugh.”

She’s known to play video games with fans on Twitch, tweet trippy non sequiturs (“what if i had eyes on my knees”) and post self-made SoundCloud loosies like March’s “TRASH MAN,” a house jam about, well, the trash man. “It hit me when we did the Billboard Music Awards and I watched the show afterward,” says Cortland, who first worked

“People separate the pop star from the very humane, normal internet teen goofball kind of girl. And I feel like they complement each other.”

—DOJA CAT

with Doja on last June’s “Like That” video. “I was like, ‘This is the same girl I used to watch online with a Mario mustache making beats with a Pikachu triangle bra on!’ I just busted out laughing for five minutes straight, I kid you not. It’s just so funny how the universe works.”

Talent aside, this is Doja’s charm: To her fans, she is proof that there’s room for the weird kids at the top. “I live for it when a pop star comes off as, like, a deity,” gushes Doja. “They carry themselves as very mysterious, and you’ll never know anything about them, only that they’re incredibly talented and always have profound shit to say. I love that, and I always wanted to be like that, but I just don’t really give a fuck. And I think it’s important for me to not put that pressure on myself or that will eat me alive. If I can just be myself, that’s probably the best thing for me.” So far, as usual, she seems to be right.



AMONG HER PANOPLY OF ONSTAGE APPEARANCES OVER the last year, the one that cemented Doja Cat’s Main Pop Girl status didn’t initially look like a Doja Cat performance at all; had Grammy Awards host Trevor Noah not announced her name, people might not even have recognized her. Covered head to toe in black latex, Doja appeared silhouetted in a row of dancers, just barely lit by lasers. “I’ve been preparing,” she purred. “Grammys, welcome to Planet Her.” She then launched into one of her many live reimaginings of “Say So” — this one with sex-robot choreography and a glitchy EDM breakdown.

Given that ultra-polished performance, it feels like divine comedy that the super-low-fi “Mooo!” was what got RCA to sit up and pay attention to Doja. Before then, the label wasn’t exactly sure what to do with her: Was she a rapper? An R&B singer? A pop star? “I would play her for people all the time, and it was strange to me how some people didn’t seem to get it,” says songwriter-producer Lukasz “Dr. Luke” Gottwald, the former head of Kemosabe Records, over email. “It’s like people weren’t listening with their ears but were more concerned about how many followers she had. I don’t know how it happened, but she just got better and better, and one day, she was like, totally there.” (In 2014, Kesha sued Gottwald, alleging sexual assault and emotional abuse, among other claims; Gottwald filed his own defamation and breach of contract suit against her that is still ongoing. Because Doja’s commercial success occurred in the wake of that, she has faced some criticism for working with Gottwald. In early 2020, she liked tweets pointing out that she had signed with him before the suit.) Fleckenstein recalls an RCA meeting, just post-“Mooo!,” where Doja played the songs that would become *Hot Pink*. “We were just blown away,” he recalls, “and I think that’s when things started to kick into the gear you’re seeing today.”

From the beginning, the arc of Doja’s life path has veered left of

center. Born Amala Ratna Zandile Dlamini in the Los Angeles suburb named after Tarzan, she spent a good deal of her childhood living in the mountains on an ashram, a commune where she, her parents and her brother practiced Hinduism, wore head-covering scarves and sang devotional songs called *bhajans* at temple. Both of her parents are artists: her mother a Jewish painter, her father a South African Zulu actor-filmmaker. “There were snakes and coyotes and mountain lions and everything. It was wild, but it was really beautiful and peaceful most of the time,” says Doja. “But as a kid, I wanted to do whatever I wanted, and it felt a little too controlled.”

When the family moved to the predominantly white suburb of Oak Park — the ashram was mostly Indian and Black people — the transition wasn’t easy. “It was really rough for me at times,” admits Doja, noting instances when classmates were racist toward her and her brother. In school, she was placed in special ed classes; outside, she skateboarded and competed in a local dance crew. By 11th grade, Doja had dropped out and fallen headfirst into music, spending her days writing and producing songs on GarageBand in her bedroom, oftentimes live on social media.

Was her early music good? “So ... no,” says Doja with a laugh. “But I saw potential in myself even though I was still aware it wasn’t good. And I really wanted it.” She focused on visuals as much as the music itself, toiling over DIY music videos for her own songs or Minaj covers, unplugging her massive desktop computer and moving it from room to room to get different shots. In 2013, through Facebook, she befriended Yeti Beats, a DJ-producer who has collaborated with her ever since. With Yeti, Doja found herself in an actual studio for the first time, free to explore whatever she wanted. Occasionally, she would bring her cat, Alex, to sessions on a leash.

At around the same time, a self-produced song she had casually posted on SoundCloud, “So High,” caught Gottwald’s attention. In 2013, he signed then-17-year-old Doja to Kemosabe and to his publishing company, Prescription Songs (see story, page 44), and released her debut EP, *Purrr!* By the time co-manager Kaplan joined Doja’s team, he saw the low-stakes “SoundCloud rapper mentality” limiting her. “People at the label knew she was talented, but they just didn’t put anything behind her because she had the ‘So High’ success on SoundCloud, and that was how she was being identified.” The question was how to nudge her toward her full potential. “Everybody always says, ‘Oh, yeah. I knew she was going to be a star,’ and all that good stuff, but there’s so much luck and timing with those things,” says Kaplan. “But did she have the talent? A million percent, yes. I knew if we could position her in the right way, yes, she’s a pop star.”

Singles like “Tia Tamera” with Rico Nasty and “Juicy” with Tyga were a legitimizing force. (The latter marked her first Hot 100 entry.) But it was *Hot Pink*, released in late 2019 — a sultry, eccentric collection of genre-spanning bangers on which she slipped easily between singing and rapping, as though she were featuring on her own songs — that showed Doja had real range. A TikTok dance challenge sent the disco-inspired “Say So” soaring up both the pop and R&B/hip-hop charts. When the song’s Minaj remix reached No. 1 on the Hot 100, it was the first time a female rap collaboration had done so, paving the way for Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion’s “WAP” a few months after. Over a year later, TikTok again fueled a *Hot Pink* track’s blowup on the chart, when the Silhouette Challenge helped propel “Streets,” a slinky deep cut, to No. 16.

“There are agencies that have been like, ‘We’ll get you a bunch of TikTok hits,’ but that is the biggest bunch of bullshit I’ve ever seen — it doesn’t work like that,” says Kaplan. “It’s just fans attaching to a song.” Still, the team’s response to the Doja-centric challenges was canny — including casting Haley Sharpe, the TikTok user who created the “Say So” dance, in the official music video, and later featuring her striking a Silhouette Challenge pose in the one for “Streets.” “She’s a very well-rounded artist, so every record kind of broke differently,” says Slaiby of Doja, noting how her swaggering club banger “Boss Bitch” broke after



Kenzo top, pants and boots; Lillian Shalom and KHIRY rings from The Residency Experience.



it was featured on the soundtrack to *Suicide Squad* spinoff *Birds of Prey*. “You’ll see her in different pockets, and a lot of the time, it’s through her fans reaching out to her. There is no one formula for every song.”

It was her marathon of “live” performances throughout the pandemic that proved Doja not only had staying power but star power, too. From *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* to the Grammys, she performed no less than six discrete versions of “Say So,” conspiring with Cortland and creative director Nelson (who formerly styled Minaj) to ensure each felt fresh and unexpected — and showing off her own stage chops in the process. On the virtual stage of the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards, “Say So” became a neon cyberpunk fantasy; for MTV’s Europe Music Awards, the trio reimagined it as a metal song, with Doja swaggering and headbanging in front of a full band. “I’ve been able to create different worlds with her,” says Nelson. “It brings me joy because growing up watching these huge pop stars

“Doja is a star, and has created a unique universe you just want to lose yourself in ... We will be seeing her impact for a very long time to come.”

—THE WEEKND

perform on television, there was always an art to the show, and I feel like recently, people have kind of lost the artistry of performing.”

If anything, the COVID-19 lockdown allowed the team more creative focus. “We were able to do things I don’t think we would ever have the opportunity to do without the pandemic,” continues Nelson. “For the VMAs, for instance, we built our whole performance on an [extended reality] stage where we built a world around us rather than having to build a practical thing onstage — which brought in this sense of technology and weird computer things that just fit so well with Doja, because she ultimately is a child of the internet.” Amid a landscape of both crackly Zoom streams and immaculately rehearsed virtual spectacles, they saw Doja’s onstage dynamism as capturing the kind of raw, live concert experience the world was missing. “We just wanted people to have the essence of a live show,” says Cortland. “A lot of people were doing things that looked like music videos, but we wanted it to feel like there was an audience, and she was giving it to them.”

At first, Doja wasn’t quite sure what to do for the Grammys. “I felt like we’d covered all bases — we’d tried every fucking thing because I did that song like 500 times,” she says. “But then I was like, ‘We need a robotic EDM kind of thing, something with a raver vibe, something that feels sexy and edgy and sleek and dark, but also crazy colors, like an action film.’” If viewers caught Janet Jackson vibes in the powerful, quasi-militaristic dance steps, it wasn’t by accident.

“If you know anything about pop, if you know anything about *Black women* in pop, then you know Janet definitely holds that strength,” says Doja. “I love that about her, and I wanted to have that moment as well.” At the start of the performance, she’s just a shiny latex silhouette — she could be anyone. When she finally steps into the spotlight, holding the imaginary audience with just her gaze, she couldn’t be anyone but Doja Cat.

DOJA HAD NO TROUBLE STAYING EYE TO EYE WITH HER FANS throughout the pandemic: Having spent her entire career chatting with them through a screen, she has happily let them watch her play *Fortnite* or *Little Nightmares*, freestyle impromptu jams or do surreal-

ist makeup with weird music playing in the background (her latest hobby). “When you can’t do shows and you can’t show your personality through live performance, you have to rely on the music and the internet,” says her co-manager Dillard. “The ones who had amazing music and understand the internet are the ones who won during the pandemic.” Fleckenstein calls Doja “probably the best example of someone really understanding how to move in today’s marketplace. I think that will be forever a bar in how to communicate with fans.”

If a Doja Cat cultural saturation point exists, she has yet to reach it. Following last year’s run of “Say So” performances and chart hits of her own, she scored a best new artist Grammy nomination and jumped on a couple of massive collaborations — featuring alongside Megan Thee Stallion on Ariana Grande’s “34+35” remix and joining Saweetie for her ride-or-die anthem “Best Friend.” Later this year, she’ll announce an expanded tour — one hitting rooms bigger than the 2,000- to 3,000-capacity spaces planned pre-pandemic. And since she hasn’t yet worn out her welcome, the next step in the Doja glow-up is nigh.

On *Planet Her*, which is due this summer, Doja tones down the genre-hopping experimentation of *Hot Pink*, but she doesn’t sacrifice its playful versatility, celebrating her femininity and reveling in her sense of humor on tracks like “Need To Know.” (“I heard from a friend of a friend/That dick is a 10 out of 10!”) She carefully selected the album’s big-name features, including The Weeknd (Slaiby’s star SALXCO client) on the steamy second single, “You Right.” “Doja is a star, and has created a unique universe you just want to lose yourself in,” says The Weeknd. “She’s got such drive and vast creative vision that we will be seeing her impact for a very long time to come.”

Lead single “Kiss Me More” (featuring SZA) might give the best sense of *Planet Her*’s head space. A punny groove about, well, kissing — which just debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 7, becoming Doja’s second top 10 on the chart — its video is bathed in pastel hues and high-femme futurism, and while it’s over-the-top sexy, it still ends with Doja and SZA cracking each other up while playing a video game in a galaxy far, far away. “We both think outside the box and don’t mind experimenting or confusing others in the process of creating,” says SZA. “Her mind is one of my favorites.”

Creative director Nelson was initially worried when Doja told him she wanted the *Planet Her* era to feel space age. “My worry was that other people have done that, from Lady Gaga with *Chromatica* to Beyoncé wearing the metal Thierry Mugler robot pieces — we’ve all seen futurism,” he recalls. “But we’re doing a style of futurism that feels fresh. We don’t know what our actual future holds, so we are making what Doja Cat’s future is. It doesn’t feel like we’re paying homage to something; it doesn’t seem like we’re on the same Pinterest board as everyone else.”

For Doja, it’s the first record that feels fully her own — instead of striving to *be* a certain kind of pop star, she’s simply embodying one. “I think in the beginning, I was just trying to be solid and be what a pop artist already was: what I’d seen on TV and what I thought was the right thing to do,” she says, lounging in bed, burned out but confident. “But as I move on into this *Planet Her* era, I want to introduce things to people as opposed to just re-create and rehash. It’s just more inspiring to start from a more innovative spot.”

It feels like a win for the weirdos, for anyone who related to Doja back when she was just a girl messing around online. “All the goofy kids, or the kids who don’t put themselves on a pedestal, or are just not normally accepted — I feel like making that example is good for those kids,” she says. “Because maybe they felt like they could never make it in an industry where everybody is so serious. It’s important that they know they have a lane.” Welcome to Planet Her: You may have met its queen with French fries in her nose, but now she’s on top of the world. It happens. **B**

PRESCRIPTION

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The women of **Prescription Songs** have taken Dr. Luke's publishing company into a new era — and are finding innovative ways to fight for songwriters

BY NOLAN FEENEY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DIANA KING

From left: Katie Mitzell Fagan photographed April 7 in Nashville. Rhea Pasricha and Sara Walker photographed April 11 in Los Angeles.

E

MILY WARREN WAS FREAKING

out. Back in 2012, the now Grammy Award-nominated songwriter was a student at New York University trying to get ahead in the music industry when a management deal fell apart. “I was distraught that I

was missing my chance and was never going to have an opportunity,” she says. Scouring her inbox for promising contacts, she found an email from an Atlantic Records A&R assistant named Rhea Pasricha, who had once come to see Warren’s high school band perform and exchanged a few messages with her.

Desperate to reconnect, Warren sent her a few songs she had been working on. It was fortuitous timing: Pasricha was about to start a new job at Prescription Songs, the independent publishing company launched in 2009 by songwriter-producer Lukasz “Dr. Luke” Gottwald. They talked by phone and discussed demos for a few months before Pasricha invited Warren out to Los Angeles to have dinner and join a few songwriting sessions. “At the time, I started talking to a few other publishers, and there was no question about who was going to be a homie, who was going to go fight for me,” says Warren. “I do remember — just because this is always the feeling with Prescription — they were and are some of the only people in the business who strike me as really good people.”

Pasricha, it turns out, didn’t have to fight that hard for Warren. She prepared a whole pitch about why the company should sign a writer without any major credits to her name. But Gottwald — then known mostly as the hitmaker behind No. 1 singles from Katy Perry and Britney Spears — only had a few questions. “‘Do you like her?’” Pasricha, now head of A&R, West Coast, recalls him asking. *Yeah.* “‘Do you think she’s talented?’” *Super talented.* “Great.” They listened to some of her songs, and he was sold.

Today, Warren is one of Prescription Songs’ quintessential success stories. Her ascension to behind-the-scenes pop powerhouse has paralleled the company’s own evolution from an extension of its founder’s brand to an entity with a staff of 25, a roster of nearly 140 writers and three ASCAP Pop Music Award wins for independent publisher of the year. Warren has co-written 11 Billboard Hot 100 entries, including several with The Chainsmokers and two of Dua Lipa’s star-making hits, “New Rules” and “Don’t Start Now,” the latter of which received a Grammy nomination in 2020 for song of the year (among other nods).

Prescription also had a banner 2020, with Hot 100 hits for writers and producers like KBeaZy (24kGoldn and iann dior’s “Mood”), Lauren LaRue (Arizona Zervas’ “Roxanne”) and Doja Cat (who works with other Prescription writers and producers, including Gottwald, on many of her tracks). In 2019 and 2020, Prescription didn’t appear on *Billboard*’s annual list of the top 10 Hot 100 publishers, but in the latter year it jumped into the unpublished portion of the chart to No. 39 — which means it finished ahead of thousands of other publishers last year on the strength of nearly a dozen hits. The company says its fourth-quarter revenue grew 29% year over year.

That success, its executives say, shows the strength of Prescription’s strategy: prioritizing gut instinct over résumés when signing songwriters, committing to long-term talent development and helping creators build sustainable careers on their own terms. “I genuinely believe that a lot of the people that we’ve signed, other publishers wouldn’t have given a second look because they didn’t have any cuts or because they didn’t have the data behind them,” says Katie Mitzell Fagan, head of A&R, Nashville. “We just get to do things because we’re passionate about them.”



That’s what stands out most to Willard Ahdriz, founder/chairman of Kobalt, which does administration for Prescription among 600 or so other small publishers. “Prescription has never been a company that buys something for market share — they take their creative bets very early,” says Ahdriz, who also praises “the long runway” it offers new talent.

The path to success has not been without scrutiny. In 2014, Kesha, with whom Gottwald worked on her early megahits, filed a lawsuit accusing him of sexual assault and emotional abuse (among other claims) that shocked the industry and fueled calls to #FreeKesha. Gottwald simultaneously sued her for defamation and breach of contract and has repeatedly and vehemently denied all of her accusations; his suit is ongoing, and a trial is scheduled for fall 2021, according to court documents. Kesha’s claims have been dismissed by the singer voluntarily or by a judge, yet her cause has become a movement. Dozens of stars, including Adele and Taylor Swift, have supported the singer, and past Gottwald collaborators such as Kelly Clarkson and P!nk have spoken negatively about their experiences working with him, saying he was “demeaning” and “not a good person,” respectively. But while Gottwald

remains persona non grata in some pop music circles, he has hardly been inactive, writing and producing for artists like Doja Cat, Saweetie and Kim Petras.

In some ways, the claims made against Gottwald and the values of the company can seem at odds. In interviews, Fagan has said that the small, tight-knit staff has a “no asshole” policy. When asked how to square this with what has been alleged about his character, Fagan summarizes her experiences with him, as other Prescription staffers do, as only positive and “empowering.” The company prides itself on advancing the careers of women in the music industry: Roughly two-thirds of the employees are female, which some Prescription writers describe as a selling point. Fagan, who started out as Gottwald’s assistant, counts a former assistant as an A&R manager; the company’s director of creative synch and digital used to be the receptionist.

Gottwald is still the owner of Prescription Songs and steers some big-picture strategy: He spearheaded a recent partnership with bitcoin company BitPay, giving Prescription writers the option to receive royalty payments in cryptocurrency. But his day-to-day involvement is harder to generalize. Fagan and Pasricha describe him as hands-



From left: Walker, Pasricha and Fagan. "It's so important to have a diverse roster," says Fagan, "in order to make music that's going to move the needle."

on but note that he is a creative first and foremost, not a desk-job executive; they talk to him frequently, mostly just to keep him in the loop, but say he has given them tremendous leeway. Prescription staffers — who speak openly and glowingly about Gottwald — describe him mostly as a sounding board, available to give advice or help out with things like resolving split disputes. "I call him every so often to check in and keep him updated, but he's as involved as we need him to be," says Fagan, who adds that his formal approval is not necessary for signings. "I've signed a lot of things, by the way, that Luke doesn't like."

Prescription's executives believe the team's accomplishments mean more to their industry peers than any headlines about its founder — an assessment several top A&R executives that *Billboard* contacted independently would agree with. "It's one of the best-run publishing companies in the business. They're on the ball, they have great follow-through, they send great demos, they're relentless in a gracious way," says Epic Records executive vp A&R Joey Arbagey. "I honestly don't talk to Luke. I haven't talked to him for several years, and I don't really think about Luke when I'm doing business with them."

