

billboard

OCTOBER 9, 2021 • BILLBOARD.COM

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID

Behind the scenes with **The Kid LAROI**, the 18-year-old Australian phenom on top of the world



Latin Power
Players 2021



UMG Cashes In.
Who's Next?



billboard

2021 LATIN POWER PLAYERS

JAK
ENTERTAINMENT

**“JAK ENTERTAINMENT CONGRATULATES OUR CEO ON HIS THIRD
CONSECUTIVE SELECTION AS BILLBOARD’S LATIN POWER PLAYER”**

**ANDY
MARTINEZ**

JAK ENTERTAINMENT, CO-FOUNDER & CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

ALSO CONGRATULATES

**NOAH
ASSAD**

CO-FOUNDER & CEO / RIMAS ENTERTAINMENT

FOR BEING SELECTED AS BILLBOARD’S LATIN POWER PLAYER

EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

**“NUESTRO ADORADO PPT! CELEBRAMOS TUS LOGROS CON MUCHO
ORGULLO ERES EL MAXIMO EJEMPLO DE QUERER ES PODER
ATT. TU FAMILIA DE JAK ENTERTAINMENT”**

billboard

2021 LATIN POWER PLAYERS

JAK
ENTERTAINMENT

CONGRATULATES

“OUR PARTNERS & FRIENDS FOR BEING SELECTED ON THE EXCLUSIVE LIST OF THE 2021 LATIN BILLBOARD POWER PLAYERS”

ADRIAN HARLEY • AFO VERDE • AJ RAMOS • ALBERT RODRIGUEZ • ALBERT TORRES
ALEJANDRO DUQUE • ALEX GALLARDO • ALEXANDRA LIOUTIKOFF • ANGEL KAMINSKY
ANTONIO VÁZQUEZ • AZUCENA OLVERA VIDAURRI • BOB ROBACK • BRUNO DEL GRANADO
BRYANT PINO • CAMILLE SOTO MALAVE • CISCO SUAREZ • CLAUDIA OCHOA
DAVID WEST • EDDIE ORJUELA • EDGAR MARTINEZ • ELSA YEP • ENRIQUE SANTOS
ERIC DUARS PEREZ • ESTEBAN GELLER • FABIO ACOSTA • FEDERICO LAURIA
FELIPE PIMIENTO • FRABIAN ELI CARRION • GABRIELA GONZALEZ • GABRIELA MARTINEZ
GUSTAVO LOPEZ • ALEX MIZRAHI • GUSTAVO MENÉNDEZ • HANS SCHAFER
HECTOR RIVERA • HENRY CARDENAS • HERB PAYAN • IGNACIO MEYER • INÉS SAPOCHNIK
ISMAR SANTA CRUZ • JENNIFER D'CUNHA • JESUS GONZÁLEZ
JESUS LARA • JESUS LOPEZ • JESUS SALAS • JORGE FERRADAS • JORGE JUAREZ
JORGE MEJIA • JOSÉ “TITO” REYES • JOSHUA MENDEZ • JUAN PAZ • JUAN DIEGO
JUAN MANUEL RÓTULO • LAURA TESORIERO • LUANA PAGANI • MANUEL ABUD
MARCOS JUAREZ • MARIA FERNANDEZ • MAURICIO OJEDA • MAURICIO MENDOZA
MEDINA VELEZ • MIA NYGREN • MICHEL VEGA • NELSON “POLO” MONTALVO
NELSON ALBAREDA • NELSON DÍAZ MARTINEZ • NIR SEROUSSI • ORLANDO “JOVA” CEPEDA
PABLO CASALS • PAULA KAMINSKY • PEDRO JAVIER GONZALEZ • TOMAS COOKMAN
RAFAEL ARCAUTE • RAUL ALARCON • REBECA LEON • RICHARD LOM • RICHARD VEGA
ROCIO GUERRERO • RODRIGO NIETO • RUBÉN ABRAHAM • SALOMON PALACIOS
SANDRA JIMENEZ • SKANDER GOUCHA • TRINITY COLON • TXEMA ROSIQUE
VICENTE SAAVEDRA • VICTOR GONZALEZ • WALTER KOLM

Camilo

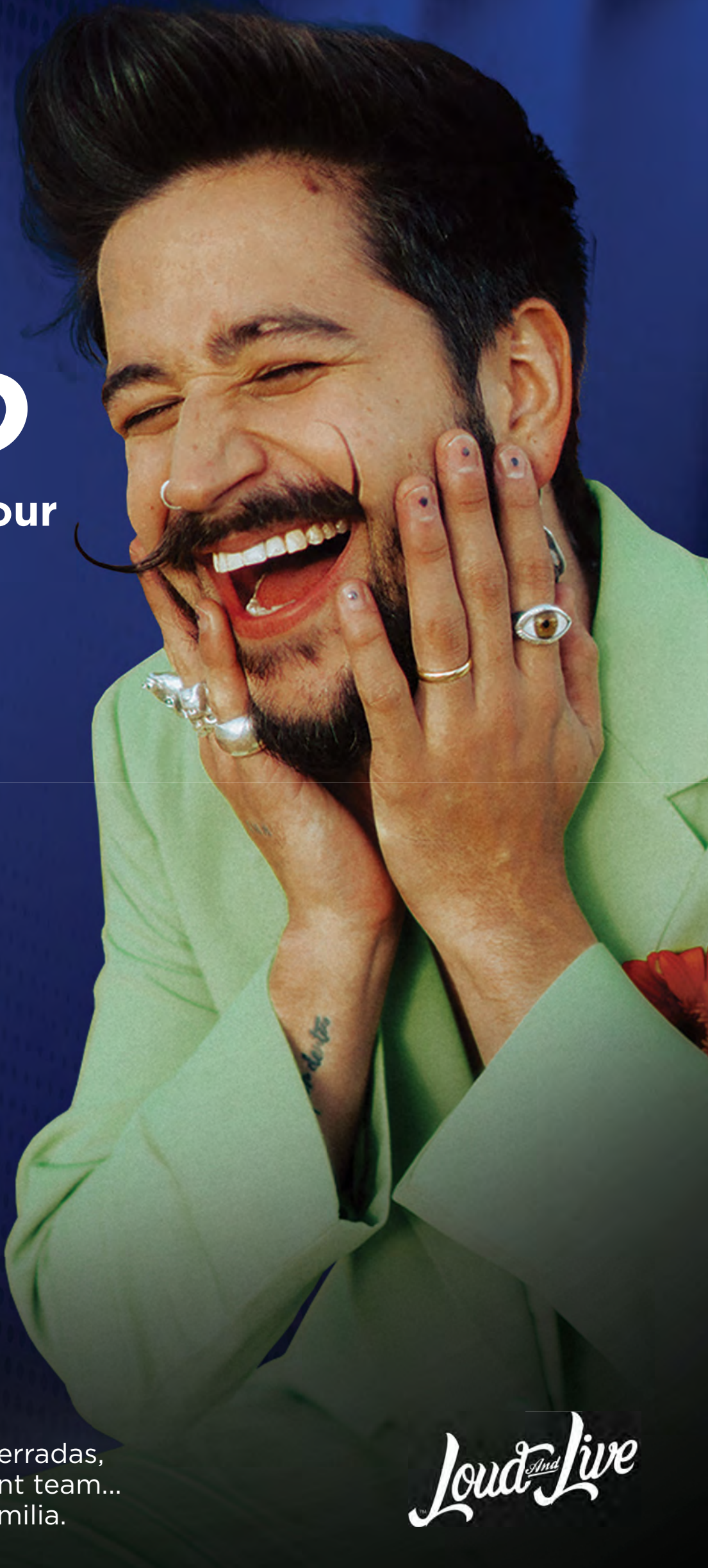
Congratulations on your
10 Latin GRAMMY®
nominations!

mis manos Tour

OCT 20 Miami, FL
OCT 21 Miami, FL
OCT 22 Miami, FL
OCT 24 Atlanta, GA
OCT 29 Chicago, IL
OCT 31 Orlando, FL
NOV 06 Washington DC
NOV 07 New York, NY
NOV 10 Houston, TX
NOV 12 El Paso, TX
NOV 13 Dallas, TX
NOV 14 McAllen, TX
NOV 19 San Diego, CA
NOV 20 Los Angeles, CA
NOV 21 San Jose, CA

Thank you Camilo, Jorge "Pepo" Ferradas,
La Tribu and the FPM Entertainment team...
Welcome to the Loud And Live Familia.

Loud And Live



Carlos Vives

Congratulations on your
2 Latin GRAMMY® nominations!

DESPUÉS DE TODO **VIVES**

DEC 3/ MIAMI, FL

DEC 5/ ORLANDO, FL

JAN 13/ SEATTLE, WA

JAN 15/ DENVER, CO

JAN 16/ SAN JOSE, CA

JAN 21/ DALLAS, TX

JAN 22/ HOUSTON, TX

JAN 23/ HIDALGO, TX

JAN 27/ CHICAGO, IL

JAN 29/ MONTREAL, CAN

JAN 30/ TORONTO, CAN

FEB 4/ WASHINGTON, DC

FEB 5/ BOSTON, MA

FEB 6/ NEWARK, NJ

MAR 26/ SAN JUAN, PR

Carlos, Claudia Elena, Walter Kolm, and #TeamVives...
Welcome to the Loud And Live Familia.

Loud ^{And} Live

Ricardo Arjona

Welcome to the Loud And Live Familia.



ARJONA BLANCO Y NEGRO TOUR 2022

MAR 24 ALBUQUERQUE NM

MAR 26 PHOENIX AZ

MAR 27 TUCSON AZ

MAR 31 MIDLAND TX

ABR 1 EL PASO TX

ABR 3 LAREDO TX

ABR 8 DALLAS TX

ABR 9 HOUSTON TX

ABR 10 MCALLEN TX

ABR 14 SALT LAKE CITY UT

ABR 20 SEATTLE WA

ABR 22 SAN JOSE CA

ABR 24 SACRAMENTO CA

ABR 29 FRESNO CA

MAY 1 LOS ANGELES CA

MAY 6 ORLANDO FL

MAY 7 ATLANTA GA

MAY 8 CHARLOTTE NC

MAY 12 WASHINGTON DC

MAY 14 BOSTON MA

MAY 22 NEW YORK NY

MAY 26 CHICAGO IL

MAY 29 TORONTO CAN

JUN 3 MIAMI FL

JUN 11 SAN JUAN PR

Thank you Ricardo and the entire Metamorfosis team.

Loud And Live

Farruko

Congratulations on your
Latin GRAMMY® nomination!

FARRUKO LA167 TOUR

2021

11-20-21 ONTARIO, CA
11-24-21 DALLAS, TX
11-26-21 HOUSTON, TX
12-03-21 ATLANTA, GA
12-04-21 ORLANDO, FL

2022

02-03-22 SAN JUAN, PR
02-04-22 SAN JUAN, PR
02-05-22 SAN JUAN, PR
02-11-22 MIAMI, FL
02-12-22 FT. MYERS, FL
02-18-22 NEWARK, NJ
02-20-22 CHICAGO, IL

Farruko, Franklin Martinez, Richard Lom and the entire Carbon Fiber team, thank you for being a part of the Loud And Live Familia.

Loud *And* Live

Juan Luis Guerra

Congratulations on your
6 Latin GRAMMY® nominations!

TOUR 2022

DALLAS, TX
HOUSTON, TX
CHICAGO, IL
ORLANDO, FL
NEWARK, NJ
WASHINGTON DC
SAN JUAN, PR
MIAMI, FL

Thank you Juan Luis, Amarilys German and the
entire 4.40 team for being a part of the
Loud And Live Familia.

Loud And Live





Rubén Blades

2021 Latin Recording Academy Person of the Year

Congratulations on your
2 Latin GRAMMY® nominations!

SALSWING TOUR!

Nov 20 Oakland, CA **Nov 21** Los Angeles, CA **Nov 24** Atlanta, GA **Nov 26** Miami, FL

Nov 28 Boston, MA **Dec 02** New York, NY **Dec 03** Washington DC **Dec 05** Chicago, IL

Thank you Rubén and Daniel Aisemberg.

Loud & Live



Gilberto Santa Rosa

**Congratulations for the Lifetime
Achievement Award, and your
Latin GRAMMY® nomination!**

We are proud to be a part of
your career for over
15 years and counting.

Caminalo

8 DE OCTUBRE, 2021	EL PASO	17 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	DENVER
9 DE OCTUBRE, 2021	DALLAS	18 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	SAN DIEGO
21 DE OCTUBRE, 2021	CHICAGO	26 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	WASHINGTON D.C.
22 DE OCTUBRE, 2021	RALEIGH	27 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	ATLANTIC CITY
23 DE OCTUBRE, 2021	CHARLOTTE	28 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	TAMPA
24 DE OCTUBRE, 2021	ATLANTA	11 DE FEBRERO, 2022	HOUSTON
11 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	LOS ANGELES	12 DE FEBRERO, 2022	MIAMI
12 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2021	SAN JOSE	13 DE FEBRERO, 2022	ORLANDO

Gilberto, Rafo Muñiz, Gilberto Joel, Edumil
and the entire ProLat family, ¡Gracias!

Loud & Live

In its inaugural year

Loud *And* Live | **STUDIOS**

Is proud to have been nominated for a Latin GRAMMY®

Best Long Form Music Video

JUAN LUIS GUERRA 4.40
Entre Mar y Palmeras

Additionally, we're thrilled to have worked with some of the worlds leading brands, producing over 200 hours of original content.

HBOMAX



 **pepsi**

 **YouTube**



Walmart 



SONY MUSIC | **LATIN**

CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR FAMILIA



NELSON ALBAREDA

CEO | Loud And Live

Billboard Latin Power Player 2021



EDGAR MARTINEZ

SVP, Entertainment | Loud And Live

Billboard Latin Power Player 2021



CLAUDIA ARCAY

SVP, Entertainment | Loud And Live

Billboard Top Business Manager 2021

Loud And Live

ALEX SENSATION **ARTHUR HANLON** BEATRIZ
LUENGO **CACHAO MAMBO ALL STARS**
CAIFANES **CAMILA CAMILO CARLOS RIVERA**
CARLOS VIVES **CAZZU CELIA CRUZ ALL STARS**
DALEX DANIEL HABIF DIEGO EL CIGALA EDDIE
SANTIAGO **EL CHACAL EL MICHA EL GRAN**
COMBO EVALUNA MONTANER FRANCO DE VITA
FARRUKO **FITO PÁEZ** GILBERTO SANTA ROSA
GONZO 247 GOYO GUAYNAA J BALVIN JERRY
RIVERA JUANES J QUILES JON SECADA JORGE
DREXLER JOSÉ FELICIANO JUAN LUIS GUERRA
KELLY PEREZ **LA INDIA LALI LAURA PAUSINI**
LENIER **MAU Y RICKY** MARIAH ANGELIQ
MELENDI MANUEL TURIZO NATALIA JIMÉNEZ
NICKY JAM **ORISHAS** ORQUESTA GUAYACÁN
OSMANI GARCIA PEDRO CAPÓ PRINCE ROYCE
RAUW ALEJANDRO **REIK RICARDO ARJONA**
RICARDO MONTANER RIGO LEON ROBERTO
CARLOS RUBÉN BLADES SRTA. DAYANA
SILVESTRE DANGOND **SODA STEREO VICENTE**
GARCÍA **VICTOR MANUELLE WILLY CHIRINO**



Congratulates our partners



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Head of Music Label Partnerships, Latin America / Facebook

Afo Verde

Chairman & CEO / Sony Music Latin

Albert Rodriguez

President / Spanish Broadcasting System

Alejandro Duque

President / Warner Music Latin America & Iberia

Alex Gallardo

President, Sony Music U.S. Latin / Sony Music Latin

Andy Martinez

CEO / Jak Entertainment, La Leyenda Entertainment

Bruno Del Granado

Agent / Creative Artists Agency

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Founder & Chairman / Westwood Entertainment

Enrique Santos

President, CCO & On Air Talent of iHeart Latino / iHeartMedia

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COO / Magnus Media

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SVP, Marketing Warner Music LA, GM for Warner Music Latina / Warner Music Latin America & Warner Music Latina

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SVP, Music, Nonfiction & Development / Univision

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President of Radio / Univision

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EVP of Programming / Spanish Broadcasting System

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Jorge Juarez

CEO / Westwood Entertainment

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Music Agent / WME

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SVP, Marketing & Artist Strategy / Universal Music Latin America

Tomas Cookman

CEO / Industria Works / Nacional Records

Walter Kolm

CEO / WK Entertainment / WK Records

Ricardo Montaner

Congratulations on your
4 Latin GRAMMY® nominations!

MONTANER ^{Tour} 2022

ENE 21 MIAMI, FL

ENE 27 WASHINGTON D.C.

FEB 05 READING, PA

FEB 13 DALLAS, TX

ENE 22 ORLANDO, FL

ENE 28 NEW YORK, NY

FEB 10 HIDALGO, TX

FEB 17 SAN JOSE, CA

FEB 19 COACHELLA, CA

ENE 23 ATLANTA, GA

FEB 04 GREENSBORO, NC

FEB 11 HOUSTON, TX

FEB 18 LOS ANGELES, CA

Thank you Ricardo, Jose Sanchez,
and the entire Montaner team for being a part of
the Loud And Live Familia.

Loud And Live



Daniel Habif

R U G E

MAR 9 PHOENIX

MAR 10 ALBUQUERQUE

MAR 12 DENVER

MAR 13 TUCSON

MAR 16 MIDLAND

MAR 17 DALLAS

MAR 18 HOUSTON

MAR 19 MCALLEN

MAR 20 EL PASO

MAR 23 WASHINGTON

MAR 24 RALEIGH

MAR 25 NEW YORK

MAR 36 MIAMI

MAR 37 ORLANDO

MAR 30 READING

MAR 31 CHARLOTTE

APR 1 CHICAGO

APR 3 ATLANTA

APR 11 FRESNO

APR 12 OAKLAND

MAY 13 SEATTLE

MAY 14 BAKERSFIELD

MAY 19 SAN DIEGO

MAY 21 LOS ANGELES

MAY 22 SOUTH LAKE CITY

Daniel, Cesar Pulido, Abraham Pulido,
Fernando De Vita and the entire Alegria team,
gracias por ser parte de la Familia Loud And Live.

Loud ^{And} Live

Roberto Carlos

USA & CANADA TOUR 2022

ABRIL 22	MIAMI, FL
ABRIL 23	ORLANDO, FL
ABRIL 28	ATLANTA, GA
ABRIL 30	WASHINGTON D.C
MAYO 01	BOSTON, MA
MAYO 04	CHICAGO, IL
MAYO 06	TORONTO, CAN
MAYO 08	NEW YORK, NY
MAYO 12	McALLEN, TX
MAYO 14	DALLAS, TX
MAYO 15	HOUSTON, TX
MAYO 18	EL PASO, TX
MAYO 21	LOS ANGELES, CA



Thank you Roberto Carlos, Dody Sirena,
and Phil Rodriguez for your trust.

Loud & Live

MOVE
CONCERTS

Silvestre Dangond

**Congratulations on your
Latin GRAMMY® nomination!**

TOUR 2022

LOS ANGELES, CA
SAN JOSE, CA
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
DENVER, CO
SALT LAKE CITY, UT
CHICAGO, IL
NEW YORK, NY
WASHINGTON, DC
HOUSTON, TX
DALLAS, TX
ATLANTA, GA
ORLANDO, FL
MIAMI, FL
TAMPA, FL
FORT MEYERS, FL
BOSTON, MA
SEATTLE, WA
PORTLAND, OR
TORONTO, CAN
MONTREAL, CAN

Thank you Silvestre, Carlos Bloom and the entire Music Dreams team for being a part of the Loud And Live Familia. ¿Hay Cariño o no Hay Cariño?

Photo Credit: Frankie Jazz

Loud ^{And} Live



Carlos Rivera

Welcome to the
Loud And Live Familia.

TOUR 2022

EL PASO, TX	MIDLAND, TX
McALLEN, TX	SACRAMENTO, CA
SAN DIEGO, CA	SEATTLE, WA
LOS ANGELES, CA	ATLANTA, GA
CHICAGO, IL	BOSTON, MA
MIAMI, FL	FRESNO, CA
NEW YORK, NY	ORLANDO, FL
SAN JOSE, CA	WASHINGTON DC
HOUSTON, TX	CHARLOTTE, NC
DALLAS, TX	DENVER, CO
SAN ANTONIO, TX	LAS VEGAS, NV
BAKERSFIELD, TX	

Thank you Carlos, Jorge Juarez and
the entire Westwood Entertainment team.

Loud ^{And} Live



Reik

Congratulations on your
Latin GRAMMY® nomination!

TOUR 2022

MIAMI, FL
ORLANDO, FL
ATLANTA, GA
DALLAS, TX
HOUSTON, TX

SAN ANTONIO, TX
MIDLAND, TX
EL PASO, TX
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
PHOENIX, AZ
SAN DIEGO, CA

LOS ANGELES, CA
FRESNO, CA
SAN JOSE, CA
SACRAMENTO, CA
LAS VEGAS, NV
SALT LAKE CITY, UT

DENVER, CO
CHICAGO, IL
NEW YORK, NY
ALLENTOWN, PA
CHARLOTTE, NC



Thank you Reik, Jorge Juarez and the entire
Westwood Entertainment team...
Welcome to the Loud And Live Familia.

Loud And Live

Prince Royce

Welcome to the
Loud And Live Familia.


PRINCE
ROYCE

U.S. TOUR 2022
In a city near you

ON SALE SOON

Thank you Prince Royce, Walter Kolm, and Gaby Herrera...
Welcome to the Loud And Live Familia.

Loud ^{And} Live



We offer students from our most vulnerable communities a powerful combination of music education and mentorship with professional musicians to help them overcome hardship, find their voice and reach their potential as tomorrow's leaders.



MUSIC

Photos by Good Miami Project

CHANGES

LIVES



VISIT US AT [GUITARSOVERGUNS.ORG](https://www.guitarsoverguns.org)



AND FOLLOW US @GUITARSOVERGUNS

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 Latin Power Player honorees — Alejandro Duque, Gabriela Martinez, Gustavo Menendez, Héctor Rivera, Juan Paz, Ruben Abraham, and Xena Rosique — selected Guitars Over Guns for their work providing youth in Miami and Chicago with mentorship, music education, and safe spaces that encourage self-expression, empowerment, and social-emotional growth.



billboard Hot 100®

Coldplay and BTS



Coldplay And BTS' 'My Universe' Blasts Off At No. 1

COLDPLAY AND BTS ROCKET ONTO THE BILLBOARD HOT 100 at No. 1 with "My Universe." Released Sept. 24, the song — from Coldplay's *Music of the Spheres* album due Oct. 15 — starts with 11.5 million U.S. streams, 5.5 million radio airplay audience impressions and 127,000 sold in the week ending Sept. 30, according to MRC Data.

Notably, the track is the first chart-topper in the Hot 100's history by two groups each with lead billing.

Coldplay claims its second Hot 100 leader after "Viva la Vida" ruled for a week in June 2008. BTS achieves its sixth No. 1 in the last 13 months, marking the quickest accumulation of that many chart-topping singles since The Beatles scored six in a span of a year and two weeks beginning in late 1964.

In another tie-in to The Beatles, "My Universe" co-writer/co-producer Max Martin earns his 25th Hot 100 No. 1 as a songwriter and 23rd as a producer. Only Paul McCartney (32) and John Lennon (26) have written more No. 1s — encompassing their hits both as part of The Beatles and as soloists — while Martin matches George Martin's total (with 19 of his 23 chart-toppers recorded by the Fab Four) for the most among producers.

—GARY TRUST

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	CERTIFICATION	Artist IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
		1	#1 MY UNIVERSE MAX MARTIN, G. HOLTER, B. RAHMO (G. BERRYMAN, W. CHAMPION, C.A. J. MARTIN, MAX MARTIN, G. HOLTER, B. RAHMO, RM, SUBA, J. HOPE)		Coldplay x BTS PARLOPHONE/ ATLANTIC	1	1
1	1	2	STAY ▲ CASHMERE CAT, O. FEDI, B. SLATKIN, C. PUTH (C. K. J. HOWARD, J. D. BIEBER, M.A. HOIBERG, O. FEDI, B. SLATKIN, C. PUTH, M.J. MULE, I. DEBONI, S. RAHMAN)		The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber RAYMOND BRAUN/ COLUMBIA/DEF JAM	1	12
6	2	3	INDUSTRY BABY ▲ K.WEST, TAKE A DAY TRIP, N.LEE (M.L. HILL, D.M.A. BAPTISTE, D. BIRAL, N.LEE, J.HARLOW, K.O.WEST, M.WILLIAMS, R.CUBINA, R.LENZO)		Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow COLUMBIA	2	10
2	3	4	WAY 2 SEXY TM88, TOO DOPE (A. GRAHAM, N.D. WILBURN, J.L. WILLIAMS, B.L. SIMMONS, L.C. RAGLAND, R. FAIRBRASS, F. FAIRBRASS, R. MANZOLI)		Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug OVO SOUND/ REPUBLIC	1	4
5	5	5	AIR FANCY LIKE ▲ W.HAYES, J.T. HIBODEAU, S. MCANALLY (W.HAYES, J.JENKINS, S.STEVENS, C.BARTOLINI)		Walker Hayes MONUMENT/RCA	5	15
3	4	6	BAD HABITS FRED, J. MCDAID, E. SHEERAN (E.C. SHEERAN, F.GIBSON, J. MCDAID)		Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC	2	14
7	6	7	GOOD 4 U ▲ D.NIGRO, ALEXANDER 23 (D. RODRIGO, D.L. NIGRO, J. FARRO, H. WILLIAMS)		Olivia Rodrigo GEFFEN/ INTERSCOPE	1	20
8	7	8	KISS ME MORE YETI BEATS, R. CHAHAYED (A.Z. DLAMINI, D. SPRECHER, R. CHAHAYED, G.A. POWELL, I.I.C. LANG, L.S. GOTTWALD, S. ROWE, T. SHADDICK, S.A. KIPNER)		Doja Cat Feat. SZA KEMOSABE/ RCA	3	25
4	8	9	KNIFE TALK METRO BOOMIN (A. GRAHAM, S.B.A. JOSEPH, L.T. WAYNE, P. HOUSTON, J.M. HOUSTON, R.A. MAYERS, P.L. JOHNSON)		Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat OVO SOUND/ REPUBLIC	4	4
9	11	10	LEVITATING ▲ KOZ, S.D. PRICE (C. COFFEE, JR., S.KOZMENIUK, S.T. HUDSON, D. LIPA, J.L. KIRK)		Dua Lipa WARNER	2	52

THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY RADIO AIRPLAY, AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AND SPINSALES BY WEEKS ON CHART. LAST WEEK'S SALES, STREAMS AND AIRPLAY DATA ARE FROM THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 26. THIS WEEK'S DATA IS FROM THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 30. SONGS ARE RANKED AS CURRENT IF THEY ARE NEWLY RELEASED TITLES, OR SONGS RECEIVING WIDESPREAD AIRPLAY AND/OR SALES. ACTIVITY FOR THE FIRST TIME: SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD. RADIO, TV AND DIGITAL SALES DATA PROVIDED BY MRC DATA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.





27

RYAN HURD WITH
MAREN MORRIS
"Chasing After You"

The 34-year-old Kalamazoo, Mich., native's first Hot 100 entry also holds its No. 4 high on the Hot Country Songs chart.

How did "Chasing After You" come together?

RYAN HURD It's an older song that was on hold for other artists. In Nashville, everybody knew the song from it being played at writers' rounds. The fact that it fell to me and [spouse] Maren, we still can't believe it. I'm proud of [songwriters] Brinley Addington and Jerry Flowers — I'd never heard anything in Nashville like it before. It has that guitar part that follows the vocal melody, and it makes the entire song.

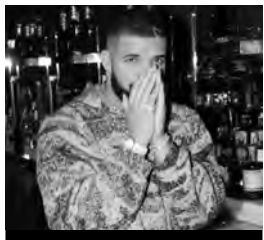
How has writing songs for others shaped your own solo career?

I put my first music out as an artist in 2017. I had to learn so much between then and now. Going from being a staff writer in Nashville and having a couple of hits under my belt, you think that'll translate into either people giving a shit about your career or into actually being a good artist. The fact is, songwriting and being a recording artist have very little to do with each other.

Tell me the story behind your debut album title, *Pelago* [out Oct. 15].

I wrote "Coast" with Aaron Eshuis, and it was a hard song to get right. We needed a placeholder word that rhymed with Chicago. We said "pelago," not knowing anything. Then we realized this is the exact word we needed. It means open sea and overwhelming passion [in Latin], and those two themes run through the entire album. It just clicked.

—JESSICA NICHOLSON



1
DRAKE FEAT. FUTURE AND YOUNG THUG
"Way 2 Sexy"

The song becomes Drake's record-extending and milestone 40th No. 1 on the Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay chart. He now has twice as many leaders as runner-up Lil Wayne.

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	CERTIFICATION	PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
17	14	11	ESSENCE	●		Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems	STARBOY/RCA	11	13
	12	12	SAVE YOUR TEARS	▲		The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	XO/REPUBLIC	1	42
	13	9	MONTERO (CALL ME BY YOUR NAME)	▲		Lil Nas X	COLUMBIA	1	27
	16	17	SHIVERS			Ed Sheeran	ATLANTIC	14	3
	15	16	HEAT WAVES	▲		Glass Animals	WOLF TONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC	15	37
	21	18	NEED TO KNOW			Doja Cat	KEMOSABE/RCA	14	16
	10	13	GIRLS WANT GIRLS			Drake Feat. Lil Baby	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	2	4
	18	19	YOU RIGHT			Doja Cat & The Weeknd	KEMOSABE/RCA	11	14
	30	20	BEGGIN'	●		Maneskin	SONY MUSIC LATIN/ARISTA	19	14
	50	35	WOCKESHA			Moneybagg Yo	CMG/1ES/INTERSCOPE	20	23

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	CERTIFICATION	PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
24	22	21	IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU			Jason Aldean & Carrie Underwood	MACON/CAPITOL NASHVILLE/BROKEN BOW	15	10
23	21	22	TAKE MY BREATH			The Weeknd	XO/REPUBLIC	6	8
11	15	23	FAIR TRADE			Drake Feat. Travis Scott	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	3	4
-	10	24	THATS WHAT I WANT			Lil Nas X	COLUMBIA	10	2
37	25	25	TRAITOR			Olivia Rodrigo	GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE	9	19
43	29	26	COLD BEER CALLING MY NAME			Jameson Rodgers Feat. Luke Combs	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	26	13
39	32	27	CHASING AFTER YOU	●		Ryan Hurd With Maren Morris	ARISTA NASHVILLE	27	22
NEW	28	28	BAD MORNING			YoungBoy Never Broke Again	NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ATLANTIC	28	1
34	27	29	PEPAS			Farruko	CARBON/BBG/SONY MUSIC LATIN/THE ORCHARD	26	10
20	23	30	DEJA VU	▲		Olivia Rodrigo	GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE	3	26
36	28	31	HAPPIER THAN EVER			Billie Eilish	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE	11	9
NEW	32	32	YOUR HEART			Joyner Lucas & J. Cole	TWENTY NINE	32	1
31	33	33	LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN	▲		Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	AFTERMATH/ATLANTIC	1	30
26	31	34	HURRICANE			Kanye West	G.O.O.D./DEF JAM	6	5
46	39	35	A-O-K			Tai Verdes	ARISTA	35	13
14	24	36	BUTTER			BTS	HYBE/BIGHIT MUSIC/COLUMBIA	1	19
-	71	37	STM			YoungBoy Never Broke Again	NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ATLANTIC	37	2
NEW	38	38	TOO EASY			Gunna & Future	GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300	38	1
32	26	39	LEAVE BEFORE YOU LOVE ME			Marshmello X Jonas Brothers	JOYTIME COLLECTIVE/REPUBLIC	19	19
NEW	40	40	NO WHERE			YoungBoy Never Broke Again	NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ATLANTIC	40	1
40	36	41	PEACHES	▲		Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	BRAUN/DEF JAM	1	28
25	38	42	FAMILY TIES			Baby Keem & Kendrick Lamar	BABY KEEM/RAYMOND P&G/LANG/COLUMBIA	18	5
62	54	43	MEMORY I DON'T MESS WITH			Lee Brice	CURB	43	10
	49	45	LATE AT NIGHT			Roddy Ricch	ATLANTIC	20	17
38	34	45	THINGS A MAN OUGHTA KNOW	●		Lainey Wilson	BROKEN BOW	32	20
98	74	46	SAL			Elton John & Dua Lipa	MEICURY/EMI/INTERSCOPE	46	4
64	44	47	MEET ME AT OUR SPOT			THE ANXIETY:WILLOW & Tyler Cole	MSFTSMUSIC/ROC NATION	44	3
63	79	48	LIFE SUPPORT			YoungBoy Never Broke Again	NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ATLANTIC	48	3
56	53	49	I WAS ON A BOAT THAT DAY			Old Dominion	ARISTA NASHVILLE	49	13
-	80	50	LOVE NWANTITI (AH AH AH)			CKay	CHOCOLATE CITY/ATLANTIC	50	2

HURD: NICK FLETCHER. DRAKE: COURTESY OF REPUBLIC RECORDS.

THE WEEKS AGO, LAST WEEK, THIS WEEK, PEAK POS., WKS. ON CHART, AND ARTIST INFORMATION ARE CURRENT. *THE ABOVE WERE RELEASED THIS WEEK OR EARLIER IN THE YEAR. **SEE CHARTS FOR COMPLETE DETAILS AND EXTRA INFO. ©2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND THE ARTISTS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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1925-2021



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LIVE NATION

LOS BUKKIS



¡FELICIDADES POR 9 ESTADIOS SOLD OUT!
UNA HISTORIA CANTADA INOLVIDABLE

LIVE NATION



ALEJANDRO SANZ

#LABURA 2021

- Oct 08** Rosemont, IL Rosemont Theatre
- Oct 10** New York, NY Radio City Music Hall
- Oct 11** Washington, DC The Theater at MGM National Harbor
- Oct 14** Orlando, FL Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts
- Oct 16** Miami, FL FTX Arena
- Oct 20** Irving, TX The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory
- Oct 22** Hidalgo, TX Payne Arena
- Oct 24** Houston, TX Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land
- Oct 26** El Paso, TX UTEP Don Haskins Center
- Oct 28** San Diego, CA Cal Coast Credit Union Open Air Theatre at SDSU
- Oct 29** Los Angeles, CA YouTube Theater
- Oct 31** San Jose, CA SAP Center at San Jose

LIVE NATION



40 AÑOS USA TOUR

- SEP 9** BAKERSFIELD, CA
MECHANICS ARENA **SOLD OUT**
- SEP 11** LOS ANGELES, CA
YOUTUBE THEATER **SOLD OUT**
- SEP 12** LAS VEGAS, CA
ZAPPOS THEATER AT PLANET HOLLYWOOD **SOLD OUT**
- SEP 24** LOS ANGELES, CA
YOUTUBE THEATER **SOLD OUT**
- NOV 11** WASHINGTON, DC
MGM NATIONAL HARBOR
- NOV 20** PHOENIX, AZ
ARIZONA FEDERAL THEATRE
- NOV 21** SAN DIEGO, CA
VIEJAS ARENA

LIVE NATION

PEPE AGUILAR
PRESENTA

JARIPEO

SIN FRONTERAS 2021

USA



PEPE AGUILAR

ANGELA AGUILAR | JINETEO DE TOROS
LEONARDO AGUILAR | TOMAS GARCILAZO
ANTONIO AGUILAR HIJO | MARIACHI ZACATECANO

SEP 03 ANAHEIM, CA **SOLD OUT**
SEP 04 PHOENIX, AZ **SOLD OUT**
SEP 05 ANAHEIM, CA **SOLD OUT**
SEP 10 SALT LAKE CITY, UT **SOLD OUT**
SEP 17 OAKLAND, CA
SEP 19 FRESNO, CA **SOLD OUT**

SEP 25 EL PASO, TX **SOLD OUT**
SEP 26 EL PASO, TX **SOLD OUT**
OCT 01 SAN ANTONIO, TX
OCT 03 EDINBURG, TX **SOLD OUT**
OCT 08 ATLANTA, GA
OCT 10 CHICAGO, IL

OCT 17 LOS ANGELES, CA
OCT 24 DALLAS, TX
NOV 06 LOS ANGELES, CA **SOLD OUT**
NOV 20 LAS VEGAS, NV
DEC 03 TACOMA, WA
DEC 05 SAN JOSE, CA

LIVE NATION

Kirk Covington's

CPT. Kirk and The Devil Horns

Self-Titled Debut album on R.M.I. Records



Yielding two hit singles
“Always The Same”

(Chaka Blackmon on Remix)

- >> 9 weeks on the HOTAC Mediabase Radio Airplay Charts
- >> Peaking at #24 on the HOTAC Mediabase Radio Airplay Charts
- >> 29 weeks in the Top 100 on the Mediabase Activator Airplay Charts
- >> Music Video Featuring DJ D-Wrek (MTV's Wild N Out)

“Soul”

- >> 18 weeks in the Top 100 on the Mediabase Activator Airplay Charts

NEW Single

“Meet Me In The Middle”

Featuring a duet with Cindy-Herron-Braggs (En Vogue)

“Covington is firing on all cylinders!”

- Music Press



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LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
95	101	TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS	12	Greatest Hits	2	429
82	102	YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN		Top	1	55
114	103	BRUNO MARS	7	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	3	539
106	104	TYLER, THE CREATOR		Call Me If You Get Lost	1	14
110	105	KANYE WEST	5	Graduation	1	191
103	106	KID CUDI		Man On The Moon: The End Of Day	4	194
116	107	THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.		Greatest Hits	1	294
136	108	DRAKE		Nothing Was The Same	1	394
109	109	MAC MILLER		Swimming	3	160
118	110	MICHAEL JACKSON	49	Thriller	1	490
111	111	THE BEATLES	11		1	492
112	112	LYNYRD SKYNYRD		All Time Greatest Hits	56	146
122	113	NICKELBACK		The Best Of Nickelback: Volume 1	21	61
120	114	RODDY RICCH		Please Excuse Me For Being Antisocial	1	95
NEW	115	SUFJAN STEVENS & ANGELO DE AUGUSTINE		A Beginner's Mind	115	1
129	116	KHALID	3	American Teen	4	239
105	117	IMAGINE DRAGONS		Mercury - Act 1	9	4
128	118	EMINEM		Music To Be Murdered By	1	88
108	119	BO BURNHAM		Inside (The Songs)	7	17
131	120	PITBULL		Greatest Hits	120	35
119	121	LIL TJAY		Destined 2 Win	5	26
113	122	POP SMOKE		Faith	1	11
121	123	GUNS N' ROSES	18	Appetite For Destruction	1	254
130	124	ARIANA GRANDE	2	Thank U, Next	1	138
127	125	MAROON 5		Jordi	8	16
132	126	TAYLOR SWIFT	7	Red	1	178
137	127	PLAYBOI CARTI		Whole Lotta Red	1	34
117	128	EST GEE		Bigger Than Life Or Death	7	11
126	129	LIL DURK		Just Cause Y'all Waited 2	2	73
174	130	HARRY STYLES		Harry Styles	1	99
123	131	MØ		Shottaz 4Eva	36	19
124	132	SOUNDTRACK		Moana	2	251
138	133	FRANK OCEAN		Blonde	1	247
134	134	THE BEATLES	12	Abbey Road	1	430
140	135	RIHANNA	3	ANTI	1	288
150	136	BILLIE EILISH		Dont Smile At Me	14	197
142	137	BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND	10	Greatest Hits	8	395
143	138	DRAKE		More Life	1	229
149	139	JHENE AIKO		Chilombo	2	82
139	140	BROOKS & DUNN	4	The Greatest Hits Collection	4	110
147	141	TRAVIS SCOTT		Birds In The Trap Sing McKnight	1	261
133	142	ABBA	8	Gold: Greatest Hits	25	189
158	143	THE ROLLING STONES	12	Hot Rocks 1964-1971	4	365
171	144	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	2	Greatest Hits	18	293
152	145	DABABY		BLAME IT ON BABY	1	76
154	146	PLAYBOI CARTI		Die Lit	3	96
155	147	POP SMOKE		Meet The Woo, V.2	7	86
96	148	EARTH, WIND & FIRE		Greatest Hits	40	26
146	149	KANYE WEST	3	My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy	1	153
156	150	AEROSMITH		Devil's Got A New Disguise: The Very Best Of Aerosmith	33	19



44

NIRVANA
Nevermind

Promotion for the 30th anniversary of its release (Sept. 24, 1991) yields the album's highest rank in a decade (since Oct. 15, 2011, when it was No. 13). It earned 13,000 equivalent album units in the week ending Sept. 30 (up 53%), according to MRC Data.



157

TAYLOR SWIFT
Fearless (Taylor's Version)

The album should rise on the Oct. 16 chart after its vinyl release on Oct. 1. *Evermore* shot back to No. 1 after its vinyl release on May 28, setting an MRC Data-era record for the biggest sales week for an album in that format (102,000).



183

SOUNDTRACK
Dear Evan Hansen

The film adaptation (7,000 units) of the Broadway musical follows the latter's hit original cast recording, which reached No. 8 in 2017. *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Hamilton* and *The Book of Mormon* are the only cast albums to reach the top 10 since 2010.

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
165	151	J. COLE	2	Born Sinner	1	113
148	152	YUNG BLEU		Moon Boy	12	10
141	153	THE ANXIETY: WILLOW & TYLER COLE		The Anxiety	141	3
170	154	LEE BRICE		Hey World	45	45
173	155	TAYLOR SWIFT	3	reputation	1	159
144	156	YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN		AI YoungBoy 2	1	100
153	157	TAYLOR SWIFT		Fearless (Taylor's Version)	1	24
NEW	158	CKAY		CKay The First	158	1
159	159	JORDAN DAVIS		Buy Dirt (EP)	86	8
167	160	KHALID		Free Spirit	1	130
172	161	21 SAVAGE & METRO BOOMIN		Savage Mode II	1	48
RE	162	BTS		MAP OF THE SOUL : 7	1	83
162	163	IMAGINE DRAGONS	3	Evolve	2	223
186	164	TYLER CHILDERS		Purgatory	106	68
169	165	FUTURE		High Off Life	1	72
180	166	LIL BABY		Street Gossip	2	57
161	167	WHITNEY HOUSTON		I Will Always Love You: The Best Of Whitney Houston	14	70
163	168	GABBY BARRETT		Goldmine	27	67
160	169	YOUNG THUG & VARIOUS ARTISTS		Young Stoner Life: Slime Language 2	1	24
166	170	FUTURE	2	DS2	1	167
195	171	BRYSON TILLER	3	TRAPSOUL	8	246
178	172	GEORGE STRAIT	8	Strait Out Of The Box	43	61
181	173	CARDI B	3	Invasion Of Privacy	1	182
RE	174	ADELE	11		25	185
164	175	SUICIDEBOYS		Long Term Effects Of Suffering	7	7
190	176	NF		The Search	1	109
185	177	ARCTIC MONKEYS		AM	6	167
187	178	HALSEY		Manic	2	89
184	179	GUNNA		Wunna	1	70
188	180	BILLY JOEL	3	The Essential Billy Joel	15	255
183	181	XXXTENTACION			17	201
157	182	BON JOVI		Greatest Hits: The Ultimate Collection	5	227
NEW	183	SOUNDTRACK		Dear Evan Hansen	183	1
NEW	184	TREMONTI		Marching In Time	184	1
145	185	GRETA VAN FLEET		The Battle At Garden, Åds Gate	7	8
192	186	FUTURE & LIL UZI VERT		Pluto x Baby Pluto	2	45
168	187	NELLY		Heartland	45	5
193	188	KANYE WEST	2	The Life Of Pablo	1	168
179	189	THE BEACH BOYS	3	Sounds Of Summer: The Very Best Of The Beach Boys	16	272
RE	190	KAROL G		KG0516	20	26
175	191	LUKE BRYAN		Born Here Live Here Die Here	5	49
177	192	EAGLES	20	Hotel California	1	148
189	193	POLO G		Die A Legend	6	119
196	194	ROD WAVE		Ghetto Gospel	10	86
RE	195	ESLABON ARMADO		Corta Venas	56	3
NEW	196	WESTSIDE GUNN		Hitler Wears Hermes 8: Side B	196	1
191	197	TIM MCGRAW		Number One Hits	27	199
RE	198	ADELE	14		21	509
RE	199	BAD BUNNY		X 100PRE	11	141
194	200	HOZIER	3	Hozier	2	219

Some of the leading composers represented by Wise Music Group

Hans Abrahamsen
Richard Addinsell
Rod Argent
Ólafur Arnalds
Malcolm Arnold
Frans Bak
Samuel Barber
Brandon Beal
Volker Bertelmann
Howard Blake
Benjamin Britten
Geoffrey Burgon
Britta Byström
Jimmy Campbell
Benet Casablanca
Dave Clark
Eddie Cochran
Cy Coleman
Reg Connolly
Silvia Dee
Richard Dehr
Dion DiMucci
Tan Dun
Julius Eastman
Ludovico Einaudi
Duke Ellington
Manuel de Falla
William Fitzsimmons
Cheryl Frances-Hoad
Debbie Gibson
Terry Gilkyson
Philip Glass
Howard Goodall
Henryk Gorecki
Jose Luis Greco
Edward Gregson
Peter Gregson
Jacob Groth
Jorge Grundman
Albert Guinovart
Jesus Guridi
Reynaldo Hahn
John Harle
Bobby Hebb
Friedrich Holländer
John Holt
Jimmy Kennedy
Arthur Kent
Aram Khachaturian
Greg Lake
Bernard Lavilliers
Marcella Levy
Joe Meek
Olivier Messiaen
Jackie Mittoo
Thelonious Monk
Nico Muhly
Per Nørgård
Claude Nougaro
Michael Nyman
Dustin O'Halloran
Sy Oliver
Riz Ortolani
Ramón Paus
Jocelyn Pook
Francis Poulenc
Florence Price
Sergei Prokofiev
Hania Rani
Max Richter
Minnie Riperton
Antoni Ros-Marbá
Poul Ruders
Kaija Saariaho
Henri Salvador
Anoushka Shankar
Bill Sharpe
Dmitri Shostakovich
Jean Sibelius
Carl Sigman
Bent Sørensen
Igor Stravinsky
Billy Strayhorn
David Sylvian
Joby Talbot
Outi Tarkiainen
John Tavener
Anna Thorvaldsdóttir
Eduardo Toldra
Merle Travis
Joaquín Turina
Rufus Wainwright
Judith Weir
Ralph Vaughan Williams
Malcolm Williamson
Hugh Wood
Gabriel Yared



Wise Music Group's iconic logo was created in the early 1970s for The Music Sales company. Today it still symbolizes the values of a dynamic international family-owned music publisher that moves with the times.

Wise Music Group: independent music publishing for the 21st century

Wise Music Group has its roots in 1930s New York, growing from being general purpose music retailers into a global group under the leadership of Robert Wise. His sons Tomas Wise (CEO, Wise Music USA) and Marcus Wise (Group Head of Media) are today fully involved in the business.

Throughout its long history the company has remained a family business at heart, flexible and ideally suited to responding to industry challenges both big and small.

Trading under the name of Music Sales from the early 1970s Wise Music Group at first operated in both print publishing and copyright acquisition with headquarters in London.

Today the group concentrates on its core strength: catalogue ownership and control. This acquisitions-driven program has rapidly flourished, and the group has acquired more classical and popular song catalogues, adding many exciting new names.

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Wise Music Group offers genuine international reach with active offices located in USA, UK, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain, Australia and Japan.

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Some of the great songs owned by Wise Music Group

All I Have To Do Is Dream
Angel Eyes
Autumn In New York
Big Spender
Bring Me Sunshine
Buffalo Soldier
D.I.S.C.O.
Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend
Earth Angel
Easier Said Than Done
Eat You Up
Everybody Needs Somebody To Love
Fantasy
Forever and Ever
Glad All Over
God Gave Rock and Roll To You
Hang On Sloopy
Have Love Will Travel
I'm A King Bee
Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow
Polka Dot Bikini
Kingston Town
Les Fleurs
Let's Groove
Lovin' You
Melody Of Love
Milonga
Misirlou
My Sharona
Only You
Papa Loves Mambo
Pass The Dutchie
Que Sera Sera
Rejoice
Run Rabbit Run
She's Not There
Something Stupid
Sous le Ciel de Paris
Strange Fruit
Sunny
Superstar
Syracuse
Take The 'A' Train
Telstar
The End Of The World
The Happy Wanderer
The Tide Is High
This Will Be Our Year
Time Of The Season
Try A Little Tenderness
Twist and Shout
Unchain My Heart
Walking In The Air
We'll Meet Again
When You're Smiling

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J Curwen & Sons Ltd
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Members of the Academy,
the power to recognize
music's creators lies
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BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200

billboard

OCT. 9 2021

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
		1	#1 MY UNIVERSE	Coldplay x BTS	1	1
		2	STAY	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	1	12
5	2	3	INDUSTRY BABY	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	2	10
30	8	4	LOVE N WANTITI (AH AH AH)	CKay	4	3
				In its third week on the Global 200, the Afrobeats track by the Nigerian artist is up 36% to 68.9 million streams and 76% to 4,500 sold worldwide. It's the chart's first top five hit by an act from Africa.		
		5	BAD HABITS	Ed Sheeran	1	14
7	7	6	SHIVERS	Ed Sheeran	6	3
9	6	7	HEAT WAVES	Glass Animals	6	39
		8	WAY 2 SEXY	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug	2	4
		9	PEPAS	Farruko	7	11
		10	HAPPIER THAN EVER	Billie Eilish	6	9
		11	THATS WHAT I WANT	Lil Nas X	4	2
24	20	12	COLD HEART (PNAU REMIX)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	12	7
14	11	13	WOMAN	Doja Cat	11	11
		14	BUTTER	BTS	1	19
		15	GOOD 4 U	Olivia Rodrigo	1	20
		16	MONTERO (CALL ME BY YOUR NAME)	Lil Nas X	1	27
		17	BEGGIN'	Maneskin	3	17
		18	LEVITATING	Dua Lipa	2	52
		19	KNIFE TALK	Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat	6	4
		20	SAVE YOUR TEARS	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	1	39
		21	NEED TO KNOW	Doja Cat	6	16
		22	KISS ME MORE	Doja Cat Feat. SZA	3	25
		23	FAIR TRADE	Drake Feat. Travis Scott	4	4
		24	GIRLS WANT GIRLS	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	3	4
44	160	25	GG MONEY	Lisa	25	3
2	22	26	LALISA	Lisa	2	3
25	26	27	FANCY LIKE	Walker Hayes	25	15
		28	PERMISSION TO DANCE	BTS	1	12
		27	LOVE TONIGHT	Shouse	20	14
		28	BLINDING LIGHTS	The Weeknd	2	56
57	35	31	LIFE GOES ON	Oliver Tree	31	4
		32	TAKE MY BREATH	The Weeknd	5	8
		33	TODO DE TI	Rauw Alejandro	3	19
		34	YONAGUNI	Bad Bunny	3	17
		35	PEACHES	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	1	28
		36	TRAITOR	Olivia Rodrigo	7	19
53	39	37	MEET ME AT OUR SPOT	THE ANXIETY: WILLOW & Tyler Cole	37	4
		38	VOLVI	Aventura x Bad Bunny	11	9
		39	HURRICANE	Kanye West	5	5
		40	DYNAMITE	BTS	1	56
39	41	41	IN DA GETTO	J Balvin & Skrillex	39	13
NEW		42	YOUR HEART	Joyner Lucas & J. Cole	42	1
		43	PERFECT	Ed Sheeran	30	56
NEW		44	LOCO	iTZY	44	1

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
NEW		45	TOO EASY	Gunna & Future	45	1
		46	ASTRONAUT IN THE OCEAN	Masked Wolf	3	36
		47	I WANNA BE YOUR SLAVE	Maneskin	13	19
		48	AM	Nio Garcia X J Balvin X Bad Bunny	10	25
		49	WILDEST DREAMS (TAYLOR'S VERSION)	Taylor Swift	25	2
		50	ESSENCE	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems	28	12
		51	QUE MAS PUES?	J Balvin & Maria Becerra	17	18
		52	GET INTO IT (YUH)	Doja Cat	41	9
		53	CHAMPAGNE POETRY	Drake	5	4
		54	DRIVERS LICENSE	Olivia Rodrigo	1	38
NEW		55	BAD MORNING	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	55	1
		56	SOBRIO	Maluma	52	12
		57	LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	2	30
32	49	58	FAMILY TIES	Baby Keem & Kendrick Lamar	25	5
		59	DON'T BE SHY	Tiesto & Karol G	59	7
		60	DANCE MONKEY	Tones And I	16	56
		61	MOOD	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	2	56
		62	2055	Sleepy Hollow	37	11
89	77	63	OUT OUT	Joel Corry, Jax Jones, Charli XCX & Saweetie	63	6
		64	SHAPE OF YOU	Ed Sheeran	58	56
		65	DEJA VU	Olivia Rodrigo	3	26
		66	WATERMELON SUGAR	Harry Styles	9	56
133	83	67	WHERE ARE YOU NOW	Lost Frequencies & Calum Scott	67	3
63	69	68	DON'T GO YET	Camila Cabello	28	10
45	61	69	HAVE MERCY	Chloe	45	3
		70	SOMEONE YOU LOVED	Lewis Capaldi	24	56
		71	BELIEVER	Imagine Dragons	52	56
		72	NO FRIENDS IN THE INDUSTRY	Drake	12	4
		73	LEAVE BEFORE YOU LOVE ME	Marshmello X Jonas Brothers	40	19
		74	DAKITI	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez	1	48
		75	ON MY SIDE	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	75	2
		76	YOU RIGHT	Doja Cat & The Weeknd	12	14
NEW		77	NO WHERE	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	77	1
104	80	78	CURAME	Rauw Alejandro	71	8
102	92	79	LEY SECA	Jhay Cortez & Anuel AA	79	4
		80	SUNFLOWER	Post Malone & Swae Lee	47	56
		81	DON'T START NOW	Dua Lipa	30	56
		82	SWEATER WEATHER	The Neighbourhood	62	53
		83	WITHOUT YOU	The Kid LAROI	10	45
		84	VOLANDO	Mora, Bad Bunny & Sech	27	12
		85	IN THE BIBLE	Drake Feat. Lil Durk & Giveon	9	4
		86	A-O-K	Tai Verdes	86	10
		87	RAATAAN LAMBIYAN	Tanishk Bagchi, Jubin Nautiyal & Asees Kaur	57	7
		88	LIKE I CAN	Sam Smith	70	6
82	70	89	WOCKESHA	Moneybagg Yo	58	18
RE-ENTRY		90	THE BUSINESS	Tiesto	12	47
		91	BABY SHARK	Pinkfong	38	55
		92	SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT	Nirvana	92	39
NEW		93	BORED	Billie Eilish	93	1
		94	FIEL	Los Legendarios, Wisin & Jhay Cortez	13	29
		95	LOVE AGAIN	Dua Lipa	63	17
NEW		96	SEJODIOTO	Karol G	96	1

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2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
91	97	97	FRIDAY	Riton X Nightcrawlers Feat. Mufasa & Hypeman	18	32
126	112	98	LOVELY	Billie Eilish & Khalid	70	56
35	62	99	TSU	Drake	11	4
114	109	100	CIRCLES	Post Malone	49	56
84	96	101	AIN'T SHIT	Doja Cat	24	14
99	110	102	BEAUTIFUL MISTAKES	Maroon 5 Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	24	30
NEW		103	HOLD ME DOWN	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	103	1
40	67	104	LOVE ALL	Drake Feat. JAY-Z	10	4
56	82	105	MOON	Kanye West	20	5
108	104	106	SHALLOW	Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper	59	56
RE-ENTRY		107	LIFE SUPPORT	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	107	2
109	111	108	IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU	Jason Aldean & Carrie Underwood	44	7
NEW		109	NEVADA	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	109	1
NEW		110	FOR TONIGHT	Giveon	110	1
124	154	111	NOSTALGICO	Rvssian, Rauw Alejandro & Chris Brown	111	3
129	115	112	BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY	Queen	101	52
123	127	113	ROSES	SAINt JHN	14	56
116	121	114	HEARTBREAK ANNIVERSARY	Giveon	10	33
117	117	115	RAPSTAR	Polo G	3	25
136	133	116	BAD GUY	Billie Eilish	54	56
101	108	117	I GUESS I'M IN LOVE	Clinton Kane	61	6
NEW		118	50 SHOTS	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	118	1
111	119	119	TIROTEO	Marc Segui & Pol Granch & Rauw Alejandro	63	13
125	120	120	DREAMS	Fleetwood Mac	10	53
121	131	121	CHOSEN	Blxst & Tyga Feat. Ty Dolla Sign	101	7
119	113	122	GOOSEBUMPS	Travis Scott & HVME	15	40
122	135	123	GANGSTA'S PARADISE	Coolio Feat. L.V.	122	15
NEW		124	SMOKE STRONG	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	124	1
106	124	125	911	Sech & Jhay Cortez	43	29
112	122	126	SUMMER OF LOVE	Shawn Mendes & Tainy	35	6
43	78	127	N 2 DEEP	Drake Feat. Future	14	4
58	95	128	OFF THE GRID	Kanye West	7	5
120	126	129	HAPPIER	Olivia Rodrigo	14	19
42	76	130	PAPI'S HOME	Drake	8	4
187	174	131	YELLOW	Coldplay	131	28
138	137	132	CLOSER	The Chainsmokers Feat. Halsey	100	52
110	116	133	SHARING LOCATIONS	Meek Mill Feat. Lil Baby & Lil Durk	43	5
118	123	134	CRY BABY	Official HIGE DANDISM	114	14
113	118	135	PAREJA DEL AÑO	Sebastian Yatra X Myke Towers	16	24
159	143	136	WHATS POPPIN	Jack Harlow Feat. DaBaby, Tory Lanez & Lil Wayne	17	56
75	128	137	UNA NOTA	J Balvin & Sech	75	3
131	132	138	ARCADE	Duncan Laurence	36	35
134	134	139	DARK RED	Steve Lacy	132	7
135	107	140	OLD TOWN ROAD	Lil Nas X Feat. Billy Ray Cyrus	70	56
115	130	141	MIENTEME	TINI X Maria Becerra	65	22
103	114	142	PARIS	Ingratax	63	10
162	152	143	NO ROLE MODELZ	J. Cole	128	20
-	36	144	SCOOP	Lil Nas X Feat. Doja Cat	36	2
107	129	145	ENTRE NOSOTROS	Tiago pzk & Lit Killah	55	11
140	139	146	BEFORE YOU GO	Lewis Capaldi	32	56
155	166	147	CHASING AFTER YOU	Ryan Hurd With Maren Morris	147	10
141	142	148	POSITIONS	Ariana Grande	1	49

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
NEW		149	SINCERELY	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	149	1
149	146	150	COUNTING STARS	OneRepublic	122	34
NEW		151	BREAK OR MAKE ME	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	151	1
144	148	152	SEÑORITA	Shawn Mendes & Camila Cabello	67	56
151	147	153	THINKING OUT LOUD	Ed Sheeran	103	47
54	99	154	PIPE DOWN	Drake	15	4
148	157	155	HAWAI	Maluma	3	56
NEW		156	I CAN'T TAKE IT BACK	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	156	1
188	171	157	SAY YOU WON'T LET GO	James Arthur	96	51
166	164	158	FOR THE NIGHT	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	7	56
173	167	159	WILD SIDE	Normani Feat. Cardi B	27	10
-	102	160	SEPTEMBER	Earth, Wind & Fire	102	3
137	145	161	WANTS AND NEEDS	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	2	30
105	138	162	RUMORS	Lizzo Feat. Cardi B	12	7
163	158	163	TAKE ME TO CHURCH	Hozier	129	38
165	165	164	GOOSEBUMPS	Travis Scott	102	53
164	163	165	DESPACITO	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee Feat. Justin Bieber	114	52
146	151	166	FAVORITE CRIME	Olivia Rodrigo	14	19
193	184	167	YOU BROKE ME FIRST.	Tate McRae	16	55
147	149	168	REMEMBER	Becky Hill & David Guetta	89	10
178	168	169	ALL OF ME	John Legend	97	54
168	172	170	34+35	Ariana Grande	2	48
143	155	171	JEALOUSY, JEALOUSY	Olivia Rodrigo	19	19
154	161	172	STREETS	Doja Cat	8	38
128	153	173	RUN	OneRepublic	67	21
167	173	174	HEAD & HEART	Joel Corry X MNEK	17	56
185	186	175	SOMETHING JUST LIKE THIS	The Chainsmokers & Coldplay	133	42
153	162	176	LA CURIOSIDAD	DJ Nelson Presenta Jay Wheeler & Myke Towers	40	50
174	156	177	YORU NI KAKERU	YOASOBI	16	56
-	177	178	MR. BRIGHTSIDE	The Killers	158	18
179	187	179	A LA ANTIGUITA	Calibre 50	179	3
158	159	180	SUIHEISEN	back number	123	7
-	199	181	LEMONADE	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	4	54
186	182	182	ANOTHER LOVE	Tom Odell	99	24
NEW		183	...AND TO THOSE I LOVE, THANKS FOR STICKING AROUND	SuicideBoys	183	1
NEW		184	RICH SHIT	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	184	1
175	178	185	MEMORIES	Maroon 5	71	56
150	190	186	BUY DIRT	Jordan Davis Feat. Luke Bryan	150	3
160	176	187	BRUTAL	Olivia Rodrigo	11	19
189	197	188	ROCKSTAR	DaBaby Feat. Roddy Ricch	8	56
170	169	189	DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'	Journey	125	50
184	194	190	SAVAGE LOVE (LAXED - SIREN BEAT)	Jawsh 685 X Jason Derulo	1	56
199	195	191	RIPTIDE	Vance Joy	160	18
NEW		192	JUGASTE Y SUFRI	Eslabon Armado Feat. DannyLux	192	1
195	193	193	THUNDERSTRUCK	AC/DC	167	27
191	192	194	SWEET CHILD O' MINE	Guns N' Roses	154	39
RE-ENTRY		195	STARBOY	The Weeknd Feat. Daft Punk	52	21
198	200	196	I DON'T CARE	Ed Sheeran & Justin Bieber	105	51
172	188	197	WELLERMAN	Nathan Evans	16	36
RE-ENTRY		198	EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE	The Police	197	2
RE-ENTRY		199	MOTLEY CREW	Post Malone	13	11
-	198	200	TALKING TO THE MOON	Bruno Mars	57	25



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ELTON JOHN & DUA LIPA
"Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)"

The song scored 31.4 million streams and 26,900 sold worldwide, according to MRC Data, and also reaches the Global Excl. U.S. top 10 (11-9). In the mashup, John sings part of his 1990 hit "Sacrifice" while Lipa reprises his 1972 classic "Rocket Man" as well as 1983 nugget "Kiss the Bride" (while the single's coda interpolates John's 1976 track "Where's the Shoora?"). The Australian trio PNAU joins the British stars on the collaboration and gets co-writing and co-production credits.