Pasricha says the period following the filing of the 2014

lawsuits "definitely wasn't the easiest of times" for the company, but she also maintains that it didn't really hurt the business. "Yeah, maybe some people didn't want to sign with us," she acknowledges. But by then, the staff was already bringing in their own writers and honing their own reputations. "I feel very fortunate that we've kind of been able to, in some ways..." — she pauses to find the right word — "overcome that? And be more than that."

At the same time, she and Prescription's other executives often point out, usually without prompting, that much of the company culture and strategy that make them successful can be traced back to Gottwald. "We're all empowered to let creative lead the way versus corporate red tape or a [profit/loss] analysis," says Sara Walker, senior vp creative synch. "Having the company founded by a songwriter and producer instills the focus on the creative." All of this occasionally makes sorting out the Venn diagram of Gottwald and Prescription tricky, even if staffers are happy to discuss him. "He's part of our company, for sure. I mean, I pitch Luke's songs. I work with his catalog. He's one of our producers," says Walker. "So, yeah. You can't separate them."

It's an ongoing calibration. This year, over a decade af-

ter its founding, the company changed its employee email domain from drluke.com to prescriptionsongs.com.



IN THE EVENING OF HER

23rd birthday, Fagan showed up at L.A.'s Conway Recording Studios for an interview with Gottwald. He was working on Britney Spears' 2011 album, *Femme Fatale*, alongside a constellation of pop hitmakers (including Max Martin and Benny Blanco) who all participated in Fagan's evaluation. To her, it was a dream come true. "I don't know if you could even call it an interview; it was just them asking me silly questions," recalls Fagan. When Martin met with her, he offered her a beer, which Fagan — whose colleagues today praise her unflappable calm — briefly panicked over whether to accept. She declined it in the end. "Good," Martin told her. "You passed your first test."

At that point, Fagan's only industry experience was a Warner Chappell Music internship, but when she sat down with Gottwald, he mostly wanted to know about her time working as a camp counselor and water ski

instructor. "I was like, 'Wait, really? That's what you want to know?'" she says. Pasricha had a similar experience. When she interviewed with Gottwald for an A&R position in 2012, he flopped down in his seat and started a conversation so informal that she wondered if she was talking to the wrong person. While she was at Atlantic, Pasricha and Gottwald had competed to sign Becky G, so he already knew she could do the job. At one point, he asked her what her favorite dinosaurs were. It was an easy question for Pasricha, who, it turns out, is a bit of a science nerd and went to space camp in middle school: brachiosaurus, the long-necked beast featured in *Jurassic Park*.

Fagan and Pasricha were among Gottwald's earliest hires, working at first out of his house. Before they joined, there were only about a dozen writers on the roster, many of whom worked closely with Gottwald. "He really started the model of what most people emulate today: signing writers and producers to himself and using them on his projects," a source with knowledge of Prescription's early years tells *Billboard*.

But they were starting to need more support than Gottwald could give them — at least without sacrificing his own creative time. So he and former senior vp publishing Beka Tischker, whom several executives interviewed for this story credit with shaping the company's early growth, started staffing up and diversifying. "It was like, 'We need an A&R now to help keep this person's calendar going and book them sessions,'" recalls Prescription chief engineer/technical adviser Clint Gibbs, who has worked alongside Gottwald in studios for over a decade. "I'd like to say I knew the exact moment, but you just opened your eyes one day like, 'Oh! We're a company.'"

Gottwald's emphasis on hangout potential set the tone for how the company recruits new talent. "If you were to do a meeting with the whole team, you're going to learn about what we all ate last night, what we're watching on television," says Walker. Prescription writer James Droll recently reminded Fagan that he and the staff once talked about *The Princess Diaries* for 45 minutes before getting down to business. Joy Oladokun, a soulful singer-songwriter whose Twitter bio describes her as "the trap Tracy Chapman," has similar memories. "It was definitely a party," she says. Still, she was struck by the fact that the staff had actually listened to her music, unlike other companies where "people could barely remember who I was or why I was there."

After initial meetings, if Prescription is interested in moving forward, it will usually put a writer in sessions with other members of its roster to vet their work ethic, skill set and personal character — not a standard practice in pop publishing. Part of that pickiness stems from the fact that its active roster drives its revenue. "We don't have the luxury [of saying], 'If we sign this writer for X million dollars and it doesn't work out, 'Billie Jean' is going to keep the lights on for this year,'" says Pasricha. Working closely with artists till they recoup is paramount. "Unless you say stop, they're going to put you in a room seven days a week and just try everything and introduce you to everyone," says Warren. "But the fact that we'd all have to say, 'Hey, I want less sessions,' to our publisher versus, 'Pay attention to me,' is so amazing."

That also means Prescription is not the place for every writer. "Some might come to us and be like, 'Listen, I really just need a check. I've already got my train going. I don't need a lot of help,'" says Fagan. Sometimes, during early discussions with a writer, one of their songs will blow up unexpectedly — and attract other publishers dangling bigger advances. "It's not that we can't compete with that," says Pasricha. "But for us, it's just not necessarily the



Clockwise from top: Prescription songwriters Warren, JORDY, LaRue and Oladokun.



way we do business."

Prescription deals, likewise, haven't always been everyone's cup of tea. Four years ago, speaking on the popular songwriting podcast *And the Writer Is...*, Bonnie McKee said, "Luke's deals are famously bad, everybody knows that. That's fine. He's a brilliant businessman, so he's getting his — that's fine. And he gave me my career ... I don't regret it at all." Even now, says Fagan, that reputation comes up "pretty much anytime" they're talking to a writer's attorney whom they haven't worked with recently.

Over the years, she continues, the company has updated its contracts to be more in line "with what everyone else is doing." That means moving away from minimum delivery and release commitment (MDRC) provisions, which specify a quota on commercially released material, not just



songs turned in. MDRC deals have fallen out of fashion over criticism that, in certain cases, the challenges of satisfying such provisions can keep songwriters unfairly locked into deals. "From a dealmaking perspective, the music publishing business has changed dramatically over the last six to eight years," says attorney Jason Boyarski of Boyarski Fritz, who has represented a number of top songwriters and previously was senior vp/GM of Warner Chappell Music. In an MDRC deal, "you could be recouped, you could be having massive success with big royalties coming in, but you don't really have a trigger to end the deal. You're kind of stuck."

Fagan does note, however, that because Prescription typically spends several years developing young writers, its deals are usually for longer periods of time. The exact terms vary, but the company also typically does not offer full contractual reversions, meaning that its share of the publishing does not revert back to the songwriter after a set period of time. (In the United States, though, a writer can file for copyright termination of the U.S. rights and get back publishing ownership after 35 years.) A former publishing executive says this is not uncommon for companies of Prescription's size and business model — in fact, for decades, it was the standard for music publishers signing unproven talent. "I always try to explain to people that if we're going to work together this early on in your career, we're in it for the long haul," says Fagan. "The reason that our deals are the way that they are is because we are doing things differently than other companies, and we are signing people differently."

During the signing process, Prescription will usually offer to introduce writers to Gottwald, though for many recent additions to the roster it hasn't been necessary. "They're like, 'No, I'm sold, I love you guys,'" says Pasricha. But if someone does have questions about his involvement, they are happy to answer them or put them in touch with Gottwald directly. "It isn't an elephant in the room for us," says Fagan.

Writers have different reasons for asking to meet Gottwald. Some are like singer-songwriter JORDY, who signed with Prescription last fall and is known for conversational pop tunes like the TikTok favorite "Long Distance." He was impressed by his conversations with the staff, but he wanted to know if Gottwald was even aware of his music — and he didn't want to sign to a company without meeting the person at the top. When they did get on a call, they talked a lot about songwriting. "There wasn't a time when we had reservations," says JORDY's manager, Cory Andersen, who has since signed another songwriter, country-pop singer Maddie Zahm, to Prescription. "I trust that team and the people who are on that team."

Oladokun went into her meeting anticipating a very different conversation. "I was looking for a reason to say no to signing to Prescription," she recalls thinking. But she was surprised at how quickly Gottwald brought up the legal battle, and she was moved by the candor and vulnerability with which he discussed the last few years. She had some lingering concerns — "As a Black, queer woman, the last thing I want to do during a press cycle is talk about a white guy" — but in the end, she says, "I took the information I had, and I made a decision. I don't regret that decision. He has been really kind and gracious. I understand that is not everybody's feeling, but when it comes to business stuff, he has been very fair to me." Ultimately, she notes, few people even ask about him.

I**N 2016, WARREN WAS BEMOANING A** breakup when Pasricha shared what she now considers some cringe-worthy relationship advice she had heard: "The only way to get over someone is to get under someone else." It's not unusual for Prescription staffers and writers to have such personal relationships. "We know their birthdays, we know their significant others, we've been to weddings and baby showers," says Pasricha. "They call us when their car gets towed." And sure enough, later that week, Warren made good use of Pasricha's advice: In a writing session with Ian Kirkpatrick and Caroline Ailin, she tweaked it into one of the most memorable lyrics of Lipa's "New Rules."

Prescription Songs' small size — and the personal attention that setup provides writers — is probably its biggest selling point. It may be a cliché, but the word "family" comes up repeatedly to describe the operation. And while those close bonds — daily phone calls, unrelenting group chats — don't always translate into lyrical gold, they do improve Prescription's batting average in other ways. A few writers say they can count on one hand the number of bad sessions they've had because their A&R executives are such good studio matchmakers. "There's a lot more thought going into [setting up sessions], because they know each other so well," says Warner Records vp A&R Gabz Landman. "A&Rs at Prescription are the type of people who, if they say to me, 'Trust me, I know you've never heard of this person, but they should work with your artist,' I believe them."

Walker, a two-decade veteran of the synch world whose energy and enthusiasm is palpable even over

Zoom, has worked at companies where it was normal to never interact with her roster; at Prescription, writers can text her about synch opportunities on TV shows they watched the night before. "Nobody's ever going to wait three weeks for a response on something from our team because our writers have access to us and can call us," says Walker. "It's not like, 'Well, we've got to talk to upper management and come back to you.'"

There are few internal boundaries within the company: A&R staff can book sessions and pitch demos across its entire roster, even if the staffer didn't sign the artist or is based in a different office — "one of the things that most surprised me about joining the team," says Siara Behar, senior director, A&R. There are also no formal genre distinctions, which has recently served Prescription well: One of its writers, Trey Campbell, contributed to 2021 Grammy nominees for best R&B, reggae and country album, while Nate Campany, who has a background in alternative music and left-field pop, has found success "writing these sexy Latin bangers," says Pasricha. "He doesn't even speak Spanish fluently!"

That freedom was what drew Lauren LaRue, who began her career in the country scene, to sign with the company after meeting her A&R executive, Hannah Montgomery, who had previously worked in Nashville and joined Prescription's L.A. office seeking similar cross-genre opportunities. "It was incredibly rare to have somebody who never put my art in any sort of box," says LaRue. (She's signed to a joint venture with Keith Urban's BOOM publishing company.) "A lot of times, that's where the best art comes from: trying a new thing, even if it seems weird."

The company has long had a relationship with Nashville. From 2013 to 2017, Prescription and Big Machine Music had a joint venture to co-publish versatile writers. But in late 2016, Fagan launched Prescription's Nashville office to invest in the city's non-country scene. Just as Nashville's rich songwriting tradition has attracted pop stars like Ed Sheeran and Kylie Minogue to its studios, it has also drawn young songwriters who don't fit into the country ecosystem. Whenever Fagan would come to town, writers, managers and even other publishers repeatedly offered to introduce her to a growing list of unsigned talent, which she recognized as a new client pool for Prescription. "I haven't left [Prescription] because I've been given the tools to succeed, and I've been heard when I have a crazy idea like, 'Hey, something's happening in Nashville, but not a lot of people know about it yet. If we get there now, we're going to be ahead of it,'" she says. "With no questions asked, [Gottwald said], 'Yes, go, go run an office there.'"

The Nashville base also provides a home to writers for whom the industry's other epicenters don't appeal. Oladokun was living in L.A. when she signed with Prescription, but she was intrigued with the way Fagan talked about the Nashville artistic community and the pace of life there. So Fagan soon set up a two-week writing trip for her; on the second day, Oladokun told her she was ready to move there permanently. "I was like, 'My work here is done,'"

recalls Fagan. She saw the folk-leaning Oladokun as "a slow build. Her music is not a viral sensation. She's a very particular songwriter, and she knows what she wants. So it has been a lot of development on that side, just figuring out what works and what doesn't work for her."

Indeed, for a company so closely associated with top 40 pop hits, Prescription has a number of less commercially inclined writers, like Ethel Cain, who writes haunting, rootsy alt-pop from the perspective of a disgruntled preacher's wife, or acts like Vancouver Sleep Clinic and Dave Thomas Junior, who make delicate, almost ambient music. "We don't look at what we're doing as one size fits all," says Walker. "If your goal is to get

the Dua Lipa cuts, let's figure out how we can help you do that. But if your goal is to make stripped-down ballads about heartbreak, let's find a way for you to continue to do that also."

Sometimes that means leaning into synch opportunities: Walker recently scored a high-profile placement in *Station 19*, the ABC *Grey's Anatomy* spinoff, for a song that Prescription writer Grace Fulmer had composed entirely in, of all languages, Latin. For other writers, that means looking for new revenue streams and taking on responsibilities atypical of music publishers. Writers' fees — an upfront sum of money to simply work with one — are not the norm in pop songwriting, but Montgomery says Prescription is "trying to make them more common" for its roster's sake. In some cases, the company has also secured streaming bonuses (a payment if a song hits a certain

number of streams), holding fees (for when an artist is deciding whether to record a song) and royalty points on a song's master. "We're really taking the time to look under the hood of how writers can make money because it's not easy right now," says Montgomery. "When I say, 'We can't promise anyone a No. 1, but we can promise that you can live a sustainable life as a creative,' we mean it."

Fighting for writers, helping them pay their bills by doing whatever they want — that's what Prescription executives want people to think of first when they picture the company. When asked how she feels about those various perceptions of the company, Pasricha says, "I feel like I just want to keep my head down and work."

They also know what's out of their control: That Prescription's legacy will be determined, to some degree, by how the industry defines it, and what it decides matters. The writers and managers interviewed for this story all give some variation of the same advice about finding publishing deals: Sign with the people, not the company. Take away the name, the track records, the talking points and consider: Is this a person you want to talk to every day for the next five years? Will they champion you? Every writer is different, and every deal has its pros and cons, the trade-offs and the opportunities. But in the end, the equation often works out the same.

"I grew up in church, so I always go back to Bible verses," says Oladokun, and there's one that comes to mind when she thinks about Prescription: "You'll know a tree by its fruit." **B**

**"WHEN I SAY,
'WE CAN'T PROMISE
ANYONE A NO. 1, BUT
WE CAN PROMISE
THAT YOU CAN LIVE
A SUSTAINABLE LIFE
AS A CREATIVE,'
WE MEAN IT."**

—MONTGOMERY

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-Larry Mestel

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AS PUBLISHER PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC OBSERVES ITS 15TH YEAR IN BUSINESS, FOUNDER/CEO LARRY MESTEL DISCUSSES GIVING A SECOND LIFE TO ICONIC HITS BY KURT COBAIN, WHITNEY HOUSTON AND BOB MARLEY

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

IN MARCH, PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC FOUNDER/CEO Larry Mestel visited his office at the independent publishing company's headquarters in New York's Gramercy Park neighborhood for the first time in nearly a year. The Brooklyn native had been waiting out the pandemic at his vacation home in Vermont, but he had good reason for making the 200-plus-mile trek. Mestel was meeting the manager of an iconic singer-songwriter and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee to discuss a catalog acquisition — one of 33 deals he currently has in motion.

In the 15 years since Mestel founded Primary Wave, it has amassed a 20,000-song catalog that contains the copyrights to works by Smokey Robinson, Aerosmith, Bob Marley, Whitney Houston, Burt Bacharach, Paul Anka, Prince and Hall & Oates. With outposts in Los Angeles, London, Nashville and Austin, the company also houses divisions for marketing and branding in partnership with Brand Synergy Group, as well as film/TV production and talent management. It advises 18 artists including Melissa Etheridge, Fantasia and Cypress Hill.

Unlike traditional publishers, Mestel says Primary Wave specializes in using innovative marketing and branding campaigns to revitalize the songs of music icons. That mission began in 2006 when he acquired a 50% interest in Kurt Cobain's sought-after music publishing catalog from the late artist's widow, Courtney Love. (*Billboard* reported the sum to be in excess of \$50 million, according to a source close to the deal.) Only later did Mestel discover that Primary Wave was the only publisher to offer



Love a marketing plan for the catalog that would eventually include a partnership with Converse to print some of Cobain's lyrics on special-edition sneakers.

"I don't understand how you can be in a business and just write checks and not create value, which is why we have 70-plus people focused on generating new ideas for partnerships with these artists," says Mestel. "Most of our competitors put their songs in a drawer."

A former executive at Virgin Records, Arista Records and Island Entertainment Group, Mestel says he modeled Primary Wave's creative drive after Chris Blackwell's 61-year-old Island Records — which guided the careers of Marley, U2 and Cat Stevens — by leveraging innovative distribution deals, imprints and subsidiaries. "[Blackwell] taught me how to be artistically sensitive and why it's important to partner with artists," he says.

“We tell an artist in advance: ‘We don’t want to buy 100%. We want to buy 50% or 60% or 70% ... We want to partner.’”

—MESTEL

That relationship led to Primary Wave’s purchase of 80% of Blackwell’s share of Marley’s publishing catalog for \$50 million in 2018.

The following year, Primary Wave struck further landmark agreements, such as a partnership with the Whitney Houston estate that gave the publisher a 50% stake in the estate’s assets and is developing a rescheduled hologram tour, as well as multimillion-dollar deals with the rock band Disturbed (which included publishing and master income) and Paul Anka (which spanned publishing, master recordings and his name and likeness). Other recent deals: a decadelong administration and marketing agreement with The Four Seasons’ surviving members, Frankie Valli and Bob Gaudio; a majority stake in Fleetwood Mac member Stevie Nicks’ copyrights and publishing; and a 50% stake in KT Tunstall’s publishing and master recording royalties. It has also purchased the iconic Sun Records label including the company’s trademark, as well as recordings by Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis among 6,000 masters, for a reported \$30 million.

Backed by institutional investors, the company now has \$1.5 billion in cash and assets under management and is preparing for a third fundraising round — the better to capitalize on the current hot market for song catalogs. The company’s marketing and branding plays include a Houston biopic, *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*, which is set for a 2022 release, and a soon-to-be-announced Las Vegas residency based on Marley’s music.

To mark the company’s 15th anniversary, Mestel discussed running Primary Wave like a record label and why he’s not worried about competition from companies like Merck Mercuriadis’ Hipgnosis Songs Fund and Irving Azoff’s Iconic Artists Group.



From left: Former Island Records president Darcus Beese, Skip Marley, Cedella Marley, Mestel, Mastercard vp/head of sponsorship for North America Michael Goldstein and Universal Music Enterprises president/CEO Bruce Resnikoff in West Hollywood in 2020.

How is Primary Wave run like a label?

When we started in 2006, I did not want to be a normal publisher, which provided no value. Music publishers put their feet up on their desks, waited for the phone to ring — when they licensed a song because somebody called them — they gave each other high-fives and thought they’d done a great job of marketing. That’s not marketing. Because I came from the record-label side of the business, I understood that to break artists, you have to generate opportunity.

Which of Primary Wave’s branding and marketing deals stand out for you?

One of my all-time favorites was creating a holiday for Smokey Robinson in 2017. The second Sunday in every October is now Smokey Robinson’s Father-Daughter Day. I love it for two reasons. One, my marketing team was able to convince American Greetings to create a holiday. Nobody else has done that. When Smokey goes out to play golf with his buddies on the weekend, he’s the only one of his friends who has a holiday, and he’s so excited. We put lyrics on the side of Kurt Cobain Converse sneakers [in 2008]. I get a kick out of it when I’m on the street and I see somebody wearing those sneakers. It was a

fantastic brand opportunity for Kurt [who was known to wear Converse]. It was organic to who he was.

What are the keystones of introducing an icon to a newer generation?

When you look at an artist who may not be on the mind of a 16-year-old or an 18-year-old, you’ve got to go where they are. For Whitney Houston, we went into the vault the day after we bought into the partnership and found this [cover of Steve Winwood’s] “Higher Love” that she had recorded in 1990. It sounded like a hit song, just dated. So our team got Kygo on board to remix the record, RCA did a great job of putting it on the radio, and it was a major hit around the world. Kids who were big Kygo fans got a chance to experience Whitney and stream her other music. Stevie Nicks and the Ocean Spray TikTok — what better way for teens and young kids to find Stevie’s music? Look at Surf Mesa with “ily (i love you baby)” [which uses a sample of Valli’s 1967 song “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You”]. That brings them into the new youth culture. That’s how you do it. Films, too, are huge.

What are Primary Wave’s film plans? Could a Nicks biopic be in the future?

“and we have a couple of proposals out to collaborators in that market.” She’s also tasked with overseeing and expanding Primary Wave’s management roster, which she hopes to invigorate with additional genres and contemporary players.

As the highest-ranking female executive on the creative team, Nastaskin sits on the executive committee of She Is the Music, a nonprofit focused on equality, inclusivity and opportunity for women in the music industry, and she helped launch UTA’s all-female networking series La Femme Majeure. —T.C.



NATALIA NASTASKIN

PARTNER/CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

A S A FORMER LAWYER who rose to become GM of the global music group at UTA, Nastaskin never planned to make the jump to publishing. But when Larry Mestel was looking for a chief content officer last year — and secretly hoping she would be interested in the role — Nastaskin saw an opportunity to leverage her network and further tap into her creative skills.

“It really enables me to ideate, create and execute deals around legendary [intellectual property], but with contemporary players,” says Nastaskin, who took on the newly created position in February.

In her role, she will create content around Primary Wave’s catalog in areas such as TV, film and podcasts. “There’s nothing we’re not looking at right now,” she says, including non-fungible tokens and international markets. “With my Russian background, Russia is the first one that we’re analyzing very deeply,” she says,

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of the first 15 years and look forward to
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Frankie Valli & Bob Gaudio

The Houston hologram in Madrid in 2020.



Stevie has so much going on right now. It's something that I'm sure will be part of her future, but it may not be part of her near future. We're developing and producing a biographical film on Glenn Gould, who is one of the greatest classical pianists of all time, but not many people in America have heard of him. We want to reintroduce him. We're producing a Whitney Houston biographical film with [screenwriter] Anthony McCarten. I'm so excited about how we've raised the bar on Whitney's brand. We've got a Burt Bacharach project — it's not a biopic, but it uses all of his music.

Why did Primary Wave's business thrive during the pandemic?

The music we've bought tends to be comfort music, and people tend to want comfort music in hard times. From a streaming perspective, we've seen the earnings of these legends go up, and from a synchronization perspective, we had a great year with Bob Marley and Burt Bacharach. We

made "What the World Needs Now Is Love" [a Bacharach co-write] almost the theme song to uplift people during the pandemic, with the Red Cross and all these advertising campaigns. It has also been very good for us from an acquisition perspective, because artists can't make money on the road. We've been able to provide capital to artists. Melissa Etheridge is a great example of how our team got very creative in helping our artists make money in a tough time via her subscription livestream series, *Etheridge TV*. Livestreaming is certainly one thing, [and] brand alliances are another opportunity. We created a major brand tie-in with Alice Cooper and Cooper tires. That's an obvious thing, but if you don't pick up the phone and call ...

The pandemic forced you to cancel the Houston hologram tour. What's next there?

We started in Europe, got five or six shows in, and it was really building nicely. It's a shame we had to cancel, but it has been rebooked. We're going to try to go back in early



JUSTIN SHUKAT

FOUNDING PARTNER/PRESIDENT,
PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC PUBLISHING

ANYONE WHO KNOWS SHUKAT knows that he loves to talk. Thankfully, it's a skill crucial to his work at Primary Wave, where he is responsible for new writer signings, content acquisitions and facilitating recordings. "It all comes down to communication," says Shukat, a former marketing executive at Arista Records and Epic Records. "It's not sending an email or a text. It's getting on the phone and having conversations. Every Monday morning, we go through our roster [and ask], 'Who needs to be communicated to?'"

Among the first songwriters Shukat signed was LP, who penned Rihanna's Billboard Hot 100 top 10 "Cheers (I'll Drink to That)" in 2011. The roster is now home to hit writers Jeremih, Anthony "Tone" Jones, Teddy Sinclair, PVRIS and Kiiara. Recent Hot 100 entries include Justin Bieber's "Holy" (featuring Chance the Rapper) and Ariana Grande and Social House's "boy-friend," both co-written by Jones; Ritt Momney's cover of Corinne Bailey Rae's "Put Your Records On" (Primary Wave owns the publishing rights); and Surf Mesa's "ily (i love you baby)" (featuring Emilee), which samples Franki Valli, who has a marketing/administration deal with Primary Wave. Meanwhile Doja Cat's "Freak," which samples Paul Anka's "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," reached No. 6 on Hot R&B Songs.

And after he challenged his team to comb through writers' catalogs for untapped gems during the pandemic, a song by Primary Wave signee Livvi Franc attracted interest from Selena Gomez's team. "I don't know if it's going to make the album or turn into a hit, but that song was sitting in my catalog and now it's in the mix with Selena," says Shukat. "We're not going to wait for the phone to ring. You've got to present ideas." —T.C.



ADAM LOWENBERG

PARTNER/CHIEF
MARKETING OFFICER

A FORMER MARKETING executive at Island Def Jam, Virgin Records and Arista Records, Lowenberg joined Primary Wave in 2008 and steers innovative marketing campaigns. He says he's guided by one mantra: "We always want to be the first to do something." That stretches back to 2009, when

Lowenberg brainstormed the first-ever artist-branded scratch-off lottery tickets for Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, which were promoted with a national commercial using the band's hit "Dream On." Fans could win prizes like free concert tickets, backstage passes and even a private performance by the group. "The [Kurt Cobain] Converse deal that Justin Shukat did and this Aerosmith deal enabled us to have two major proofs of concept," says Lowenberg.

When the first four weeks of the pandemic fueled a 23% rise in global

streams of Bob Marley's soulful, comforting catalog, according to MRC Data, it gave Lowenberg the ammunition to strike a deal with SiriusXM for Tuff Gong Radio — an exclusive, year-round channel dedicated to the Marley legacy that launched in December. He also recently worked with the mayor of Akron, Ohio, to declare April 1 DEVO Day in a bid to push for the Akron-based band's induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame later this year. "A publisher doesn't do that," says Lowenberg. "But we don't think of ourselves as a publisher." —T.C.

Heartfelt congratulations to my dear friends,
Larry, Justin, Adam and Ramon, along with their partners, counsel and
THE ENTIRE PRIMARY WAVE TEAM,
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spring of next year. But I also think we're going to have a Vegas hologram show in a residency setting by the end of this year.

Will the boom in song-catalog sales last?

I would say we're only at the beginning, for a number of reasons. One, interest rates are still historically very low, so these assets are very good investments. And artists are not getting younger. Back in 2006, I was trying to convince artists who were 60 and 70 years old to sell us a partnership interest in their works. Those artists are now in their mid-70s to mid-80s, and they want to set up an estate plan for their families. Until interest rates shoot up dramatically or somebody finds a cure for the Fountain of Youth, and while tax rates are still relatively low on capital gains, the boom is going to continue.

Over the past year, younger artists like OneRepublic's Ryan Tedder and Calvin Harris have sold portions of their catalogs. Does it ever make sense for you to acquire a newer artist's work?

Those are the ones we typically stay away from. Everybody seems like they want to sell right now. You've got to be careful what you buy because you don't want to buy a declining asset, and new artists are not as predictable. When their songs come off the radio and they stream less, they earn less. I enjoy seeing my competitors buying newer music. I root for them to be successful, but I also like that

they're spending money where I don't want to spend money.

What about newer songwriters?

Between 5% to 10% of our business is new and developing songwriters and producers. We've had a lot of success over the years with bands like Blue October, Airborne Toxic Event and Anberlin.

LP is signed to us for publishing; [so is] Kiiara, who is on Atlantic Records; Foy Vance, who wrote a lot of Ed Sheeran songs; and recently, The Interrupters. So we do sign a fair share of new and developing artists, but we don't buy new artists' catalogs.

What factors do you weigh when you consider obtaining rights to the work of more contemporary acts such as Disturbed and KT Tunstall?

It has to be iconic or legendary. Disturbed may be one of the biggest hard-rock bands in the world, and I view them as very iconic in their genre. KT Tunstall is a spectacular

artist. When I was running Virgin Records, she was signed at Virgin in the U.K., and we had the chance to work with her in America. I thought she was the next Melissa Etheridge. She'll have a resurgence. She's a great songwriter, storyteller and person.

Do you sign and represent songwriters to administration deals, even if the company doesn't have a stake in the songwriter's publishing?

We have in the past. We do it in special circumstances with incredible artists who don't want to sell a piece of



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"Is it true that you were the only person at the concert who refused to 'wave your hands in the air, and wave 'em like you just don't care'?"

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WE PROUDLY CELEBRATE **LARRY MESTEL** AND HIS AMAZING COLLEAGUES AT
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their music to us, but do want our marketing and our partnership. So we'll do an admin deal. We have maybe 10 to 12 admin deals that we work, including Kenny Loggins and Alice Cooper.

Do you have a network of subpublishers to administer globally?

When we bought Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, we gave it to Universal worldwide. Smokey Robinson is at Sony. Different catalogs that we buy are at different places. Stevie Nicks is at Kobalt; Bob Marley, we moved over to Universal. We use different administrators, depending on what's in place when we buy and who we think will do the best job with a particular catalog. And we're agnostic — we have nonexclusive deals with everybody. But Universal is the best worldwide administrator in the business, so we give a lot of our business to them.

Unlike your competitors, you prefer not to buy 100% of an artist's catalog. Why?

We have acquired about 80 catalogs in the last three years, and I would venture to say 80% of those were partnerships with the artists or the estates. We tell an artist in advance: "We don't want to buy 100%. We want to buy 50% or 60% or 70%. We want to leave you with a significant piece," so that they can participate in the earnings and help us market their work when they are part of the marketing plan. It's more organic, and frankly,

it always turns out better. So we want to partner. Every once in a while, an artist will say, "I'm selling 100%, and if you don't buy it, I'll sell it to somebody else." Then we'll buy 100%, but we don't like to do that.

What's your take on Hipgnosis, which has spent almost \$2 billion to date on catalogs?

They have a model for themselves, and it's not our vision. I'm not saying their vision isn't as good as ours. It's just different. Hipgnosis came in late, they started throwing around a lot of money, and it has benefited me dramatically that they started stirring up the pot. Artists who may not have thought about [selling their catalogs] are now thinking about it. That's a positive thing, but time will tell whether their strategy is successful.

What about Irving Azoff's Iconic Artists Group, which also focuses on reintroducing legends?

Irving is a formidable competitor, but we've gotten a very big head start. People have a long way to go to catch us, and more importantly, when you're able to talk about partnering with artists and delivering on reserves, it helps. There are a lot of formidable competitors out there, but there always have been. We've been up against the majors in the past, and the majors went away, and then the majors came back. We've been up against other competitors who have sold, and new ones pop up all the time.

More and more, you're also buying master recording rights along with publishing. Why?

I like to buy masters when it's associated with publishing so that you have both sides. We did that with the War catalog; we've done that on the Gaither Music side. When we bought Sun Records, we bought some publishing, mostly masters. There's a lot of upside in masters if you buy the right type. It really needs to be very iconic. Sun Records is an example. Sun is a bonanza. It's not just the masters: It's the name. It's the logo. It's the diner. We're going to hopefully put a diner in every music city in America. And we're not doing that just because we want to franchise the diners, but because we want to reinvigorate the Sun name and the masters and the earnings. So if you go with your kids to the Sun diner because you're a Sun music fan, your kids are going to experience the music. They'll buy the merch. It's a way to market the music.

What catalogs are you dying to get your hands on?

AC/DC and Guns N' Roses. First, I love the music, and in this business, it's important to work the music you love. I would love that opportunity. More practically speaking, there's enormous opportunity with those bands. Even though they're iconic and enormous, they're still underserved in terms of what our team does well, which is take these incredible artists and help their brands grow. **b**



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ANNETTE BARRETT

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EVP of International and Emerging Markets
& PopArabia Founder and President



JEREMY LASCELLES

Blue Raincoat / Chrysalis Records CEO



ROBIN MILLAR

Blue Raincoat / Chrysalis Records Chairman

From left: Archie Roach; Flinders Street Station in Melbourne, Australia; Bruce Springsteen; Michael Gudinski; Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne; Ed Sheeran; and Kylie Minogue.



2021 INTERNATIONAL POWER PLAYERS

BILLBOARD PAYS POSTHUMOUS TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL GUDINSKI, FOUNDER OF AUSTRALIA'S MUSHROOM GROUP, AS INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR, AS WE RECOGNIZE INDUSTRY LEADERS AT OVER 100 COMPANIES WHO ARE DRIVING THE SUCCESS OF THE MUSIC BUSINESS OUTSIDE THE U.S.

SOME 63% OF THE WORLD'S MUSIC, by value, is consumed outside the United States, according to IFPI.

Billboard's *International Power Players* recognizes industry leaders — nominated by their companies and peers and selected by our editors — with primary responsibility outside the United States. Honorees include label executives, music publishers, independent entrepreneurs, artist managers and concert promoters.

The late Michael Gudinski of Australia, who died March 2 at the age of 68, achieved success in all of those roles and more. A music industry pioneer whose Mushroom Group would become a template for independent companies, Gudinski, with his exuberant personality, became the face of his country's music scene.

In recognition of his incomparable five-decade music career, Billboard posthumously honors Gudinski as our *International Power Players Executive of the Year*.

"The touring side is decimated. It's frustrating. I really can't see [international tours] happening before the end of the year," Gudinski told *Billboard* over the phone during an interview on Feb. 11. "But it's a great time for Australian acts to shine."

Gudinski loved music, his birthplace of Melbourne and his homeland. He loved family more than anything — a brood that, to him, included the more than 250 employees across Mushroom Group, the independent music powerhouse he built from scratch.

In that final interview, Gudinski talked about the many things he cherished: Bruce Springsteen and Foo Fighters, great songs, cricket and good food. (He shed 17 pounds during the pandemic, which he attributed to eating grilled fish and removing French fries from his diet.) And, of course, he mentioned his immediate family: his wife, Sue, and his grown children, Kate and Matt.

Gudinski died in his sleep on March 2. His impact on Australia's music industry is immeasurable, highlighted

by the state memorial held March 24 in his honor at Melbourne's Rod Laver Arena.

The careers of countless artists and music industry figures moved forward thanks to the 24-strong companies that form Mushroom Group. Gudinski established the company in 1973 and led as chairman until his death.

Today, the group includes Mushroom Music Publishing, the country's leading independent publisher; The Harbour Agency; labels I Oh You, Liberation and Bloodlines; and the concert promotion juggernaut Frontier Touring, which ranked as the third-largest promoter in the world in 2018, according to *Billboard* Boxscore, with gross ticket sales of \$245.1 million and over 2.7 million tickets sold to 440 reported shows.

During the tribute in Melbourne, held in the city's largest indoor arena, those closest to Gudinski appeared onstage or in the audience, including Kylie Minogue, Jimmy Barnes and Ed Sheeran, who made the long haul from the United Kingdom to pay tribute to "this titan of a

man." Sheeran performed a new song in celebration of Gudinski, "Visiting Hours," which he wrote during his stay in quarantine, a hurdle for every visitor entering Australia.

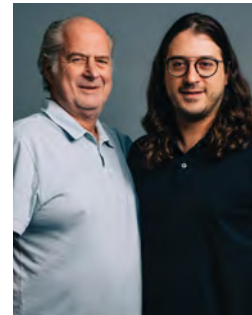
Those who couldn't make the trip to Melbourne opened their hearts in other ways. On March 3, Springsteen unveiled his video for "I'll See You in My Dreams" with a dedication to Gudinski and earlier stated he had "never met a better promoter." Rock stars from Dave Grohl and Elton John to Billy Joel, Sting and many others remembered his infectious, larger-than-life spirit in video tributes.

Archie Roach, the iconic Indigenous artist who was inducted into the Australian Recording Industry Association Hall of Fame in 2020, recounted Gudinski's tireless championing of First Nations artists, including Troy Cassar-Daley, Christine Anu and Dan Sultan, and for his support of Yothu Yindi and its breakthrough hit, "Treaty."

"He gave us a chance," said Roach. "If it wasn't for Michael Gudinski, I wouldn't have been working or been a recording artist."

Gudinski always found a way. In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, he recalibrated his company and focused on a string of new projects, which included the launch of a new label, Reclusive Records, with Yorta Yorta singer-songwriter Scott Darlow as its first signing.

With touring grounded, Gudinski's considerable live-entertainment assets were mothballed. He threw himself into content production through his company's Mushroom Vision division. He spearheaded the April 25 Anzac Day special *Music From the Home Front*, which was a



From left: Gudinski with Madonna in 1993, and with his son, Matt Gudinski, in 2019.

ratings hit (capturing 1.4 million TV viewers, according to OzTAM data), as well as a spinoff multidisc fundraising album that reached No. 1 on the ARIA albums chart.

He then orchestrated a six-part virtual concert series, *State of Music*, through an alliance with Victoria Together, the online platform of the Victoria state government.

A third project was realized when season one of *The Sound* premiered in July on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. A second season wrapped in December, while *Music From the Home Front* is confirmed to return on April 24, this time with a live, all-star concert at Melbourne's Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

Gudinski shaped the landscape of Australian music, and he also introduced the world's biggest acts to Australian audiences through Frontier Touring. Prior to the pandemic, the company had enjoyed a strong run that included stadium tours for Paul McCartney, Justin Bieber, Foo Fighters and Taylor Swift.

When asked to describe himself for a *Billboard* feature published in 2010, Gudinski said, "I'm a man of my word. I'm persistent, and I'm loyal."

Those qualities paid off when Frontier Touring produced Sheeran's ÷ (*Divide*) tour of Australia and New Zealand in 2018 that sold over 1.1 million tickets, shattering the all-time record for a single tour that had stood since Dire Straits set the mark in 1986.

Gudinski's son, Matt, will now lead Mushroom Group as CEO. During his speech at the state memorial, the younger Gudinski hinted at big things to come. Mushroom Group, he said, is in its "strongest position ever," and with its 50th year approaching, "I know that our incredibly talented Mushroom family will help me deliver the vision Dad and I had for the next 50 years of our business." —LARS BRANDLE

MUSIC GROUPS GLOBAL

Dominique Casimir

EXECUTIVE VP GLOBAL REPERTOIRE AND MARKETING, CONTINENTAL EUROPE, ASIA PACIFIC AND LATIN AMERICA, **BMG**

Justus Haerder

EXECUTIVE VP GROUP STRATEGY AND M&A, **BMG**

Sebastian Hentzschel

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, **BMG**

Casimir's role — signing, promoting and working with artists and songwriters across continental Europe — expanded to Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region in November. She also helped lead BMG's new partnership with independent German live-music promoter Undercover as "the logical extension of BMG's plan to integrate all the services an artist could need under one roof." Responsibility for BMG's global technology infrastructure falls under Hentzschel, who saw the company's workforce dispersed last year to over 900 locations. The instant-messaging app myBMG allowed artists and songwriters to track royalty payouts and also collaborate during the lockdown. Under Haerder, BMG continued its run of music-rights deals in 2020, including the Undercover partnership, the COVID-19-fighting charity single "cOMbat quotidien" released with the French football

club Olympique de Marseille and a deal for the recording catalog royalties of Mick Fleetwood. This spring, BMG's film and TV business, under Haerder, plans a multimedia release of Fleetwood's tribute to Peter Green, the guitarist who originally co-founded Fleetwood Mac.