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ITZY
"Loco"

Formed in 2019, the South Korean group released its official studio debut, *Crazy in Love: The 1st Album*, on Sept. 24 and scored 30.2 million streams and sold 3,800 globally in its first week. The set concurrently starts at No. 1 on World Albums and No. 11 on the Billboard 200 with 26,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States. —GARY TRUST

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HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID

After steadily growing his fan base with streaming hits, **The Kid LAROI** has the biggest song on the planet with "Stay." Now, as he prepares his debut album amid big behind-the-scenes changes, he's finding out what being a superstar actually takes.

70

21 UNDER 21

The Kid LAROI leads this year's 21 Under 21 list featuring a mix of young chart-toppers, TikTok stars-turned-artists and on-the-verge breakout acts among many more making waves in the industry right now.

ON THE COVER

The Kid LAROI photographed by Alexandra Gavillet on Sept. 8 at Industria in Brooklyn.

Rick Owens shirt, Fendi jacket.

TO OUR READERS

Billboard will publish its next issue on Oct. 23. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.



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LATIN POWER PLAYERS 2021

Noah Assad, Bad Bunny's longtime manager, has helped the Puerto Rican superstar conquer the world without compromising — or losing his independent streak — which puts him atop *Billboard's* annual list of executives leading the charge within the genre.



Ana Bárbara photographed by
Mary Beth Koeth on Sept. 21
at Faena Forum in Miami.



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Goldplay and **BTS**' "My Universe" launches at No. 1, marking the first time that two co-billed lead groups have ruled the chart.

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Universal Music's spinoff will trigger a new flood of funding, as well as new conflict and competition. Plus: an informed but speculative guide to which companies might go public next.

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China's internet watchdog is cracking down on online celebrity fandom — and that's bad for K-pop.

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Celebrating two decades of disruption, founder/chairman **Willard Ahdriz** and CEO **Laurent Hubert** discuss the music publisher's influence on the majors, its relationship with Silicon Valley and why paying creators is still a revolutionary concept.

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A chart-topping single has helped **Anne Wilson** turn family tragedy into "something beautiful."

Baby Keem photographed by Michael Tyrone Delaney on Sept. 23 at Winston House in Los Angeles. The rapper is featured on this year's 21 Under 21 list.



TWO LEGENDS CROSS THE 'FINISH LINE'

Though fans of each other for over 50 years, Elton John and Stevie Wonder had never recorded a full duet together until "Finish Line" for John's Oct. 22 album, *The Lockdown Sessions*. The new collaboration features Wonder playing keyboards and harmonica and singing with the Rocket Man. The song of redemption struck a chord with the two friends, who sat with *Billboard* for an exclusive interview about their long history and latest project. For the full story and video interview, go to billboard.com.



5 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE KID LAROI

In *Billboard*'s latest installment of its video series *5 Things You Didn't Know*, cover star The Kid LAROI shares one of his secret talents, explains why his friends refer to him as "annoyingly charming," admits that hearing other people chewing is one of his biggest pet peeves and spills which major pop star he listens to that you might not expect — revealing an album of hers that he knows "All Too Well." To watch the video in its entirety, go to billboard.com/videos.

A portrait of Noah Assad, a man with a beard and short hair, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a black t-shirt. The background is dark with a red, textured, halftone-like pattern.

NOAH ASSAD

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The Market

PG. 50 WHO'S GOING PUBLIC NEXT? * PG. 52 DIGITAL AUTOGRAPHS * PG. 54 CHINA'S FAN CLUB CRACKDOWN



Raising The Stakes

Universal Music's spinoff will trigger a new flood of funding — as well as new conflict and competition

BY ROBERT LEVINE AND GLENN PEOPLES

NOT ALL THAT LONG ago, most serious thinking about the future of the music business involved predicting the collapse of major labels. In 2002, David Bowie said music would “become like running water” and copyright would vanish within a decade. And once music became free, who would need a company to help promote it? As recently as 2013, Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke called Spotify “the last desperate fart of a dying corpse,” meaning the labels, then distributed his album *Tomorrow's Modern Boxes* on BitTorrent. (Remember BitTorrent?)

Investors weren't much more optimistic. In 2003, Time Warner sold its music business to a group of investors led by Edgar Bronfman Jr. for

\$2.6 billion, a multiple of nine times the company's EBITDA, or earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization. In 2011, Universal Music Group, under new CEO Lucian Grainge, agreed to buy EMI Music's recording business for \$1.9 billion — just seven times its EBITDA — at what may well have been the bottom of the market.

That same year, Spotify launched in the United States. Within a few years, it became the water utility Bowie might have imagined, as did Apple Music and other services. As much as streaming represented an innovative new business model, though, the future didn't turn out to be quite as radical as some predicted. Most ambitious artists still make deals with labels or distributors, which license their music to com-

panies that generate most industry revenue by charging consumers for it.

The power of streaming and its steady, scalable revenue drove the Sept. 21 spinoff of Universal Music Group by Vivendi, which as it happens was founded in 1853 as an actual water company. UMG, which went public at a value of roughly \$57 billion, is the most valuable music company in history and trades for about 30 times its 2020 EBITDA. On its first day of trading, it helped boost the value of Warner Music Group, which went public last year, by 13.4%. WMG, which trades at an EBITDA multiple of 27, recently announced a deal to release the albums Bowie put out after 2002. And *Tomorrow's Modern Boxes* is now on Spotify.

UMG's spinoff makes it obvious that the industry has entered a new

phase, which looks like a boom for the kinds of acts that do well on streaming and the labels and distributors that work with them. (What the future holds for other kinds of acts remains to be seen, as does how much publishers and songwriters will share in this prosperity.) It could further drive up the value of recording and publishing catalogs, which have already risen to unprecedented multiples, plus inspire other companies to go public (see story, next page).

UMG may benefit more from a boom than its competitors, since its market share is unprecedented in the modern music business, which is why investors value it at a premium. But even those competitors will now have an easier time raising capital, and much of the money that pours into the music business will help other players

● CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY AGREED TO ACQUIRE ICM PARTNERS. ● THE NATIONAL MUSIC PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION SIGNED DEALS WITH TWITCH AND ROBLOX FOR PAST MUSIC USE.

— acts that can negotiate bigger advances, songwriters who can get more money for their publishing rights, concert promoters that will benefit from higher artist marketing budgets.

Which also means UMG will face fierce competition — from established labels, new distributors and a variety of artist services companies. The fact is, artists of any size no longer need a label the way they once did. Streaming services and social media have lowered the cost of marketing and promotion, and some companies are even starting to offer advances against royalties and other financial services that once only labels could provide. Many artists still want a label, of course — to fund marketing or defray risk — but often only on their own terms. The competition among companies with different busi-

ness models will only help them.

Two decades ago, the music business turned into a series of conflicts about whether recorded music would continue to generate significant revenue in a digital marketplace. For years it has been clear that it will, and optimism about how much keeps on rising. What still hasn't been settled entirely is how that revenue will be divided — among labels and distribution startups, but also between labels and publishers and labels and artists — and what business models will be most effective in an industry where every player has far more choice of how to structure deals, and with whom. And these conflicts — less compelling to pundits but more interesting to investors — will shape the music business of the future. **b**

MEET THE BOARD

UMG's new global 10-person board of directors is 40% female and includes executives across a range of industries

Executive director:
Lucian Grainge
UMG chairman/CEO

Executive director:
Vincent Valjeo
UMG deputy CEO, corporate

Chairman of the board/
independent nonexecutive director:
Judy Craymer
Mamma Mia! producer, co-founder
of Littlestar Services

Vice chairman of the board/
independent nonexecutive director:
Antoine Fievet
Chairman/CEO of multinational
cheese company The Bel Group

**Independent nonexecutive
directors:**
Anna Jones
Co-founder/CEO of global women's
club AllBright

Margaret Frerejean-Taittinger
International development manager
for the Michelin Guide

Nonexecutive directors:
James Mitchell
Tencent senior executive vp/chief
strategy officer, Tencent Music
Entertainment Group director

Manning Doherty
Senior vp of Singapore's sovereign
wealth fund GIC, part of the
Tencent-led consortium that owns
20% of UMG

Cathia Lawson-Hall
Head of coverage and investment
banking for Africa at financial
services firm Société Générale

Luc Van Os
Co-owner of agricultural brand
publisher Misset Uitgeverij, former
Hearst Netherlands CEO

Who's Next?

UMG's stock spinoff shows that equity markets like the sound of music companies — and its stock's performance so far raises the odds that more companies will join the growing gang of public firms that now includes WMG and three publishing companies. Here's an informed but speculative guide to which companies are likely candidates, how the market might receive them and what issues they would face.

► BMG

Revenue 602 million euros (\$707 million) for the year ending Dec. 31, 2020*
EBITDA 137 million euros (\$160.7 million) for the year ending Dec. 31, 2020*
Valuation \$5 billion***
EBITDA multiple 30 times***

When BMG reemerged as an independent music company in 2009, it initially focused on buying publishing rights, and it acquired catalogs from companies like Bug Music and Cherry Lane Music Publishing when a net publishers' share multiple of 12 was considered aggressive. Now that multiples run from 16 up to 30 in some cases, could BMG try to cash out some of its equity? The odds were thought to be against this, because the company is part of the German media giant Bertelsmann, which is controlled and partly owned by the Mohn

family, which has been determined to keep the company private. Bertelsmann and its partner Saham did recently offer some of the stock in their jointly owned call-center business, Majorel. But BMG may not need public funding — it recently renewed its partnership with the investment company KKR to finance further acquisitions.

► CONCORD

Revenue about \$500 million**
EBITDA about \$150 million***
Valuation about \$4 billion***
EBITDA multiple about 26.7***

Concord has become a mini-major, a formidable publisher and a label with a catalog that includes recordings it acquired from Stax, Fantasy and Rounder — plus the Kidz Bop brand. It takes in about \$500 million annually — about \$200 million a year each from recorded music and publishing, plus \$100 million from a theatrical division that licenses musicals by Rodgers & Hammerstein, Andrew Lloyd Weber and others. It also signs new creators — to Concord and Loma Vista on the recorded side and to Pulse Music for publishing — and it has a growing presence in the expanding Latin business through its purchases of Fania and Musart. As of July 2020, Concord was 93% owned by the Michigan State Retirement System, which may value steady dividends as retiree benefit payouts come due, but that wouldn't rule out an eventual public offering.

► JIOSAavn

No financial information is publicly available, other than a \$1 billion valuation from 2018.

The 2018 merger of Jio Music (owned by India telco company Jio Platforms) with Saavn created this company, valued at \$1 billion, with 100 million users. Its board has already approved a plan for a public listing, according to an April 2020 report by the Indian tech news site *Inc42*. "Every other streaming service has now either gone public, or is imminently going public, or is backed by the majors," JioSaavn co-founder and executive vice chairman Paramdeep Singh told *Billboard* in 2019. "In order for us to continue to grow and compete, we needed some kind of competitive advantage." (The company declined to comment further about its plans.) A spinoff could be complicated, however, because JioSaavn is to Jio Platforms what Apple Music is to Apple — a service that helps its parent company retain customers and market a broad array of products.

► PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC

Revenue \$135 million***
EBITDA \$65 million***
Valuation \$1.80 billion***
EBITDA multiple about 27.7***

Primary Wave could become the fourth independent music publisher to go public, following Hipgnosis Songs Fund, Round Hill Music and Reservoir Media. In the company's second incarnation — an earlier one sold a big chunk of its publishing catalog to BMG — it has put together three funds that focus on buying the publishing copyrights or master-recording income of

iconic creators like Smokey Robinson, Stevie Nicks, Whitney Houston, Bob Marley, Olivia Newton-John, Burt Bacharach, Boston and The Four Seasons, among others. A public offering would most likely offer investors an opportunity to buy into the first two funds and perhaps acquisitions made with the third. But any plans may wait a beat or two, however, since it's possible the music companies in the public market have satisfied investors' appetites for now.

► SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT AND SONY MUSIC JAPAN

Revenue \$6.344 billion for the year ending March 31, 2021*
EBITDA \$1.6 billion for the year ending March 31, 2021**
Valuation \$46.4 billion***
EBITDA multiple 29***

Sony investors must have been impressed by Vivendi's UMG spinoff. The day before, Vivendi's market capitalization was nearly 33.9 billion euros. On Sept. 21, when UMG spun off, Vivendi's share price fell from 31.53 euros to 10.64 euros, but the two companies' combined valuation was about 57 billion euros. Could Sony generate the same kind of value by spinning off its music division? It might not be so easy. In its financial statements, Sony groups together three operations — Sony Music Entertainment, Sony Music Japan and Visual Media/Platform (which includes the company's mobile gaming business). Sony could combine the two music operations — the estimates above reflect what that might look like — but reorganizing their management and reporting structure could be harder.

—ED CHRISTMAN AND GLENN PEOPLES

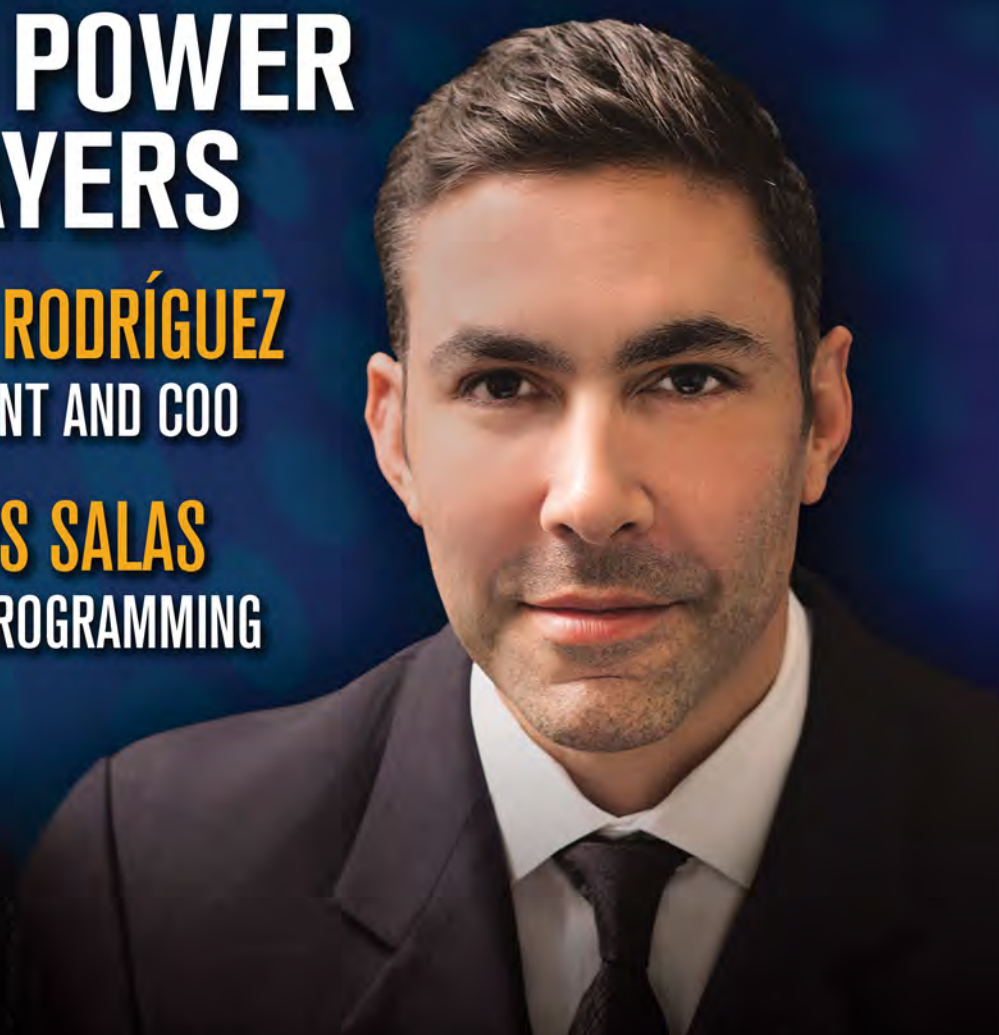
● BMG ACQUIRED A SUITE OF TINA TURNER'S RIGHTS AND REVENUE STREAMS. ● EONE MUSIC REBRANDED AS MNRK MUSIC GROUP AFTER ITS SALE BY HASBRO TO BLACKSTONE.

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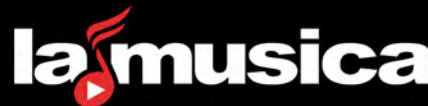
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NETWORK



THE LARGEST CERTIFIED HISPANIC BROADCASTER

GOOD WORKS

TAKE CARE

Saxophonist Carlos Sosa has been on the board of directors of the health services nonprofit SIMS Foundation for seven years, but it wasn't until he performed at the 2017 Route 91 Harvest festival in Las Vegas, where a gunman killed 59 people and injured another 800, that he realized just how crucial the organization could be. When Sosa returned to Austin with post-traumatic stress disorder,



Bouressa

he and his family received support from SIMS, which had already been providing him and his spouse with subsidized therapy since 2006 to cope with the stresses of touring. "I'd never experienced anything like it," he says. "It gave me more reasons than ever to do whatever I can to push SIMS Foundation."

As touring resumes around the country, the nonprofit is looking ahead to the mental health problems that could come with it. Founded in the wake of Texas musician Sims Ellison's 1995 suicide, for almost three decades the SIMS Foundation has taken care of Austin's musicians, touring professionals and — unlike many similar nonprofits around the country — their family members by connecting them to free or discounted mental health services funded by government grants or private donors. Since most musicians don't have health benefits or, in some cases, even steady income, while often managing erratic schedules and working in regular proximity to alcohol and drugs, this has allowed thousands of artists to receive help who would not have otherwise. In 2019, SIMS' six-person staff aided almost 900 clients in Austin by facilitating nearly 2,000 days of substance use treatment and over 12,500 counseling sessions. Now, it's trying to take the initiative nationwide.

Executive director Patsy Bouressa says SIMS regularly receives calls from "well-intentioned people" wanting to create a similar program in their areas, "knowing that their music community desperately needed such services." But the amount of work involved is intimidating. In July, SIMS launched a fundraising campaign in an effort to expand its services — first to Houston, Dallas and San Antonio, then to Detroit; Denver; Boulder, Colo.; and Raleigh, N.C.

"When the pandemic hit, exponentially more people contacted us in need of care," says Bouressa. So "we've been exploring ways to expand." —TAYLOR MIMS

he and his family received support from SIMS, which had already been providing him and his spouse with subsidized therapy since 2006 to cope with the stresses of touring. "I'd never experienced anything like it," he says. "It



Swift onstage at the Grammy Awards in March.

Signed, Sealed, Downloaded

Taylor Swift proved "digitally autographed" albums can drive sales, but other artists are seeing mixed results

BY STEVE KNOPPER

EARLIER THIS YEAR, TAYLOR Swift's *evermore* jumped back up the Billboard 200 chart with a well-orchestrated physical sales campaign six months after its initial release and a secret weapon: digital downloads.

On June 3, for one day only, Swift's online store sold four "digitally autographed fan edition" downloads, including a "Willow" remix with a graphic of her signature scrawled across the new album covers for \$4.99 each. While most sales came from vinyl preorders for a record 102,000 units and a signed CD campaign that generated most of another 69,000 sales, these digital copies pushed the album across the finish line. Overall, they goosed U.S. digital sales to 21,000 for the week ending June 3 (up from 400 in the previous



The "digitally autographed fan edition" versions of *evermore* that were sold on Swift's website on June 3.

week), according to MRC Data, helping drive *evermore* from No. 74 the week prior to No. 1 on the chart dated June 12 — edging out Olivia Rodrigo's *Sour* by 16,000 units. Since then, other artists have released downloads with digitally autographed covers, too.

These digitally signed albums are really just old-school album downloads whose virtual cover contains an image of a signature. Unlike non-fungible tokens, the ownership of which can be tracked on a blockchain, these can easily be copied and widely shared online. They only exist on fans' computers, presumably next to the original version of the album without a signature on it. But while Swift's strategy made the difference for another No. 1, as digital album sales continue to

decline (down 29% so far this year, through the week ending Sept. 16), not everyone has had the same results.

On June 11, when Migos released their *Culture III* on Motown Records, the trio also released a digitally signed version of the album on its webstore. Ultimately, the album sold 23,000 downloads and landed at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 behind Polo G's *Hall of Fame*. On Aug. 18, nearly two months after Doja Cat's *Planet Her* had debuted and peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard 200, her label, RCA Records, also released four versions

of a \$4.99 signed digital album on her webstore. It helped boost her digital album sales 540% to 2,700 units, from 500 the previous week, but didn't get her a No. 1. (The album

jumped 5-2 on the Billboard 200 that week.) K-pop boy band Tomorrow X Together received a similarly lackluster response in August when the group's label, BigHit Music, released three digitally signed versions of *The Chaos Chapter: Freeze* on its webstore, each with a different bonus track, resulting in just 900 U.S. digital album sales in the week ending Aug. 25.

With each of these releases, fans have voiced confusion and skepticism about the motives driving the strategy.

"I really like culture III but this is sad," said a Reddit poster of Migos' digitally signed album. Another expressed respect for "the hustle."

Asked one Doja Cat fan: "Doja baby what does the autograph matter if it's online?"

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**LATIN POWER
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China's Celeb-Culture Crackdown

The country's internet watchdog is looking at online fandom — and that's bad for K-pop

BY HSIUWEN LIU

HONG KONG — In April, a Chinese fan group dedicated to BTS member Jimin set out to give the K-pop star a special 26th birthday present: a customized commercial airplane. Through an account with 1.1 million followers on Weibo, China's leading social media platform, the group says it crowdfunded over 1 million yuan (\$155,000) in three minutes to wrap a Jeju Air jet with photos of the star, which would act as a giant, flying billboard.

But after the fan group posted pictures of the Jimin-adorned jet on Aug. 31, the Chinese government suspended the account for 60 days, claiming the fans had raised the funds “illegally.” Within hours, Weibo said that due to online complaints about “irrational star-chasing behavior,” it would also suspend 21 other K-pop fan accounts for 30 days, including five for NCT, four related to BTS, three supporting Blackpink and three for EXO.

The suspensions reflect the latest diplomatic tension between China and South Korea, as well as a broader tightening of control by China's Communist Party over the cultural

and political sphere. After months of regulatory action to stem the growing scale and influence of tech companies — including Tencent Music Entertainment — the government has now set its sights on taming “fan club chaos,” which it says is exacerbating cyberbullying and rumors among minors. As a result, artists and their followers will now face stringent censorship and penalties if they run afoul of authorities.

On Aug. 27, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), the government's internet watchdog, announced 10 measures to “clean up” celebrity fan clubs, including banning celebrity rankings based on popularity. Tencent's QQ Music service also said it would restrict customers from purchasing more than one download of an album. Then on Sept. 2, China's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television banned “effeminate” boy bands from starring in TV and online idol talent shows.

While K-pop album sales in China account for less than 2% of global revenue for the four biggest South Korean entertainment firms — SM Entertainment, HYBE, YG Entertainment

and JYP Entertainment — securities analysts say, Chinese-based fan groups generate thousands of sales of physical albums and digital downloads through their sprawling networks. A week after the announcement, SM Entertainment, HYBE, YG Entertainment and JYP Entertainment's share prices had fallen by 1.68%, 0.89%, 4.74% and 2.9%, respectively.

The Chinese government seems particularly concerned that the country's idol-fan culture is emulating that of K-pop, including such behaviors as inducing minors to raise funds, contest vote-rigging and the flaunting of wealth and extravagance. Across the world, K-pop fans have become powerful forces in driving sales and chart success for artists, and industry sources say music companies have come to expect that fan economy to generate a certain amount of additional revenue. “Labels are freaking out” about China's fan-group crackdown, says Alex Taggart, the head of international for Outdustry, an industry services company that operates in China. “They were really relying on that revenue.” (The major multinational record labels and K-pop

entertainment companies declined to discuss the topic with *Billboard*.)

The actions threaten to slow the development of China's highly engaged fan culture. The size of the country's idol-generated economy — the amount of money driven by fan groups and their purchases — is expected to reach 100 billion yuan (\$15 billion) by the end of this year, more than double the 45 billion yuan (\$7 billion) of 2018 (which was a 60% jump from 2017), according to research by Owhat, a Chinese e-commerce platform. That vastly outweighs China's recorded-music revenue, which IFPI reported to be \$791.9 million in 2020.

Weibo has been the main driving force, with over 500 million active monthly users as of this year. In 2011, the social media platform made a focused effort to invite celebrities to join and interact with their followers, says Yin Yiyi, associate professor of media and cultural studies at Beijing Normal University. By 2019, most popular artists and actors had at least 20 million followers on the site, with some like Jackson Yee counting over 88 million devotees.

As in South Korea, China's fan economy is based on turning fan power into money through sometimes over-the-top activities. In May, a popular Chinese talent show, *Youth With You 3*, encouraged viewers to buy milk and scan a QR code to support their favorite artists on the show — leading fans to waste an estimated 270,000 bottles during the campaign, according to Chinese media reports. The “milk waste” scandal, as the Chinese media dubbed it, caught the eye of the country's internet watchdog, leading the CAC to decide it was time to start regulating China's entertainment sector, analysts say. In June, it began its “Clear and Bright” campaign targeting online fan groups.

For now, fan groups and Weibo seem to be heeding the government's regulatory orders. Responding to its punishment over the Jimin plane incident, the BTS member's fan group called on its following “to be civilized, follow stars rationally ... and build a harmonious and healthy online environment.” Weibo said in a statement that it “firmly opposes such irrational star-chasing behavior and will deal with it seriously,” vowing to “intensify” its policing of fan culture to “purify” online discussions and “regulate community order” on its platform. **B**

Additional reporting by Alexei Barrionuevo.

AFINARTE MUSIC



GENERATION REGIONAL MEXICAN

AQUI
SOMOS
-PURO-
AFINARTE

FROM THE DESK OF

STACIA MAC

Founder/CEO
Only Dreamers Achieve

BY DARLENE ADEROJU

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DIWANG VALDEZ

S TACIA MAC DESCRIBES HER management style as “analytical,” and she recently put that skill — honed while guiding her son, hip-hop star Polo G’s career — to use during a terrifying incident that could have turned deadly.

In early September, Mac posted security camera footage on Instagram — which she has since deleted — of armed masked men attempting to break into her Georgia home. A few weeks later, she recounts the coolheaded action she took to protect herself and her 8-year-old daughter, Leia Capalot.

“Nothing prepares you for that, but I’m from Chicago, so you’re always ready,” says Mac. “I had my gun on the nightstand. I was on the phone with a friend, and I told him to call the police so I could continue to monitor my camera. I had already positioned my daughter where she wouldn’t be in any crossfire. The moment that door creaked open, I fired down on them and they ran.”