Adam Granite

EXECUTIVE VP MARKET DEVELOPMENT, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP**

Dickon Stainer

PRESIDENT/CEO, GLOBAL CLASSICS AND JAZZ AND VERVE LABEL GROUP, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP**

For the world's largest music company, Granite guides strategy for some of the globe's fastest-growing markets. He has overseen UMG's expansion within China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and the launches of Universal Music Nigeria, headquarters for Universal Music Southeast Asia in Singapore and new operations in Israel, Morocco and Vietnam. UMG has launched labels including Def Jam Africa & South East Asia, Astralwerks Asia and Island Records Philippines. Stainer guides the strategic direction of UMG's market-leading classical and jazz labels including Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Mercury KX, the distributed label ECM and Capitol Music Group's Blue Note, as well as Verve Label Group, including Verve, Impulse! and Decca U.S. In the past year, Stainer

has overseen major campaigns for artists including Lang Lang, Melody Gardot, Ludovico Einaudi, John Williams, Gregory Porter, Max Richter and Andrea Bocelli — whose performance from the Duomo Cathedral in Milan on Easter Sunday 2020 reached over 2.8 million peak concurrent viewers worldwide, according to UMG.

Wouter Jansen

VP STREAMING AND DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY, **SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT**

Monica Cornia

SENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, RCA RECORDS AND ARISTA RECORDS, **SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT**

Melissa Thomas

SENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, COLUMBIA RECORDS AND EPIC RECORDS, **SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT**

Jansen oversees streaming and digital marketing strategy for Sony Music's U.S. labels across more than 50 markets. With his colleagues, he helped Columbia Records achieve four concurrent top 10 hits on the Spotify Global chart with Harry Styles' "Watermelon Sugar," Jawsh 685's "Savage Love (Laxed — Siren Beat)," Powfu's "death bed" and Stay-SolidRocky's "Party Girl." As co-heads of Sony's international marketing group, Cornia and Thomas are responsible for global campaigns for artists from RCA

and Arista (Cornia), and Columbia and Epic (Thomas). For Doja Cat, Cornia helped drive her single "Say So" to chart peaks in multiple markets and 2.52 billion global on-demand streams, according to MRC Data. She also guided Sony Nashville on Kane Brown's debut tour in Europe. Thomas has helped lead campaigns for Camila Cabello, DJ Khaled, French Montana, Travis Scott and others while also leading Sony Music's international urban team.

Donny Novakovic

VP INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, **DISNEY MUSIC GROUP**

The soundtracks for some of the biggest movie franchises in the world — from Disney, Marvel Studios, Lucasfilm and Pixar — are marketed outside the United States with campaigns overseen by Novakovic. The soundtrack for *Frozen II* has been released in 26 languages, resulting in 4.6 billion streams and 3 million albums sold outside the United States, according to Disney. Novakovic guided the launch of Disney Spotify hubs in Germany, Japan, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Middle East and North Africa, adding to the existing hubs in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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ALEX HILL

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SIMON JONES

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TOBY LEIGHTON-POPE

AEG

PRESENTS

Simon Robson

PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL, WARNER RECORDED MUSIC, **WARNER MUSIC GROUP**

Eric Wong

PRESIDENT/CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, WARNER RECORDED MUSIC, **WARNER MUSIC GROUP**

Jess Keeley-Carter

SENIOR VP GLOBAL MARKETING, WARNER RECORDED MUSIC, **WARNER MUSIC GROUP**

Since November, Robson has led WMG's recorded-music operations outside the United States and United Kingdom. He has been president of Warner Music Asia since 2015 and expanded WMG's presence in markets including China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam. WMG has a new joint-label venture in China with Tencent Music Group. It has also invested in Africori, the largest music distributor in sub-Saharan Africa, and Rotana Music, the Arab world's leading independent label. Wong, who joined WMG in July 2020, guides worldwide marketing while also overseeing Warner's international A&R function in collaboration with the company's local repertoire centers around the globe. Keeley-Carter, who reports to Wong, played a key role in one of the company's biggest campaigns of 2020, for Dua Lipa's *Future Nostalgia*. Setting up marketing best practices for Warner worldwide, she has also guided campaigns for artists including Bebe Rexha, Burna Boy, Cardi B, David Guetta, Jason Derulo, Lizzo, Roddy Rich and Sia.

MUSIC GROUPS EUROPE AND AFRICA

Fred Gillham

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **CONCORD RECORDED MUSIC U.K.**

Vivien Goodwin

SENIOR VP **CONCORD THEATRICALS (U.K. AND EUROPE)**

During the past year, Gillham set up Concord's first recorded-music division outside the United States, recruiting a London-based team to build a footprint for the company in the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Concord enjoyed U.K. success across genres. Gillham is no stranger to Concord's roster. He is a former vp of international for Universal Music Group, which has a global distribution deal with Concord. During the pandemic, Goodwin and her teams in the United Kingdom and Germany worked with theaters and theater companies to think creatively in staging outdoor performances and creating musicals with smaller casts, supporting streaming initiatives and, overall, to offer audiences new ways to engage with performers and productions.

Tony Harlow

CEO, **WARNER MUSIC U.K.**

Bernd Dopp

CHAIRMAN/CEO, **WARNER MUSIC CENTRAL EUROPE**

Mark Fry

PRESIDENT, **WARNER MUSIC NORDICS**

Alfonso Perez Soto

PRESIDENT OF EMERGING MARKETS, **WARNER MUSIC**

Victor Aroldoss

SENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, **WARNER MUSIC U.K.**

Harlow, along with Aroldoss and the Warner Music U.K. team, guided the launch during lockdown of *Future Nostalgia* from Britain's Dua Lipa. The album spent four weeks at No. 1 in the United Kingdom, where Warner's team also celebrated chart-topping releases from Biffy Clyro, Liam Gallagher, Nines and **STORMZY**. Leading Central Europe, Dopp is a five-decade veteran of WMG and the company's longest-serving CEO. He has continued to deliver hits with international artists and domestic talent, the latter ranging from German rap to the repertoire of children's label Kiddinx to the leading schlager label Telamo. Fry was named head of Warner Music Nordics last year and has enjoyed success with stars including Antti Tuisku, Emma Gaala and Miriam Bryant. Perez Soto has been expanding WMG's presence in new markets including Africa, where the company invested in Africori, a company that manages distribution, rights and artists development. That deal gives Warner access to a range of African artists through Africori's roster of 6,500 artists and 700 labels.

Jason Iley

CHAIRMAN/CEO, **SONY MUSIC U.K. AND IRELAND**

Nicola Tuer

COO, **SONY MUSIC U.K. AND IRELAND**

Daniel Lieberberg

PRESIDENT, **SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT CONTINENTAL EUROPE AND AFRICA**

Patrick Mushatsi-Kareba

CEO, **SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA**

Sean Watson

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT SOUTH AFRICA**

Iley, who was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire at the Queen's Birthday Honours in October 2020 for his services to charity and music, has worked with Tuer and the Sony U.K. team to achieve success for Sony's international stars (from Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan to Doja Cat, Powfu and Tate McRae) and its strong domestic roster (Little Mix, J Hus, Headie One, Sam Fischer and Regard). Under Lieberberg, Sony opened a new German and European headquarters in Berlin housing recording and publishing teams along with an in-house studio.



Stormzy

Responsible for Germany, Switzerland and Austria, Mushatsi-Kareba saw an increase in chart shares via hits from artists like Jawsh 385, Imanbek and Apache 207, the most streamed German-speaking artist in the region, according to Sony. Watson, a 30-year veteran of the African music industry, guides a roster that includes AKA, Shekinah, Mlindo, Sha Sha, Black Motion, KDDO and Dice Ailes. He's a member of the board of the South African Music Performance Rights Association and its nonprofit division supporting the growth of the South African music industry.

David Joseph

CHAIRMAN/CEO, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC U.K. AND IRELAND**

Frank Briegmann

CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC CENTRAL EUROPE AND DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON**

Olivier Nusse

CEO, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC FRANCE**

Sipho Dlamini

CEO, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC SOUTH AFRICA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

Franck Kacou

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC AFRICA**

Chindedu Okeke

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC NIGERIA**

Under Joseph, Universal Music U.K. claimed the No. 1 album of 2020 in the United Kingdom with Lewis Capaldi's *Divinely Uninspired to a Hellish Extent* and boasted four of the market's top five streaming artists (Capaldi, Drake, Eminem and Billie Eilish), while the company launched the 0207 Def Jam label and relaunched EMI Records (with Motown U.K. as one of its imprints). Briegmann saw Universal lead the market in Germany on the strength of both international repertoire and local stars including Capital Bra, Bonez MC, Die Ärzte and Kerstin Ott. Universal Music France, under Nusse, likewise celebrated chart success with

Versus by Vitaa/Slimane and *Les Derniers Salopards* by Maes, the country's two top albums of 2020. Nusse's team also shared in the achievements of local artists Angèle, Niska, Nekfeu, Damso and Dadju — and posthumous success for French legend Johnny Hallyday. In 2019, Kacou took on responsibility for UMG operations in Ivory Coast and across 27 French-speaking markets within Africa. Dlamini was promoted last December to oversee all of UMG's operations within English-speaking Africa, working with colleagues on the continent including Okeke, based in Lagos, who is leading the growth of UMG's Nigeria operations and other English-speaking markets in West Africa.

MUSIC GROUPS LATIN

Jesús López

CHAIRMAN/CEO, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATIN AMERICA AND IBERIAN PENINSULA**

Luis Estrada

PRESIDENT, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC SOUTHERN CONE**

Victor Gonzalez

PRESIDENT,

UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATIN ENTERTAINMENT

Paulo Lima

PRESIDENT, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC BRAZIL**

After J Balvin released his latest album, *Colores*, in March 2020, it debuted at No. 1 in 14 markets on Apple Music/iTunes rankings and earned gold certifications in its first week in 15 countries, according to Universal Music Group. The achievement is just one of the success stories of the past year for the team that reports to Lopez, who leads UMG's operations in all Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking territories around the world, as well as the U.S. Latin market. To launch new songs by Balvin, Luis Fonsi, Chino & Nacho and others during the lockdown, UMG held virtual press confer-

ences with journalists from all over Latin America, organized streaming concerts and struck brand sponsorship deals, while also supporting charitable initiatives by the artists themselves. A 40-year veteran of the Latin music industry, López has been an innovator, from anticipating the reggaeton boom with the creation of the Machete Music label to launching the management and artist services division GTS (Global Talent Services). He has played an essential role in the international success of Latin superstars including Balvin, Juanes, Paulina Rubio, Gloria Trevi, Enrique Iglesias, David Bisbal, Luis Fonsi and Wisin & Yandel.

Afo Verde

CHAIRMAN/CEO, LATIN-IBERIA REGION,

SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Maria Fernandez

EXECUTIVE VP/COO, SONY MUSIC

ENTERTAINMENT LATIN-IBERIA

José María Barbat

PRESIDENT, SONY MUSIC IBERIA

Ginny Peirats

PRESIDENT, SONY MUSIC

CENTRAL AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Stars like Maluma, Ozuna, Anuel, Nicky Jam, Camilo and Rauw Alejandro have thrived internationally under the leadership of Verde, who oversees Sony's operations in Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the U.S. Latin market, and whose purview includes superstars like Enrique Iglesias, Shakira and Jennifer Lopez's Spanish-language releases. Verde also worked closely

on Sony's recent acquisition of leading Brazilian indie label Som Livre, a deal that further cements Sony's leadership in the biggest market in Latin America. He and his team have nurtured the rise of Nathy Peluso, Boza, Nicki Nicole and Trueno, and he has made the expansion of Latin music in European and Asian markets a priority. Fernandez has been involved with the growth of artists including Maluma, Camilo, Carlos Vives, Lali, Dvicio, Carlos Rivera and Reik. She has also overseen strategic moves like Sony's joint venture with the concert promotion company Eventim in Brazil. Under Barbat, Sony Music Iberia has seen the breakout of Rosalía, C. Tangana, Nathy Peluso and María José Llergo. Peirats celebrated the Grammy Awards' recognition this year of Costa Rican singer-songwriter Debi Nova, who was nominated for best Latin pop or urban album, and The Wailers, the legendary Jamaican band nominated for best reggae album.

Iñigo Zabala

PRESIDENT, WARNER MUSIC

LATIN AMERICA & IBERIA

Sergio Affonso

PRESIDENT, WARNER MUSIC BRAZIL

Tomas Rodriguez

PRESIDENT, WARNER MUSIC MEXICO

As in-person performances became unsafe, Zabala supported Rodriguez's team in Mexico to deliver *Mi Casa, Tu Casa*, one of the earliest online showcases featuring artists at home, including music from

Piso21, Sofia Reyes and Zion & Lennox. Over the past year, Warner Music's hits from its Latin roster have included Piso21 and Maluma's "Más de la Una," Karol G and Danny Ocean's "Midedito o Qué?," Zion & Lennox's "Gota Gota" (featuring El Alfa) and Justin Quiles' "Jeans," according to the company. Zabala and his team have made a priority of developing local talent for international audiences. Over two decades, he has supported the global rise of other Warner artists including Alejandro Sanz, Anitta, Danny Ocean, Jesse & Joy, Laura Pausini, Luis Miguel, Maná, Miguel Bose, Pablo Alborán and Ricardo Arjona. In early April, Zabala announced he will step down from his position at the end of this year but will remain a consultant through 2022.

MUSIC GROUPS AUSTRALASIA

George Ash

PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC ASIA PACIFIC

Naoshi Fujikura

PRESIDENT/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC JAPAN

Devraj Sanyal

MANAGING DIRECTOR/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC

GROUP AND EMI MUSIC, INDIA AND SOUTH

ASIA; MANAGING DIRECTOR, UNIVERSAL MUSIC

PUBLISHING GROUP, INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

Calvin Wong

SENIOR VP ASIA/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Ash has been Universal Music Group's top Asia-Pacific executive since 2013. In the past year, he has shared in the success of his Australian team and their domestic artists including Tame Impala, Indigenous singer Miiesha and Hilltop Hoods, the most streamed Australian act of 2020. In Japan, a stronghold for physical music sales, Fujikura has moved his company's focus toward streaming and expanded services offered to artists, such as merchandising, live events and fan clubs. In July, the Japanese-language version of **BTS's** *Map of the Soul: 7 - The Journey* generated record sales for an international act in Japan, according to UMG. Sanyal's initiatives in India have included a global distribution deal, announced in July, with Desi Melodies, a leader in Punjabi music. Wong has overseen UMG's expansion in Vietnam and the launch of Def Jam South East Asia, Island Records Philippines, Asstralwerks Asia, Spinnup and the regional expansion of Ingrooves.

Andrew Hajgato

LABEL MANAGER, AUSTRALIA,

CONCORD RECORDED MUSIC

Skegss hit No. 1 on the Australian Recording Industry Association's albums chart with their second release, *Rehearsal*, while domestic star George Alice gained

Where Royalties Flow

ARTISTS WORLDWIDE CREATE

music to delight and inspire their fans. But they also need to get paid, whether through performance royalties (for songwriters and music publishers), mechanical royalties (for owners of sound-recording copyrights), digital performance royalties (paid in the United States by noninteractive digital streaming services) or neighboring rights royalties (earned outside the United States from the public performance of a master recording). Who can keep track? In the world's top 10 markets as ranked by IFPI, these are the leading rights-collection organizations. Most are commonly identified by the widely used acronyms for their full names.



1. United States

ASCAP
BMI
SESAC
Global Music Rights
HFA
MLC
SoundExchange



2. Japan

JASRAC
CPRA/Geindankyo



3. United Kingdom

PRS for Music (including PPL and MCPS)



4. Germany

GEMA
GVL



5. France

SACEM
SCPP



6. South Korea

KOMCA
RIAK



7. China

MCSC



8. Canada

SOCAN
Sound



9. Australia

APRA
AMCOS
PPCA



10. The Netherlands

BUMA
STEMRA
SENA

Sources ASCAP, BMI, CISAC, SoundExchange



two airplay hits on the nation's influential Triple J radio outlet and Florida rapper Denzel Curry earned his second ARIA-certified gold single with "Ricky." All benefited from campaigns driven by Hajgato, who is boosting Concord's status as an indie label with clout Down Under.

Denis Handlin

CHAIRMAN/CEO, AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Andrew Chan

MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHINA, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Joseph Chang

MANAGING DIRECTOR, KOREA, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Shridhar Subramaniam

PRESIDENT, STRATEGY AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT, ASIA AND MIDDLE EAST, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Handlin, Sony Music's longest-serving global executive, leads the team that launched Tones and I and The Kid LAROI in Australia, setting up their international success. Sony Australia saw No. 1 albums from Harry Styles, Guy Sebastian, Midnight Oil and AC/DC, and celebrated **AMY SHARK** winning best pop release at the ARIA Awards — for a third time. Handlin has been recognized with the Order of Australia for his philanthropy and "distinguished service to the Australian recording industry." Chan guides operations across China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, achieving success with regional artists like G.E.M., Karen Mok and Eric Chou as well as international releases by Sasha Sloan, NYK and Doja Cat. Chang has overseen the growth of Sony's international repertoire across Korea while also helping K-pop acts such as Kang Daniel, Oh My Girl, ATEEZ and Momoland find a global audience. Since January 2020, Subramaniam has overseen all of Sony's strategic acquisitions, joint ventures, investments and partnerships in a region that is expected to grow at an average of 20% annually, according to the company.

Dan Rosen

PRESIDENT, WARNER MUSIC AUSTRALASIA

Jonathan Serbin

CEO, WARNER MUSIC GREATER CHINA

Rosen, who for the past decade has served as CEO of ARIA, was named president of Warner Music Australasia effective Feb. 1. Rosen concurrently had held the post of CEO of the Phonographic Performance Company of Australia. With advanced degrees in business and law, Rosen has been praised as an advocate for the rights of musical creators (and in the early 2000s he was the founder and frontman for the indie band Second Dan). Serbin was named to his regional role in November and will run the newly launched, Pan-Asian dance label Whet Records.

STREAMING

Pawan Agarwal

HEAD OF MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, ASIA PACIFIC, YOUTUBE

Dan Chalmers

DIRECTOR, YOUTUBE MUSIC, EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, YOUTUBE

Sandra Jimenez

DIRECTOR, YOUTUBE MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, LATIN AMERICA, YOUTUBE

Sun Lee

HEAD OF MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, KOREA AND GREATER CHINA, AND ARTIST RELATIONS, ASIA PACIFIC, YOUTUBE

Ruuben van den Heuvel

DIRECTOR, YOUTUBE MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND LABEL RELATIONS, ASIA PACIFIC, YOUTUBE

At YouTube India, under Agarwal, the T-Series channel (an offshoot of the country's largest music label) became the platform's biggest channel worldwide, with over 178 million subscribers. Earlier in April, T-Series agreed to license its music through the Indian Performing Rights Society, which IPRS called a "game-changing" boost for creators in the market. Chalmers last year launched a new version of YouTube Analytics for Artists, giving acts a complete picture of how their YouTube content is reaching music fans. Jimenez in August congratulated Daddy Yankee as his collaboration with Snow, "Con Calma," surpassed 2 billion YouTube views. Lee partnered with YG Entertainment for Blackpink's first livestream concert in January from Seoul. Van den Heuvel has played a key role in the launch of YouTube Music and YouTube Music Premium in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Hans-Holger Albrecht

CEO, DEEZER

Under Albrecht, Deezer is a rival to the big three streaming services (Amazon Music, Apple, Spotify) with a distinctly international perspective. "I'm proud of what we accomplished in a challenging year," he says. "We delivered over 40 product initiatives, updates and launches to improve the service for our subscribers." Among those moves: a feature that allows users to explore the music and podcasts of different countries without searching for specific content. Deezer, which has been growing in Mexico, via a partnership with TV Azteca, and in other Latin American markets, also has been seeking a more fair streaming payment system that will allow performers to get paid based on how individual listeners divide their attention rather than by their share of aggregate streams.

Shark



Raoul Chatterjee

VP/HEAD OF CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS,

SOUNDCLOUD

Josh Nicoll

VP INDEPENDENT LABEL SERVICES, SOUNDCLOUD

Chatterjee and Nicoll oversee music industry partnerships at SoundCloud. Amid the pandemic, Chatterjee renewed multiple deals with major and indie labels, distributors, publishers, performing rights organizations and other collection societies. His team set up the launch of SoundCloud's subscription and advertising business in the Nordic territories. In Australia, leveraging a partnership with Southern Cross Austereo, he helped launch SoundCloud Radio, which showcases emerging artists. Nicoll has strengthened SoundCloud's relationships with over 500 new and existing independent rights-holder partners. His work yielded a year-over-year increase of more than 40% in on-platform content from indie labels and an all-time-high market share of indie rights-holders on the platform, according to SoundCloud.

Paul Firth

DIRECTOR, AMAZON MUSIC INTERNATIONAL

Rene Fasco

DIRECTOR, AMAZON MUSIC JAPAN

Jillian Gerngross

DIRECTOR, AMAZON MUSIC EUROPE

Sahas Malhotra

DIRECTOR, AMAZON MUSIC INDIA

Federico Pedersen

HEAD OF MUSIC, LATIN AMERICA, AMAZON MUSIC

Firth was named to his new role in October and oversees Amazon Music in markets outside the United States. He helped secure a partnership with Twitch to bring livestreams to Amazon Music's mobile app in over 40 territories. In Japan, Fasco saw J-pop stars Sekai no Owari and Aimyon stage Amazon Music-exclusive livestreams. Gerngross oversees industry relations, editorial, programming and

marketing across the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. In the past year, Malhotra has expanded Alexa functionality for Amazon Music in India, allowing customers to create or add to existing playlists just by using their voice. Pedersen has led the addition of Amazon Original podcasts to Amazon Music in Mexico and Brazil.

Mathieu Jatton

CEO, MONTEUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

When the Montreux Jazz Festival was canceled in 2020 for the first time in its 55-year history, Jatton moved from live music to event streaming. The festival and its partner, Eagle Rock, teamed up with Qello Concerts by Stingray to make over 50 classic festival performances available online — driving 100,000 new Qello registrations. In March, the festival announced a global deal with BMG to launch a series of previously unreleased recordings from the archives of the festival's late founder Claude Nobs, along with a three-part documentary on Montreux's history and impact.

Khee Lee

CHIEF MONETIZATION OFFICER, KISWE

In July, Guinness World Records certified that BTS had set a new record for the most viewers for a concert livestream when 756,000 fans from 100 countries tuned in for a June 14 show carried live from Seoul. The technology platform behind the event? Kiswe — which under Lee struck a partnership with BTS' home label, HYBE (formerly Big Hit Entertainment). Lee also has led Kiswe's partnership deals for livestream events as varied as a live U.K. performance by Culture Club and the 43rd Dresden Music Festival in Germany. Kiswe has hosted 13 livestream pay-per-view concerts, most from outside the United States, reaching nearly 200 countries, according to the company.



billboard 's 2021 International Power Players List

MATT BATES

ICM PARTNERS, PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

ARI BERNSTEIN

ICM PARTNERS

CRAIG D'SOUZA

PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

PETER ELLIOTT

PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

SCOTT MANTELL

ICM PARTNERS

BEN WINCHESTER

PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

**We Proudly Congratulate Our International
Power Players On Both Sides Of the Pond!**

Rishi Malhotra

CO-FOUNDER/CEO, **JIOSAAVN**

“For us, last year was a master class in humanity, global leadership and ultimately invention,” says Malhotra, leader of India’s streaming service JioSaavn, which also operates a label, management company, podcasting service and more. “Global conditions accelerated our business as more people turned to streaming.” In 2019 JioSaavn worked on **U2**’s historic tour of India and last summer it announced a partnership with Triller, designed to drive local usage and subscription growth for both services. (The move came in the wake of India’s ban of TikTok and other Chinese-owned apps over data privacy concerns.) During the pandemic and under Malhotra’s leadership, JioSaavn teams have worked with Habitat for Humanity and the health-care nonprofit Ketto through corporate responsibility partnerships.

Robb McDaniels

CEO, **BEATPORT**

Under McDaniels, the online EDM-focused retailer Beatport reports that 75% of its business comes from outside the United States. As touring and festivals shut down in the past year, the company supported moves by DJs to livestream. In April, Beatport organized the 24-hour ReConnect livestream that featured 33 DJs from around the globe and raised \$185,000 for COVID-19-related charities. “People can still dance,” said McDaniels at the time. “You can dance anywhere; you can dance alone; you can dance in groups — but dancing is going to make you feel better.”

Mia Nygren

MANAGING DIRECTOR, LATIN AMERICA, **SPOTIFY**

Federica Tremolada

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN AND EASTERN EUROPE, **SPOTIFY**

Nygren oversees the region with one of the fastest growth rates in the world for Spotify. “Superstars are now coming from all corners of Latin America,” she told *Billboard* last year when she was chosen for the Latin Power Players list. “Smaller artists are charting globally, and it’s not just limited to Puerto Rico and Colombia anymore.” Tremolada has responsibility for 26 markets in her region, with a specific focus on content, marketing and partnerships. Last year, she launched Spotify’s new podcast strategy in Spain and Italy, including the *XRey* podcast that received a Premios Ondas, the equivalent of an Emmy Award, as Spain’s best podcast of the year.

Ola Sars

CEO, **SOUNDTRACK YOUR BRAND**

From its base in Stockholm, Soundtrack Your Brand operates in 73 countries offering background music with a streaming

service. Sars struck a global licensing deal in August with Universal Music Group to use its music catalog on the platform. “Now, when the world of music is about to hit ‘play’ again, we stand ready to contribute to the industry by adding [business-to-business] streaming to the market,” says Sars, “bringing transparency and a usage-centric royalty flow.” Sars says his company’s model will yield “eight to 10 times more in royalties to music creators” than consumer-focused streaming services.

Jen Walsh

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF APPLE CONTENT AND SERVICES, INTERNATIONAL, **APPLE**

Walsh is a veteran international executive at Apple, which last spring reported that its Apple Music service is available in 167 countries and regions, offering 60 million songs as well as thousands of playlists and the global radio station Beats 1. In April 2020, Apple announced that new Apple Music subscribers in 52 recently added countries could receive a six-month free trial of the service. This includes playlists created by local music experts such as Africa Now, Afrobeats Hits and Ghana Bounce.

Jay Winship

CEO, ASIA, **GODIGITAL MEDIA GROUP**

AdShare, which is GoDigital Media Group’s social media rights manager for music and video, has achieved a 40% market share in South Korea under Winship’s guidance, according to the company. That’s the result of rights management deals with the artist PSY and companies including YG Entertainment, the record label Kakao M and Times Music in India. Winship, who is based in Seoul, spent the past year in Singapore, citing “5G connectivity, [which] has been overwhelmingly stable, making working from home, in all frankness, very pleasant.”

MULTISECTOR

Bang Si-Hyuk

Chairman/CEO, **HYBE**

Lenzo Yoon

GLOBAL CEO, **HYBE**

Bang’s South Korean entertainment company HYBE (formerly known as Big Hit Entertainment), the home of BTS, announced in March that it’s acquiring Scooter Braun’s Ithaca Holdings. The deal brings under common ownership K-pop groups BTS, TXT and Seventeen, and U.S. pop stars Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande and Demi Lovato, among others. Yoon moved to the United States last year to focus on his global CEO role and plans to bring HYBE’s successful business model to new markets.



Rob Cowling

GM, **GALLO MUSIC GROUP**

Cowling guides South Africa’s Gallo Music Group, which includes one of the continent’s largest and oldest labels and publishing companies. Last May, Flightmode Digital, the investment holding company owned by DJ Black Coffee, acquired a significant stake in Gallo Music Investments, says Cowling. And in March, Gallo Music Publishers signed a worldwide agreement (excluding Africa) with Sony Music Publishing that will help promote Gallo’s songs around the globe. “In a year plagued by challenges, despite piracy and work-from-home connectivity issues, creativity was rife,” says Cowling. “Gallo still managed to grow digital streaming numbers and maintain our market share.”

André de Raaff

CEO, **CTM ENTERTAINMENT**

De Raaff leads the multifaceted Dutch music company CTM Entertainment, which last August acquired the catalog of CNR/Arcade, described as the largest independent record label in the Benelux region (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) and the home to acts such as Twenty 4 Seven, Alan Parsons and Doop. In 2019, de Raaff oversaw the extension of CTM’s worldwide publishing agreement with Scott Storch, who has written for Ariana Grande, The Kid LAROI, Jack Harlow, Chloe x Halle, Marshmello, Russ and Trippie Redd. A partnership struck with producers Juan “Play” Salinas and Oscar “Skillz” Salinas has boosted CTM’s activity in Latin music.

Colin Gayle

FOUNDER/CEO, **AFRICA CREATIVE AGENCY**

Gayle manages and produces South African rapper Nasty C, who signed last year to Def Jam Recordings through a joint venture with Universal Music Group

in Africa. His album *Zulu Man With Some Power* was released before the pandemic. Gayle executive-produced the Netflix documentary *Zulu Man in Japan*, exploring connections between the music and culture of South Africa and Japan. He also has been expanding the publishing division of his agency, and he curated and produced Essence Festival of Culture for Africa as a virtual event.

Jeremy Lascelles

CO-FOUNDER/CEO, **BLUE RAINCOAT MUSIC**

Robin Millar

CO-FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN, **BLUE RAINCOAT MUSIC**

Lascelles, the former CEO of Chrysalis Records, teamed up with record producer Millar to launch Blue Raincoat Music in 2014 to offer artist management services, music publishing and recorded-music operations through Chrysalis, which is now a subsidiary label. Blue Raincoat represents a roster that includes Cigarettes After Sex, J.S. Ondara and Phoebe Bridgers. Lascelles says the process of signing and recording artists is his “first love,” and it reflects how he and Millar run their company. Reservoir acquired Blue Raincoat in 2019, but its founders remain at the helm.

Suhel Nafar

VP STRATEGY AND MARKETING DEVELOPMENT, WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA, **EMPIRE**

Nafar, a former hip-hop artist, joined EMPIRE early this year after previously helping Spotify launch programming in West Asia and North Africa. He developed the streaming service’s Arab Culture Hub and curated over 120 playlists, including Yalla Today’s Top Hits, Arab X, Shisha Lounge, Global X and Women O Bas, which spotlights female Arab artists. He also contributed to Spotify’s Sawtik campaign to boost the visibility of emerging Arab women in music. “If you look at artists who are top



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International
Power Players
for 2021



tier in the Arab world,” says Nafar, “they’re being streamed in the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Germany.”

Bose Ogulu

CO-FOUNDER, **SPACESHIP COLLECTIVE**

Amid the pandemic, Ogulu co-executive-produced, released and promoted the *Twice As Tall* album from Nigeria’s breakout global star Burna Boy (aka her son, Damini Ogulu). He is signed to Bad Habit/Atlantic in the United States and Warner Music International for territories outside of Africa. *Twice As Tall* won best global music album at this year’s Grammy Awards. Bose has set up a publishing company through Spaceship Collective to enable Africans to own their own catalogs “so that the authenticity of our stories, our glory, our culture is sustained,” she says, “and we are empowered.”

Cussion Kar Shun Pang

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, **TENCENT MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP**

Tencent Music Entertainment Group and Warner Music Group announced in March that the companies will expand a multiyear licensing agreement and launch a joint record label. Under Pang, Tencent will continue to make Warner’s repertoire available across all of its online platforms in mainland China, including QQ Music, Kugou Music and Kuwo Music, as well as its livestreaming platforms and WeSing, an online

karaoke platform. Warner in 2014 became the first major label to license its repertoire to an internet provider on mainland China.

Phil Sales

PARTNER, **THREE SIX ZERO**

Pete Tong

PRESIDENT, **THREE SIX ZERO RECORDINGS**; PARTNER, **WME**

Sales leads the U.K. and European operations for Three Six Zero, the international management and entertainment company that represents Calvin Harris, Tiësto and the entire Smith family (Will, Jada Pinkett, Jaden and Willow), among others. He also maintains his own roster of management clients, including Fraser T. Smith, Disciples and Franky Wah. In 2019, Tong, the influential BBC DJ and partner at WME, took on the additional role of president of Three Six Zero Recordings, a joint venture with Sony Music.

MANAGEMENT

Peter Coquillard

HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL, **MILK & HONEY MUSIC + SPORTS + VENTURES**

For Milk & Honey, which manages writers, producers and, most recently, athletes, Coquillard has built relationships abroad with artists who need great songs. Amid the pandemic, he has overseen the opening

of new offices in London and Amsterdam. One example of his networking savvy: a Mandarin version of “Just My Luck,” which brought together Chinese singer Tia Ray and American R&B singer Kehlani on a track produced by Milk & Honey client Oak Felder. Pre-pandemic, producers and writers (including Demi Lovato, Nick Jonas, Kesha and Noah Cyrus) have taken part in Coquillard’s annual songwriting camp in Bali, which for five years has included a fundraising evening to benefit orphanages on the Indonesian island.

Eshy Gazit

PARTNER, **MAVERICK MANAGEMENT**; CEO, **GRAMOPHONE MEDIA**

Gazit was one of the first K-pop advocates in the United States. “Early on, many people in the industry mocked my attempts to break BTS,” he told *Billboard* in 2017. “They thought that it was never going to happen in the United States.” Along with BTS, he has worked with Monsta X and that group’s former singer, Wonho, who launched a solo career last year. Gazit has also guided Western artists like Steve Aoki, Halsey, The Chainsmokers and French Montana in their collaborations with K-pop stars.

Walter Kolm

PRESIDENT/CEO, **WALTER KOLM ENTERTAINMENT**

The leading Latin music manager — whose clients include Maluma, Carlos Vives, CNCO, Wisin, Emilia Mernes and Rombai — launched WK Records in June. Distributed by The Orchard, the label’s first signings include Puerto Rican R&B singer Alex Rose, Argentine trap artist Seven Kayne and Colombian freestyle rapper Cheo Gallego. Initial success has come in Spain, Mexico, Colombia and Chile, as well as airplay hits in those markets, according to the label. “Launching a label is tough in normal circumstances, but launching it during a global pandemic was extremely challenging, to say the least,” says Kolm. “But I’m proud of my team for not only making it happen but also making it an immediate success.”

Ben Mawson

Ed Millett

CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOS, **TAP MUSIC**

DUA LIPA’s *Future Nostalgia*, released in March 2020, reached No. 3 on the Billboard 200 and was one of the delights of the early days of the pandemic, earning the British star a Grammy Award for best pop vocal album. Mawson and Millett last year celebrated the 10th anniversary of their firm, which also represents Lana Del Rey, Ellie Goulding, Hailee Steinfeld and one-time Dublin street busker Dermot Kennedy. With 45 employees across offices in the United States, Europe and Australia, says Mawson, “we really believe in an international focus.”



The Latin Boom






WHEN IFPI RELEASED ITS 2021

Global Music Report in March, it confirmed that only one region in the world experienced a double-digit rate of revenue growth in the preceding year — Latin America, where revenue increased by 15.9%.

That growth boosted the region’s share of the global recorded-music market to 3.6%, up from 3.3% in 2019. (Music consumption in the region outpaces that market share. Were it not for currency devaluation, the region would account for a higher share of global revenue.)

Streaming revenue grew by 30.2% and accounted for 84.1% of Latin America’s total revenue. The growth is driven by the strength of the region’s artists, including multiple performers who are global superstars.

For a snapshot of that talent, *Billboard* highlights some of the most influential talents in Spain, which, bound by language with Latin America, as both a source and a destination for music in Spanish; Portuguese-speaking Brazil, which is the largest Latin American territory (by music revenue); and the Latin markets of Mexico, Argentina and Colombia.

-  **Spain**
C. Tangana, SONY MUSIC
Rosalía, SONY MUSIC
Aitana, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
Pablo Alboran, WARNER MUSIC
-  **Brazil**
Anitta, WARNER MUSIC
Henrique & Juliano, SOM LIVRE
Tarcisio do Acordeon, INDEPENDENT ARTIST
Jorge & Mateus, SOM LIVRE
-  **Mexico**
Banda MS, LIZOS
Christian Nodal, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
Alejandro Fernandez, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
Carlos Rivera, SONY MUSIC
-  **Argentina**
Bizarrap, DALE PLAY
Nathy Peluso, SONY MUSIC
Cazzu, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
Nicki Nicole, DALE PLAY
-  **Colombia**
Maluma, SONY MUSIC
J Balvin, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
Karol G, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
Shakira, SONY MUSIC
Carlos Vives, SONY MUSIC

FELICITACIONES

HENRY CÁRDENAS

BILLBOARD'S INTERNATIONAL POWER PLAYER LIST OF THE YEAR

Ser un visionario y emprender nuevos proyectos hace que una pequeña idea se vuelva una gran realidad.



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Polo MolinaARTIST MANAGER, **GRASSROOTS MUSIC**

Over the past 12 months, Molina has guided international success for management clients in two different genres: **THE BLACK EYED PEAS'** *Translation* album became a hit in European markets including Spain, France and Italy, while regional Mexican star Gerardo Ortiz's *Más Caro, Que Ayer* made an impact in Mexico. Molina's management roster — which covers pop, Latin and hip-hop — also includes Joan Sebastian, Paulo Londra, Luis Coronel, Ty Dolla \$ign, Tyga, Afrojack and YG. Says Molina: "We continue to go above and beyond for our clientele despite what is going on around us, which I am very proud of."

James SandomU.K. MANAGING DIRECTOR, **RED LIGHT MANAGEMENT**

The past year offered time "to focus on where we can improve, culturally, commercially and creatively," says Sandom. He handles established acts including Interpol, Kaiser Chiefs, Belle & Sebastian, Radiohead's Ed O'Brien and The Strokes (managed by Red Light founder Coran Capshaw), as well as rising talents such as Alfie Templeman, Amy Michelle, Phoebe Green, Sinead O'Brien (each signed to Chess Club), Delilah Montagu and Cole LC (Columbia Records), Punctual (Polydor), Mysie (70Hz) and Luz (Platoon). Writer-producers including Flood, ShiftK3Y, Violet Skies/sheWrites, Karma Kid and Ben Matravers also benefit from guidance from Sandom, who credits Capshaw for

"encouraging calm, entrepreneurial thought and a culture with patience for artist development during these times."