Since 2018, Mac has helped steer Polo G — born Taurus Tremani Bartlett in 1999 — to multiplatinum success with the same tactical decisiveness. (In 2020, she began to share management duties with Steve “Steve O” Carless, who, in late September, was named Warner Records president of A&R.)

Mac, who was 18 when she gave birth to Polo G, the second of her four children, had no music-industry experience when she began to manage his

Mac photographed
Sept. 21 at her
home near Atlanta.



RICHMUSIC

**RICHMUSIC'S PROFESSIONAL DREAMERS CONGRATULATE ITS COO AND CO-FOUNDER,
JOSHUA MENDEZ
NAMED 2021 BILLBOARD LATIN POWER PLAYER**

career. “Property management was all I’d ever done until he was signed,” she says.

In addition to her lack of experience, Mac had to overcome the skepticism that results when parents manage their children’s entertainment careers. “Many times we were in meetings and I said, ‘These are my goals,’ and people laughed,” says Mac. “Well, they’re not laughing now.”

Polo G had already gained notoriety for his singles “Finer Things” and “Pop Out,” featuring Lil Tjay, when Mac signed him — yes, a contract was involved — as the first client of her Only Dreamers Achieve artist management firm. “Choosing where we should go was the heaviest decision we ever made because that would eventually make or break him as an artist,” she recalls. “There was a bidding war, so we could have gone anywhere. He was looking at me like, ‘Which way should I go?’ It was Columbia.”

Polo, as Mac calls him, released his debut album, *Die a Legend*, in June 2019. It peaked at No. 6 on the Billboard 200 and charted for 118 weeks. Sophomore album *THE GOAT* dropped in 2020 and peaked at No. 2. His third album, *Hall of Fame*, went all the way to the top of the chart in June. The rap star kicked off his *Hall of Fame* tour in Cincinnati on Oct. 8.

Mac credits her son’s fast growth to his natural talent, paired with strategic marketing. “Any beat you put him on,” she says, “he flourishes because he’s a true artist who understands music.”

Her management company and reputation as a savvy negotiator have also grown. She now manages rapper Asian Doll and Jamaica’s “Queen of Dancehall,” Spice. On Dec. 5, she plans to host the Cheat Code seminar in Atlanta, where she will provide tips for those looking to succeed in the industry. “I didn’t have anybody to tell me the fundamentals on starting a team or how to pay your taxes,” she says.

Mac also aims to reboot her podcast, *I Birth Legends*, that she started in June 2020. Her eldest child, Leilani Capalot, works as Polo’s tour manager, while her third, hip-hop artist T Baby, is gaining traction. “Everybody’s picking up on him,” she says. “He’s not in his brother’s shadow.” Leia, Mac’s youngest offspring, launched the online children’s boutique House of Monroe when she was 7. The proud mom says her children’s ambitions are not happenstance. “We work toward those things that we want, and this is the manifestation of it.”

You had no previous experience in the music industry. How did you confront that steep learning curve?

I devoured books and articles to gain as much knowledge as possible to effectively assist him.

What do you think of the term “momager”?

There’s a stigma attached to the word because it’s equated with someone who’s inexperienced and leads with emotion rather than discernment and knowledge. I’m analytical. I don’t make decisions based on “This is my son.” He’s my artist first in this role.



1

Were you considered less credible because you were new and representing your son?

There are very few women in this industry, and I’m a woman of color. You have to prove yourself every time. I did that by making sure whenever I spoke, I had something to say. I asked the appropriate questions, and I wasn’t afraid to stand [up] when I knew something was right. In doing that, I gained respect.

In a previous interview, you said that one of the reasons you became Polo’s manager was because he was being lowballed on performance fees. Do you think the music business attempts to take advantage of artists of color more than white artists?

His fee is now \$150,000, and I remember the days when it was \$5,000. We couldn’t cover travel accommodations and were in the hole. We arrived at his current fee with each of our successes. People of color are slighted. That’s a fact. What you have to do is stand firm on your worth.

Do you take a commission when you make deals for Polo? If so, was that a difficult discussion to have with your son?

I do, and it wasn’t a hard discussion. Our family is driven by love, morals and boundaries. Before becoming his manager, we signed a management contract to protect not only him, but myself. Business is business, whether it’s my son or anyone. I’m doing the work without getting anything handed to me. If anybody else was in this position, they would get a commission, so I don’t feel bad about it.

Why did Polo sign with Columbia Records?

We chose Columbia because we knew they would throw their all into my son and he would not be shelved. They had as much riding on making him a hip-hop star as he had to make himself one.

Does he own his masters?

He does not. That doesn’t happen often. But we got many other beneficial things in the deal. He has a true 50-50 profit share, which is very valuable.

How are you helping build Polo’s music career and expand his fan base?

Die a Legend was highly anticipated, and we really didn’t do a lot of marketing because the fans wanted it. We did target markets, and they made the numbers go where they should. Each album increased because of our marketing, rollouts, playlisting, radio play and other necessities. We’re going to work with different artists and experiment with samples to elevate his sound. We’re excited to tour internationally. We’re working on a television series that chronicles his jewelry store in Miami, Black Ice. [He has] also asked his agents to book him more films.



2

1. Mac says the walls of her basement are covered with Polo’s plaques that “remind us where we’re from and how far we’ve come. The biggest is ‘Pop Out’ because that record changed our lives.”

2. “I light these candles, smell the flowers and center myself before I get going. They are essential to my self-care regimen.”

Despite his chart success, with *Hall of Fame* peaking at No. 1, some perceive Polo as a hip-hop underdog. What could Columbia do to change that?

I don’t feel Columbia can do anything more than they do. Sometimes the greatest of the great don’t get their flowers, but he’ll continue to be a consistent artist pumping out No. 1s. If the world catches up later, they’ll catch up later. A lot of [that perception] comes from social media. If you’re on the blogs every day, then that makes you mainstream, and most of those people don’t even have a hit.

Polo was arrested twice this year — in Miami and, more recently, in Los Angeles. Did those controversies affect any endorsement deals he has, and are you concerned they could affect future deals?

I can’t say much because they’re ongoing. In both incidents, the officers were overzealous, and a lot of those charges have already been reduced. That speaks volumes, and it will all come out in the wash. If he did something egregious, he would have been charged for it. I don’t feel that [these incidents] would stop any endorsements because life happens to us all, whether we want it to or not. My grandmother always told me, “You think it won’t happen to you? Keep living.” Any endorsement that passed him wasn’t meant for him.

Do you have any kind of support group with other momagers?

Not early on, but as of late, I’ve become great friends with [late artist] XXXTentacion’s mom, Cleo [Cleopatra Bernard], and she has been helping me with estate planning, asset protection and things of that nature. We don’t want to think about or speak of those taboos, but they’re things we have to address while living because we don’t have any control thereafter. ■

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OCTOBER 15 LEDYARD, CT
OCTOBER 16 BOSTON, MA
OCTOBER 22 NEW JERSEY, NJ
OCTOBER 29 CHATLOTTE, NC
OCTOBER 30 FAIRFAX, VA

NOVEMBER 4 CANCUN, MX
NOVEMBER 6 FORT MYERS, FL
NOVEMBER 7 MIRAMAR, FL
NOVEMBER 12 MCALLEN, TX
NOVEMBER 13 LAREDO, TX
NOVEMBER 14 SAN ANTONIO, TX
NOVEMBER 17 LAS VEGAS, NV
NOVEMBER 19 BARRANQUILLA, CO
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NOVEMBER 27 MEXICO, DF
DECEMBER 4 NEW YORK, NY
DECEMBER 18 MIAMI, FL
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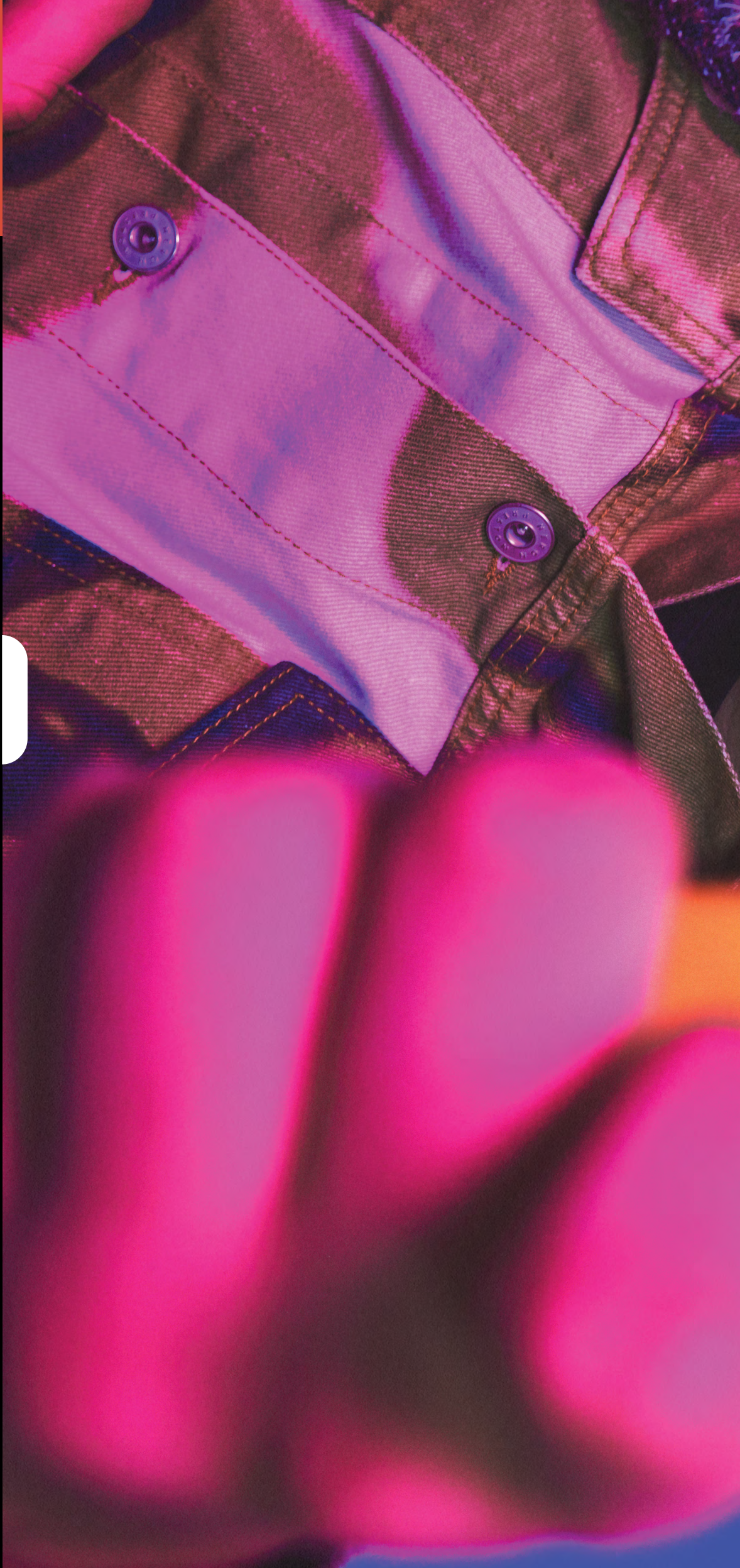


Here's Looking At You, Kid

After steadily growing his fan base with streaming hits, **The Kid LAROI** has the biggest song on the planet with "Stay." Now, as he prepares his debut album amid big behind-the-scenes changes, he's finding out what being a superstar actually takes

BY JOSH GLICKSMAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALEXANDRA GAVILLET



The Kid LAROI
photographed Sept. 8 at
Industria in Brooklyn.

Styling by Bobby Wesley
Heron Preston jacket, R13 vest.



The Kid decided he wanted ice cream instead.

It's a Wednesday in September, and we had planned to grab a late lunch in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. But at the last minute, The Kid LAROI — the Australian rapper-singer born Charlton Kenneth Jeffrey Howard — says he would rather hit up Mikey Likes It Ice Cream, a shop in Manhattan's East Village that he has visited three times since arriving in New York last weekend. He orders like a regular, asking for his usual — a flavor called Foxy Brown involving mocha, a sea salt caramel swirl and crushed chocolate wafer cookies — before bonding with the cramped space's currently lone worker about how they both recently turned 18. Rows of small clocks with celebrity headshots as their faces line the walls, and LAROI points to one of Macaulay Culkin making his famous open-mouthed *Home Alone* poster face. "Look," he comments between bites. "It's me."

This spur-of-the-moment jaunt isn't out of character for LAROI — keeping up with his good-natured spontaneity is simply what it means to be a part of his inner circle these days. His rider (an artist's set of requests for a host upon arrival) includes a ball pit, à la Chuck E. Cheese, that he can dive into during breaks on music video sets. Songwriter-producer Omer Fedi, a close friend and collaborator, says LAROI will often call from outside his house or hotel, eager to ride go-karts or head to a nearby Dave & Buster's. On more than one occasion, his manager, Adam Leber, has found himself driving 30 minutes to a specific McDonald's just off South Fairfax Avenue in Los Angeles so LAROI can snag an elusive frozen Coke he can't seem to find anywhere else.

Lately, there has been less and less time for such whimsical adventures — being a budding global pop star tends to get in the way, and that seems to dampen LAROI's enthusiasm. Sitting in the back seat of a black SUV outside the ice cream shop, he intermittently tears at a cardboard coffee tray and scrolls through his phone. He groans at the idea of having to travel several hours to rural Pennsylvania later this week for a rehearsal, and more than once, he likens interviews like this one to "schoolwork."

"I hate feeling like I'm having a forced conversation," he says, scraping the bottom of his first cup of Foxy Brown while waiting for a second to arrive. "I just hate talking about myself, to be honest. I'd rather not talk at all." His omnipresent box-framed sunglasses, he explains, are in part a defense against "people trying to figure out what I'm thinking."

In general, LAROI would prefer to let his music do the talking, and right now, it's speaking volumes. "Stay" — his amped-up hit with a Justin Bieber assist and a plucky, '80s-inspired synth line courtesy of Charlie Puth — has arguably been the biggest song in the world since its July release. It has held the top slot on the Billboard Hot 100 and Global 200 charts for six and a record-setting

nine weeks, respectively, amassing 1.87 billion global on-demand streams along the way, according to MRC Data. Before that, he had been riding the success of the acoustic ballad "Without You," which peaked at No. 8 on the Hot 100, thanks to a remix with Miley Cyrus, and led to a May appearance with her on *Saturday Night Live*.

Collaborators like Bieber, Cyrus and Puth are just a few of the growing LAROI fan club members among pop's A-list. After edging him out in the fan-voted best new artist category at MTV's Video Music Awards (VMAs) in September, Olivia Rodrigo said in her acceptance speech that LAROI "inspires me every day." Ed Sheeran called him "the biggest artist on the planet" in a SiriusXM interview after the two met over pizza — a sentiment Elton John echoed when LAROI appeared on his *Rocket Hour* radio show in January.

Fedi boils down his friend's appeal to two core qualities: his sense of melody and a willingness to be vulnerable. "Not a lot of up-and-coming artists, or even big artists, actually talk about shit that happens in their life," he says. "You can hear stories in his music, and that's why people gravitate toward him." It was those qualities, in fact, that drew Leber, the founder of Rebel Management. "He isn't one of these cookie-cutter artists who's out there just taking songs," says Leber. "It's very rare in this day and age when an artist has a), the ability to write amazing songs in general, but b), really writes from a place of honesty. [That's what] separates a hit song from a phenomenal artist."

And at a time when genre fluidity is the new normal, LAROI has achieved something else rare: the ability to freely explore styles while maintaining his credibility and keeping a foot firmly in hip-hop, which first inspired him as a '90s-rap-

loving kid and became the world in which he built a following, particularly on streaming platforms. "Stay" may be a pop playlist mainstay, but fans are just as likely to find LAROI's hazy, guitar-driven "F*ck You, Goodbye" (featuring Machine Gun Kelly) on a curated alt-rock set or his yearning, R&B-rooted "Go" (with a posthumous verse from mentor Juice WRLD) and down-the-middle rap fastball "I Don't Know" on those genres' lists.

It's no accident that he has been able to explore diverse sounds so nimbly: LAROI and his team have made the most of his short time in the spotlight, orchestrating each release so that his audience is primed to come along with him. Thanks to a few savvily timed repackagings of his three-part debut, *F*ck Love*, LAROI has kept introducing new listeners to the full range in his catalog. The initial installment dropped in summer 2020, with a deluxe edition called *F*ck Love (Savage)* coming that November. When *F*ck Love 3: Over You* arrived this July — which expanded into its own *F*ck Love 3+* set four days later with six new tracks — the project reached No. 1 on the Billboard 200 for the first time, buoyed by the series' entire 35-song tracklist on streaming services.

"People don't consume music the same way anymore," says LAROI. "People want to listen to a 12-song project, at most. They chew stuff up and spit it out really quickly. Imagine if I had put 'Tragic,' 'Without You' and 'Stay' all in a 30-song thing [at once]. Who knows if any of those songs might've even caught?" The success of the *F*ck Love* franchise is the culmination of an "always on" approach that has embodied Columbia Records' strategy for LAROI since chairman/CEO Ron Perry personally signed him in 2019: have content ready to engage the fan base now and make sure to tee up something that will be ready when it comes back for more.

Leber is determined to ensure that doesn't translate to burnout. "I think where a lot of mistakes are made — especially with new artists — is trying to do too much, too soon," he says. "It's easy to get enamored with all the opportunity coming your way and lose sight of the most important thing, which is the music. Honestly, my goal right now is to take as much off his plate that isn't locked in so he can really focus on making his next great body of work."



Marni sweater and socks,
Wales Bonner pants.



Movie x Tultex vintage T-shirt,
Wales Bonner shirt, Greg Lauren
plaid shirt, Dickies pants.

That may prove harder than anyone anticipates. As LAROI prepares for both a world tour and, in 2022, the release of his official debut album, he has also been navigating major changes behind the scenes. In late September, *Billboard* broke the news that after just four months he had parted ways with his management at SB Projects, where he had worked directly with president Allison Kaye, and had signed on with Leber. In August, LAROI began working with high-powered attorneys Kenny Meiselas (who represents The Weeknd and Lady Gaga) and David Jacobs, his colleague at Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks who happens to work with Lil Nas X — another Leber client.

Amid all that, LAROI's ascent hasn't shown any signs of losing steam; if anything, he's rising even more rapidly. Right now, on Spotify alone, he appears on curated all-genre hits playlists not only in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and his native Australia but in locales as far-flung as Mexico, France, Italy, India, Chile, the Philippines, Sweden, Indonesia and Poland. And hardly three years removed from a mixtape titled *14 With a Dream*, LAROI himself is still trying to wrap his head around how, exactly, he got here.

"I have no clue," he half-whispers, pushing up his sunglasses just enough to reveal a peek at his bewildered eyes. Then, soon after, he repeats himself, even more hushed: "I have no clue."

DEEP IN THE NETWORK of tunnels and halls within Brooklyn's Barclays Center, The Kid LAROI and Justin Bieber are walking together, arms clasped around each other's backs. It's the day before the VMAs, and they're about to rehearse their show-opening rendition of "Stay," complete with prop mountains they'll climb down after descending from the ceiling in harnesses. Once onstage, they're in constant communication, breaking into side conversations, applauding each other between takes and offering thoughts on how to improve the next one. After their third run-through, Bieber murmurs into the microphone to remind LAROI to exchange a handshake once the song ends. On the night of the

show, LAROI goes for a hug.

Bieber first reached out to LAROI earlier this year on Instagram, and the two became fast friends. LAROI is a frequent presence at the Bieber household, where the duo can be found playing pickup basketball and doing improv acting sessions, and LAROI recently appeared on Hailey Bieber's *Who's in My Bathroom?* YouTube series — which her husband briefly FaceTimed into — introducing her to classic Australian snacks. A source close to Bieber says it was he who initially broached the idea of bringing LAROI into the SB Projects fold.

Around that time, LAROI was being managed by Grade A Productions, the label co-founded by early-2010s Chicago mixtape staple Lil Bibby and his brother, G-Money, perhaps best known for their work with the late Juice WRLD. (Interscope Geffen A&M signed the rapper to a joint-venture deal with Grade A in March 2018, and the labels continue to release his music posthumously.) The brothers were involved with Columbia in the first two installments of *F*ck Love* and had seemingly found their next star.

Grade A helped then-15-year-old LAROI acclimate to the United States in the months following his move from Sydney, before his mother, Sloane Howard — a former talent manager who promoted her son's burgeoning career — and younger brother, Austin, settled in with him in Los Angeles. (The three still live together, though LAROI says he'll probably get his own spot "in the next couple of months.") LAROI tagged along with the team for Juice's Death Race for Love Tour, often staying in adjoining hotel rooms with Grade A partner Peter Jideonwo. But the relationship soured, though Columbia declines to comment on why, and Jideonwo stopped responding to *Billboard* interview requests. LAROI, when asked about Grade A, says, "we won't talk about them," and when I ask if he's at all in touch with Bibby anymore, his publicist shuts down the conversation.

Once Kaye heard that LAROI was no longer affiliated with Grade A, she agreed to set up a meeting. An awkward Zoom pitch followed; LAROI jokes that SB Projects founder Scooter Braun simply told him multiple times, "I'm the best,

man." But following an in-person second meeting in which the two outlined a more defined career plan, LAROI agreed to a deal over Memorial Day weekend. On paper, it certainly seemed like a logical match for the company synonymous with Bieber: another teen sensation from humble beginnings abroad, exploding to megastardom at light speed.

A source says that LAROI and his team found the reality of the arrangement different, however. After Braun made "a promise" that he would be directly involved with LAROI, the source continues, there was not enough participation from him, and LAROI had "significant problems" with Kaye, including feeling she was making decisions without consulting him.

"LAROI is a brilliant artist, and I wish him and his family nothing but the best," says Braun. "I'm proud of the historic success we had together in our short time — I am rooting for him always, and he knows that."

The source says that LAROI spent a month trying to work things out with SB Projects, including speaking directly with Braun, before ultimately signing on with Leber — a move that was "a very easy pivot." Leber had spent an intensive two weeks with LAROI leading up to his *Saturday Night Live* appearance with Cyrus (his longtime client before the two parted ways in August) and was wowed by how the then-17-year-old "knocked it out of the park" with his first live televised performance. He had also been, says the source, one of five managers LAROI and his team had first considered when he departed Grade A. (Leber declined to comment on his client's split from SB Projects.)

Leber sees LAROI as utterly distinct from Bieber and Juice — the former an artist he's often compared to, the latter a crucial mentor whose shadow seemed to follow LAROI during his time with Grade A. And though he acknowledges LAROI's good looks and palpable star power don't exactly hurt the young artist, he's more drawn to his personality. "He's the kind of guy you can sort of sit down with and talk to for hours on end," says Leber. "He's witty and engaging. He has a great sense of art and culture. He's a bit of an old soul — he's heavily into artists like [INXS'] Michael Hutchence and Kurt Cobain. He just has great sensibilities."

It's clear that LAROI is eager to build those into his own stand-alone narrative. When we first start to discuss his forthcoming album, he perks up and interrupts mid-question, rubbing his hands together, then clapping while letting loose three yelps of joy. He's already planning future projects, too, including something bigger that he won't delve into quite yet, but that he says will explain the details behind the name LAROI itself — a nod to his mother's Indigenous Australian heritage. And as he continues to grow, he hopes, those comparisons to other artists will just dissipate on their own.

"I understand that's what happens in the beginning of [a career]," he says. "I feel like as I keep going, people will start to see me more for me. I think that's already happening. Hopefully with this album, people will really start to separate me as my own person."

"Just Follow me!"

It's three nights before the VMAs, and LAROI is playing a pop-up show at New York's recently renovated Irving Plaza when he suddenly pauses mid-set: He has brought Columbia's Perry onstage and has just informed him they're *both* about to stage dive.

As LAROI launches himself deep into a sea of screaming voices and waiting arms, Perry sheepishly waves to the crowd, as if to say, "We're not really going to do this to each other, right?" But sure enough, LAROI surfs his way back onstage in time to see it through. (He tells me Perry is "the coolest label dude ever," though the crowd doesn't quite buy in: The executive barely makes it past a few rows offstage before getting pushed back.)

When Perry met LAROI in New York three years ago, he signed him to Columbia on the spot. They both say they've worked together closely ever since to strategize how best to promote the artist's music. "We speak almost daily," says Perry. "He's really humble with brilliant instincts, both musically and culturally. Nothing gets by him. He understands all aspects. That's quite unusual."

The two seldom disagree, says LAROI, though even when they do, they make the best of it. At Irving Plaza, LAROI introduces Perry by telling the crowd "Stay" would have come out sooner if not for the latter's input; in June, the artist jokingly tagged Perry in a since-deleted Instagram post in which he and HYBE chairman Bang Si-hyuk were photographed holding a cardboard sign reading, "LET LAROI DROP STAY!"

LAROI's approach to teasing songs has become an important part of rolling out his biggest releases. He says he'll often post snippets on social media just to "see what's going on," but once something sticks, he begins to play into the hype, stoking fan anticipation until it reaches a boiling point. It's an approach he shares with his labelmate Lil Nas X. "I actually get an education watching artists like LAROI and Nas use their skill set to present their art to the marketplace," says Leber. "When you're dealing with an artist who understands how to speak to their audience, it lets me sort of throw gasoline on the fire when they have an idea and a direction for what they want to do."

In March 2020, for instance, LAROI posted a song snippet on TikTok with lyrics centering on the platform's third-most-followed influencer, Addison Rae, figuring it would go viral. After Rae filmed her mother's reaction to it, which quickly drew millions of likes, LAROI dropped a full version simply titled "Addison Rae" less than two weeks later that has since compiled 67.7 million on-demand U.S. streams, according to MRC Data. Now that "Stay" is out and thriving — with its official release coming more than nine months after he first teased it on Instagram — the rueful "Thousand Miles" appears to be next on LAROI's list: He has been tweeting lyrics from the song and performing it at his live shows. At Irving Plaza, he offers to teach the crowd its chorus, but it's immediately clear that the audience knows all of the words already — as it does for essentially every song in his set.

That may not seem surprising, considering his chart accomplishments, but it's a revelation for LAROI, who has anxiously waited through the pandemic to get an actual, live grasp of just how big his fan base is. "Seeing all of the kids sing the words to all the songs is crazy," he says. "You don't get to see that on the internet, necessarily. You don't get to see that through the streaming numbers. You don't really realize it until they're in the crowd."

Following the release of *F*ck Love 3*, LAROI gave a free performance at the Hollywood Palladium, one he now calls his favorite show to date, despite his initial worry that people wouldn't show up. Standing on the roof of the venue in late July, he brought

out Bieber, Machine Gun Kelly and G Herbo. (Polo G was a last-minute cancellation due to a delayed flight.) As he flashed his pearly white smile, his wavy, blond locks bouncing along to each song, it felt like a moment of arrival — a new prince of L.A. looking out over his adoring public.

"I looked him in the eyes, and I saw that he was like, 'I'm fucking ready,'" recalls Fedi, who played

maintain a healthy balance.

"I'm very cognizant of how grueling touring is, especially for an artist who's 18 and going on his first world tour," says Leber. "When you dump radio and promo visits on top of that, it can be a recipe for disaster. It's a massive priority for me to make sure that while he's playing these shows, traveling, trying to fit in some promo and radio station visits, he's heavily

“Not a lot of up-and-coming artists, or even big artists, actually talk about shit that happens in their life. You can hear stories in his music, and that’s why people gravitate toward him.”

—OMER FEDI, SONGWRITER-PRODUCER

guitar throughout the set. "Just as a fan of LAROI, I was happiest on the songs that I didn't play because I got to see him perform. Sometimes, you stop and you're like, 'Damn, this guy is good.'"

He'll soon embark on his recently announced End of the World Tour, hitting 27 stops in North America between late January and early March 2022 before kicking off a leg in Europe in the spring. And while LAROI likely has the draw to fill larger rooms already, he wants to keep crowd sizes limited to just a few thousand people at most venues in an effort to duplicate the intimate atmosphere that he achieved at places like Irving Plaza and OMEARA in London.

"The biggest priority to me is to create something that people can feel like they're stepping away from reality for a minute to come and be a part of something that's different from everything else," he says. "And [to] make sure that people want to come back and do it again."

He'll also, of course, have to deal with the kind of "schoolwork" that goes along with any new artist's first major tour: interviews, yes, and the promotional stops that build good will along the way. Still, Leber is determined to help LAROI

rested and has time to actually be a human and be a kid."

Following an almost monthlong break at the conclusion of the tour's European leg, LAROI will begin its third and final installment in Sydney. At the time of our conversation, he hadn't been back in almost two years and was excited above all else just to see his friends. Things won't be the same as when he left them, of course. Back then, he was still struggling just to get by; now, he's something of a hometown hero, already receiving daily messages about new Australian artists to look out for.

As his Irving Plaza set nears its end, LAROI sneaks offstage, only to reemerge from the VIP section. He's near his family and girlfriend of over a year, influencer Katarina Deme-triades, on the balcony, one leg hanging over the glass railing. He then swings his other leg over, his heels barely still touching the surface as he launches into his set closer, "Without You." He looks as cool as ever, moving to the beat on his precarious perch, as his head of security maintains a steady grasp on the back of his shirt — ready, if needed, to pull him back down to earth. **■**

Additional reporting by Melinda Newman.

The Kid LAROI leads this year's 21 Under 21 list featuring a mix of young chart-toppers, TikTok stars-turned-artists and on-the-verge breakout acts among many more making waves in the industry right now.

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From left: Eilish, PinkPantheress and 24kGoldn.

The (New) School Of Rock

Guitars are back in popular music thanks in large part to a new class of artists eager to let riffs fly

Over the past year, pop-punk and alternative rock have reasserted their place in mainstream music — and this year's 21 Under 21 list reflects that resurgence, with nearly half of the artists loosely fitting that mold.