Wassim "Sal" SlaibyCO-MANAGER, THE WEEKND; FOUNDER/CEO, **SALXCO AND XO RECORDS**; BOARD ADVISER, **GLOBAL CITIZEN**; HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, **ANGHAMI**; BOARD MEMBER, **HXOUSE****Amir "Cash" Esmailian**CO-MANAGER, THE WEEKND; CO-FOUNDER, **XO RECORDS**; FOUNDER, **YCFU****La Mar C. Taylor**CREATIVE DIRECTOR, THE WEEKND; CO-FOUNDER, **XO RECORDS AND HXOUSE**

This power trio's work led to The Weeknd receiving the IFPI global digital single award for 2020 for "Blinding Lights," the most popular single of the past year across all digital formats. The song's parent album, *After Hours*, amassed 2.5 billion on-demand audio streams in the United States, according to MRC Data, and hit No. 1 in over 30 countries including the United States. Slaiby, a refugee from the Lebanese Civil War who immigrated to Canada at 15, also struck a deal to launch Universal Arabic Music and also recently signed on as manager for Swedish House Mafia.

LABELS AND DISTRIBUTORS**Kaz Aida**HEAD, **ADA JAPAN****Alassane Konaté**HEAD, **ADA FRANCE****Juan Paz**HEAD, **ADA LATIN****Sander Stijnen**HEAD, **ADA BENELUX****Chee Meng Tan**HEAD, **ADA ASIA**

Alternative Distribution Alliance's global heads worked through the past year to build their teams, artist rosters and local partnerships while launching their respective operations during the pandemic. Aida joined ADA from Universal Music Japan, where he had worked with local stars such as Kiyoshiro Imawano and the rock group PassCode. Before launching ADA France, Konaté had spent the last 15 years running his own independent label, Din Records. From Miami, Paz oversees ADA's activity in Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the U.S. Latin market. Guiding ADA expansion in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, Stijnen has already signed a host of new deals and partnerships with multiple Belgian and Dutch labels and artists. Tan, who came from Spotify's operation in Asia, will expand ADA into China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Southeast Asia.

Rebecca AllenPRESIDENT, **EMI RECORDS**

Last June, Universal Music U.K. re-launched EMI Music (rebranded from Virgin EMI) and named Allen to lead the label, which is the home of Elton John, Paul McCartney, Mark Knopfler, Florence + The Machine and Bastille, and releases international repertoire from Justin Bieber, Lewis Capaldi, The Killers, Metallica, Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and Taylor Swift, among others. When announcing her new role, Universal Music Group chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge said Allen "is such a strong leader — creatively and commercially — and has the values, dedication and acumen to keep EMI as the unquestioned home for some of the U.K.'s greatest talent."

Stacey BedfordCEO, **BANDZOOGLE**

At Canadian web services and direct-to-fan e-commerce platform Bandzoogle, Bedford leads the company's efforts to help artists amid the pandemic, including commission-free livestream ticket sales, a digital "tip jar" for virtual performances, pay-what-you-want subscription pricing and expanded integrations with Twitch and Crowdfunder. Bandzoogle reports that artists have earned over \$13 million through their websites since the pandemic began. Bandzoogle has also been raising funds for the Emergency Mental Health for Music Community campaign led by Unison Benevolent Fund, Canada's leading music industry charity.

Alec Boateng**Alex Boateng**CO-PRESIDENTS, 0207 DEF JAM, **UNIVERSAL MUSIC U.K.****Marisa Lauro-Norris**SENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, **DEF JAM RECORDINGS**

Since November, London-born Ghanaian twin brothers Alec and Alex Boateng have led the newly launched 0207 Def Jam label. Their first signing, British rapper Stormzy, topped the charts while with Warner Music U.K., won best worldwide act at the 2017 MTV Europe Music Awards and collaborated with acts such as Ed Sheeran and Linkin Park. Meanwhile, for Def Jam Recordings in New York, Lauro-Norris oversaw the global campaign for Justin Bieber and his *Changes* album, which, according to the label, debuted at No. 1 on Apple Music and iTunes in over 85 countries.

Chris CannonHEAD OF INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY, **SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION****Irene Lydon**HEAD OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT, **SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION**

London-based Cannon and Lydon are key players abroad for Secretly Distribution, a division of Secretly Group, one of the largest independent label companies, and home to artists such as Bon Iver, Angel Olsen, Sharon Van Etten, Whitney, Jamila Woods and Phoebe Bridgers. Cannon launched a neighboring rights division for the distribution company, while Lydon built and manages INTL Project Management, which works with over 75 independent label and artist clients.

Priya Dewan

VP SOUTH KOREA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA,

THE ORCHARD**Laura Tesoriero**VP LATIN AMERICA, **THE ORCHARD****Albert Torres**VP LATIN, **THE ORCHARD**

For The Orchard, the digital distributor for independent artists and labels in over 40 territories, these three colleagues have responsibility for some of the world's fastest-growing markets. Based in Singapore, Dewan oversees Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Korea. She has worked with The Orchard's Asian catalog, which includes artists like ITZY, GOT7, Kiana Valenciano, Inigo Pascal, DPR Live — and BTS, from early in its career. When The Orchard acquired Argentina label EPSA Music, the deal also brought into the fold Tesoriero, now vp Latin America. In Spain and Mexico, Torres and his team have grown The Orchard's digital and overall market share to double digits, according to the company.

The Black Eyed Peas



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JOHN SHARKEY

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT - EUROPEAN OPERATIONS

TIM WORTON

GROUP DIRECTOR - ARENAS ASIA PACIFIC



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Arthur FitzgibbonMANAGING DIRECTOR, BRAZIL, **ONERPM**

With livestreams driving consumption, digital music distributor ONERpm reports over 70 sales certification awards for its artists in Brazil in 2020 under Fitzgibbon's leadership. A former artist, producer and manager, Fitzgibbon invested in adding staff — and personally called members of his team to check on them during the pandemic. "It has been an unbelievable and a challenging year full of livestream performances and awards," he says. "Our years of commitment resulted in a solid strategy for thousands of artists that we love."

Andrea GleesonCO-HEAD/CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER, **TUNECORE**

Gleeson has made international expansion a priority for TuneCore during the past year. Previously operating in eight countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Australia, Canada, Germany and Italy), the digital distributor is now in 43 countries, including Russia, South Africa and markets in Southeast Asia and Latin America. Through a partnership with the artificial intelligence-driven translation service Unbabel, TuneCore now offers artist support in 29 languages. The company reports partnerships with over 150 digital streaming and online store partners, and independent artists on the platform can be heard in more than 200 countries.

Jurgen GrebnerEXECUTIVE VP INTERNATIONAL, **INTERSCOPE GEFGEN A&M**

Interscope Geffen A&M closed 2020 as *Billboard's* top label, and Grebner made sure that success was not limited to the United States. With the 15-year label veteran overseeing global campaigns, IGA reports that Billie Eilish sold over 10 million albums outside the United States and reached No. 1 in more than 20 markets worldwide, Lady Gaga's *Chromatica* debuted at No. 1 in 15 countries, DaBaby's *Rockstar* had nearly 314 million on-demand streams outside the United States, according to MRC Data, and Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license" reached No. 1 in over 30 territories on Spotify and 40 on Apple Music. Benny Blanco, Selena Gomez, Juice WRLD, Machine Gun Kelly and Lil Mosey also benefited from Grebner's marketing savvy abroad.

Cindy GuHEAD OF ASTRALWERKS ASIA, **ASTRALWERKS**

Gu was named head of Astralwerks Asia in August. Based in Singapore, she leads the label's operations across Southeast Asia, Korea and China and works closely with Astralwerks GM Toby Andrews. Universal Music Group executive vp market development Adam Granite, in announcing the move, described Gu as "a true dance

music enthusiast" with "a proven history of executing successful artist campaigns ... vital to establishing Astralwerks Asia as the trusted home for the genre in Asia."

Drew HillMANAGING DIRECTOR, **PROPER MUSIC GROUP**

At Proper Music Group, which says it's the United Kingdom's leading physical distributor with 10% of the physical music market, Hill made certain the company navigated the pandemic to keep serving its clients, from independent music retailers to super-markets. Representing more than 1,000 indie labels and handling over 1 million titles, Proper was the first distributor to work with Amazon to directly fill physical orders for the online retailer, according to the company. While physical music sales fell nearly 40% as the pandemic began, Proper contributed to the chart-topping success of Gerry Cinnamon's *The Bonny*, released on AWAL in April 2020. Proper won *Music Week's* Diversity in the Workplace Award in 2017, and the distributor reports that equality and diversity remain top priorities.

Ben LarsenSENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL, **WARNER RECORDS**

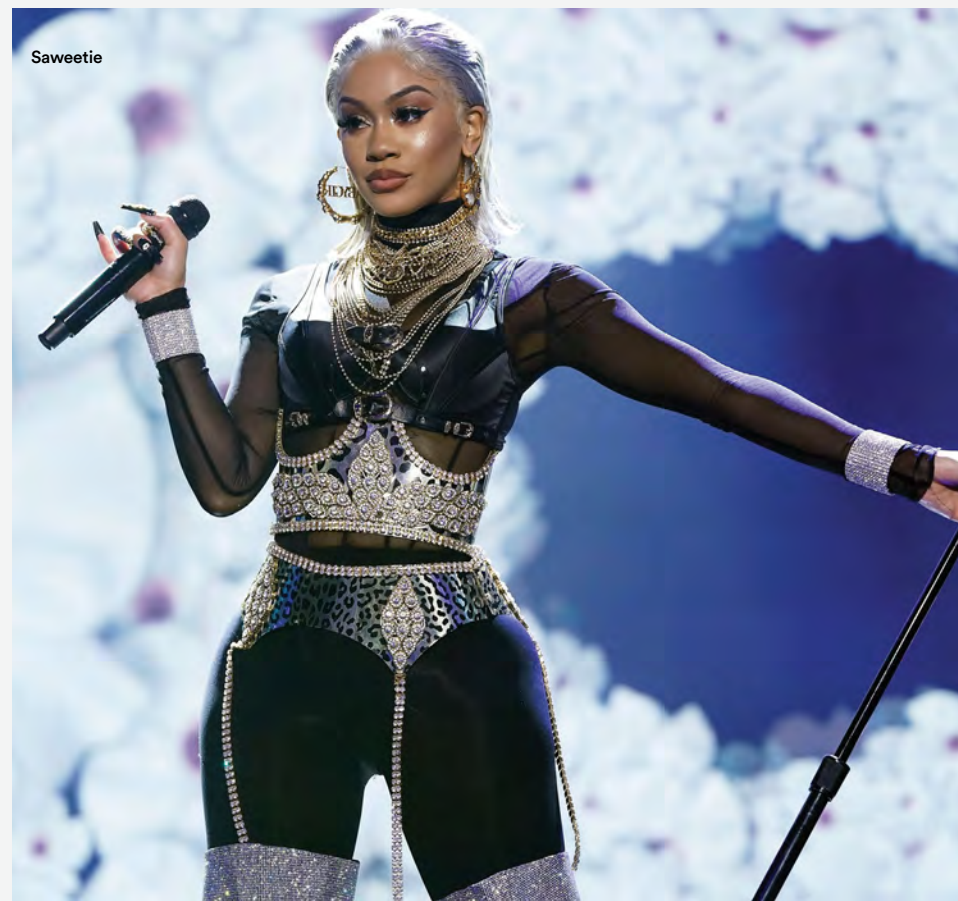
Since taking on leadership of the international department of Warner Records two years ago, Larsen has racked up wins for the label's roster outside the United States. In less than three months since the artist CJ signed to Warner, Larsen and his team have helped the New York-bred rapper achieve 200 million streams on Spotify and TikTok, plus 140 million views on YouTube, according to the label. **SAWEETIE** has been featured on six U.K. magazine covers, while her single "Best Friend" (featuring Doja Cat) has become a hit in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. Larsen has boosted other developing acts abroad, including Cavetown, IDK, Ali Gatie and Sub Urban.

Fede LauríaFOUNDER, **DALE PLAY RECORDS**

Lauría launched Argentina's Dale Play Records in 2018 with a focus on the country's rising trap scene. "We saw a real movement happening here, and all these artists were coming from the streets, winning freestyle battles," Lauría told *Billboard* in October after Dale Play struck an exclusive partnership with Sony Music. The label's roster has grown to include several of Argentina's top trap artists and producers, such as Nicki Nicole, who was nominated for best new artist at the 2020 Latin Grammy Awards.

Nando LuacesFOUNDER/CEO, **ALTA FONTE**

Luaces' digital distribution company, Altafonte, is headquartered in Spain; has offices in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Argen-



tina and Chile; and plans new outposts this year in Ecuador, Paraguay and Bolivia. Not surprisingly, the company has emerged as a force in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries. Altafonte reports signings in the past year of Brazilian DJ Alok; the 547 label from Colombia, guided by DJ Pope (a partner of J Balvin); and the Argentine group Babasonicos, among others.

Torsten LuthEXECUTIVE VP INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, **ATLANTIC RECORDS**

Artists signed to Atlantic Records in the United States benefit from the marketing and promotion efforts abroad led by Luth, who has been in his role for 12 years. With experience working in Germany and the United Kingdom and now based in New York, Luth and his team work with Warner Music Group companies around the globe. While the pandemic halted international promotional trips by artists, Luth and his colleagues guided campaigns for acts including Jack Harlow, Roddy Ricch, Why Don't We, Ava Max, Pink Sweat\$, Melanie Martinez, Sia, Burna Boy and Cardi B, whose "WAP" duet with Megan Thee Stallion was a worldwide smash.

Scott MacraeMARKETING MANAGER, **GLASSNOTE MUSIC**

From London, Macrae has helped the career growth of international Glassnote artists including Jade Bird, Dylan Cartlidge, Half Moon Run, Mosa Wild and William Prince. He has contributed to Bird's rise since her 2019 self-titled debut album, which topped the Official Americana Album chart in the United Kingdom and helped her 2020 singles "Headstart" and "Houdini" gain airplay throughout Europe and Australia. Macrae laid the base for Cartlidge's EP released in Brazil, Australia

and Mexico. For Canada's Half Moon Run, he helped market the indie rockers' videos, filmed during the pandemic, that have yielded a half-million views and 5 million streams, according to Glassnote.

Gary MandelVP CREATIVE, **ENTERTAINMENT ONE U.K.****Ted May**MANAGING DIRECTOR, U.K./HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL, MUSIC, **ENTERTAINMENT ONE**

Mandel, a veteran music attorney whose clients included Lana Del Rey, joined eOne in 2019 to recruit a roster of writers and artist-producers. He introduced brothers Marco and Giampaolo "Jack" Parisi to producer Fred Again and they collaborated on Ed Sheeran's year-end single, "Afterglow." May has been guiding eOne's evolution from a U.S.-oriented distributor to a front-line alternative to the major labels in the United Kingdom while recruiting a team to expand eOne to other territories.

Victoria NeedsVP INTERNATIONAL, **AWAL**

Needs brought 23 years of major-label experience, including international marketing roles at Sony, EMI and Warner, when she joined the independent label/distribution company AWAL in January 2020. In the past year, with the support of Needs and her team, AWAL reports that the debut album *How I'm Feeling* from American singer-songwriter Lauv became the most streamed album on Spotify in the Philippines and Singapore; Norway's Girl in Red (see story, page 34) used TikTok to close in on 1 billion global streams; Australia's Blake Rose gained airplay in Germany; and FINNEAS (brother of Billie Eilish) has been building his own fan base worldwide following AWAL's 2019 release of his album *Blood Harmony*.



WALTER KOLM
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Maykel PironCO-FOUNDER/CEO, **ARMADA MUSIC**

With offices in Amsterdam, New York and London, Armada Music is one of the world's leading independent dance labels, founded in 2003 by DJ Armin Van Buuren, Piron and David Lewis (who combined their names to create the company's moniker). Along with Van Buuren, Armada's roster includes dance artists such as Andrew Rayel, ARTY, Erick Morillo, Ferry Corsten, Kevin Saunderson, Lost Frequencies, Loud Luxury, Morgan Page and W&W, with repertoire heard on dance music stations worldwide.

Ilich RausaFOUNDER, **RUDE RECORDS**

Rude, which this year marks its 20th anniversary, has signed alt-rock singer-songwriter Sydney Sprague and the rock quartet A Will Away and finalized a crowdfunding campaign that allows fans to own equity in the label. "And we launched RudeCares, Rude's charity branch," says Rausa. In October, Rude Records signed a worldwide agreement with The Orchard for digital distribution and a deal with Sony Music Publishing for management of its publishing assets.

Bob RobackCEO, **INGROOVES MUSIC GROUP**

Ingrooves Music Group, under Roback,

has opened new offices in Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Korea, Turkey and South Africa, while also boosting its presence in Sweden, Norway and Australia. The distributor signed deals with leading local labels like GR6 in Brazil and Mushroom Pillow in Spain and, in South Africa, acquired one of the market's leading independent distributors, Electro-mode. As a competitive edge, Ingrooves points to its proprietary, privacy-focused marketing methods that use artificial intelligence and machine learning. The company's technology gives its label and artist partners the ability to identify and target prime music audiences anywhere in the world, according to Ingrooves.

Adriana SeinVP INTERNATIONAL, **COLUMBIA RECORDS**

For artists across the Columbia Records roster, Sein guides the international teams who execute campaigns in over 50 countries. She has helped AC/DC, Bruce Springsteen and Harry Styles achieve chart-topping success while contributing to the development of rising talents, including 24kGoldn, Jawsh 685, Powfu and The Kid LAROI. She also worked on what Columbia calls the biggest global launch to date for Rosalía with "TKN" (featuring Travis Scott), which has reached the top 10 in markets in Europe, Latin America and the United States since its release last May.

Marcelo SoaresCEO, **SOM LIVRE**

On April 1, it was announced that Sony Music Entertainment had agreed to acquire Som Livre, Brazil's largest independent label, for about \$255 million, securing Sony's leadership in Latin America's largest market. Soares, who has run Som Livre since 2007, will remain as CEO. Under Soares, Som Livre has become home to over 80 artists, including **sertanejo** superstars **JORGE & MATEUS**, *forró* artist Wesley Safadao and Latin Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Maria Gadú.

Jonathan StraussCO-FOUNDER/CEO, **CREATE MUSIC GROUP****Alexandre Williams**CO-FOUNDER/COO, **CREATE MUSIC GROUP**

Create Music Group, which acts as a digital distributor and allows artists to monetize content across multiple digital platforms, was founded by high school friends Strauss and Williams and generated over \$100 million in revenue in 2020 — almost half of that outside the United States, according to the company. Last year, Create acquired Mumbai-based Nirvana Digital in the first of \$30 million worth of deals the company plans in Asia.

Brian Sutnick

SENIOR VP GLOBAL MARKETING,

REPUBLIC RECORDS

Pop Smoke's posthumous hit album *Shoot for the Stars, Aim for the Moon* has set records in the United States (spending 21 total weeks at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top Rap Albums chart), but Republic reports it has also led album charts in 12 other countries through the work of Sutnick and his Universal Music colleagues worldwide. Sutnick helped Ariana Grande's "Positions" hit No. 1 in the United Kingdom and five other markets and has also handled global marketing for The Weeknd, whose single "Blinding Lights" won IFPI's global digital single award for 2020.

Mez TaraVP INTERNATIONAL, **EPIC RECORDS**

"Heartbreak Anniversary" by Giveon (see story, page 32) has risen to No. 14 on the *Billboard* Global Excl. U.S. chart — just one example of Tara's work on international strategy for Epic's biggest artist campaigns. The song broke out of Southeast Asia, hitting No. 1 in markets including the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, according to Epic. Among other artists and projects for which Tara has guided international marketing: Future's *High Off Life*, Travis Scott's collaboration with Kid Cudi on "The Scotts," Fiona Apple's *Fetch the Bolt Cutters*, DJ Khaled's duets with Drake on "Popstar" and "Greece," and The Black Eyed Peas' *Translation*.

ASSOCIATIONS

Frances MooreCEO, **IFPI****Jenny Wong**ASIA REGIONAL DIRECTOR, **IFPI**

For IFPI, the global trade organization of the recording industry, Moore has advanced the interests of record companies around the world, from offices in London, Brussels, Miami, Hong Kong, Beijing and Nairobi, Kenya. Wong's appointment in 2019 has strengthened IFPI's presence in Asia. Moore fought for the passage by the European Union two years ago of the Copyright Directive, which compels platforms that use user-uploaded content, like YouTube, to license music they make available to the public. She's now leading the organization's efforts to ensure the directive is implemented into national law in all of the EU countries.

Jeremy SirotaCEO, **MERLIN**

In early 2020, as Sirota arrived as the new CEO of Merlin, the worldwide digital licensing organization for independents, he focused on closing deals and expanding partnerships to diminish the impact of the pandemic. "We've been inspired by our members' resilience," says Sirota. In 2020, he reports, Merlin welcomed 81 new members from across the globe "including first-time members from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Peru, Singapore, Slovakia and the United Arab Emirates," he says. "As we move forward, Merlin is excited to find new ways to enable our members and celebrate the thing that brings us all together — the music."

PUBLISHING

Leslie AhrensSENIOR VP CREATIVE, **KOBALT MUSIC,**
LATIN AMERICA**Johan Ekelund**MANAGING DIRECTOR, **KOBALT MUSIC,**
SCANDINAVIA**Simon Moor**MANAGING DIRECTOR, **KOBALT MUSIC,**
ASIA PACIFIC

Kobalt continues to expand its roster worldwide. Among Ahrens' recent signings are El Alfa from the Dominican Republic, Alex Campos from Columbia and Jesús Adrián Romero from Mexico. Ekelund signed Victor Leksell, whose Sony Music single "Svag" has hit No. 1 in both Sweden and Norway and received over 136 million streams on Spotify. Among the writers and artists Simon has worked with is Tones and I, who is signed to Kobalt for Australia and New Zealand



Jorge & Mateus



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and for a global neighboring rights deal for repertoire including the artist's worldwide hit "Dance Monkey."

David Alexander

FOUNDER/MANAGING DIRECTOR, SHEER PUBLISHING AFRICA

Alexander, founder of Sheer Publishing Africa, which describes itself as the largest independent music publisher on the continent, struck a deal with Downtown, which acquired the company in May 2020. Downtown gets access to the African market, and Sheer Publishing benefits from Downtown's global reach. (Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.) Alexander remains at the helm of Sheer Publishing, whose copyrights were featured last year in the Netflix series *Blood & Water*.

The Leaders Of Live

WHILE THE PANDEMIC HAS ALL but shut down the live-music industry since March 2020, these are the companies that will lead the concert promotion business when touring returns, as ranked by Billboard Boxscore with data from Nov. 1, 2019, through Jan. 30, 2021.

- 1 **Live Nation**
- 2 **AEG Presents**
- 3 **MSG Entertainment**
- 4 **OCESA-CIE**
- 5 **TEG Dainty/TEG Live/TEG MJR**
- 6 **Semmel Concerts**
- 7 **Cardenas Marketing Network**
- 8 **Caesars Entertainment**
- 9 **MGM Resorts International**
- 10 **SJM Concerts**
- 11 **Gelb Productions**
- 12 **FKP Scorpio Konzertproduktionen**
- 13 **André Rieu Productions**
- 14 **Jam Productions**
- 15 **CID Entertainment**
- 16 **Insomniac**
- 17 **evenko**
- 18 **Another Planet Entertainment**
- 19 **Phil McIntyre Entertainments**
- 20 **iHeartMedia**

Jackie Alway

EXECUTIVE VP INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AND INDUSTRY AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Bertil David

MANAGING DIRECTOR, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING FRANCE

Joe Fang

MANAGING DIRECTOR, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING BEIJING

Tom Foster

EUROPEAN HEAD OF FILM AND TV, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Alexandra Lioutikoff

PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP, LATIN AMERICA

Alway, who was awarded an Order of the British Empire at the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2019 for her efforts on behalf of creators and rights holders, has been an advocate for copyright reform in the United Kingdom and Europe. Developing UMPG's French roster, David has signed Burna Boy producer Kel-p and struck a co-publishing deal with the Nigerian-based Aristokrat Group. In the past 18 months, Fang and the UMPG team in China have worked with MCSC, the Chinese performing rights organization, to strengthen recognition for copyright owners under Chinese law. Foster leads the European synch team with wins that include newcomer Griff, who recorded a song for Disney's 2020 Christmas commercial; the placement of *Frozen* anthem "Let It Go" in Audi's 2020 Super Bowl spot; and songs from U.K. stars featured in Netflix's *The Crown*. In 2019, Lioutikoff became the first woman to hold the role of president of Latin America and United States. She is the only woman to hold the position of president for a multinational Latin music company.

Ichiro Asatsuma

CHAIRMAN, FUJIPACIFIC MUSIC

A major figure in the Japanese music industry for over five decades, Asatsuma has been chairman of FujiPacific Music since 2005 and was chairman of Japan's Music Publishers Association from 2004 to 2010. In 2020, Concord acquired FujiPacific's global stake in Pulse Music Group, the publisher of hits written by Starrah, Ty Dolla \$ign and others, in a deal credited to Asatsuma's long-term vision and financial savvy.

Mandy Aubry

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA AND ASIA PACIFIC, SONGTRUST

Lara Baker

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, U.K. AND IRELAND, SONGTRUST

In their respective regions, Aubry and Baker work with Songtrust clients to access the company's global publishing



Keren Ann

administration network and collect their royalties. In 2020, they achieved year-over-year client growth of 225% in the United Kingdom and Ireland, according to Songtrust. Aubry brought over 60 new music creators and companies from across Africa to Songtrust. One new client, Ghanaian music distributor Highvibes, estimates that 95% of songwriters in Africa are not signed with publishers to administer their rights.

Annette Barrett

MANAGING DIRECTOR/GLOBAL STRATEGIC LIAISON, RESERVOIR

Hussain "Spek" Yoosuf

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT, POPARABIA; EXECUTIVE VP INTERNATIONAL AND EMERGING MARKETS, RESERVOIR

From London, Barrett pursues international opportunities for Reservoir writers like Jamie Hartman, Cutfather and Ivor Lifetime Achievement Award winner Nitin Sawhney. She's a co-founder of the International Music Publishers Forum and in 2020 was named both president and chair of the organization's board. Following a joint-venture deal struck in February 2020 between Reservoir and PopArabia, Yoosuf, based in Dubai, oversees strategy, signing and development of talent for both companies across Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

Laura Bedikian

SENIOR CREATIVE MANAGER, DOWNTOWN MUSIC PUBLISHING

Charles Braud

HEAD OF SYNC, FRANCE, DOWNTOWN MUSIC PUBLISHING

Dean Francis

GM, DOWNTOWN NEIGHBOURING RIGHTS Bedikian and Braud jointly run Downtown Music Publishing's operation in France. Bedikian represents artist-composers ranging from Israeli-born, Paris-based singer KEREN ANN to rising rappers Luidji and Green Montana. Braud's deals with

brands such as Lancôme, Jimmy Choo and others drove a "double-digit percentage" of Downtown's synch revenue for 2019-2020, according to the company. Francis' success leading neighboring rights collections for Downtown's music publishing division led the company in June to announce a new stand-alone business unit dedicated to performance royalties with Francis at the helm.

Benjamin Budde

PRESIDENT, BUDDE MUSIC

Budde has carried on the music publishing legacy of his father, Dr. Rolf Budde, who died in 2018 after a lifetime of building the family's independent Berlin-based company. During the pandemic, Budde struck a deal to acquire the London-based independent publisher Phrased Differently, "a strategic creative merger," he says, "as it grows our U.K. office and studios tremendously." Meanwhile, sister company BTA launched a brand partnership and acting department that, says Budde, "opens up new paths in these fields."

Justin Dowling

GM, BLUE MOUNTAIN MUSIC; EXECUTIVE VP, PRIMARY WAVE U.K. AND EUROPE

After Primary Wave acquired Chris Blackwell's share of both Blue Mountain Music and Bob Marley's song catalog in 2018 for an estimated \$50 million, Dowling took on responsibility for both catalogs and, from his base in London, has guided the publisher's expansion into Europe. He oversaw a record year of synch deals for the Marley catalog in 2020, according to Primary Wave. Dowling secured sampling usage for Marley's "Could You Be Loved" for the hit "Safaera" from Anuel and Bad Bunny, one of the most streamed songs of the past year. He has also taken the lead on Primary Wave acquisitions in the United Kingdom and Europe, including the publisher's deal for the catalog of KT Tunstall announced in January.



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Gustavo Fernandez

PRESIDENT, **WARNER CHAPPELL LATIN AMERICA**

Shani Gonzales

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **WARNER CHAPPELL U.K.**; HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL A&R, **WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC**

Santiago Menéndez-Pidal

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC SPAIN**

Matthieu Tessier

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC FRANCE**

Under Fernandez, Warner Chappell Latin America in the past year has inked agreements with the Mexican *grupero* band Bronco and Latin Grammy-winning producer Tony Succar, among others. Gonzales' international A&R role has her working with writers across borders, such as Ari Pensmith and MNEK from the United Kingdom, Capital Bra from Germany and El Guincho from Spain. In October, Menéndez-Pidal renewed Warner Chappell's publishing agreement with Spanish superstar Pablo Alborán (who also re-upped his recording deal with Warner Music Spain). Tessier and his team have been working with Aya Nakamura, whose remixed hit "Djadja" (featuring Maluma) has spent 13 weeks on *Billboard's* Global Excl. U.S. chart, peaking at No. 32.

Jorge Mejia

PRESIDENT/CEO, LATIN AMERICA AND U.S. LATIN, **SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING**

Sharon Boyse

SENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND SOCIETY RELATIONS, **SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING**

Sarah Lockhart

HEAD OF A&R, U.K., **SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING**

Johnny Tennander

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SCANDINAVIA/SENIOR VP A&R, EUROPE, **SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING**

Miami-based Mejia is responsible for Sony Music Publishing operations in the U.S. Latin market and throughout Latin America, with offices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico. In 2020, the company was named Latin publisher of the year by both BMI and SESAC for the fifth consecutive time. Boyse's global expertise has allowed Sony to become the first publisher to introduce real-time processing for foreign earnings, according to the company, along with royalty and copyright administration across multiple digital platforms. Lockhart, who joined the company just over a year ago, signed British rap duo Young T & Bugsey, whose "Don't Rush" reached No. 5 on the Rhythmic Airplay chart. Boosting the presence of Sony's Scandinavia roster on the global charts, Tennander has signed writers including Benjamin Lasnier, who has co-written with Megan Thee Stallion, among others.

Merck Mercuriadis

FOUNDER/CEO, **HIPGNOSIS SONGS FUND**

Under the guidance of Mercuriadis, the 4-year-old Hipgnosis Songs Fund, based in London, has reshaped the music rights business, spending over \$2 billion so far acquiring some 140 publishing catalogs including the works of Blondie, Lindsey Buckingham, Rick James, Journey, Barry Manilow, Nelly, Mark Ronson, RZA, Richie Sambora and Neil Young. Profits were up 917% in its fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2020, and the company now has a market capitalization of almost \$2 billion, according to Hipgnosis.

John Minch

PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING, **CONCORD**

Kim Frankiewicz

EXECUTIVE VP WORLDWIDE A&R, **CONCORD MUSIC PUBLISHING**

Kent Hoskins

CFO, **CONCORD**

Concord's Boosey & Hawkes division has become an international partner under Minch for classical publishers including Oxford University Press in the United Kingdom, Germany's Schott Music and Austria's Universal Edition. Frankiewicz leads Concord's A&R teams worldwide and has done so in the past year "all from her kitchen table in London," she says. Concord writers Biff Stannard and Fiona Bevan contributed to Kylie Minogue's album *Disco*, which hit No. 1 last year in the United Kingdom. When the pandemic struck, Hoskins and senior executives followed a "European business continuity and resilience strategy" — covering relocation, remote working and more — that he had prepared in 2013.

Ralph Peer II

EXECUTIVE CHAIR, **PEERMUSIC**

Mary Megan Peer

CEO, **PEERMUSIC**

The international pedigree of peermusic goes back to 1928, when visionary founder Ralph S. Peer recognized the potential of the Latin market after a visit to Mexico City. Today, peermusic operates in 31 countries with a global network developed by Ralph Peer II and his daughter Mary Megan Peer. In October 2020, peermusic Neighbouring Rights was formed after the acquisition of Premier Muzik (Canada), All Right Music (France) and Global Master Rights (the Netherlands). Mary Megan, promoted to CEO in December and now based in Amsterdam, has worked alongside her father to advance her grandfather's legacy, with peermusic ranking at No. 8 on *Billboard's* year-end Hot 100 Publishing Corporations chart in 2020.

Robert Wise

CHAIRMAN, **WISE MUSIC GROUP**

In January 2020, Music Sales Group



Alok

rebranded itself as Wise Music Group, recognizing that the firm is "very much a family business," says Wise. One of the world's leading publishers, the company owns and manages over 200,000 popular and classical copyrights, including the catalog of G. Schirmer Inc., the American classical publisher that was founded in 1861. Earlier this year, Wise oversaw the acquisition of a company that owns the music publishing rights to hit songs by The Zombies.

LIVE

Marcos Araújo

CEO, **VILLA MIX**

Brazilian promoter Araújo has helped popularize Brazil's country music genre *sertanejo*, discovering and initially managing talents like Jorge & Mateus and Gustavo Lima. He also helped propel the international success of dance music DJ-producer **ALOK**, whose global rise came thanks to his 2016 song "Hear Me Now," recorded with Bruno Martini and Zeeba; it became the first track from Brazil to break 100 million streams on Spotify. The song and Villa Mix exposure helped push Alok's performance fee in Brazil to between \$100,000 and \$150,000, says Araújo.

Henry Cárdenas

FOUNDER/CEO, **CMN**

Cárdenas was recognized as *Billboard's* 2019 Latin Power Players Executive of the Year as the promoter behind tours by Marc Anthony, Maluma and Bad Bunny. Based in Chicago, he has spent much of the past year leading the multimillion-dollar development of Arena Bogota, which will include a 20,000-seat venue in his native country of Colombia. Along

with Marc Anthony, Cárdenas is co-founder of the Maestro Cares Foundation, which provides housing, community centers, outreach programs, and educational and medical initiatives to children in 13 countries.

Denis Desmond

CHAIRMAN, **LIVE NATION U.K. AND IRELAND**

John Reid

PRESIDENT, **LIVE NATION EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA**

Roger Field

PRESIDENT, **LIVE NATION ASIA PACIFIC**

Selina Emeny

INTERNATIONAL GROUP COUNSEL, **LIVE NATION**

Desmond spent the last year devoting himself to steadying the Live Nation ship abroad, which he says "is easy when you have a great team." Reid, a veteran of the European live- and recorded-music businesses, expanded his responsibility to include the Middle East, Africa and India, in addition to Europe, with a focus on drive-in shows, streaming and socially distanced events. (In Madrid, he oversaw a series of socially distanced Crew Nation Presents shows to provide employment and raise money for concert workers.) Along with other Australian industry leaders, Field co-founded the Live Entertainment Industry Forum to support the safe return of live events, producing state-of-the-art protocols and working to create risk management plans that met the needs of fans, governments, artists and the industry. Emeny, celebrating her 22nd year with Live Nation Entertainment, has an expansive role that includes international group counsel, liaison between the company's U.S. headquarters and its international operations, government affairs and envoy for Live Nation with regulatory authorities across global markets.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRIMARY WAVE 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Primary Wave has become an exciting new partner bringing a new level of fun, creative and outside-the-box ways to keep our music in the hearts and minds of fans. To Larry, Adam, Sam and everyone at Primary Wave, Congratulations and let's keep Rockn' this Wave!!
Love ya!

TOMMY & JEANNE
SHAW

Photo Credit: Jason Powell

CTM

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André de Raaff

ON BEING NAMED TO

BILLBOARD'S 2021 INTERNATIONAL POWER PLAYER

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Steve Homer

Toby Leighton-Pope

CO-CEOS, U.K., **AEG PRESENTS**

Alex Hill

PRESIDENT/CEO, **AEG EUROPE**

Adam Wilkes

PRESIDENT/CEO, **AEG ASIA**

Jim King

CEO OF EUROPEAN FESTIVALS,

AEG PRESENTS U.K.

Simon Jones

SENIOR VP INTERNATIONAL TOURING,

AEG PRESENTS

Homer and Leighton-Pope guided the team behind marquee festivals like Country to Country, which brought Nashville stars to London, Glasgow, Dublin, Berlin and Amsterdam before the pandemic. When live shows ceased, the two helped livestream shows from AEG venues — and donated food and beverages from the Hammersmith Apollo to a local London hospital. Under Wilkes, AEG in Asia entered a joint venture with South Korea's CJ Group to build a new arena in Seoul. King helped confirm the extension of AEG's agreement to promote the BST Hyde Park festival in London through 2027. Amid the many concerts and tours that Jones saw canceled in 2020, he helped pull off Justin Bieber's acoustic show in London in February 2020 to promote his *Changes* album.

Harvey Lister

CHAIRMAN/CEO, ASIA PACIFIC, **ASM GLOBAL**

John Sharkey

EXECUTIVE VP, **ASM GLOBAL**

Tim Worton

GROUP DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIA ARENAS,

ASM GLOBAL

Marie Lindqvist

SENIOR VP EUROPE, **ASM GLOBAL**

Dana DuFine

VP GLOBAL BOOKING, CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT, **ASM GLOBAL**

In late 2019, the merger of venue management companies SMG and AEG Facilities brought together 112 arenas and 24 stadiums worldwide, including in the Asia-Pacific region, overseen by Lister; Australia, where Worton guides arenas; and Europe, where Sharkey and Lindqvist work with venue clients and promoters. DuFine, whose role involves bringing concerts and other events to all those venues, is working at rescheduling shows across the globe. "I have no doubt we're coming back strong," she says. "But it's going to take everything we got."

Alejandro Soberon Kuri

PRESIDENT/CEO, **OCESA/CIE**

Before COVID-19 shut down the touring industry, Soberon Kuri's OCESA/CIE ranked at No. 4 — just behind Live Nation, AEG Presents and MSG Entertainment — among the world's most

successful concert promotion companies, according to Billboard Boxscore rankings for November 2019 to January 2021. Since founding OCESA (CIE is its holding company) in 1990, Soberon Kuri has made Mexico a must-play for international artists. Although a planned acquisition by Live Nation was scuttled by the pandemic, Soberon Kuri pivoted to livestreaming. "Live experiences will return with a lot of power," he says, "and we'll be able to amplify these experiences in a much better way with the digital world. That's the growth opportunity."