In 2020, on the heels of TikTok fame, jxdn became Travis Barker's first signee to his DTA Records label (an imprint of Elektra). "I was interested in someone his age venturing into that [pop-rock] sound," Barker told *Billboard* in August 2020, emphasizing how jxdn's social media savvy is a huge selling point for breaking an artist now. "It's a big reason why he's popular, but it's one of the reasons that rock bands in general are *not* popular, because they don't know how to use social media," said Barker. "I just feel like it's one of the things that makes an artist [today], love it or hate it." In the last year alone, Barker has also helped young talent including Willow, Nessa Barrett and Lilhuddy land alternative and rock hits.

Lilhuddy, who similarly translated a TikTok following into a faithful fan base, found fast success in the pop-punk lane — and even starred in Machine Gun Kelly's album film, *Downfalls High*. After signing with Adam Mersel's Immersive Records (an Interscope imprint) in January, the rising artist released his debut album and scored a high-profile brand campaign with Burger King.

Considering TikTok's role in helping what was once old become new again, it's natural that artists like jxdn, Lilhuddy and others are finding success by infusing the genre with new flavor: mixing guitars with hip-hop beats for bite-size, social media-friendly choruses.

Lilhuddy "was really a student of pop-punk," says Mersel of what initially stood out to him about the artist. "For him, it was always about the genre and redefining what it meant to be a young person in 2020 ... doing that kind of music and doing it in an authentic way that made sense for him and didn't feel copycat or something that was derivative of something else."

"Even though there's this resurgence of pop-punk going on, it didn't feel like [Lilhuddy] was making that kind of music to fit into a box," continues Mersel. "But I think it's a blessing because it opened the door to the sound really resonating with young people and a rediscovering [of this genre] through young people."

Chart-topping artists like The Kid LAROI and Olivia Rodrigo are among those embracing, and benefitting from, the mainstream return of pop-punk with songs that lean heavily on guitar. While both scored non-rock No. 1 hits with "Stay" and "drivers license," respectively, they've also shown an alt-rock proclivity on songs like "Without You" and "good 4 u" (the latter of which retroactively credited Paramore's "Misery Business" as inspiration).

And, as Will Calder, director of branding and programming at Florida stations WPOI Tampa and WPYO Orlando, told *Billboard* of LAROI and Rodrigo in September: "[They] are the new kings and queens of pop radio right now."

—LYNDSEY HAVENS

PinkPantheress

- **Age** 20
- **Label** Elektra/Parlophone
- **Publisher** Sony Music Publishing
- **Management** Up Close Management
- **Total streams** 293.3 million

The singer-producer gained a following on TikTok, where she has nearly 1 million followers, after posting snippets of original songs like her top 40 U.K. single "Pain" before independently releasing the full-length versions. After signing with Elektra in April and Parlophone in June, the Bath, England-based artist — who can now count Mura Masa as a collaborator — remains an enigma by choice. She looks up to Frank Ocean and Imogen Heap as "two admired artists who have still maintained their privacy and dignity over the years while simultaneously releasing some of the best music this generation has heard."

24kGoldn

- **Age** 20
- **Label** RECORDS/Columbia
- **Publisher** APG
- **Management** Active Management/Electric Feel Management
- **Total streams** 1.95 billion

Last year, 24kGoldn's Billboard Hot 100 chart-topper, "Mood," featuring iann dior, kicked off an impressive run. After enjoying eight weeks at the summit, the former University of Southern California student released his debut album, *El Dorado*, which featured Future and Swae Lee, and debuted in the top 25 of the Billboard 200. After dominating social media with "Mood" — the song is tagged to over 3 million TikTok videos — 24kGoldn hopes to find similar success on YouTube. In May, he entered a media partnership with Wheelhouse DNA, responsible for managing his YouTube channel (2.57 million subscribers) and exclusively creating content for the page.

Billie Eilish

- **Age** 19
- **Label** Darkroom/Interscope
- **Publisher** Universal Music/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing
- **Management** Best Friends
- **Total streams** 76.7 billion

Happier Than Ever, the highly anticipated second album from superstar Eilish, debuted atop the Billboard 200 — and remained there for three weeks — with the second-largest debut sales week of the year. Meanwhile, album single "Your Power" scored Eilish her fifth top 10 hit on the Hot 100. She has extended her victory lap since, teaming with Disney+ for a special concert film, *Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles*; co-chairing the Met Gala in Oscar de la Renta, under the condition that the designer go fur-free; dropping two pairs of vegan Air Jordan sneakers, both of which sold out within seconds; and scoring the headlining gig at Glastonbury 2022, becoming the youngest solo artist to ever earn the slot.

● **ÁNGELA AGUILAR**, 18-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF PEPE AGUILAR, IS ONE OF THE YOUNGEST ARTISTS EVER TO EARN BOTH GRAMMY AND LATIN GRAMMY AWARD NOMINATIONS.



Willow photographed by Munachi Osegbu on June 11 in Los Angeles.

Willow

- **Age** 20
- **Label** MSFTSMusic/Roc Nation
- **Publisher** Buglife Music Publishing
- **Management** Three Six Zero
- **Total streams** 570.5 million

Willow's natural progression from pop preteen to neo-soul experimentalist to now a pop-punk rocker proved fruitful when her latest and fourth solo album, *Lately I Feel Everything* — featuring collaborations with Travis Barker and Avril Lavigne, among others — earned the 20-year-old her first top 10 release on the Top Rock and Alternative Albums charts. She's now on her headlining lifE tour, and will soon open a string of dates on Billie Eilish's worldwide trek.

Thinking back, what surprised you most about the process of getting discovered and signed?

I think the most surprising part would have to be how hard it ended up being to actually follow through with the demands

and the stress of it all. Being an artist and really wanting to put your heart and soul into it and wanting to do it well, it takes a lot of work. I just had to find my authentic self in the industry in order to feel like that amount of energy was worth it.

What's the first thing you splurged on?

Probably going to Barnes & Noble and getting bags and bags of books.

Who has been most helpful in learning about the music business?

My 11 years in the industry have really taught me a lot about myself and taught me what I'm willing to do and what kind of person and what kind of message I want to put out into the world. I think the biggest teacher is experience and time.

What's one area of the industry you're excited to learn more about?

I want to start collabing with more artists and writing and producing for more artists. Even though I love performing and singing, I feel like a different part of me gets awakened when I can help someone else find their vision. I also just want to be more experimental and creative and kind of do a Jack White vibe, where I have a bunch of different bands and I might be a part of them or I help produce for them or I'm just the bassist or guitarist.

Years ago, you shaved your head to protest continuing with your first tour. What are some strategies you have developed to keep yourself healthy and

at ease while on the road?

You have to allow yourself to rest. For a very long time on tour, I just wanted to be doing the most all the time. And you have to really listen to your body because sometimes your body will send you signs, and I'm learning how to take those cues more.

What do you want your fans to feel when they listen to your album or hear it live at one of your shows?

I hope that my songs can help people see the beauty of themselves even deeper. *Everything* should be inspiring someone to look into their life and into their beauty and ugliness equally — with an equal amount of love and an equal amount of acceptance. —HERAN MAMO

Clockwise from left: Rodrigo, NLE Choppa, Lilhuddy and The Linda Lindas.



Olivia Rodrigo

- **Age** 18
- **Label** Geffen/Interscope
- **Publisher** Sony Tunes/Liv Laf Luv
- **Management** Camp Far West
- **Total streams** 8.37 billion

One of the biggest breakout stars of any age this year, Rodrigo catapulted to stardom with her devastating first single, “drivers license,” in January, spending eight weeks at No. 1 on the Hot 100 with the runaway hit. Debut album *Sour* followed in May, drawing rave reviews, moving a then-2021 best 295,000 equivalent album units in its first week and including two more heartbreaking smash singles, “deja vu” and “good 4 u,” with the latter becoming her second No. 1. All the while, she filmed the second season of her Disney+ show, *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series* — and still found time to graduate from high school.

The Linda Lindas

- **Age** Bela (17), Lucia (14), Eloise (13), Mila (11)
- **Label** Epitaph
- **Publisher** BMI
- **Management** Fly South Management
- **Total streams** 6 million

The Linda Lindas first played together in January 2018 (before they were officially a band) when Dum Dum Girls founder Kristin Kontrol had them accompany her at the Los Angeles Girlschool festival. By April 2019, the Latinx and Asian American punk rockers had opened a one-off date for Bikini Kill. The group has since independently released its debut, self-titled EP; placed a synch in Amy Poehler’s February film *Moxie*; and in May — after going viral with its anti-intolerance hit “Racist, Sexist Boy” — sisters Lucia and Mila, cousin Eloise and friend Bela signed with Epitaph Records and made their late-night debut on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*

NLE Choppa

- **Age** 18
- **Label** Warner
- **Publisher** Bryson Potts Publishing Designee
- **Management** Choppa Management
- **Total streams** 1.10 billion

Even in a pandemic, NLE Choppa (born Bryson Lashun Potts) was moving at full speed. The Memphis rapper raked in a number of star-studded collaborations last year with Lil Baby, Roddy Ricch and Latto; opened a vegan food truck; and became a first-time father to Clover, to whom he dedicated his heartfelt single “Letter to My Daughter.” (The video has over 14 million YouTube views.) He’s now eager to get into acting, saying, “I want to be in films and TV shows. I’ve had that personality since I was a kid.” JAY-Z is an inspiration: “He has had a long, successful career and has ventured into other businesses, but he still puts his family first.”

Lilhuddy

- **Age** 19
- **Label** Immersive/Sandlot/Geffen
- **Publisher** N/A
- **Management** Moxie Artists
- **Total streams** 7.57 million

Over the past year, TikTok star Chase Hudson (who has 32.3 million followers on the app) has successfully morphed into Lilhuddy, a new-school, pop-punk singer-songwriter who works quickly (his first four singles arrived within a week) and effectively (he has already collaborated with Travis Barker and iann dior). Having released debut album *Teenage Heartbreak* in September, Lilhuddy is ready to take another leap with his touring debut, studying other artists’ performances now that live shows have returned. “I’ve been observing their movements and the ways that they engage the crowd,” he says. “It has all been super inspiring.”

● HYPERPOP ARTIST **GLAIVE**, 16, SIGNED WITH INTERSCOPE IN 2020 AND RELEASED HIS SECOND EP, FEATURING PRODUCTION FROM TRAVIS BARKER AND NICK MIRA, IN AUGUST.

CONGRATS TO BILLBOARD'S LATIN POWER PLAYERS

AZU

OLVERA Director of Latin Talent and Industry Relations, Pandora & SiriusXM



BRYANT

PINO Director of Music Programming, SiriusXM



MARCOS

JUÁREZ Head of Latin Music, Pandora



TRINITY

COLON Vice President of Music Programming, SiriusXM

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Eslabon Armado

- **Age** Pedro Tovar Jr. (19), Brian Tovar (17), Ulises Vázquez (20)
- **Label** DEL Records
- **Publisher** DEL Publishing
- **Management** DEL Records
- **Total streams** 973 million

Just six months after Eslabon Armado's third album, *Corta Venas*, debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Regional Mexican Albums chart in January, the teenage band from Patterson, Calif., landed another chart-topper on the tally with *Tu Veneno Mortal, Vol. 2*. The 12-track set was the act's fourth No. 1 in less than 13 months. With new member Ulises Vázquez now in tow, the trio — which won top Latin album artist of the year, duo or group at the 2021 *Billboard Latin Music Awards* — doesn't plan to slow down. "I have a new strategy for the remainder of the year: release music when people expect it least," reveals group member Pedro Tovar. "I want to have that element of surprise like other mainstream artists have done."

Who has been most helpful in learning about the music business?

Pedro Tovar Our manager [and DEL Records founder] Ángel del Villar. He's always telling us to learn about the business, which I really appreciate. For example, I want to learn more about how royalties work. It's a process I don't fully understand, and one day, I'd like to have my own label and sign artists, so Ángel has been really motivating us to understand the business side of what we do.

Whose career do you most admire and why?

Grupo Firme's Eduin Caz. I've spoken to him before, and we text here and there. He's hardworking, and that's why Grupo Firme is huge right now. He has proven to many of us that our genre isn't limiting anymore, especially in the touring area. I mean, they played seven back-to-back shows at the Staples

Brian Tovar (left) and Pedro Tovar of Eslabon Armado photographed by Mary Beth Koeth on Sept. 22 at Faena Forum in Miami.

Center. He has taught me to never underestimate myself.

How did it feel to have Eslabon Armado take off while still in high school?

We released *Tu Veneno Mortal* during the second semester of my senior year, and a month after releasing it, everything started happening for us. Everyone at school start-

ed telling us that our songs were blowing up on TikTok. And a week later, I would get stopped by other students because they wanted a picture with me. It was crazy.

What's the first thing you splurged on?

[My brother, Brian Tovar, and I] bought our parents a house. That has been the most expensive thing we've ever bought.

Back in June, you mentioned feeling "fried" after writing four back-to-back albums. How have you managed that?

A few months ago, I was feeling burned out — and still there are days when I don't feel inspired — but I've learned to just let go and step back. It's all I can do because at the end of the day, I can't force myself to write. —GRISELDA FLORES

CONGRATULATIONS / LEVEL UP / NOAH ASSAD

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BILLBOARD'S LATIN POWER PLAYERS

Baby Keem

- **Age** 20
- **Label** PGLANG/COLUMBIA
- **Publisher** KEEM MUSIC
- **Management** PGLANG
- **Total streams** 326.4 MILLION

Baby Keem photographed
by Michael Tyrone Delaney
on Sept. 23 at Winston
House in Los Angeles.

● POP-PUNK TRIO **MEET ME @ THE ALTAR** (TÉA CAMPBELL, 20; ADA JUAREZ, 22; AND EDITH JOHNSON, 21) SIGNED WITH FUELED BY RAMEN IN 2020 AND JUST WRAPPED ITS FIRST U.K. TOUR.

Baby Keem has grown up fast. In a matter of five years, the musical multihyphenate went from a teenage Top Dawg Entertainment beatmaker to a trendsetting MC. In the last month alone, the Las Vegas native achieved his first top 20 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 with his single “family ties” featuring his cousin Kendrick Lamar and released his debut album, *The Melodic Blue*, which peaked at No. 5 on the Billboard 200. The album focused primarily on the rising rapper’s most vulnerable qualities: “If you believe that you’re the only one going through what you’re going through, you’re lying to yourself,” says Keem. “It’s therapy when you have someone to relate to. For me, that someone is my fans.”

Growing up, what did you want to be?

An astronaut or some sort of scientist. That was my thing. I’m very curious. I would break things and try to put them back together. And I think I found something that lets me do all of it. I just honed in on being curious, and music allows me to try new things and also venture out to other things. But, who knows? Maybe I’ll be an engineer one day.

What do you remember most about the process of getting signed?

I remember feeling blessed to have an opportunity to work with partners that help aid my visions. There was also a feeling of unrest, because the job wasn’t and still isn’t finished. I know there is still a lot of work to be done — I haven’t even scratched the surface. I intend to be around for a long, long time.

How did therapy help you open up in your music?

A lot of people are embarrassed by their families and what happened to them and their traumas. That was one of the reasons I even went to [therapy]. I’m telling this random person this, so I’m like, “Why can’t I just tell the world?” It gave me the confidence to really start expressing myself more in my music.

What’s one area of the industry you’re excited to explore and learn more about?

Technology. There is a whole world out there that I’m excited to explore further — the work of advancing humanity into its next era.

What’s your favorite social media platform?

If I had to pick one, I’d pick something unorthodox like Discord. I like it because it plays a part in engineering, a small piece of what’s to come in the future of communications.

Whose career do you most admire?

Rihanna, because she does what she pleases.

What’s the most “adult” decision you’ve made since turning 18?

Making the decision to live in the moment and enjoy these times with the people I have around me. Often it’s easy to get caught in the future or dwell on the past. —NEENA ROUHANI

Griff

- **Age** 20
- **Label** WARNER
- **Publisher** UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP
- **Management** DELEON BLAKE/GRUMPY OLD MANAGEMENT
- **Total streams** 185.5 MILLION

Adele, Sam Smith and Ellie Goulding are some of the past recipients of the Rising Star award at the BRIT Awards, which U.K. pop artist Griff took home in May ahead of the release of her debut mixtape, *One Foot in Front of the Other*, in June. Yet, Taylor Swift is the superstar whose career Griff most admires: “It always comes down to the fact that she’s such an incredible songwriter,” says Griff, who received a shout-out from Swift on her Instagram story in June. Griff’s own songwriting relies on clean hooks and sensual imagery, best heard on “Black Hole,” which became her first U.K. top 20 hit earlier this year.

Lil Tjay

- **Age** 20
- **Label** COLUMBIA
- **Publisher** SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING
- **Management** GRADE A
- **Total streams** 2.45 BILLION

After years of flirting with mainstream success as a guest on hits like Polo G’s “Pop Out” and Pop Smoke’s “Mood Swings” — both of which entered the Hot 100’s top 20 — Lil Tjay finally cracked the chart as a lead artist with this year’s “Calling My Phone” featuring 6LACK. Peaking at No. 3, the hit became the rapper’s first top five entry on the chart and introduced his second album, *Destined 2 Win*, which debuted at No. 5 on the Billboard 200. “I learn the most from seeing what I did right or wrong ... I learn from my own mistakes, but also from my success,” says Tjay. “[The industry] is always changing, and I’m a student of the game.”

jxdn

- **Age** 20
- **Label** DTA RECORDS
- **Publisher** WARNER CHAPPELL
- **Management** 724 MANAGEMENT
- **Total streams** 307.5 MILLION

Since jxdn signed with Travis Barker’s DTA Records last year, his 9.3 million TikTok followers have morphed into loyal music fans and helped the Chattanooga, Tenn., native (born Jaden Hossler) land multiple top 10 entries on *Billboard*’s Hot Rock and Alternative Songs charts. Following the July release of his debut album, *Tell Me About Tomorrow* — produced by Barker and featuring Machine Gun Kelly and iann dior — jxdn kicked off his first global trek, performed at Lollapalooza and is now opening up on MGK’s *Tickets to My Downfall* tour. “I’ve never seen someone so focused on the little details,” says jxdn of MGK. “He is involved in every single aspect of his career and I really admire that.”

Callista Clark

- **Age** 18
- **Label** BIG MACHINE RECORDS
- **Publisher** BIG MACHINE MUSIC
- **Management** SB PROJECTS
- **Total streams** 10.5 MILLION

At 13, Georgia native Callista Clark had a viral hit with her rendition of a Creedence Clearwater Revival classic, leading to a management deal with Scooter Braun’s SB Projects in 2019 and a recording contract with Big Machine. After Clark spent years writing and performing covers, her debut single, “It’s ‘Cause I Am” — off her February EP, *Real to Me* — reached No. 25 on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart. She’ll open on tour for Chris Young this fall and, outside of music, is eager to meet and collaborate with fashion designers. “Maybe one day I’ll even design my own outfit to wear on a red carpet,” she says.

Nessa Barrett

- **Age** 19
- **Label** WARNER
- **Publisher** SELF-PUBLISHED
- **Management** BLCKSHEP + 724 MANAGEMENT
- **Total streams** 260 MILLION

Nessa Barrett made a quick jump from TikTok stardom to the *Billboard* charts thanks to darkly alluring breakout alt-pop hits like “la di die” — featuring boyfriend jxdn and co-written and co-produced by his label boss, Travis Barker — and “i hope ur miserable until ur dead,” the latter landing on the Hot 100 in August. Her debut EP, *Pretty Poison*, was released on World Suicide Prevention Day in September, which she said was purposeful, “to show that there’s faith behind everything, and that everyone is able to be happy whenever it’s right for them.”

● THANKS TO A TIKTOK HIT, **CLAIRE ROSINKRANZ**, 17, SCORED A RECORD DEAL WITH REPUBLIC AND RELEASED HER MAJOR-LABEL DEBUT EP, *6 OF A BILLION*, IN JULY.



Jxdn (left) and Barrett onstage at Lollapalooza in August.



Moore Kismet

- **Age** 16
- **Label** THRIVE MUSIC/VIRGIN MUSIC
- **Publisher** N/A
- **Management** PRODIGY ARTISTS
- **Total streams** 3.3 MILLION

With singles and EPs dating back to 2018, in April Moore Kismet released their biggest collaboration to date with a remix of Tate McRae's "Slower." (The pair then co-wrote Kismet's forthcoming single "Parallel Heartbreak.") By October, the producer (born Omar Davis) became the youngest artist to play the Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas, and in September Kismet made their debut at Red Rocks in Colorado, opening for Alison Wonderland, who, alongside Skrillex, they count as idols. "Their respective journeys inspire me to be more open with my music and make my presence known," says Kismet. "I love them both so much for that."

Luis Vazquez

- **Age** 15
- **Label** JAK ENTERTAINMENT
- **Publisher** JAK ENTERTAINMENT
- **Management** JAK ENTERTAINMENT
- **Total streams** 1 MILLION

Luis Vazquez kicked off his music career at just 5 years old, having joined the musical group Los Bravitos de la Plena, founded by his musician father in Puerto Rico. By 2019, Vazquez was discovered by artist manager Andy Martinez, who signed him to his label, JAK Entertainment, with a 360 deal. Earlier this year, the now 15-year-old singer, whose biggest inspiration is Victor Manuelle, released "Tu Fan," an urban-infused salsa track that highlights his crisp, dulcet vocals. "Tu Fan" scored Vazquez his first No. 1 on *Billboard's* Tropical Airplay chart, making him the youngest soloist to arrive at the summit since the chart began in October 1994.

Grace VanderWaal

- **Age** 17
- **Label** COLUMBIA
- **Publisher** SONY/ATV SONGS OBO MAIDMETAL LIMITED
- **Management** LBI ENTERTAINMENT
- **Total streams** 100.8 MILLION

Grace VanderWaal shocked fans at the end of 2020 by trading her blond bob for a bright pink buzz cut, and the new music that arrived in early 2021 showed her 4.1 million Instagram and 933,600 TikTok followers that her evolution was not skin-deep. Starting in March, the 17-year-old released back-to-back alternative-pop singles that showcased a throatier vocal, bigger rock guitars and new collaborators, like producer Mike Elizondo (twenty one pilots, Fiona Apple, Turnstile). The ukulele-playing singer-songwriter added acting to her résumé in 2020 with a lead role in the Disney+ film *Stargirl*, and although VanderWaal has yet to announce her next album, listeners will hear new original music when the film's sequel drops in 2022.

Joshua Bassett

- **Age** 20
- **Label** WARNER
- **Publisher** BLACK DIAMOND ARTIST PUBLISHING/WARNER CHAPPELL
- **Management** FOUNDATIONS MUSIC
- **Total streams** 143.8 MILLION

Thanks to the Disney+ show *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*, Joshua Bassett became an instant Gen Z staple. With the series renewed for a third season and a chart hit under his belt ("Lie Lie Lie," a rumored response to co-star Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license," reached No. 25 on *Billboard's* Bubbling Under Hot 100 chart), Bassett is "dying to get on the road and tour." In the meantime, he's leaning on his A&R executive at Warner, Nate Albert, to teach him more about the industry while teasing new solo music for his 2.8 million TikTok followers: "The collaborative nature and content-focused algorithm is the peak of social media."

Youth Movement

How exactly do young talent who broke out amid a pandemic prepare to tour?

🎯 In late September, punk quartet The Linda Lindas played their first headlining gig since their performance of "Racist, Sexist Boy" at the Los Angeles Public Library went viral in May. Held at DIY space The Smell in their hometown of Los Angeles, the gig sold out within minutes. "It was really exciting to see that [fame] come offline and into a small venue," says the group's music agent, Carly James, at Creative Artists Agency (CAA).

Translating virtual success amid a pandemic into triumphant live shows is a conundrum many young artists now face. This year, over half of those included in *Billboard's* 21 Under 21 list identified touring as a field they want to learn more about. Meanwhile, agents and managers understand there's no one-size-fits-all strategy for a successful first run.

For example, with The Linda Lindas ranging from ages 11 to 17, a tour has to wait until summer 2022 once they're out of school. (It will also, according to James, have to include parents and chaperones.) 24kGoldn, however, is jumping right in. Following an opening slot on Cordae's 2021 tour, the 20-year-old rapper will kick off his *El Dorado* dates at the 1,500-capacity House of Blues in San Diego in November.

"The main preparation is the grueling long haul of the travel that he might not be used to," says 24kGoldn's manager, David Waltzer, of Electric Feel Entertainment. "The most trying hurdle he has to overcome is how to take care of himself [and] his voice to perform night after night." Waltzer adds that 24kGoldn played a series of festivals this summer, including New York's Governors Ball, to fine-tune his set for larger crowds.

That tactic has also been utilized by Tate McRae, whose 2021 has been full of festival appearances, from Lollapalooza and Firefly to Austin City Limits. Next year, she'll launch a headlining tour in the United Kingdom before returning to North America for 25-plus dates. "Festivals have kept her really busy, raised her profile and given her a chance to meet her fans in real life for the first time," says manager Matt Feldman of Hard 8 Working Group.

By the time McRae hit the festival scene this summer, fans were singing her lyrics back at her despite only playing a handful of shows before the pandemic. "Coming out of the pandemic we've had to quickly scale up the shows, and every time she gets better."

TikTok star Nessa Barrett is scheduled to perform her first headlining shows in New York and Los Angeles in November — both of which sold out within minutes, according to agent Matt Galle at CAA. Given the sales — and the fact she performed alongside jxdn in front of 50,000 festivalgoers at Chicago's Lollapalooza in August — Galle believes she's already a headlining artist. Even so, he says the plan is to avoid more than three shows in a row to save her voice.

But his most vital advice? "You only have one first tour. Remember to enjoy it." —TAYLOR MIMS

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES

● AFTER SIGNING WITH ATLANTIC IN AUGUST, POP SINGER-SONGWRITER **GAYLE**, 17, RELEASED HER DEBUT SINGLE, "ABCDEFU," AND WILL OPEN FOR WINNETKA BOWLING LEAGUE ON TOUR THIS FALL.



**CONGRATULATES OUR CEO
GUSTAVO LOPEZ**



**ON BEING NAMED TO
LATIN POWER PLAYERS**

Since breaking out in 2020 with “You Broke Me First,” an emotive hit that cracked the Hot 100’s top 20, Tate McRae has been enjoying success in the fast lane. The Canadian artist — who moved to Los Angeles and splurged on her first apartment after graduating high school — has scored collaborations with Khalid and Troye Sivan, performed at Lollapalooza and Governors Ball, and will soon hit the road opening for Shawn Mendes on his Wonder: The World tour. “My situation is so weird, because everything happened for me during a pandemic,” says McRae. “I haven’t been performing as much as usual artists. I’ve never experienced tour bus life. I’m just kind of going into everything blindfolded because I have no idea what to expect, and that’s the fun part about it.”

What surprised you the most after getting discovered and signed?

That nothing happens quickly or easily. It takes so much work, time and effort before you can even put out your first song. There’s so much that goes on behind the scenes that artists stress over for hours upon hours that no one will ever see. You write a million songs and end up releasing two. The process is so much more demanding than people realize.

Whose career do you admire most?

Zendaya. She has been an idol for me since I was super young. And it’s funny because usually your inspirations and idols change as you grow up, but the older I get the more respect I have for her. I watch her interviews, movies and projects all the time and I feel like she’s so invested in her art. The biggest thing that inspires me as an 18-year-old is how she presents herself. She’s one of the most educated, classy and admirable individuals.

What’s the biggest misconception about being a teen in this industry?

That we are so clueless and we’re going to say yes to everything. I feel like people think they can convince me way easier than they actually can. I’m super stubborn and also very opinionated at my age, and I feel like I can read through people so easily when they try to spitball me random information that clearly isn’t going to win me over, but they really think it’s going to. Our generation is way smarter than people think — people underestimate that.

What’s the most adult decision you’ve made since turning 18 this summer?

When I moved into my apartment and started writing my album, which I’m in the process of now, I realized everything is in my hands, and that’s terrifying. I was like, “I’m out of high school, I’m out of my family’s house, and I have no one around me to ask for a second opinion.” It was the first time where I was like, “Wow, I’m doing this on my own.” **B**

Tate McRae

- **Age** 18
- **Label** RCA
- **Publisher** SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING
- **Management** HARD 8 WORKING GROUP
- **Total streams** 1.4 BILLION



McRae photographed by Sami Drasin on Dec. 19, 2020, in Calgary, Alberta.

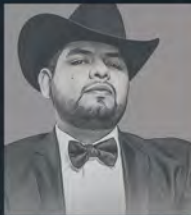
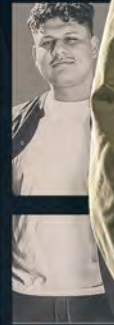
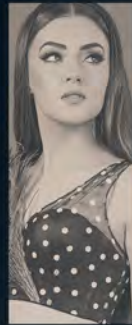
CONTRIBUTORS Katie Bain, Griselda Flores, Josh Glicksman, Lyndsey Havens, Carl Lamarre, Jason Lipshutz, Joe Lynch, Heran Mamo, Taylor Mims, Jessica Nicholson, Jessica Roiz, Neena Rouhani, Andrew Unterberger, Christine Werthman

METHODOLOGY A committee of *Billboard* editors and reporters weighed a variety of factors in determining the 2021 21 Under 21 list, including, but not limited to, impact on consumer behavior, measured by metrics such as album and track sales, streaming volume (listed here as each artist’s career global total to date), social media impressions and radio/TV audiences reached; career trajectory; and overall impact in the industry, specifically during the past 12 months. Where required, record-label market share was consulted using MRC Data market share for album plus track-equivalent and stream-equivalent album consumption units. Unless otherwise noted, MRC Data is the source for sales/streaming data.

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INDIE POWER PLAYERS 2021



ANGEL DEL VILLAR

CEO/FOUNDER



DEL
RECORDS

ARTISTAS EXCLUSIVOS

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ESLABON ARMADO
ULICES CHAIDEZ
T3R ELEMENTO
PANCHITO ARREDONDO
JOSE MANUEL
ANGEL PEREZ
LOS DEL LIMIT
BANDA CULIACANCITO

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EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR
NOAH ASSAD

CEO, RIMAS ENTERTAINMENT

BAD BUNNY's longtime manager has helped the Puerto Rican superstar conquer the world without compromising — or losing his independent streak

Assad (left) and Bad Bunny photographed by Devin Christopher on Sept. 22 in Miami.





LAST SEPTEMBER, in the thick of the pandemic, Bad Bunny livestreamed a performance from atop a flatbed truck decked out like a subway car that meandered through the streets of New York, thrilling fans and puzzling pedestrians all the way from Yankee Stadium, in the Bronx, to the Harlem Hospital Center. Over 10 million viewers watched the Univision-produced show stream on its Uforia platform, as well as Bad Bunny's YouTube channel. And like so many things Bad Bunny does — including surprise-releasing albums — the spectacle came with little warning, capturing the sense of spontaneity and fun that are central to the chart-topping artist's appeal.

That approach has been the hallmark of Bad Bunny's manager, Noah Assad, since they started working together in 2016. "Our day-to-day is we go eat, we share, we laugh, and, all of a sudden, we go into work mode," says Assad, 31. "We brainstorm, and if the idea comes, it comes. We take everything a day at a time. We don't treat it as rocket science."

This nonchalant demeanor belies the meticulous planning that goes into pulling off their vision — and the unimpeachable results. In the past two years, Bad Bunny has become the most successful Latin artist in the world and Spotify's 2020 most streamed artist globally in any language. He was *Billboard's* top Latin artist of the year, according to MRC Data, and last December, *El Último Tour del Mundo* became the first all-Spanish album to top the Billboard 200 in the chart's 63-year history. Prior to that, the highest-charting Spanish album was his *YHLQMDLG*, which debuted at No. 2 in March 2020.

"The No. 1 with an album 100% in Spanish meant everything to me," says Assad. "Like my grandmother says, 'It makes my heart sing.' And what people don't know is that my friend Bunny, when he's in love with a vision, he's in love with a vision. His vision was to release [*YHLQMDLG*] on Feb. 29, a leap year" — even though dropping the record that Saturday, instead of the standard Friday release, meant missing out on a day of streaming during MRC Data's tracking week and, Assad believes, ultimately cost

him the No. 1 spot at the time.

Bad Bunny's success goes well beyond streaming, though. His 2022 tour sold over 600,000 tickets during its first week of sales in April, generating \$64 million to \$84 million in revenue, *Billboard* estimates, and becoming the fastest-selling since Beyoncé and JAY-Z's joint *On the Run II* tour in 2018. Meanwhile, Assad has grown Rimas Entertainment, the company he founded in 2014 with José "Junior" Carabaño, from a small but profitable YouTube network that distributed and marketed music videos to what he describes as "the first one-stop shop created in the post-streaming era."

Rimas, which Assad says has grown to roughly 100 employees globally, serves as a full-fledged label, publisher, manager and booker with a roster that includes Bad Bunny, Arcángel, Tommy Torres and reggaeton duo Jowell y Randy, as well as highly regarded newcomers Mora and Eladio Carrión. He credits his success to being a good team player. "We collaborate with a lot of people very well," he says. "We work with everybody — with major labels, independent labels. We are always coexisting and helping each other out. That helps us as a label and as a company, and it helps everyone else, too."

In 2021, he signed Karol G as a management client via his newly launched Habibi management firm — Assad's father is Lebanese, and the name means "my love" in Arabic — making the Universal Music star the first artist he manages who is not signed to Rimas. Assad also struck a global distribution deal with longtime partner The Orchard, which includes the launch of Sonar, a new label dedicated to distributing young, indie partners; Assad and The Orchard are currently scouting talent across Latin America and Europe.

"My artists all have the same DNA: They're not looking sideways or comparing themselves to someone else," says Assad. "It's 'This is my vision, this is what I need.' My new philosophy is [to be] their friend. I do everything possible to accomplish their vision, to maximize, to monetize. I do 30% of the job, but the artist has to come up with the other piece. If an artist gives 100%, we're at 130%. There's always potential to grow and to develop."

—LEILA COBO

MAJOR MUSIC GROUPS

Alejandro Duque

President, Warner Music Latin America

Gabriela Martínez

GM, Warner Music Latina

Ruben Abraham

Vp marketing, Warner Music Latina

Txema Rosique

Vp A&R, Warner Music Latina

Hector Rivera

Vp A&R, Warner Music Latina

Duque became head of Warner Music Latin America (after Iñigo Zabala stepped down) as Warner bet big on developing talent in hot genres through its partnership with Rancho Humilde, with artists Junior H and Natanael Cano debuting at No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Albums chart. Warner Music Latina and Warner Records jointly signed an exclusive deal with Puerto Rican phenom Myke Towers and his indie label, White-world Music, and Warner Music Latina also signed Venezuelan rising star Micro TDH. Meanwhile, longtime Warner Music Latina act Justin Quiles continued charting with tracks like “Jeans” and “Loco,” from his new album that was released in August.

THE POWER OF LATIN MUSIC, IN A WORD

“Boundless” —DUQUE

Jesús López

Chairman/CEO, Universal Music Latin America & Iberian Peninsula

Angel Kaminsky

President, Universal Music Latin

Salomón Palacios

Senior vp marketing and strategy, Universal Music Latin

Skander Goucha

Executive vp e-commerce, business development and digital, Universal Music Latin America & Iberian Peninsula

Antonio Silva

Managing director, Fonovisa Disa USA/Mexico; management, Fonovisa Disa/Universal Music Latin Entertainment

Elsa Yep

CFO/executive vp operations, Universal Music Latin America & Iberian Peninsula (See story, page 86)

Afo Verde

Chairman/CEO, Latin-Iberia, Sony Music Entertainment

Alex Gallardo

President, U.S. Latin, Sony Music Entertainment

Maria Fernandez

COO/executive vp, Latin-Iberia, Sony Music Entertainment

Herb Payán

Senior vp digital strategy and auxiliary revenue, Latin-Iberia, Sony Music Entertainment



Towers

Rafael Arcaute

Global head of A&R, Sony Music Latin

Esteban Geller

Senior vp artist relations and marketing, U.S. Latin, Sony Music Entertainment

(See story, page 90)

LABELS & DISTRIBUTORS

Frabian Eli Carrion

CEO, Real Hasta La Muerte

Carrion has reveled in the success of Anuel AA and Ozuna’s joint album, *Los Dioses*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Top Latin Albums chart in February — after Anuel told *Billboard* that the pair had produced the set with a chart-topping bow in mind. Carrion’s recent achievements have extended beyond music. “I can’t believe that after two years of back-and-forth negotiations we were able to buy the Capitanes de Arecibo [basketball] franchise in Puerto Rico,” he says. “Owning a basketball team is another level of entrepreneurship that I’m excited to be tackling.”

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC “Staying relevant. A lot of people like to bring back sounds from the past, but we need to be pushing forward and not be afraid to try new things.”

Orlando “Jova” Cepeda José “Tito” Reyes

LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

Partners, Whiteworld Records

Whiteworld Records’ breakout star Myke Towers became one of the most streamed artists in the world in the past year, with 13 tracks on the Billboard Global 200 and nine top 10 hits on Hot Latin Songs. “This is something that we have worked hard for and [remained] consistent in putting out

music, which was key,” says Cepeda of Towers, who was the subject of a bidding war that ended in an exclusive global distribution pact with Warner Latina and Warner Records, as well as the “game-changer” release of Towers’ album, *Lyke Mike*, which debuted at No. 36 on the Billboard 200 and No. 3 on Top Latin Albums in May.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING

LATIN MUSIC “Lack of originality. Artists need to find their own sound and take a chance. There is always room to stay in a certain genre but making it [in] your own way.” —REYES

Tomas Cookman

CEO, Industria Works/Nacional Records

Cookman’s company includes a record label, artist-services platform Industria Works and a management division working to create a “new generation of future classics,” he says, citing recent signees in Spain including Love of Lesbian, Mala Rodríguez (who just released a best-selling memoir), Paula Cendejas and Fuel Fandango. The company’s catalog stream volume has doubled since January, he reports, and Cookman oversaw the 22nd edition of the annual Latin Alternative Music Conference, held virtually for a second consecutive year in May, with sponsorships doubling year over year. “We continue hiring and not firing,” he says.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC “To find ways to be a dominant and constant part of the global music business so that Latin music is not in the midst of yet another ‘Latino explosion’ with an ever-changing expiration date.”

Ángel del Villar

Founder/CEO, DEL Records

Del Villar, 41, recently signed DEL Records’ next promising stars, Los del Limit and Panchito Arredondo, and continues celebrating the successes of Eslabón Armado and Lenin Ramirez: the former for earning

its fourth No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Albums chart in less than 13 months and the latter for his viral Grupo Firme-assisted hit, “Yo Ya No Vuelvo Contigo.” Eslabón Armado also nabbed top Latin albums artist of the year duo/group at the 2021 Billboard Music Awards, “an unprecedented accomplishment for a completely new regional Mexican band,” says del Villar.

THE POWER OF LATIN MUSIC, IN A WORD

“Unstoppable”

Victor González

President, Virgin Music Latin America & Iberian Peninsula

This February, Universal Music Group relaunched Virgin Music as a global label and artist services company, with González taking the helm for Latin America. In a 22-year-career with UMG, he was most recently president of Universal Music Latin Entertainment. With his new role, he highlights the success of Virgin’s latest viral TikTok hit from Gera MX and Christian Nodal, “Botella Tras Botella,” which debuted at No. 1 on Spotify’s Global Songs Debut chart and No. 3 on Hot Latin Songs, and reached No. 60 on the Billboard Hot 100 — the first regional Mexican title to reach the all-genre chart in its 63-year history.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC “Logistics for Latinos during the pandemic. Minorities in the U.S. didn’t get enough support. Many of their territories of origin lacked access to vaccines, so COVID-19 will last longer for these communities.”

Jimmy Humilde

Founder/CEO, Rancho Humilde

(See story, page 100)

Gustavo López

CEO, Saban Music Group

López, 48, joined the startup Saban Music Group after a long career at Universal Music Group. After two years, he has achieved



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2021 LATIN POWER PLAYERS



three No. 1s on the charts, including Ch-esca, Pitbull and Frankie Valli’s “Te Quiero Baby” — and a handful of marquee TV appearances. Saban prides itself on global collaborations, like Israel’s Static & Ben El with Chesca and Pitbull, “tackling the task of living in the Latin space, the U.S. general market space and the international space under one roof,” says López, who signed a partnership in September with reggaetón legend Don Omar.

Andrés López Quiroga

Regional director, Latin Iberia ex Brazil, ONErpm

Digital music distributor ONErpm managed to grow during the pandemic, says Quiroga, 51, while “making our deals more flexible to accommodate artists and independent label needs in such hard times.” Changes included adding new territories and hiring experts in those countries, in every genre and service. “We have transformed ONErpm to become a modern full-service label, where our goal is to empower an artist’s music through experience, expertise and transparency,” he says.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Know your rights and responsibilities. Read your contracts before signing them. Think of your career, not only about how much money you are being offered.”

Joshua Mendez

Co-founder/COO, RichMusic

Over the past year, the RichMusic roster has expanded internationally. The Miami-based indie label, founded by father-son duo Richard and Joshua Mendez with Joshua’s uncle Jimmy Aquino, recently expanded to include singer-songwriter Thyago from Argentina and producers Animal and Symon

Dice from Colombia. Joshua also oversaw the re-signing of Dimelo Flow and marquee artist Sech, who renewed his multimillion-dollar recording and publishing deal in May. The company also unveiled its new Morplay Academy facilities to help develop new talent.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST “You have to be able to write your own music and be confident in a room full of other creatives to stand out. Also, it’s very important to find the right team that believes in your dreams and shares your same goals.”

Claudia Ochoa

Vp Mexico, The Orchard

Albert Torres

Laura Tesoriero

Vp Latin, The Orchard

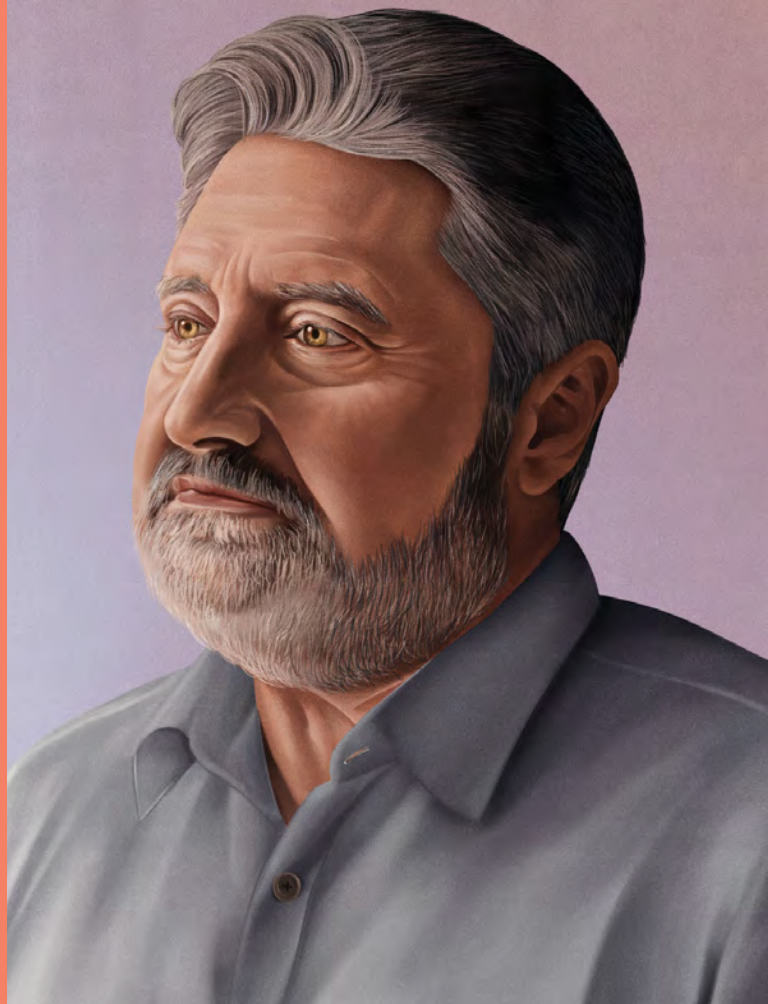
Inés Sapochnik

Director of sales and marketing, Latin, The Orchard

The Orchard strengthened its market share thanks to global distribution agreements with prominent labels like WK Records (whose “Fiel” by Los Legendarios with Wisin and Jhay Cortez hit No. 1 on the Latin Airplay chart) and Rimas Entertainment (home to Bad Bunny, whose album *El Último Tour del Mundo* became the first in Spanish to top the Billboard 200). The Orchard’s releases ran the gamut, from Marco Antonio Solís’ comeback single, “Se Veía Venir,” to Banda MS and Snoop Dogg’s edgy collaboration, “Qué Maldición,” released with partners Sony Music Mexico and Sony Music Latin. The Sony-owned indie distributor also welcomed key signings including Intocable, Alemán and Mexican hip-hop label Homegrown Mafia. “It’s been very challenging to successfully manage releasing massive hits and connecting with fans without live shows,” says Ochoa, 38.



Chesca



LÓPEZ LEADS UNIVERSAL LATIN’S BORDER-CROSSING SUCCESS

Under Jesús López, chairman/CEO at Universal Music Latin America and Iberian Peninsula, the company’s urban-leaning acts continue to chart throughout the globe, fluidly crossing barriers of language and genre.

While J Balvin and fellow Colombian Karol G may be Universal Latin’s most prominent success stories — Karol G scored her first No. 1 on Top Latin Albums with *KG0516*, the biggest week, by units, for a female-led album on the chart since 2017 — López says the company still thinks locally “so that our artists keep expanding their music outside their countries of origin.”

Via streaming, some of Universal’s brightest and youngest stars — including Colombia’s Sebastian Yatra (managed by Universal-owned GTS); Puerto Rico’s Jhay Cortez, Guaynaa and Feid; and Mexico’s Christian Nodal and Danna Paola — have done just that, achieving revenue-generating stardom. Regional Mexican labels Fonovisa and Disa also revamped their rosters with new signings such as Adriel Favela and his label, Esperanto, and Colombians Yeison Jiménez and Nabález.

And even as their touring was sidelined, legacy artists continued recording. “We are very proud of the achievements by artists who have created and released music during the pandemic, such as Juanes, Gloria Trevi, Alejandro Fernández, Alejandro Sanz and David Bisbal, among others,” says López.

As of Aug. 12, Universal’s U.S. label market share, including Disa and Fonovisa, stood at 24.65%, while as a distributor, it gobbled up a 36.83% market share, including the 5.73% share of Universal Music Group-owned distributor Ingrooves, according to MRC Data.

Beyond the U.S. market, executive vp e-commerce, business development and digital Skander Goucha led the expansion of Universal’s e-commerce business across Latin America and Iberia, and Universal now has direct-to-consumer operations in Brazil, Mexico and Spain, with more countries to launch this year. And CFO/executive vp operations Elsa Yep was instrumental in the launch of Virgin Music in Latin America, bringing that iconic brand to the region.

—LEILA COBO



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Ozuna

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Focus on the long term and building fans. The best thing they can do is show authenticity through their music. Fans are looking for deeper ways to connect to the artists they love.” —**OCHOA**

Juan Paz

Managing director, ADA Latin

The nascent Latin division of Alternative Distribution Alliance became “a key player in the distribution business in the region” in its first year of operation, says Paz, 48. “We’ve secured global distribution deals with some of the most respected labels and artists in Latin music.” Headquartered in Miami and operating in Latin America, Spain and Portugal, ADA Latin’s recent wins include global distribution deals with DJ Toy Selectah’s Worldwide Records and 17-year-old Los Angeles fixture Cosmica Records, as well as new signees, such as Puerto Rican producer Eduardo Cabra, singer-composer with the band Calle 13, and Brazilian acts Carlinhos Brown and Fernando & Sorocaba.

THE POWER OF LATIN MUSIC, IN A

WORD “Richness — in culture, diversity and flavor!”

Jason Peterson

Chairman/CEO, GoDigital Media Group

GoDigital has become deeply invested in Latin music with Latido Music, the Mitú network and YouTube multichannel network VidaPrimo, and it has completed the acquisition of “one of the largest and most culturally significant” Latin music catalogs, says Peterson, 39, who declined

“THERE ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES THAN EVER FOR LATIN ARTISTS TO REACH A GLOBAL AUDIENCE.”

BOB ROBACK, INGROOVES

to identify the acquisition at press time. Peterson has a budding conglomerate that also encompasses media rights manager AdShare and Cinq Music Group, a combination distributor/label/publisher.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I’LL CONTINUE

“Surfing. It creates such mental clarity.”

Bob Roback

CEO, Ingrooves Music Group

Distribution company Ingrooves keeps driving success for its independent label partners: DEL Records duo EsLabón Armado topped the Regional Mexican Albums chart four times in 13 months; Rich Music’s roster earned over 2.5 billion global streams in 2020, according to Ingrooves; and Sech’s *42* peaked at No. 7 on the Top Latin Albums chart. “We’re thrilled with the performance of Lunay’s *El Niño* album, which covered brand-new territory for the

artist. Carbon Fiber has had a great run with Milly, whose ‘No Te Enamores’ was a big hit in the U.S. and in Latin America. We’re also proud to be a part of the Neon16 Tainy/Yandel *DYNASTY* project, which has been successful here in the U.S., but also has had great international reach in Japan, Israel, India, Egypt and elsewhere,” says Roback.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC “The increased number of releases means it’s more important than ever to have a solid strategy for every release. You need to make sure your setup is flawless, and you need to focus on your core base first before breaking down barriers.”

Vicente Saavedra

President, Dimelo Vi

Saavedra’s Dimelo Vi label, in partnership with Sony Music Latin, released the

first four albums from superstar Ozuna between 2017 and 2020, sending each to No. 1 on Top Latin Albums. In May, Dimelo Vi unveiled the first solo album from Lenny Tavárez (of reggaetón duo Dyland & Lenny), whom Saavedra — a self-proclaimed “nontraditional manager” — represents. “My advice to young Latin artists would be to set priorities in their personal life and professional career, learn to create a balance between both and understand they need to have constant discipline,” says Saavedra, 39, citing Tavárez as “a great example of this.”

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE

PANDEMIC “Ozuna’s ‘Caramelo’ had a refreshing sound and rhythm, which led me to clear my mind and to not think about all the worries brought by the pandemic.”

Luis Sánchez

President/CEO, AfinArte Music

In September 2020, Sánchez’s Los Angeles-based regional Mexican label reached a new pinnacle when its breakout act, norteño duo Los Dos Carnales, earned their first No. 1 on Regional Mexican Airplay with “El Envidioso.” “AfinArte has established itself as a household name,” says Sánchez, 44, whose roster also includes El Fantasma and Voz de Mando. Despite the pandemic, the company reached a broader audience with virtual concerts like El Fantasma’s Tecate *El Patio* concert series. “We are dedicated to preserving the roots of regional Mexican music, and we are committed to ensuring that our culture gets the recognition it deserves.”

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE

PANDEMIC “El Fantasma & Los Dos Carnales’ ‘Cabrón y Vago.’ This song reminds us that money is not what makes us happy, but that the people around us are the cause of true happiness. It’s important to remember as a business owner.”

Nir Seroussi

Executive vp, Interscope Geffen A&M

Seroussi joined IGA in 2019 with the intention of creating the first full-fledged Latin operation within a major label. “This year, we kicked everything into high gear,” he says, launching Kali Uchis’ and Selena Gomez’s first-ever Spanish-language albums. Uchis’ *Sin Miedo (del Amor y Otros Demonios)* peaked at No. 3 on Top Latin Albums, and includes her first solo Hot 100 hit, “telepatía,” while Gomez’s *Revelación* debuted at No. 1.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“If you haven’t honed your songwriting skills, make it your priority. Challenge yourself. Get in rooms with writers who are better than you. Aim to become the best writer that you can be. It can be your most powerful advantage or greatest weakness as an artist. Songwriting is the one thing that never goes out of style, and it’s more important than ever.”

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Camille Marie Soto Malave
CEO, GLAD Empire

GLAD Empire continued to release hits, with Myke Towers and Juhn's top 10 Hot Latin Songs collab, "Bandido," leading the way with 143.2 million on-demand streams in the United States. The company also distributed Flow la Movie's release of the remix of "Travesuras" by Nio Garcia, Casper Mágico, Ozuna, Wisin & Yandel and Towers, which has achieved 62.3 million

on-demand streams. Beyond music, GLAD opened a gaming center to create and monetize gaming content and expanded its Orlando, Fla.-based facilities with a new media studio for livestream concerts, podcasts and content for its GLAD TV channel.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

"Read all your contracts thoroughly. If you don't understand the language, hire a lawyer whom you can trust to not sell you out for a cut of the deal."

MULTISECTOR

Henry Cárdenas

Founder/CEO, Cárdenas Marketing Network

In the first half of 2021, when few artists and promoters were placing major tours on sale, Cárdenas, *Billboard's* 2019 Latin executive of the year, announced Marc Anthony and Maluma arena runs,

which opened in August and September, respectively. Cárdenas also announced Bad Bunny's 2022 tour, which became the fastest-selling U.S. tour since 2018. The executive believes that the first bold move, which was then followed by an avalanche of announcements in different genres, represented "a big step forward for our industry amid so much uncertainty."

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"I am paying close attention to budgeting and analysis of spending to maintain financial efficiency. The silver lining in times like these is that inefficiencies are easier to identify and correct."

Pablo Casals

CEO, Elite Media and Marketing

In September 2020, Casals' Elite Media and Marketing, which books and produces Ozuna's shows, launched its own independent record label, AP Global Music, with a roster that included Fabiio, Joonti, Ache and DVILA. But Casals, 47, is most proud of "developing and nurturing" the company's breakout star, reggaetón artist Jay Wheeler, whose "career has skyrocketed and continues to flourish," thanks to his single "La Curiosidad," with DJ Nelson and Myke Towers, which peaked at No. 5 on Hot Latin Songs in January. "He has become one of the leading acts in urban Latin music," says Casals.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"Adapting to the reality of the moment and overcoming any obstacle that was

VERDE GUIDES SONY'S STARS — AND DEVELOPS NEW ONES

Sony Music Entertainment (SME) has had a year of explosive new Latin talent development combined with aggressive and flexible deal-making under chairman/CEO of Latin-Iberia Afo Verde.

Sony is home to Latin music's biggest roster of stars: Maluma, Enrique Iglesias, Ricky Martin, Shakira, Carlos Vives, Romeo Santos and Marc Anthony, among others. All of them released new material, while a close partnership with Sony-owned distribution company The Orchard generated opportunities for creative marketing and exploitation of Latin repertoire. Sony and The Orchard

combined had a 43.71% market share of the Latin market year to date in August.

"We worked closer [with The Orchard] than ever before, and we were able to provide A-class services to the talented Latin artistic community," says Verde, who not only negotiated hybrid deals but is also personally involved in The Orchard-distributed and Sony-marketed product of artists like Ozuna and Anuel AA. Sony also expanded its international clout with the acquisition of Som Livre, Brazil's leading independent domestic label, a move that ensures Sony's domination of Latin America's largest music market.

"We maintained a great number of releases, in a totally

different environment, and with the passion for what we do intact," adds Alex Gallardo, president of Sony Music, U.S. Latin, which scored global hits with the likes of Rauw Alejandro, Maluma and Natti Natasha, while SME COO/executive vp Latin-Iberia María Fernández worked on expanding Latin music's footprint in international markets.

"During the last months, artists like Maluma, Camilo, Rauw Alejandro, Nathy Peluso and many others had significant growth outside the Latin region," says Fernández.

Equally important, she adds, "The company has made a significant commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion. I am a member of task forces dedicated to these activities and completed a certification in this area from the University of South Florida to be better pre-

pared to help create change."

Despite the pandemic, says Verde, "we remained focused. We have such an amazing roster that produces mind-blow-

ing music, and we've been able to help them develop their projects, release their music and position it globally for their fans to enjoy." —L.C.



MALUMA: JOHN PARRA/GETTY IMAGES

thrown at us is definitely a skill worth keeping as we develop new artists and produce live concerts and tours.”

Eric Duars Pérez
CEO, Duars Entertainment

Duars Entertainment’s roster of six includes newcomer Eix and former Fifth Harmony member Ally Brooke. Most notably, the company is behind the success of Rauw Alejandro, who has released over 15 singles and two studio albums, including *Vice Versa*, home to the viral hit “Todo de Ti” that debuted at No. 1 on Top Latin Albums in July. Alejandro opened an international tour in July that includes some 50 dates, with four sold-out shows at the Coliseum of Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot among them. “As an independent label, releasing singles and developing their careers hasn’t been an easy job,” says Duars Pérez, 40.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Don’t quit working and fighting for your dreams, and do whatever is necessary to be heard.”

Jaime González
CEO, JG Music

In April, JG Music’s marquee management client, Christian Nodal (who also happens to be González’s son), broke a record for most No. 1s among solo artists on Regional Mexican Airplay with his 11th chart-topper, “Duele,” a collaboration with Alejandro Fernández. González, 42, also counts the May release of a joint album between Nodal and fellow JG signee Los Plebes del Rancho de Ariel Camacho, *Recordando a una Leyenda*, as a standout moment. The tribute album honored the late bandleader Camacho, who died in a

car accident in Sinaloa, Mexico, in 2015.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Stay focused and consistent, keep a positive attitude and strive to produce fresh, high-quality music.”

Walter Kolm

Founder/CEO, WK Entertainment; founder/owner, WK Records and WKMX
(See story, page 94)

Federico Lauria

Founder/CEO, Dale Play Records and Lauria Entertainment

For years, Lauria’s Dale Play has been cultivating the trap music movement in Argentina, led by the success of trap star Duki. The label’s artists, including Bizarrap, have become the face of the current scene. Another triumph: Nicki Nicole was one of the first contemporary Argentinian artists to gain mainstream TV exposure in the United States with an April appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Don’t focus on numbers. Focus on building a long-term career.”

Sergio Lizárraga

President/CEO, Lizos Music

After scoring a 2020 hit with Banda MS and Snoop Dogg’s anthem “Qué Maldición,” which peaked at No. 4 on Hot Latin Songs, Lizárraga pursued new territories by launching the Room 28 label in March to develop and manage pop and urban acts. The company’s roster includes newcomer Ingratax, who debuted on *Billboard*’s Global Excl. U.S. chart, and Lizárraga’s own daughter, Brianda. Earlier this year, he also signed Spanish pop star Natalia Jiménez to his booking agency, LM Events. “Staying

relevant is challenging,” says Lizárraga. “But I like a good challenge.”

MY PANDEMIC HABITS THAT I’LL CONTINUE

“Doing video calls and using antibacterial gel.”

Andy Martínez

Co-founder, JAK Entertainment

Martínez, 44, put together Rapetón Approved, a joint venture between his management clients Yandel and Angel “El Guru” Vera of the media brand Rapetón to develop new talent. “We’ve received over 3,000 emails from new talent, and are launching the first volume of music in Q4,” says Martínez. The Puerto Rican manager-promoter also helped develop 15-year-old salsa star Luis Vázquez, whose single “Tu Fan” topped Tropical Airplay, and is booking Myke Towers’ debut tour.

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

“ADMV” — “Love of My Life” — by Maluma. It’s my wife’s ringtone when I call her.”



Fabio Acosta

Founder, Vibras Lab

Acosta credits his “marathon-over-sprint” approach to management for recent achievements by his star client, J Balvin. The Latin sensation scored his 31st No. 1 on Latin Airplay with his Skrillex collaboration, “In Da Getto,” and surpassed 30 million subscribers on YouTube, maintaining his reign as one of the “top 10 most streamed artists in the world,” says Acosta. Vibras Lab describes itself as the biggest

business management company in the Latin music industry, with five of its clients among the top 10 Latin artists on the planet. Its management division has grown with Cazzu, Manuel Medrano, Cornetto, Yeison Jiménez and Agudelo 888.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“They must act as the president of their own company. Every movement and play they make should be very strategic.”