BOOKING AGENCIES

Emma Banks

Chris Dalston

Mike Greek

Marlene Tsuchii

CO-HEADS, INTERNATIONAL TOURING,

CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY

Maria May

MUSIC AGENT, **CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY**

With Banks and Greek based in London and Dalston and Tsuchii in Los Angeles, CAA has a powerhouse quartet of top agents focused on international markets bolstered by May, who is also based in London. The agency boasts a star-studded roster that included Harry Styles, **ARIANA GRANDE**, Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, Bon Jovi, Foo Fighters, Queen, Adam Lambert, AC/DC, Sting, Ricky Martin and the Eagles. May, with her roots in electronic and dance music, represents David Guetta, The Black Eyed Peas and The Chainsmokers, among others. CAA reports that in 2019 the agency booked over 8,000 shows in 98 countries. During the pandemic, its agents found new creative and commercial channels for clients — not only virtual shows but endorsement deals, books and podcasts. CAA's international roster has continued to grow with new signings that include Chvrches, Playboi Carti, Bauhaus, Todrick Hall, Declan McKenna, Claire Rosinkranz, Phantogram, Bree Runway, Gok Wan, Gracie Abrams, BENEE, Celeste and Tomfoolery.

Amy Davidman

Devin Landau

CO-FOUNDERS/PARTNERS/AGENTS, **TBA AGENCY**

Davidman and Landau are the internationally focused co-founders, along with three other former Paradigm agents, of TBA Agency. For over a decade Davidman has been an advocate for bringing Latin artists to the mainstream and international artists to Latin markets. Landau represents (outside the European Union) Brazil's Luísa Sonza, whose engagement on BeApp led to a monthlong focus by the social media platform on the Brazilian market.



Grande

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE RECORDING ACADEMY

The Top 10 Hottest Songs Outside The U.S.

DYNAMITE	BTS
MOOD	24kGoldn feat. iann dior
BLINDING LIGHTS	The Weeknd
HAWÁI	Maluma
DAKITI	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez
SAVAGE LOVE (LAXED - SIREN BEAT)	Jawsh 685 and Jason Derulo
HEAD & HEART	Joel Corry x MNEK
WAP	Cardi B feat. Megan Thee Stallion
LEMONADE POSITIONS	Internet Money and Gunna feat. Don Toliver & NAV
	Ariana Grande

Source The Top 10 Hottest Songs recap is based on actual performance on the weekly Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart for the period of Sept. 19, 2020, through April 10, 2021. Songs are ranked by their cumulative chart points using the chart's weekly formula, which blends streaming and sales as tabulated by MRC Data.



CONGRATULATIONS
— ON YOUR —
15th ANNIVERSARY
HERE'S TO MANY MORE!



15
YEARS

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15TH ANNIVERSARY

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PARTNERSHIP OF DELIVERING GREAT
MUSIC TO THE WORLD!



BRAVO...

Primary Wave Music
on your 15th Anniversary!



Lucy Dickins

CO-HEAD, MUSIC, **WME**

Tony Goldring

PARTNER/HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT, **WME**

Brett Murrhiy

PARTNER/HEAD OF ASIA PACIFIC, MUSIC, **WME**

James Rubin

PARTNER/CO-HEAD OF HIP-HOP DEPARTMENT, **WME**

Ashley Gonzalez

MUSIC AGENT, **WME**

In early 2020, Dickins was promoted to co-head of WME's music division while continuing to represent clients including Adele, James Blake, Bryan Ferry and Mumford & Sons. Her client Mabel won a 2020 BRIT Award for best female solo artist. Goldring oversees tours outside the United States for WME artists including Rihanna, Justin Timberlake and John Legend and last year signed Shakira to the agency. Murrhiy oversaw the most successful quarter on record for WME's Sydney office in early 2020 before touring halted. Rubin's hip-hop and R&B roster includes Tyler, The Creator, Solange, Killer Mike, Travis Scott, Goldlink and Run the Jewels, as well as R&B singer Summer Walker and French-British rapper-singer Octavian. Gonzalez developed strategy to book hundreds of WME clients in Latin markets and coordinated global tours

for her own roster, including St. Vincent, Kali Uchis and Jenny Lewis. She recently signed Camilo, one of the most followed artists on TikTok.

Peter Elliott

MANAGING DIRECTOR, **PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL**

Matt Bates

DIRECTOR, **PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL**; HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL, **ICM PARTNERS AND PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL**

Ben Winchester

DIRECTOR, **PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL**

Craig D'Souza

AGENT, **PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL**

In March 2020, Elliott played a key role in the sale of Primary Talent International to ICM Partners, which strengthened both agencies during the pandemic. He represents artists such as Lana Del Rey, Dizzee Rascal and Sofi Tukker. After the two agencies joined forces, Bates became a Primary Talent International partner and has worked alongside ICM Worldwide head of concerts Rob Prinz to grow ICM's international department. Winchester books tours outside the United States and Canada for acts including Noel Gallagher, Slowdive and Ride. (One highlight of his three-decade career: booking Oasis' legendary 1996 concert in Knebworth, England, which drew a quarter of a million

fans.) D'Souza, whose client Stormzy headlined the 2019 Glastonbury festival, received *Music Week's* 2020 award for live music agent of the year.

Alex Hardee

Tom Schroeder
James Whitting

PARTNERS, **PARADIGM AGENCY**

Hardee's client **LEWIS CAPALDI** finished his first arena tour of the United Kingdom and Ireland in March 2020, days before the pandemic halted in-person concerts, then did an Amazon Prime Day livestream in October to raise funds for shuttered venues. Schroeder worked with clients like FKA twigs, Disclosure and slowthai to donate memorabilia for the #LoveLive campaign, which raised a half-million pounds for out-of-work touring crews and technicians. Whitting's client Ellie Goulding unveiled her new album *Brightest Blue* in July and played a global pay-per-view livestream from London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

John Jackson

PRESIDENT, **K2 AGENCY**

In August, the private equity firm Yucaipa Companies entered into a joint venture with Jackson's K2 Agency, bringing the renowned London-based booking firm under the same umbrella as Yucaipa-owned Artist Group International. Jackson, who represents Metallica, Iron Maiden and Slayer for European touring, says that the highlight of 2020 was "joining forces with Dennis Arfa and his colleagues at AGI and, consequently, K2 becoming a Yucaipa company. The lowlight is the realization that I have not seen a K2 artist play live for over a year and a half and counting."

Scott Mantell

PARTNER/HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL, **ICM PARTNERS**

Ari Bernstein

AGENT, **ICM PARTNERS**

In March 2020, ICM Partners acquired U.K. talent agency Primary Talent International, expanding its reach and roster by over 600 music clients. Mantell oversees ICM's entire international roster and during the pandemic built relationships with streaming platforms not only for musicians but also ICM clients in the podcast, unscripted talent and comedy sectors. From London, Bernstein has managed touring abroad for Kendrick Lamar, Khalid, Migos and others. During the touring shutdown, he has focused on diversifying income streams for his clients.

Steve Strange

DIRECTOR/AGENT, **X-RAY TOURING**

Beckie Sugden

SENIOR AGENT, **X-RAY TOURING**

Coldplay, Eminem, Snow Patrol, Queens of the Stone Age and Jimmy Eat World are among the clients booked by Strange at London-based X-ray Touring, all awaiting the full-scale return of tours. Sugden helped bring Anderson .Paak and Russ abroad; represents Jhené Aiko, Gucci Mane and Ghostemane; and is one of the first agents to book many shows in emerging markets in the Middle East, according to the agency.

Neil Warnock

Obi Asika

CO-HEADS OF U.K. OFFICE, **UTA**

Jules De Lattre

AGENT, MUSIC, **UTA**

Sean Hill

DIRECTOR OF TOUR MARKETING, MUSIC, **UTA**

Cleo Thompson

EXECUTIVE, MUSIC BRAND PARTNERSHIPS, **UTA**

UTA in March announced the acquisition of Echo Location Talent Agency, founded by Asika, who personally represents Alesso, Marshmello, Chase & Status and Trippie Redd, among others, while UTA will also book former Echo clients Diplo and Major Lazer. Warnock, a five-decade veteran in live booking, played a key role in guiding UTA clients and supporting U.K. music venues during the pandemic. De Lattre and his colleagues booked hundreds of virtual shows viewed by fans worldwide while generating "substantial revenue," according to UTA. Hill developed artist marketing strategies for over 30 virtual concerts, including a 360-degree livestream from London in November for Burna Boy. Thompson guides UTA's European brand-partnerships business and has helped close over 300 deals globally since the pandemic began.

CONTRIBUTORS

International Power Players was written by Thom Duffy with reporting from Katie Bain, Alexei Barrionuevo, Lars Brandle, Dave Brooks, Patrick Brzeski, Keith Caulfield, Ed Christman, Tatiana Cirisano, Leila Cobo, Frank DiGiacomo, Chris Eggertsen, Griselda Flores, Tim Ingham, Glenn Peoples, Dan Rys, Marc Schneider and Rebecca Sun.

METHODOLOGY

Nominations for *Billboard* power lists open not less than 120 days in advance of publication. (For a contact for our editorial calendar listing publication dates, please email thom.duffy@billboard.com.) The online nomination link is sent to press representatives and/or honorees of companies previously featured on any *Billboard* power list, as well as those who send a request to thom.duffy@billboard.com. Nominations close and lists are locked not less than 90 days before publication. *Billboard's* 2021 International Power Players were chosen by editors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors, limited to the industry sectors shown. Consideration was given to geographic diversity and the industry impact of honorees and/or their companies. That impact is measured by metrics including, but not limited to, chart, sales and streaming performance as measured by MRC Data and social media impressions using data available as of March 15.



Capaldi

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For The Record



**Parker Bop Alto
On 40-Min. Disk**

NEW YORK, May 14.—Forty minutes of Charlie Parker's bop alto on a single platter now available to...

Col's New LP Player To Bow

NEW YORK, May 7.—Columbia Records' long-awaited new and improved long-playing record player attachment will debut next week in New York. The machine will retail at \$9.95 in New York and will be sold by Times-Columbia Appliances, local Columbia disk distrib, to dealer at \$8.95. The distrib will make no profit on the new machine which will replace the older Philco attachment. The new machine is being produced for Columbia by the VM firm, of Chicago, and it features the recommended sapphire pick-up and an improved heavy duty 33 1/3 r.p.m. motor. Each local distrib will work out its own plan for the sale of the...

BLUEBIRD 45 R.P.M., 49 CENTS

**Victor Skeds
Distrib Talks
On Disk Bally**

To Cover Wide Area

NEW YORK, Oct. 15.—An extensive series of meetings between top RCA Victor brass and distributors is scheduled to get under way within a few days. The sessions, of course, tie in with Victor's fall and winter advertising and promotional drive and are part of the...

**Satchmo Europe
Trip Successful;
Plans 2d Tour**

STOCKHOLM, Oct. 15.—Louis Armstrong, who just completed three concerts here, has been so successful that he plans to revisit the Continent for another tour in March. In Stockholm no less than 13,500 persons heard him at the 4,500-seat Kungliga Hallen. Armstrong's tour includes Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and France. He will wind it up with a concert in Copenhagen November 5. The tour has sparked the sale of Armstrong records, with virtually all...

**RCA Label Adopts Price
Of 78 Line for New Speed**

(Continued from page 3)
49 cents will plainly necessitate working on a tiny profit margin and will require huge volume sales to keep the operation out of the red. RCA hopes to do this via its current drive, which is aimed at moving both disks and players. Tying in with these aims, of course, is Victor's desire to make the entire line—including Bluebird—available to users of the 45-r.p.m. system. Widespread trade talk has RCA going for 33 1/3 some time in 1950, with the assumption that the two...

market place. Others feel that the 45 can become the accepted pop medium, while 33 1/3 becomes the classical medium. Before 45 replaces 78 as the pop medium, however, the big missionary job of winning the public over and getting 45 machines in homes must be accomplished. Putting the Bluebird line on a 49-cent 45-speed disk can be construed as a drive toward both objectives. In one swoop RCA hopes to woo record buyers to the disk itself and encourage sales of the players by implanting the idea...

Plant Closes Book On Vinyl Chapter

BY IRV LICHTMAN

NEW YORK Faced with a sharper decline in demand for vinyl pressings than expected, the world's largest independent record plant in the U.S. is calling it quits in 60 days. The plant, the Hauppauge Record Manufacturing Ltd. on Long Island, N.Y., was producing...

erated in the U.S.

A press statement announcing the closure—affecting some 125 staffers out of a total company roster of 550—indicates that as recently as six months ago, executives at HRM had determined that record production could continue well into the '90s. But, says the company,...

In the areas of audio- and video tape duplicating, HMG indicates high rate of growth. It regards Hauppauge Tape Manufacturing, formed in 1962, as the largest cassette-tape duplicator in the country while its Hauppauge Video Manufacturing unit, formed in 1965, among the nation's leading vide...

HOW VINYL GOT ITS GROOVE BACK

THE VINYL COMEBACK ISN'T JUST spin. In 2020, records accounted for \$626 million in U.S. sales — exceeding those of CDs and contributing 5.2% of industry revenue, according to the RIAA. And MRC Data shows vinyl sales have been rising for 15 years, to 27.5 million units last year, up a staggering 46.2% during the pandemic. “It’s the movie theater,” Jack White told *Billboard* about the format in a March 14, 2015, cover story, “compared [with] the iPhone.”

GET INTO THE MICROGROOVE

After World War II, a music-business format fight broke out when the then-dominant shellac 78 rpm records faced two challengers: Columbia Records' 33 1/3 rpm vinyl LPs and RCA Victor's shorter 45s. This “mark[ed] the beginning of a historic disk battle,” *Billboard* wrote in a Jan. 8, 1949, story, advising readers to “hold your hats, kids, and run for the storm cellars.” In the Feb. 19 issue, Columbia's chairman of the board called out RCA, predicting that its LP would win a “record war ... which Columbia Records has not initiated and in which it cannot be defeated.”

SINGLES GOING STEADY

The 45 quickly eighty-sixed the 78 as the leading singles format, but LPs brought in more money. The June 3, 1950, *Billboard* reported that during a 12-month period, U.S. labels produced 7.3 million 45s and 3.3 million LPs — but those 45s had a retail value of \$5.6 million, compared with \$12.5 million for the LPs. By the end of the year, RCA started making LPs, too.

THE NEEDLE AND THE DAMAGE DONE

By the late 1980s, CDs and cassettes were outselling records, and in 1989, *Billboard* tracked what an April 22 report called vinyl's “inevitable phase-out.” That April issue also covered how the country's largest independent record plant stopped making vinyl after “what was seen as a gradual decline in market demand turned into a ‘swift and precipitous tailspin.’” Vinyl's extinction seemed inevitable. “It's not a question of if,” said Tommy Boy chairman Tom Silverman in the May 27 issue. “It's a question of when.”

SPIN DOCTORS

Two decades later, a group of independent retailers organized the first Record Store Day on April 19, 2008. The *Billboard* that was published on that date asked, “Can Record Store Day Work?” The question was still open in the May 3 issue, when one record-store manager shrugged at a modest sales bump: “I don't know if it's because of the nice weather,” she said, “or Record Store Day.”

VINYL FETISH

It was Record Store Day all along. After higher-profile annual events that included record store “Ambassadors” like Ozzy Osbourne, Chuck D and Metallica, an April 27, 2016, headline read, “Record Store Day Spurs 131 Percent Gain In Vinyl Album Sales In U.S.,” compared with the previous week. Many of those buyers wouldn't remember the format's decline. The April 3, 2021, *Billboard* reported that “during the pandemic, sales picked up, thanks to a new kind of customer: young people.” —JOE LYNCH

billboard



NOEL SCHAJRIS 20TH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE

Latin Grammy winner, singer, songwriter and pianist Noel Schajris, has sold more than 25 million records and 1 million tickets since his first solo album 20 years ago, some of his songs and albums had been appeared at the Billboard's top ten charts. He has earned international success with the legendary duet Sin Bandera where he and Leonel Garcia created some of the biggest hits in Spanish music history.

His music videos have more than 700 million views and his social media includes 9.5 million followers from more than 15 countries. As a recording artist, he has sung duets with John Legend, Brian Mcknight, Luis Fonsi, and Reik, just to name a few.

In 2020 he released the unique web www.NoelSchajris.fan which includes an online store, a fan subscription service and online shows. Mr. Schajris is considered to be one of the most important and celebrated artists in Latin music.

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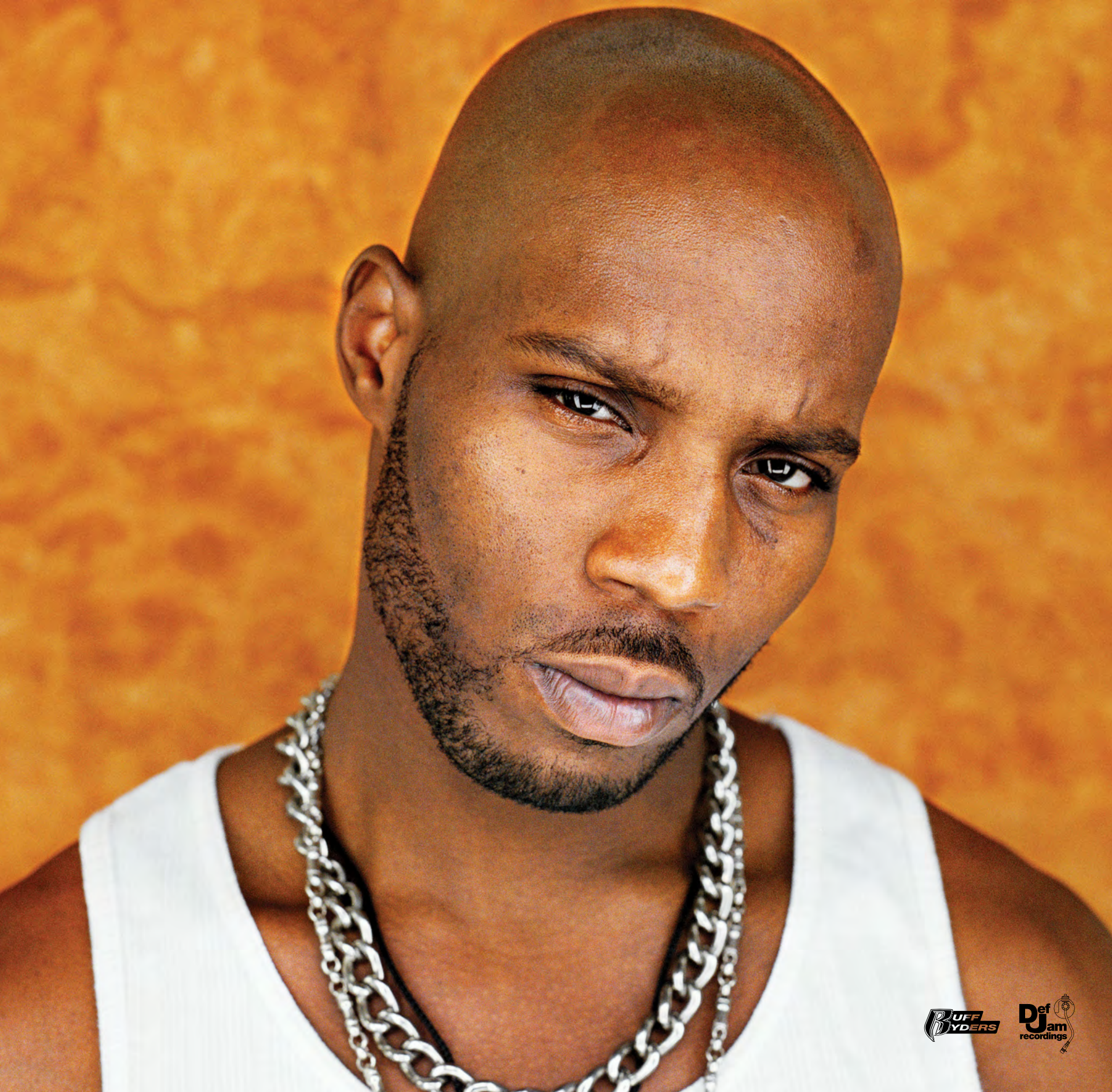
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