Nelson Díaz Martínez

LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

Founder, Flow Music

Díaz Martínez guided the release of Jay Wheeler’s second album, *Platonicos*, through Linked Music/EMPIRE, with the single “La Curiosidad,” with DJ Nelson and Myke Towers, spending 39 weeks on Hot Latin Songs. “Artists need to stay genuine when they introduce their style,” he says. “It’s a major key to success and making a difference as an artist.”

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING

LATIN MUSIC “[There are so many releases happening] that music is not getting the necessary attention that it needs for it to be successful. There is a very large amount of content being put out, and artists need to find a way to constantly innovate.”

Juan Diego Medina

Founder/CEO, La Industria

As touring shut down during the pandemic, Medina, 34, cultivated new revenue streams, investing in real estate as well as Nicky Jam’s La Industria Bakery and Cafe in downtown Miami, which opened in April. “It’s not enough to make good music or good songs,” says Medina, who also manages Manuel Turizo, ChocQuibTown and, most recently, producer Sky. “Nowadays, you have to be an influencer, YouTuber and content creator all at the same time — which can be a little hard to keep up with.”

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I’LL CONTINUE

“Cooking — and enjoying more time at home with family and loved ones.”

Jorge “Pepo” Ferradas

LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

CEO, FPM Entertainment

Ferradas’ new FPM Entertainment celebrated Camilo earning his fifth No. 1 on the Latin Airplay chart with “Millones” and Nathy Peluso’s viral collaboration with Argentine artist-producer Bizarrap for his *BZRP Music Sessions* series, which accrued 250 million YouTube views and nearly 140 million Spotify streams. Meanwhile, his client Lali landed a starring role in the hit Netflix series *Sky Rojo*, as did Evaluna Montaner on Nickelodeon’s *Club57*.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Play live as much as possible and understand that what matters the most always is having the best song possible.”



COURTESY OF NBC

Jorge Juárez

CEO, Westwood Entertainment

David West

Founder/Chairman, Westwood Entertainment

Westwood Entertainment has not only produced over 80 livestreams and signed clients that include Justin Quiles (for co-management) and Santa Fe Klan, it also offered new business ventures to its artists, including campaigns with brands like Michelob, Walmart and Nestlé. Other clients landed on TV, such as Reik's Jesús Navarro on *La Voz Colombia*, Yuri on HBO's *Bake Off Mexico* and Llane on Amazon's new series, *How to Survive Being Single*, to name a few. Amid the pandemic, "we had to diversify the business," says Juárez.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING

LATIN MUSIC "Not being able to do shows in Latin America and not having contact with people. Video conferences and calls will never replace the fact of closing a deal in person in an industry where intuition and hunches play an important role." —JUÁREZ

Paula Kaminsky

Manager, Sebastián Yatra; managing director, GTS U.S.

The post-pandemic comeback of Kaminsky's management client Yatra has included back-to-back hits, with his Guaynaa-assisted "Chica Ideal" and "Pareja del Año" with Myke Towers both reaching No. 1 on Latin Airplay. The Colombian star is currently on the road with Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias as a special guest on their joint tour. "The return to live entertainment brings many challenges, but strong presales prove that fans are ready to enjoy live music again in a big way," says Kaminsky, who also oversees the U.S. careers of GTS acts like Mariah Angeliq and Danny Felix.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"Not wearing shoes. Or maybe I'll have to let that one go."

Rebeca León

Founder/CEO, Lionfish Entertainment

León connected her marquee artist, Rosalía, with brands like Nike and *Vogue*, as well as star collaborators The Weeknd, Billie Eilish and Bad Bunny — all "without losing primary focus on what's been a complex new recording process in the midst of the pandemic," she says. León, who was named *Billboard's* 2020 Latin executive of the year, is also executive music producer of a Latin-themed remake of *Father of the Bride*, starring Andy García and Gloria Estefan. In addition, she manages st. Pedro and Lunay, whose sophomore effort, *El Niño*, debuted at No. 17 on Hot Latin Albums in June.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN MUSIC

"Touring is super limited, and artists and crews haven't been making money. And because there are so few live shows, the rest of the industry is off."



Rosalía

Alex Mizrahi

CEO, OCESA Seitrack

Luana Pagani

President, Seitrack US

Seitrack's star-studded management roster has thrived despite the pandemic. With Alejandro Fernández, Alejandro Sanz, Los Ángeles Azules and David Bisbal on the road, among others, Pagani says that Seitrack is "the only Latin management company whose artists will perform more than 150 shows during 2021 in the United States." In addition, the company expanded its roster by signing Joss Favela, Edith Márquez and Raymix, to name a few.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"Making decisions based on the things that really matter to me as a person and a family/team leader." —MIZRAHI

Polo Molina

Founder/CEO/artist manager, Grassroots Music

Known for his outside-the-box ideas, Molina recently celebrated management client Gerardo Ortiz's 10th anniversary by working with Univision on a live performance broadcast that involved "over 200 cars and Gerardo performing on a semi-truck throughout the streets of Los Angeles." Ortiz notched his 10th No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart last year with "Otra Borrachera." In addition to helping push the Black Eyed Peas and "Girl Like Me," with Shakira, to No. 1 on Latin Airplay in March, Molina pulled double duty as manager-A&R for the BEP's upcoming album, which he says is "due in 2021/2022."

THE POWER OF LATIN MUSIC, IN A WORD

"Iconic"

Nelson "Polo" Montalvo

President/CEO, La Buena Fortuna Global, La Buena Fortuna Music

Montalvo says the pandemic gave his clients time to work from home on new music and finish pending productions. "We had a very strong year with a lot of uncertainty, but we had our successes," he says. The results? Award show nominations and wins, including Latin Grammy triumphs for Kany García (best singer-songwriter album) and Pedro Capó (best pop song), plus wins for Residente and iLe.

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE

PANDEMIC "'Day by Day' by Pedro Capó. That song makes me think how grateful we are to be alive and to be able to enjoy life every day."

Diana Rodríguez

LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

Founder/CEO, Criteria Entertainment

Celebrating 30 years in the music industry — and the 10th anniversary of her company, Criteria Entertainment — Rodríguez, 50, has recently signed new management clients, including Mon Laferte and Nanpa Basico, while continuing to nurture the careers of Draco Rosa, Diamante Eléctrico and Francisca Valenzuela. But Rodríguez's focus is on "the uncertainty of markets like Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico due to sociopolitical or COVID-19-related matters," as well as oversaturation in the United States, leading her to ask, "How do you cut through the noise?"

"THIS YEAR HAS TAUGHT ME GRATITUDE. WE LOST SO MUCH, SO SUDDENLY. IT PUTS EVERYTHING INTO PERSPECTIVE."

LUANA PAGANI, SEITRACK US

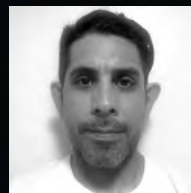
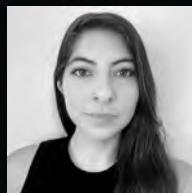
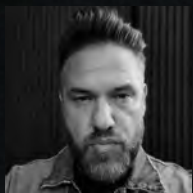
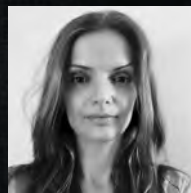
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as he always says, "it takes a village to be on these lists year after year."
This is our growing village ...





KOLM'S MID-PANDEMIC LABEL LAUNCH

As the pandemic sidelined his superstar management clients Maluma, Carlos Vives and Wisin from arena touring — their biggest source of revenue — WK Entertainment founder/CEO Walter Kolm took an educated gamble and started his own label, WK Records.

“We were on track to launch a label to develop new talent, and also, our artists wanted to develop their own artists, parallel to their own careers,” says Kolm. “Once the pandemic hit, we simply shifted our focus to the label.”

In July, WK Records celebrated its first anniversary, having notched two No. 1 hits on Latin Airplay with “Fiel,” from Wisin, Los Legendarios and Jhay Cortez, and “Mi Niña,” with Wisin, Los Legendarios and Myke Towers in association with Wisin’s label, La Base. That success, says Kolm, made it a “no-brainer” to launch his regional Mexican music label, WKMX, in July (with offices in Monterey, Mexico) and bring in former Universal Music Latin marketing executive Horacio Rodríguez as WK Records’ new CEO and WK Entertainment’s new head of music.

Today, WK is perhaps Latin music’s most successful management company, with a roster that also counts Emilia, CNCO and Prince Royce among its names and a one-stop shop that includes booking, promotion, branding and production divisions.

Kolm also oversaw the ascent of Maluma’s “Hawái” to the top of the Global Excl. U.S. chart and the track’s subsequent remix with The Weeknd, in addition to negotiating lucrative deals for Maluma with brands like Hennessy, Michelob (including a Super Bowl commercial) and Quay.

“Our job as a company is to strengthen and grow the artist’s brand so it doesn’t depend on the current hit, and our success as a company doesn’t depend on a current hit,” he says.

Now Kolm is looking forward to his artists returning to the road. Maluma kicked off an arena tour in September, and others are following in the next six months. “Thankfully, we begin to see a sense of normalcy in the very near future,” he says.

—L.C.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Know your market; have a strong, reliable team; commit; work hard; be constant; be true to yourself; listen; work harder; tour; network; and be patient. This is not a sprint nor a marathon. It’s a decathlon.”

Michel Vega

CEO, Magnus Media

Felipe Pimiento

COO, Magnus Media

In early 2020, Magnus Media finalized a first-look deal with Viacom International Studios to develop two shows: animated children’s series *Gloria Wants to Know It All* and comedy series *Liked*, which explores an influencer’s online persona versus her real self. The company, founded by Vega and Marc Anthony (who launched a 23-city tour in August), also partnered with Sony Music Latin to produce the forthcoming soundtrack for the animated film *Koati*. Plus, it has developed an energy drink, OCA, with beverage giant BELIV that “launched nationally and internationally in several foreign countries such as Guatemala, Panama and China,” says Vega.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

“Don’t let what is currently trending on the radio determine who you are as an artist. People want individuality. It’s better not to fit the mold.” —VEGA

STREAMING

Jennifer D’Cunha

Global head of Latin music, Apple Music

“Latin is now the fastest-growing genre on Apple Music both here in the U.S. and worldwide,” says D’Cunha. With her team, she has created the Supernova playlist to expose “risk-taking, young visionaries currently transforming Latin music,” the La Clika playlist for acts “who are revolutionizing Música Mexicana while drawing inspiration from contemporary hip-hop” and Bichota Radio on Apple Music 1, hosted by Karol G. Meanwhile, Apple Music’s City Charts playlists allow fans to see the top songs “in culturally significant music markets” in over 100 cities, including Madrid; Mexico City; Miami; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Medellín, Colombia; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Santiago, Chile; and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Rocío Guerrero

Global head of Latin music, Amazon Music

Guerrero expanded Amazon Music’s global reach by launching Amazon Music LATÍN, a new destination and brand developed to celebrate the many genres and artists of Latin music. Apart from her efforts, in April, it was announced that

CMN, Amazon Music LATÍN and Twitch have united for the launch of ¡LatinUp!, a new content platform. Latin music listening has grown 94% year over year on Amazon Music, the company reports.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I’LL CONTINUE

“Dancing Zumba every morning virtually with a group of friends. There is no better way to start the day.”

Sandra Jimenez

Director of music partnerships, Latin America, YouTube

Mauricio Ojeda

Manager of music label partnerships, U.S. Latin, YouTube

AJ Ramos

Artist relations manager, YouTube Music

The introduction of YouTube Shorts in all Latin American countries was “an important highlight for the region,” says Jimenez, whose team was responsible for coordinating the rollout and educating artist and label partners about the product. That spells competition for TikTok: YouTube, the world’s de facto video platform that has about 2 billion monthly logged-in viewers, is especially popular in Latin America.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING

LATIN MUSIC “Providing equal opportunities for our Afro-Latino artists. With the launch of the #YouTubeBlackVoices Fund, we were proud to have artists in our region represented within the cohort of grantees. Artists such as Myke Towers, Péricles, Urias, MC Carol and RAEL received widespread partner support to help create more visibility and growth for their channels and overall career development.” —JIMENEZ

Marcos Juárez

Director of Latin music, Pandora Media

Azucena Olvera Vidaurri

Director of Latin talent and industry relations, SiriusXM and Pandora

In 2021, Pandora launched Satélites, a new content initiative designed to “highlight the next generation of artistic protagonists and innovators throughout ‘satellite’ regions of Latin America, the U.S. and the Caribbean like Colombia, Panamá, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Argentina,” says Juárez, 42. The streaming service turned its *El Pulso* performance series into virtual events during the pandemic and offered exclusive content from artists like Maluma and Bad Bunny. Meanwhile, its sister satellite radio platform, SiriusXM, has also rapidly expanded its Latin content with new hubs and channels.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC “Representation of the diversity of Latin American culture. The more that we truly normalize, celebrate and amplify the diversity of our beautiful Pan-Latin American culture, the better off society will be.” —JUÁREZ

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2021 LATIN POWER PLAYERS

Mauricio Mendoza

LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

Head of content and industry relations, Americas, Deezer

In a competitive streaming field, Mendoza, 46, recruits stars to develop original content that helps Deezer, an early entrant in many Latin American countries, compete against Spotify and Apple Music. Among the most notable Deezer Originals is the podcast *Atrapados*, offering a “stellar cast” of voice actors and sound design to examine the physical and mental effects of confinement during the pandemic, says Mendoza. For *Reggaeton Acústico*, a Deezer Originals music album, Deezer created acoustic versions of hits by Camilo, Reik, TINI, Justin Quiles and Pedro Capó. “This project proves there are powerful voices and lyrics behind some of today’s most popular reggaeton songs,” he says.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN MUSIC “As Latin music becomes more mainstream and global, it’s also quite easy for emerging subgenres to get grouped together under one Latin genre, when in fact there are so many local flavors and subgenres that make Latin music distinct.”

Mia Nygren

Managing director, Latin America, Spotify

Juan Manuel Rótulo

Head of editorial, Latin America, Spotify

Antonio Vázquez

Head of U.S. Latin, editorial, Spotify

Spotify is “the largest driver of revenue for the recorded-music industry in the Latin markets,” says Nygren, 48, who oversees the Latin American region for the streaming platform. Rótulo’s team curates key

playlists, including *Mansión Reggaeton*, the regional Mexican-focused *La Reina* and Brazil’s *Esquenta Sertanejo*. Vázquez leads the U.S. Latin editorial team at Spotify responsible for playlists like *¡Viva Latino!* and *Baila Reggaeton*, with over 10 million followers each. Spotify continues to bolster its Latin footprint, with the Latin American region now representing 22% of the streaming service’s monthly active users and 20% of its subscribers, while Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny was the most streamed artist on the platform in 2020, the company reports. It was a “true testament to the power of fans that can’t get enough of Latin music and the muscle of Latin markets,” says Nygren.

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE PANDEMIC “‘Muriendo de Envidia’ by C. Tangana [and Eliades Ochoa]. The experimental song mixes many different sounds, just like the pandemic, and was a huge surprise to us all when the rules and norms changed drastically.” —NYGREN

PUBLISHING

Néstor Casonú

President, Kobalt Latin America

In recent months, Casonú has guided contract renewals for chart-topping artists such as Carlos Vives, Ozuna and, most recently, artist-producer Ovy on the Drums (Karol G’s go-to producer), whose deal includes a full range of creative, synch and administration for his catalog and future works. Kobalt, recognized as ASCAP Latin’s 2020 independent publisher of the year, also signed new

songwriters, including Justin Quiles, Bryant Myers, Yampi and Dynell.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN MUSIC “To realize how the pandemic affected the collections of the societies in the region and, as a result, how that effect trickled down to creators and publishers. At the same time, it will be interesting to see how the boom in streaming will offset that loss of collections.”

Alexandra Lioutikoff

President, Latin America and U.S. Latin, Universal Music Publishing Group

UMPG organized global synch song camps on Zoom for writers, artists and producers from 14 countries, says Lioutikoff, as well as coordinated a series of collaborations that charted on Spotify — from Mahmood, Sfera Ebbasta and Feid’s “Dorado” to Takagi & Ketra, Elodie and Mariah Angeliq’s “Ciclone.” In March, UMPG also won BMI’s Latin publisher of the year honor. And Lioutikoff’s new signings include Carla Morrison, KHEA, Feid and Horacio Palencia.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST “Be open to collaborations and pursue innovation through technology. Doing live shows is not yet possible in many markets, so you have to be clever to reach, maintain and increase your fan base, be it via livestreams, socials or virtually.”

Jorge Mejía

President/CEO, Sony Music Publishing Latin America and U.S. Latin

Under Mejía, 48, Sony Music Publishing in March was honored as ASCAP’s Latin publisher of the year for the 17th time in 19 years, and in June, it was named SESAC’s Latin publisher of the year for the sixth consecutive time, thanks to hits like Colombian singer-songwriter Manuel Turizo’s “La Nota” and “Quiéreme Mientras Se Pueda.” The awards “highlight the excellence of our writers and, of course, the excellence of our team,” says Mejía. Under his purview, Sony signed young hit writers from Keitlyn and Jay Wheeler to Nicki Nicole and Bizarrap in addition to extending the reach of fixtures like Daddy Yankee.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST “There has never been a better time in the history of Latin music to be a young Latin artist. You are standing on the shoulders of many. Use that vantage point well.”

Gustavo Menéndez

President, U.S. Latin and Latin America, Warner Chappell Music

Menéndez’s publishing team in the past year signed talent like superstar singer-songwriter Marco Antonio Solís and rising banda and norteño hitmaker Joss Favela while encouraging experiments from roster fixtures like Rauw Alejandro’s funky smash “Todo de Ti,” which became his first top 40 hit on the Hot 100 in July. “It’s going to be important to keep grow-

ing and to stay relevant,” says the 21-year Warner Chappell vet. “We’ll all have to find new ways to keep building on past accomplishments and innovating.”

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST “This is a marathon, not a sprint.”

Eli Ponce

Director of A&R, BMG

During the past year, Ponce, 40, has celebrated nine platinum and two gold singles by writers on BMG’s roster, plus multiplatinum certification of the single “Yo Ya No Vuelvo Contigo,” by Lenin Ramirez featuring Grupo Firme. BMG also extended co-publishing agreements with Cuban superstars Gente de Zona and Puerto Rican duo Domino Saints, while signing Colombian producer Zenzei — who co-wrote Manuel Turizo’s Latin Airplay No. 1 “La Nota,” with Myke Towers and Rauw Alejandro — to a global publishing deal.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN MUSIC “Achieving racial diversification. It’s important for us to address all the challenges and racial-justice issues faced by Afro Latinx artists and executives at music companies.”

MEDIA

Raúl Alarcón

CEO/chairman, Spanish Broadcasting System

Albert Rodriguez

President/COO/executive vp, Spanish Broadcasting System

Jesús Salas

Executive vp programming, Spanish Broadcasting System

In June, Rodriguez rose to become the first new president of SBS in over 35 years, succeeding Alarcón, whose two daughters maintain key roles in the company. The portfolio of the largest minority-owned and -targeted media and entertainment entity in the United States spans top-rated radio formats (with Salas overseeing music programming across all SBS platforms), including flagship outlet WSKQ-FM New York — the No. 1 Spanish-language station in the country — as well as its Aire Radio Networks, streaming app LaMusica (led by Bianca Alarcón), news and political commentary network MegaTV and concert promoter SBS Entertainment (led by Alessandra Alarcón). With plans to relaunch mass concerts this fall, Rodriguez is most proud of the company’s ability to “inspire and entertain our people,” he says, “with more content, initiatives and experiences than ever before.”

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I’LL CONTINUE

“I ask myself every day, ‘What am I doing today to make a positive impact for our community?’ Those small, kind gestures go a long way.” —RODRIGUEZ



Balvin

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LATIN POWER PLAYER



Eddie Orjuela

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Trinity Colón

Vp music programming, SiriusXM

Bryant Pino

Director of music programming, SiriusXM

Colón launched new programming and projects, including channels Viva 90s/2k Hits and Chucho's Cuba and Beyond — created with legendary Cuban bandleader Chucho Valdés — as well as African/Latinx channel Tropix. Virtual SiriusXM Town Hall specials featured artists such as Piso 21 and Victor Manuelle, and wrapped 2020 with a New Year's special featuring J Balvin. "It was a challenging year, but [we were] able to continue to inform, entertain and create compelling content for our subscribers and Latino community," says Pino.

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE

PANDEMIC " 'Rhythm Is Gonna Get You' by Gloria Estefan from *Brazil305*. It's familiar, comforting and a fun escape, and is a reminder that we are all united in this global fight." —COLÓN

Henrique Fares Leite

Head of music development, Latin America, Bytedance

"Latin America is the region that most uses music to create videos on TikTok," says Fares Leite, fueling hits like Kali Uchis' "telepatía," which hit the Billboard Global 200 top 10 after it was used in over 1.7 million TikTok videos. Fares Leite, who joined TikTok's parent company, Byte-dance, in 2019, also cites the launch of its music streaming platform Resso in Brazil in August as another recent milestone. "We are proud to empower the diversity that is Latin music," he says.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST "Be true to yourself. Data is there to support your uniqueness and singularity. Stick to what you have and develop the creative ideas you really believe in. The data may serve to empower your artistic path, not substitute it."

Adrian Harley

Head of music label partnerships, Latin America, Facebook

Alvaro de Torres

International music publishing manager, Facebook

In addition to coordinating Facebook's partnerships with Latin music stars on vari-

ous projects — including Karol G's first full live performance of her *KG0516* album, a Natti Natasha livestream for Mother's Day and Instagram Reels for multiple J Balvin singles — Harley and his team offer education to the music industry through webinars, trainings and workshops. They also helped the company launch video hosting in Mexico last March, following the U.S. debut of the service in 2020. "During this time, we have seen that the audience in Mexico is hungry for music videos," says Harley. The launch "is something we are very proud of."

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST "Be bold, learn the rules of the system and then break them in your own way." —HARLEY

Jesús Lara

President of radio, Univision Communications

Ismar SantaCruz

Senior vp radio content, Univision Communications

Ignacio Meyer

Executive vp music and non-scripted entertainment, Univision Communications

With its broad reach on radio (driven by Lara and SantaCruz) and its TV programming (guided in part by Meyer), Univision is the preeminent provider of Spanish-language content in the United States. During the past year of canceled concerts, Bad Bunny's September 2020 live online performance atop a bus traveling throughout New York "broke the internet" for Univision's digital Uforia Live platform, says Lara, while the Univision Radio network gained a 16% linear audience increase in the first half of 2021 and saw the return of its Uforia live events. Meanwhile, Meyer's prized achievements included the Latin Grammy Awards in November, the Premio Lo Nuestro in February and Premios Juventud in July. The latter, he says, "shed light on the humanitarian crisis in Cuba with a powerful moment that included superstars Camila Cabello, Emilio Estefan and Pitbull."

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC "To adapt to the post-pandemic world. Our industry has been forever changed, as have our audience's expectations. During the past year, we relied on technology to find more ways to bring the viewers closer to the programming. Now



Karol G

we are going to have to keep innovating and using new technologies to continue to put them in the front seat." —MEYER

Enrique Santos

President/chief creative officer/on-air talent, iHeartLatino

Pedro Javier González

Senior vp programming, iHeartLatino

iHeart partnered with its nationally syndicated morning host Santos to launch the My Cultura podcast network, dedicated to elevating Latinx voices, and continued to expand the iHeart Latino network that includes over 25 stations across the country, plus partnerships in Mexico and Puerto Rico. Next up: bringing a live audience back to this October's iHeartRadio Fiesta Latina. "[We continue to] be a driving force in Latin music across the country, amplifying Latin artists' most compelling elements," says González.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"Listening. I have become a much better listener." —SANTOS

Francisco "Cisco" Suárez

Executive vp primetime realities and specials, Telemundo

Telemundo adapted during the pandemic to "maintain our productions," says Suárez, noting the 2020-2021 season offered over 3,000 hours of content, including new daytime entertainment show *En Casa con Telemundo* and virtual

music festival *Concierto en Casa* that featured sets by Luis Fonsi, Alejandro Sanz and Gloria and Emilio Estefan, among others. The network also produced fully live editions of the Billboard Latin Music Awards and the Latin American Music Awards mid-pandemic. "It's beyond rewarding to look back and admire our team's resilience and the way we overcame challenges to keep our shows on the air," he says.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"Making a conscious effort to eat three meals a day. Before the pandemic, I was always so focused on work that I would constantly skip meals. I've learned that I need to stop and eat."

AGENCIES

Bruno del Granado

Music agent, Creative Artists Agency

Rudy Lopez Negrete

Music agent, Creative Artists Agency

Since the Los Angeles-based Lopez Negrete joined in 2019, CAA has more than doubled its branding deals for Latin clients to make up for the gap from touring revenue. Since the pandemic, top Latin clients including Maluma, Jennifer Lopez, Anthony Ramos and Leslie Grace secured new partnerships. Del Granado signed Anuel AA and Residente, among others, and negotiated a starring role for Gloria Estefan in the remake of *Father of the Bride*, while Ricky Martin became part owner of Chilean cosmetic line Kumiko. The next step is to get artists "back on the road," says Lopez Negrete, 41.

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE

PANDEMIC "My dad led BMG Mexico for a number of years, and I grew up listening to all of his label artists, including my all-time favorite, Caifanes. I put 'La Célula Que Explota' and other Caifanes hits on repeat a lot of days." —LOPEZ NEGRETE

"THE ENERGY OF LIVE PERFORMANCES FUELS THE SOULS OF THESE ARTISTS."

CISCO SUÁREZ, TELEMUNDO



CONGRATS

JASON PETERSON

**FOR BEING NAMED A 2021 BILLBOARD
LATIN POWER PLAYER**

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MUSIC GROUP

Richard Lom
Richard Vega
Music agents, WME

This fall, WME client J Balvin hosted the sold-out, multivenue Neon Experience in Las Vegas, and will host Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic in December, in addition to headlining performances at Baja Beach Fest, Governors Ball and Outside Lands. Tainy, who became the first Latin producer signed to WME, joined Balvin's bill in Las Vegas, while WME client Farruko will kick off his U.S. and Puerto Rico arena tour in November. WME is also developing new Latin acts including Aleesha, Arath Herce, Nobeat, Pink Pablo and Nicki Nicole.

THE POWER OF LATIN MUSIC, IN A WORD
"Global" —LOM

Toni Wallace
Co-head of global music brand partnerships, UTA
Jbeau Lewis
Agent, music leadership, UTA

Lewis, 41, calls UTA client Bad Bunny's rise to global stardom "a marvel to behold." The UTA team was especially proud when the Puerto Rican phenom's 2022 *El Último Tour del Mundo* became the fastest-selling tour since 2018 when it went on sale in April. After moving 480,000 tickets in less than a week, the 35-date engagement is now entirely sold out. Says Lewis, "The influence Bad Bunny wields today in popular

culture — not just Latin music — is simply staggering."
THE POWER OF LATIN MUSIC, IN A WORD
"Transcendent" —LEWIS



Nelson Albareda
CEO, Loud and Live
Edgar Martínez
Senior vp entertainment, Loud and Live

Loud and Live expanded its content division with Loud and Live Studios, which produced livestreams and short- and long-form content for such platforms as HBO and YouTube with artists like Juan Luis Guerra, Farruko and Nicky Jam. Loud and Live is "on pace to produce over 400 shows and \$150 million in ticket revenue through 2022 in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico alone," says Albareda, 45, with tours by the likes of Camilo, Ricardo Arjona and Carlos Vives. However, the promoter is proudest of its role in brokering the "historic partnership" between J Balvin and McDonald's, which, says Albareda, cemented Balvin "as the first Latino ever to be featured on the brand's menu."

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST
"Never give up. Never surrender. This career is harder than working at NASA. You can study and sing like the gods and still not make it." —MARTÍNEZ

Jared Braverman
Senior vp touring, Live Nation
Hans Schafer
Senior vp touring, Live Nation
Emily Simonitsch
Senior vp booking, Live Nation

Schafer helped book Aventura's reunion tour of stadiums from Miami to Los Angeles, its "final run of shows as a group," he notes. He also booked Alejandro Fernández's fall tour, and has worked with Romeo Santos, Bukis and Christian Nodal. Braverman booked Maná's record-breaking *Rayando el Sol* trek in 2019, which had the strongest on-sale for the band in its three-decade history, Live Nation reports. Simonitsch organized Pepe Aguilar's Jaripeo Sin Fronteras arena tour, which has included horse shows, charrería competitions, bull riders and more. She also booked Banda MS at the North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre in South Dakota to support the music of Mazatlán, Mexico, and Grupo Firme in Las Vegas for three shows at MGM Grand in a co-promotion with Viva Entertainment.

Eddie Orjuela
LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

Latin talent buyer, *Nederlander Concerts National*; chief executive, *Orjuela Entertainment*
Orjuela landed one of the biggest bookings of his career after locking down a

seven-night stint for Grupo Firme at Los Angeles' Staples Center this summer, all played at full capacity. Among headliners with the most consecutive shows at the arena, it now ranks second only to Adele (who played eight nights in 2016). "Nederlander's Latin music footprint has expanded dramatically, and I am thrilled to continue booking sell-out artists," says Orjuela, who also did bookings for cumbia group Los Ángeles Azules and Franco Escamilla.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST
"Expose and promote yourself and your music as much as possible in all areas of the Latin music business and network. Build your tribe."



Manuel Abud
CEO, *The Latin Recording Academy*
Abud was named CEO of the Latin Recording Academy in May and previously had been its COO. In that role, he led a major reorganization of the academy, with a focus on digital content development, and his awards team shepherded a record high of over 20,000 entries for the 22nd annual Latin Grammy Awards that will take place on

HUMILDE TAKES REGIONAL MEXICAN GLOBAL

Jimmy Humilde's first foray into the music business was in 1993, when he was 14 years old and organizing neighborhood parties in his friends' backyards in Los Angeles.

That entrepreneurial, DIY approach continued with his launch of Rancho Humilde, the independent promotion company and label, which he runs with business partner José Becerra and CFO Roque Venegas. Informed by crowd reaction to live performances, Humilde has signed mostly local, underground regional Mexican acts since 2011, fueling their success with a nontraditional digital marketing

approach that initially didn't rely on radio or TV. Things really clicked in 2019 when Humilde tapped into a wave of acts like Fuerza Regida and Natanael Cano, who mixed traditional *corridos* with rap and trap. Those artists effectively ushered in a new subgenre of Mexican music that found wide acceptance with a young generation of bilingual, bicultural listeners — and helped redefine regional Mexican music.

In October 2020, Humilde broadened his horizons and partnered with Warner Music Latina in a distribution and development deal where Atlantic Records is a "key ally," he says. The goal is to create a global market for a genre

that carries "regional" in its very name. (Humilde doesn't care for the term.)

"I am grateful that our Latin artists are finally competing with the Anglo market," says Humilde, "and I want to thank all my colleagues for bringing our music to the next level."

Rancho Humilde has consistently sent titles to No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Albums chart, including releases by Alta Consigna in 2017, Legado 7 in 2018 and Cano in 2019 and 2021. The label kept that streak alive when newcomers Porte Diferente debuted in the top spot for the week ending Oct. 9, 2020. Meanwhile, Cano's catalog has generated 797,000 album consumption units, and he was the third-most-consumed Latin artist of 2020 in the United States, according to MRC Data's 2020 midyear report. —L.C.



Nov. 18. The entry process was managed remotely for the second consecutive year due to COVID-19. But amid the academy's success, Abud worries about the turmoil of Latin American economies, which can affect arts funding and music education, leaving "a great deal of talent in Latin America waiting to be discovered. This impacts the industry, hindering diverse representation and growth of Latin music."

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE "Working remotely from Valle de Bravo, Mexico."

Javier Asensio

Regional director of Latin America, IFPI
Asensio is responsible for coordinating the activities of IFPI's affiliated record-industry trade groups across Latin America and

developing the region's digital market on behalf of its record-label members. In the past 12 months, IFPI obtained a blocking order against Peru's biggest digital piracy site, Y2mate.com, and led successful actions against 65-plus streaming manipulation operations in Brazil. Those victories, together with improved market reporting practices, helped recorded-music revenue in Latin America increase by 15.9% to \$779 million last year, according to IFPI's Global Music Report — making it the fastest-growing region globally.

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE PANDEMIC " 'Rayando el Sol' from Maná [featuring Pablo Alboránis]. Maná is my favorite band, and this song expresses loss and looking for an answer."

"NO MATTER WHERE YOU COME FROM, LATIN MUSIC CAN SPEAK TO YOU."

RODRIGO NIETO-GALVIS, CITY NATIONAL BANK



Rodrigo Nieto

LATIN POWER PLAYERS PICK

Vp/team leader, entertainment banking, Miami, CN Bank

City National Bank, a key financial partner of the music industry in all genres, does business in Florida as CN Bank. During the pandemic, it aided its clients by helping them access the federal Paycheck Protection Program loans and other ways of strengthening their finances, says Nieto. As the pandemic continues in Latin America, he cautions, "We're seeing the industry hurt because artists can't travel, because concerts still aren't allowed and because businesses are still closed."

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

"Remember that a career works as a business, and getting the right team — lawyers, bankers and managers who really understand the industry — is crucial to running that business successfully."

RIGHTS GROUPS

Gabriela González

Vp U.S. Latin and Latin America membership, ASCAP

At ASCAP, González has helped foster the next generation of Latin talent, particularly by "helping and encouraging women who are beginning their careers in the music industry," she says. González secured opportunities for up-and-coming female ASCAP Latin songwriters in various platforms and programs. In the past year, she also renewed ASCAP's agreements with top Latin hitmakers — such as Joss Favela, Carlos Vives, Pedro Capó, Maná's Fher Olvera, Nino Segarra, Luis Ortiz and Urbani Mota — and welcomed new members Natalia Jiménez and Alejandro Sanz.

MY ADVICE TO A YOUNG LATIN ARTIST

"Co-write, learn and get familiar with the ins and outs of the business, and try to always be involved in all the decisions that will affect your career."

Jesus González

Vp creative, Latin, BMI

After joining BMI during the pandemic, González doubled down on executing signature virtual events, such as the 2021 BMI Latin Awards and the BMI Showcase at the Latin Alternative Music Conference, while also helping retain agreements with key BMI members like powerhouse Espinoza Paz and up-and-coming producer Caleb Calloway. As a member of Voto-Latino's Impact Council, González also participated in Get Out the Vote initiatives and "helped turn out the Latinx vote in record numbers," he says.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING LATIN

MUSIC "The need to educate our [members] on the importance of metadata and its impact on proper credits for musical works is critical. Bad metadata results in billions in revenue not making it to those who earned it."

Celeste Zendejas

Vp creative, SESAC

Zendejas advocates for SESAC's many record-breaking members, including Nicky Jam, Erika Ender, Christian Nodal, Manuel Turizo and Calibre 50 lead singer Edén Muñoz. SESAC writers collectively scored 30 No. 1 songs on the charts in 2020 and the first six months of 2021, according to the rights organization. This June, Turizo and Muñoz were both recognized as songwriters of the year at the annual SESAC Latina Music Awards. It marked the first time that the top songwriting honor was presented in two categories — regional Mexican and pop/Latin rhythm — and the second win in the category for Muñoz.

MY PANDEMIC HABIT THAT I'LL CONTINUE

"I recently developed a video podcast, *Regalías 101*, with Amelia Cueva of A&I Music. Our goal is to create a space where songwriters can go for basic information on how to protect their intellectual property."

CONTRIBUTORS

Rich Appel, Chuck Arnold, Katie Bain, Dave Brooks, Pamela Bustios, Ed Christman, Tatiana Cirisano, Leila Cobo, Mariel Concepcion, Marcus Dowling, Thom Duffy, Chris Eggertsen, Griselda Flores, Josh Glicksman, Gil Kaufman, Steve Knopfer, Jason Lipshutz, Joe Lynch, Geoff Mayfield, Taylor Mims, Mia Nazareno, Melinda Newman, Glenn Peoples, Jessica Roiz, Micah Singleton, Richard Smirke, Andrew Unterberger, Jewel Wicker, Nick Williams, Stereo Williams

METHODOLOGY *Billboard* power lists are selective, with honorees chosen by *Billboard* editors. Nominations for each power list open not less than 120 days in advance of publication. (For our editorial calendar of 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 before the nomination period to thom.duffy@billboard.com. Nominations close and lists are locked not less than 90 days before publication. *Billboard's* 2021 Latin Power Players were chosen by editors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors. In addition to nominations, editors weigh the success of each executive's company or affiliated artists as measured by chart, sales and streaming performance. Career trajectory and industry impact are also considered. Unless otherwise noted, *Billboard* Boxscore and MRC Data are the sources for tour grosses and sales/streaming data, respectively. MRC Data is also the source for radio audience metrics. Unless otherwise noted, album streaming figures cited represent collective U.S. on-demand audio totals for an album's tracks, and song/artist streaming figures represent U.S. on-demand audio and video totals.

Natti Natasha



BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC WEEK 2021

Superstar Q&As and social justice discussions, panels and live performances converged at the annual Latin conference — a unique experience in Miami with 150-plus artists and executives, as well as 15,000 attendees

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARY BETH KOETH

Tostão (left) and Goyo



From left: Chris Jedi, Gaby Music and Lunay.





From left: Lucia Villa, Elena Rose, Mariah Angeliq, Emilia Mernes and Laura Villa.



Los Dos Carnales



From left: Raymix, Jhonny Caz, Erika Vidrio and Esteman.



Daddy Yankee



Mabel (left) and Fher Olvera



Nicky Jam

To all of our...

ARTISTS, SONGWRITERS, PRODUCERS, & PUBLISHING PARTNERS

...We thank you!

For twenty years, you've created music that has changed the world. We are incredibly proud of the opportunity to work with you, and honored to share in your artistry and talent.



20th Anniversary

20 years of innovation. 20 years of transformation. 20 years of music.

...AND A BIG THANKS TO TEAM KOBALT

As we celebrate our 20th year, thank you to our incredible team of innovators, who work tirelessly to support our incomparable artists and songwriters. Your dedication to making the industry a better place for creators has inspired us for the last 20 years and will continue to inspire us for the next 20 years and beyond.

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*With gratitude,
Willard Ahdrtiz and Laurent Hubert*



Joe Serling & Greg Brooks

honor



Kobalt

Congratulations
on 20 years and counting...



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The Players



Left: Ahdriz at the Kobalt office in New York. Right: Metcalfe, Hubert and Perez (from left) in Los Angeles.



Kobalt's 'Silver Bullet' Of Transparency

CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF DISRUPTION, FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN WILLARD AHDRIIZ AND CEO LAURENT HUBERT TALK THE MUSIC PUBLISHER'S INFLUENCE ON THE MAJORS, ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SILICON VALLEY AND WHY PAYING CREATORS IS STILL A REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT

BY DAN RYS

SEATED IN THEIR NEWLY reopened West Hollywood office under a portrait of rock disruptor Frank Zappa, Kobalt Music Group founder/chairman Willard Ahdriz and CEO Laurent Hubert can't help but laugh at the irony. The two are looking back on two decades of disruption of their own — a period when, to hear them tell it, Kobalt was the only company speaking about the merits of the digital revolution within the music business, as well as the only one actively pushing for it.

"There has been resistance — I joke that I was the guy who told the wife about her husband's mistresses," says Ahdriz with his trademark smirk. "That's how popular I was among the old, cigar-smoking executives."

For the past 20 years, Ahdriz has driven and defined Kobalt. A Swede with a love of language and a propensity to piss off those who prop up the status quo, his drive to create and maintain a transparent, fair, digital-first music industry has unsettled the traditional music publishing

business. And his vision, forged in the early 2000s after years as a record and publishing executive in Europe, has evolved from the left-field ideas of an industry iconoclast to conventional wisdom as the music business has been buoyed back to a period of growth by streaming revenue.

Kobalt's influence can be measured by considering its major-label competition. Companies like Sony/ATV Music Publishing, Universal Music Publishing Group and Warner/Chappell Music have adopted many of Ahdriz's ideas and processes in

recent years, most significantly with their respective Core, Window and music client portals that provide creators with real-time access to royalty information. "Back then, nobody wanted to talk about the transparency or the business' digital transformation except for Willard," says Hubert, a former BMG executive who joined Kobalt in 2016, rising to CEO last year. "It was truly revolutionary, and Willard had to fight that battle at every corner to make it happen."

In the years since, the European-based music publisher has grown into

a global behemoth, attracting top stars such as The Weeknd, Lorde, Childish Gambino, Roddy Ricch, Max Martin, FINNEAS, Karol G, Andrew Watt, Stevie Nicks, Phoebe Bridgers and Paul McCartney with a range of creative and label services, including synch and brand partnerships, A&R, global administration, YouTube monetization, record release management, and digital distribution and marketing. In 2011, the company expanded to include label- and artist-services company AWAL (Artists Without A Label), followed by its Neighboring Rights division, which tracks income from broadcast recordings for over 2,000 performers; and three separate investment funds that control or administer thousands of publishing copyrights on behalf of creators. (Kobalt itself does not own music copyrights; a foundational part of its ethos is that creators should own their own rights.)

After refuting rumors of a potential sale of the entire company (at a valuation between \$750 million and \$1 billion) last fall, Kobalt entered into an agreement with Sony Music Entertainment in February to sell just its recorded-music operations, including AWAL and Neighboring Rights, for \$430 million. (The deal closed in May and is under review by U.K. regulator the Competition and Markets Authority, which examines deals for antitrust issues.) Moving forward, the company has invested in the infrastructure of its publishing business by quadrupling the headcount of its creative and synch teams and climbing to an average of third place on *Billboard's*

Publishers Quarterly ranking of the top Hot 100 songs this year, thanks to its share of hits like "Peaches" by Justin Bieber, Daniel Caesar and Giveon and "Levitating" by Dua Lipa and DaBaby.

Kobalt's other main business is its global performing rights digital collection society, AMRA (formerly known as the American Mechanical Rights Agency), which it acquired in 2015 as a digital-first alternative to the country-by-country society payment structure that previously existed in many international markets. Today, AMRA collects in over 182 countries around the world. "It was the first time that a [performing rights organization] had challenged other PROs and the norm of how things should work. We took a lot of flack for it, but we increased value," says AMRA CEO Tomas Ericsson. "Willard used to say that 20 years from now, everything is going to be licensed directly and digital. Kobalt is positioned now to grow for the next 10 years because we have a vehicle that drives all that value."

Kobalt's mission remains songwriter- and artist-centric, having led the industry toward "innovation and empowerment," says president/COO Jeannette Perez, by making terms like "transparency," "artist-first" and "portal" standard in today's publishing market. The company also shepherded the concept of giving creators the opportunity to "retain their copyrights," says Sas Metcalfe, chief creative officer and Ahdritz's first-ever hire. "I really believe we've changed the publishing industry," she says. "We've done everything we said we would do."

To mark their two decades in the music business, Ahdritz and Hubert discuss their continued evolution as a music-tech giant and look ahead to a metaverse future.

Why did you start Kobalt?

AHDRTZ When I started Telegram Records and Publishing [in 1986], I had global hits on the recording side, and on the publishing side, I saw how the traditional local and regional opaque systems worked, where you had no power. They were sitting on all your revenue, all your data, all your money and, sometimes, with your lawyer, too. That is how it worked. I realized that Sweden was too small of a home market for me to build a big business, so I took my MBA, I went to London, and I strategized. Online came — online banking, then Kazaa and Napster happened and the whole internet boom. When I saw that, I realized there is an opportunity now to go back and actually build [the industry] how it should be done.

And how should it be done?

AHDRTZ No. 1, by putting creators first and delivering services. They are the power in the system. I played saxophone in a band, so I knew that side and what digital and tech could do. No. 2: We needed tech to solve the issue of high-volume, low-transaction values for efficiency and to drive the costs out of the system. No. 3: I realized it needed to be centralized. You needed to have big tech that could match the big telecoms and the big [digital service providers]. You couldn't have

these local societies or local structures, because it would never work. So we had this centralized organization, supported by a technological platform to run it. Music crosses borders. That's why at Kobalt, we all work as a team. It's not "my artist" and "my signing." We are here to service our global clients.

Another innovation was transparency.

AHDRTZ Today we call it "music as a service" — we introduced that, having a full stack [of services] to maximize cash flow. And that means, after we have an agreement upfront, which is very straight and clear, that we are partners. We are here to maximize your cash flow, and our interests are aligned. Today I say that we get hugs from our clients, not litigation. And that means that you keep your copyrights, and we've created \$10 billion in value.

How did the industry first react to your business model?

AHDRTZ People thought this wouldn't work. At the time, songwriters waited up to two years for their money and up to 50% was lost in royalty systems. If you're a writer, that made it quite tough to become an entrepreneur and a creator. I joke that I had a revolutionary concept: "I am paying artists." (Laughs.)

It was the beginning of the industry grappling with the digital age. Was that challenging?

AHDRTZ At that time, they didn't even grapple with it. Up until 2015, they did everything to try to stop it, to chop off

Something To Talk About

KOBALT'S MUSIC CREATOR CLIENTS SHARE WHAT MAKES THE PUBLISHER STAND OUT MOST

"Kobalt is so passionate and aligned with my vision as an artist and my creative process."

—MADISON BEER, ARTIST

"As a songwriter and independent publisher, the Kobalt app is a dream utility. If I could only have one app on my phone it would be email, but if I could have two, the second would be the Kobalt app."

—GARY GO, ARTIST-SONGWRITER-PRODUCER (RIHANNA, SKRILLEX)

"Kobalt has been such a massive supporter of mine since the very start. From the early synchs on 'Waves,' the team has been so instrumental in



helping get my music out to the world."

—DEAN LEWIS, ARTIST-SONGWRITER

"Three big cheers to Kobalt on being the best publisher in the business."

—PAUL MCCARTNEY, ARTIST-SONGWRITER

"Kobalt is the perfect partner to work for Raedio's publishing division. Their transparency with songwriters, producers and artists is helpful as we build out our music library and work with emerging talent across all platforms where music exists."

—ISSA RAE, ACTRESS-WRITER-PRODUCER; OWNER, RAEDIO PUBLISHING

"I respect everything Kobalt has been doing with their artists that they've signed. Most importantly they had a genuine interest and support of me as an artist and my vision, which made the decision easy."

—RODDY RICCH, RAPPER-SINGER-SONGWRITER-PRODUCER

"You can't stand out by trying to fit in and that's why I love Kobalt. I have the freedom to do whatever I want creatively, and they are supportive of it. Because my business is taken care of, mentally, I am free, too. I want my music to be a breath of fresh air and show my vision for the future. Kobalt understands that."

—TEDDY WALTON, SONGWRITER-PRODUCER-DJ

To Willard, Sas, Laurent and all our friends at Kobalt!
love you all but I think we can all agree this is
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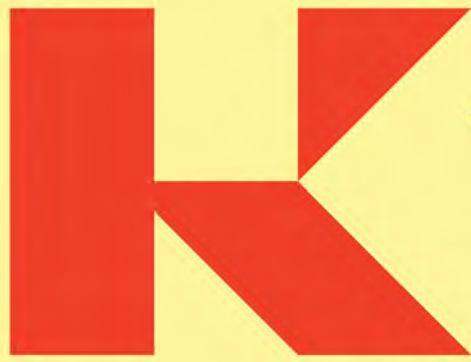
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what happened to us?



#blacklivesmatter
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Kobalt

**CONGRATULATIONS AND MUCH
THANKS TO YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY FOR 20 YEARS OF**

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**THANK YOU FOR THE
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HERE'S TO THE NEXT 20!



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YEARS OF SUPPORTING
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A Timeline Of Industry Firsts

BEHIND THE GROUNDBREAKING MOVES THAT HELPED PUSH THE INDUSTRY TOWARD THE FUTURE

2001

Kobalt offered the first full-service deals — encompassing categories of A&R, synch and administration — for its music creator clients. To further differentiate itself, the company also offered writers the ability to keep 100% ownership of their songs.

2002

Kobalt became the first platform to collect and register directly in all major markets on behalf of its music creator clients, eliminating intercompany subpublisher charges.

2002

Kobalt launched the first-ever online portal giving statements and royalty analysis for every writer, allowing clients to track and access their individual incomes and manage their rights and royalties directly.

2008

The publisher's portal evolved to become the first to offer online advances, show global registration status and counterclaim data, flexible royalty analysis and a live pipeline of synch activity.

2010

Kobalt became the first (and still only, a decade later) nonmajor publisher to have greater than 10% of the market share in the United States and the United Kingdom.

2011

Kobalt created the first regulated music fund with Kobalt Music Capital, which has gone on to invest over \$1 billion.

2013

The company developed the first portal to show an activity feed of global catalog events, YouTube user-generated-content video earnings and viewing data, global chart positions and videos of global licensed synch commercials.

2013

Kobalt's Neighboring Rights service became the first to directly collect in all major markets.

2013

Kobalt is named the inaugural winner of the publisher administrator of the year honor at ASCAP's annual Pop Awards.

2015

Kobalt launched the first mobile app showing all portal data, giving creators quick access to financial and consumption information.

2015

Kobalt became the first publisher to offer global direct collection from digital sources with the relaunch of AMRA, which today operates in China, Brazil and Japan, among other markets.

2017

Kobalt developed the first recordings app to visualize streaming data and revenue for AWAL artists.



From right: Kobalt's Perez with FINNEAS, Apple's Peymon Maskan, Billie Eilish and Universal Music Publishing Group's Tom Eaton at the Clio Awards in 2019.

their hands and not utilize it, because they saw it as a threat to the control they had. I was the only one saying, "This is the biggest opportunity the music industry has to transform." We had 600 million consumers buying music at the top of the CD era, and I said, "With all the technology that is rolling out in the world — we had 90% piracy at the time in Asia — if we can monetize this in a global data environment, it's a significant opportunity to lower costs. So your rights will be worth much more in this industry."

HUBERT What has been accelerating, especially in the past 10 years, is a shift from the major gatekeepers to the talent. That power structure has changed, and it's continually changing — we don't believe that we're at the end of that transformation. When I look at music today, I compare it to water: You can't stop it. The key is how to monetize it in a way that's fair to all stakeholders. It hasn't always been easy, but 20 years later, nobody's arguing whether there should be transparency or not.

When did you realize you were making a real difference for creators?

AHDRITZ *Billboard* did a cover story about us in 2012 when we had 15% [of the Hot 100 chart], so sometimes you say, "Wow, this is the moment."

In the first half of the last decade, you expanded with AMRA, AWAL and Neighboring Rights. Why was that the right move at the time?

AHDRITZ We started in publishing, because it was the most complex. It took

longer than I thought because it didn't have industry support. I tested recordings, and then we introduced label services and added AWAL. It has been very controlled. Like with artists, when people say it was a success overnight, we all know it was a success after 10,000 hours behind it, and it was the same thing with Kobalt: We needed to work and prepare and develop.

We have a half-billion-dollar publishing business and growing, AMRA is rolling out, we have 13 offices globally for creative and support, and we have one global roster. You can come from London or Berlin or Stockholm or L.A., and at any of our offices you have support. Clients love it, because you're not signed to one guy in one office somewhere and everyone else doesn't bother.

How did AMRA come into play?

HUBERT AMRA was, for us, fundamental. In 2015, we acquired a small mechanical collection society based in Florida and said, "We're going to transform this to repair collections in the digital environments and bypass the collection societies." That's a fundamental rethinking of how the collection framework could evolve, and, again, we were the first.

AHDRITZ We introduced technology by having a centralized data system that, if you push one button, payments get sent out to over 200 societies. So by using different technologies we could improve tracking to show clients how many units were being collected on their album, which was impossible to understand on traditional publishing statements.

Paul McCartney

&

MPL

Communications



Congratulate

Kobalt

On Their 20th Anniversary



The Weeknd won top Hot 100 artist at the 2021 Billboard Music Awards.

What's the long-term strategy for AMRA?

AHDRITZ You're going to read a lot about the global data society. It is brilliant. Instead of sending your terabytes of data to 200 societies, we send one global invoice from London to Stockholm, from London to Cupertino for Apple, from London to San

Bruno for YouTube, from London to Shenzhen for Tencent, centrally. We cut off all those middlemen. That's a silver bullet for global digital music consumption with full control, full matching and we are running it.

What was wrong with the old system?

AHDRITZ I couldn't do an audit on a

big collection] society in Europe to find out what they were charging and what was going on under the hood. If your son came home and you asked him what he got on his math test and he said, "I'm not going to tell you," you would assume he doesn't have an A-plus. *(Laughs.)* Here, with AMRA, we have full transparency, but even our clients have the right to audit us. Transparency is a win-win. One hit today has 60 billion microtransactions globally. Before, you had 4 million radio spins, 2 million singles, 10 million albums at best. Now, you

have 5,000 revenue sources, billions of transactions, and they all need to match with each unit. So it is really big data.

HUBERT That has rendered the environment far more complex, so it's important that you have the infrastructure to harness that complexity. We've made sure that people see us as a destination,

not only because of our core values and global infrastructure, but also because of our creative team. The message to the marketplace is, "You don't have to compromise on anything when you come to Kobalt." And if you look at our recognition in the marketplace, we were the 2020 music publisher of the year for ASCAP. Last week, we won the 2021 BMI award for best hip-hop/R&B publisher. So we really have an amazing creative staff and that service is on par, if not better, than our competitors.

You are in the process of selling AWAL to Sony. How do you think about music as an investment?

HUBERT AWAL's business grew over sevenfold from early 2016 to 2020, so it made sense from a commercial, shareholder standpoint to say, "Hey, we've created a lot of value, now is the time to take advantage of that."

AHDRITZ Today it's called an "impact investment" [which is concerned with generating social and environmental returns, as well as financial]. So we were a commercial operation and I raised commercial money, because like wind, power

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the music industry.

XO

and everything else, if you're able to make big changes, it needs to be at a commercial level. Working in London in the '90s, I was brought up in stakeholder rapport — that clients, employees and shareholders should benefit from everything. So we were a stakeholder company from day one. The deal was the best way to move forward, to recoup the business and also to maximize what we can do. We are in a very good place. We are profitable, we have a lot of cash, and we have a lot of interest in Kobalt. I have extremely patient long-term investors.

What other business sectors are you exploring?

AHDRITZ There's a lot of innovation around new wellness and fitness sectors, which could be 10% of total income for us in three or four years and will be very important for the music industry. There's also the metaverse [the concept of a future iteration of the internet comprising shared, 3D virtual spaces]. I told a guy yesterday: "Even if you're in the metaverse, if you stand on Mother Earth, you will still need to license The Weeknd's copyrights from us." (*Laughs.*) You can't

claim that you're somewhere else, because I see you!

Publishing and song catalog sales have been music's hottest topic in recent years. What opportunities do you see in that sector?

HUBERT We see significant growth in the business. Three years ago, digital was 35% of publishing revenue, and now it's at 57.5%.

AHDRITZ When you think of songwriters and producers and the marriage of sharing and [non-fungible tokens] and the relationship between music and gaming, it's very exciting on a global level. We collect everywhere, so now we need to have our virtual metaverse, our avatar, of Kobalt saying, "We are here to collect." (*Laughs.*)

What other music trends are you keeping an eye on looking ahead?

HUBERT There's an opportunity to build more of our business around creating a marketplace, to engage more intensely with our writers. That's what [cloud-based music creation and collaboration platform] Splice is doing. We watch a lot of compa-

nies in the technology space. Another one is mood music or meditation music. Music is no longer just for your entertainment. It can be there for your health or prescribed as a therapy.

AHDRITZ Before, the music industry had 2,000 artists and maybe 500 writers on average, and today we have a middle class, and what I've talked about before as the democratization of music, not the long tail of where grandma is my only fan, but the real middle. You have an industry of a million professional producers, bands and musicians that needs to be served. And in the digital environment it's significantly easier to monetize music, rather than with CDs and the radio. It's inside of *Fortnite* or your health app or Peloton subscription model. It will be easier to monetize music, because it's suddenly bundled together with something you do. Before, you went to the gym and they played a CD. Now, music is bundled in your bicycle at home. And we are here to support that. It's an exciting time for music. It's clear now how important it is to go to a local gig with your friends, enjoy music and be alive. I'm happy for the fans to be able to get

more and better music. I'm pleased for the whole ecosystem.

You operate at the intersection of music and technology. What has your relationship been like with Silicon Valley?

AHDRITZ We were, and are, the only trusted brand both in San Francisco and in Hollywood. When I went out there, I said, "You can't demand \$2 per YouTube stream. I'm making more money monetizing content, and it doesn't cannibalize my product." I had a lot of bad calls after that. But I said, "We need to embrace them," and that meant building a relationship that made it easier to collaborate and for AMRA to collect the Kobalt catalog. We're a trusted brand sitting with the biggest tech players in the world who see us as a tech company because we talk the same language and can handle big data. We understand where they are coming from and, at the same time, can sit and talk with the biggest creators in the world and help them with their creative work. I am very proud that we have that position. It's extremely powerful that we can sit at that table, for our clients and for Kobalt. **B**



Congratulations to Kobalt on 20 years of supporting songwriters and artists.

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Happy anniversary Willard, Johan and everyone we have had the pleasure of working with at Kobalt – it has been an honour to take part in your amazing journey during the first 20 years!

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BENJ PASEK & JUSTIN PAUL

future classic.



From the artists and team
at Future Classic

Congratulations to **Gus Lopez** on
being named one of
Billboard's Latin Power Players 2021



from your Virgin Music family



Chartbreaker

Wilson photographed by Tracy Allison on Sept. 16 at Cedarmont Farm in Franklin, Tenn.

No. 1

PEAK ON *BILLBOARD'S*
CHRISTIAN AIRPLAY CHART

Anne Wilson

A chart-topping single has helped the newcomer turn family tragedy into “something beautiful”

○ Anne Wilson grew up in Kentucky playing piano and dancing ballet but never considered singing — she dreamed of becoming an astronaut. That changed in 2017, when her older brother, Jacob, died in a car accident at 23. “I’d never written a song, and I’d never sang in front of anyone until [his] funeral,” recalls Wilson. She performed Hillsong Worship’s “What a Beautiful Name” at the service, and says now, “That was the first moment I felt God calling me to music.”

Prompted by friends and family, Wilson posted a video of herself singing the song

to YouTube. The clip gained traction, making its way to Noble Management’s Jason Davis, who reached out at the top of 2018. “You could tell there was so much potential,” says Davis, who signed Wilson as a management client that August. “I’ve been doing this for 23 years, and for there to be a career, artists have to have this gift.”

After her first ever songwriting session, one of Wilson’s co-writers, Jeff Sojka, met with Capitol Christian Music Group vp Josh Bailey and mentioned her name. Soon, Wilson was fielding offers from Capitol CMG, Fair Trade Services and

Provident Label Group. She signed a recording and publishing contract with Capitol CMG and its publishing division (Capitol CMG Publishing) in 2019.

All the while, Wilson was processing her brother’s death through journal entries. She drew upon those when writing “My Jesus” — a deeply personal ballad and the first song she wrote that broached her loss — with Jeff Pardo and Matthew West in Nashville last year.

The label released “My Jesus” in April, and by August, Wilson became the first female soloist to top *Billboard’s* Christian

Airplay chart with a debut single since the chart’s launch in 2003. She followed the song’s success with a three-track collection of the same name, as well as the five-song project *My Jesus (Live in Nashville)*. She’s now working on original Christmas music, as well as her full-length debut album, expected for release next year.

Having just graduated high school last May, Wilson can only describe her trajectory as “overwhelming, in a good way.” She adds: “I’ve been able to see God turn [my family’s tragedy] to something beautiful.” —JESSICA NICHOLSON

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